



2017 INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT CARD



OVERVIEW

U.S. airports serve more than two million passengers every day. The aviation industry is marked by technologically advanced and economically efficient aircraft, however, the associated infrastructure of airports and air traffic control systems is not keeping up. Congestion at airports is growing; it is expected that 24 of the top 30 major airports may soon experience “Thanksgiving-peak traffic volume” at least one day every week. With a federally mandated cap on how much airports can charge passengers for facility expansion and renovation, airports struggle to keep up with investment needs, creating a \$42 billion funding gap between 2016 and 2025.

CAPACITY & CONDITION

New, technologically advanced and fuel efficient aircraft are being deployed regularly, however, that tells only half the story of the aviation industry. In the other half, progress at the nation’s airports and in the air traffic control system is slow, as investment has been consistently lagging in the past 18 years, unable to keep up with demands of increased traffic and new technologies.

In 2015 there were in the United States:

- 8,727,691 commercial flights for the year;
- Approximately 7,000 aircraft in the air at any given time; and
- 2.25 million passengers every day.

The U.S. aviation network includes 3,345 airports as part of the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) with 3,331 existing and 14 proposed. Of these, 514 airports offer commercial service. There were a total of 786 million enplanements in the nation’s airports in 2015, up from 728 million in



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Airports are a critical component to the movement of goods and people and must be resilient in the event of catastrophic events, be it weather, man-made, or other events. Airports often serve as a gateway to urgent relief supplies during large events and are interdependent on other forms of transportation to work efficiently.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO RAISE THE GRADE

- Permanent extension and increase of user fees to adequately fund the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) through the Airport and Airway Trust Fund (Trust Fund). Such funds should not be used to pay for security costs, but specifically used for airport capacity, air traffic, and airport maintenance and improvement.
- Continue the practice that all monies collected from these user fees be deposited in the Trust Fund with budgetary firewalls to eliminate the diversion of transportation revenues from non-airport capacity, air traffic and maintenance and improvement purposes.
- Continued and accelerated implementation of the NextGen air traffic control system.
- Congress must timely enact multi-year reauthorizations of aviation programs to ensure predictability and stability in airport improvement funding.
- Remove the federally-imposed cap on Passenger Facility Charges (PFCs) to allow airports a tool to invest in their own facilities.
- Funding for security measure must not impact needed infrastructure funding.
- Explore innovative third-party funding such as privatization, public private partnerships and others.

DEFINITIONS

Enplanements — Individual trip segments for each passenger.

Large Hub Airports — The FAA defines as airports that account for one percent or more of total U.S. enplanements.

Medium Hub Airports — The FAA defines as airports that account for between 0.25 and 1% of the total U.S. enplanements.

Small Hub Airports — The FAA defines as airports that account for between 0.05 and 0.25% of the total U.S. enplanements.

Nonhub Primary Airports — The FAA defines as airports that enplane less than 0.05% of all commercial passengers, but more than 10,000 annual enplanements.

Nonprimary Commercial Airports — The FAA defines as airports that have less than 10,000 commercial passengers enplanements annually.

SOURCES

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