

# gateways TO OUR COMMUNITIES

# 2040



## 2040 REGIONAL AVIATION SYSTEM PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL  
2011

# THE REGIONAL AVIATION SYSTEM PLAN



LONE STAR EXECUTIVE AIRPORT



## A FRAMEWORK FOR AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT

The Regional Aviation System Plan (RASP) is the framework for airport development in the 13-county Houston-Galveston region. The plan examines the region's airports, evaluates how well they are performing today, and determines what improvements are needed in the future. The RASP seeks to ensure that the region's airports are preserved, that they have the facilities and capacity to operate safely and efficiently, and that they provide maximum economic benefits to their local communities and the region.

### MISSION

The mission of the RASP is to establish a balanced system of general aviation, reliever and commercial airports for all aviation users in the region. The plan provides:

- Air access to each of the region's counties
- Preservation of the region's airports
- A safe environment with safe airports
- Capacity to meet current and future aviation demand
- Opportunities for airside and landside development
- Protection from incompatible land uses
- Protection of the environment and sustainable development
- Economic benefits for local communities
- Competitiveness with other Texas regional aviation systems

### PLAN OBJECTIVES

- Inventory the facilities and condition of the regionally significant airports in the Houston-Galveston region
- Consult with leaders of the communities in which airports are located
- Identify major issues affecting regional aviation

- Develop goals to guide selection of improvement measures and priorities
- Forecast future aviation demand and assess the capacity of each airport for aviation activity to 2030
- Explore scenarios of unexpected events that could impact the system
- Develop an optimal plan that establishes airport roles and improves safety, efficiency and convenience for users
- Develop a list of projects that result in the optimal plan
- Set priorities for projects to form a logical sequence of plan development
- Provide recommendations for updates to the Texas Airport System Plan (TASP) and the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS)

## RASP GOALS



### PRESERVE EXISTING AIRPORTS

*Preserve existing airports through public ownership or public/private partnership for all airports in the NPIAS, and regional partnerships for small publicly owned airports where appropriate.*

### IMPROVE SAFETY AND SECURITY

*Improve safety and security by bringing airports to FAA standards, establishing an emergency airport system, and ensuring security perimeter fencing for all airports.*

### IMPROVE EFFICIENCY

*Improve efficiency by building on each airport's strengths for better system integration, adding hangars at airports with pent-up demand and sufficient aviation services, and providing essential services, additional facilities or increasing capacity to eliminate constraints.*

### BENEFIT COMMUNITIES

*Benefit communities by establishing protective land use restrictions around airports, adding signs, gateway entrances and landscaping, and encouraging community events at airports.*

## AIRPORT INVENTORY

An inventory was conducted at 26 public use airports serving general aviation in the Houston-Galveston region. The FAA classifies the nation's airports according to level of service. The RASP includes 2 commercial service, 10 reliever and 14 general aviation airports as described below:

- Commercial Service – Supports scheduled passenger service by transport aircraft. Primary commercial service airports have more than 10,000 passengers per year.
- Reliever – Relieves congestion at a commercial service airport by providing an alternative for general aviation. Reliever airports typically have at least 100 based aircraft.
- General Aviation – Airports with no scheduled air carrier service or scheduled air carrier service for less than 2,500 passengers per year.

Eighteen of the airports are owned by cities or counties, while eight are privately owned. As shown on the following page, the number of based aircraft varies widely among airports. Chambers County Airport in Anahuac has 11 aircraft, while D.W. Hooks Memorial Airport in north Houston has 478. Ten airports have at least 100 based aircraft.

Instrument approaches aid pilots in landing at airports in low visibility. Twenty-three airports have at least one instrument approach. In addition, seven airports have air traffic control towers.

As shown on the following page, 21 of the system airports have a combined annual economic impact of \$14.3 billion. The 10 reliever airports are the heart of the regional aviation system, relieving Bush Intercontinental and Hobby of nearly one million operations and are home to 2,185 aircraft.

### BASED AIRCRAFT

AIRCRAFT TYPE	BASED AIRCRAFT	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Single-engine propeller	2,181	72%
Multi-engine propeller	403	13%
Jet	249	8%
Helicopter	112	4%
Glider	11	.4%
Ultralight	9	.3%
Military	67	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,032</b>	<b>100%</b>



SCHOLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



## AIRPORT INVENTORY

AIRPORT	CITY	OWNER	LONGEST RUNWAY	RUNWAY CONDITION <sup>1</sup>	INSTRUMENT APPROACH	CONTROL TOWER	BASED AIRCRAFT	AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS	ECONOMIC IMPACT <sup>2</sup>
<b>COMMERCIAL SERVICE AIRPORTS</b>									
George Bush Intercontinental Airport	Houston	Public	12,001 ft	●	✓	✓	72	591,700	\$10,900
William P. Hobby Airport	Houston	Public	7,602 ft	●	✓	✓	273	219,000	\$2,500
<b>RELIEVER AIRPORTS</b>									
Texas Gulf Coast Regional Airport	Angleton/Lake Jackson	Public	7,000 ft	●	✓		99	60,000	\$30
David Wayne Hooks Memorial Airport	Houston	Private	7,000 ft	◐	✓	✓	478	247,800	\$84
Ellington Airport	Houston	Public	9,001 ft	●	✓	✓	270	153,200	\$345
Houston Southwest Airport	Arcola	Private	5,000 ft	●	✓		140	46,400	\$13
La Porte Municipal Airport	La Porte	Public	3,500 ft	●	✓		167	79,400	\$17
Lone Star Executive Airport	Conroe	Public	6,000 ft	●	✓	✓	231	83,900	\$152
Pearland Regional Airport	Pearland	Private	4,313 ft	●	✓		216	87,400	\$33
Scholes International Airport	Galveston	Public	6,001 ft	●	✓	✓	141	35,500	\$113
Sugar Land Regional Airport	Sugar Land	Public	8,000 ft	●	✓	✓	127	75,600	\$95
West Houston Airport	Houston	Private	3,953 ft	●	✓		316	103,000	\$17
<b>GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORTS</b>									
Bay City Municipal Airport	Bay City	Public	5,107 ft	●	✓		43	8,800	\$6.60
Baytown Airport	Baytown	Private	4,334 ft	●	✓		58	9,600	
Chambers County Airport	Anahuac	Public	3,005 ft	●	✓		11	3,000	\$6.00
Cleveland Municipal Airport	Cleveland	Public	4,998 ft	●	✓		43	14,200	\$0.90
Eagle Lake Airport	Eagle Lake	Public	3,801 ft	●	✓		28	13,200	
Houston Executive Airport	Brookshire	Private	6,610 ft	●	✓		37	9,000	
Huntsville Municipal Airport	Huntsville	Public	5,005 ft	●	✓		38	21,400	\$8.40
Liberty Municipal Airport	Liberty	Public	3,801 ft	●	✓		13	5,700	\$0.20
Palacios Municipal Airport	Palacios	Public	5,001 ft	◐	✓		16	3,000	\$0.20
Robert R. Wells, Jr. Airport	Columbus	Public	3,800 ft	◐			12	2,800	\$0.08
Weiser Airpark	Houston	Private	3,455 ft	●	✓		78	38,000	
Wharton Regional Airport	Wharton	Public	5,004 ft	●	✓		58	11,800	
North Houston Business Airport	Porter	Private	3,596 ft	◐			56	10,000	\$2.20
Winnie-Stowell Airport	Winnie	Public	3,600 ft	◐			11	3,000	\$0.50
							<b>3,032</b>	<b>1,936,400</b>	<b>\$14,324</b>

<sup>1</sup> ● = Good; ◐ = Fair.

<sup>2</sup> In \$millions. Texas Department of Transportation, Aviation Division, 2005.

## FORECASTS

The RASP projects aviation activity for the 26 system airports in the Houston-Galveston region for 2015, 2020 and 2030. The forecasts include general aviation operations, based aircraft numbers and aircraft fleet mix. The 26 system airports are expected to grow from 1.9 million operations and 2,938 based aircraft in 2008 to more than 2.4 million operations and 3,839 based aircraft in 2030. This growth is at a slightly higher rate than general aviation in the nation and the state. Jets based at regional system airports will increase from 8 percent to 14 percent of the fleet, as the proportion of single-engine propeller aircraft in the fleet drops from 72 percent to 69 percent.



## AVIATION FORECASTS

AIRPORT	AIRCRAFT				OPERATIONS			
	2008	2030	% CHANGE	ANNUAL GROWTH	2008	2030	% CHANGE	ANNUAL GROWTH
<b>COMMERCIAL SERVICE AIRPORTS</b>								
George Bush Intercontinental <sup>1</sup>	72	83	15%	0.7%	591,700	629,600	6%	0.3%
William P. Hobby	273	298	9%	0.4%	219,000	242,800	11%	0.5%
<b>RELIEVER AIRPORTS</b>								
Texas Gulf Coast Regional	99	128	29%	1.3%	60,000	86,500	44%	2.0%
D.W. Hooks Memorial	478	595	24%	1.1%	247,800	326,300	32%	1.4%
Ellington Airport <sup>2</sup>	227	259	14%	0.6%	153,200	191,700	25%	1.1%
Houston Southwest	140	200	43%	1.9%	46,400	75,500	63%	2.9%
La Porte Municipal	167	194	16%	0.7%	79,400	96,800	22%	1.0%
Lone Star Executive <sup>2</sup>	207	317	53%	2.4%	83,900	131,500	57%	2.6%
Pearland Regional	216	273	26%	1.2%	87,400	128,200	47%	2.1%
Scholes International	141	200	42%	1.9%	35,500	48,700	37%	1.7%
Sugar Land Regional	127	173	36%	1.6%	75,600	101,600	34%	1.6%
West Houston	316	419	33%	1.5%	103,000	142,500	38%	1.7%
<b>GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORTS</b>								
Bay City Municipal	43	61	42%	1.9%	8,800	13,800	57%	2.6%
Baytown <sup>3</sup>	31	50	61%	2.8%	9,600	13,900	45%	2.0%
Chambers County	11	15	36%	1.7%	3,000	5,000	67%	3.0%
Cleveland Municipal	43	62	44%	2.0%	14,200	21,800	54%	2.4%
Eagle Lake	28	39	39%	1.8%	13,200	23,300	77%	3.5%
Houston Executive	37	75	103%	4.7%	9,000	20,000	122%	5.6%
Huntsville Municipal	38	60	58%	2.6%	21,400	34,700	62%	2.8%
Liberty Municipal	13	15	15%	0.7%	5,700	8,400	47%	2.2%
Palacios Municipal	16	25	56%	2.6%	3,000	4,100	37%	1.7%
R.R. Wells, Jr.	12	19	58%	2.7%	2,800	4,100	46%	2.1%
Weiser Airpark	78	91	17%	0.8%	38,000	51,200	35%	1.6%
Wharton Regional	58	76	31%	1.4%	11,800	18,900	60%	2.7%
North Houston Business	56	99	77%	3.5%	10,000	19,000	90%	4.1%
Winnie-Stowell	11	13	18%	0.8%	3,000	4,200	40%	1.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,938</b>	<b>3,839</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>1,936,400</b>	<b>2,444,100</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>

<sup>1</sup>New operations forecasts for George Bush Intercontinental were completed in February 2011.

<sup>3</sup>The number of aircraft at Baytown increased to 58 after the forecasts were completed.

<sup>2</sup>The forecasts do not include 43 military aircraft at Ellington Airport and 24 at Lone Star Executive Airport.

## AIRPORT SYSTEM

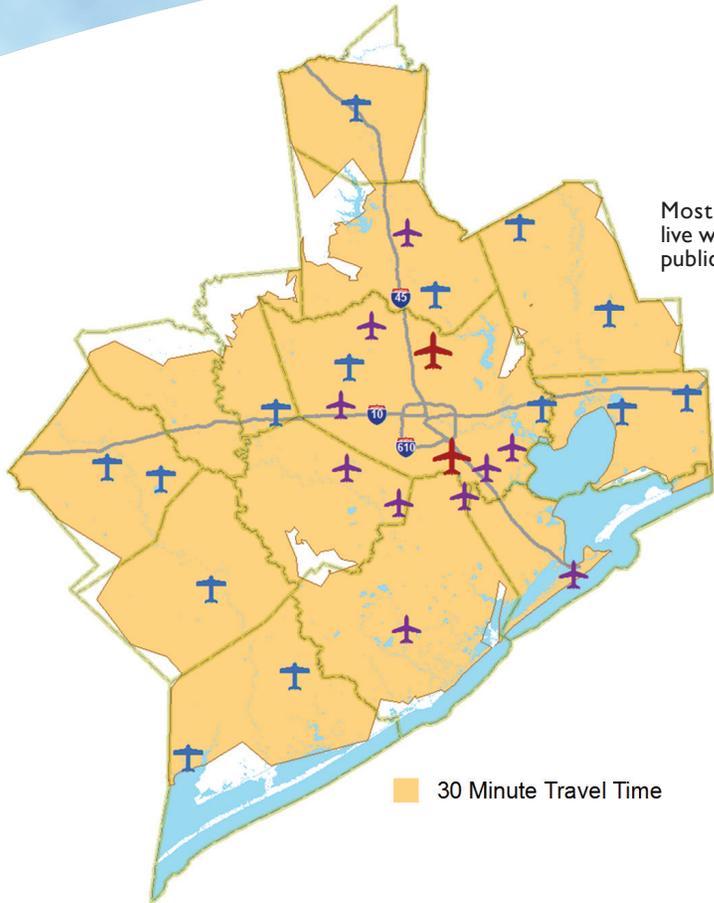
The recommended roles for the system airports are shown in the table on the right. The regional aviation system has 2 primary (P) commercial service airports (CMS) and 10 reliever airports (R). The 14 remaining general aviation (GA) airports are classified as business/corporate airports (BC), community service airports (CS) and basic service airports (BS). Currently, five airports in the system are not in the NPIAS and three are not in the TASP.

### AIRPORT SYSTEM ROLES

AIRPORT	NPIAS	TASP	RASP
<b>COMMERCIAL SERVICE AIRPORTS</b>			
George Bush Intercontinental	P	CMS	CMS
William P. Hobby	P	CMS	CMS
<b>RELIEVER AIRPORTS</b>			
Texas Gulf Coast Regional	R	R	R
David Wayne Hooks Memorial	R	R	R
Ellington Airport	R	R	R
Houston Southwest	R	R	R
La Porte Municipal	R	R	R
Lone Star Executive	R	R	R
Pearland Regional	R	R	R
Scholes International	R	R	R
Sugar Land Regional	R	R	R
West Houston	R	R	R
<b>GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORTS</b>			
Bay City Municipal	GA	BC	BC
Baytown			CS
Chambers County	GA	CS	CS
Cleveland Municipal	GA	CS	CS
Eagle Lake	GA	CS	CS
Houston Executive		BC	BC
Huntsville Municipal	GA	BC	BC
Liberty Municipal	GA	CS	CS
Palacios Municipal	GA	CS	CS
Robert R. Wells, Jr.		CS	CS
Weiser Airpark			BS
Wharton Regional	GA	BC	BC
North Houston Business			CS
Winnie-Stowell	GA	BS	BS

HUNTSVILLE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT



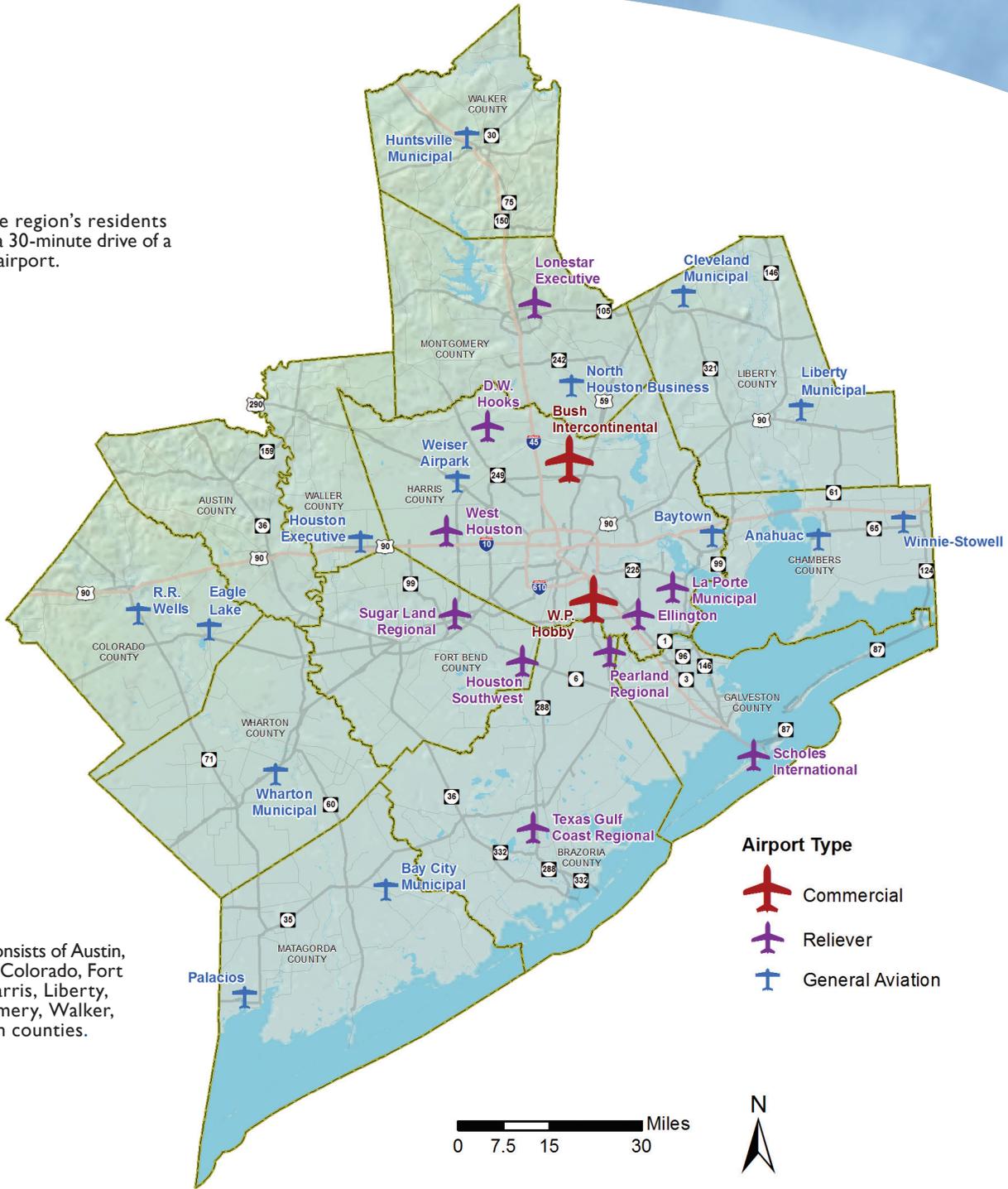


Most of the region's residents live within a 30-minute drive of a public-use airport.

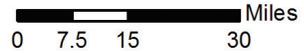
30 Minute Travel Time



The H-GAC region consists of Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller and Wharton counties.



- Airport Type**
-  Commercial
  -  Reliever
  -  General Aviation



## THE OPTIMAL PLAN

Based on current issues at the system airports and predicted airside and landside capacity shortfalls over the next 20 years, an optimal plan is developed. The optimal plan consists of existing airport projects and proposed projects to increase capacity, eliminate inefficiencies and expand capabilities. The RASP includes airport improvements planned by the Houston Airport System (HAS), TxDOT and projects recommended by this study. The airport projects are classified as short-term (2010-2015), mid-term (2016-2020) and long-term (2021-2030). The total cost of the RASP is \$2.28 billion over the next 20 years and includes \$1.9 billion for HAS projects, \$275 million for TASP projects and \$87 million for projects recommended by this study. Improvements identified in the RASP are classified by program objective.



Henriksen Jet Center

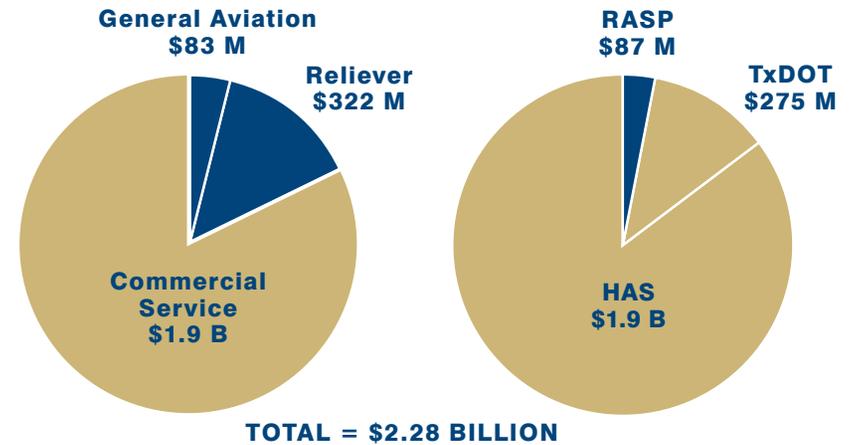
HOUSTON EXECUTIVE AIRPORT



## AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT COSTS

AIRPORT (\$000)	0-5	6-10	11-20	TOTAL
<b>COMMERCIAL SERVICE AIRPORTS</b>				
George Bush Intercontinental	\$473,470	\$984,603	\$0	\$1,458,073
William P. Hobby	\$30,831	\$381,787	\$0	\$412,618
<b>RELIEVER AIRPORTS</b>				
Texas Gulf Coast Regional	\$15,410	\$2,364	\$5,761	\$23,535
D.W. Hooks Memorial	\$11,864	\$16,152	\$5,073	\$33,089
Ellington Airport	\$19,799	\$23,210	\$0	\$43,009
Houston Southwest	\$8,257	\$11,959	\$5,826	\$26,042
La Porte Municipal	\$1,625	\$1,852	\$3,966	\$7,443
Lone Star Executive	\$15,232	\$10,551	\$10,492	\$36,275
Pearland Regional	\$15,706	\$7,061	\$4,705	\$27,472
Scholes International	\$16,472	\$9,328	\$17,481	\$43,281
Sugar Land Regional	\$56,314	\$15,246	\$5,769	\$77,329
West Houston	\$1,191	\$1,987	\$1,437	\$4,615
<b>GENERAL AVIATION AIRPORTS</b>				
Bay City Municipal	\$1,555	\$1,319	\$4,231	\$7,105
Baytown	\$1,270	\$2,500	\$630	\$4,400
Chambers County	\$8,550	\$1,027	\$381	\$9,958
Cleveland Municipal	\$1,615	\$1,411	\$722	\$3,748
Eagle Lake	\$1,251	\$2,859	\$551	\$4,661
Houston Executive	\$7,250	\$7,550	\$1,500	\$16,300
Huntsville Municipal	\$2,378	\$3,950	\$1,400	\$7,728
Liberty Municipal	\$1,852	\$1,786	\$801	\$4,439
Palacios Municipal	\$3,509	\$1,754	\$1,062	\$6,325
Robert R. Wells, Jr.	\$1,406	\$1,328	\$0	\$2,734
Weiser Airpark	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Wharton Regional	\$2,262	\$2,319	\$1,416	\$5,997
North Houston Business	\$380	\$620	\$4,460	\$5,460
Winnie-Stowell	\$383	\$2,503	\$1,091	\$3,977
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$699,832</b>	<b>\$1,497,026</b>	<b>\$78,755</b>	<b>\$2,275,613</b>

Priority: 0-5 = 2010 to 2015; 6-10 = 2016 to 2020; 11-20 = 2021 to 2030



### PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- **Safety** - projects that improve safe aircraft operations.
- **Preservation** - projects that preserve the functional or structural integrity of the airport.
- **Standards** - improvements required to bring the airport to design standards for current users.
- **Upgrade** - improvements required to expand the airport to accommodate larger aircraft consistent with the airport's system role.
- **Capacity** - expansion required to accommodate more aircraft or higher activity levels.

OBJECTIVE (\$000)	COMMERCIAL SERVICE	RELIEVER	GENERAL AVIATION	TOTAL
<b>ALL AIRPORTS</b>				
Safety	\$26,350	\$21,009	\$3,416	\$50,775
Preservation	\$96,300	\$90,639	\$25,077	\$212,016
Standards	\$163,101	\$40,523	\$3,317	\$206,941
Upgrade	\$539,696	\$46,073	\$15,349	\$601,118
Capacity	\$1,015,805	\$88,807	\$32,836	\$1,137,448
Misc	\$29,439	\$35,039	\$2,837	\$67,315
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,870,691</b>	<b>\$322,090</b>	<b>\$82,832</b>	<b>\$2,275,613</b>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The RASP presents a series of recommendations to include projects listed in this study, prospective changes to the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) and Texas Airport System Plan (TASP), and recommended policy changes at the Federal and State levels. The plan does not recommend construction of a new airport in the Houston-Galveston regional aviation system.

SUGAR LAND REGIONAL AIRPORT



## **NPIAS**

The FAA developed the NPIAS to plan for airports and heliports of national importance. The NPIAS classifies airports by their service levels and the roles they play in the national airport system.

Five system airports are not in the NPIAS: Baytown Airport, Houston Executive Airport, R.R. Wells, Jr. Airport, Weiser Airpark and North Houston Business Airport. Currently, no airport is eligible to be added to the NPIAS. However, Baytown Airport, Houston Executive Airport and North Houston Business Airport may become eligible in the next few years if the demand exceeds the forecasts.

## **TASP**

TxDOT has published eligibility standards for TASP airports. All commercial service and reliever airports in the NPIAS are included in the TASP. The TASP classifies airports according to their role in meeting airport system goals and objectives.

Three system airports are not in the TASP: Baytown Airport, Weiser Airpark and North Houston Business Airport. The RASP recommends adding Baytown Airport and North Houston Business Airport to the TASP.

## **POLICY**

The regional aviation system was developed under existing FAA and TxDOT policies that have changed little over the years. This study identifies potential changes in policies that would improve aviation in the Houston-Galveston region by supporting a balanced system of general aviation, reliever and commercial airports. The policies support preservation of existing airports, enhancement of safety and operational efficiency, and

maximization of aviation opportunities in local communities and in the region. The recommended policies are consistent with the FAA's goal of ensuring that aviation is as safe and efficient as possible, and with TxDOT's goal of providing adequate access by air to the population and economic activity centers of Texas.

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**



### **AIRPORT GRANT REVENUE SOURCES**

*Aviation-related sales tax revenues in Texas should be dedicated to aviation projects, supplementing the FAA block grant funds.*

### **AIRPORT SAFETY AND SECURITY**

*The RASP supports safety and security measures that are cost effective and appropriate for the airport's role and level of service.*

### **AIRFIELD CAPACITY**

*FAA and TxDOT should allow privately owned public-use airports included in a regional system plan to receive grant funds for projects that preserve the airport and meet capacity shortfalls, providing that the airport owner enters into a durable obligation to keep the airport open for long-term public use.*

### **STANDARDS**

*FAA and TxDOT should mandate that airports submit electronic Airport Layout Plans with new or updated Airport Master Plans.*

### **RECONSTRUCTION**

*The TxDOT Routine Airport Maintenance Program should be extended to include privately owned public-use airports in a regional system plan, providing that the airport owner enters into a durable obligation to keep the airport open for long-term public use.*

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Wharton Regional Airport

### JEFF BILYEU

Airport Manager  
Texas Gulf Coast Regional Airport

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TxDOT Aviation

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Texas Airports Development Office  
FAA Southwest Region

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Airport Manager  
Pearland Regional Airport

### THERESA RODRIGUEZ

Manager, Transportation Infrastructure  
Greater Houston Partnership

### PHILLIP SAVKO

Airport Manager  
Sugar Land Regional Airport

### SCOTT SMITH

Airport Manager  
Lone Star Executive Airport

## ABOUT H-GAC

The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) completed the first Regional Aviation System Plan in 1973, with updates in 1981, 1986 and 1992. The study area is the 13-county H-GAC region of Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller and Wharton counties.

H-GAC is the region-wide voluntary association of local governments in the 13-county Gulf Coast planning region of Texas. Its service area is 12,500 square miles and contains more than 6 million people. Organized in 1966, H-GAC provides a forum for the discussion of area-wide concerns, promoting regional cooperation through comprehensive planning and services to local governments.

## REGIONAL AVIATION FACTS



- The first powered aircraft flight in Texas occurred in South Houston on February 18, 1910
- 11,767 pilots and 5,707 registered aircraft in the 13-county region
- 154 airports/airstrips, including 46 public-use airports and 26 system airports in the 13-county region
- Oldest system airport – Ellington Airport, 1917
- Newest system airport – Houston Executive, 2007
- Longest system airport runway – Bush Intercontinental, 12,001 feet
- Shortest system airport runway – Chambers County, 3,005 feet
- 3,032 aircraft based at system airports including 249 jets, 403 multi-engine and 2,181 single-engine aircraft
- The largest aircraft to land at a system airport – Russian Antonov An-124 Condor
- 7 air traffic control towers handle 1.4 million takeoffs and landings each year – 74 percent of the system's activity
- Houston air traffic control's airspace is 135 nautical miles long

2040 REGIONAL AVIATION SYSTEM PLAN  
HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL  
[WWW.H-GAC.COM/AVIATION](http://WWW.H-GAC.COM/AVIATION)



TRANSOLUTIONS



VESTA REA &  
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URS

The preparation of this document may have been supported, in part, through the Airport Improvement Program financial assistance from the Federal Aviation Administration (Project Number 3-48-D301-001-2008) as provided under Title 49 U.S.C., Section 47104. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of the FAA. Acceptance of this report by the FAA does not in any way constitute a commitment on the part of the United States to participate in any development depicted therein nor does it indicate that the proposed development is environmentally acceptable or would have justification in accordance with appropriate public laws.