

Chapter 9: Aviation

Introduction

An integrated and seamless transportation system is vital to the nation's economy and the health of regional communities. Aviation plays a key part in this national success by providing a substantial part of the national freight movement and easy access to industry and commerce. Aviation also supports a higher quality of life for citizens by ensuring efficient access to business and leisure activities.

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The MPO is dedicated to advocating an aviation transportation system, policies, and programs that meet the economic and social needs of the communities.

The Northeast Arkansas (NEA) officials are looking into the possibility of establishing a regional airport at Walnut Ridge which is about 23 miles northwest of Jonesboro. The Walnut Ridge airport is a former military training base which has three 5,000-foot runways and 2.7 million square feet of concrete apron. A number of aviation related industries are located adjacent to the airport.

Aviation Goals and Objectives

1. Provide safe and efficient highway and transit access to the airport for the movement of air passengers, airport employees, and cargo.
2. Promote local and regional economies.
3. Look to enhancing existing facilities to meet new demand.
4. Provide more resources for airport maintenance and facility expansion.
5. Provide more resources for key aviation programs.

Jonesboro Regional Airport

The Jonesboro Regional Airport is located three miles East of Jonesboro City Hall. The Union Pacific Railroads define its eastern and northern boundaries while the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and Nettleton Avenue define its southern boundary. The airport is connected to the roadway system by Airport Road connecting Nettleton Avenue and US 49 (Johnson Avenue).

The Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce has identified the following needs for an enhanced air service for the MPO area.

Airport Rescue and Firefighting Station: The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has scheduled the construction of fire fighting capabilities for the airport.

Runway and Taxiway Signage: Signage upgrade is necessary to allow continued scheduled air service.

Runway and Taxiway Lighting System and Fixture: The old lighting fixture and cables need to be replaced with new system compliant with the current standards.

Perimeter Fence and Roadway: FAA has plans to improve the perimeter fencing and roadways to comply with the FAA regulations.

Resurface Taxiways and Public Use Aprons: The project is necessary to eliminate dangerous operating conditions due to wear of the existing taxiways.

Runway 5-23 Extension and Taxiway Extension: FAA has plans to extend Runway 5-23 for 800 feet making it a 7000 feet runway.

Taxiway for New Hanger Area: A new taxiway to access the new hanger.

Strengthen Runway 5-23 and parallel Taxiway: Strengthening the runway and taxiway to accommodate larger aircrafts.