



August 31, 2011 - On August 29, GA Airport Coalition staff met with the FAA Airports Office to discuss the FAA's National Airport System Strategic Evaluation Task (ASSET). ASSET is a process by which FAA is studying GA airports, gathering data, and creating airport categories to reflect current roles and functions of GA airports. These categories will be released in a final report due January 2012.

FAA has held two industry stakeholder meetings that included NASAO, AAAE, ACI, and others. The GA Airport Coalition has not been involved...until now. We learned that this data-driven process has resulted in FAA defining 5 categories for GA airports. They are: Regional Activity Airports, Metropolitan Activity Airports, Community Activity Airports, Local Activity Airports, and Limited Activity Airports. Airports will be put in a particular category based on a set of specific criteria.

It is our understanding that the purpose of this exercise is multi-fold: it will help FAA justify the use of federal funds at GA airports, improve general public perception of GA airports and what they do, and may also allow certain categories to be held to different standards (in other words, addressing the fairness of holding a limited activity airport to the same requirements as a regional activity airport). While this is a study of GA airports, involvement of such airports has been limited. The two managers of this project from FAA Airports will be joining our monthly group call on Tuesday, September 13, 2011, at 1:00 p.m. EST to discuss the process and hear from GAAC members.

Bottom line: This is happening. The GA Airport Coalition is giving general aviation airports the opportunity to make sure it's done right. Sharon Glasgow and Luis Loarte, both Senior Airport Planners, will walk through the process for defining the categories thus far and ask for feedback. As mentioned above, this has been a data-driven process, but now the GA Airport Coalition has the opportunity to put a human face on the process. FAA has asked for our help in gathering stories about airports that will fall into each of the categories. Shortly after the call, we will gather this information and give it to FAA. This call will not be the time to share those stories, but will give GAAC members an opportunity to see how the categories are being defined and give helpful feedback.

This is a real opportunity for GAAC members to help chart the future of GA airports by helping define the classifications and categories that will define GA airports from now on.