

## Executive Summary

In 2010, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) began examining the roles general aviation plays in our national airport system. At the time, general aviation airports had not been thoroughly studied at the national level for more than 40 years. The FAA released the results in a report, *General Aviation Airports: A National Asset* (known as the ASSET report), in May 2012. With the participation of aviation stakeholders, the original ASSET report identified the types of aeronautical functions serving the public interest that general aviation airports perform. The report defined four new categories for nonprimary airports based on existing activity and role (national, regional, local, and basic), which has been incorporated into the FAA's planning process including the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). These airports can serve many functions such as access to medical flights, search and rescue, disaster relief, aerial firefighting, law enforcement, and community access.

The original report identified 497 unclassified facilities that did not fit into one of the newly established categories and for which a separate category could not be defined. The FAA committed, as part of the original ASSET report, to an in-depth review of the unclassified airports to ensure that all available information was collected and considered. Most of these facilities have been in the NPIAS for decades. They have seen a decline in aviation activity due to population, economic shifts, and/or fundamental and lasting changes to the general aviation industry and their airport role.

This report documents the findings from our in-depth review of the 497 facilities that could not be categorized in the FAA's original report. This follow-on initiative, known as *ASSET 2*, began in January 2013. The FAA felt that an open and transparent process was critical so that all available information was considered. As a result, FAA established a core team consisting of diverse aviation stakeholders to assist in gathering data and reviewing the unclassified airports.

To begin this effort, the core team developed an outreach strategy to gather the critical input needed for this effort. This review included extensive airport participation and the active engagement of state aviation agencies across the country. It reflects information gained from direct conversations with the unclassified facilities, close cooperation with state aviation officials and aviation stakeholders, a thorough review of all collected data by FAA staff and an industry team, and input gathered during coordination with a broad group of industry stakeholders.

After a thorough review of all the information gathered through outreach and coordination with industry stakeholders, FAA determined that 212 (42 percent) of the original 497 unclassified airports met the criteria for inclusion as either regional, local, or basic. Two hundred and eighty-one airports continue to be unclassified with no clearly defined Federal role. This includes 227 publicly owned airports with little to no activity, 19 privately owned relievers that do not meet the minimum activity levels for continued designation as reliever, and 35 airports that do not meet the statutory requirements for inclusion in the NPIAS because they are privately owned general aviation airports. These airports will remain in the NPIAS as unclassified. They will have the opportunity to move into one of the four established categories upon reaching the thresholds established in the ASSET criteria (see Appendix 1 for the criteria). The final four facilities are closed or inactive, and we will remove them from the NPIAS.

## Summary

After a thorough review of all the information gathered through outreach and coordination with industry stakeholders including the individual 497 airports, the ASSET 2 study was able to identify a role for 212 of the 497 airports that were identified as unclassified in the original ASSET report. These airports are now categorized as either regional, local, or basic.

The ASSET 2 study was unable to categorize 281 airports. The 281 airports will continue to be listed as Unclassified in the NPIAS. While they may not have a clear Federal role today, it is possible that within the next 2 years they may. In addition, four airports are closed or no longer serve as active landing facilities and will be removed from the NPIAS. The NPIAS report to Congress (2015-2019), when released in October 2014, will reflect the information shown in this report.

The FAA will continue to coordinate with state aviation agencies, airport sponsors, and local planning organizations to identify nonprimary airports that are important to the national transportation system. The FAA examines all airports, including the unclassified airports, every 2 years and submits a report to Congress on the airport system. The FAA will reexamine the nonprimary airports every other year as part of the biennial NPIAS report to Congress process. The next review will be in 2016. If at that point a clear role has been identified for an unclassified airport, then we will move the airport into the appropriate category.

Many of the airports identified as unclassified have received Federal funding in the past and may be considered for future funding when they are able to meet the criteria for one of the four ASSET categories. Future development of nonprimary airports will continue to be based on eligible and justified needs and priorities, consistent with the role of the airport in the national system.