



Memorandum

U.S. Department of
Transportation
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION**: Audit Announcement –
FAA’s Progress in Implementing Its Metroplex
Program
Federal Aviation Administration
Project No. 18A3002A000

Date: January 31, 2018

From: Matthew E. Hampton
Assistant Inspector General
for Aviation Audits

Reply to
Attn. of: JA-10

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation

The Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA) Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) aims to modernize the Nation’s air traffic system and provide safer and more efficient air traffic management. A cornerstone of NextGen is advancing Performance-Based Navigation (PBN), a top investment priority for both FAA and the aviation industry. New PBN flight procedures can provide significant benefits to airspace users, such as more direct flight paths, enhanced airspace capacity, improved on-time airport arrival rates, and reduced aircraft emissions and fuel burn.

As part of its effort to implement PBN flight procedures, FAA began the Metroplex program in 2010 to increase efficiencies in congested, metropolitan areas with multiple airports and complex air traffic flows. FAA and industry have since prioritized 12 locations where improvements are expected to yield near-term benefits. Currently, FAA reports that it has completed implementation at 5 of the 12 Metroplex locations. However, our previous reports¹ identified delays to Metroplex-related efforts and key challenges to implementing PBN and achieving the full range of expected benefits.

The Chairmen of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and its Subcommittee on Aviation requested that we examine FAA’s Metroplex program, including whether FAA delivers new routes and procedures that yield tangible, measurable benefits to airspace users on a consistent and repeatable basis. In addition,

¹ *Challenges With Implementing Near-Term NextGen Capabilities at Congested Airports Could Delay Benefits* (OIG Report No. AV2012167), August 1, 2012; *FAA Faces Significant Obstacles in Advancing the Implementation and Use of Performance-Based Navigation* (OIG Report No. AV2014057), June 17, 2014; and *FAA Has Not Effectively Deployed Controller Automation Tools That Optimize Benefits of Performance-Based Navigation* (OIG Report No. AV2015081), August 20, 2015. OIG reports are available on our website at <http://www.oig.dot.gov/>.

they requested that we assess FAA and the aviation industry's progress in resolving obstacles to PBN, such as the lack of new automated tools to help controllers maximize the use of new procedures. Accordingly, our objectives are to assess (1) FAA's progress in implementing its Metroplex program and identifying benefits achieved from new PBN procedures and (2) FAA and industry efforts to resolve key barriers to PBN.

We plan to begin the audit next month and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. We will conduct our work at FAA Headquarters, regional offices, air traffic facilities, and airlines at selected metroplex locations. If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 366-0500 or Robin Koch, Program Director, at (404) 562-3770.

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cc: DOT Audit Liaison, M-1
FAA Audit Liaison, AAE-100