




Memorandum

**U.S. Department of
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Audit Initiated of the Joint
Planning and Development Office's Progress
Toward the Next Generation Air
Transportation System
Federal Aviation Administration
Project No. 08A3009A000

Date: May 6, 2008

From: 
Lou E. Dixon
Assistant Inspector General
for Aviation and Special Program Audits

Reply to
Attn. of: JA-10

To: Assistant Administrator for Financial Services
and Chief Financial Officer

The Office of Inspector General plans to review the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) progress in developing the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen). FAA's Joint Planning and Development Office (JPDO) was mandated by Congress in 2003 to develop a vision for NextGen and coordinate diverse research efforts at other Federal agencies, including the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Department of Defense.

In February 2007, we reported that JPDO efforts to develop and implement NextGen are critical, as U.S. airlines are expected to transport over 1 billion passengers annually by 2015. We also highlighted several risks, such as complex software development and systems integration issues, that FAA needed to address. We recommended actions to help FAA reduce cost and schedule risks with NextGen, including identifying and obtaining the necessary skill mix to manage NextGen initiatives. FAA concurred with our recommendations.

Earlier this year, the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure requested that our office re-examine FAA's progress with NextGen. Specifically, the Congressmen asked that we review (1) NextGen's impact on JPDO partner agencies' research and capital budgets, (2) FAA's progress in response to our February 2007 recommendations, (3) issues that need to be addressed to shift NextGen from research and development to

implementation in a timely manner, and (4) the role of external user review and input into key NextGen policy matters.

We plan to begin the audit within the next 2 weeks and will contact your office to arrange an entrance conference. If I can answer any questions or be of further assistance, please contact me at (202) 366-0500 or Kevin Dorsey, Program Director, at (202) 366-1518.

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cc: FAA Deputy Administrator
FAA Chief of Staff
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