



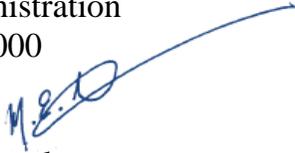
# Memorandum

**U.S. Department of  
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary  
of Transportation  
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Audit Announcement –  
Review of FAA’s Progress With Implementing  
High-Priority NextGen Capabilities  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Project No. 15A3014A000

Date: November 3, 2015

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

Reply to  
Attn. of: JA-10

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation

For over a decade, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has undergone efforts to implement the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen)—a multibillion-dollar transportation infrastructure project aimed at modernizing our Nation’s aging air traffic system. The success of these efforts depends on the FAA’s ability to set priorities, deliver benefits, and maintain stakeholder support. In September 2013, the NextGen Advisory Committee (NAC)<sup>1</sup> identified industry’s top priorities for NextGen.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and its Subcommittee on Aviation requested that we review FAA’s response to the NAC’s priorities.

Following the NAC’s report, FAA worked with industry to develop a plan for implementing the top prioritized capabilities—(1) advancing Performance-Based Navigation (PBN), (2) employing closely spaced parallel runway operations, (3) enhancing airport surface operations through data sharing, and (4) developing data communications capabilities between the cockpit and air traffic control. In October 2014, FAA published its plan for implementing the top prioritized capabilities, which included locations and timelines for the next 3 years. While the plan is an important

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<sup>1</sup> The NAC is a Federal advisory committee that develops recommendations for NextGen portfolios with an emphasis on the midterm (through 2020). The NAC includes representation from affected user groups, including operators, manufacturers, air traffic management, aviation safety, airports, and environment experts.

<sup>2</sup> NAC, *NextGen Prioritization: A Report of the NextGen Advisory Committee in Response to Tasking from the Federal Aviation Administration*, September 2013.

step to focus FAA's NextGen efforts, tracking progress against milestones and mitigating risks are essential to achieving the full range of benefits.

In November 2014, we issued an interim report<sup>3</sup> on FAA's response to the NAC's priorities and noted our plans to review FAA's progress in implementing the capabilities at a later time when the Agency and industry advanced efforts beyond the planning stages. Accordingly, our audit objectives in this follow-up audit will be to evaluate FAA's (1) process for identifying risks to implementing the four prioritized NextGen capabilities, and (2) actions to mitigate any identified risks.

We plan to begin our audit in November and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 366-0500 or Barry DeWeese, Program Director at (415) 744-0420.

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

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<sup>3</sup> *Planning for High-Priority NextGen Capabilities Underway, But Much Work Remains for Full Realization of Benefits* (OIG Report No. AV-2015-012), November 20, 2014. Two recommendations were closed and the third recommendation for FAA to develop a risk mitigation strategy for missed milestones or as commitments change remains open. OIG reports are available on our Web site at <http://www.oig.dot.gov/>.