

California Aviation System Plan 2013 INVENTORY ELEMENT

California Department of Transportation
Division of Aeronautics



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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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SUMMARY

The 2013 Aviation Inventory Element and data collection update is an important element of the California Aviation System Plan (CASP). A primary objective of the CASP is to capture an appropriate level of data that will ultimately be used to help the Division of Aeronautics (Division) make informed decisions related to planning and developing the system of airports and aviation in California. This document meets the CASP's primary data collection objectives.

The Inventory Element describes the existing system of public-use airports and hospital heliports that serve the aviation community in California as of spring 2013. Since the number one threat facing aviation is incompatible land use encroaching on airports, a discussion of the purpose and authority of the Airport Land Use Commission is included. The data collected will not only be used to support the larger CASP objectives, but will also help the Division and airport owner/operators to easily identify, document, and understand its current and planned airport and aviation system needs.

The purpose of the Inventory Element is to provide an overview of the broader assets within the aviation system by examining the characteristics of each facility. Since planning for the future is an important part of sustaining a vibrant network of airports and heliports, an inventory of existing conditions is likewise significant to the system planning process.

Specific to this element, it was necessary to thoroughly research all relevant and current airport data through scouring existing databases, conducting personal interviews and mail-out/mail-back airport sponsor surveys, and data collected during state permit safety compliance inspections conducted at each of California's public use airports and hospital heliports. The efforts of numerous airport and Division staff are presented in the update.

The results of this data collection effort form the foundation of all subsequent tasks within the CASP including the role of airports and their facility requirements that help them better serve their community. Additionally, the results of this effort will also be used as a data source for future anticipated planning activities within the Division.

The 2013 Inventory Element is organized into the following sections and appendices:

- Section 1: Public Use Airports and Hospital Heliports in California
 - Public Use Airports Aviation System Plans – the individual Airport System Plans include detailed information for each airport such as: State & Federal airport type designation, Caltrans District, airport planning documents, detailed runway information, number and type of based aircraft and annual aircraft operations, aircraft parking availability, elevation and acreage, services provided, and passenger and air cargo activities.
 - Hospital Heliport Dataplates – the dataplates include a facility description, location, medical facility type (e.g. Trauma – A-II), contact information, an aerial view depicting the approach, and other relevant information.

- Section 2: Automated Weather Observation Systems for Aviation
- Section 3: Purpose and Authority of Airport Land Use Commissions in California
- Appendices A-H: Maps, Lists, Based Aircraft and Operations Data, Air Passenger and Cargo Data, Commercial Airport Status, State Functional Classification, Facility Index, Glossary (See the Table of Contents for more detail.)

Trends that affect the aviation industry are quite obvious to governing authorities and the private sector alike – the sluggish economy and its ripple effects. According to a study published by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in 2012, aviation in California amounted to \$154.7 billion in economic activity in 2009. The ongoing economic recession and the increase in aviation fuel cost are two major reasons for uncertainty by those directly connected to the aviation industry, as well as the various city and county governments that own and operate airports. Some communities have considered filing for bankruptcy protection to remain solvent, however at this point no city or county is currently under bankruptcy protection. Some governments have reduced the number of staff considerably and are hesitant to spend scarce revenues on aviation infrastructure improvements, including application for State and Federal grants. Furthermore, from the personal small aircraft owners to the larger aviation industry leaders, economics has played a major part in decisions from whether to fly or retain their aircraft to when and how often to operate their aircraft while attempting to remain viable.

Although the number of aircraft based in California is relatively unchanged in recent time, the counties' annual aircraft assessment reports to the Division demonstrate a decrease in the overall value of the aircraft – nearly a 20 percent decrease in assessed value since 2008, and subsequently a reduced property tax collection by local governments. A record of the last seven years (2007-2012) of aircraft property assessments by county is available from our web site @ <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/planning/aeronaut/documents/statistics/MultiYearAssessedAircraftRecord.pdf> The Division's 2013 assessed aircraft report will be available soon from the above link.

The lower aircraft value is simply aircraft depreciation. However, piston-driven aircraft owners may be more hesitant to replace their aircraft under the current economic conditions, partially due to the fact that the price of Aviation Gasoline (AvGas) has escalated. And to complicate this issue further, an alternative unleaded gasoline has not yet been developed for piston engines. This uncertainty may keep companies and individuals from replacing older aircraft until an alternative fuel that will be compatible with the current engine designs is approved and certified by the FAA. “The FAA has established the Fuels Program Office to help meet the agency's goal of making an unleaded fuel available for the general aviation (GA) fleet. The FAA is working with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and key stakeholders to replace 100 octane low-lead (100LL) by 2018.” More information is available from the FAA @ <http://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/avgas/archive/2013-05-28/>

It is our hope that the information gathered in the 2013 Inventory Element update is useful to airport owner/operators and public agencies conducting regional transportation planning efforts.

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