

*Review of the FAA 1982 National Airspace
System Plan*

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**REVIEW OF THE
FAA 1982
NATIONAL AIRSPACE
SYSTEM PLAN**



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Foreword

In January 1982, shortly after OTA had concluded an assessment of the airport and air traffic control system, the Federal Aviation Administration released the 1982 National Airspace System (NAS) Plan. The Transportation Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations asked that OTA undertake a review of the NAS Plan, building on the results of the assessment that had been carried out at their request.

OTA'S approach to conducting this review was to examine the NAS Plan at two levels—the adequacy of the plan as a whole and the appropriateness of the specific technologies selected by FAA for implementation. Our aim was to make a balanced assessment—pointing out those parts that are commendable and supported by the aviation community while also identifying alternatives that merit consideration and indicating aspects of the plan that could be improved. In so doing, it was our intent to assist the congressional review process and to make a constructive contribution to the generally shared goal of modernizing and improving the air traffic control system in the years to come.

In conducting this review, OTA held extensive consultation with representatives of the aviation community and with technical experts in the fields of computer and communication technology. Workshops on aviation growth forecasts and air traffic control technology were held, and a z-day conference of aviation experts was convened to evaluate FAA's planned modernization of the National Airspace System. The results of this consultative effort combined with analysis performed by OTA staff and the work carried out in the previous assessment form the basis for this OTA report.

In all, some 60 persons from outside OTA took part in the review of the NAS Plan. Their contributions were remarkable both for their depth and richness of insight and for the diversity of opinion on the strengths and weaknesses of the plan. We accept full responsibility for the analysis presented here, but acknowledge our debt to those who contributed so freely of their time and effort on our behalf. We are particularly grateful to the Congressional Budget Office for their assistance in analyzing traffic forecasts and funding issues.



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