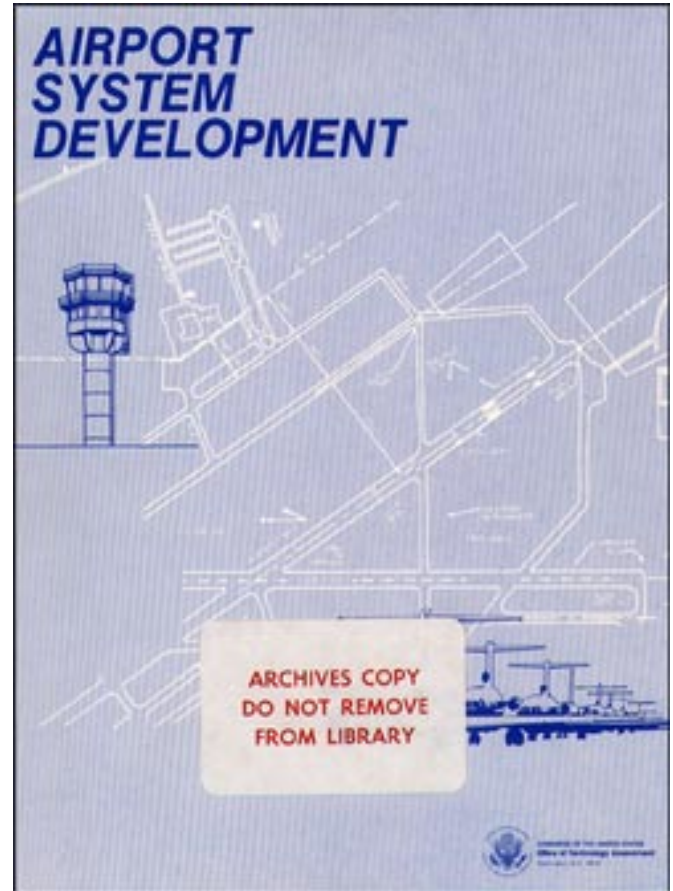


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# Foreword

The United States has the largest and most technologically advanced system of airports in the world. These airports support an air transportation network that links all parts of the Nation to the rest of the world and enables over 300 million passengers each year to undertake journeys—many of great length—with ease, comfort, and safety. One measure of the excellence of this system is that over 98 percent of all airline flights arrive within 15 minutes of schedule.

Still, there is cause for concern about the future adequacy of the airport system. On one hand, there is need to accommodate expected growth in air travel demand at major airports, several of which are now experiencing severe congestion at periods of peak use. On the other, there is also need to assure access to airport facilities by private and business aircraft operators, who are fast becoming the predominant users of airports and the most active sector of civil aviation. Community concern about noise and land use limit the ability of airport planners and managers to provide additional facilities or, in some cases, to accommodate more traffic at existing facilities.

Undertaken at the request of the House Committee on Public Works and Transportation, this study examines present conditions and future needs of the Nation's airports, with emphasis on possible solutions to problems of operational capacity and air travel delay. The range of remedial actions considered includes improved airport and air traffic control technology, revised procedures for airport and airspace use, economic and regulatory measures to reduce demand during peak periods, and managerial approaches to make more efficient use of existing airport facilities. Special attention is given to issues of airport planning and funding methods at Federal, State, and local levels.

OTA was assisted in this assessment by an advisory panel reflecting a broad range of interests and expertise, ably chaired by Dr. Don E. Kash of the University of Oklahoma. OTA is greatly indebted to the advisory panel and to many others in the aviation community for their generous contributions. Their participation does not necessarily constitute consensus or endorsement of the content of the report, for which OTA bears sole responsibility.

One notable feature of this assessment is that it is a cooperative effort by the Office of Technology Assessment and the Congressional Budget Office, in which CBO provided detailed analysis of airport financial management, funding methods, and capital investment.



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\*Through September 1983

\* \*After September 1983

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