1.   Introduction and Project Goals

The Iowa DOT Aviation Bureau, in completing the 2020 Iowa Statewide Aviation System Plan (SASP 2020), continues an established planning process that is built on a series of goals and objectives that align with the Bureau's mission to help ensure that the airport system serves all facets of aviation in a safe and efficient manner. The ongoing development of this statewide aviation system planning effort, including the 2020 SASP, continues to evaluate the needs of the system through the collection and analysis of relevant data. This system plan follows guidance from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as contained in "Airport System Planning Process, Advisory Circular 150/5070-7."

The 2010 Iowa Statewide Aviation System Plan established several goals and objectives; this study serves as an update to the 2010 plan. Since the 2010 SASP, progress has been made to achieve past goals and objectives through federal, state, and local funds for projects that fit into the vision of the past system plan. A review and update of the 2010 goals and objectives helped direct the SASP 2020 and its recommended future improvements. The SASP 2020 review of the earlier plan's goals and objectives generally determined they are still appropriate for Iowa's aviation environment today. Still, minor modifications were made, with updated objectives and targeted performance measures, to plan for the future of the Iowa airport system.

This chapter will define the framework of the plan that will influence subsequent chapters and guide how the system is evaluated and developed. In a later chapter, facility and service objectives will be identified that will provide a clear, measurable mark for the individual airports and the system to meet to achieve success in meeting study goals.

1.1   System Stakeholders

Key stakeholders including airport officials, aviation-related stakeholders and business owners, and pilots were involved in developing the SASP 2020 through participation on a Project Advisory Committee (PAC). The PAC was included in a review of 2010 goals and objectives and helped refine these goals for the SASP 2020. SASP 2020 goals and objectives are outlined in this chapter.

The PAC retained an important role in providing feedback throughout the study process, with three meetings conducted in-person and through online webinars at key project milestones. Information and input gathered at these meetings impacted study outcomes including current and future airport roles, facility and service objectives, and system recommendations.

Appendix A provides the full list of Project Advisory Committee members.

1.2   Iowa Airport System Goals and Objectives

The formation of goals for the SASP 2020 originates from the ideas and mission promoted by the Aviation Bureau. According to the Aviation Bureau, "Emphasis is placed on building cooperative working relationships, advocating for opportunities to strengthen aviation in Iowa, coordinating outreach programs, maintaining a comprehensive data collection system, and managing programs that promote a safe and secure air transportation system in Iowa." The goals and objectives formed in SASP 2020 build on these core concepts and help translate that statement to measurable targets.

In order to explain the process by which the SASP 2020 accomplishes its aims, it is first necessary to define the terms used in this chapter.

- Goals – These are broad targets that the system plan should achieve.

- Objectives – Objectives are more detailed and quantifiable than goals. They define specific areas where progress is desired in order to achieve the goal. Because goals tend to be broad in nature, multiple objectives are usually identified to support the achievement of each goal.

Each goal can be achieved through different avenues, which is where the evaluation of current system performance and development of specific facility and service objectives helps direct resources and focus towards elements identified in the plan. The goals from the 2010 SASP were reviewed by the Iowa Aviation Bureau and the PAC. The 2010 goals and objectives were modified slightly to align with current conditions of the airport system. These goals and objectives were used to formulate the data collection effort and develop facility objectives for each airport role category. Each goal, and its associated objectives, are discussed in more detail below.

1.2.1   Goal 1: Safety and Security

Provide a safe and secure system of airports.

Safety is a priority that benefits airport users as well as communities and persons near airports. A safe and secure operating environment can include clear approaches to all runways, maintenance of navigational aids, and weather reporting capabilities. To measure these critical objectives to provide a safe and secure system, the percentage of airports meeting the objectives will help illustrate the system's performance in this goal.

Objectives

- Meet minimum primary runway length by role
- Maintain appropriate approach procedures by role
- Maintenance and installation of navigational aids (runway lighting, VGSI, etc.) by role
- Adequate weather reporting capabilities at airports in Commercial, Enhanced, and General Service roles

1.2.2   Goal 2: Infrastructure and User Support

Provide an airport system that meets existing and future user needs.

Maintaining adequate infrastructure allows for the continued use of Iowa airports by a variety of users. The runway is the primary facility at each airport but is supported by a number of other buildings, surfaces, and devices that allow for operations at airports with different roles and capacities.

Objectives

- Adequate terminal buildings at airports in Commercial, Enhanced, General and Basic Service roles
- Maintain storage for based aircraft in covered hangars throughout the system
- Maintain availability of overnight storage for business aircraft at Commercial, Enhanced, and General Service role airports
- Adequate availability of aircraft services throughout the system
- Maintain a suitable pavement condition at system airports

1.2.3   Goal 3: Accessibility

Provide a system of airports that is adequately accessible from both the ground and the air.

Iowa airports are strategically located throughout the state to best serve residents and visitors. Communities and businesses may take advantage of an airport's presence by hosting visitors or by efficiently traveling to another community in the state or country. For the purpose of this goal, objectives focus on the population within 30-minutes of airports with certain facilities that help maintain efficient operations. For commercial service airports, a 90-minute service area was considered. Approach procedures and weather reporting are two important elements that can help an airport stay open through difficult weather conditions and also supports the safety of the system.

Objectives

- 90-minute or less drive time to a commercial service airport for most Iowa residents
- 30-minute or less drive time to an airport with weather reporting equipment for most Iowa residents
- 30-minute or less drive time to an airport with an instrument approach for most Iowa residents
- 30-minute or less drive time to an airport with a vertically guided approach for the majority of Iowa residents

1.2.4   Goal 4: Economic Support

Support economic development through the air transportation system.

Economic support provided by Iowa's airports can come in different forms depending on role and location within the state. Commercial airline service provides important connections, which is why a 90-minute drive for airports with commercial service was evaluated. Airports without commercial service are also able to support local economies by partnering with chambers of commerce and economic development offices that can connect local or visiting businesses with the necessary airport facilities to conduct business efficiently.

Objectives

- 30-minute or less drive time to a commercial service or enhanced service airport for most Iowa residents
- 30-minute or less drive time to an airport with Jet A fuel
- Available overnight storage for business aircraft at Commercial, Enhanced, and General Service airports
- Continued airport coordination with local economic development offices, chambers of commerce, and city and county officials to include airport information in business promotion materials
- Support aircraft owned and operated by companies doing business in proximity to an airport
- Maintain business-jet capable airports in close proximity to major Iowa employers

1.2.5   Goal 5: Planning

Establish airport-related local planning to guide sustainable development and operation of airports in Iowa.

Planning for sustainable facilities and operations in the context of the airport's property, surrounding area, and local community, will allow for the efficient maintenance and improvement of Iowa system airports. Airports that serve in certain roles should conduct or maintain a master plan or airport layout plan that will help guide development in and around the airport in the future. Additionally, local community comprehensive or master plans should also be consulted or integrated where possible to ensure the airport is adequately meeting the needs of the community.

Objectives

- Maintain a current (last 10 years) master plan or airport layout plan
- Protect airports through local height zoning ordinances
- Development and use of city/county comprehensive plans or land use plans that address compatible and sustainable land use around airports

1.2.6   Goal 6: Education and Outreach

Provide local aviation education opportunities that promote understanding, safety, utilization, and career development.

Promoting aviation to current and future generations provides exposure to those with varying degrees of interest; an important step in expanding the user base. Activities mentioned as potential objectives include communication materials, safety programs, and events at airports. As the number of pilots and mechanics faces declines across the nation and Iowa, expanding aviation programs will help maintain and potentially grow interest in the coming years.

Objectives

- Establish and continue regular communication programs, such as newsletters, press releases, web sites, or social media
- Encourage airport-supported programming and aviation education through the following avenues:
  - Regular availability of rental aircraft and flight instruction throughout the state
  - Pilot safety programs
  - Fly-ins, air shows, and static aircraft displays
  - Business after Hours receptions or open houses
  - Young Eagles events or youth camps

The assessment of these performance measures and objectives will help Iowa DOT Aviation Bureau evaluate how the Iowa airport system is performing so that resources can be identified and prioritized to improve the system and better serve the Iowans.

1.3   Summary

The six goals and their associated objectives presented above reflect the vision of the Aviation Bureau's mission statement and provide broad categories to group important objectives to build a complete system plan. These goals were used to develop the inventory forms and specific questions used to collect data from each system airport. Facility and service objectives for each role will be introduced in Chapter 6 and will set the bar for where Iowa airports should be providing service. Not at all objectives are able to be associated with a numeric benchmark. In these instances, the objective will serve as informational only to provide the reader additional context and detail to help ensure the system plan is successful in achieving the seven goals of safety and security; infrastructure and user support; accessibility; economic support; planning; and education and outreach.