



January 27, 2022

Contact: Jeff Lea  
314-793-4240  
jeff.lea@mspmac.org

## **2021 MSP Passenger Traffic Rebounds from Pandemic Lows Total Passengers of 25.2 million is 69% Increase over 2020**

MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL – Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) made significant progress in 2021 to continue its recovery from the on-going impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, surpassing 25.2 million total passengers, a 69.6% increase over 2020, but still 36.3% lower than 2019. In that year, MSP capped 10 years of total passenger growth setting a record of 39.5 million passengers.

“While the rebound in passengers this past year is encouraging, we are still faced with many challenges and uncertainties with air travel because of the continued spread of COVID globally,” said Brian Ryks, CEO of the Metropolitan Airports Commission, which operates MSP. “While MSP saw a stronger rebound in domestic travel and several new destinations this past year, we hope to see a more meaningful recovery in the business and international travel sectors in 2022.”

MSP gained 27 new year-round or seasonal domestic destinations in 2021, reaching a total 137 non-stop destinations for the year. That’s an increase from 119 destinations in 2020, but down from 167 prior to the pandemic, in 2019. Domestically, MSP ended 2021 serving 118 destinations during the year, compared to 137 before the pandemic. MSP has recovered 19 out of 30 pre-pandemic international routes.

MSP supported 303,850 aircraft operations (takeoffs and landings, all types of aircraft) in 2021, up 24% from 2020’s 245,045 operations. In 2019, MSP supported 406,124 aircraft operations. Passenger airline operations in 2021 averaged approximately 741 per day, compared to more than 1,000 daily operations in 2019.

Cargo activity has remained strong at MSP through the pandemic, backed by global e-commerce growth. MSP’s total cargo in 2021 was 234,747 metric tons, surpassing 2019’s pre-

pandemic cargo shipments by 2.5%, and 2020 levels by 15.2%. Cargo-only carrier operations grew to 16,578, a 10.2% increase from 2020.

[Click here for a summary of 2021 MSP statistics.](#)

MSP began 2021 with monthly enplanements down 60% from pre-pandemic levels and trended up most of the year with November showing the highest recovery rate: a gap of 19.4% compared to the same month in 2019. Percentages aside, July 2021 saw the highest number of enplaned passengers at 1,435,263.

In 2021, 24,461,241 passengers flew to or from domestic destinations vs 740,879 on international flights. Pre-pandemic, international travel surpassed 3.2 million passengers. The pandemic also continues to impact the ratio of originating vs connecting passengers. In 2021, connecting travel accounted for 33 percent of total passengers, compared to 35% in 2020 and 37% in 2019.

The top five airlines in passenger market share in 2021 were:

1. Delta\* 72%
2. Sun Country 10%
3. American\* 5.5%
4. Southwest 4.7%
5. United\* 3.6%

Percentages rounded. \*Includes regional affiliates.

This month, airlines are operating an average of 362 departures a day, compared to 299 average daily departures in January 2021. Forecasted daily average departures at MSP in February will tick slightly higher to 368, and then increase to more than 400 daily departures in March 2022 as airlines adjust to anticipated seasonal demand related to spring break travel.

A multi-faceted health safety program, [Travel Confidently MSP](#), continues to support the recovery of air travel. Health safety measures include robust facility cleaning and operations, which has earned MSP accreditations for the second year in a row from the [GBAC STAR™ program](#) and the [Airport Health Accreditation program](#). Other elements include the promotion of face coverings and social distancing, placement of hundreds of hand sanitizer dispensers in public spaces, installation of Plexiglass shields at customer interaction points, and the adoption of touchless technology for [food and beverage ordering and payment](#), and [pre-booked parking](#). In addition, the federal government continues to require that facemasks be worn in airport buildings and on aircraft.

###

*The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) owns and operates one of the nation's largest airport systems, including Minneapolis-St Paul International (MSP) and six general aviation airports. The MAC's airports connect the region to the world and showcase Minnesota's extraordinary culture to millions of passengers from around the globe who arrive or depart through MAC airports each year. Though a public corporation of the state of Minnesota, the organization is not funded by income or property taxes. Instead, the MAC's operations are funded by rents and fees generated by users of its airports. For more information, visit [www.metroairports.org](http://www.metroairports.org).*