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## **MAC Reliever Airports Supported 342,000 Operations in 2022** **Investments in General Aviation System Remain Strong to Support Future Demand**



MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL –The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) general aviation system in the Twin Cities supported a total of 342,136 aircraft operations in 2022. The newly released year-end operations data accounts for all takeoffs and landings at the system’s six Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area general aviation airports. Operations declined just under 3% compared to the 352,195 total operations in 2021.

“General aviation activity in the Twin Cities has grown through the pandemic – even when commercial passenger travel dipped. Operations at our reliever airports last year was 7% greater than in 2019,” said Brian Ryks, CEO of the MAC. “We are continuing to invest in the MAC’s reliever system to meet projected demand and support our flying community and the many aviation businesses that operate at our airports.”

The MAC’s general aviation airports support personal, recreational, and business aviation users. They are referred to as “reliever airports” within the Twin Cities metropolitan area because they relieve congestion[PN1] that would otherwise impact Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport (MSP), which had [310,235 total operations in 2022](#), a 24% increase over 2021.

“There is significant momentum at our reliever airports with our commercial partners— flight training schools, charter operators, maintenance companies fixed-base operators and avionics firms—all reporting they are busier than ever,” said Joe Harris, director of reliever airports for the MAC. “The demand we are seeing at our relievers includes waitlists for flight training and aircraft maintenance activity, both of which are already scheduling out to late 2023. ”

Three reliever airports increased operations in the last year: St. Paul Downtown Airport (STP), Crystal Airport (MIC) in northwest Minneapolis and Airlake Airport (LVN) located in Lakeville, MN. STP is the MAC’s primary business-focused general aviation airport, logging 41,592 operations for a 4.9% increase over 2021. Corporate jet activity continued to rebound in 2022, especially with fewer pandemic restrictions to international travel.

Flying Cloud (FCM), located in Eden Prairie, is the busiest reliever airport in the MAC system. In 2022, FCM had 122,281 total operations, a decline of 7% over 131,593 the prior year.

MAC Reliever Airport Operations			
Airport (web links)	2021	2022	% Change
<a href="#">FCM</a>	131,593	122,281	(7.08)%
<a href="#">MIC</a>	37,845	42,592	12.54%
<a href="#">STP</a>	39,196	41,592	4.90%
<a href="#">ANE</a>	74,657	65,688	(12.01)%
<a href="#">LVN</a>	36,259	38,268	5.54%
<a href="#">21D</a>	32,645	32,189	(1.40)%
	352,195	342,136	(2.86)%

[Click here to view a complete summary of 2022 reliever airport statistics.](#)

In the past five years, the MAC has invested more than \$50 million to provide a safe, efficient, and modern reliever airport system. One of the latest projects was the completion of a new 3,500-foot runway at Lake Elmo Airport (21D), which opened to air traffic in July 2022. It is 650 feet longer than the previous runway, which will be converted to a taxiway later this year. Improved instrument approaches will also be implemented this year at Lake Elmo as part of the [multi-year project](#) to improve airfield infrastructure and provide safer operations.

The MAC's reliever airport system generates an estimated \$756 million annually for the area economy. It also supports more than 3,600 jobs. The reliever system accommodates 850 hangar buildings for nearly 1,300 aircraft.

The MAC's reliever airports host numerous community events annually including Girls in Aviation Day and the AirExpo aircraft showcase at Flying Cloud, the Father's Day pancake breakfast at Crystal, and the Pan-o-Prog Fly-in Breakfast at Airlake.

### **About The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC)**

*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).*