METROPOLITAN AIRPORTS COMMISSION

News Release

Feb. 4, 2025

Contact:

Michael Schommer
MAC Strategic Communications
michael.schommer@mspmac.org
612-747-2512 (m)

2024: MAC general aviation airports see more growth in operations
St. Paul Downtown leads growth, with more investments planned for 2025

St. Paul Downtown Airport. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Airports Commission.

MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL, Minn. — New data from the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) shows the organization's general aviation airports in the Twin Cities totaled 372,609 operations in 2024. This number represents a 1% increase over the total of 370,509 takeoffs and landings at the facilities in 2023.

The MAC owns and operates six general aviation airports. Also known as reliever airports, they serve a dynamic flying community and support aviation-related businesses while also helping to relieve congestion at the MAC's flagship commercial airport, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP). That airport served 37.2 million passengers in 2024, a 6.9% increase over 2023.

"The continued growth of the MAC's general aviation airports highlights their value for business aviation, flight training, recreational flying and other services," said Brian Ryks, CEO of the Metropolitan Airports Commission. "These airports are vital to the state's aviation system and benefit our regional economy as well as those who rely on them for travel and business."

Four of the six general aviation airports posted operations growth in the last year, led by St. Paul Downtown Airport (STP) at 42,476 takeoffs and landings, an 11% year-over-year increase. Airlake Airport (LVN), located in Lakeville, recorded the second biggest increase of 10%, totaling 42,611 operations.

Flying Cloud (FCM), the MAC's busiest general aviation airport — located in Eden Prairie — logged 132,744 operations, a decline of 3% from 2023. The MAC is in the process of updating the Flying Cloud Airport Long-Term Plan through 2040.

Long-term planning helps guide strategic investments and improvements throughout the MAC's airport system to support aviation across the state, while also considering the values and needs of each airport community. Over the past six years, the MAC has invested more than $50 million in safety and modernization projects at general aviation airports. These projects have included constructing new runways, installing new lighting, enhancing navigation systems, and completing other infrastructure improvements. In addition, private tenants have contributed even more by building or upgrading hangars and other facilities. The MAC's general aviation airports are home to 850 hangar buildings that accommodate over 1,400 aircraft.

In 2025, the MAC is committed to investing over $30 million in capital improvements aimed at enhancing the safety and efficiency of operations at its general aviation airports. Two of the biggest projects this year are slated for St. Paul Downtown Airport with the rehabilitation of its primary runway, 14-32, and the construction of a new international arrivals facility for U.S. Customs and Border Protection to clear general aviation passengers and cargo.

"We're grateful to partner with dedicated customers and businesses at our general aviation airports," said Joe Harris, the MAC's director of reliever airports. "These partnerships improve operations and customer experiences, and our investments ensure the airports remain safe, efficient and adaptable for the future."

2024 Reliever Operations:

Airport	2023	2024	% Change	Based Aircraft
Airlake	38,678	42,611	10%	168
Anoka	69,908	71,614	2%	398
Lake Elmo	41,593	41,854	1%	196
Crystal	45,541	41,310	-9%	188
Flying Cloud	136,622	132,744	-3%	422
St. Paul	38,167	42,476	11%	97
System Total	370,509	372,609	1%	1,469

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 Airport (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.

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