Chapter One: Introduction

About the System Plan
In November 2014, the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) undertook an update to the Regional Aviation System Plan (RASP) for Greater Kansas City. The study was funded largely with a grant from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), with matching funds supplied by both the Kansas and the Missouri Departments of Transportation (KDOT and MoDOT). The system plan was developed following guidance contained in FAA Advisory Circular 150-5070-7, The Aviation System Planning Process.

Role of the Regional System Plan
The regional system plan is informed by a number of existing planning efforts. Among these are:

- Regional Plan for Sustainable Development
- Transportation Outlook 2040
- Kansas City International Airport Master Plan
- Local Comprehensive Plans
- Individual Airport Master Plans

Findings and conclusions from the system plan will feed into state aviation system plans for both Kansas and Missouri when these plans are next updated. As appropriate, findings and recommendations from the state system plans feed into the FAA’s National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). Figure 1-1 shows the relationship of the plans that form the building blocks for aviation system plans. The regional system plan is essential to ensuring that airport needs for the study area are appropriately represented in applicable state and national aviation planning studies.

Figure 1-1 - Building Blocks of RASP

Source: JVIATION, Inc.
Study Objectives

There were four overarching themes for the regional aviation system plan. These themes are summarized below:

- **Understandability** — Conduct the study in such a way that its methodologies, results, findings and recommendations can be clearly communicated to those outside of the aviation/airport community, especially to local elected officials and the general public.

- **Accessibility** — Focus the study on opportunities to maximize airport accessibility from both the ground and the air.

- **Compatibility** — Provide tools and information that can be used by MARC and airport owners and sponsors to promote airport compatibility with human and natural elements.

- **Sustainability** — Establish a baseline for identifying practices in place to support sustainability (economic, environmental, and social) and a method to measure sustainability progress in future planning cycles.

These themes guided the development of the scope of services for the system plan and run throughout the various technical elements of the study. These themes are directly related to goals for creating a more vibrant, connected and sustainable region.

Several key objectives were identified for undertaking an update to the system plan. These objectives are as follows:

- To provide a bridge between regional aviation needs and priorities and statewide aviation system plans for all public airports in both Kansas and Missouri.

- To evaluate the adequacy of the region’s public-use airports using factors similar to those used to evaluate the performance of other transportation modes. This included establishing an evaluation process that could be updated in subsequent planning cycles.

- To gather information on users of study airports and on benefits that communities in the MARC study area receive from those same airports.

- To help MARC strengthen its role as a communicator and a facilitator for study airports with agencies such as FAA, KDOT and MoDOT. One of MARC’s goals is to advocate for the region’s needs on the state and federal level.

- To provide tools and information to study airports that they otherwise would not have access to. Further, an important system plan objective was to provide value-added information and products that study airports may not have been able to develop with their own resources.

- Ultimately, the system plan may be used to update or inform the Aviation Chapter of the Greater Kansas City’s metropolitan transportation plan.

These stated objectives were considered as the work plan for the system plan was developed. Technical elements of the system plan and various study products help to ensure that the system plan objectives identified here are met.
Study Area and Study Airports

MARC is the association of local governments and metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the bi-state Kansas City region shown in Figure 1-2. Governed by a board of local elected officials, MARC serves nine counties and 119 cities, providing a forum for the region to work together to advance social, economic and environmental progress. As the MPO, one of MARC’s responsibilities is to help the region anticipate and adapt to changing transportation needs. The region’s transportation planning boundary —the area in which metropolitan transportation planning processes must be carried out according to federal statute — includes only eight of the nine counties shown below; Ray County is not part of the transportation planning area.

Figure 1-2 - RASP Study Area

The nine-county MARC study area and the public-use airports that are included in the update to the regional system plan are shown in Figure 1-3. The location of all study airports and the highways serving the study area are also shown in Figure 1-3.
Airports included in the system plan are listed in Table 1-1. These airports are referred to in the system plan as “study airports.” This table also provides information on airport ownership. A majority of the study airports are publicly-owned, most often by a city or county; however, some of the study airports are privately-owned. One exception is the Sherman Army Airfield, as it is owned by the U.S. Department of Defense; this airport is a joint-use civilian and military airfield. Table 1-1 also provides each airport’s three letter/number identifier as assigned by the FAA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Airport</th>
<th>FAA Identifier</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles B. Wheeler Downtown</td>
<td>MKC</td>
<td>Kansas City, MO</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Kansas City</td>
<td>3GV</td>
<td>Grain Valley, MO</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excelsior Springs Memorial</td>
<td>3EX</td>
<td>Excelsior Springs, MO</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardner Municipal</td>
<td>K34</td>
<td>Gardner, KS</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson County Executive</td>
<td>OJC</td>
<td>Olathe, KS</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City International</td>
<td>MCI</td>
<td>Kansas City, MO</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence Smith Memorial</td>
<td>LRY</td>
<td>Harrisonville, MO</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee's Summit Municipal</td>
<td>LXT</td>
<td>Lee’s Summit, MO</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami County</td>
<td>K81</td>
<td>Paola, KS</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest National Air Center</td>
<td>GPH</td>
<td>Mosby, MO</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Century Air Center</td>
<td>IXD</td>
<td>Olathe, KS</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noah’s Ark</td>
<td>06MO</td>
<td>Waldron, MO</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosterville</td>
<td>0N0</td>
<td>Liberty, MO</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherman Army Airfield</td>
<td>FLV</td>
<td>Leavenworth, KS</td>
<td>Military</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Airport Management records, FAA 5010 Reports.
Airports identified for inclusion in the system plan update have generally been included in past updates to the regional aviation system plan for the Kansas City area. In addition, the airports included in the system plan are also included, for the most part, in either the Kansas or the Missouri State Aviation System Plan. There are, however, a few exceptions. Cedar Air Park in Johnson County, Kansas is included in the Kansas State Aviation System Plan, but it is not included in this regional system plan. This is a low activity-level airport with only four reported based aircraft, according to FAA Form 5010. Following FAA’s rule of thumb for airports of significance, the airport should have 10 or more based aircraft. Based on this guidance, Cedar Air Park is not included in the regional system plan, but privately-owned Noah’s Ark in Platte County, Missouri, with 42 based aircraft and privately-owned Roosterville in Clay County, Missouri, with 65 based aircraft are both included in the regional system plan. Neither of these two airports are included in Missouri’s current state airport system plan.

It is worth noting that in addition to the airports included in the system plan, there are other airports in the nine-county study area. Almost exclusively, these additional airports are privately-owned, private-use airports or heliports that are not open to the public. Figure 1-4 shows the general location of these privately-owned private use facilities in the nine-county area. It is worth noting that privately-owned, private use airport frequently close, while others open. Current information on the location of privately-owned, private use airports and heliports in the study area is best obtained from FAA.

**Figure 1-4 - Airports and Heliports in Nine-County Area**

Source: MARC
Study Elements

The following elements are included in the regional system plan:

- Inventory
- Future Demand
- Airport Roles
- Current System Performance
- Strategies to Enhance System Performance
- Airport Actions
- Costs
- Implementation Tools
- Documentation
- Outreach

Findings, conclusions and recommendations from the regional system plan are documented in both a technical and an executive summary report. In addition, to provide value to study airports, a number of specific tools will be provided to each airport. These tools will help airports implement study recommendations, thereby helping to improve overall system performance. Airport-specific reports and tools resulting from the system plan will include:

- Airport-specific system summary.
- Access overview.
- Environmental features.
- Land use/local jurisdiction reference map.

Outreach and educational efforts are an important underpinning to the success of the regional system plan. A Project Steering Committee provided guidance during the plan’s development. This committee met on several occasions over the study’s 12-month timeframe. The Steering Committee represented various airports and other aviation and planning interests in the study area. FAA, MoDOT, and KDOT representatives also were included on the Steering Committee. In addition to the Steering Committee, the system plan was supported by other communication, outreach and educational efforts. These efforts provided an opportunity to reach out to others in the study area, including local elected officials and the general public. Outreach for the system plan was accomplished using each of the following:

- Airport and MARC websites
- Social media
- Newspaper articles
- Online user survey
- Public open houses

Subsequent chapters in this document provide information on methodologies used to conduct the system plan and on the study’s findings and recommendations.