

**Supporting Statement A**  
**Federal Aviation Administration**  
**Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Integration at Airports and Necessary Planning,**  
**Design, and Physical Infrastructure Needs**  
**OMB 2120-XXXX**

**This is a new information collection.**

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection.**

The aviation industry is experiencing expedited growth in new and innovative aircraft design and operation. One of these concepts has been unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). The proliferation of interest in and use of UAS, or drones, has led to a significant need for policy and regulatory adaptations to ensure a safe integration of these platforms into the airport environment.

As the technology and its use continues to mature, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is committed to conducting research and providing policy and guidance to ensure the safe operation of UAS in and around the airport environment. As more UAS Concept of Operations (CONOPS) propose operations involving the airport environment and “droneports”, there is a need to inventory existing and prospective droneports and catalog planning, design, infrastructure, and support equipment needs, as well as find out which airports are integrating UAS into the airport environment. This includes documenting stakeholder’s experiences/lessons learned with integrating or operating UAS at airports as well as standalone droneports. This collection will inform future operational testing and potential standards/guidance for infrastructure, design, and safety at droneports.

Based on what the FAA learns from this collection, the agency may be able to streamline research in this area, prevent duplication of efforts, and save FAA resources – staff time and money, on additional research questions industry has already provided answers to. The collection will also allow the FAA to more quickly identify what guidance and policy may be needed by the industry, get this guidance to stakeholders in a timely manner, and help to accelerate the future of flight.

This research will be performed by the Airport Technology Research & Development (ATR) Branch. ATR is the FAA’s research hub and testing site dedicated to ensuring the safety, capacity, and efficiency of U.S. airports. ATR discovers and evaluates new technologies and methods that are critical to the future of aerospace. ATR’s work informs policies, standards, and regulatory guidance to meet the demands of increasing air traffic, new types of aircraft, and environmental factors. ATR’s research programs align with the Department of Transportation’s strategic goals of safety, economic strength, global competitiveness, and transformation. ATR’s funding is provided every year through the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), as specified in the Report to Congress on the Airport Improvement Program for FY 2022, which was published on

November 25, 2024. As discussed in the [FAA AIP Program History](#), this agreement took place under the 2009 AIP Extension.

On May 9, 2023, the FAA's Office of Airports – Airport Emerging Entrants Division (AAS-200) provided ATR with a 'Request for Research' titled: *Droneport Design Standards and UAS Integration at Airports*. This *Request for Research* was reviewed and approved by the Research, Engineering, and Development Advisory Committee (REDAC) – Subcommittee on Airports. Established in 1989, the FAA's REDAC provides advice and recommendations to the FAA Administrator on the needs, objectives, plans, approaches, content, and accomplishments of the aviation research portfolio. The REDAC also assists the FAA in ensuring present and future aviation research activities are coordinated with similar research being conducted outside the FAA. Members of the REDAC Subcommittee on Airports are identified on [Research, Engineering and Development Advisory Committee \(REDAC\) | Federal Aviation Administration \(faa.gov\)](#).

As specified in 49 U.S. Code 329, Transportation information, paragraph (a)

*'The Secretary of Transportation may collect and collate transportation information the Secretary decides will contribute to the improvement of the transportation system of the United States.'* [USCODE-2022-title49-subtitle-chap3-subchapII-sec329.pdf \(govinfo.gov\)](#).

Additionally, 49 U.S. Code Chapter 471: Airport Development, Section 47101 – Policies Paragraph (a)(12) states that:

*'the airport improvement program should be administered to encourage projects that employ innovative technology (including integrated in-pavement lighting systems for runways and taxiways and other runway and taxiway incursion prevention devices), concepts, and approaches that will promote safety, capacity, and efficiency improvements in the construction of airports and in the air transportation system (including the development and use of innovative concrete and other materials in the construction of airport facilities to minimize initial laydown costs, minimize time out of service, and maximize lifecycle durability) and to encourage and solicit innovative technology proposals and activities in the expenditure of funding pursuant to this subchapter;'* [49 USC Ch. 471: AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT \(house.gov\)](#)

Both U.S. Codes 329 and 471, discussed above, provide justification that makes the FAA's 'droneport collection' of information necessary and identify legal requirements that necessitate the collection.

**2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.**

The FAA and their support contractors (FAA research team) will conduct stakeholder outreach with representatives from the following organizations: airports, facilities used

for takeoff and landing of UAS operations, private entities, original equipment manufacturers (OEM), UAS industry vendors, the military, the international aviation community, aviation organizations, and academia. The purpose of this outreach will be to inventory existing and prospective droneports and catalog droneport planning, design, infrastructure, and support equipment needs, as well as determine which airports are integrating UAS into the airport environment. The FAA also intends to document stakeholder experiences and lessons learned related to integrating or operating UAS at airports and droneports. Participation in the FAA's outreach and responding to the FAA's collection will be voluntary.

Prior to stakeholder outreach, the FAA research team will review and analyze publicly available information to ensure the FAA is not collecting existing information. A stakeholder engagement question bank has been developed by the FAA research team. The stakeholder engagement questions are divided into two sets of questions. The first set of questions is the Main Question Bank, which will be asked of all stakeholders. The second is a Stakeholder-Specific Bank, which includes more targeted questions dependent on the type of the stakeholder (i.e., civil/military/international airports; academia; private entities; and OEMs). The FAA research team will ask stakeholders applicable questions from the question bank to facilitate discussions. The question bank includes questions on topics such as infrastructure requirements, design, and UAS operations. At the time of the outreach, the FAA may ask stakeholders follow-up questions to clarify their responses, as necessary. Each of the topics included in the question banks are consistent with the types of design elements for airports; the FAA plans to evaluate how each may also apply to a droneport. The FAA also plans to conduct operational evaluations in each topic. The two question banks (Main and Stakeholder-Specific) are intended to help facilitate the discussion and allow the FAA to gather additional information pertaining to droneports that may not be published or publicly available.

This effort will primarily focus on UAS aircraft weighing 55 pounds or more and includes operational considerations for cargo transport. However, in response to a public comment, UAS with weights lower than 55 pounds will be included in the collection. Both fixed wing and rotary operations will be considered to create a baseline understanding before establishing infrastructure design requirements and safety standards for existing and standalone droneport facilities.

This collection will be used to shape the FAA's operational evaluations of viable UAS aircraft designs, and their types of missions, to determine infrastructure design and safety standards for fixed wing, rotary, and multi-rotor UAS operations. The FAA's operational evaluations and subsequent policy/guidance on droneports may be accelerated based on information collected during this outreach, as the FAA can possibly adopt concepts of use, steps taken to integrate UAS into existing infrastructure, lessons learned, etc., through vetting with applicable FAA subject matter experts. The findings from this effort will be summarized by the FAA research team in a final report, as discussed in Question 16.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.**

The FAA intends to collect this information via in-person or online meetings or via written responses to questions, whichever is least burdensome for the stakeholder. For meetings, the FAA team will record responses in Microsoft Word. Written responses can be handwritten or entered into Microsoft Word and can be submitted via email, fax, or mail. The FAA team will offer these options in the initial outreach to stakeholders. In the event the FAA needs to ask follow-up questions after the in-person or online meeting or in response to written answers, the FAA will use the preferred communication method as indicated by the respondent (phone or email).

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.**

The FAA has conducted a comprehensive literature review of publicly available industry, academic, and government published documents related to droneports and similar facilities (i.e., vertiports and heliports) and UAS operations at airports to ensure the FAA is not requesting information that is already publicly available. Additionally, the FAA has identified the leading UAS platforms and their characteristics relevant to droneport design, including wingspan, maximum takeoff weight, and mode of propulsion. The information collected during this literature review has been summarized and synthesized to determine its relevance and significance in relation to the research.

Further, the FAA's Office of Airports and Airport Technology Research and Development Branch briefed all FAA Lines of Business (LOBs) on this research effort on February 22, 2024, during an internal FAA UAS and Advanced Air Mobility Integration Research Round Table Meeting. Following this internal meeting, the FAA has been actively engaging with other FAA lines of businesses (LOB) to learn about their UAS-related projects to ensure that the same information is not being collected by the FAA LOB or a collaborator, such as a FAA-funded academic program (e.g., Airport Cooperative Research Program, Center of Excellence, etc.).

**5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.**

The collection will involve small businesses or other small entities. UAS technologies are relatively new; therefore, a number of UAS companies fall under 'small business'. To ensure there is minimal burden on small entities and other entities involved (e.g., airports, military, academia, etc.), the FAA will provide the entities that choose to participate with the option of either a meeting/discussion with the FAA or the submission of written answers to the question banks (discussed in item 2, above). Following the collection, the FAA research team will send the responses to the stakeholders, via email, to confirm the accuracy of information collected during the meeting/discussion.

If an entity elects to submit written answers to Main/Stakeholder-Specific question banks, the FAA will request the entity respond to the questions within 30 days, but the FAA will allot additional time for entities to complete the questions, if necessary.

**6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.**

Not collecting this information will limit the FAA's ability to understand the planning, design, infrastructure, and support equipment requirements for landing areas/structures that support UAS and will delay the development of guidance and standards. It will also reduce the FAA's ability to gather input from industry stakeholders to support the safe integration of UAS in and around the airport environment. Lastly, it will limit the FAA's ability to design operational evaluations of viable UAS aircraft designs, and their types of missions, to determine landing site minimum design standards and guidance for UAS operations.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:**

- *requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;*
- *requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;*
- *requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document; requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years;*
- *in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;*
- *requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;*
- *that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or*

- ***requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.***

No special circumstances exist.

**8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.**

A Federal Register Notice published on February 02, 2024 (89 FR 7435) solicited public comment from nine organizations. Pertinent comments to the PRA included recommendations to include UAS less than 55 pounds in the collection (i.e., collect information from organizations that are operating UAS less than 55 pounds) and to have the FAA establish a 'droneport' definition. Responses to the comments provided by the nine organizations are included as a supplemental document.

On February 22, 2024, the FAA held a virtual meeting with the Airline Pilots Association (ALPA), as the Association had questions related to the FRN (89 FR 7435).

**9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

No payments or gifts are provided to respondents.

**10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

No assurance of confidentiality is given to respondents. More details about how information will be shared is included in Question 16.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.**

There are no questions of sensitive nature.

**12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.**

The total expected hourly burden to the public is 250 hours and expected cost is \$15,740.

The hourly burden estimate is an average based on preliminary 2024 discussion with nine representative organizations (airports, military, and private organizations) using the same question bank proposed for this collection. The labor hour burden is estimated on an annual basis.

| Summary (Annual numbers)             | Reportin<br>g | Recordkeepin<br>g | Disclosur<br>e |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|
| <b># of Respondents</b>              | 100           |                   |                |
| <b># of Responses per respondent</b> | 1             |                   |                |
| <b>Time per Response</b>             | 2.5<br>hours* |                   |                |
| <b>Total # of responses</b>          | 100           |                   |                |
| <b>Total burden (hours)</b>          | 250           |                   |                |

\* This response time includes preparation for the interview, the interview, follow-up questions at the time of the outreach, if necessary, to clarify a response(s), and review and comment on the summarized results (see Question 16).

Cost data is taken from US Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment Statistics for labor category 00-0000, All Occupations, as the collection could be completed by staff in a wide range of positions and pay ranges (example, an engineer, remote pilot, planner, airfield operations specialists, airport manager, planner, etc.). The 2024 mean hourly wage rate for 00-0000 is \$31.48 ([https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_nat.htm](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm)). The cost of benefits plus other overhead costs such as rent, utilities, and office equipment for government employees is calculated by multiplying this rate by 2 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Guidelines for Regulatory Impact Analysis, Table 4.2, Constructing Default Estimates of the Value of Time, 2016; [https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/242926/HHS\\_RIAGuidance.pdf](https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/242926/HHS_RIAGuidance.pdf)). We calculate the total as follows:

| Entry                                                       | Amount   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>2024 Mean Hourly Wage Rate</b>                           | \$31.48  |
| <b>Total Hourly Rate with Fringe Benefit/Overhead Costs</b> | \$62.96  |
| <b>Total Annual Hours</b>                                   | 250      |
| <b>Total Annual Cost</b>                                    | \$15,740 |

### 13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information.

Since this is a new collection, it is estimated that 5% of respondents may respond by first class mail, incurring a cost of \$3.65 (up to 5 respondents x \$0.73).

**14. Provide estimates of annualized costs to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.**

Estimated costs to the government—including staff, travel, and contract costs is \$736,856. It is estimated that this collection may require travel to at least 5 locations at an average cost of \$2,600 per trip, for a total estimated travel cost of approximately \$39,000 (up to 3 travelers). In addition, the FAA incurs labor costs through its contract with Applied Research Associates. The annual cost of contract support for this collection is \$400,000.

Cost data for FAA staff is taken from US Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment Statistics. A Senior FAA Operations Research Analyst will lead this collection; therefore, the 90% for wage estimates was used.

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(<https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes152031.htm>): \$71.60

- Average: \$71.60

The cost of benefits plus other overhead costs such as rent, utilities, and office equipment government employees is calculated by multiplying this rate by 2 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Guidelines for Regulatory Impact Analysis, Table 4.2, Constructing Default Estimates of the Value of Time, 2016; [https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/242926/HHS\\_RIAGuidance.pdf](https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/242926/HHS_RIAGuidance.pdf)). We calculate the total as follows:

| Entry                                                       | Amount    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>2024 Mean Hourly Wage Rate</b>                           | \$71.60   |
| <b>Total Hourly Rate with Fringe Benefit/Overhead Costs</b> | \$143.20  |
| <b>Total Annual Hours</b>                                   | 2080      |
| <b>Total Annual Cost</b>                                    | \$297,856 |

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.**

This is a new collection.

**16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.**

The findings from this research effort will be summarized in a FAA Final Report, which



may be posted for public viewing on the FAA Airport Technology Research and Development Branch's website: <https://www.airporttech.tc.faa.gov/Products>. Prior to publication, the FAA will send each stakeholder the summary from their meeting/discussion with the FAA Research team to review and provide comments. This will ensure that all the information collected during the meeting/discussion and included in the report is accurate.

- Collection will begin upon approval of this collection.
- Draft Final Report will be completed six months after completing initial data collection.
- Final Report will be completed three months after completing draft final report.

After the publication of the final report, information collection will be one to two times annually.

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.**

We are not seeking approval not to display the expiration date.

**18. Explain each exception to the topics of the certification statement identified in "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."**

There are no exceptions.