

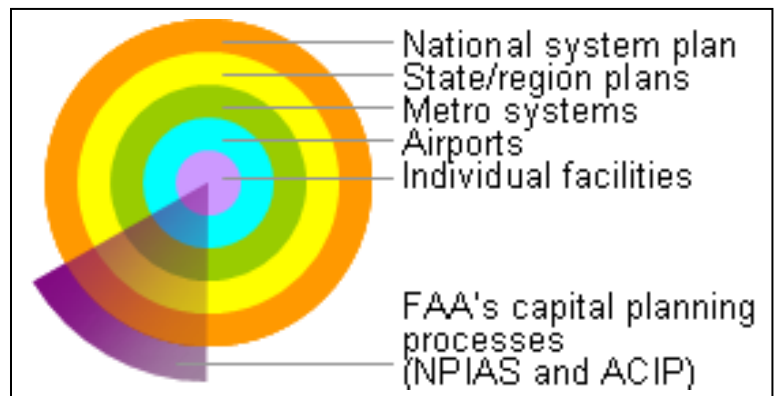
What Do We Mean When We Talk About “Planning”?

During Fiscal Year 2008, the FAA conducted a customer satisfaction survey to get input from key stakeholders on what processes are going well and where there is room for improvement.

One area that emerged for further attention is planning. After reviewing some of the comments, it is important to clarify what the FAA means by “planning” in various contexts.

- **Airport master planning.** Focused on balancing airside and landside demand and capacity at a single airport, with due consideration of surrounding land use and zoning, surface access, facility and infrastructure needs. Undertaken by the airport sponsor, typically with the help of a consultant. Should identify and consider environmental issues as well as financial feasibility. The approved forecast and Airport Layout Plan are among the most important components, along with the associated reports and documentation.
- **Airport facility planning.** Focused on a particular facility—such as a runway complex, passenger terminal or parking structure—with careful consideration of short- and long-term needs, project timing, environmental permitting and financial issues including justification. Also undertaken by the sponsor, typically with the help of a consultant.
- **State planning.** Typically focused on the existing inventory of airports and doesn’t normally involve a state-level forecast, but should consider forecasts and other factors affecting individual existing or proposed airports. Should establish the basis for proposed capital improvements based on demonstrated aeronautical need. Undertaken by the state, often supported by a consultant.

- **Airport system planning.** Particularly important in large cities with multiple airports, but can also involve a broader regional system. Involves demand forecasting as well as regional surface and intermodal transportation. May be undertaken by one or more state, county or municipal units of government, with participation by the Metropolitan Planning Organization.



- **Capital planning (or financial planning).** The FAA, states and individual airport sponsors all have to conduct forward-looking financial planning in order to make well-informed decisions about limited capital resources. At every level, units of government have an obligation to make prudent use of limited funds, to maximize return on investment in terms of system performance. This needs to consider the costs of maintaining existing facilities as well as expansion or improvements.

The methodologies, underlying assumptions and even conclusions can vary substantially from one process to the next. However, when different conclusions are reached, it is important to explain why.

Where Can I Learn More?

- FAA Advisory Circular 150/5070-6b, Change 1, “Airport Master Planning”
- FAA Advisory Circular 150/5070-7, “System Planning Process”
- FAA Order 5100.39A (“Airports Capital Improvement Plan”)
- National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) Report to Congress
- FAA Order 5090.3C (“Field Formulation of the NPIAS”)