

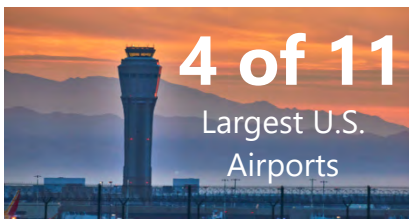


WRP Aviation/Airspace Needs Fact Sheet

WRP Region has the Nation's Most Complex and Heavily Used Airspace

The WRP Aviation/Airspace Needs Deep-Dive Chapter in the [2026 WRP Report](#) details five focus areas with associated summary information, case studies, best practices and findings for further agency collaboration.

Strategic Overview



CROSS-CUTTING FINDING: Achieving resilient WRP airspace requires real-time data sharing, flexible regulatory frameworks, sustained FAA-DOW-Tribal coordination, and proactive integration of new entrants, from drones to rockets, without degrading military or civilian operations.

Key Takeaways:

- The WRP Region is not just important to Western aviation but is the nation's most complex and heavily used airspace environment, bar none.
- Consider the scale: Four of the eleven largest U.S. airports, four Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Metroplexes, four active spaceports, 75% of the Department of War's (DOW) Special Activity Airspace, and 67% of USMC airspace, all concentrated in this one region.
- Resilient airspace for WRP means a safe, flexible, information-rich environment that can support modernized systems, new technologies, and shared real-time awareness, without degrading military or civilian operations.
- Dynamic airspace management is the core challenge: we need to replace legacy rigid airspace structures with real-time, automated allocation that allows drones and crewed aircraft to safely coexist.

- On the technology side, there is a rapid growth in drones, Advanced Air Mobility (AAM), Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) operations, and supersonic aircraft, all of which must be integrated into a National Airspace System that was not designed for them.
- Modernization efforts, including Unmanned Aircraft System Traffic Management (UTM) systems, Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) integration, and the Brand New ATC System (BNATCS), must align military and civilian standards while improving deconfliction frameworks.
- Space operations are growing rapidly. The WRP Region has four spaceports, with significant launch activity from Vandenberg Space Force Base and Black Rock. Every launch compresses surrounding airspace with limited notice, making proactive deconfliction planning essential.
- FAA Part 450 has streamlined launch licensing, but the real solution lies in seasonal planning playbooks and stronger coordination between launch operators, FAA, and DOW.
- **The cross-cutting finding is clear:** Achieving resilient WRP airspace requires real-time data sharing, flexible regulatory frameworks, and proactive integration of new entrants, from drones to rockets, without degrading what already works.

Highlights of the WRP Aviation/Airspace Needs Deep-Dive focus areas:

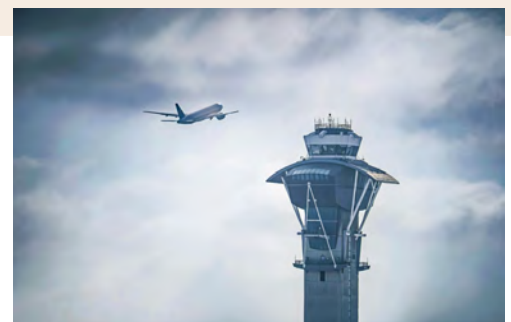
1. New Technologies/Entrants

- AAM and eVTOL aircraft integration.
- Commercial Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) fleets and BVLOS expansion.
- Supersonic aircraft and commercial space operations, growing launch cadence.
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proposed UAS Near Fixed Site Facility rule.
- Remote ID enforcement gaps: spoofing, legacy drones, limited mitigation.



2. Aviation's Access to Spectrum

- Preserve Electromagnetic Spectrum (EMS) for navigation, communication surveillance and air traffic management operations.



3. **Dynamically Managed Airspace:** Flexible, Automated Real-Time Allocation

- Replace legacy rigid airspace with real-time, automated allocation.
- Smarter airspace sharing; drones and crewed aircraft co-exist safely.
- Align military and civilian drone standards; improve deconfliction frameworks.
- FAA modernization: UTM AAM and BNATCS integration.



4. **Space Operations Growth, Locations and Deconfliction Opportunities**

- Four spaceports in WRP Region.
- Frequent need to react to changes in timing of operations compress airspace; deconfliction is critical.
- FAA Part 450 streamlines licensing; playbooks and seasonal planning essential.
- **Case Study:** Spaceport America.
- Debris recovery zone planning increasingly critical for National Airspace System (NAS) safety.



5. **DOW Airspace Needs**

- WRP holds 75% of DOW Special Activity Airspace, irreplaceable for testing.
- **File and Fly COA Case Study:** Replaced slow Class A COA process with flight-plan-based system.
- Luke AFB Special Air Traffic Rule: model for civil-military airspace integration.
- Sustained FAA-DOW collaboration needed as weapons and tactics grow more complex.



For more information please see [2026 WRP Report](#).