

# CHAPTER 10: AVIATION

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## GOAL 5: AVIATION

### **Promote and preserve aviation facilities and services that complement the regional transportation system, support emergency response, and enhance economic activities.**

Local airports play an important role in the safety, efficiency, and sustainability of communities. Airports improve the quality of life and enhance mobility by connecting communities with business services, emergency response, fire suppression, law enforcement, tourism, and travel. Airports are a critical element of the regional transportation network and must be maintained as development pressures grow and communities expand.

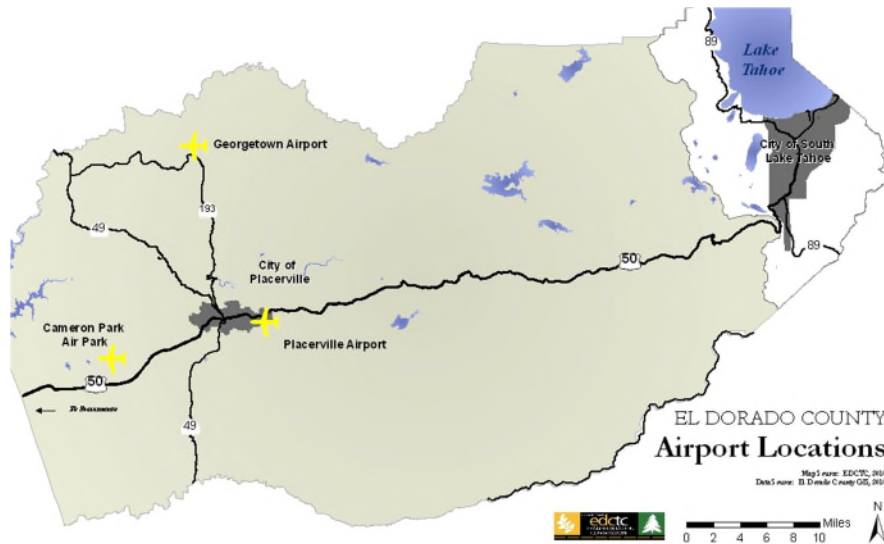
Aviation facilities in El Dorado County include both public and private airports and helipads serving commercial, recreational, medical, military, fire, and search and rescue needs. There are three public use airports on the west slope in El Dorado County: the Cameron Park Airpark, Georgetown Airport, and the Placerville Airport. There are also several private use airports and helipads in the County. There are no commercial or military airports on the west slope of El Dorado County. Map 10-1 displays the location of the public use airports on the west slope of El Dorado County.

The California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics classifies the Cameron Park Airpark and the Georgetown Airport as Community General Aviation (GA) Airports. Community GA Airports provide access to other regions and states and are located near small communities or in remote locations. They serve, but are not limited to, recreational flying, training, and local emergencies. They accommodate predominately single-engine aircraft under 12,500 pounds and provide basic or limited services for pilots or aircraft.

The Placerville Airport is classified as a Regional GA Airport. Regional GA Airports provide the same access as Community GA Airports, but may provide international access, and are located in an area with a larger population base than Community GA Airports. They have a higher concentration of business and corporate flying, and accommodate most business, multi-engine and jet aircraft. They also provide services for pilots and aircraft including aviation fuel, have published instrument approach, and may have a control tower.

The South Lake Tahoe Airport is located in El Dorado County in the City of South Lake Tahoe. The airport is within the planning boundaries of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, and therefore, is included in the Tahoe Regional Transportation Plan.

## MAP 10-1: LOCATION OF PUBLIC USE AIRPORTS IN EL DORADO COUNTY (Excluding Tahoe Basin)



### **AVIATION EXISTING CONDITIONS**

#### **CAMERON PARK AIRPARK**

The Cameron Park Airpark is the smallest of nine unique Airport Districts in California. The District is a special district similar to a Community Services District or Fire District governed by an elected Board of Directors and run by an on-site airport manager. The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors formed the District on December 1, 1987.

The Cameron Park Airport is classified as a Community General Aviation (GA) Airport and serves the area from western Placerville through the more heavily populated areas of El Dorado Hills and Folsom (combined population exceeding 100,000).

The Cameron Park Airpark encompasses 50 acres within the County and is responsible for paying the costs of maintenance and operation of the airport and the taxiway/streets within the adjacent subdivision, Air Park Estates. The District is made up of 136 parcels: 124 residential (plane port lots) and 11 commercial parcels. There are 107 developed plane port lots and 17 undeveloped residential parcels in the District. The plane port lots typically have homes with their own hangars and the Air Park has 100-foot wide streets that serve as joint taxi-ways and roadways combined for taxiing between the residences and the runway.

The Cameron Park Airpark is essentially in the center of the Cameron Park community, situated between its own residential parcels and some commercial development along Cameron Park Drive. The properties along both sides of Cameron Park Drive near the airport are zoned and developed commercial-industrial. The airport is 1.5 miles north of US 50 and approximately 1 mile south of Green Valley Road at an elevation of 1,286 feet. The Cameron Park Airpark is surrounded primarily by developed land and new infill development is subject to encroachment regulations.

The airport runway is 4,051 feet long, 50 feet wide, and has a rated capacity of 12,500 pounds for Single wheel landing gear aircraft. The airport provides facilities for recreational flying, compassion and medical flights, and local emergency response including medical evacuation, law enforcement, and training. Commercial aviation support facilities include complete aircraft maintenance and restoration services. As of Summer 2020, Cameron Park Airport is the only El Dorado County airport on the western slope with a flight school offering professional pilot training.

Airport facilities include four transient tie-downs, 21 leased tie-downs, 100LL self-serve fuel availability, and a public restroom. As of 2020, there are 23 District-owned and privately owned hangars on the public use and commercial portion of the airport. Within the Air Park, most of the 107 existing plane port lots have a hanger and some residences have more than one aircraft. The Cameron Park Airport District officials estimate that 250 aircraft could eventually be based in the Air Park Estates and, with acquisition of adjacent properties, can accommodate significantly more on the airport, itself.

The Cameron Park Airport has an approved airport layout plan with an update planned. Of particular concern in the development process of the Airport Layout Plan is whether the plan will be recognized and funded by FAA due to regulations regarding access to the Airport from the Air Park properties (e.g., “Through The Fence Operations” considerations). The Airport’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) will include proposals for expansion and maintenance of the airport through the mentioned acquisition of adjacent land within the District boundaries that is currently not owned by the District with intent to gain additional aircraft tiedown and, potentially, highly sought-after hangar space. Development of the CIP will through an established process guided by an Airport Capital Improvement Program (ACIP).

### **GEORGETOWN AIRPORT**

The Georgetown Airport is located approximately two miles northwest of the community of Georgetown in the Sierra Nevada foothills of El Dorado County. It is situated on a ridge top above the town at an elevation of 2,623 feet. The airport is a public use Community General Aviation airport owned by El Dorado County and operated by the El Dorado County Planning and Building Department. The airport can be accessed by SR 193 from either the City of Placerville or the community of Cool.

The airport has a single north-south asphalt runway that is 2,980 feet long and 60 feet wide. The runway has a rated capacity of 12,500 pounds for aircraft with a single wheel landing gear and 20,000 pounds for dual wheel landing gear. Airport facilities include fuel availability, 30 tie-down spaces designated for lease by based aircraft, 7 transient spaces, 19 hangars, and public restrooms. According to the California Aviation System Plan (CASP) Forecast Element, in 2009 there were 27 based aircraft and 22,000 annual operations.

The airport is currently operating at maximum capacity and there is a need for an increase in airport land. An Airport Master Plan was developed and adopted in 2007. The Master Plan includes recommendations for expansion and maintenance of the airport in a process guided by an Airport Capital Improvement Program.

### **PLACERVILLE AIRPORT**

The Placerville Airport is located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada in El Dorado County, three miles southeast of downtown Placerville. The airport is a public use Regional General Aviation airport owned by El Dorado County and operated by the Planning and Building Department. The airport serves the Placerville community as well as a number of surrounding communities. It is also used by the military and other governmental agencies for training, search and rescue missions, medical evacuation, and fire support. According to the CASP, the Placerville Airport is considered one of the Sierra Region’s highest priority facilities in terms of capacity and safety enhancement. Enhancements to the airport could improve the California state system capacity and safety, and perhaps make it worthy of reclassification.

The airport property is 243 acres at an elevation of 2,585 feet above sea level. The airport terminal area consists of the airport administration building, aircraft parking aprons, aircraft storage hangars, a fuel island, and facilities for aviation related service businesses. The airport also has 107 open tie-down spaces, portions of which are designated for transient overnight parking, and one helicopter

parking space available, 107 hangars, and public restrooms. According to the CASP Forecast Element, in 2009 there were 208 based aircraft and 72,348 annual operations. The existing airfield includes a northeast-southwest runway that is 3,910 feet long and 75 feet wide. The gross weight strength is rated at 26,000 pounds for single-wheel landing aircraft.

The Placerville Airport is considered to be strategically important to emergency air operations in support of wild land fires. The airport's location is ideal due to its access to US 50 and proximity to Sacramento. Placerville's central location allows access to a broad area within the foothill region of California. Ground access is crucial to emergency air operations. In some cases, the vehicles required to support emergency air operations are double-trailer tank trucks delivering fuel for helicopter operations.

The airport is located on Airport Road, which can be accessed from either upper Broadway Road on the east end of Placerville or via Cedar Ravine Road from central Placerville. The access from upper Broadway is limited due to one hairpin turn and, to a lesser extent, overhead clearance problems presented by trees and brush. The alternate access route from the Bedford Road exit off US 50 to Main Street and then to Cedar Ravine Road is more direct, with less drastic turns, but less desirable due to the required travel on Main Street.

The Placerville Airport Master Plan was last updated and adopted in 2007. The aviation activity forecasts are complete, and it has been determined that the airport is currently operating at maximum capacity. The Airport Master Plan includes proposals for a significant increase in airport land. The Master Plan also includes detailed proposals for expansion and maintenance of the airport in a process guided by an Airport Capital Improvement Program.

## **AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION**

On July 3, 2008, the El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC) was designated as the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) for El Dorado County. As the designated ALUC, EDCTC provides technical and advisory support to the Georgetown and Placerville Airports, and the Cameron Park Airpark.

The California Public Utilities Code governs ALUC responsibilities and powers. ALUCs have two specific duties:

- Prepare and adopt an airport land use compatibility plan; and,
- Review local agency plans, regulations, and other actions for consistency with the plan.

The Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans (ALUCP)s were adopted by the EDCTC ALUC June 28, 2012 for the Georgetown, Placerville, and Cameron Park Airpark Airports. These plans defined and assess compatible land uses for safety, height, and noise on and near airports. ALUCPs were adopted by the City of Placerville and El Dorado County and deemed to be consistent with their respective General Plans.

EDCTC ALUC coordinates with the California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics for ALUC planning activities and funding. As the designated ALUC for the West Slope of El Dorado County, EDCTC is responsible for defining planning boundaries and setting standards for compatible land uses surrounding airports. The California Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics, updated the California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook in 2002. The Handbook is to be used by ALUCs to address airport/land use safety issues and determine compatible land uses surrounding airports in California.

The EDCTC/ALUC serves four primary functions under the State Aeronautics Act of the California Public Utilities Code Section 21670 (Division 9, part 1, Chapter 4, Article 3.5):

- Develop and adopt land use standards to minimize public exposure to safety hazards and excessive levels of noise
- Prevent encroachment of incompatible land uses around public-use airports
- Prepare an Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) for the area around each public use airport defining compatible land uses for safety, density, height, and noise
- Perform land use consistency determinations for proposed projects within each ALUCP

## **AIRPORT FORECASTS**

The most current forecasts for the aviation facilities in El Dorado County are available in the Caltrans California Aviation System Plan (CASP) which examines the state’s overall aviation systems. Based on that assessment, a forecast of aviation system conditions for a period of twenty years is developed. The CASP uses three indicators to forecast aviation trends: population, number of households, and personal income. These factors, in conjunction with historical trends of aircraft mix, aircraft operations, and airport funding, are utilized to forecast demand.

The CASP Forecast Element is currently being updated. The data listed in Table 10-1 is from the Caltrans CASP Forecast Element.

**TABLE 10-1: ANNUAL AIRCRAFT OPERATION FORECASTS PUBLIC USE AIRPORTS IN EL DORADO COUNTY**

<b>Departures and Landings</b>				
<b>Airport</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Forecast Growth</b>
Cameron Park	52,612	57,736	62,662	19%
Georgetown Airport	33,000	35,750	39,417	20%
Placerville Airport	95,652	104,696	113,739	19%
<b>Number of Aircraft Based at Airport</b>				
Cameron Park	267	293	318	19%
Georgetown Airport	36	39	43	19%
Placerville Airport	275	301	327	19%

Source: CASP 2003

## **AVIATION ACTION PLAN**

The Action Element of the RTP consists of short-term and long-term projects and activities that address regional transportation issues and needs. The federal conformity regulations (Title 40 CFR 93.106, Content of Transportation Plans) identifies the short-term horizon as a period up to 10 years in the future and the long-term horizon as projects or activities 20 years and beyond.

The Aviation Action Plan implements Goal 5 of the Policy Element of this RTP, which pertains to aviation:

- ***Promote and preserve aviation facilities and services that complement the regional transportation system, support emergency response, and enhance economic activities.***

Unlike in prior Action Plan sections, there are no projects included in the RTP 2040 that are specifically identified as “aviation” projects and therefore are not depicted as a proportionate share of total expenditures. The proposed actions are consistent with the strategies outlined in the Goals, Objectives, and Strategies.

**TABLE 10-2: AVIATION SHORT- AND LONG-TERM ACTION PLAN**

Project Description	Responsible/Supporting Agencies
Encourage the development of airport facilities and services necessary to satisfy a diversity of user requirements such as plane and small jet sizes and fuel requirements	Local jurisdictions, EDCTC
Encourage the development of aviation system facilities that serve as a regional economic stimulus including aircraft maintenance and restoration and flight training	Local jurisdictions, EDCTC
Support the role of public use airports in accommodating general aviation, agricultural, business promotion and retention, and emergency response needs	Local jurisdictions, EDCTC
Encourage the safe, orderly, and efficient use of airports and air space and compatible land uses that are consistent with the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans (ALUCP) for the Placerville, Georgetown, and Cameron Park Airpark Airports	Local jurisdictions, EDCTC
Implement, maintain, and update the Placerville, Georgetown, and Cameron Park Airpark Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans (ALUCPs).	Local jurisdictions, EDCTC
Coordinate with airport owners/operators to maintain up to date Airport Master Plans	Local jurisdictions, EDCTC
Encourage road system maintenance, consistent with appropriate standards that support freight movement and emergency services, to support access to airports	Local jurisdictions, EDCTC
Update, as needed, the County Planning and Building permit process to ensure project compliance with all aviation related requirements such as obstruction height limitations in the airport protected zones and adequate seller disclosures for new and existing real property within the Airport Influence Areas.	El Dorado County, Airports, EDCTC
Encourage development and enforcement of compatible County codes that will assist sustaining and growing airport use and service in the community.	El Dorado County, City of Placerville, EDCTC
Ensure land use that will reasonably allow for future expansion of the airport to support the projected number of aircraft and associated facilities.	El Dorado County, City of Placerville, EDCTC