

While it is important to plan for the long-term improvements that our air traffic management (ATM) system will need to respond to demand 10 or 20 years in the future (the much discussed NextGen ATM system), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is struggling to keep up with demand for air traffic services right now. Not only is that contributing in a very significant way to delayed and canceled flights and the associated litany of customer and airline frustrations, it is also a major drag on the airline industry's efforts to reduce unnecessary emissions.

It is the search for substantive, real-world solutions to these inextricably linked issues that is at the heart of the Air Transport Association's commitment to connecting and protecting our planet. It is all about easing the travel and transportation process to bring people and goods to the right place,

at the right time, from across the country or around the world – and doing that in the most fuel-efficient and environmentally responsible fashion. Fortunately, with the right leadership, there is a real opportunity to introduce “NowGen” and leverage NextGen capabilities in the very near term to reduce congestion and enable new capacity, targeting first the most constrained regions of our national airspace system.

This NowGen concept would begin by accelerating the strategic deployment of key NextGen capabilities in the most congested areas, where they are most needed now, not only providing relief from today's constraints and delays but also enabling further refinement of NextGen technologies and procedures as they move into still broader use nationwide. Just as important, NowGen will help us move even more aggressively on maximizing the

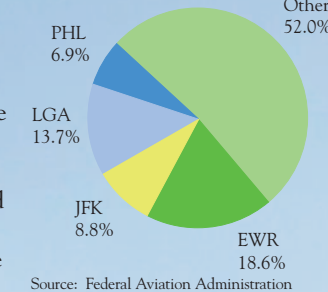
airline industry's remarkable fuel efficiency and eliminating unnecessary emissions.

While more detailed technical information is available on NowGen at www.airlines.org, in brief summary, it envisions: improved separation of aircraft through reliance on Automatic Dependent Surveillance Broadcast (ADS-B); leveraging current and emerging commercial air/ground digital communications service to increase airline and FAA efficiency; improved navigation capabilities through rapid deployment of Required Navigation Performance (RNP); and streamlined traffic flows using improved Area Navigation (RNAV) procedures. In addition, as we have seen in moving to address the

particularly critical airspace issues in the New York region, there are dozens upon dozens of site-specific, operational improvements that can be implemented now.

These steps are not complicated, but they demand strong and determined leadership; that, of course, is what our commitment to connecting and protecting is all about. We are determined to get to NowGen and, in the longer term, to NextGen in order to provide the public with the aviation service it needs and expects. At the same time, we know that we cannot accomplish everything that needs to be done alone; consequently, we will continue to focus public attention on the crucial role the government must play in advancing critical aviation infrastructure improvements.

Share of Delay Minutes – 2007
Arrivals at Major U.S. Airports



Source: Federal Aviation Administration

Managing Our Airspace