

AIRPORT OVERVIEW AND SOCIOECONOMIC INFORMATION



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CHAPTER THREE

AIRPORT OVERVIEW

An important goal of this airport master plan is to consider the airport's history and its current role in our local community in order to determine how it can best contribute to the success of the region. Examining the community's characteristics and developing an understanding of how the community is expected to grow and change will help the airport continue to meet the needs of the people it serves. This chapter provides a general description of the airport and the surrounding area. It includes a brief history of the airport and describes its role in both the national and state aviation systems. It also includes socioeconomic data for the local area and discusses the airport's economic impact. This overview helps to illustrate the nature of the community and the market the airport serves as well as its role in the community, region, and state.

3.1. Introduction

Cedar City Regional Airport (**CDC**) is a public use facility located approximately three miles northwest of Cedar City, Utah. It is owned and operated by the Cedar City Corporation which is considered by the FAA to be the airport sponsor.¹ The airport supports a wide variety of aviation needs including scheduled commercial service and air cargo flights, air taxi and charter service, and general aviation operations. The airport is home to the Color Country Interagency Fire Center (**CCIFC**) which is an interagency dispatch center in cooperation between the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (**BLM**), U.S. Forest Service (**USFS**), National Park Service (**NPS**), Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands (**FFSL**). The CCIFC base is capable of accommodating single engine air tankers (**SEAT**), large air tankers (**LAT**), and firefighting helicopters.²



3.1.1. Regional Setting

As shown in [Figure 3.1](#), the airport is located in Iron County which is in southwestern Utah. It is approximately 250 miles south of Salt Lake City, 170 miles north of Las Vegas, and about 20 miles north of the Mojave Desert. The region attracts many tourists due to its close proximity to high-profile outdoor destinations such as Arches National Park, Bryce Canyon National Park, Canyonlands National Park, Capitol Reef National Park, and Zion National Park. Aside from the world-famous national parks, the region offers many other variegated cliffs, canyons, domes, and sand dunes. The regional terrain ranges from hot, relatively low areas around Cedar City to the forested mountains of the Dixie National Forest which reach more than 10,000 feet high and is characterized by the many shades of color and beautiful forms of the exposed rocks.³

3.1.2. Iron County

Iron County is bordered by Beaver County to the north, Garfield County to the east, Kane County to the southeast, Washington County to the south, and the Nevada state line along its western edge. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county is 3,296.34 square miles which makes it the 11th largest county in Utah.⁴ In addition to Cedar City, other cities and towns in the county include Brian Head, Enoch, Kanarrville, Paragonah, and the county seat, Parowan, along with several other unincorporated communities and census-designated places.⁵ The major roadways that traverse the county are Interstate Highway 15 (I-15), Route 14, Route 56, and Route 130 (Main Street).

3.1.3. Cedar City

Cedar City encompasses 35.86 square miles and has an estimated population of 37,206 which makes it the largest community in Iron County.⁶ Its elevation is 5,800 feet above sea level, and it lies in a semi-arid part of the state with 10,000-foot mountains to the east and a vast desert area to the west. Cedar City has become known as “Festival City USA” because it is home to several festivals such as the Utah Shakespeare Festival, the Red Rock Film Festival, Simon Fest, the Utah Summer Games, and several other major events, fairs, and festivals. The city is also home to Southern Utah University (SUU). As a result, Cedar City has become a center of tourism, commercial development, education, and the arts in southwestern Utah.⁷

3.2. Regional Environment

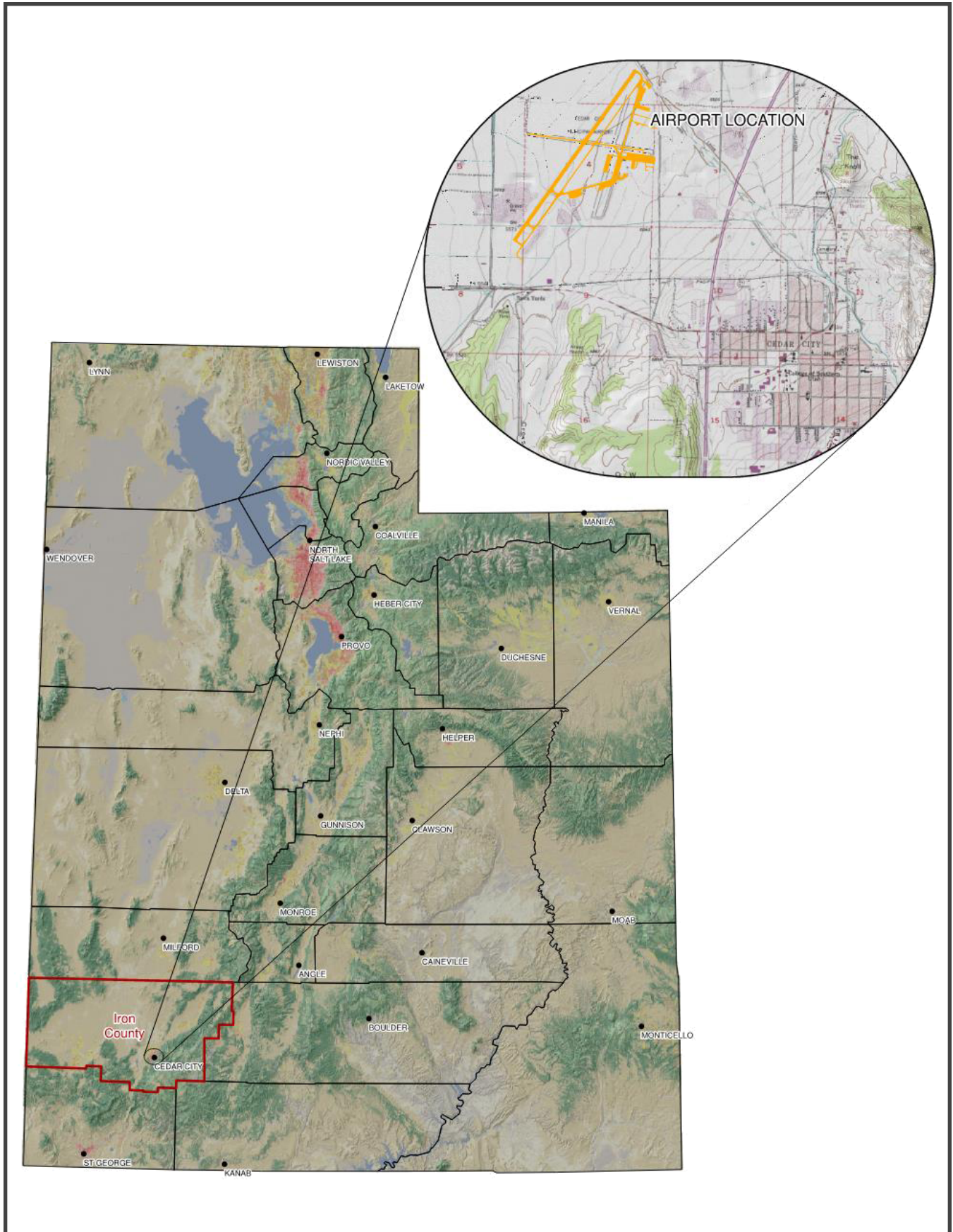
3.2.1. Geology

The airport is located within the Cedar Valley which is a structural depression bordered by the Black Mountains to the north, the Markagunt Plateau to the east, Parowan Valley to the northeast, and low-lying mountains and hills to the west. The valley floor is 170 square miles with elevations ranging from 11,307 feet at Brian Head to less than 5,400 feet at Mud Springs Wash. The Cedar Valley drainage basin exists in the structural transition zone between the Basin and Range and Colorado Plateau provinces. During the past 200 million years, the region has been affected by several periods of volcanism and tectonic deformation. The exposed geology of the area includes sandstones, siltstones, mudstones, volcanic deposits, alluvial-fan deposits, and other materials. The two principal geologic resources in the Cedar Valley drainage basin are iron ore and coal. Quaternary alluvium and volcanic deposits more than 1,000 feet thick lie under the valley floor. This alluvial fill is the principal aquifer in the basin. The aquifer, which is composed primarily of sand, gravel, clay, and silt, includes many high-permeability beds. The area’s perennial streams and springs are the major sources of recharge in the valley.⁸

a. Affect on Aviation

Although the natural geology and landscape of Utah drive its economy, they also present a challenge to aviation. High-altitude airports, like CDC, that are surrounded by rising, extreme terrain are an impediment to aviation operations. Under these circumstances, airports require longer runways, frequent wintertime snow removal operations, and potential limits to instrument approaches resulting from reduced radar coverage due to the challenging terrain or other obstructions.⁹

Figure 3.1: Airport Location and Vicinity Map



Source: Ardurra

3.2.2. Soil

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides an online tool that can be used to identify soil types and related data for a selected area of interest. According to this resource, there are six types of soils located on airport property. The main soil type is Medburn sandy loam, 0–2% slopes, which makes up approximately 74% of the property. This soil type is not considered prime farmland but is considered farmland of statewide importance. The other types of soils are not considered prime farmland or, as in the case of Wales loam and Calcross loam, are considered prime farmland if irrigated.¹⁰ Table 3.1 lists the soil types shown in the web soil survey for the airport.

Table 3.1: Soil Types and Farmland Classification

Soil Type	Farmland Classification	Acres
Medburn sandy loam, 0–2% slopes	Farmland of Statewide Importance	662.5
Wales loam, 0–2% slopes	Prime Farmland if Irrigated	74.3
Wales loam, flooded, 0–2% slopes	Not Prime Farmland	65.2
Pitts-Dumps complex	Not Prime Farmland	53.2
Annabella very gravelly loam, 2–15% slopes	Not Prime Farmland	22.4
Calcross loam, 0–2% slopes	Prime Farmland if Irrigated	15.8

3.2.3. Vegetation

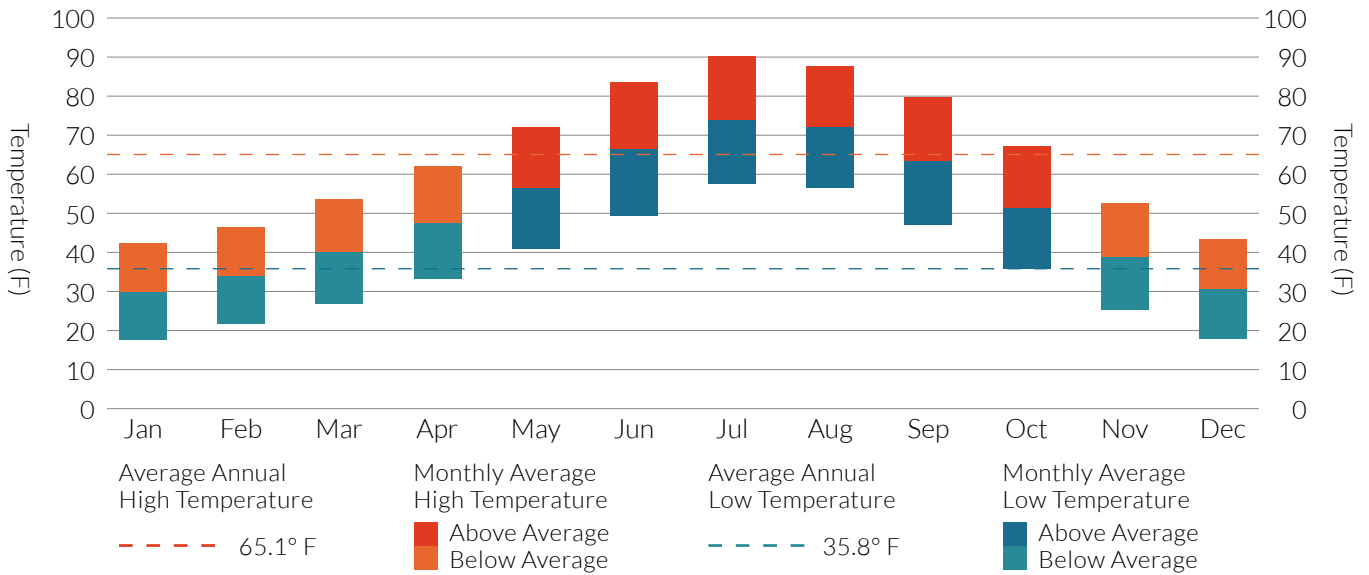
Iron County has a great diversity of natural vegetation due to the broad range of environmental conditions in the region. Major ecosystems within Iron County include grasslands, sagebrush, sagebrush steppe, and upland forested regions. About 43.1% of the county is forested; the majority of which are pinyon-juniper woodlands or montane forests and woodlands. Pinyon-juniper woodlands occur at a lower tree line between shrub-steppe ecosystems and montane forests. The montane forest and woodland areas occur between the upper limit of the pinyon-juniper woodlands and the upper tree line. The montane forest and woodland areas are covered with white fir (*Abies concolor*), curlleaf mountain-mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius*), Utah juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*), Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*), Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*), two-needle pinyon (*Pinus edulis*), limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*), Great Basin bristlecone pine (*Pinus longaeva*), singleleaf pinyon (*Pinus monophylla*), ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and Gambel oak (*Quercus gambelii*).¹¹ Vegetation in the vicinity of the airport is primarily shrubs and grasses.

3.2.4. Climate and Weather

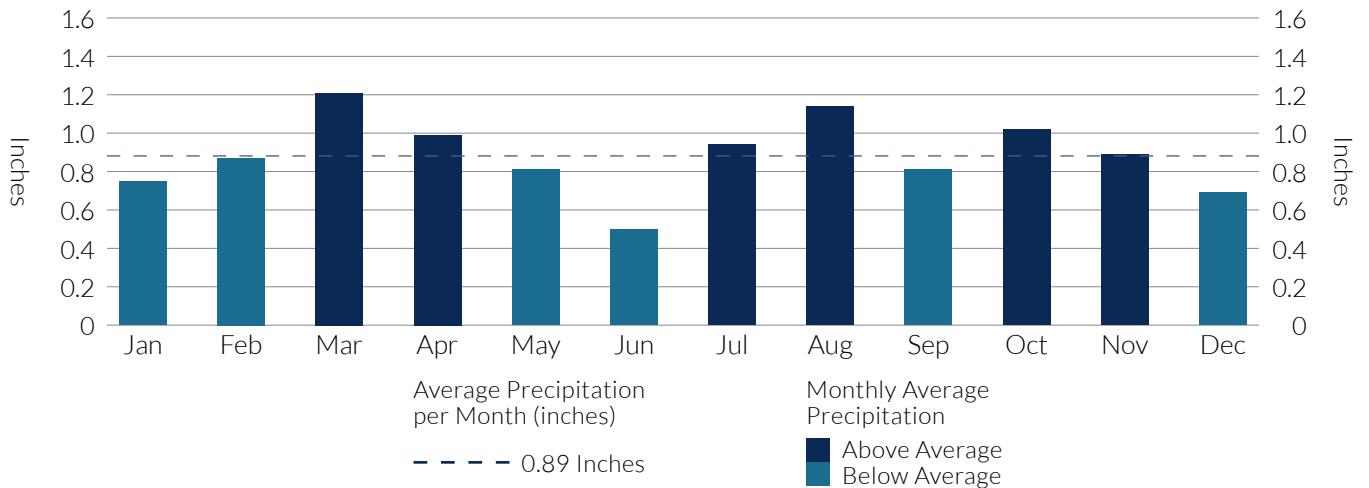
The Cedar Valley has a dry, semiarid steppe climate which provides limited and frequently unreliable annual rainfall. It is typical for the region to experience large variations in daily temperatures which can fluctuate as much as 40° F during the summer.¹²

In general, the weather at the airport is very cold, snowy, and partly cloudy during the winter while summers are mostly hot, dry, and mostly clear. On average, the temperature typically varies between 18° F to 90° F and is rarely below 4° F or above 96° F. The coldest month of the year is January which has an average low of 18° F and a high of 42° F. The hottest month of the year is July which has an average high of 90° F and low of 58° F. The area receives an average of 10.6 inches of rain and 45.1 inches of snow per year.¹³ The average temperatures, precipitation, and snowfall for Cedar City Regional Airport are shown in Figure 3.2.

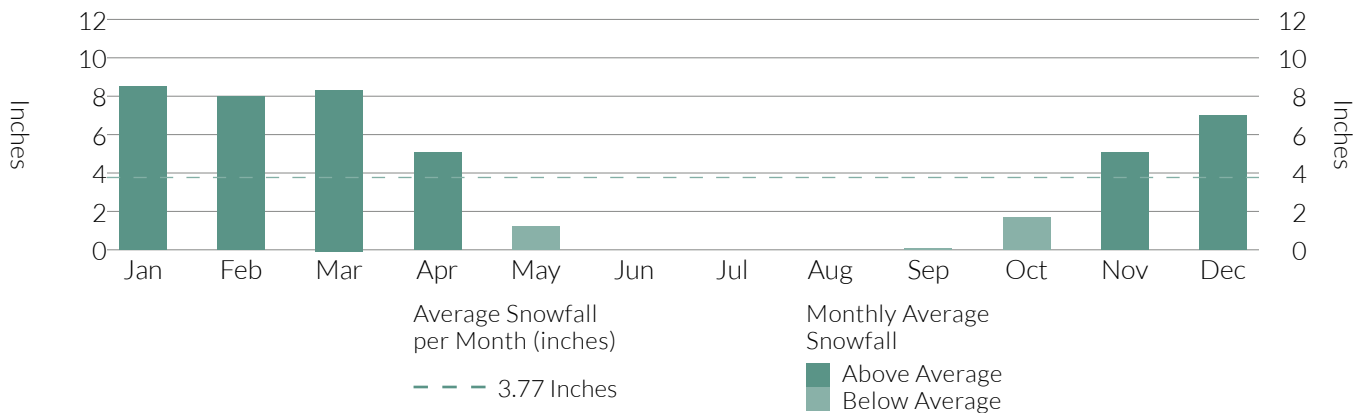
Figure 3.2: Cedar City Regional Airport Weather
Average Temperatures



Average Precipitation



Average Snowfall



Source: Western Regional Climate Center, Cedar City Regional Airport.

3.3. History of the Airport

On September 27, 1920, the first airplane came to southern Utah as a concession at a fair in Cedar City where the pilot offered flights for a dollar a ride. However, it wasn't until 1929 that the aeronautics branch of the U.S. Department of Commerce began building an airport approximately three miles northwest of Cedar City with airport engineer P.S. McLain supervising its construction. The opening day celebration took place May 18, 1929, and it was attended by hundreds of townspeople and visitors. The celebration featured a parade, musical numbers, and speakers who hailed the event as an important step in the development of the region that would improve tourism and help stabilize agriculture.¹⁴ However, the airport remained off limits to the local aviation community until May 1932 when it became a municipal airport.¹⁵

When the city took the airport over from the U.S. Department of Commerce, it then leased it to Grand Canyon Airlines which made its first flight during June of 1932.¹⁶ The city also began making a series of improvements to the airfield beginning the following year.¹⁷ Additional improvements were made in 1934 as the result of a Civil Works Administration (CWA) project, and in 1935 as the result of a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project.¹⁸

In October 1939, the Branch Agricultural College, now Southern Utah University, filed an application with the Civil Aeronautics Authority (CAA) to begin a pilot training course at the airport.¹⁹ This proposal received tremendous support, and the college received approval for two training units.²⁰ It also prompted the city to make additional airport improvements so it would meet the standards necessary for the training course, and the local Lions Club began raising money for construction of a hangar to house the planes to be used in student pilot training courses.²¹ The hangar, which was completed August 1940 as a joint project of the city and local civics clubs, also housed a mechanic shop.²² This allowed the college to offer the only complete aircraft mechanics course in the state.²³ When pilot training courses began that summer, more people than could be accommodated reported and applied for admittance.²⁴ In October 1940, 28 students—two women and 26 men—completed the course and received a Pilot's Certificate of Competency.²⁵

The airport was formally dedicated as the Cedar City Municipal Airport September 14, 1941, which was just prior to beginning the biggest improvement project to date; a \$287,000 project funded by a Civil Aeronautics Authority (CAA).²⁶ This grant allowed the city to level and grade the airfield, add fencing, place boundary lights, install an enormous beacon, and construct two concrete mile-long runways. (The airport beacon was installed on the north end of Leigh Hill which has since been known as Beacon Hill.)²⁷ As part of this project, the city purchased approximately 800 acres of additional land required to enlarge the airfield, and the city and state aeronautics commission made \$25,000 in improvements.²⁸

After the United States entered World War II, the improved airfield and training program made it possible for a Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPTP) to be housed at the airport. Students completed preflight classes and received ten hours of flying instruction at the airport with many of the students going on to be enlisted in the U. S. Army Air Corps and U.S. Navy Air Corps.²⁹ Due to the success of this program, the 316th Army Air Force College Training Detachment was established at the college, and on March 5, 1943, the first 300 preflight aviation students arrived at Cedar City.³⁰ This led the state and city to fund the construction of a new 15-plane hangar with the office and classroom space needed for the training.³¹ By the time the program closed in June 1944, 2,276 cadets had been trained here.³²

Flying increased dramatically after World War II, and the airport manager, Royce Knight, petitioned the city to allow him to run a lunch counter, dining room, and dance floor to cater to the flying public and the local community. He used a remodeled hangar for these amenities until 1951 when the modern municipal airport administration building was constructed as a joint project between the city and the CAA. The new building, which was designed by local architect, L. Robert Gardner, housed offices and counter space for Western Airlines which provided air service into Cedar City. It also housed the Civil Aeronautics Administration offices and equipment, an airport manager's office, freight rooms, and a dining room with huge glass panels that allowed diners to look out at the runways (Figure 3.3). Activity at the airport grew steadily between the 1950s and 1970s which required repeated improvements. This included extending the runways in 1964 and again in 1975. The airport continued to grow into Utah's second largest municipal airport.³³

Figure 3.3: Airport Administration Building, circa 1951



Source: Sherratt Library, Southern Utah University, Special Collections, Homer Jones Photograph Collection.

The first airline to offer commercial service after the war was Western Airlines. It was followed in January of 1958 by Bonanza Air Lines which later became Air West and eventually Hughes Airwest. In 1972, SkyWest Airlines, which began as a small commuter airline, offered service from St. George to Salt Lake City with a stop in Cedar City. About the time Air West discontinued service to Cedar City, SkyWest took over commercial service to Iron County. SkyWest extended its service to other western cities and established an affiliation with Delta Airlines in the late 1980s. From Cedar City, SkyWest and Delta provide flights to more than 300 cities. Full certification of the airport in 1997 permitted larger planes to land on a regular basis which further opened up the area for tourism and development.³⁴

In October 2005, the airport built a new airport terminal that provides passengers with modern traveling conveniences. A major rehabilitation of the primary runway was completed in 2009, and a new fire station was built in 2011. This dual purpose station provides firefighting capabilities for both the airport and the local community. Additional recent improvements include the 2012 construction of the snow removal equipment (SRE) building, the 2014 rehabilitation of the helipad, and the 2015 purchase of additional snow removal equipment.³⁵

3.3.1. Recent Aircraft Accident History

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency that investigates civil aviation accidents and incidents in the United States. The agency makes these records available via the Case Analysis and Reporting Online (CAROL) database. As shown in Table 3.2, nine accidents have taken place on or near Cedar City Regional Airport since the previous airport master plan was completed.³⁶

A review of these accidents indicates that each occurred under unique circumstances, and they were not associated with a particular trend or condition occurring at the airport.

Table 3.2: Aircraft Accidents, 2016–2022

NTSB #*	Date	Purpose of Flight	Injuries	Fatalities	Phase of Flight
WPR22LA363	9/30/2022	GA, Instructional	0	0	Maneuvering
WPR22LA267	7/25/2022	GA, Instructional	1	0	Maneuvering
WPR22FA164	4/23/2022	GA, Personal	0	4	Cruise
WPR21LA031	10/29/2020	GA, Personal	0	0	Landing
WPR20LA249	8/2/2020	GA, Personal	0	2	Cruise
GAA19CA125	2/1/2019	GA, Personal	0	0	Landing
GAA17CA217	4/5/2017	GA, Personal	1	0	Takeoff
GAA16CA488	9/14/2016	GA, Instructional	0	0	Maneuvering

*Accidents shown in bold occurred on airport property.

Source: NTSB, Case Analysis and Reporting Online (CAROL) database.

3.3.2. Recent Airport Development

Table 3.3 summarizes the major capital improvement projects the airport has completed since the 2017 Airport Master Plan was completed.³⁷

Table 3.3: Airport Development, 2016–2022

Year	Brief Project Description
2016	Rehabilitate Apron
2016	Rehabilitate Taxiway
2017	Install Perimeter Fencing
2017	Rehabilitate Apron
2017	Rehabilitate Taxiway
2018	Reconstruct Runway
2019	Reconstruct Runway
2020	Install Airport Beacon
2020	Reconstruct Taxiway
2020	Seal Apron Pavement Surface and Joints
2021	Acquire Snow Removal Equipment
2022	Seal Apron Pavement Surface and Joints

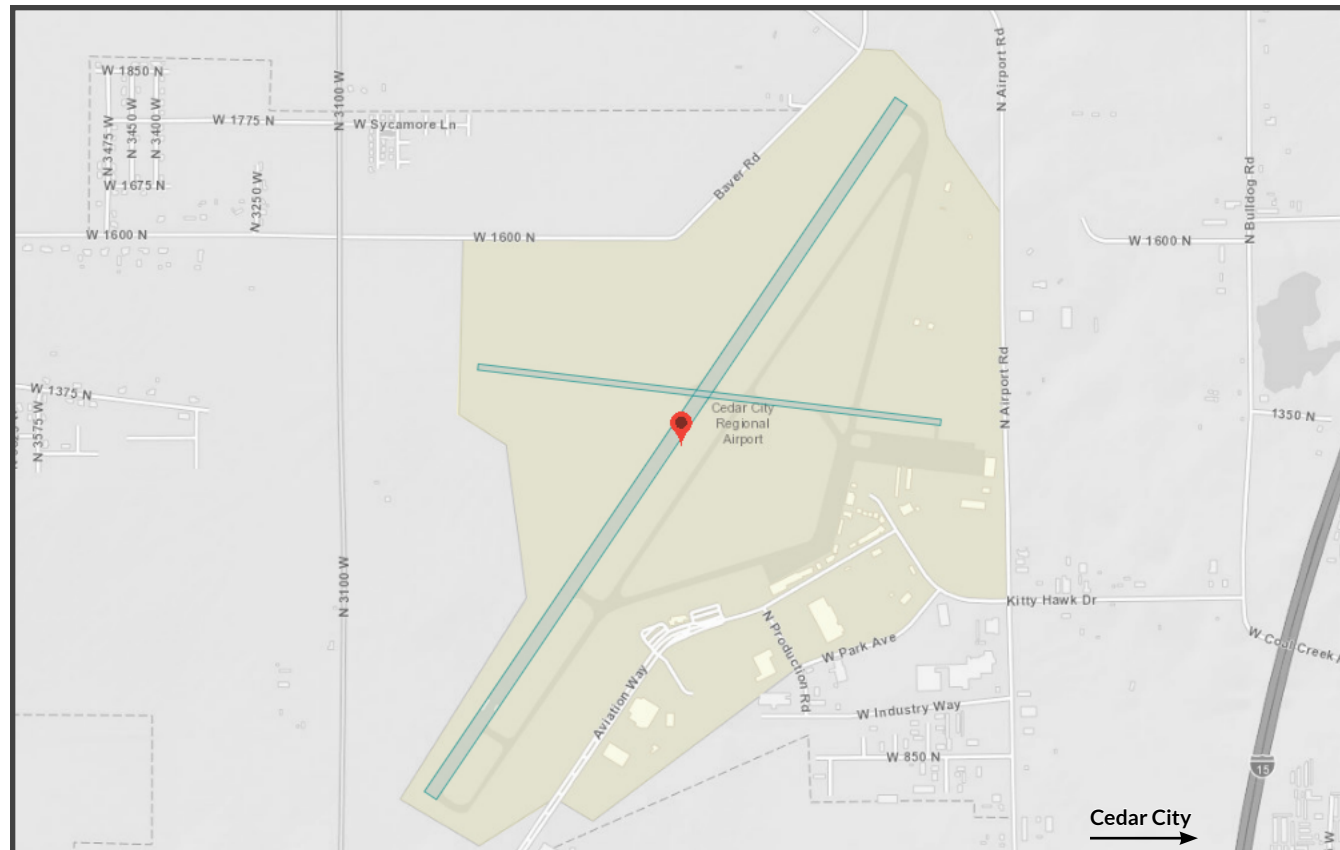
Source: FAA, Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Grant Histories.

3.4. The Airport Today

3.4.1. Airport Property

The airport property totals approximately 1,040 acres (Figure 3.4). The airport elevation (i.e., the highest point on any runway) is approximately 5,622.3 feet above mean sea level (MSL). The airport reference point (ARP), which is the approximate center of all usable runways, is located at 37° 42' 3.492" N and 113° 5' 55.863" W.³⁸

Figure 3.4: Cedar City Regional Airport Property



Source: FAA, Airport Data and Information Portal, CDC Facility Map.

3.4.2. Ground Access and Circulation

The airport facilities are all accessed via Aviation Way which is easily accessed from several surface streets as well as I-15, Route 14, and Route 56 which also provides access to downtown Cedar City.

3.4.3. Airport Administration

The Cedar City Regional Airport is a public facility that is owned and operated by the Cedar City Corporation. The city is governed by a mayor and five city council members. The mayor, with the advice and consent of the city council, is responsible for appointing members of the Cedar City Airport Board. The board is responsible for the operation and development of the airport. There are eight members of the board who each serve for a term of four years. The airport manager is responsible for the daily operations of the airport.³⁹

3.4.4. Federal Oversight

Federal regulatory oversight is fulfilled by the FAA’s Northwest Mountain Region through the Denver Airports District Office (ADO).

3.5. Airport System Planning

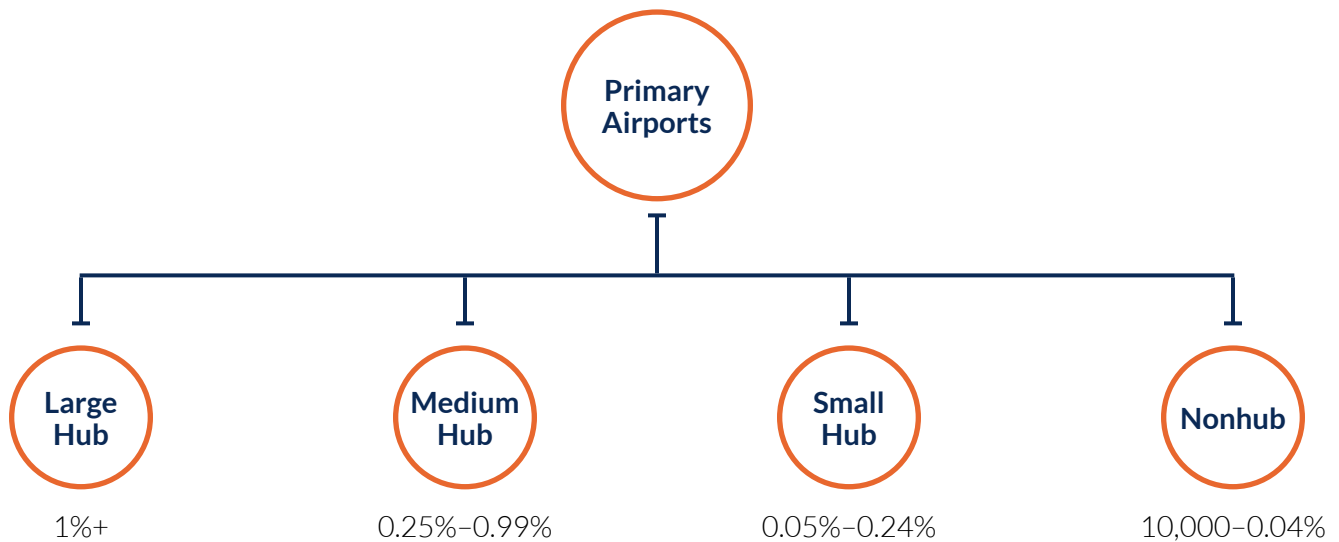
Airport planning takes place at the national, state, and local levels. These plans work together to provide the public with a safe, efficient, and integrated airport system.

3.5.1. National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) updates the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) every two years. The current version, *National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) 2023–2027*, was published September 30, 2022. All commercial service airports, all reliever airports, and selected public-owned general aviation airports are included in the NPIAS. In addition to discussing the roles these airports currently serve, the NPIAS is used by the FAA in administering the Airport Improvement Program (AIP).⁴⁰

NPIAS airports are categorized as either primary or nonprimary. Primary airports are defined as having scheduled air carrier service with a minimum of 10,000 annual enplanements (i.e., revenue paying passengers boarding commercial flights) while nonprimary airports mostly support general aviation. As shown in **Figure 3.5**, primary airports fall into one of four subcategories based on the percentage of U.S. enplanements that occur at each airport.⁴¹

Figure 3.5: Categories of Primary NPIAS Airports

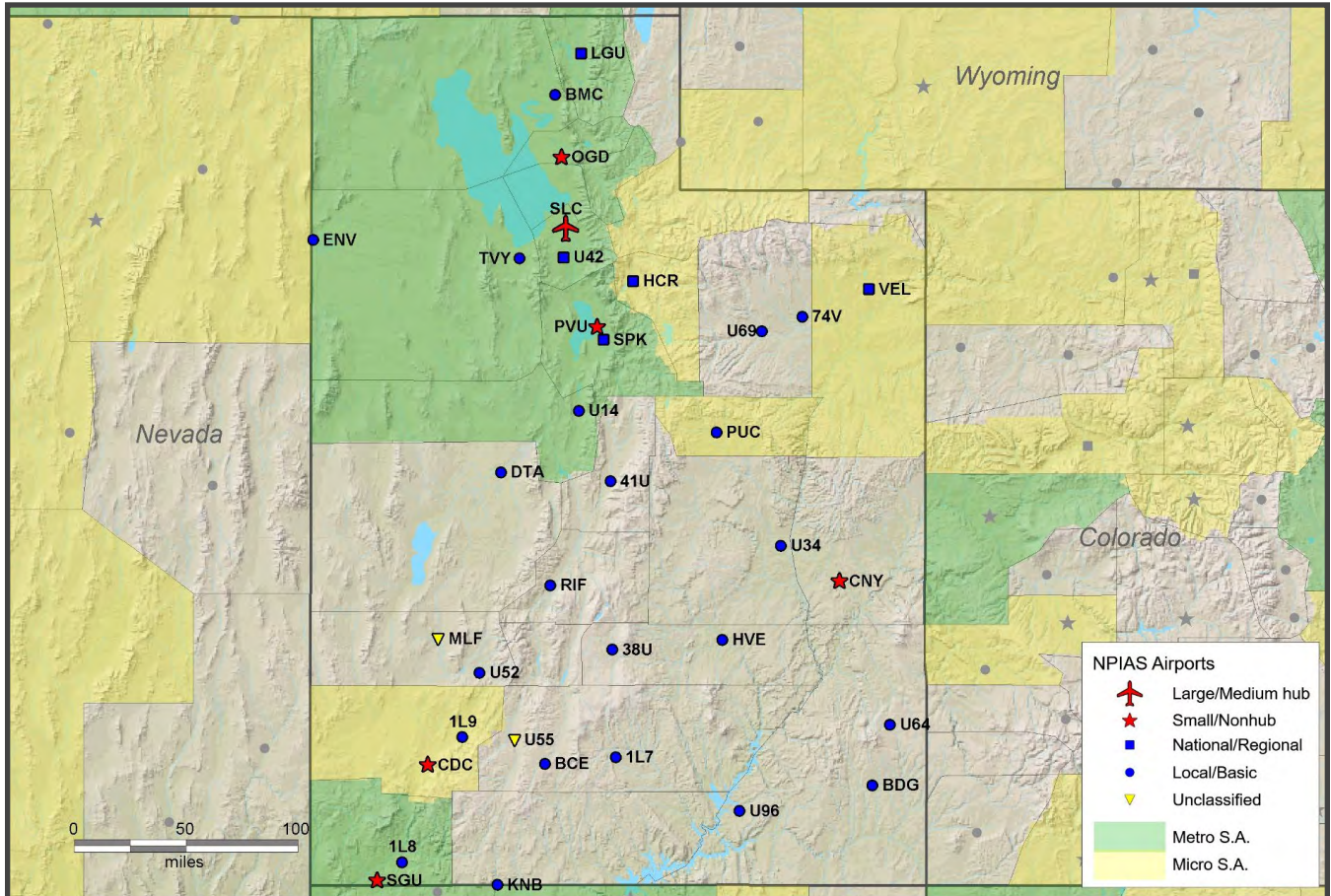


Source: FAA, National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (2023-2027)

a. NPIAS Airports in Utah

According to the 2023–2027 NPIAS, there are 35 NPIAS airports in Utah. This includes six primary and 29 nonprimary airports. As shown in **Figure 3.6**, Cedar City Regional Airport is included in the NPIAS and is classified as a primary, nonhub, commercial service airport. The other primary airports include Canyonlands Regional (CNY), Ogden-Hinckley (OGD), Provo Municipal (PVU), Salt Lake City International (SLC), and St. George Regional (SGU). Salt Lake City International is a large hub airport and the others are nonhub airports.

Figure 3.6: Map of NPIAS Airports in Utah, 2023–2027



Source: FAA, National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (2023–2027).

3.5.2. Utah Aviation Development Strategy

The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) Division of Aeronautics is responsible for developing the Utah Aviation Development Strategy which is updated every two years. The current version, *2020 Utah Aviation Development Strategy*, was published June 2021. This statewide aviation system plan collectively assesses the conditions and needs of a variety of Utah airports and identifies the system's ability to meet current and future aviation demand. The plan aids the aeronautics division in developing and planning for the state's airport system as a whole and provides input for federal planning documents.⁴²

There are 46 airports (44 public and two private airports) included in the *2020 Utah Aviation Development Strategy*. Eight of these airports are categorized as commercial service airports (UT-I), 16 are corporate/tourism/freight airports (UT-II), nine are recreation and community access airports (UT-III), and 13 are essential access airports (UT-IV).⁴³ As shown in **Figure 3.7**, Cedar City Regional Airport is included in the *2020 Utah Aviation Development Strategy* as a commercial service airport.

3.5.3. Local Airport Planning

This airport master plan is a comprehensive, airport-wide study to determine future demand so the airport can continue to operate as safely and as efficiently as possible. It provides a 20-year vision for airport development based on aviation demand forecasts. The FAA recommends that public-use airports prepare a new airport master plan every five to ten years or as often as necessary to reflect significant changes in local aviation conditions. Prior to this airport master plan, the most recent airport master plan was completed for CDC in 2017.

Figure 3.7: Map of 2020 Utah Aviation Development Strategy Airports



Source: Aviation, State of Utah, 2020 Utah Aviation Development Strategy.

3.6. Land Use Planning

Land use is the term used to describe how property is currently being used and how it can be used in the future. The existing and planned land uses near an airport can impact the local community, airport operations, and potential growth. It is important to identify the nearby land uses that will be exposed to airport operations as well as any land uses that may affect the safe operation of the airport or influence its expansion.

Effective compatible land use planning around airports addresses airspace, safety, and noise considerations. In many instances, the community's willingness to take a proactive approach in establishing compatible land use policies around the airport prevents the need to be reactive and deal with more severe conflicts in the future.

Effective land use compatibility plans take both height and land use restrictions into consideration with these restrictions also being incorporated as zoning laws. Coupled with other proactive measures, such as voluntary noise abatement programs and selective fee-simple land acquisition, proactive planning around the airport protects both the airport and the surrounding community. Furthermore, federal grant assurances require airport sponsors to operate and maintain the airport in a safe and serviceable condition, prevent and remove airport hazards, and take appropriate measures to ensure the land uses around the airport are compatible with airport operations.

It is important to point out that there is a difference between height restrictive zoning and basic land use zoning. As its name implies, the intent of height restrictive zoning is to protect the airspace around an airport from objects or structures that may pose hazards to aircraft operations. In general, this type of zoning conforms to the surface definitions and height limitations of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 77, *Safe, Efficient Use, and Preservation of the Navigable Airspace (Part 77)*. On the other hand, the intent of land use zoning is to prevent incompatible land uses near an airport. This practice protects the airport and helps prevent the effects of airport operations, such as noise, dust, fumes, or aircraft accidents, from negatively impacting nearby sensitive land uses such as residential areas.

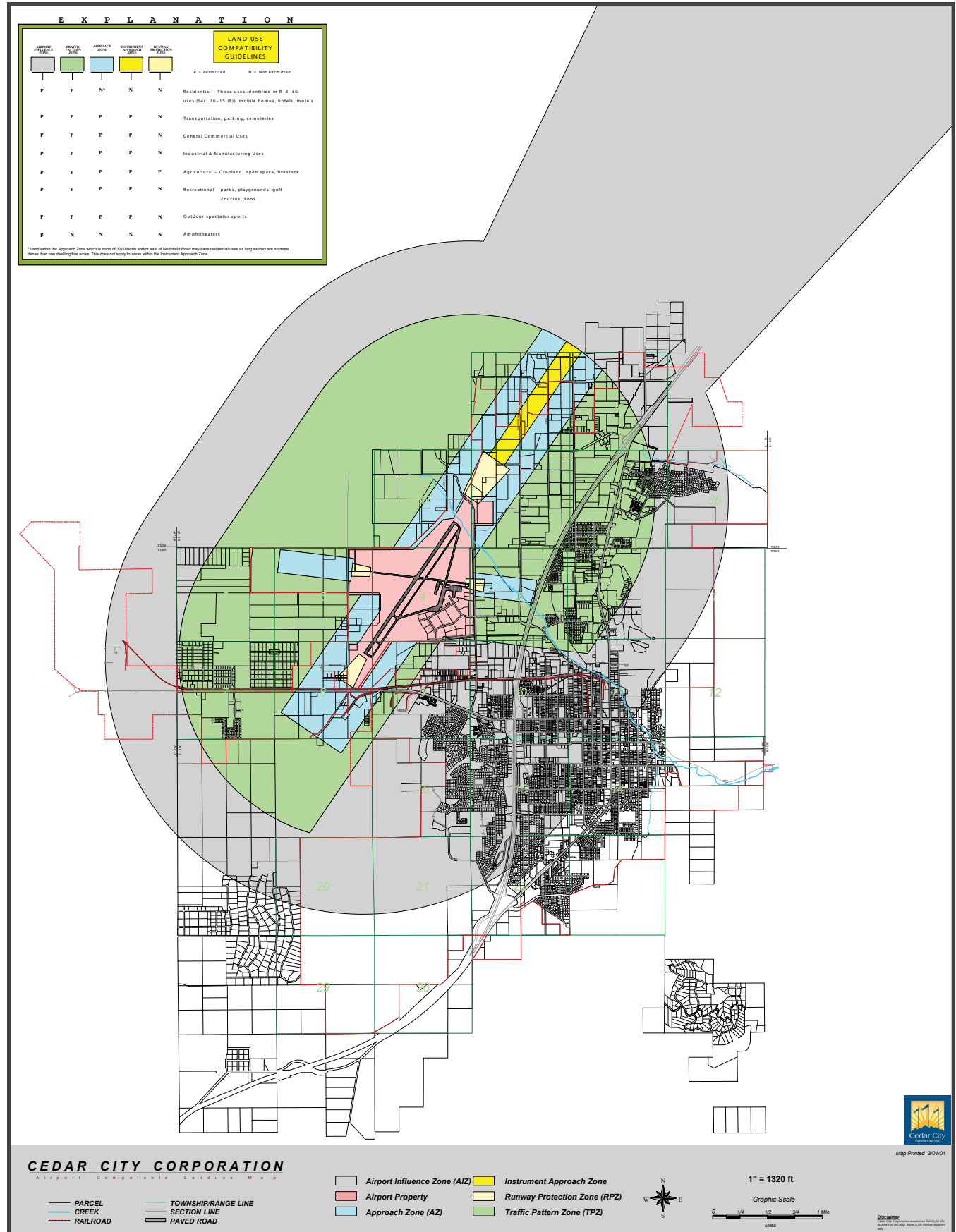
3.6.1. County Land Use Protections

Iron County Code and Ordinances established an airport overlay zone (Chapter 17.58) with the purpose of regulating and restricting the height of structures and objects of natural growth, and otherwise regulating the use of property, in the vicinity of the Cedar City Regional Airport. This ordinance uses the Cedar City Regional Airport compatible land use overlay zoning map (Figure 3.8) to identify the boundaries of airport compatible land use overlay zones. It also uses the airport's height restriction areas map (Figure 3.9) to identify the boundaries of height restriction areas. This ordinance also establishes five airport compatible land use overlay zones, which include the runway protection zone (RPZ), instrument approach zone (IAZ), approach zone (AZ), traffic pattern zone (TPZ), and airport influence zone (AIZ), to protect the airport from incompatible development within these areas (Section 17.58.050). It also incorporates appropriate land use and height restrictions established by Federal Aviation Regulation Part 77 and Advisory Circular (AC) 150/5300-13, *Airport Design*.⁴⁴

3.6.2. City Land Use Protections

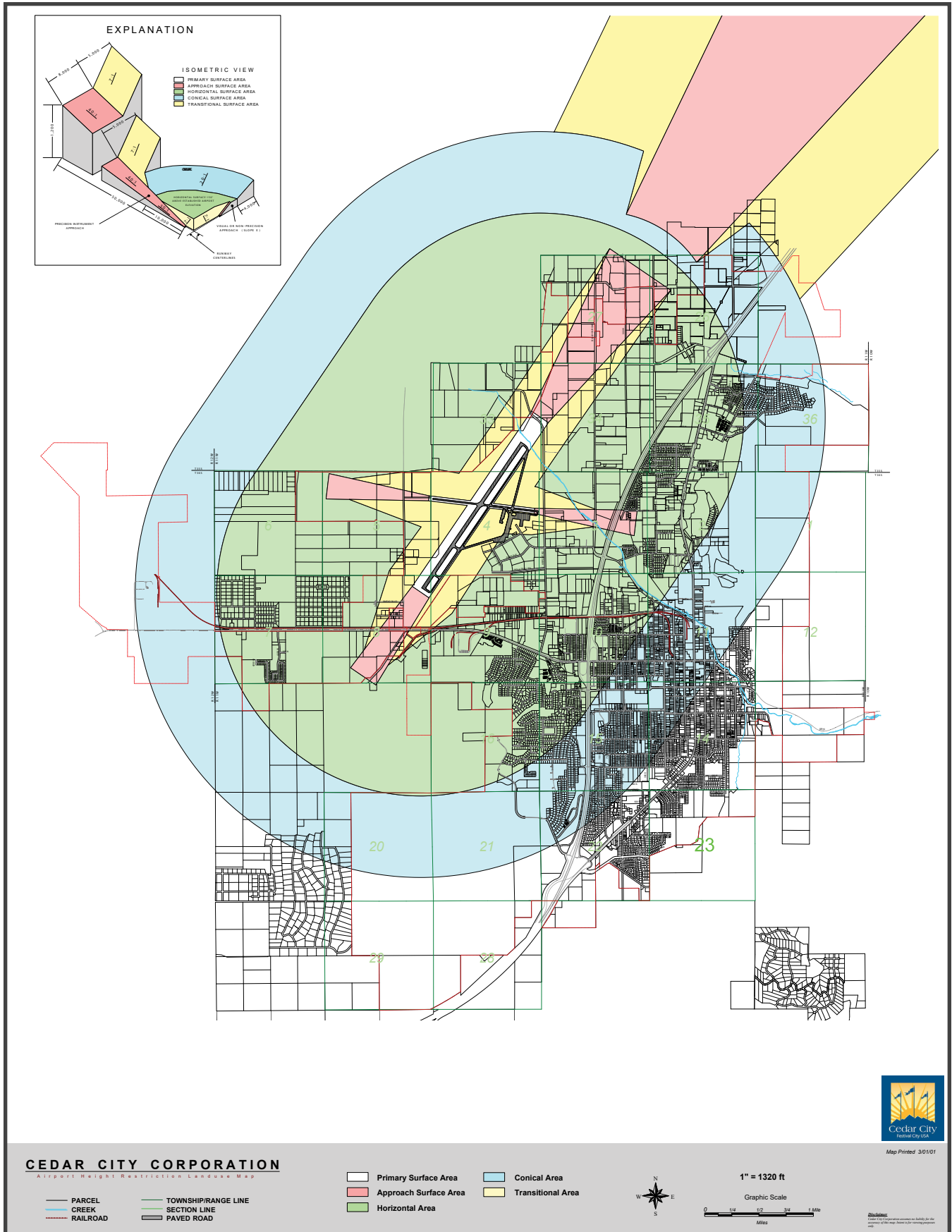
The *Ordinances of Cedar City, Utah* established an airport overlay zone (Article 26, Section XIV) with the purpose of regulating and restricting the height of structures and objects of natural growth, and otherwise regulating the use of property, in the vicinity of the Cedar City Regional Airport. This ordinance also uses the Cedar City Regional Airport's compatible land use overlay zoning map (Figure 3.8) to identify the boundaries of the airport compatible land use overlay zones, the airport's height restriction areas map (Figure 3.9) to identify the boundaries of height restriction areas, and incorporates appropriate land use and height restrictions established by Federal Aviation Regulation Part 77 and Advisory Circular (AC) 150/5300-13, *Airport Design*.⁴⁵ Additionally, the *Cedar City 2022 General Plan* adheres to the Cedar City Airport Master Plan, along with any associated FAA criteria and restrictions, regarding appropriate land uses and land use restrictions for development around the airport.⁴⁶

Figure 3.8: Compatible Land Use Overlay Zoning Map



Source: Cedar City Regional Airport Master Plan.

Figure 3.9: Height Restriction Areas Map



Source: Cedar City Regional Airport Master Plan.

3.7. Economic Impact

An airport’s economic impact is essentially a measure of the financial effect it has on the local economy. These impacts can be direct, indirect, or induced. Direct impacts are typically attributed to on-airport activity such as car rentals, food sales and other concessions, fuel sales, and capital improvements as well as off-airport visitor spending. Indirect impacts are typically the result of interactions between businesses and suppliers of goods and services associated with an airport while induced impacts are typically associated with the respending of income within the community. An airport’s total impact is the sum of the direct, indirect, and induced impacts.

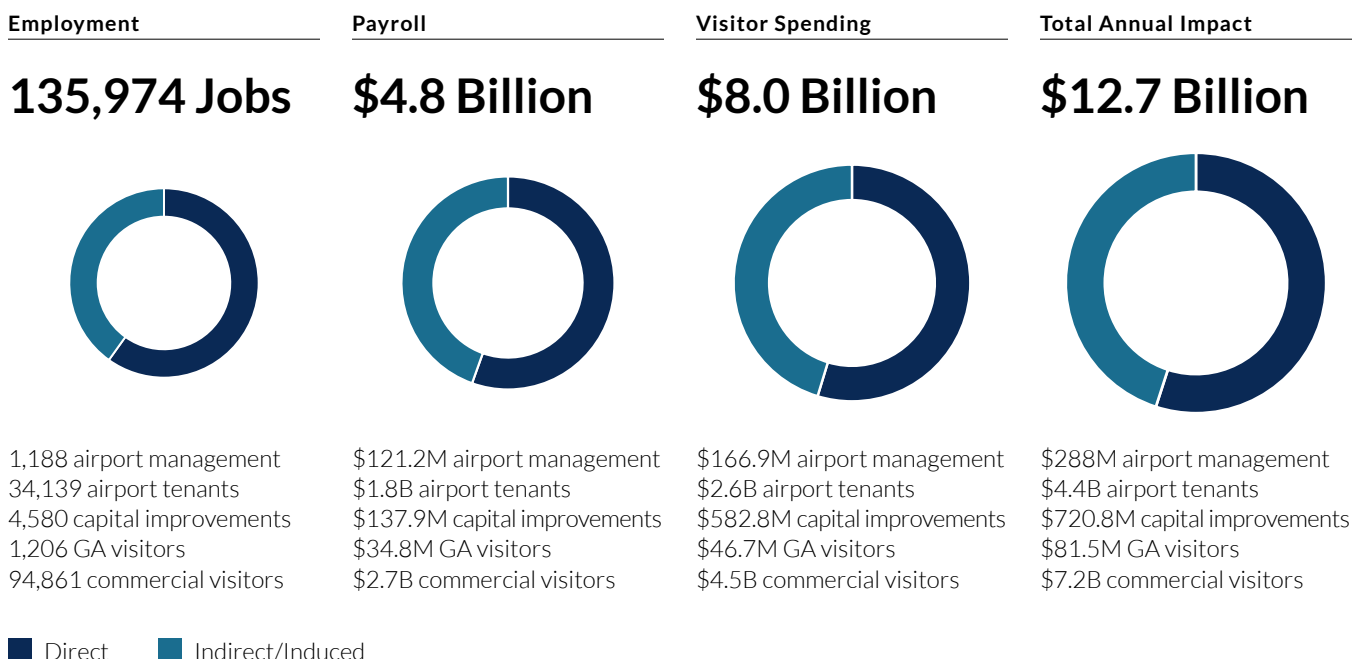
To measure the economic impact of the 46 airports included in the *2020 Utah Aviation Development Strategy*, the Utah Division of Aeronautics completed the *2020 Utah Statewide Airport Economic Impact Study*. It is important to note that this report was published December 2020 and does not reflect any impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴⁷ This report presents estimated impacts for the following four categories:

1. **Employment:** The number of people employed at businesses associated with the airport.
2. **Payroll:** Wages, salaries, and benefits received by those employees.
3. **Visitor Spending:** This is the amount of money spent by visitors for goods and services, such as lodging, food, transportation, entertainment, and at retail establishments, during their stay in Utah. This does not include the value of intermediate goods and services used to produce the final product.
4. **Total Economic Impact:** The total amount of any economic activity generated by the operation of the airport and all related activities including the dollar value of intermediate goods and services.

3.7.1. Economic Impact of Utah Airports

Figure 3.10 shows the economic impact of Utah’s 46 public airports. According to the report, the total annual economic impact of these airports exceeded \$12.7 billion. This includes supporting 135,974 jobs with a total payroll of \$4,776,781,500 and \$7,950,596,100 in visitor spending.⁴⁸

Figure 3.10: Economic Impact of Utah Airports

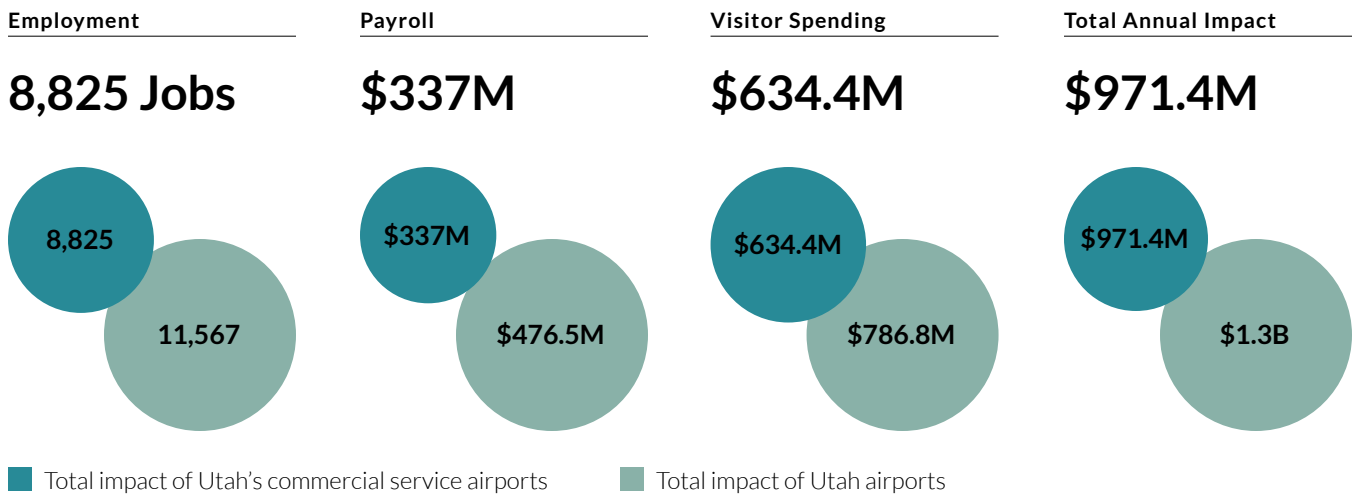


Source: State of Utah, UDOT, Airport Economic Impact Study, 2020, Table 6-7.

3.7.2. Economic Impact of Utah Commercial Service Airports

Salt Lake City International Airport (SLC) is among the nation’s top 20 busiest airports and has—by far—the largest economic impact of all of Utah’s airports. As a result, the information presented in this section excludes the economic impact of SLC. **Figure 3.11** shows the economic impact of Utah’s seven commercial service airports (excluding Salt Lake City International Airport). According to the report, the total economic impact of these airports exceeded \$971.4 million. This includes supporting 8,825 jobs with a total payroll of \$336,969,600 and \$634,443,500 in visitor spending.⁴⁹

Figure 3.11: Economic Impact of Utah Commercial Service Airports

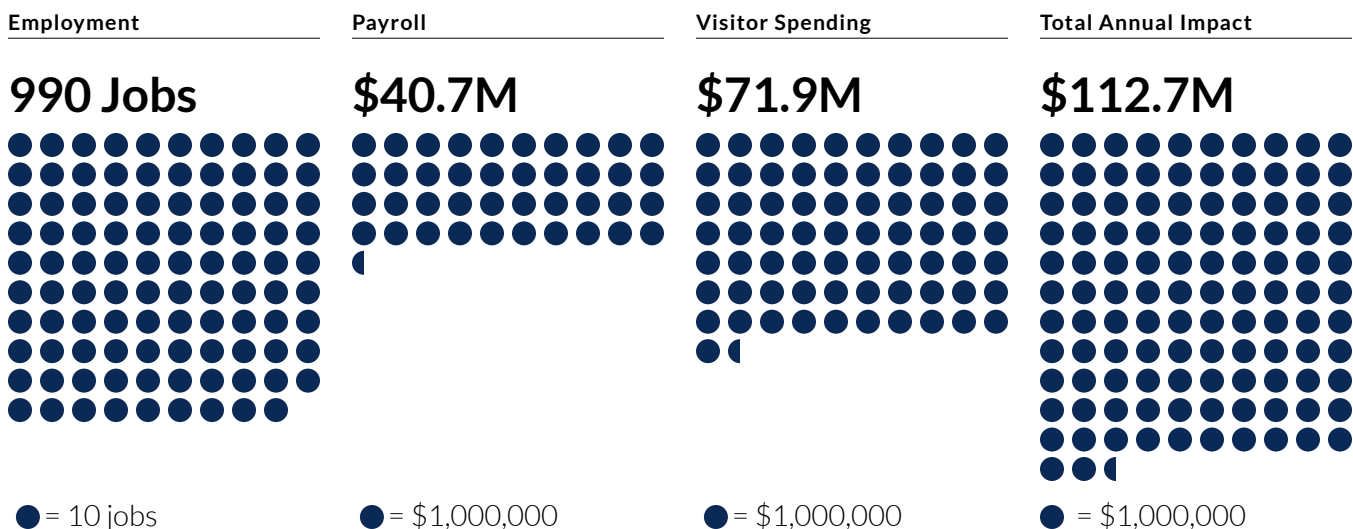


Source: State of Utah, UDOT, Airport Economic Impact Study, 2020, Table 5-1.

3.7.3. Economic Impact of Cedar City Regional Airport

The 2020 Utah Statewide Airport Economic Impact Study also estimated the total annual economic impact for each airport analyzed in the study. This analysis shows the total economic impact of Cedar City Regional Airport is nearly \$112.7 million. This includes supporting 990 jobs with a total payroll of \$40,735,100 and \$71,930,500 in visitor spending (**Figure 3.12**).⁵⁰

Figure 3.12: Economic Impact of Cedar City Regional Airport



Source: State of Utah, UDOT, Airport Economic Impact Study, 2020, Table 5-1.

3.8. Socioeconomic and Demographic Data

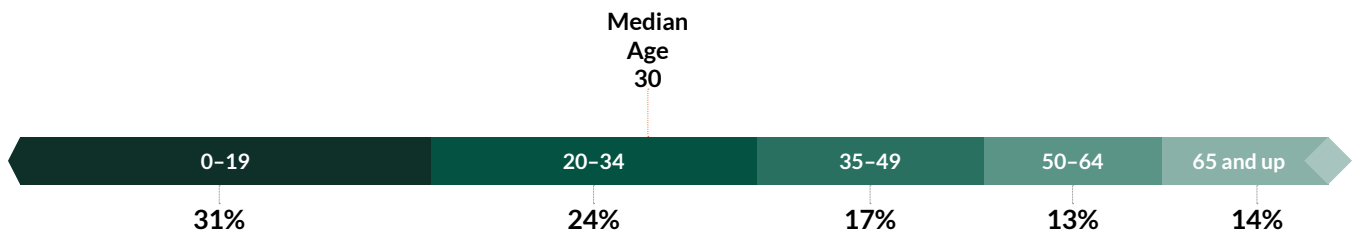
The socioeconomic characteristics of a community may influence demand for air travel within an airport’s geographic region. Data about the area’s population, employment, and income activity can help identify trends that may impact current and future aviation operations. These trends are especially important to consider when preparing aviation demand forecasts because aviation forecasts are typically tied to the region’s population and economic strength. Socioeconomic information is also helpful in making sure the community’s long-term needs are taken into consideration as part of the airport planning process.⁵¹

The footprint for the socioeconomic analysis consists of the Cedar City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). An MSA is a census-recognized area with a population of 50,000 or more people and surrounding densely populated areas that have a high degree of economic and social interaction with the core urban area.⁵² In this case, the Cedar City MSA includes all of Iron County.⁵³

3.8.1. Population Rates

According to Woods & Poole, the population within the Cedar City MSA was estimated to be 61,464 for 2022. The population has grown at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.75% since 2002 and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 1.56% through 2042. In 2022, the median age of the population in the Cedar City MSA was 30 (Figure 3.13).⁵⁴

Figure 3.13: Population Distribution, 2022

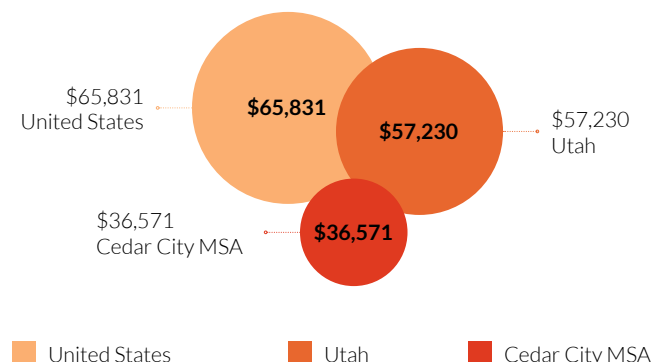
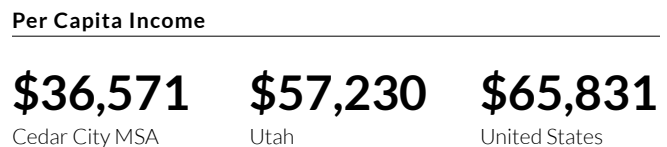


Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2022

3.8.2. Per Capita Income

According to Woods & Poole, per capita income (PCI) for the Cedar City MSA was estimated to be \$36,571 for 2022. Since 2002, PCI has grown at a CAGR of 3.35% and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 4.92% through 2042.⁵⁵ Figure 3.14 shows the PCI for the Cedar City MSA in comparison to the PCI for the state of Utah and the United States.

Figure 3.14: Per Capita Income, 2022



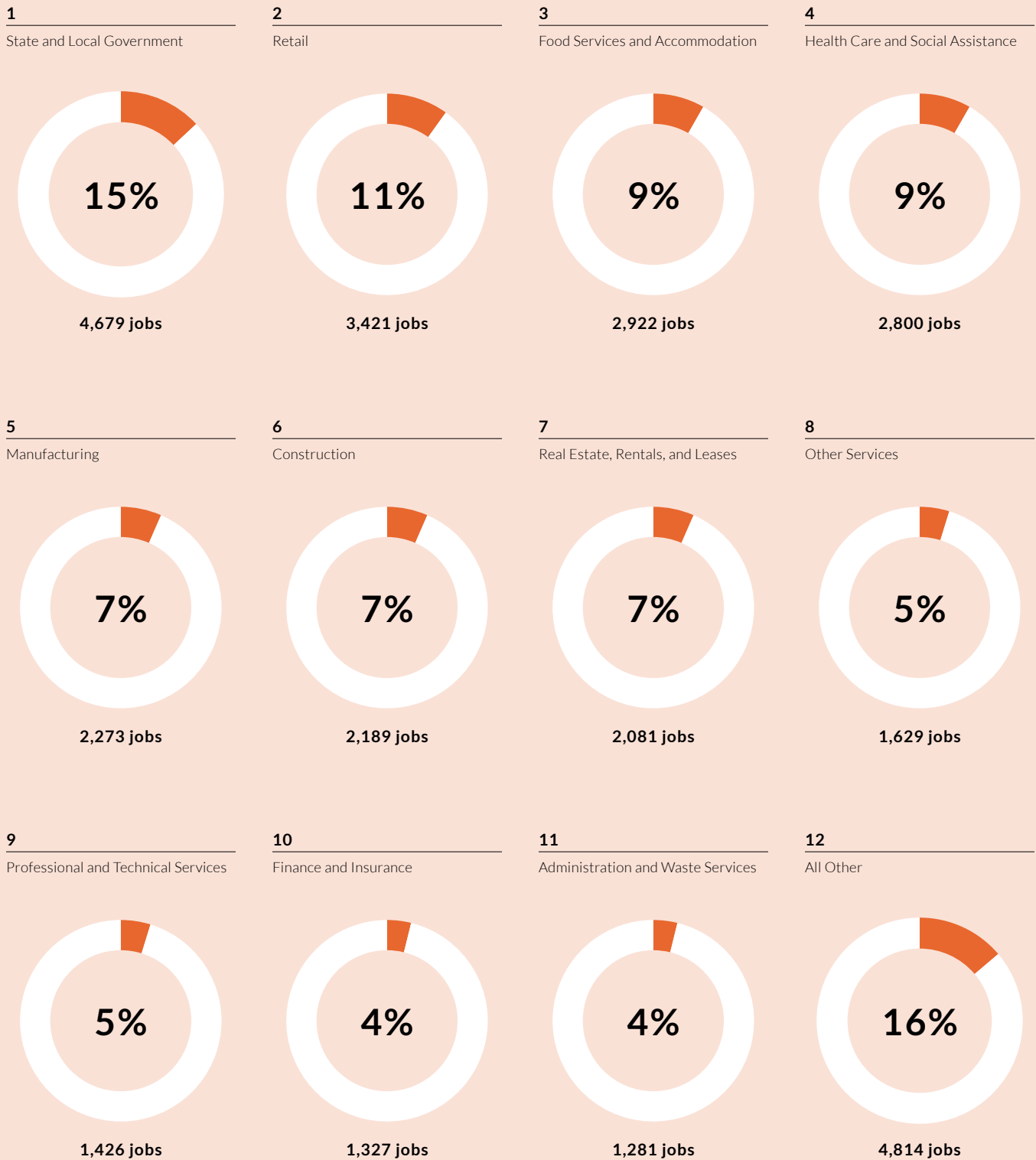
Source: Woods & Poole Economics, Inc., 2022

3.8.3. Top Industries by Employment

According to Woods & Poole, the top five industries in which people were employed within the MSA for 2022 were state and local government; retail; food services and accommodation; health care and social assistance; and manufacturing.⁵⁶ Figure 3.15 shows the top industries in which people are employed within the Cedar City MSA for 2022.

Figure 3.15: Top Industries by Employment, 2022

Cedar City MSA Top Industries by Employment

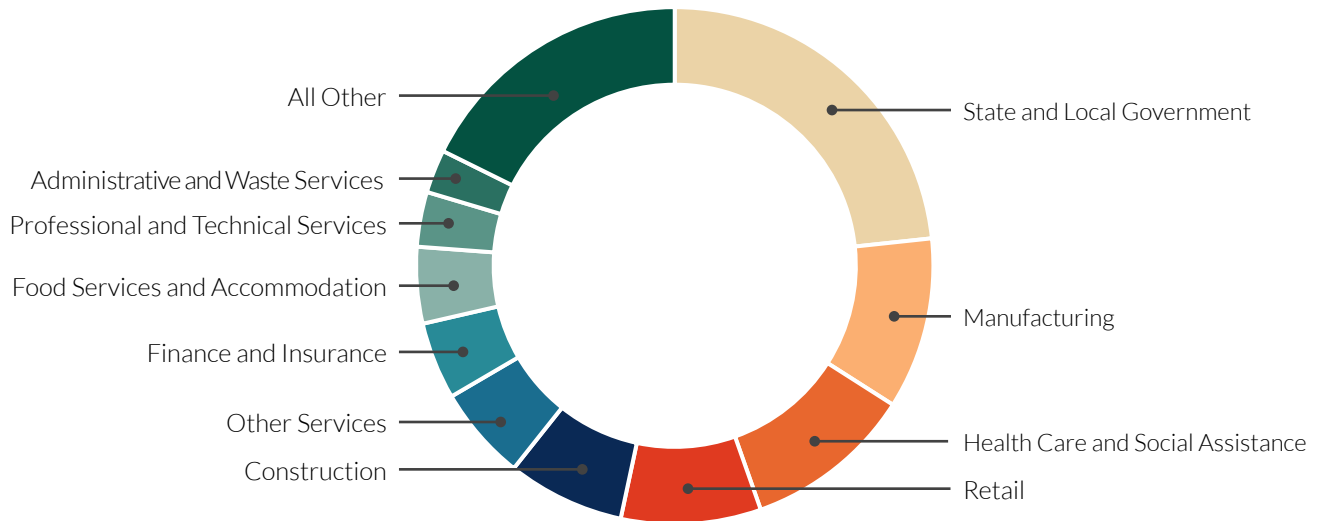


Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc.

3.8.4. Top Industries by Earnings

According to Woods & Poole, the top five industries in terms of earnings within the MSA for 2022 were state and local government; manufacturing; health care and social assistance; retail; and construction.⁵⁷ Figure 3.16 shows the top industries within the MSA in terms of earnings. (Amounts shown are in 2012 dollars.)

Figure 3.16: Top Industries by Earnings, 2022

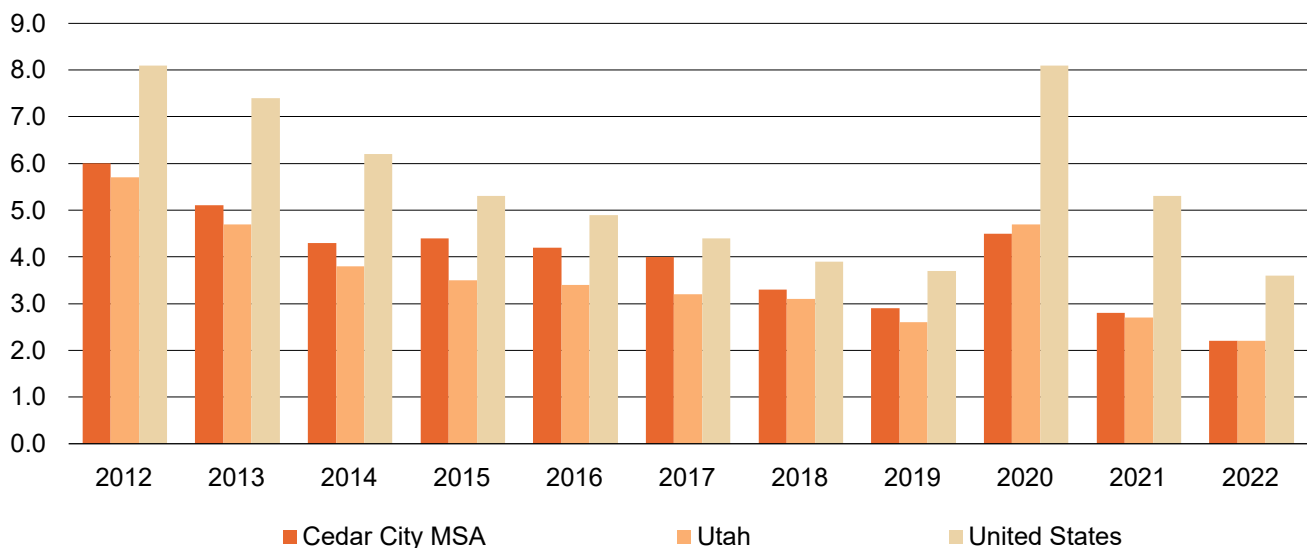


Source: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc.

3.8.5. Unemployment Rate

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), unemployment within the Cedar City MSA declined from 8.6% for 2011 to 2.2% for 2022. As shown in Figure 3.17, the unemployment rate for the MSA has typically been higher than the statewide rate but lower than the national average.⁵⁸

Figure 3.17: Unemployment Rates, 2012-2022



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023

3.8.6. Economically Distressed Area

An economically distressed area is a county, region, municipality, or other geographic area with high rates of poverty and unemployment or low levels of income. According to the criteria used by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA), an area is considered to be economically distressed if one or more of the following thresholds is met:

- **Low per capita income:** The area has a per capita income of 80% or less of the national average.
- **Unemployment rate above the national average:** The area has an unemployment rate that is, for the most recent 24-month period, at least 1% greater than the national average unemployment rate.
- **Unemployment or economic adjustment problems:** The area has experienced, or is about to experience, a special need arising from severe unemployment or economic adjustment problems resulting from a severe change in economic conditions. Special needs can include a substantial loss of population, military base closures, negative effects of changing trade patterns, or other similar circumstances.⁵⁹

Due to the area's consistently low per capita income, the Cedar City MSA is considered to be an economically distressed area.⁶⁰ As shown in [Figure 3.14](#), PCI for the Cedar City MSA was \$36,571 for 2022 which is only 55% of the national average PCI of \$65,831.

a. Essential Air Service

The FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 established a special rule for economically distressed communities that permits the federal share of allowable project costs (under the Airport Improvement Program) to be increased from 90% to 95%. This special rule applies to airports receiving essential air service (EAS) that are located in an area that are considered to be economically distressed areas. The FAA has determined that Cedar City Regional Airport qualifies for this increased federal share for the 2023 fiscal year because of the region's status as an economically distressed area.⁶¹

3.9. Looking Ahead

The Cedar City MSA has experienced steady economic growth during the past ten years and is expected to continue to see growth in all socioeconomic categories. The local economy also benefits from Southern Utah University (SUU). According to data released by the Chronicle of Higher Education, SUU has been one of the fastest growing regional universities in the country this past decade.⁶² In general, increased university enrollment tends to result in a significant boost to the local economy through student and visitor spending as well as increased incomes and employment within the region.⁶³ The airport also directly benefits from the growth in enrollment due to the strength of the aviation program offered by the university. The SUU aviation program features the largest university-owned helicopter training fleet in the world, the highest altitude university flight school in the country, and one of the most up-to-date aviation maintenance training programs in the world.⁶⁴ Due to the inherent link between a region's economy and aviation demand, it can be assumed that aviation activity will increase at a pace similar to the growth predicted for the Cedar City MSA.

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