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1.1 Introduction to Paper and Military Airfield Conversion

Much of the vast U.S. aviation airfield infrastructure which American air travelers enjoy today was part of a vast military network at one time or another. As of 2006, there were roughly 5000 U.S. public airports and 15,000 private airports. Of these, more than 500 were formerly military airports. Examples range from small to large scale and include namesakes such as Hartsfield International in Atlanta, Chicago O’Hare, Oakland International, John Wayne-Orange County, and Orlando International\textsuperscript{1,2,4}.

This paper will provide an analysis of the military airfield conversion process. To begin, a discussion on the background of military conversion is necessary to gain insight into the advantages and motivations for conversion. This discussion will lead to an analysis of the process of conversion, in which the reader will get a sense of the programs available and steps necessary to take control of and convert an airfield to civil use. Two different case studies will be analyzed; one showing a well planned and executed conversion (NAS Cecil Field, Florida), and a more ‘problematic’ case which has not gone as smoothly (Stewart AFB, Newburgh, New York).

We will conclude with a discussion about the key attributes found in most successful military airfield conversion projects and a look at some of the airfields currently in the Military Airport Program (MAP) and make some predictions about whether or not they will be successful.

\textit{Photo: Atlanta Army Airfield which closed on 1 June 1946, now Hartsfield International in Atlanta}
1.2 Background and the Military Airfield Conversion Opportunity

Converting military airfields to civilian use is simply smart business. When a military base closes, it leaves behind infrastructure will either lay dormant or be used productively by the local state of municipality. If operational demand exists for non-military aviation, the possibility or converting the military airfield must be considered.

The effects of a base closure on the local populace or economy can range from minimal to severe. For those communities that rely heavily on the economic stimulus provided by a local military base, the process can be crippling to a community. In general, when a military base closes or is realigned, the community needs to look at the facilities which are left behind and evaluate reuse opportunities. If the facilities include an airfield, the option of converting that airfield to a usable civilian airport could potentially bring an economic engine back the area, proving jobs and increased economic activity. Often, the military facilities left behind are in great operational condition; include runways, buildings and fueling depots. They are also built to accommodate large military aircraft such as the C5 Galaxy and therefore can usually accommodate the largest of civilian aircraft (A380).²

This economic advantage of this essentially ‘free’ transfer of property from the federal government to the state or local municipality is the biggest driver of the military conversions process. The ex-military land and facilities can be deeded directly to the state or municipality (or sponsor) directly by use of public conveyance at often no cost under the Surplus Property Act of 1944. Additionally, the government has a program specifically implemented to provide funds to developed military airfields which we will discuss later in the paper (Military Airport Program).⁴

The second driver of this conversion is on the demand side. Due to land use issues, I think most would agree that we cannot continue to build new airport facilities as demand increases. We have to look at smarter ways to use our existing infrastructure. Air traffic in the U.S hit all time records at 779 million passengers emplaned in 2007. It has since tailed off from 779 million to 740 million in 2008 due to the recent economic recession, and has stabilized in 2009 but will no doubt return to and exceed 2007 levels in the future. Meanwhile, the internet revolution has led to an increase in e-commerce with internet orders for packages at an all time high. All of this translates into higher capacity requirements. With many of our nations airports experiencing capacity constraints, even a slight reduction in demand through the use of a feeder airport could significantly improve the overall service quality and reduce delays at airports across the country.⁴

In summary, with military property becoming available through the base closure process, it only makes sense that we fully analyze the economic and capacity benefits of converting military airfields to civilian airports whenever possible. One of the conclusions of this paper is that military airfield conversions are usually successful regardless of the mission they perform; whether it is a commercial reliever airport, general aviation, or maintenance depot.
1.3 The Military Airfield Conversion and Financing Process

1.3.4 Conversion of Military Airfields

In general, the military airfield conversion process can be intimidating and can take years to successfully complete. This can be seen by looking at our two case studies as well as the list of applicants in the MAP program. It requires a persistence and steady approach. One must be willing to learn the process, work across many different organizations and deal with multiple stakeholders.

Below is a flow chart which I have developed to assist in understanding the process of military airfield conveyance and acquisition of funding to support. A full explanation of this process is provided in Appendix 1.

Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) is a process used by the US Government to force the US Military to close ‘excess’ facilities. It’s a very politically sensitive activity as jobs and economic developments are often highly dependent on bases in the local area. More than 350 installations have been closed in the four BRAC rounds: 1989, 1991, 1993, and 1995. In this latest round of BRAC, 62 installations were identified to either be closed or realigned. Many of these military bases contain or contained airfields and are planned to be converted to civil airports. From 1988 to 1995, communities selected 24 of 49 of the closed airfields for conversion to civilian airports. It was determined by the community that the reuse of these airfields could be a huge economic boost to an often depressed area (due to the closure).

An airport sponsor applies directly to the military department for Public Benefit Conveyance (PBC) of the property in question. This is done in close coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Office for Economic Adjustment (OEA). The sponsor can be the state or local government, or their appointed representative; however, the land can only be conveyed to a state or local municipality. The FAA will assist in the completion of the PBC application. They review and assist with the formulation of the application. The application should include the land required and
facilities required for the operation or support of the civilian airport and will require that the sponsor develop an Airport Master Plan (AMP).\textsuperscript{7}

Fortunately, military airfields are usually turned over in great operational condition. The supporting facilities are usually lacking or have been under maintained. Land side improvements often require large capital investments. A state or local government may not have the bonding capacity or want to take the sole risk of developing an airfield for civilian use. Fortunately, airports provide a stimulus that is often carried throughout the local area and therefore the federal government has specific programs which can provide monetary assistance to the conversion process. Federal grants for military airfield conversion (discussed more below), can be used for improvements in buildings, rehabilitating parking lots, fuel farms, hangers, utility systems, access roads and cargo buildings.\textsuperscript{4}

\textit{1.3B Financing of Military Airfield Conversions}

One of the key government drivers and facilitators of military airfield conversion is the Military Airport Program (MAP). The Aviation and Capacity Expansion Act of 1990 (49 USC 47118) authorized the federal Secretary of Transportation to set aside 4\% of the Aviation Improvements Program monies for military airport projects.\textsuperscript{4}

The criteria established by the FAA for approved projects is that they show that they can reduce the delays at existing commercial service airports that have more than 20,000 hours of annual delays in commercial take offs and landings, enhance air traffic control system capacity or reduce current and projected flight delays. Alternatively, the Secretary added that they could also be “in or near a location where the development would result in an increase in the overall airport system capacity”. The designated airports can participate the in the program for up to 5 years and a maximum of 15 airports can be in the program on any given year. MAP grants may be used for projects not normally funded by Aviation Improvements Program, such as building or rehabilitating parking lots, fuel farms, hangers, utility systems, access roads and cargo buildings.\textsuperscript{4}

In 1990, the first airport to receive money under the MAP was Stewart AFB, which is discussed in more detail in the case study later in this paper. The program was highly criticized in the early 1990s, as over $20 million was provided to Stewart AFB in an effort to jump start the conversion of that airport to a major player in the NYC market. We will discuss this case more later in this paper.\textsuperscript{9}

In 2008, the program allotted $23.7 million to the 15 identified airports in the MAP. The program usually has allocations that exceed $30 million. It has been considered to be very successful in aiding in the conversion of military airfields over the years. Appendix 1 lists many of the airports receiving money now under the MAP.\textsuperscript{4}
1.4 Case Study: “Successful” Conversion at Cecil Airfield

The case study at Cecil Field (VQQ) shows that a successful military airfield conversion does not necessarily have to be a reliever airport for a major primary airport. In fact, through the course of this study, I have found that the majority of military conversions have not become reliever airports, but rather have found an operations niche in either the rural general aviation, cargo or maintenance areas.

Located just 13 miles west of Jacksonville, Florida, Cecil Field Naval Air Station closed in 1999 and was renamed Cecil Field in 2001. The existing facilities, located on over 6000 acres included four 200 foot wide runways, a 12,500 foot runway and another at 8000 feet. Based solely on location and facilities available, you would think this was an ideal candidate for military airfield to civilian airport conversion. However, with roughly 1.0 million people in Jacksonville in 1999, the three existing airports in the Jacksonville area were already meeting capacity just fine. So why convert the military airfield? Where was the opportunity?

The conversion was almost a foregone conclusion well before the base was slated for closure. With more area than all three airports combined, ample parking aprons, and large runways to service virtually every type of aircraft, Cecil Airfield could provide the maintenance, repair and overhaul needed in the Jacksonville area. Over 7000 jobs were ‘lost’ during the closure of the base in 1999. The number of jobs created on site now exceeds the number lost during the closure of 1999. This airport performs aircraft maintenance for much of the Jacksonville aircraft. They have found a niche in those businesses and are not functioning as a reliever airport (classical sense) one would have initially thought.

The conversion of the field was well executed from the beginning. This can be primarily attributed to the personal ownership and commitment of the personnel involved. Several examples can be cited where this was evident.

1. Advance Planning – Preparations began nearly two years before the base closure. In 1997, the Jacksonville Port Authority had created the Cecil Field Development Commission – with appointed members of the community. When the Jacksonville Port Authority completed their Master Plan in 1998, it included Cecil Field in the NPIAS and then subsequently the airport was included in the MAP shortly after the closure. They were ready for the transition.
2. Clearly Defined Mission – The Port Authority’s decision to create the Cecil Field Development Commission was a step that ultimately led to a unified mission of all stakeholders to push this conversion through.

3. Coordination with FAA/OEA – When the base was closed, the city had already done much of the upfront leg work. They had ensured the airport was all the upfront work was done to facilitate a smooth transition. They immediately contacted the FAA/OEA and began the process of lobbying and working with the military authorities to transfer the deeds to real property at airfield as quickly as possible.

4. Maximum Public Participation – Transparency and public involvement is important when engaging in public projects such as this. Through the before mentioned Cecil Field Development Commission – the community’s voice was heard and involved throughout the whole process.

In conclusion, this case study shows what good upfront planning and process management can lead to a successful military conversion. This also shows that a converted airport does not always function as a reliever airport. This is especially true in rural areas; however, as is that case here, even airports in major metropolitan areas may not function as relievers. This airport has found a niche in aircraft maintenance; they do it well and have thrived by converting facilities for that use.
1.5 Case Study: “Problematic” Conversion at Stewart Air Force Base

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Airport Name</th>
<th>Community Served</th>
<th>Primary Airport **</th>
<th>Distance to Primary</th>
<th># of Air Ops</th>
<th>Primary Function</th>
<th>% Comm.</th>
<th>RWs/Size (Acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stewart International Airport (SWF)</td>
<td>New York Metro Area</td>
<td>New York City &quot;Big 3&quot;</td>
<td>65 miles/LaGuardia</td>
<td>145/day</td>
<td>General Aviation</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2/~2400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stewart International Airport (SWF) is located in Newburgh/New Windsor, New York, at the intersection of the New York State Thruway I-87 and Interstate 84. The Airport is 60 miles north of New York City and covers 2,400 acres. The Airport serves the regions of Long Island, Westchester County, Orange County, Connecticut and New Jersey. The history of military conversion at Stewart International Airport goes all the way back to 1970, when Stewart Air Force Base was officially deactivated and turned over to the New York New Jersey Port Authority. It is a long and interesting story of grandiose government plans of expansion meeting up with realities of economic conditions and public dissent. Without going into detail (which could fill a term paper on its own), I will summarize by saying that expectations of becoming a major NYC airport have fallen extremely short.

While Stewart may never become the next major NYC airport, the major investments made throughout the 1990s (MAP improvements) coupled with continued key capital investments by the Port Authority over the last 10 years have provided a safe, easily accessible alternative to the major airports in NYC. This will certainly pay dividends in the future, but only time will tell at what magnitude. One of its runways is 12,000 feet in length; therefore Stewart Airport already has room to handle the largest jumbo jets. It is only a matter of time that Stewart International will become a true alternative to Kennedy and Newark Airports. Only time will tell.

The reason I refer to the conversion as problematic in the title above is due to the fact that in the nearly 40 years since the conversion of the airfield, the airport really hasn’t found its niche. It has advertised itself as something it can never achieve. As stated above, early ambitions hoped to grow the airport to major New York City ‘hub’ airport size. This has not come to fruition and in fact only in the last few years, has the traffic even approached numbers that will allow the airport to be classified as a true reliever airport. Limited flights are now offered by JetBlue, Northwest, US Airways and Delta, nothing close to continuous service that customers need when booking any kind of business travel.

Several key aspects have worked against growing Stewart to ‘Big 3 NYC’ size, but are also working in favor of it to continue doing well as a small reliever airport.

1. Catchment Area. It is safe to say that Stewart is currently serving those that live within its catchment area and that the area does NOT include NYC. Some business traveler will use Stewart’s helicopter pad and it does service
some private jet aircraft, but in general, when people travel to NYC, accessibility is of primary concern.

2. Distance to Primary. Simply stated, no one wants to drive 65-80 miles to either travel out of or into NYC. For this same reason however, Stewart does not have its own O/D market, although limited. NYC is a unique market, with less mobility than perhaps a good reliever airport such as the Phoenix/Mesa Gateway Airport in Mesa, Arizona. A 60 mile drive for a resident of the metro NYC area is not perhaps the same drive for someone in a more rural open city such as Phoenix, Arizona.

3. Lack of Public Involvement. Especially in the early years, decisions were made without the public’s involvement. Much of the 70s and 80s were spent trying to rectify land grab decisions that were made by the Rockefeller administrations, some of which are still being addressed today. In contrast to the Cecil Field case study, where the public was involved from the beginning, the advantages to including the public from the beginning should be clear.

4. Lack of Clear Mission. Hub for NYC traffic, or local O/D airport for general aviation flights? Since the inception in 1970, no clear mission for the airport has been established and it has hurt the reputation and progress of the airport.

In conclusion, one could say that this is a case of an airport being geographically limited in what type of services it can provide and the authorities having to “deal with the cards they were dealt”. Early expectations by the Rockefeller administration were way overboard, and perhaps slow growth and well defined mission of providing good O/D service to the local area would have better served the airport in the long run. Having said this however, major changes could be coming. With air congestion causing more and more headlines, I would not be surprised to see perhaps La Guardia eventually shut down in favor of moving all traffic out to Stewart. We’ll have to wait and see what happens.
1.6 Conclusions and Recommendations

Prior to my research into the military airfield conversion process, I would have believed the primary reason to convert military airfields was to provide relief for major airports across the US. What I have found is that due to geographic restrictions, this is not always possible and therefore the conversion projects are often niche airports that thrive in their own local origin/destination markets. My study leads me to believe that based on geography, rural airports and airports more than 30 miles from the primary airports will have to explore demand for aviation services in their own catchment areas. There are many other opportunities in the local civil aviation market to explore, to include general aviation, cargo, maintenance and private jet operations. The key to each of these conversions will be the ability of the airport authorities to find the operating niche which suits the market they are given.

Today, several airports are currently in the Military Airport Program and are either in the process of converting or have converted military facilities to a civil airport. As stated above, there really is no common theme as to why airports are included in the MAP; some are purely general aviation, others are cargo, some are limited commercial origin destination and some are maintenance depots. This is quite different from my initial conclusion that most would be commercial reliever airports in metro areas. Each MAP recipient is reusing existing military infrastructure and makes unique contributions to our nation’s air system. Therefore it would be hard to argue that any of these projects are not good use of tax payer dollars.

Appendix 1 is a partial list of airports currently receiving money under the Military Airport Program. I have listed some key factors associated with each of the airports and will provide some conclusions and forecasts with regard to the chances of success for these transitions based on some trends or other data gained through this analysis.

1. **The Alexandria International (AEX) Airport**, located within the England Industrial Airpark near the town of Alexandria, Louisiana, is situated in the center of Louisiana. The new terminal building is impressive, but in my opinion way overbuilt for the current levels of operations. At present, four regional jet services operate at the small airport. The airport is too far from any major airport to be considered a reliever airport and therefore relies on its own O/D market to sustain. With a good mix of general aviation and commercial flights, at 117 flights/day, the airport is doing quite well and will continue to perform well as a general aviation and small O/D commercial operator.

2. **Chippewa County International Airport (CIU)** is a public use airport in Chippewa County, Michigan, United States. It is located in a very rural area of northern Michigan, 15 nautical miles (28 km) south of the central business district
of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. The airport is owned by the Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation.\(^2\) The airport is used mostly for general aviation but is served by one commercial airline. It is not a reliever airport, is located in a very rural area and at only 46 flights/week, it is definitely serving a select community.\(^5\) I am not sure how they were able to get MAP funding for this airport!

3. **Northwest Florida Regional Airport (VPS)** is an airport located within Eglin Air Force Base, near Valparaiso and Fort Walton Beach in Okaloosa County, Florida, United States. No private aircraft are permitted to leave out of or arrive at Northwest Florida Regional (Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport used). Northwest Florida Regional Airport is served by eight airlines providing non-stop service to Dallas, Houston, Memphis, Atlanta, and Charlotte.\(^2\) It is not a reliever airport, as it is 145 miles from Tallahassee, Florida. In 2007 the total passengers that flew out of Northwest Florida Regional was over 800,000 and is growing. With over 345 flights/day, 19% of which are military and no private aircraft, VPS has definitely found its niche as a good O/D market within central Florida.\(^5\)

4. **Griffiss International Airport (RME)** is a public airport located one mile (2 km) east of the central business district of Rome, a city in Oneida County, New York. This airport is publicly owned by County of Oneida. It is located on the former site of Griffiss Air Force Base, which closed in 1995.\(^2\) The airport is small; it averages about 137 aircraft operations/day and serves primarily the general aviation community.\(^5\) Limited to no commercial activity makes this a niche airport for the general aviation community and a good reliever airport for the eastern NY area.

5. **San Bernardino International Airport (SBD)** is a public airport located two miles (3 km) southeast of the central business district of San Bernardino, California, in San Bernardino County, California. The airport covers 1,329 acres (538 ha) and has one runway. It is currently a general aviation and cargo airport located on the former site of Norton Air Force Base.\(^2\) This is a good example of a niche airport which capitalizes on other federal activities in the area. The U.S. Customs Service uses this airport to clear imported goods. The airport is also used as a base for United States Forest Service planes fighting forest fires.\(^5\) Several hangars that were formerly empty have recently been occupied by civilian-owned aircraft maintenance companies. The local municipality is looking to expand operations at the airport to commercial aircraft, but is competing in a highly competitive LA area market.

1. **Portsmouth International Airport at Pease (PSM)** is a public-use joint civil-military airport located one nautical mile (2 km) west of the central business district of Portsmouth, a city in Rockingham County, New Hampshire. It is owned by the Pease Development Authority. The airport does not currently offer scheduled commercial airline service. It served as a hub for Pan Am from 1998 until 2005, when all mainline Pan Am flights at the airport were suspended. It was
also one of a handful of airports serviced by the short-lived Skybus Airlines which ceased operation in the spring of 2008. It is a busy airport, with 51,673 aircraft operations, an average of 110-130 per day: 68% general aviation, 22% military, 7% air taxi. Portsmouth International provides good relief for Logan International airport, as it pulls off many of the small general aviation aircraft. Unfortunately, the airport no longer offers commercial service. Pease was once a hub for PanA$m and serviced by the short-lived Skybus Airlines through 2008. It still has found a niche as a smaller general aviation and military hub for the southern New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts areas.

2. Plattsburgh International Airport (PBG) is located at the former Plattsburgh Air Force Base in Plattsburgh, New York. The airport is owned by Clinton County. Plattsburgh International has been attempting to promote itself as "Montreal's U.S. Airport," standing just one hour from downtown Montreal. With only 26 flights/day, the airport really can’t be considered a successful reliever or a strong O/D candidate. It is however growing services and has the facilities to make a significant impact. On September 5, 2007, it was learned that Las Vegas-based airline, Allegiant Air, would offer non-stop flights from Plattsburgh International Airport to Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The airport is also served by Cape Air, offering up to three flights daily to Boston.

3. Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport (IWA), formerly Williams Gateway Airport and formerly Williams Air Force Base, is a commercial airport located in the southeastern area of the city of Mesa, Arizona, and 20 miles (32 km) southeast of Phoenix, in Maricopa County, Arizona. The airport is owned and operated by the Williams Gateway Airport Authority. According to the FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems for 2007-2011, Phoenix-Mesa Gateway was designated as a reliever airport. This airport continues to draw funding under the MAP program and is one of the only candidates that I see consistently making a case for the requirement of reducing congestion at primary airports by 20,000 hours.

4. Sawyer International Airport (SAW) is a public airport located 17 miles (27 km) south of the central business district of Marquette, a city in Marquette County, Michigan, United States. The airport is publicly owned by Marquette County. Sawyer International Airport covers an area of 2,100 acres and was originally designed for B-52 bombers. The airport averages about 60-100 aircraft operations/day and is mostly a general aviation airport but does about 19% of its work as a commercial airport. At 174 miles from Milwaukee, it is not really a reliever airport. It serves the local O/D market quite well and will continue to do so with little growth.

5. Riverside Municipal Airport (RAL), also known as Riverside Airport (and formerly as Riverside Arlington Airport), is a public airport located four miles (6 km) southwest of the central business district of Riverside, the county seat of
Riverside County, California. The airport is located in the Inland Empire, a region with a population of over four million people. The Airport's current Master Plan will lengthen this runway to 6,153 feet (1,875 m) in the near future. The local municipality is looking to expand operations at the airport to commercial aircraft, but is competing in a highly competitive LA area market.
Appendix 1: Airports in the MAP (Military Airfield Program)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Airport Name</th>
<th>Community Served</th>
<th>Primary Airport **</th>
<th>Distance to Primary</th>
<th># of Air Ops</th>
<th>Primary Function</th>
<th>% Comm.</th>
<th># RWs/Size (Acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria International Airport (AEX)</td>
<td>England AFB</td>
<td>Rural LA</td>
<td>New Orleans, LA</td>
<td>226 miles/</td>
<td>General Aviation &amp; O/D</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2/2284</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New Orleans</td>
<td>New Orleans</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chippewa International Airport (CIU)</td>
<td>Kincheloe AFB</td>
<td>Northern Michigan</td>
<td>Detroit, MI</td>
<td>269 miles/</td>
<td>Limited Commercial</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>2/1850</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>Detroit</td>
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<tr>
<td>NW Florida Regional Airport (VPS)</td>
<td>Eglin AFB</td>
<td>Panhandle, Florida</td>
<td>Tallahassee, FL</td>
<td>153 miles/</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>2/1300</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tallahassee</td>
<td>Tallahassee</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffiss International Airport (RME)</td>
<td>Griffiss AFB</td>
<td>Central NY</td>
<td>Syracuse, NY</td>
<td>46 miles/</td>
<td>General Aviation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1/1680</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Syracuse</td>
<td>Syracuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Bernardino International Airport (SBD)</td>
<td>Norton AFB</td>
<td>LA Area</td>
<td>Ontario, CA</td>
<td>20 miles/</td>
<td>Cargo</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>1/1329</td>
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<td>Ontario</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portsmouth International Airport at Pease (PSM)</td>
<td>Pease AFB</td>
<td>Coastal NH/Southern Maine</td>
<td>Boston, MA</td>
<td>57 miles/</td>
<td>General Aviation</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1/3000</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinton County International Airport (PBG)</td>
<td>Plattsburgh AFB</td>
<td>Northern NH</td>
<td>Montreal, CA</td>
<td>20 miles/</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>1/2000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Montreal</td>
<td>Montreal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phoenix/Mesa Gateway Airport (IWA)</td>
<td>Williams AFB</td>
<td>Phoenix Area</td>
<td>Phoenix, AZ</td>
<td>10 miles/</td>
<td>General Aviation</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3/3020</td>
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<td>Phoenix</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sawyer International Airport (SAW)</td>
<td>Sawyer AFB</td>
<td>Northern Michigan</td>
<td>Milwaukee, WI</td>
<td>174 mi/</td>
<td>General Aviation</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>1/2100</td>
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<td>Milwaukee</td>
<td>Milwaukee</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Riverside Municipal Airport (RAL)</td>
<td>March AFB</td>
<td>LA Area</td>
<td>Ontario, CA</td>
<td>15 miles/</td>
<td>General Aviation</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>1/525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Numbers are primarily from [http://www.airnav.com](http://www.airnav.com) & [http://www.ifly.com](http://www.ifly.com)
** I define “Primary” as a major travel point, small to medium hub airports with 0.05 to 1% of US Air Traffic as defined by FAA.
Appendix 2: Military Airfield Conversion Process

A) Identify an Airport Sponsor

Only registered state and local governments can receive military real property. Once in the local government’s hands, the entity that operates the airfield is often by default the sponsor and may be a number of different types of organizations. The sponsor should have a well thought out staff on board, as the conversion process is long and often complicated. At this point

B) Coordination with the FAA and OEA.

Steps A and B can be interchanged. The FAA and OEA will be plugged into the BRAC process and be able to facilitate the transfer of real government property (airport) to the local authority. It is important to involve these entities early in the process, as they can be a huge advocate for the quick transfer of the property. At this stage, a community base reuse plan should detail the planned usage of the facilities should they be received through public conveyance.

C) Ensure the Airport is listed within the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS).

In order to manage, track and meet air traffic demand, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) maintains and updates a list of airports (NPIAS) that encompass the national network of safe public airports around the United States. Airline passenger traffic is required to pay a passenger facility charge on each flight, the funds are collect by the airlines and form the Aviation Trust Fund. The airport authorities operating an airport listed on the NPIAS are eligible to receive grants from this aviation trust fund through the Airport Improvement Program (AIP). If your airport is not listed on this register, you cannot receive funding.

The FAA has three classifications for airports; commercial, reliever and general aviation. Each has its own criteria. Most military conversions will initially fall into the reliever category.

D) Prepare the Public Benefit Conveyance Application

E) Prepare an Airport Master Plan

A fully coordinated Airport Master Plan (AMP) is essential and the single most important document in the military airfield conversion process. Many assumptions
will have to be made, but the document will be used by the FAA in making determination of grants or other monetary support.

At a minimum, an AMP must include the following:

1. Environmental impacts - Provided by disposal agency, hopefully an EA with FONSI will suffice. If not, full EIS is required.
2. Facility and capital development needs – What you need to get the civilian airport operational.
3. 20 year projected traffic volumes – Needs to consider catchment area and numbers if funding requirements are met to expand and operate as desired.

Additionally, the AMP should contain:

4. Airport Layout Plan (ALP)
5. Multi-year capital development plan
6. Communications and navigation aids needed for civil airport

F) Apply for the Military Airport Program

This will be done in cooperation with the OEA and the FAA. Applications are long and involved, but the rewards are well worth the effort.
Sources

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   http://www.ifly.com/sitemap-code-AM
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6. Base Realignment and Closure – Information on BRAC; figures, etc.
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