

ACI-NA Sustainability Policy Statement

Background

The mission of Airports Council International – North America (ACI-NA) is to advocate policies and provide services that strengthen the ability of airports to serve their passengers, customers and communities.

North American Airports support approximately 10 million jobs and \$1 trillion in annual economic activity¹. In many communities, airports serve as a principle economic driver and vital link for business and trade. The growth of the Aviation industry is essential to ensure a healthy, resilient, equitable, and vibrant economy in North America. As airports grow, it is vital to ensure that the growth is managed responsibly complementing the values of each host community.

Sustainability is an accepted concept that enhances an airport's economic vitality, operational efficiency, natural resource conservation and social impact. As airports in the U.S. and Canada integrate sustainability into their organizations and use it as a framework for managing both day-to-day operations and long term planning, they realize significant benefits for their communities, passengers, tenants, employees and other stakeholders.

According to the respondents of the 2016 ACI-NA Environmental Benchmarking survey, 35 US and Canadian Airports representing 59% of all US and Canadian Passenger Enplanements (2015) have adopted sustainability policies. Many of these airports are active members on the ACI-NA Environmental Affairs Committee and its Sustainability Working Group, and have asked ACI-NA to elevate sustainability within the organization, to mirror the values that airports are adopting across the US and Canada.

ACI-NA has taken several steps to establish a position of sustainability leadership within the airport industry:

- Pioneered the “EONS” definition of sustainability for airports, recognizing the need to incorporate operational efficiency in addition to the “triple bottom line” of economic vitality, natural resource conservation, and social impact adopted by other industries.
- Helped develop the Sustainable Aviation Guidance Alliance (SAGA), a publicly available database of sustainability practices for the aviation / airport industry. ACI-NA staff and committee members advocated for and participated in the ACRP project to update the database, as well as led the SAGA Task Group to find a permanent home and funding for the website to remain a free industry resource.
- Promotes industry diversity through our Business Diversity Committee, and Inclusion Champion Awards to celebrate the proactive and innovative steps taken by members to enhance workforce and business diversity, outreach and advocacy.
- Supported the development of the next generation airport leadership through the ACI-NA Commissioners Committee Scholarship since 1993 and the launch of the ACI-NA [Airport Internship minisite](#).
- Created the Sustainability Working Group under the Environmental Affairs Committee. The working group has planned sustainability-themed sessions and Sustainability Roundtable discussions at our conferences to promote the sharing of best practices.

¹ See [“The Economic Impact of Commercial Airports in 2013”](#), ACI-NA, 2013, and [“The Economic Impact of the Air Transportation Industry in Canada”](#), 2013, ACI-NA Canadian Division

- Participate as a member of the Air Transport Action Group, advocating for measures to address aviation's contribution to climate change at ICAO, and helped develop ATAG's "Benefits Beyond Borders" effort to show Aviation Industry leadership in the implementation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
- Support the ICAO-led development of a global market based measure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the Aviation Sector, in coordination with airlines and aircraft manufacturer.
- Adopted the Airport Carbon Accreditation Program, which allows airports around the world to demonstrate progress towards GHG emissions reductions using an internationally recognized standard.
- Established Annual Environmental Achievement Awards to recognize industry leadership in the areas of environmental management, mitigation, outreach & communication and innovation.
- Developed working partnerships with the US Green Building Council and the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure to facilitate the adoption of green building standards for airport building and infrastructure projects, for example through an educational webinar series and proposal of alternative compliance pathways for certain LEED credit categories.
- Established Sustainable Conferencing Guidelines in 2016, addressing ACI-NA's highest impact line of business, including launching a carbon emissions offset sponsorship program for attendee travel to/from our conferences.
- Developed a set of Environmental Goals (2008, updated in 2015) and established a biennial Environmental Benchmarking Survey and summary report for members to track implementation across the industry.

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ACI-NA adopts the principles of sustainability and commits to delivering a high level of service to our members while strengthening our financial health, minimizing our environmental impact and providing benefits to our communities. ACI-NA commits, through this policy, to assist airports as they deploy policies, plans, and strategies to enhance their economic vitality and operational efficiency while protecting natural resources and engaging with their host communities.

Near and Mid-Term Action Items

Specific actions that ACI-NA will undertake include:

- 1) Continue alignment with the aviation industry on the shared target of achieving carbon-neutral growth from 2020, by maintaining existing ACI-NA environmental policy commitments, and promote and enhance programs (such as Airport Carbon Accreditation) that will help airports meet those policy commitments;
- 2) Continue implementation and refinement of sustainable conferencing initiatives;
- 3) Develop and enhance partnerships with organizations within the Aviation sector (such as FAA, Transport Canada, ATAG, A4A, and others) and outside the sector [such as USGBC, Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure (ISI), and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)] to enhance the resources available to airports as they seek to achieve their sustainability goals;
- 4) In the near-term, create a cross-discipline sustainability Task Group (inclusive of members from multiple ACI-NA committees), with a mid-term goal of creating a full Sustainability Committee. The Task Group (and subsequently the Committee) will be tasked with developing initiatives and conference programming to address the following key issues:
 - a. Coordinate internally on ACI-NA activities that contribute towards our economic, operational, social and environmental sustainability.
 - b. Directly engage with government agencies to advocate for grant and incentive programs that address key airport sustainability priorities;
 - c. Develop recommendations for addressing issues of climate resilience at airports and in surrounding communities;
 - d. Create a new sustainability benchmarking effort that synthesizes existing ACI-NA data from members on environmental, social, operational, and economic indicators;
 - e. Assist ACI-NA to identify relevant reporting elements for a periodic organizational sustainability report.
- 5) Create periodic sustainability progress reports in line with accepted industry frameworks, addressing actions taken by ACI-NA to respond to material issues and to support industry sustainability goals.
- 6) Provide support for airports seeking to establish or enhance sustainability programs by sharing resources, best practices and connecting to industry peers.