
LEFT HANGING: THE CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF U.S. AIRPORT HANGARS

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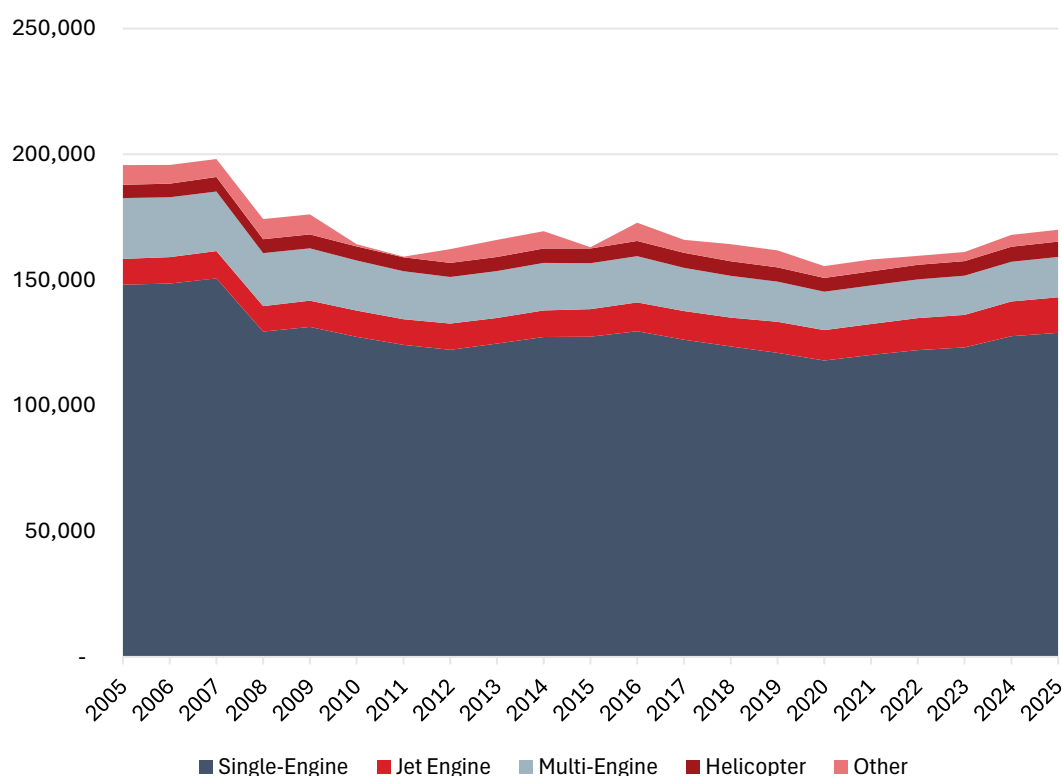
Left Hanging: The Critical Shortage of U.S. Airport Hangars

by Anala Ravinarayan
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The U.S. general aviation (GA) sector relies on a vast and diverse aircraft fleet supported by airport infrastructure. Yet, one of the most critical components, hangar capacity, has not kept pace with evolving demand. While the U.S. maintains the world’s largest base of GA aircraft and activity levels have rebounded in recent years, constraints on airport development and rising utilization are placing increasing pressure on storage capacity.

THE EXPANSIVE FLEET OF GENERAL AVIATION AIRCRAFT

U.S. Based General Aviation Aircraft



Source: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Terminal Area Forecast (TAF), mba analysis.

The U.S. boasts nearly 170,000 FAA-reported GA aircraft in the country (active, airworthy GA aircraft physically stored or hangared at a U.S. airport for more than 6 months of the year). The majority of these are Single-engine pistons (over 75%), followed by Turbojet/Turbofan aircraft and multiengine aircraft, which each make just under 10% to the total U.S. GA based aircraft fleet, and helicopter and other aircraft (gliders, military, ultra-light), each of which makes up 3-4% of the total fleet.

The U.S. GA fleet, which dipped in the late 2000s following the 2008 Financial Crisis, grew until 2016 as the economy rebounded. While the US GA fleet declined again in the late 2010s and in

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2020 as a result of structural issues and COVID-19, it has been on the uptick since 2021. The overall U.S. GA fleet was 1.6% lower than 2016 levels in 2025, driven by a marginal decline in single-engine pistons (0.5%) and a decline in multi-engine and other aircraft, while the fleet of turbojet/turbofan aircraft increased by 23.5% between 2016 and 2025.

WHERE THE AIRCRAFT FLY AND LAY

There are over 3,150 airports in the U.S. that saw GA operations in 2025. The top airports with the most GA activity in the U.S. in 2025 (recorded by the FAA), excluding flights that commence and terminate at the same airport (local operations), are noted below, along with the number of aircraft based at these airports during the year and the national ranking of the number of based aircraft.

Airport	GA Operations*	GA Based Aircraft	Based Aircraft Ranking
Miami Executive Airport (TMB), FL	143,364	329	50
Van Nuys Airport (VNY), CA	136,345	720	5
Melbourne Orlando International Airport (MLB), FL	120,357	264	86
Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport (FXE), FL	118,641	594	10
Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport (MYF), CA	113,636	412	27
Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport (BJC), CO	111,882	476	16
Pryor Field Regional Airport (DCU), AL	111,642	142	268
Denton Enterprise Airport (DTO), TX	108,578	420	23
Centennial Airport (APA), CO	107,344	866	3
Casa Grande Municipal Airport (CGZ), AZ	106,586	74	653
Long Beach Airport (LGB), CA	106,445	398	30
John Wayne Airport (SNA), CA	95,056	345	42
North Perry Airport (HWO), FL	89,356	419	24
Falcon Field Airport (FFZ), AZ	89,076	688	6
Page Field (FMY), FL	88,204	243	102
Jacksonville Executive Airport at Craig (CRG), FL	87,427	254	94
DeKalb-Peachtree Airport (PDK), GA	86,547	337	45
McClellan-Palomar Airport (CRQ), CA	83,707	284	66
Republic Airport (FRG), NY	82,631	434	22
DeLand Municipal-Sidney H Taylor Field (DED), FL	81,772	150	252
Other	31,097,007	162,091	
Total	33,165,603	161,746	

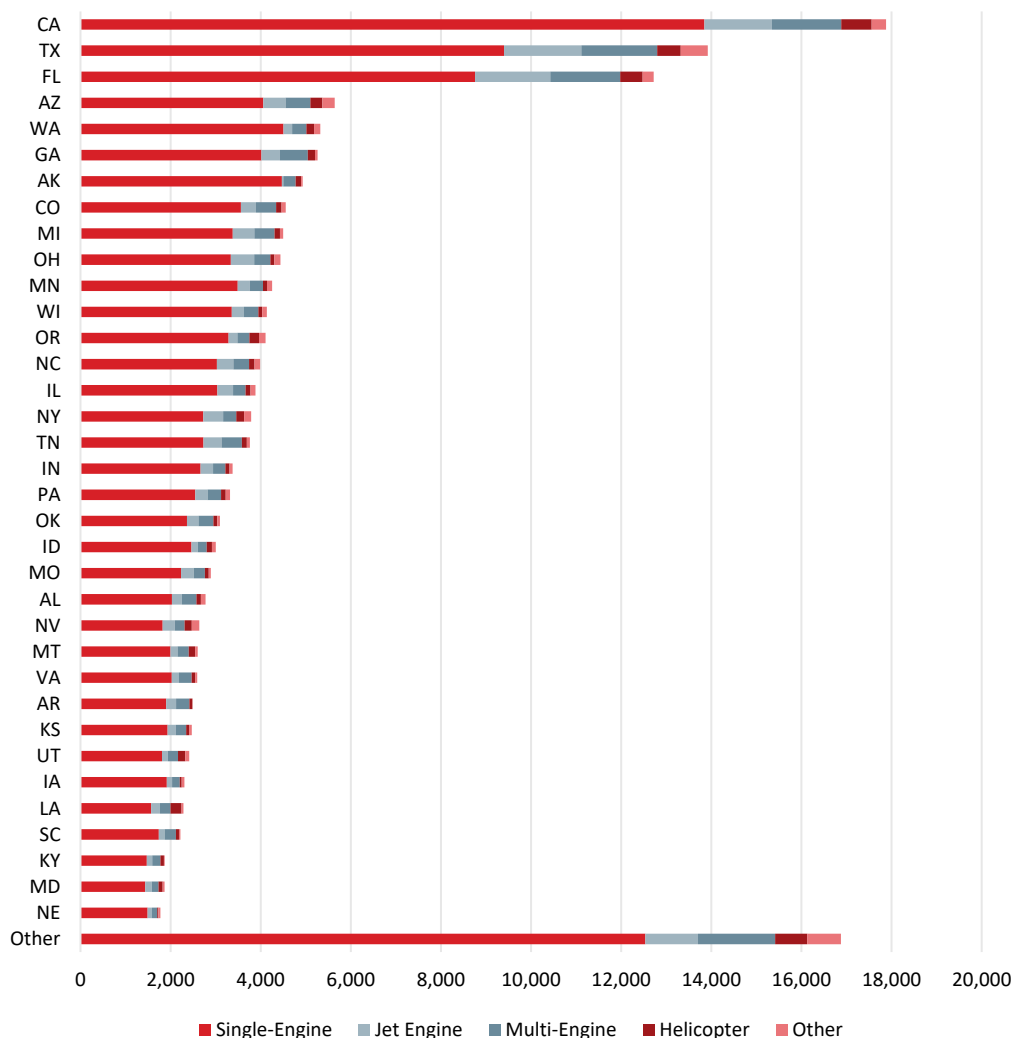
Source: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Terminal Area Forecast (TAF), mba analysis.

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Half of the airports shown above explicitly report recorded hangar shortages or severe, long-term waitlists as of 2025/26. In Southern California, Van Nuys Airport (VNY), John Wayne Airport (SNA), and Long Beach Airport (LGB) are locked in a regional real estate crisis with multi-year backlogs, prompting recent FBO expansions and forcing aircraft onto outdoor tie-downs. Florida faces a similar infrastructure squeeze, where Miami Executive Airport (TMB), Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport (FXE), Melbourne Orlando International Airport (MLB), and DeLand Municipal-Sidney H Taylor Field (DED) maintain extensive waitlists fueled by an increased demand for private aviation following COVID-19. Elsewhere, Centennial Airport (APA) in Colorado and DeKalb-Peachtree Airport (PDK) in Georgia have reported hangar waitlists of several years, and Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport (BJC) has been forced to implement tiered public waitlists by aircraft footprint.

California, Texas, and Florida have the highest number of based GA aircraft in the U.S. (11%, 8%, and 7% of the total U.S. based GA aircraft, respectively).

U.S. GA Based Aircraft by State



Source: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Terminal Area Forecast (TAF), mba analysis.

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Overall, the relatively stable GA fleet size masks important shifts in aircraft mix and activity that are intensifying demand for hangar space, particularly at high-traffic airports and in key states. At the same time, while some of the airports noted above have ongoing/ planned hangar projects, hangar supply has proven slow and difficult to expand, leading to persistent shortages, long waitlists, and greater reliance on outdoor storage. This imbalance highlights hangar capacity as an emerging bottleneck in the GA ecosystem and points to a need for targeted investment and planning to align infrastructure with long-term demand.

For further inquiries about anything covered in this article, please contact mba's Airline & Airport Strategy Team at forecasting@mba.aero.

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