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Appendix K: Airport Service Areas

Service Areas and Access

Accessibility, both by air and ground, is important to efficient use of air-transportation. Overall growth, at both the national and regional level, is expected to continue fueling future travel demand and increase current levels of commercial airport and urban roadway congestion. Total trip times for air transportation has increased over the past decade due to peak hour capacity issues on runways and roads, increased overall use of each system on a daily and annual basis, and increased security demands at the airports and for aircraft operations. The U.S. urban land use pattern is now more spread out, with jobs increasingly dispersed throughout the region. The regional system of airports should reflect the trends in long-term urban development, population and employment patterns.

Regional Growth Management & Airport Service Areas

Population growth and land use development provide both constraints and opportunities. The regional growth management plan, in coordination with local communities, defines when and where the growth is likely to occur, including type and density of development. A tool for alignment of the aviation system with the Development Framework is the use of airport service areas to relate regional and aviation forecasts and plans. Airport service areas have been identified for the Major, Intermediate and Minor system airports; they are used to reflect current forecast demand, at a regional and sub-regional level, for the 2030 planning horizon. The functional roles of the airports, and how the system is operated, results in types of service capabilities that are almost mutually exclusive between the different classes of airports.

There are two types of criteria used in the aviation policy plan to define airport service areas; one reflects air access to local destinations from the particular airport for itinerant aircraft users, and the other reflects local ground access by based-aircraft users from their home or work locations to their preferred airport, or others using MSP air services. The service areas defined by ground access users are identified by surface travel times on the future 2030 highway system.

MSP and Metro Reliever Airport Service Areas

The service area for MSP International Airport reflects the fact that it is the region's only Major airport and provides service to many different types of air-service providers, and different user groups accessing the airport by multimodal surface transportation. Predominant users of the airport can be grouped as follows:

- airline passengers, arriving by personal auto, and they originate their trips in all travel time zones,
- other users, are also characteristic within different travel zones for MSP:
 - within the 15 minute zone for example, a typical user group would be hotel courtesy vehicles and parking shuttle services,
 - within the 30 minute zone would be transit bus, shuttles, taxis and light rail transit,
 - within the 45 minute zone would be rental vehicles,
 - the 60 minute zone is the MSP primary service area within which most of the personal auto access is captured,
 - from 60 to 90 minutes there is a combination of personal auto and for-hire access,
 - within and beyond the 90 minute travel time there is an increase in the for-hire user group.

General ground access indicates service potential; it does not necessarily indicate where passenger, cargo or airline/airport employees origins and destinations occur. Over time cargo users and employees may tend to gravitate to certain areas around the airport, but many passengers will still tend to come from all over the greater metro region. Each of these groups will experience different levels of congestion and bottlenecks on their way to the airport. A separate O/D analysis is long overdue to identify IRCs and other road, turn lane, signal, bridge, signage, or transit links important to the total air trip travel time, and therefore important to be recognized in the TIP. Total trip time for air transportation is important as a cost factor to the region's economy and competitiveness. Multimodal access, at least within certain distances/links to the airport, should be part of an optimized transportation system.

The performance measure used in the NPIAS for access and location of airports at the national level uses a 60 minute criteria for scheduled air service airports, and 30 minutes for general aviation airports. In urban areas the 30 minute criteria is also interpreted as approximately 20 minutes driving time. Figure K-1 depicts the 60 minute threshold defining the MSP 2030 primary travel shed; also depicted is the combined 30 minute travel shed for the system reliever airports. A large portion of the central MUSA area is not within the access area of a reliever airport; developing portions of Scott County and the Lake Minnetonka area are also further removed. MSP access is less to the north and west due to higher density development and congestion.

Metro Collar County Airport Service Areas

Airport role and function reflect the airport's location, airspace in relation to other airports, and navigational/landing aids. Figure K-2 depicts the 60 minute service area for the St. Cloud airport and a combined 30 minute service area for all the remaining public airports in the collar counties. Most of the metro airports [generally] have higher capabilities and levels of service than adjacent-county airports, and are generally expected to retain or attract users from further away.

These service areas can obviously be enlarged or decreased by changes in facility capabilities, system role, or changes in costs and service levels. For example: Forest Lake airport in northern Washington County is expected to have an increased presence in the system through a role change from Special Purpose, to Minor airport; White Bear Lake airstrip, formerly a private airport [Benson's] but now publicly owned, located in Ramsey County may by legal agreement be closed in 2036. The airport at River Falls, in Pierce County-WI was closed to allow development of a new high school - its service area has disappeared from the map. Some of the system airports are essentially being built-out (e.g. Crystal and So. St. Paul), and from a prospective users viewpoint, looking to base their aircraft, those facilities are limited. Until recently, most metro airports have had hangar waiting lists.





Special Purpose Airports Service Areas

A few facilities in the metro area and collar county area have privately-owned, public-use airports that are included in the SASP and RASP as depicted in Figure K-3. Some of these facilities may eventually transition into the national plan of integrated airports (NPIAS) and become eligible for federal airport improvement program funding. This category of airport is not only distinguished by type of ownership, but is usually characterized by turf runways. The category also includes seaplane bases and heliport sites. The Stanton airport is primarily used by glider enthusiasts, and the Forest Lake airport is pursuing construction of a paved runway in order to fulfill its new role as a Minor system facility. The users at these facilities are in general low-time fliers, and as urban development encroaches on private, personal-use airstrips these special purpose facilities may be attractive for relocation due to lower costs than public owned airports.

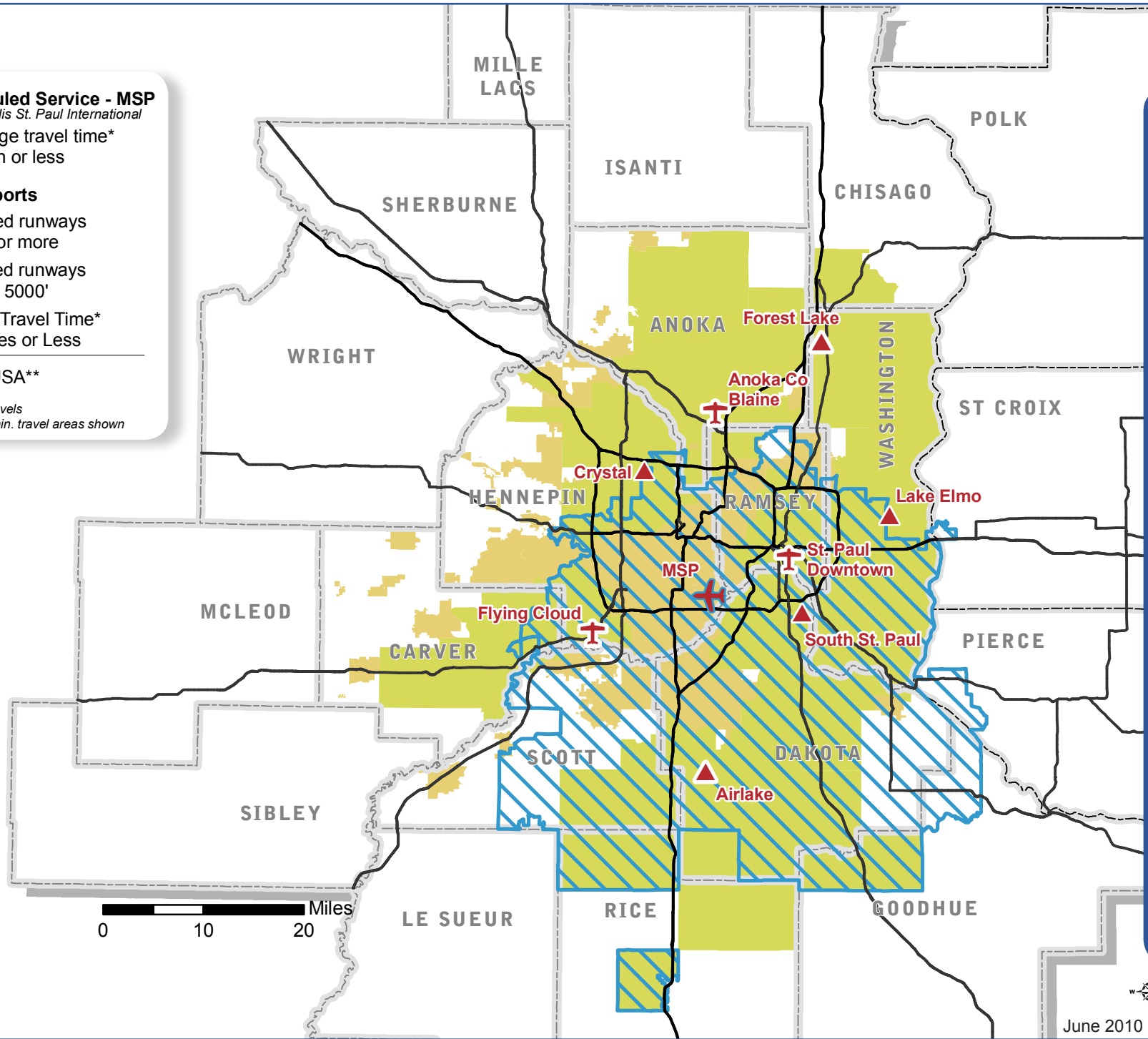
Figure K-1: Metro Area Public Airport Service Areas

Scheduled Service - MSP
 Minneapolis St. Paul International
 Average travel time*
 60 min or less

Metro Public Airports


-  with paved runways of 5000' or more
-  with paved runways less than 5000'
-  Average Travel Time* 30 Minutes or Less
-  2030 MUSA**

* by TAZ - 2030 PM peak levels
 ** Only MUSA beyond 30 min. travel areas shown







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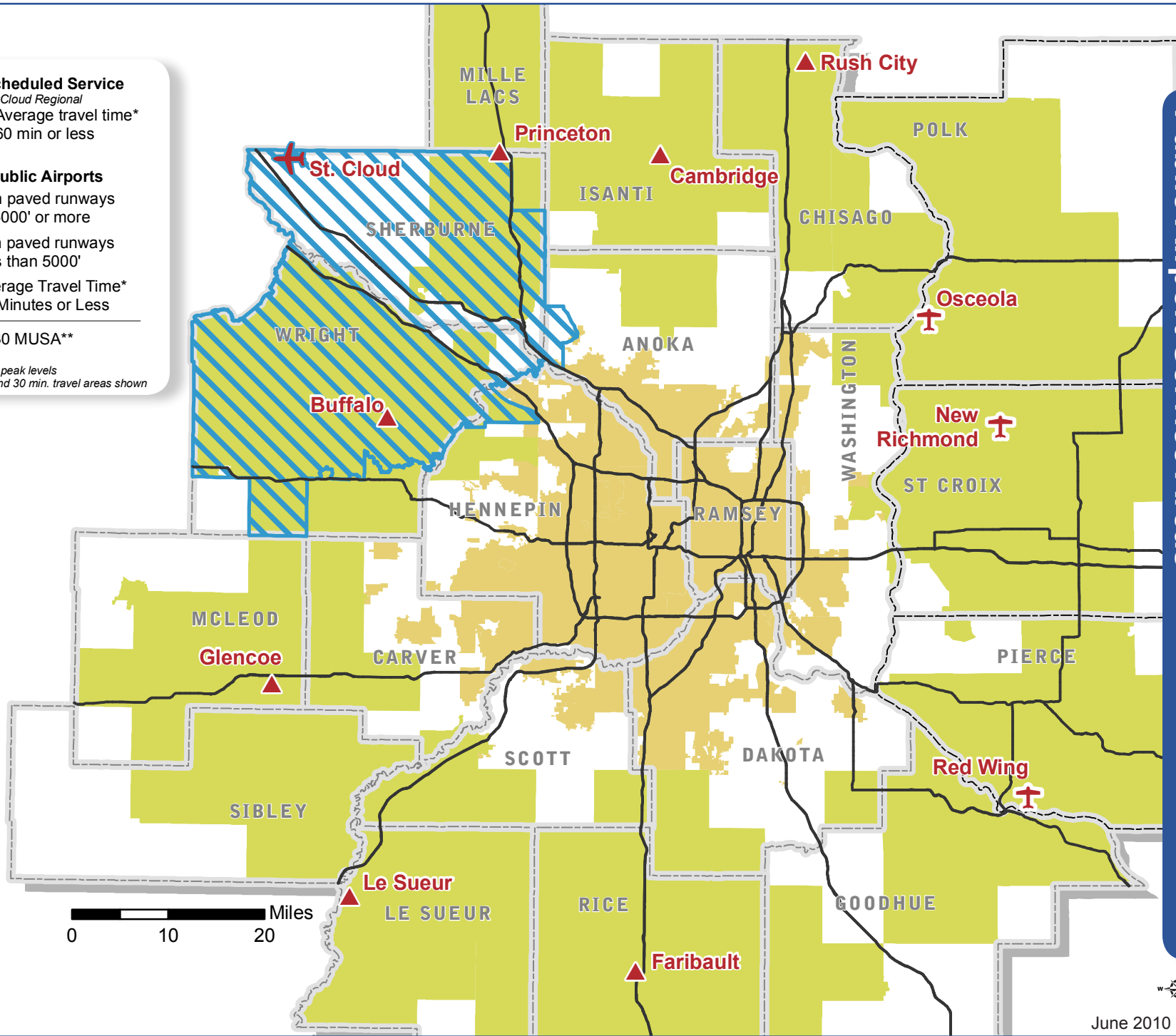
Figure K-2: Collar County – Public Airport Service Areas

 **Scheduled Service**
St. Cloud Regional
Average travel time*
60 min or less

Collar Co. Public Airports

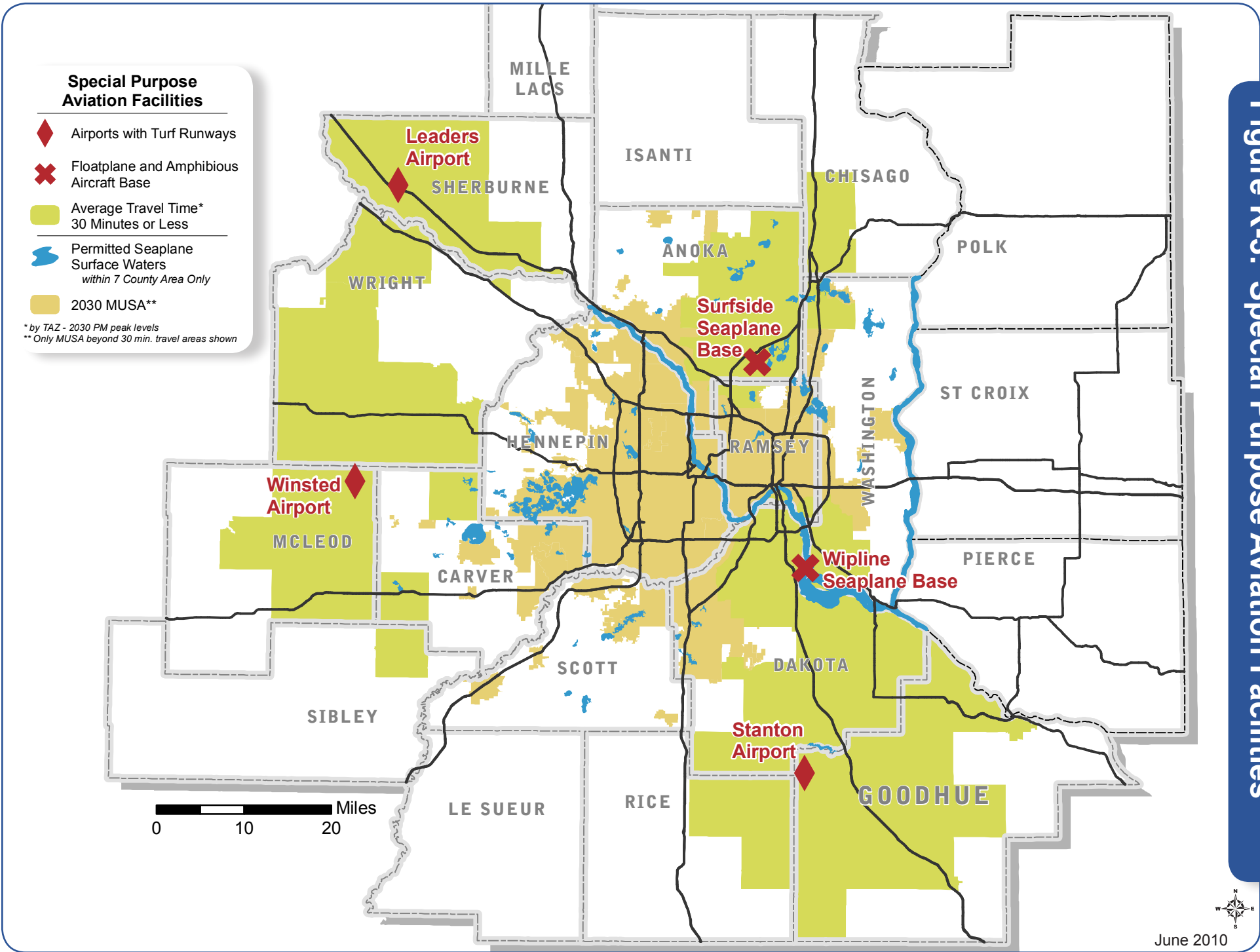
-  with paved runways of 5000' or more
-  with paved runways less than 5000'
-  Average Travel Time* 30 Minutes or Less
-  2030 MUSA**

* by TAZ - 2030 PM peak levels
** Only MUSA beyond 30 min. travel areas shown



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Figure K-3: Special Purpose Aviation Facilities



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