



# City of Austin

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Aviation Department

Austin-Bergstrom International Airport

3600 Presidential Blvd., Ste. 411, Austin, Texas 78719

512/530-2242 Fax: 512/530-7686

The Honorable David P. Pekoske  
Administrator  
Transportation Security Administration  
601 South 12th Street – East Building  
Arlington VA 20598  
Via email: [david.pekoske@dhs.gov](mailto:david.pekoske@dhs.gov)

Dear Administrator Pekoske:

The post-pandemic economic growth in the Central Texas region has resulted in one of the fastest growing populations in the country. As the region's economy continues to dramatically grow, the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (AUS) has been the beneficiary of substantial demand in air service and is a key contributor to the community through providing air service and creating tens of thousands direct and indirect jobs. By March 2022, AUS will have 280 daily departures, up from 215 in the same month in 2019 – the airport's current busiest year on record. AUS is currently outpacing all other major airports in the United States in terms of flight departures (*Figure 1*). Passenger traffic has already been regularly exceeding pre-pandemic counts and is forecasted to only grow higher to over 35,000 passengers per day, exceeding our high growth pandemic recovery scenarios (*Figure 2*).

AUS is working hard to balance the needs of our travelers and business partners during this period of unprecedented growth while simultaneously navigating limited staffing levels that have caused negative impacts to the customer experience. AUS is grateful for the partnership with TSA, and to have received 40 supplementary Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) as part of the National Deployment Force (NDF) program in October 2021. The term for these supplementary officers at AUS is set to expire in March. This expiration comes at the same time select airlines are set to add 30 new daily flights at AUS. For the reasons set forth below, as well as the current passenger forecast, we are concerned the current levels of staffing are not going to be adequate to meet the needs of the Airport and Central Texas travelers. We are respectfully requesting TSA consider the following:

- 1. Extend the end date of the current supplemental TSOs at AUS.**
- 2. Increase the current number of supplemental TSOs to a total of 100 supplemental TSOs.**
- 3. Provide additional K-9 canine teams from other airports to expedite screening.**
- 4. Upgrade the current AT x-ray technology to CT technology.**

While strong demand has meant significant strides for the Airport in terms of new and increased service, it has also stressed the capacity of the Airport, specifically at our security checkpoints. One of our top priorities is ensuring swift and reliable processing at TSA checkpoints, which serves a dual mission of excellent customer service and reliable security operations. Unfortunately, long lines that stretch through the terminal and even to curbside on peak days has become a normal

occurrence at AUS, resulting in decreased passenger satisfaction as well as creating the potential soft targets. Passengers missing flights due to security screening lines is an issue at the present time. We fear these issues will only get worse as the spring and summer airline schedules increase passenger demand. We anticipate these issues would only be exacerbated by the expiration of the NDF program and reduced staffing levels.

AUS is committed to providing world-class security and customer experience but is in dire need of assistance and support from all business partners to meet the increased level of air service. Sufficient TSA staffing and upgraded technology are essential components to our shared goals. I welcome the opportunity to collaborate with our partners at TSA to implement solutions for continued success.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please contact Ghizlane Badawi, Chief Operations Officer, at (512) 530-8846 or [Ghizlane.Badawi@austintexas.gov](mailto:Ghizlane.Badawi@austintexas.gov).

Respectfully,



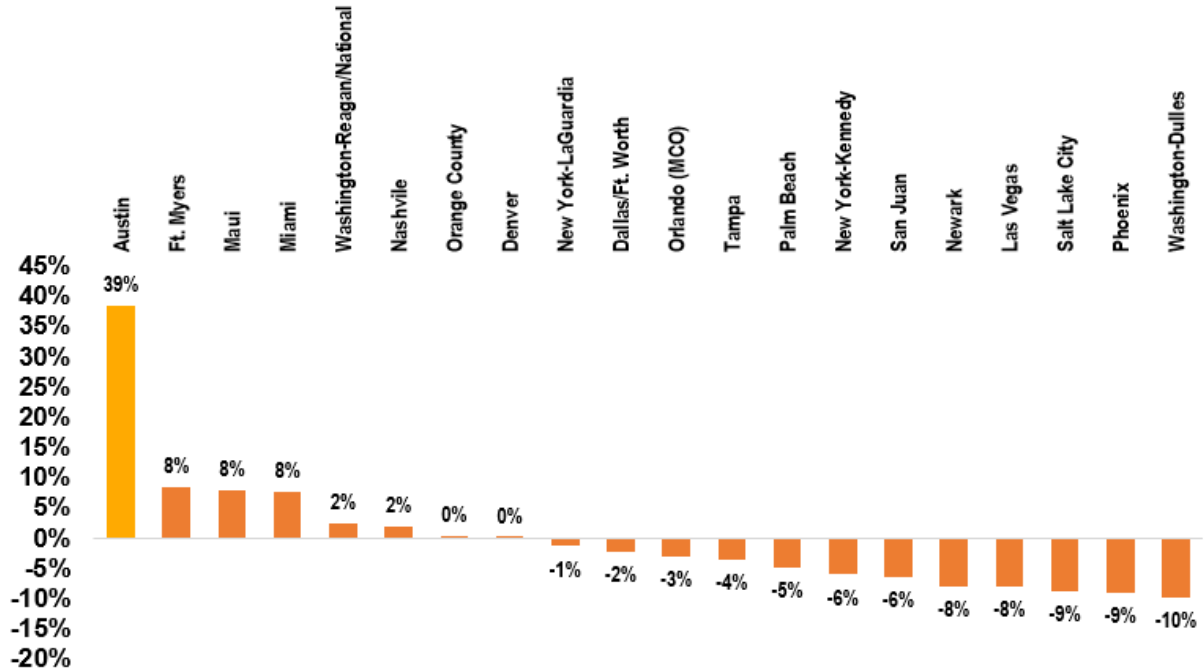
Jaqueline Yaft  
Chief Executive Officer  
Austin-Bergstrom International Airport

CC:

Brian Hyer, Department of Homeland Security Office of Intergovernmental Affairs  
The Honorable John Cornyn  
The Honorable Ted Cruz  
The Honorable John Carter  
The Honorable Lloyd Doggett  
The Honorable Michael McCaul  
The Honorable Chip Roy  
The Honorable Pete Sessions  
The Honorable Roger Williams

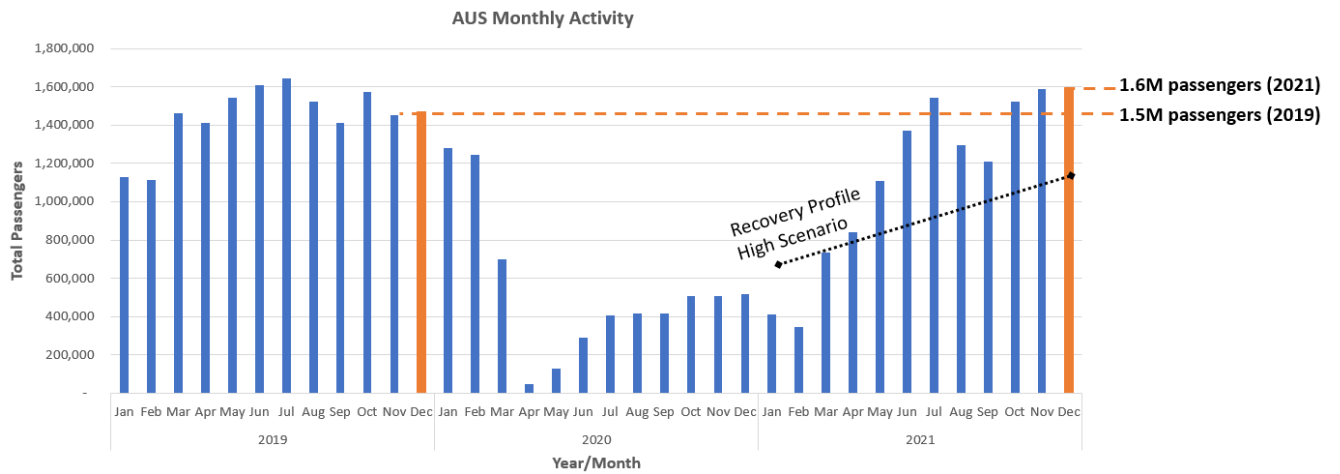
Figure 1

### January 2022 Scheduled Flight Change Vs. January 2019 for Largest 50 Airports in U.S. (Top 20 Shown)



Source: Diio Mi

Figure 2



Source: City of Austin Department of Aviation