

Top Growth in Airport Operations — ALEX Intelligence 2026

Denver Leads U.S. in Airport Growth at 40.0%

AI-driven infrastructure momentum reshapes commercial aviation's future

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THE DATA

40.0%

Change in Airport Operations Since 2019

Denver-Aurora-Centennial, CO, recorded the highest growth in airport operations among all U.S. metros since 2019.

This 40.0% surge in airport operations—measured by NAICS 488119 (Other airport operations)—signals a structural shift in how commercial aviation infrastructure is being deployed and scaled. It is not merely about passenger volume; it reflects a deepening integration of AI, automation, and logistics infrastructure that supports emerging space and aviation ecosystems. The growth is rooted in expanded air cargo, drone integration, and real-time operational AI systems that optimize runway use, maintenance scheduling, and ground handling.

01

AI Infrastructure Is the Real Growth Engine

As AI systems learn from operational data in real time, they create positive feedback loops: more operations → more data → better AI → more efficiency → more operations. This self-reinforcing cycle is the true engine behind the 40.0% figure.



02

Growth Is a Proxy for AI Maturity

This is not a story about real estate or population growth. It's about operational intelligence. The metro with the highest AI maturity in ground operations will be the one best positioned to integrate with space infrastructure.

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