

A TEXAS-SIZED HOME FOR ADVANCED AIR MOBILITY INNOVATION



Larger eVTOLs, like the one in the AI rendering above, could be used as an extension of existing public transportation, offering “last mile” connectivity to workplaces. Conceptual rendering by Port San Antonio.

BY TRACY IDELL HAMILTON – March 4, 2025

For more information, visit www.portsanantonio.us

TECH PORT
SAN ANTONIO

SAN ANTONIO, TX – Port San Antonio took part in an advanced air mobility (AAM) showcase in Austin on March 4, joining state lawmakers, transportation executives and industry experts as Texas positions itself to become a destination for early adoption of this new aviation technology, which will transform the way people and goods move about within cities and between nearby communities.

AAM will save time, boost productivity, lower infrastructure costs and even save lives.

Port San Antonio is uniquely positioned to help advance the adoption of AAM by leveraging its 1,900-acre campus, known as Tech Port, its real estate development expertise and its internationally recognized ability to bring together strategic industry, research and government partners to test, validate and ultimately deploy this next-gen air transport.

Central to AAM is the development of electric vertical take-off and landing vehicles, or eVTOLs. Colloquially referred to as “air taxis,” these are being conceived by designers and engineers in many forms—from small two- and four-seaters to multi-passenger transport to unmanned drones for the transportation of diverse types of cargoes.

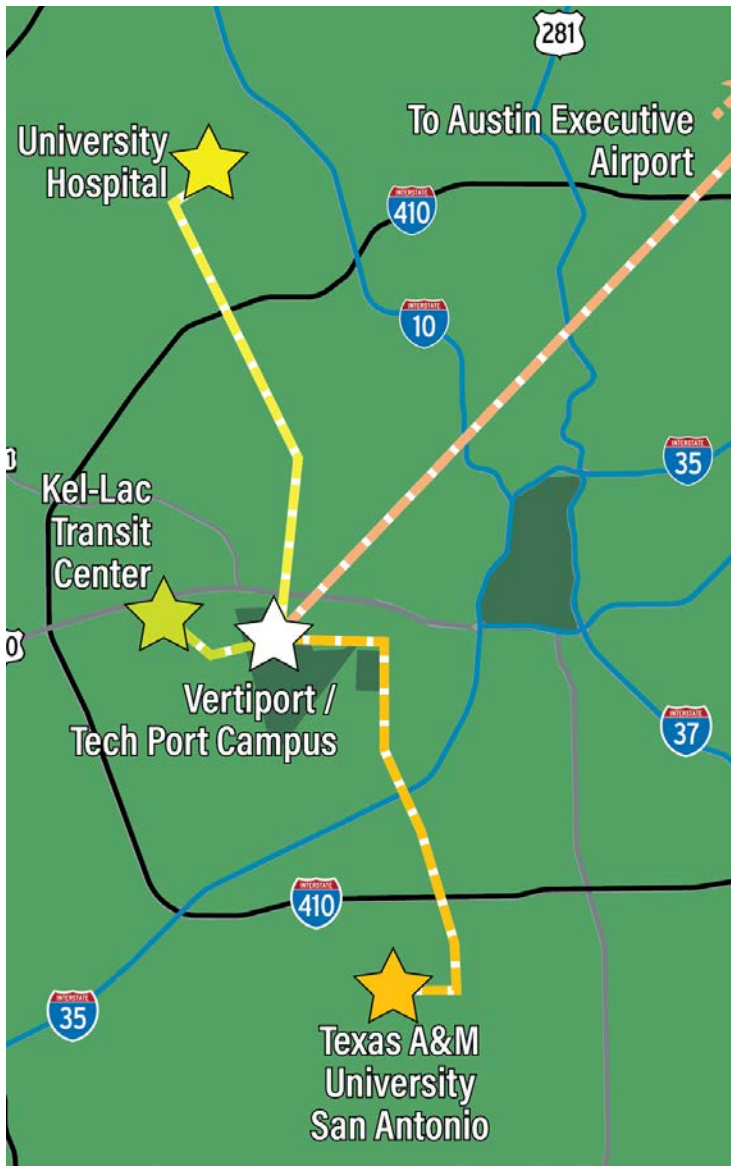
These new aircraft will largely fly in the airspace below 5,000 feet above ground level, far below traditional airspace corridors. While the FAA works to define safety regulations for this airspace, these craft will need secure places to test routes and develop use cases.



The Port team joined an advanced air mobility showcase in Austin on March 4. Texas lawmakers, transportation executives and industry experts learned more about ongoing work on the Tech Port campus and plans ahead to serve as an important testbed for the new technology.



The compact eVTOL prototype, above left, could shuttle passengers between urban, suburban and rural locations, ranging from less than 50 miles to approximately 150 miles. eVTOLs, like the AI rendering in the above right image, can move cargo, including time-sensitive and high-value goods such as emergency supplies, more quickly than ground transportation, and with greater access to remote and difficult to reach locations. Credit: Wisk Aero (left) and conceptual rendering by Port San Antonio (right).



Port San Antonio has developed several potential eVTOL test routes from its Tech Port campus. For more details on the use cases these routes would support, see the enclosed insert.

Site work at Tech Port is already underway to develop what could be the country's first purpose-built vertiport, with landing pads, charging stations and other necessary infrastructure to accommodate eVTOLs and other craft under development. The Port has also proposed several air routes to support eVTOL development and testing.

The proposed paths will serve as early test cases to address different use scenarios: as an extension of mass transit, to accommodate the logistics needs within the Port campus, to connect academic and industry ecosystems, and to support emergency operations and first responders.

"From a use case perspective, our value is our 1,900 acres, and the fact that we control all of it," said Port San Antonio President and CEO Jim Perschbach. "For decades we've been collaborating with our Air Force neighbors on Kelly Airfield, whose uses include hosting very large aircraft sustainment operations on our side of the runway. That makes it relatively easy to coordinate so that eVTOL companies can test their technologies."

The Port has already cleared almost 50 acres of land alongside its large industrial airport as the site of the consolidated air service facility, which, in addition to the planned vertiport, will be the new location for fixed-base operations (FBO) that support traditional aircraft.

The vertiport is among the key components of the defense and industrial research campus the Port is developing over the next several years, bringing together military, commercial enterprises and entrepreneurs, research institutions and the community. Validating the Port's vision, the international Association of University Research Parks singled out Tech Port for its 2024 Outstanding Innovation district award.

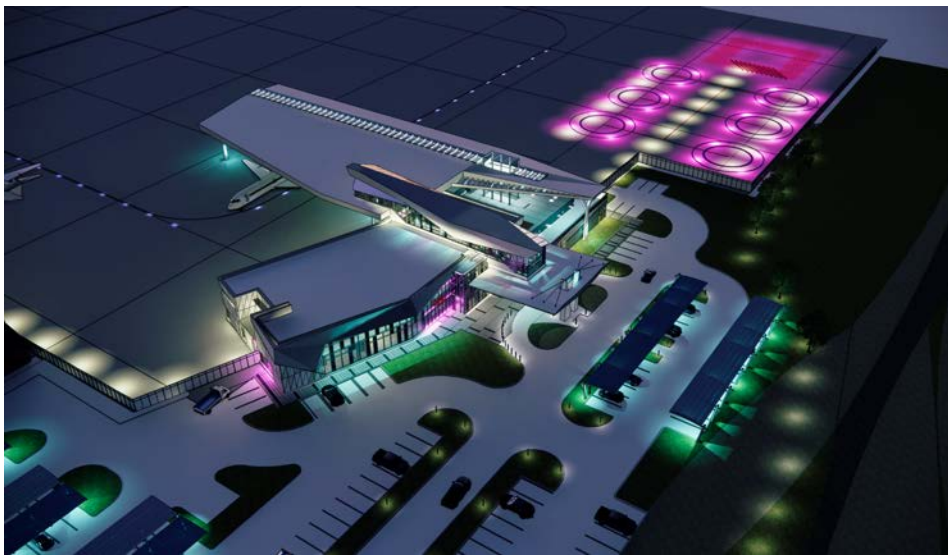
Within that growing hub, the vertiport will:

- attract innovative new technologies, companies and talent to the campus;
- spur collaboration among industry, academia and government;
- facilitate transportation; and
- ease infrastructure demands.



Site work on the Port's new consolidated air services facility began in 2024. Credit: Port San Antonio.

Already home to more than 80 public- and private-sector enterprises that employ more than 18,000 people in aviation, cybersecurity, national defense, robotics, global logistics, manufacturing and education, Tech Port will see significant growth with the development of its innovation campus.



A rendering depicts a vision of a vertiport that's part of Port San Antonio's concept for the Defense Industrial Research Campus of the Future. Credit: Port San Antonio.

garages," said Perschbach. "This would benefit not just Tech Port and its customers, but can serve as a model that can be applied to other growing centers of employment across San Antonio and the U.S."

Perschbach is a longtime advocate for AAM. Last year, he hosted a panel discussion on AAM at the Boeing Center at Tech Port to help the community become more familiar with the technology.

He also served on the Texas Department of Transportation's Urban Air Mobility Task Force and later its Advanced Air Mobility Advisory Committee, which late last year issued recommendations for lawmakers to encourage the State of Texas to become a leading destination for early AAM adoption and development.

This projected increase in commuter traffic further underscores the value of AAM as an important solution to enhance connectivity between the campus and the surrounding community while reducing infrastructure costs.

"As an extension of existing mass transit, large, multi-passenger eVOTLs can relieve ground transportation congestion and associated roadway construction and maintenance, including the need to build multi-million-dollar structured parking



The vertiport is just one part of Port San Antonio's planned defense industrial research campus. Credit: Port San Antonio.

As part of that vision, Texas leaders and academic institutions such as Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi's Autonomous Research Institute are advocating for the FAA's planned Center for Advanced Aviation Technologies to be located in the Lone Star State. As a complement to the work being undertaken on the Tech Port campus, such a hub would bring together industry, government and academia to further develop advanced aviation technologies.

As Texas positions itself to lead, companies across the U.S. are racing to meet milestones as the FAA works to certify the first eVOTL craft this year and refine design and safety guidelines for the construction of vertiports.

"The future of aviation will be here sooner than we think," said Perschbach. "Just like space travel or even smart phones, we are once again turning yesterday's science fiction into today's reality.

"How soon we get there will depend in no small part by how well we work together: the engineers, the designers, the researchers, the planners, the industries and ultimately, the millions of people who will benefit from this life-changing innovation. As we continue to move forward in growing our Tech Port campus, we foresee being a central pillar that brings together a thriving community of innovators who will be writing the next chapters in aviation history."



Representatives from Port San Antonio, Boeing, Wisk Aero and the University of Texas at San Antonio engage in a community conversation on Advanced Air Mobility, May 2024.

**WATCH THE
CONVERSATION:**

