

Airbus Aerial Conducts Runway Mapping at World's Busiest Airport



Airbus Aerial, the commercial aerial services, has recently conducted runway mapping and inspections at the world's busiest airport – Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International (ATL).

Officials from Hartsfield-Jackson requested Airbus Aerial conduct mapping of its south runway to help it assess the benefits of using the aerial service to conduct critical runway inspections. The airport has engaged in this work in the past but Aerial was able to provide the highest levels of data quality, accuracy, and simple cloud based tools to easily interact with and share this valuable information.

The airport has held its ranking as the world's busiest airport since 2012, both in passengers and number of flights, by accommodating 100 million passengers (more than

260,000 passengers daily) and 950,119 flights annually.

Due to the high volume of activity in this class B airspace, a special clearance from the Federal Aviation Administration to fly drones in this airspace was required before any mapping work could begin.

In conducting the runway mapping, the Aerial team used a senseFly eBee Plus drone with specialised RTK GPS capabilities to capture aerial images of the runway with an accuracy of <5cm. The eBee Plus is autonomous, can cover up to 40km² (15.4mi²) in a single flight, and acquire images with a ground sampling distance down to 1cm (0.4in) per pixel. This drone is fully automated and can map an entire runway in one flight with a single operator there to provide safety oversight, offering considerable time and cost savings.

Once imagery was in-hand, Airbus Aerial engineers developed a comprehensive assessment report for airport officials, including 3D mapping, contour layers, and traditional high resolution imagery, all within Aerial's cloud based geospatial platform to ensure ease of access, use and sharing across airport officials.

The mapping work at Hartsfield-Jackson airport is but the latest engagement for Airbus Aerial. The company has conducted beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) inspections of power lines for the Southern Company; and they also played a critical role in recovery efforts following Hurricane Harvey by providing leading insurance companies access to its aerial data. More recently, Airbus assisted catastrophe response teams in mitigating the destruction caused by the Thomas Wildfires in Ventura County, California, which burned more than 281,893 acres.

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