



Flying Beyond | DCA Air Service Analysis

Washington, D.C. is one of the largest metropolitan areas in the United States and the nation's capital – making it an important destination in the U.S. air travel network. Since the late 1960s, Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (DCA) has been subject to a federally-imposed perimeter rule that limits the number of flights that land or take off outside a 1,250-mile radius of DCA. It's the only airport in the country subject to this federally-imposed rule and federal constraints on the number of allowed flights. Airports in major destinations, such as Austin, Texas, Los Angeles, California, Salt Lake City, Utah and Seattle, Washington are outside of this artificial perimeter and have a limited number of direct flights to and from DCA.

An extensive study finds the current perimeter rule no longer serves its original 1960s-era purpose and should be reimagined for modern-day air travel. In fact, the study shows that the unintended consequences of the perimeter rule are harming consumers and making flying into and out of DCA more expensive and time consuming. The study also found that DCA is under-utilizing its capacity compared to other major airports in the top 10 U.S. metros.

Adding 28 Flights at DCA Will Make a Big Difference for Consumers Traveling to and from the Nation's Capital.

- Increasing access to in- and beyond-perimeter markets will allow more than 2,000 daily passengers to be connected by non-stop flights to those destinations.
- Reduce flight ticket prices by an average of \$60 per ticket through increased supply and competition.
- Improve passenger productivity by reducing passenger time spent on flights.

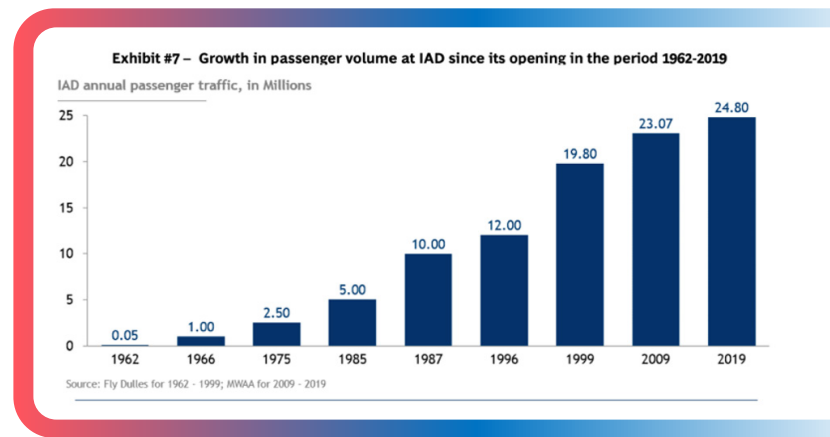
The Current Perimeter Rule is Outdated.

The perimeter rule's original 1966 objectives were three-fold:

- Protect growth at Dulles National Airport (IAD).
- Protect in-perimeter communities' access to Washington, D.C.
- Protect DCA's air service reliability.

But the air travel ecosystem in Washington, D.C. has changed substantially in the past 60 years, as has growth in the Northern Virginia region, with significant shifts across the consumer, economic, technological and industry landscape...

- > Air traffic in the U.S. has increased 10-fold since the 1960s.
- > Demand at IAD has increased dramatically since Northern Virginia's population has more than tripled since the 1970s.
- > Today's aircraft are faster, more efficient and quieter than ever before.
- > Beyond-perimeter cities have seen tremendous economic growth. They are now home to 28 percent of Fortune 500 companies – doubling the 14 percent from 1966.

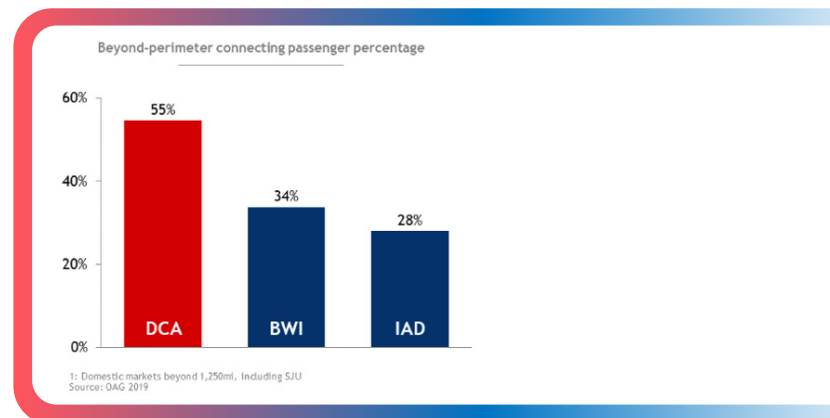


Not Only is the Perimeter Rule Outdated – It's Ineffective.

- > The perimeter rule at DCA has incentivized carriers to fly more regional aircraft, which on average, experience a higher rate of disruption. DCA experiences 25 percent more cancellations than similar metros.
- > Over the past several years, IAD has seen significant passenger growth, even when exceptions to the perimeter rule were granted at DCA.

The Perimeter Rule is Costing Consumers More Time and Money, and Hurting the Environment.

- > Washington D.C. has the most expensive domestic ticket prices compared across the top 10 U.S. metropolitan areas. Less competition costs consumers more than \$500 million annually in above-average flight prices.
- > Low supply-demand ratio also forces passengers to connect more frequently, costing them \$200 million in lost productivity.
- > The perimeter rule also results in DCA emitting the highest CO₂ footprint per passenger among airports of the top U.S. metropolitan areas.



[Read the full study HERE.](#)