



ELECTRA DEMONSTRATES REVOLUTIONARY AIRPORT OPERATIONS WITH ULTRA-SHORT TAKEOFF AIRCRAFT USING HELICOPTER-STYLE PROCEDURES

News / Manufacturer



Electra announced the successful completion of first-of-its-kind flight operations from a heliport located on the commercial airport ramp at Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport. The demonstration highlighted the unique capabilities of Electra's fixed-wing Ultra Short aircraft to operate from compact landing areas using helicopter-style instrument procedures, enabling safe, affordable, and reliable regional air service while reducing demand on congested airport runways.

Using Electra's hybrid-electric EL2 Ultra Short aircraft, the flight campaign validated point-in-space approaches and dedicated instrument routings across multiple Virginia airports, including Virginia Tech/Montgomery Regional Airport (KBCB), Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport (KROA), and Allan C. Perkinson/Blackstone Army Airfield (KBKT).

At these locations, as well as additional sites in Newport News and Richmond, the aircraft operated from heliports, vertiports, taxiways, and other compact landing areas traditionally reserved for helicopters. The demonstrations highlighted the EL2's ability to access alternative operating sites while maintaining the safety and reliability required for regional air transportation.

The milestone flights were conducted in collaboration with the FAA's eVTOL and Advanced Air Mobility Integration Pilot Program (eIPP), the Virginia Smart Airspace Program, Virginia Tech, the Virginia Department of Aviation, and PennDOT, the lead eIPP participant for Virginia operations.

Together, these achievements represent a significant step toward integrating fixed-wing Ultra Short aircraft into the National Airspace System through low-cost, scalable operating procedures tailored to the capabilities of next-generation electric and hybrid-electric aircraft. The work also lays the foundation for future commercial operations of Electra's flagship EL9 aircraft.

Marc Allen, CEO of Electra commented: "What happened in Virginia provides a glimpse into the future of flight. We showed that fixed-wing, Ultra Short aircraft can use vertical flight landing areas and a new generation of instrument procedures to reach places conventional airplanes were never designed to access. This will both bring air service closer to the passenger and also expand capacity at commercial airports in completely non-congestive ways. Direct Aviation is not just about a new aircraft, but a new operating model that brings air travel closer to communities and saves travelers huge amounts of time on their journeys."

Tombo Jones, Director of Virginia Tech's Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership stated: "This is the kind of practical flight testing needed to move Advanced Air Mobility from concept to operational reality. The goal is not just to fly a route, but to generate the data and operational insight needed to help new aircraft types integrate safely, efficiently, and repeatably into the airspace system."

Dr. Parker Vascik, Director of Product Strategy at Electra said: "This is a breakthrough moment for Advanced Air Mobility. All in all, we demonstrated the core enabling principle of Ultra Short aircraft feeding into major airports in a manner that complements rather than burdens the air traffic system—by accessing airspace and airport surfaces currently underutilized by conventional traffic. This is a first step toward developing guidelines and procedures for Ultra Short operations at major airports and novel access points."

Electra's latest flight demonstrations build on its leadership role in the Virginia Smart Airspace Program, an innovative initiative focused on developing scalable instrument flight procedures and expanding access to new operating locations for Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) aircraft. The program aims to enable next-generation aircraft to operate safely, efficiently, and predictably through the use of point-in-space procedures, dedicated routings, integrated airport and vertiport operations, and data-driven validation.

Throughout the flight campaign, Electra and its partners collected operational data to assess aircraft performance against procedural requirements and support future evaluations of fixed-wing AAM operations using helicopter-style instrument flight procedures. The effort represents more than a year of collaboration among Smart Airspace partners and the FAA to advance operational concepts tailored to Ultra Short aircraft.

As part of the program, the team developed flexible instrument approaches for heliports and vertiports, designed and validated novel approach and departure procedures, and explored new air traffic management concepts that enable Ultra Short aircraft to operate safely and efficiently from off-runway locations at airports. Together, these advancements are helping establish the framework for integrating a new generation of electric and hybrid-electric aircraft into the National Airspace System.

The EL9 Ultra Short is designed to deliver helicopter-like access with the benefits of fixed-wing flight, advancing Electra's Rule of Six: the combination of expanded access, quiet operations,

meaningful payload, practical range, uncompromising safety, and affordability needed to make Advanced Air Mobility practical at scale.

22 SEPTEMBER 2026

ARTICLE LINK:

<https://virginia.50skyshades.com/news/manufacturer/electra-demonstrates-revolutionary-airport-operations-with-ultra-short-takeoff-aircraft-using-helicopter-style-procedures>