

United set to launch air taxis in San Francisco

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Passengers in the Bay Area could soon take flying taxis to the airport as United Airlines and Eve Air Mobility announced they will launch an eVTOL air taxi service in San Francisco in 2026.

The project was announced on June 14, detailing the two companies' plans to bring convenient and efficient commuter transportation to San Francisco and the Bay Area. They claimed to be working with officials across sectors in the area to help deliver electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft services within the next three years.

United Airlines first partnered with Eve Air Mobility last year when it invested \$15 million into the aircraft manufacturer—a subsidiary of Brazilian planemaker Embraer—alongside an agreement to purchase 200 aircraft from the firm and the option to buy 200 more. Eve specializes in eVTOL aircraft, also called flying electric taxis, resembling a cross between a helicopter and a drone.

The two companies hope to have launched an eVTOL service for San Francisco residents and visitors by 2026. According to Eve, the aircraft will have a range of up to 60 miles, allowing them to operate many commuter routes within the San Francisco Bay area.

Several routes will likely ferry passengers back and forth from San Francisco International Airport (SFO) to various locations across the surrounding area, vastly reducing journey times and carbon emissions for those passengers.

“Our shared goal is to provide residents and visitors to the San Francisco Bay area with efficient and cost-competitive transportation in one of the most densely populated urban areas in the U.S.,” said Andre Stein, co-CEO of Eve Air Mobility. “The Bay Area is perfect for perfect for eVTOL flights given its size, traffic, focus on sustainability, innovation, and commitment to add other options for mobility.”

Michael Leskinen, president of United Airlines Ventures, said: “Urban Air Mobility has the potential to revolutionize how United customers work, live, and travel. Eve’s proposed route is a critical first step towards making this all-electric and quiet commute a reality for Bay Area residents.”

United isn’t the only airline to have invested in eVTOL manufacturers in recent months. Virgin Atlantic has partnered with U.K.-based Vertical Aerospace to launch commercial operations in London and Manchester. At the same time, Brazilian carriers GOL and Azul Airlines, and Japan Airlines plan to launch flying electric taxi services over the next few years.

Meanwhile, United Airlines has also partnered with another eVTOL firm – Archer Aviation – to launch air taxi services in Chicago in 2025. The proposed route will transport passengers between Chicago O’Hare International Airport (ORD) and Vertiport Chicago—North America’s largest heliport—near the city’s downtown area.

The companies claim that the new service, which will use Archer Aviation’s Midnight electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, will cut the journey time between Chicago’s principal airport and downtown from over an hour during peak rush hour to around ten minutes.

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