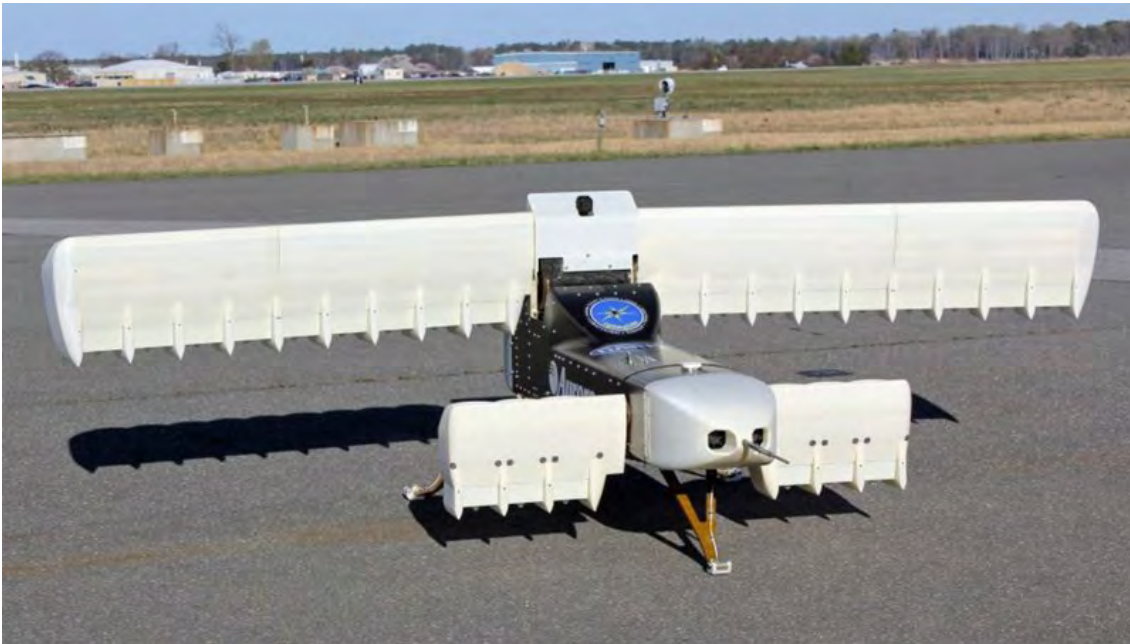


Aurora's X-plane takes to the air

Aerospace Testing International



A demonstration flight of a scale prototype of a concept 'X-plane' has been successfully completed when Aurora Flight Sciences flew its 20% scale demonstrator LightningStrike.

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency [DARPA] selected the design for development with a goal of creating an aircraft that flies more efficiently than an airplane and hovers more efficiently than a helicopter. Aurora's flight announcement contained few details, such as the duration of the flight, the altitude reached, etc.

The design, with ducted fans between the wings, hopes to improve on the shortcomings of fixed-wing aircraft, which can fly fast, but are not good at hovering. Helicopters are excellent at hovering, but lack forward speed capabilities.

The most successful of the few hybrid aircraft that can hover and fly fast are the Boeing AV-8 Harrier and V-22 Osprey, and Lockheed's F-35B. All are expensive and complex and DARPA wants to both improve flight and hovering characteristics and simplify the construction. Click here to see a video of the demonstration flight.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4jWzANJufc>

