Bell Awarded Funding for Phase 1B of DARPA Speed and Runway Independent Technologies (SPRINT) X-Plane Program



Bell completes conceptual design phase for X-plane program

Fort Worth, Texas (May 28, 2023) Bell Textron Inc., a Textron Inc. (NYSE: TXT) company, has been down-selected for Phase 1B of Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Speed and Runway Independent Technologies (SPRINT) X-Plane program. The SPRINT program intends to design, build, and fly an X-Plane, an experimental aircraft to demonstrate enabling technologies and integrated concepts necessary for a transformational combination of aircraft speed and runway independence for the next generation of air mobility platforms. In Phase 1A, Bell executed conceptual design review and will move into preliminary design efforts for the SPRINT X-plane.

“Bell is honored to be selected for the next phase of this revolutionary program and ready to execute preliminary

design,” said Jason Hurst, executive vice president, Engineering, Bell. “We completed our initial risk reduction efforts with our sled test demonstration at Holloman Air Force Base, and we look forward to building on this success with our continued work with DARPA.”

Bell completed risk reduction testing at Holloman Air Force Base in late 2023, showcasing folding rotor, integrated propulsion, and flight control technologies. Bell is building on its investment in High-Speed Vertical Takeoff and Landing (HSVTOL) technology and past X-plane experience to inform the X-plane development for this program.

Bell’s HSVTOL technology blends the hover capability of a helicopter with the speed (400+ kts), range, and survivability of jet aircraft. Bell has developed high-speed vertical lift technology for more than 85 years, pioneering innovative VTOL configurations like the X-14, X-22, XV-3 and XV-15 for NASA, the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force, and continues to build on its proven history of fast flight from the Bell X-1.