

STRATEGIC PLAN

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-WILLARD AIRPORT
CHAMPAIGN/URBANA, IL



TABLE OF CONTENTS



PURPOSE OF REPORT	3
VISION, MISSION, AND CORE VALUES.....	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND ACTION ITEMS	6
AIR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	8
CURRENT SERVICE OVERVIEW.....	11
TARGETS FOR NEW SERVICE.....	13
AIR SERVICE "CHAMPIONS" AND COMMUNITY FUNDING	20
RENTAL CAR SERVICE FACILITY.....	26
ENHANCED TERMINAL ENVIRONMENT	28
GROUND TRANSPORTATION REGULATIONS.....	32
GREENHOUSE FARMING FEASIBILITY.....	36
SOLAR POWER GENERATION	39
EXPANDED CUSTOMS OPERATIONS	42
ON-FIELD PARTNERSHIPS.....	44
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS.....	49
AOPA FLY-IN EVENT	64

PURPOSE OF REPORT



This strategic plan details action items for the University of Illinois – Willard Airport to undertake over the next three to five years. It is based on Volaire Aviation Consulting’s previous strategic options report, published in May of 2020. The Airport’s executive committee chose the final options to be included in this strategic plan based on that research and its own recommendations following that report’s publishing.

The items included in this strategic plan were developed before the full extent of the COVID-19 crisis was apparent. However, most of the options are longer term strategies. The action items included in this final report are viable in the post-COVID-19 aviation industry. It is too early to tell the full impact of the pandemic on Willard Airport or the industry. But this report is designed to position the Airport for recovery.

The action items included in this strategic plan come from a combination of sources including independent analysis by consultants at Volaire Aviation, input from the airport advisory board, input from Airport and University officials, suggestions from airport stakeholders, advancement of options from the last strategic plan, and experience and expertise from other airports. Each recommendation is designed to be actionable upon direction of Airport leadership and the University of Illinois. The financial impact of some of the recommendations is clear, while much more work will need to be completed before the financial impact of others is fully understood. This report recommends certain strategic options without a fully-vetted financial plan in order for work to commence quickly, and to avoid unnecessary delays in improving the operation of the Airport.

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VISION, MISSION, AND CORE VALUES



University of Illinois – Willard Airport leadership, staff members, and airport advisory board members all had a hand in crafting the vision, mission, and core values statements that will guide the organization. Final versions were created by airport leadership and staff in a collaborative session ensuring all voices were heard.

The vision statement of an organization is its statement of what the organization wants to become. Vision statements are future-looking declarations of an organization's purpose for existing and aspirations. Willard Airport's vision is below.

We strive to be a global gateway, a hub of innovation, and an economic engine
connecting our community with opportunity around the world.

The mission statement of an organization is its reason for being. It describes how that organization will aim to serve its diverse stakeholders. In other words, the mission must define who Willard Airport is today and what the Airport values. Willard Airport's mission is below.

As the doorstep to the University of Illinois, we are accountable, open-minded, and innovative.

We focus on convenience and seamless connectivity to the world.

We fly Champaign-Urbana.

Core values are designed to be the elements which support both the mission and vision of an organization. Core values are the beliefs of the organization in which the organization is emotionally invested. Core values are also designed to lay out how an organization treats people – both employees and customers – and how an organization does business. Willard Airport's core values are to be:

Convenient

Safe and Secure

Customer Focused

Business Friendly

Responsive

Respectful

Accountable

Accessible

The Airport's vision, mission, and core values will be used to guide the initiatives in this document. They will also be used to help focus Airport team members on common goals and in setting clear performance expectations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND ACTION ITEMS



The goal of this project is to develop a set of actionable items for University of Illinois – Willard Airport leadership to immediately work on to better position the Airport for long-term financial viability. These key recommendations lay out Volaire’s favored course of action to achieve the Airport’s goals. These recommendations are made with input from Airport leadership, the airport advisory board, the airport executive committee, and the University of Illinois.

Each bullet point below represents an action item for Airport leadership. This section summarizes each action item. Detail on each of these items is provided throughout this document in the order presented here.

- > Complete a new passenger retention and leakage study for calendar year 2019, to determine the baseline market size in support of air service retention and expansion;
- > Collect data on Champaign County business demand for travel post-pandemic;
- > Gather letters of support from businesses indicating when their travel will resume and distribute to airline partners;
- > Prepare and submit Small Community Air Service Development (SCASD) Grant application for revenue guarantee in support of new service;
- > Develop a “return to travel” marketing plan for air service;
- > Begin work to develop a network of community air service champions to support local service and eventually develop incentive funding for expanded service;

- > Meet with incumbent and prospective carriers, when appropriate, to discuss future service and potential for new service post-pandemic;
- > Continue preliminary planning work for the construction of a new rental car service facility;
- > Complete an in-terminal survey of passengers asking about their desires for enhanced concessions, including the ability to buy beer, wine, and liquor, and work with concessionaire on plan for alcohol sales if demand warrants;
- > Explore options to retain a sponsorship for enhanced terminal seating and charging workstations;
- > Enter into an agreement with the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) to implement a rideshare and taxi fee for access to pick-up passengers;
- > Complete a feasibility study for the option of on-field greenhouse farming;
- > Work with the Airport's engineering firm to determine site suitability for solar power generation and work with local energy companies on potential partnerships;
- > In-terminal redevelopment study options to locate Federal Inspection Service (FIS) facility within the airline terminal for joint-use option;
- > Foster relationships between FlightStar and Parkland College and be a champion for the potential development of an aircraft maintenance training program;
- > Ensure Parkland's Institute of Aviation has the resources to grow, to become self-sufficient, and to ensure its status as a long-term airport tenant;
- > Consider releasing a request for proposals from hangar developers for a public-private partnership to replace aging hangars;
- > Work to develop and implement community programs including Airport 5k "Fun Runs", National Aviation Day Events, Customer Appreciation Day(s), Airport Press Days, and Airport Therapy Dog programs;
- > Work with Visit Champaign County on a proposal to host an AOPA Fly-In event within the next five years.

AIR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



While the core market area for University of Illinois – Willard Airport continues to grow, it is unclear in the short term if airline demand will outpace airline capacity as it has for the last decade. Champaign/Urbana had been the only metro area in Illinois with a growing population. The metro area was growing by about 1% per year, adding several thousand residents per year, as Bloomington/Normal, Springfield, Decatur, and Peoria all shrunk. But the COVID-19 impact on the University of Illinois could change that dynamic.

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Air service development for Willard Airport will shift over the next year to air service retention. There are a number of immediate projects the Airport should begin to work on to be able to communicate demand to American, its incumbent airline, and ensure it maintains important links to the world. It is recommended the Airport shift its immediate business focus to the following initiatives:

1. **Business demand research, polling, and data collection:** The more the Airport can understand business demand that underlies the airline-reported data, the better it can explain why certain routes will be valuable in the new economy. This research should include information on as many businesses as possible with detail including: baseline 2019 traffic; co-located offices and major destinations; origins of inbound demand; how post-crisis 2020 traffic will compare to previous demand; and which route/airline combinations are most used. This project should detail as much University of Illinois demand as possible.

2. **Business letters of support:** Once demand data is collected, the Airport should seek letters of support for specific airline/route combinations, along with commitments to return to travel by certain dates. The University has already sent a letter of support to American Airlines.
3. **Incentive funding development:** When the economy is stabilized, the Airport should work through its business list to determine if businesses have any appetite to contribute to revenue guarantees and other funds to help the Airport return and recruit service.
4. **Small Community Air Service Development Grant application:** The Airport should apply for a Grant as soon as the program is announced. Targets can be determined once the program is released.
5. **Marketing Plan:** As the industry begins to emerge from the pandemic and enter into a recovery phase it will be imperative that airline service is marketed in an appropriate and sensitive way. Strategies that may have worked in the past may not work in the new “normal”. As noted previously, airlines will be significantly different for the foreseeable future and that includes their own marketing capabilities. Showing that the Airport is a true partner will go far with incumbents as everyone grapples with where to go from here. It is strongly suggested the Airport develop an actionable recovery strategy geared towards marketing its airline partner. This strategy should include goals and tactics to achieve those goals as well as draft creative messaging and platforms for advertising. This strategic recovery plan can then be executed as soon as deemed proper.
6. **Passenger Retention and Leakage Data:** It is likely 2019 data will be the baseline used to analyze underlying market demand for the foreseeable future – at least a few years. It is highly recommended the Airport make an investment in a passenger retention and leakage study using calendar year 2019 data. This will help show airlines what the true market size really is, how many passengers in

battleground areas are using other airports, and how retained and additional service could grab a higher market share.

7. **Leveraging New Economic Impact Projections:** Willard Airport is fortunate to have a brand-new economic impact study. This should be used in messaging to illustrate the value of the airport to the community as well as to ensure business support.

It will be difficult to forecast passengers – or even capacity – until we are all past the first phase of the crisis. It is still unclear what CMI capacity will look like in the fall – much less by summer of 2021. It does seem clear that demand will not return to previous levels until 2022 or 2023. However, Willard Airport lost most passengers to other area airports before the crisis. It could support pre-crisis levels of service by simply retaining a slightly higher share of people flying to and from Champaign County. With this in mind, it is still worth detailing an air service development plan and scenario to retain and grow airline service.

Since 2013, the Champaign/Urbana catchment area has seen total passengers increase from 483,500 per year to almost 971,300 per year – an increase in total market size of 101%, according to the most recent passenger retention study completed by Volaire Aviation Consulting. In 2013, the Champaign/Urbana catchment generated 662 passengers per day each way (PDEW) – a number that increased to 1,331 PDEW in 2017, adding an average of 669 PDEW.

Even with capacity increases and the addition of nonstop flights to Charlotte, with limited capacity, Willard's retention of passengers traveling to and from Champaign County has decreased from 33% in 2013 to less than 20% now. Demand in the market was growing much faster than airline capacity.

CURRENT SERVICE OVERVIEW

Before the pandemic, service at Willard Airport was performing well and was profitable. While Willard Airport fills the vast majority of available airline seats, it is important to remember that “load factor” is only one measure of the success of air service. Fare and revenue are just as important. With a fare too low, a 100% load factor – with 100% of seats filled with paying passengers – is worthless to an airline. With a high fare, a 50% load factor can be profitable.

An airline’s highest achievable load factor is about 85%. That’s because an airline will often run completely full at peak times, such as Monday morning and Thursday evening, but rarely run full at off-peak

CHART 1: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF WILLARD AIRLINE PERFORMANCE
 SOURCE: AIRLINE DATA, INC. AND US DOT T100; YEAR ENDED 10-19

<u>Airport</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Passengers</u>	<u>PDEW</u>	<u>Avail. Seats</u>	<u>SDEW</u>	<u>Load Factor</u>
ORD	AA	118,544	162.4	156,218	214.0	75.9%
DFW	AA	52,609	72.1	63,530	87.0	82.8%
CLT	AA	28,480	39.0	38,066	52.1	74.8%
		204,230	279.8	266,832	365.5	77.6%

times like Tuesday and Saturday afternoons. An airline will still operate off-peak so that it can carry high-yield business traffic. But the impact on load factors – especially in business markets like Champaign/Urbana – is negative.

Before the crisis, American’s service at Willard Airport ran a load factor near 78%, as you can see in the chart above (as of the year ended October 2019 – the most recent data available). Dallas/Ft. Worth service ran 83% full while Chicago ran 76% full and Charlotte ran 75% full.

American’s average load factor in regional markets – served by its regional partners such as Envoy and SkyWest – is 75%. Willard Airport slightly outpaces the overall regional load factor average. Regional load factors are always lower than mainline due to American’s pricing philosophy.

American prices regional markets to maximize revenue on each flight, not passengers. It will price fares higher, hoping to sell four or five tickets at \$400 instead of eight to ten tickets at \$180. That results in a revenue premium of 10% in regional markets.

American also prices regional markets to ensure the last few seats on each flight – including flights with high demand in peak times – are available for last-minute bookings. This discourages leisure passengers from booking the flights in favor of corporate passengers who will pay more and fill high value connecting flights.

Because of regional pricing philosophies, it is very difficult for an airport like Willard to achieve load factors much higher than the current levels. Even at a lower load factor, Willard

Airport is likely highly profitable for American. In fact, American demands the highest average one-way fare in its entire regional Midwest network at Willard Airport - \$265 each way, as illustrated in the chart to the upper right. Fares at other central Illinois airports are considerably lower.

The fare data underscores American's revenue management in Champaign/Urbana. American is willing to trade a lower load factor for travelers paying higher fares. This ensures service at Willard Airport is consistently profitable and that Willard Airport ranks among the top regional markets for American service. While it is not always ideal for the consumer, it is excellent for the Airport because in normal circumstances the service is in no danger of being reduced or eliminated.

CHART 2: ONE WAY FARE IN MIDWEST MARKETS
 SOURCE: AIRLINE DATA, INC. AND US DOT DB1B; YE3Q19

Market	Code	Passengers	One Way Fare
Champaign/Urbana, IL	CMI	192,822	\$265
Green Bay, WI	GRB	644,810	\$256
Rhineland, WI	RHI	53,560	\$247
Evansville, IN	EVV	470,047	\$245
Mosinee, WI	CWA	261,773	\$244
Joplin, MO	JLN	83,492	\$244
Dubuque, IA	DBQ	72,672	\$240
La Crosse, WI	LSE	182,224	\$239
Columbia, MO	COU	237,560	\$238
Waterloo, IA	ALO	45,926	\$236
Sioux City, IA	SUX	90,542	\$234
Cedar Rapids, IA	CID	1,262,004	\$225
Springfield, MO	SGF	1,124,494	\$223
Appleton, WI	ATW	746,127	\$219
Fort Wayne, IN	FWA	757,091	\$219
Eau Claire, WI	EAU	47,193	\$214
Moline, IL	MLI	701,882	\$205
Springfield, IL	SPI	142,304	\$205
South Bend, IN	SBN	788,005	\$199
Peoria, IL	PIA	662,000	\$188
Quincy, IL	UIN	19,810	\$181
Cape Girardeau, MO	CGI	23,495	\$180
Bloomington/Normal, IL	BMI	405,980	\$172
Decatur, IL	DEC	16,615	\$109
Marion/Herrin, IL	MWA	19,345	\$105
Rockford, IL	RFD	218,022	\$81
Belleville, IL	BLV	300,604	\$62
Branson, MO	BKG	42,329	\$36

TARGETS FOR NEW SERVICE

Even before the COVID-19 crisis, there were several external threats outside Willard Airport's control that could have an impact on future success in air service development. There was a growing pilot shortage, which is now all but solved due to decreased demand for airline service. But COVID-19 could result in a decreasing number of airlines, a shrinking fleet of aircraft in commercial service, and a general impression among many airline executives that smaller markets are not worth the financial risk as compared to larger markets. Despite these threats, it will be important for Willard Airport to be forward thinking and to try and use this crisis as a time to develop risk mitigation for future service.

Before the pandemic, airline mergers had set in motion a huge reduction in both competition and the number of cities with scheduled service. Since 2001, 94 cities in the US have lost all scheduled airline service. The airline industry was de-regulated in 1978, allowing airlines to fly wherever they want without applying for government approval. In 1978 there were 18 major airlines in the country. Today, those 18 have been merged

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into four mega-carriers, American, Delta, United, and Southwest, which carry 90% of all passengers. Smaller carriers still exist, at least for now, but they have been pushed to the margins of the industry. Combined, airlines such as Alaska, Allegiant, JetBlue, Frontier, Sun Country, and Spirit carry less than 10% of US passengers.

Willard Airport's targets are subsequently limited. The network only carriers serving cities like Champaign-Urbana are American (which already serves Willard Airport), United (which left the market in 2018 after a year of service to Chicago), Delta, and Alaska Airlines (which only serves

smaller markets along the west coast). It should be noted Delta has cut service to 44 smaller cities in the last decade, including Champaign-Urbana. Delta is signaling it will likely cut more cities from its network in the fall.

That means the only real targets for service expansion, outside of smaller regional carriers are American, Allegiant, Sun Country, and Frontier; assuming they all survive the pandemic. These airlines must weigh potential expansion at Willard Airport against their entire networks, which collectively serve more than 500 cities. It is easy to see that the competition is not just from nearby cities in Illinois such as Bloomington/Normal and Springfield – competition for aircraft and crew time is worldwide, meaning the Willard Airport business case has to be better than dozens if not hundreds, of other potential routes the airlines can choose from.

Despite these factors, it was clear before the pandemic that Willard Airport can support additional flights and new destinations. As previously mentioned, the Airport retains less than 20% of passengers traveling to and from Champaign County, with more than half driving to Chicago airports to catch flights.

When all Champaign County airline passengers are considered

CHART 3: CHAMPAIGN COUNTY'S TOP 25 TRUE PASSENGER MARKETS
 YEAR ENDED FIRST QUARTER 2018; SOURCE: VOLAIRE AVIATION, INC.

		TRUE	CMI	Leaked	Avg
Rank	Airport Metro Area	O&D Pax	Pax	Pax	Fare
1	New York/Newark	67,022	10,731	56,291	\$149
2	Orlando/Sanford	52,378	2,858	49,520	\$116
3	Los Angeles Basin	49,129	9,150	39,979	\$187
4	Washington/Baltimore	48,810	11,575	37,235	\$162
5	San Francisco Bay Area	43,096	10,636	32,460	\$209
6	Denver	40,228	5,292	34,936	\$131
7	Miami/Ft. Lauderdale	38,583	3,384	35,199	\$139
8	Las Vegas	37,146	2,933	34,213	\$141
9	Ft. Myers/Punta Gorda	35,924	1,637	34,287	\$127
10	Boston	34,366	6,595	27,771	\$154
11	Phoenix/Mesa	32,130	4,915	27,215	\$171
12	Seattle	28,452	4,230	24,222	\$216
13	Dallas/Ft. Worth	23,956	9,668	14,288	\$178
14	Tampa/St. Petersburg	23,056	2,268	20,788	\$131
15	San Diego	20,190	3,224	16,966	\$189
16	Atlanta	19,682	2,628	17,054	\$153
17	Houston	17,093	4,093	13,000	\$174
18	Portland, OR	13,382	2,110	11,272	\$196
19	Minneapolis/St. Paul	12,936	3,883	9,053	\$138
20	Chicago	12,376	6,349	6,027	\$146

– not just those that fly in and out of Willard Airport – it is clear there are a number of large markets that could support nonstop service. For example, Champaign County generates an average of 92 passengers per day each way (PDEW) to and from New York/Newark – its largest market without a nonstop (refer to the chart on

the previous page). Additionally, Champaign County generates 72 PDEW to Orlando and 67 PDEW to Washington, DC. Both of those markets are large enough to support nonstop service.

A list of air service development targets will constantly change, as it must be built around airline strategy and no airport can control strategy. It is the job of the airport to tailor its targets to an established airline business plan. The most successful airports can do this nimbly, changing the focus of their air service development programs based on airline feedback. The air service development plan in this document should not be treated as an unchanging roadmap. It will have to be continually updated and refined based on continuing conversations with target carriers and the evolution of post-COVID demand.

The pandemic will cause airlines to shuffle networks. Some hubs will be reduced in importance while others will grow in importance. Some communities will lose service. Hundreds of aircraft will be permanently retired. How this will evolve has yet to be determined. It will create opportunities for markets that can provide a risk-free place for airlines to deploy aircraft. In markets that have demand returning and have a revenue guarantee available to make-up for short term losses and ensure airline profitability, there is a real opportunity to gain service in the next 12 months. This report will explain more about the development of that risk mitigation funding in a moment.

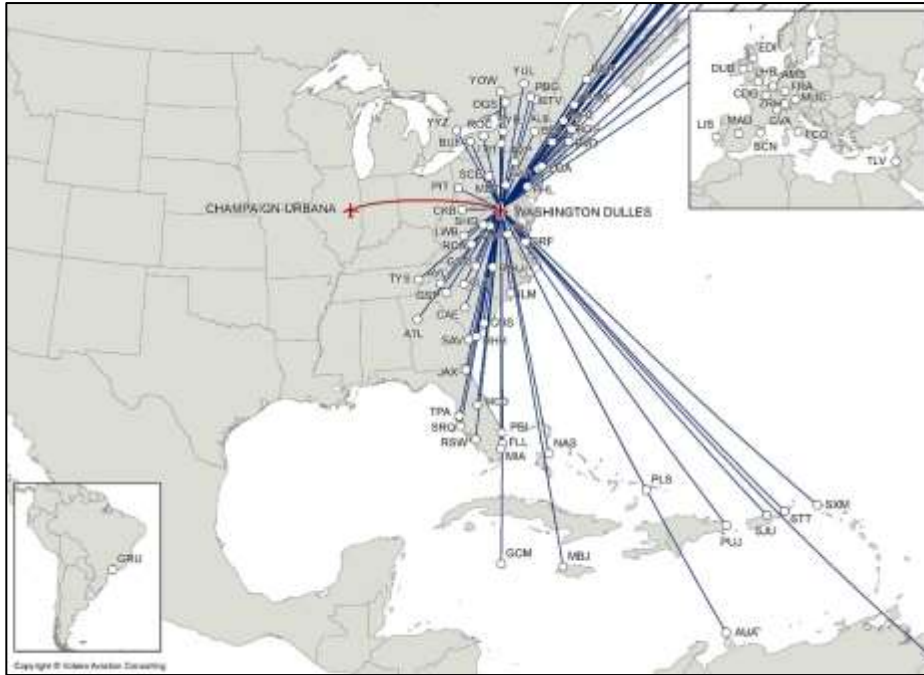
With nonstop service provided to Chicago O'Hare, Dallas/Ft. Worth, and Charlotte, there are still many potential target routes for airline expansion at Willard Airport. Among the targets for network airline service are

MAP 1: NETWORK AIRLINE AIR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT TARGET MARKETS
SOURCE: VOLAIRE AVIATION CONSULTING



Philadelphia, which is a hub for American; Washington, DC, which is a hub for American and United; Denver, which is a hub for United; and Phoenix, which is a hub for American (refer to the map on the previous page).

MAP 2: CONNECTIVITY OVER WASHINGTON DULLES ON UNITED
SOURCE: VOLAIRE AVIATION CONSULTING, MAY 2020



With each potential target market being home to at least one airline with a hub, each would provide broad connectivity required to make small community air service successful.

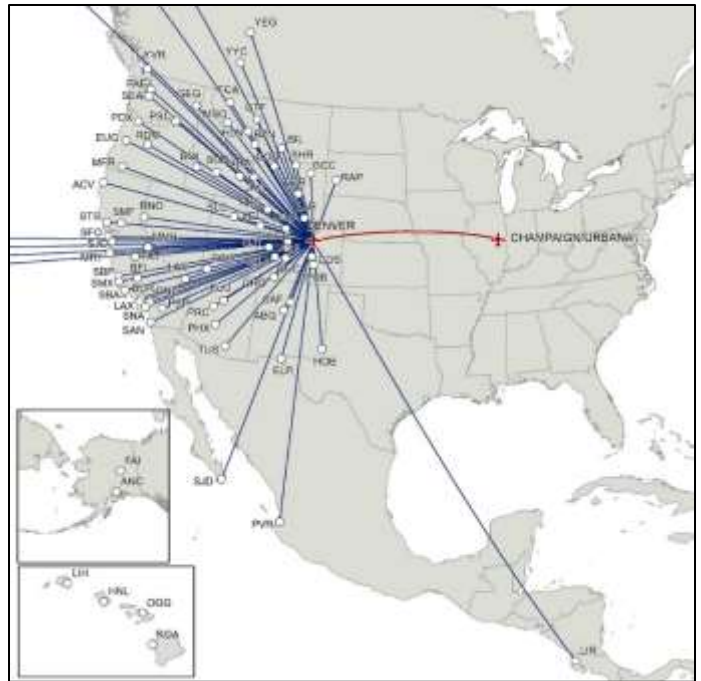
While American service to Washington National would be ideal for Champaign-Urbana, it is essentially, impossible due to slot restrictions. There are no available takeoff and landing slots at the Airport meaning

American cannot add more flights or destinations from its hub there. It would likely take Congress passing a slot waiver for Champaign-Urbana to secure service for Willard Airport.

Washington Dulles Airport has no such slot restrictions and its hub carrier, United, is seeking to grow its network there. United nonstop service would connect Champaign-Urbana to 76 cities in a single stop (refer to the map above). United would access an average of 477 passengers per day each way (PDEW) that could flow over its network. Today, Willard Airport retains just 87 PDEW to and from those cities, or 18% of the total demand – with more than 60% driving to Chicago airports. Service to Dulles would access more Champaign County passengers than any other new hub option.

The second-ranked hub option, based on available passengers, would be United service to Denver, which would access an average of 437 passengers per day each way (PDEW). Today, Willard Airport retains just 73 PDEW to and from those cities, or 17% of the total demand – with more than 50% driving to Chicago airports. Denver service would connect Willard Airport to 79 cities in a single stop, as seen in the map to the right.

MAP 3: CONNECTIVITY OVER DENVER ON UNITED
SOURCE: VOLAIRE AVIATION CONSULTING, MAY 2020



The third-ranked hub option, based on available passengers, would be American service to Phoenix, which would access an average of 368 passengers per day each way (PDEW). Today, Willard Airport retains just 62 PDEW to and from those cities, or 17% of the total demand – with more than 55% driving to Chicago airports. American service to Phoenix would connect Willard Airport to 46 cities in a single stop (refer to the map to the right).

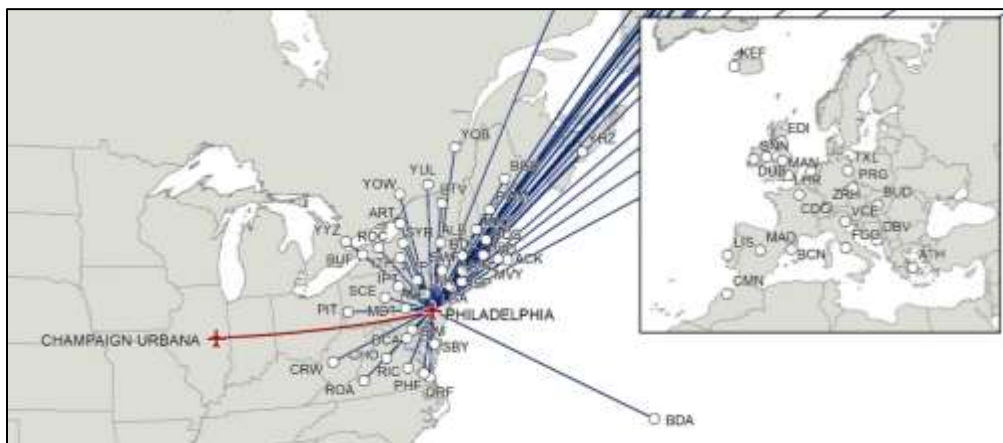
MAP 4: CONNECTIVITY OVER PHOENIX ON AMERICAN
SOURCE: VOLAIRE AVIATION CONSULTING, MAY 2020



The final hub option, based on available passengers, would be American service to Philadelphia, which would access an average of 289 passengers per day each way (PDEW). Today, Willard Airport retains just 64 PDEW to and from those cities, or 22% of the total demand – with more than 50% driving to Chicago airports. American

service to Philadelphia would connect Willard Airport to 61 cities in a single stop (refer to the map to the left). Even though Philadelphia would access fewer passengers, it might be the most likely route to launch. American already serves

MAP 5: CONNECTIVITY OVER PHILADELPHIA ON AMERICAN
SOURCE: VOLAIRE AVIATION CONSULTING, MAY 2020



Champaign-Urbana, lowering the risk of failure and American would provide unique connections it does not offer from its current hubs served from Willard Airport.

Beyond network carriers, Willard Airport has a large enough market to support less-than-daily, low cost carriers flying leisure passengers to vacation destinations. Allegiant and Frontier have long served Bloomington/Normal. Allegiant served Willard Airport in 2007, but service was lost due to the cost of operation at the

MAP 6: LOW COST AIRLINE AIR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT TARGET MARKETS
SOURCE: VOLAIRE AVIATION CONSULTING



Airport. The Airport has recently offered Allegiant a new, competitive cost structure which could help in luring the Airline back to Champaign/Urbana.

In addition to Allegiant and Frontier, Sun Country has been expanding in regional markets as it adds aircraft and moves away from its hub in Minneapolis/St. Paul. It recently made Madison, Wisconsin a base with nonstops to cities such as Orlando and Las Vegas. It could operate a similar route structure in Champaign-Urbana.

Willard Airport's main targets for low cost service would include cities in Florida such as Orlando, Tampa, Punta Gorda/Ft. Myers, and even Destin (refer to the map on the previous page). The market also generates enough passengers to support two flights a week on mainline jet aircraft to destinations in the west such as Las Vegas and Phoenix.

There will be winners and losers in the post-COVID-19 airline industry. Airports who can best illustrate the return of demand, that can leverage risk mitigation funding, and can offer strong profitability will see service increase. Willard Airport will be competing against communities all over North America for capacity when the pandemic wanes. For it to move to the top of the list of potential new routes, it will not only have to aggressively court target airlines but offer best-in-class incentives to reduce airline risk in starting a new market. It is highly unlikely Willard Airport will win additional service on business case alone. The Airport must leverage a network of air service development champions to build an enhanced incentive program and land additional flights.

AIR SERVICE “CHAMPIONS” AND COMMUNITY FUNDING

Incentives for air service are going to be even more important as the industry recovers from the shock of COVID-19. There will be a surplus of aircraft and crews for the first time in almost a decade. But airlines will prefer to keep planes parked unless they can be sure they will fly full. Airports with robust incentives will be the first to see new service when demand returns because they can remove airline risk in re-activating aircraft and re-hiring crews.

Many communities use formal organizations to further regional goals for air service development. Most communities who seek to incentivize air service (which includes virtually all non-hub airports in the country) do so through outside third parties because of limitations on airport incentives imposed by federal law. Willard Airport has no such third-party organization, although it has the support of many participants on its airport advisory board.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) applies many restrictions on the use of airport revenue to ensure fair treatment to all airport users. The key to determining legal uses of airport revenue lies in the definition of different types of income

generated by an airport and the source of that income. In general, airport revenue cannot be used for air service incentives outside of fee waivers and marketing support and only for a limited period of time. However, the FAA does not lump all airport income into the definition of “airport revenue,” making it legal for airports to use some other income sources to support air service beyond waivers and marketing incentives. For example, Bloomington/Normal is allowed to use its property tax levy to provide other incentives to carriers, such as zero-cost operations, revenue guarantees and/or subsidies. Willard Airport is not supported by a local property tax.

**“MOST COMMUNITIES THAT
SEEK TO INCENTIVIZE AIR
SERVICE... DO SO THROUGH
OUTSIDE THIRD PARTIES
BECAUSE OF LIMITATIONS ON
AIRPORT INCENTIVES IMPOSED
BY FEDERAL LAW.”**

The critical factor in determining the legal use of airport income is the definition of “airport revenue.” The FAA currently defines “airport revenue” as:

“Airport revenue generally includes those revenues paid to or due to the airport sponsor for use of airport property by the aeronautical and nonaeronautical users of the airport. It also includes revenue from the sale of airport property and resources and revenue from state and local taxes on aviation fuel.”

“Revenue generated by the airport for the aeronautical and nonaeronautical use of the airport includes, but is not limited to, the fees, charges, rents, or other payments received by or accruing to the sponsor from air carriers, tenants, concessionaires, lessees, purchasers of airport properties, airport permit holders making use of the airport property and services, etc.”

The FAA does not allow airport revenue, in any form, to be used for certain incentives to develop or support airline service. Specifically, FAA policy reads:

“The direct subsidy of air carrier operations is a prohibited use of airport revenue. Prohibited direct subsidies do not include support for airline advertising or marketing of new services to the airport.”

Airports are allowed to use “airport revenue” to market their service and to provide fee waivers under current FAA regulations – with one caveat. Airports may not place a burden on incumbent carriers, in the form of increased airport fees, in order to raise money for incentives for new carriers or new service.

There is no comprehensive research available to determine the number of airport authorities and districts leveraging their tax income to support airline service. Limited research has been done on the topic and because

of the often-confidential nature of airline negotiations and agreements, it can be difficult to find detail on how the programs are structured.

However, a number of destinations have been open in discussing how they have leveraged tax income to support new service. Two major ski resort destinations in Colorado use sales taxes to support service (refer to the chart below). A ski resort in California has been open about its use of a hotel tax to guarantee airline revenue on new routes. The City of Bismarck, North Dakota used general fund tax revenue for new service. While the State of Wyoming continually subsidizes service to its remote airport through tax income.

CHART 4: AIRPORTS LEVERAGING TAX REVENUE FOR AIRLINE SERVICE
 SOURCE: VOLAIRE AVIATION ANALYSIS

Market	Type of Tax	Annual Amount	Service Supported	Type of Program
Gunnison, CO	Sales (1%)	\$3,500,000	Alaska Airlines, Los Angeles	Revenue Guarantee
			American Airlines, Chicago and Dallas/Ft. Worth	Revenue Guarantee
			United Airlines, Houston	Revenue Guarantee
Steamboat Springs, CO	Sales (0.25%)	\$4,000,000	Alaska Airlines, Seattle/Tacoma, San Diego	Revenue Guarantee
			United Airlines, Houston	Revenue Guarantee
Mammoth Lakes, CA	Hotel Tax	\$1,500,000	Alaska Airlines, Seattle, San Diego, Orange County	Revenue Guarantee
			United Airlines, Los Angeles, San Francisco	Revenue Guarantee
Bismarck, ND	City Gen. Fund	\$200,000	Frontier Airlines, Denver	Revenue Guarantee
State of Wyoming	Income Tax	\$6,400,000	Multiple Services to Multiple Airports	Direct Subsidy

The county in which Gunnison, Colorado's airport sits collects a 1% sales tax on behalf of the airport (refer to the chart above). That funding, which totals roughly \$3.5 million per year, is used exclusively for developing new and enhanced air service. In the last five years, the funding has led to new service from three airlines on four new routes, illustrating its success. It is important to note the funding never touches the airport. While the airport works on airline recruitment, all of the air service agreements are signed directly between the county and the air carrier so as to avoid airport non-discrimination FAA rules.

The same arrangement is used in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, where Hayden County collects the sales tax and negotiates revenue guarantee agreements with airlines independently. The tax in Steamboat generates roughly \$4 million per year and has been used in the last three years to leverage service on two carriers to three new markets (refer to the chart on the previous page).

"...ALL OF THE AIR SERVICE AGREEMENTS ARE SIGNED DIRECTLY BETWEEN THE COUNTY AND THE AIR CARRIER, SO AS TO AVOID AIRPORT NON-DISCRIMINATION FAA RULES."

In Mammoth Lakes, California, the airport receives funding from hotel taxes and a Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID), put into effect in September 2013, with a five-year life. The funds from the TBID are collected by the town of Mammoth Lakes and then distributed by Mammoth Lakes Tourism, a 501(c)6 nonprofit. The TBID money is used to provide minimum revenue guarantees to the airlines, but again, the guarantee comes from the non-profit and the tax never touches the airport, itself.

In Bismarck, North Dakota, the City owns and operates the airport. The City used general fund revenue, from property taxes, to fund a revenue guarantee for Frontier Airlines service (refer to the chart previous page). Again, because the tax revenue was not collected by the airport, itself, it did not have to abide by FAA non-discrimination rules. The Frontier service, in fact, was launched on a route where an incumbent already provided daily service (United to Denver).

In all of these cases, the tax funding is provided as a revenue guarantee to a carrier – and not a direct subsidy. A revenue guarantee agreement includes a negotiated target-revenue amount for the carrier to earn. If the carrier earns less than the targeted amount, the community makes-up the difference. If the airline earns more than the targeted amount, the community owes nothing. These agreements reduce community risk and still provide an airline with its targeted margin on a new route.

Other resort destinations lean on local businesses (primarily the resorts, themselves) to develop airline service. Research shows both Eagle/Vail and Telluride, Colorado have business coalitions that collect funding from resorts and associated companies to be used for airline revenue guarantees in the support of new service (refer to the chart below).

CHART 5: AIRPORTS WITH OTHER ANNUAL PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT AIRLINE SERVICE
 SOURCE: VOLAIRE AVIATION ANALYSIS

Market	Type of Support	Annual Amount	Service Supported	Type of Program
Eagle/Vail, CO	Business Guarantee	\$500,000	Air Canada, Toronto	Revenue Guarantee
			American Airlines, New York Kennedy	Revenue Guarantee
Telluride, CO	Business Guarantee	Varies	American Airlines, Dallas/Ft. Worth	Revenue Guarantee

While Champaign County is home to the University of Illinois, it lacks any other single large business that could fund guarantees for new service. To truly be able to compete with other airports a permanent air service development fund, independent of the Airport, must be developed. Funding for this could come from many sources, but it will likely need some kind of government component, either from the University itself or from other regional government sources.

The airport advisory board should also work to develop a “fly local” organization dedicated to developing funding for additional airline service. Many other communities have similar organizations. A good example is Rochester, Minnesota, which has a metro area of similar size to Champaign-Urbana. Its “Fly RST” organization now has more than 100 member businesses who all pledge to use local air service and pledge varying amounts of money to revenue guarantees for new service. This group provided matching funds for a revenue guarantee that secured nonstops between Rochester and Atlanta. The development of funding was much easier with so many groups participating – and the risk was spread across many organizations.

To secure any of Willard Airport’s targeted network service a revenue guarantee will be required. The guarantee will need to be at least seven figures. Other similar routes have required guarantees of between \$2 and \$3

million. For example, regarding Denver service, Willard Airport would be competing against other airports that already have guarantees in excess of \$2.5 million. With similar or equal business cases, airlines will always choose communities with less risk – and larger guarantees.

This will be especially true in the post-COVID-19 environment. While Willard Airport should quickly work through the retention goals and projects at the beginning of this section of the strategic plan, it should also work as quickly as possible to mobilize local businesses with air travel demand to develop incentive funding. Without quick action, Willard Airport could be left behind other central Illinois airports.

RENTAL CAR SERVICE FACILITY



It is recommended the Airport continue preliminary planning work for the construction of a new rental car service facility. The Airport's executive committee prefers to have the Airport develop the facility on its own, without using an outside third-party developer.

FIGURE 1: BIRMINGHAM QUICK TURNAROUND FACILITY
SOURCE: BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT AUTHORITY



Preliminary plans indicate the cost will be around \$1.4 million. The facility will be funded through rental car concession fees. But the project will require the Airport to take a loan from the University. Internal loans may be approved for new construction projects. Internal loans are not made for working capital. Loans may not exceed \$10 million for any individual capital project. Interest and principal must be paid off during the term of the loan, which can be no longer than ten years.

Investments annually recalculate the interest rate for loans of more than three years (each March, to become effective the following July 1). The interest rate is based on the Barclays Capital Intermediate Aggregate Bond Index yield and is never less than 3%. The interest rate for loans for more than three years is adjusted annually if the rate from the preceding year differs from the current rate by 1% or more. Rental car charges must be adequate to cover loan cost.

The quick turnaround facility is supported by rental car tenants. It will save those companies time as they no longer have to take the cars off site for fueling and cleaning. It also reduces carbon emissions as fewer cars are on the road to accomplish this task.

The only concern, which airport management will need to monitor, is the extended slump in air travel caused by the pandemic. Rental car usage at the Airport is virtually nil at the time of the writing of this report. It is assumed rental car usage will increase as the University re-opens the Urbana-Champaign campus and that traffic will rebound to 2019 levels no later than 2022. But there is some risk in that forecast as the trajectory of the pandemic is impossible to determine.

ENHANCED TERMINAL ENVIRONMENT



Willard Airport's executive committee is committed to improving the passenger experience and to offering amenities that more closely match those available at larger, competing airports. From the strategic options document, the committee chose two initiatives to include in the strategic plan. The first: enhanced concessions in the gate area to include the sale of alcohol. The second: enhanced seating to include charging stations and potential workspaces.

IN-TERMINAL LIQUOR SALES

Airports with significant leisure-focused service tend to generate strong revenue from in-terminal beer, wine, and liquor sales. Much of Willard Airport's service is focused on business travelers, University traffic, and students. The Airport's schedule is highly skewed to flights departing first thing in the morning, with all but three departures (before the pandemic) leaving before 9am. That does not mean liquor sales could not be profitable. But there would be higher demand at certain times than others.

Because of the terminal layout, it would be impossible to control liquor sales before security without walling off a new area for a bar or restaurant. Most people do not spend much time in this part of the terminal anyway, so the utility of liquor sales pre-security is limited.

The most logical way to offer beer, wine, and potentially liquor to passengers is for the current concession tenant, Einstein's Bagels, to apply for a liquor license. Champaign County licensing regulations would likely require the entire gate area to be permitted for alcohol consumption.

The Champaign County liquor license application requires the applying business to "... attach a diagram showing the internal and external configuration of the premises to be licensed, including all doors, windows, entrances, exits, the fixed structural internal features of the premises, plus the interior rooms, walls, partitions, stages, performance areas, and restrooms." The Airport could easily accomplish this work for Eistein's Bagels.

The gate area would require a Class A license. Those are available to businesses whose licensed premises are 1,200 square feet or larger. A Class A license permits the licensee to sell any and all alcoholic liquor in the original package for consumption on or off the licensed premises and by the drink for consumption on the licensed premises only, which could include the entire gate area. The license costs \$2,365 per year, or an average of roughly \$200 per month.

The concessionaire would need to sell around ten "drinks" per day to break even on the licensing costs. On Fridays and weekends its likely that sales would be significantly higher than ten drinks per day. But on Mondays and Tuesdays, it could be difficult to sell that many alcoholic drinks. The vendor would also be required to have a clerk/bartender at least 21 years of age, which is not a current consideration.

It is recommended the Airport continue to monitor the growth in passenger traffic during the pandemic recovery. Once passengers have recovered to about 75% of previous levels, it is advised the Airport complete an in-terminal survey of passengers asking about their desires for enhanced concessions, including the ability to buy beer, wine, and liquor.

If that survey data shows significant demand, the Airport should work with the current concessionaire on a plan to offer alcoholic beverages. If the survey shows little demand for alcoholic drinks, the Airport could table this initiative until passenger traffic grows.

WORKSTATIONS, CHARGING TABLES, AND ENHANCED SEATING

While the current seating in the gate area at Willard Airport is clean, comfortable, and sufficient, many other airports have enhanced their offerings to better serve their core passengers. Willard Airport caters to a larger share of business travelers than most airports its size – at least 45% of total passengers. These travelers are always looking for somewhere to charge their devices and places where they can sit and work.

The most popular workstations for business travelers tend to be taller desks where one can either stand, or sit at a stool (refer to figure 2). These usually have room for between three and eight passengers to plug in their devices and work on a laptop.

Arconas is the most well-known manufacturer of this type of workstation. It has outfitted numerous airports that are roughly the size of Willard. It has also provided charging stations for many airline clubs, including United, Alaska, and Delta. While there are other manufacturers and some airports have been able to build these types of tables on their own, Arconas provides warranties and ensures the equipment works properly.

FIGURE 2: ARCONAS INPOWER BAR, SAN LUIS OBISPO
SOURCE: ARCONAS



FIGURE 3: ARCONAS COMPASS SEATING
SOURCE: ARCONAS



Arconas also offers a popular seating and charging option it calls Compass seating (refer to figure 3 on the previous page). It allows six people to sit while still spaced apart – and is perfect for groups of two traveling together. It can also be outfitted with either televisions or flight information displays.

Any seating or workstation option is going to represent a significant investment. The InPower Bar, with seating for eight (refer to figure 4), has a base price of \$10,171 before shipping and installation. And that does not include seating. It is possible an airport might choose to have a few of the positions around the bar as stand-up only – some travelers prefer to stand while they work. But each compatible stool is listed at \$842. To install one

bar and six stools, leaving two positions on each end of the bar for those who wish to stand, the estimated cost would be about \$15,250 before shipping and installation. For an installation like this to be useful at Willard Airport, with a high proportion of business travelers, at least two units and stools would be needed. A total budget would need to be around \$35,000.

Compass seating is slightly less expensive on a relative basis, per passenger seat. The entire unit, shown in figure 3 on the previous page, is priced at \$9,755 before shipping and installation. Since each unit only seats six, the Airport would like need to install at least three units to provide any real utility. The budget for three Compass units would be similar to the budget for two InPower workstations.

The Airport should explore options to retain a sponsorship for enhanced terminal seating. A sponsor's logo and company information could be placed on, or on top of, any of these seating options. Sponsor videos could be played on the Compass video screens. Alternatively, the Airport could work with the University to develop its own seating options with similar utility and, hopefully, a lower upfront investment cost.

FIGURE 4: ARCONAS INPOWER BAR SPECIFICATIONS
SOURCE: ARCONAS



GROUND TRANSPORTATION REGULATIONS



As Volaire stated in the strategic options document, community input makes it abundantly clear the taxis and many of the rideshares currently serving Willard Airport, and the Champaign-Urbana community at large, are not up to the standards of other cities. Passengers have little confidence in the safety of ground transportation nor do they have confidence they will be charged fairly. Moreover, many of the taxis serving the airport still do not accept credit cards which makes it difficult for business travelers, on expense accounts, to document their taxi trips.

**"THE AIRPORT CAN... REQUIRE
ALL TRANSPORTATION
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DROPPING OFF PASSENGERS
TO PAY A FEE FOR THAT
PRIVILEGE."**

Additionally, the Airport has little control – and even little ability to monitor – rideshare vehicles and drivers serving its passengers.

The Airport has no operating agreement with Uber or Lyft. Most airports – even the size of Willard – have operating agreements with rideshare providers to better control traffic, parking, and the quality of service.

There are multiple ways to structure transportation standards, programs, and fees. Most airports rely on their larger communities to regulate the quality and appearance of rideshares and taxis. Willard Airport will likely need to rely on Champaign, Urbana, and Champaign County to do that – even if those entities are reluctant to do so.

The Airport can, however, require all transportation companies picking up and dropping off passengers to pay a fee for that privilege. In fact, most airports already do that. Even smaller ones such as Cedar Rapids. Uber,

Lyft, other rideshare companies, taxis, and all shuttles pay the Airport Commission \$2 per pick-up, with the total paid monthly. This pick-up fee amount is consistent with what other airports of similar size have implemented.

The American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) has a program for smaller airports under which it will negotiate all operating agreements with rideshares on behalf of the Airport, and then collect the revenue and distribute it back to the Airport. AAAE will offer that service to Willard Airport for \$12,000 per year. This would relieve all pressure from airport administration to figure out how to implement fees on its own and ensure all participants are paying each month.

Volaire currently estimates about three rideshare and taxi pickups per arriving flight. This does not

include those who use hotel shuttles. At this level of activity, with a \$2 fee per pickup and no fee for drop off, Willard Airport would generate \$15,000 per year in total revenue with pre-pandemic flight activity (refer to the chart above). Essentially, it would be a breakeven proposition if Willard used AAAE to implement the fee program.

With a slightly higher fee, the margin for error in the estimated usage is covered. With a fee of \$3 per pickup Willard Airport would only need two passengers (or groups) per arriving flight to use a rideshare or taxi in order to be revenue positive, with \$15,000 in total revenue against \$12,000 in AAAE costs. With Volaire's estimated

CHART 6: POTENTIAL RIDESHARE REVENUE
 SOURCE: VOLAIRE AVIATION ANALYSIS, JUNE 2020

Fee per Pickup \$2.00			
Pickups per Flight	Flights per Year	Pickups per Year	Revenue per Year
1	2,500	2,500	\$5,000
2	2,500	5,000	\$10,000
3	2,500	7,500	\$15,000
4	2,500	10,000	\$20,000
5	2,500	12,500	\$25,000

Fee per Pickup \$3.00			
Pickups per Flight	Flights per Year	Pickups per Year	Revenue per Year
1	2,500	2,500	\$7,500
2	2,500	5,000	\$15,000
3	2,500	7,500	\$22,500
4	2,500	10,000	\$30,000
5	2,500	12,500	\$37,500

Fee per Pickup \$4.00			
Pickups per Flight	Flights per Year	Pickups per Year	Revenue per Year
1	2,500	2,500	\$10,000
2	2,500	5,000	\$20,000
3	2,500	7,500	\$30,000
4	2,500	10,000	\$40,000
5	2,500	12,500	\$50,000

three rideshare/taxis per flight and a \$3 fee, the Airport would generate a total of \$22,500 in annual revenue or more than \$10,000 in direct new profit.

Based on this analysis, it is suggested the Airport enter into an agreement with AAAE to implement a rideshare and taxi fee for access to pick-up passengers. This should include regulations like those in Cedar Rapids, where drivers are prohibited from loitering on airport property and must wait outside the geo-fence until they have arranged a customer pick-up. Willard Airport should implement a similar geo-fence, and have drivers pick up passengers in the newly paved turn-around between the terminal and the rental car lot, keeping the terminal curbside for taxis and personal vehicles.

It is also vital any new rideshare and taxi regulations require drivers to adhere to a set of basic rules of operation. These rules should include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- > Soliciting customers in any form by vocally calling out or using any other means of attracting customers, nor solicit on behalf of any vendor;
- > Using any other person or agent, including but not limited to Airport Employees to solicit customers in any manner whatsoever;
- > Picking up or dropping off passengers or their luggage at any other airport location other than designated areas;
- > Leaving vehicles unattended while the engine is running, or with keys in the ignition. Driver of vehicle must remain with the vehicle at all times while the engine is running even when passengers are in the vehicle;
- > Using profane, vulgar language or participating in offensive conduct directed at the public or any Airport personnel;
- > Feeding wildlife while on Airport property;
- > Damaging or defacing Airport property or failing to report such damage to the appropriate airport staff;

- > Failing to immediately comply with law enforcement when asked to see proof of insurance, license and registration, confirmation of TNC app while on airport property or within the GEO-fence tracking areas;
- > Transporting passengers in an unauthorized TNC vehicle;
- > Using or possessing alcoholic beverages, drugs or narcotics while on airport property;
- > Attempting to bypass TNC app and soliciting cash payment from customers.

With a set of easy-to-understand regulations, a reasonable fee which can be passed on to travelers, and a means of collecting those fees, Willard Airport will be able to much better control rideshare and taxi access for its passengers.

GREENHOUSE FARMING FEASIBILITY



As noted in the previous report, Agricultural land use options at airports are somewhat limited by the FAA. To circumvent the wildlife attractants that traditional farming brings yet still fully utilizing land available for such activity at Willard Airport, greenhouse farming may be a viable option. As with any endeavor, the decision to convert large tracts of land must be fully studied in order to assess whether that is the best use of a finite resource. This section seeks to define what the objectives of such a study would entail.

To recap, Greenhouse farming is a term used to define virtually any major agriculture production carried out using greenhouses. These allow farmers to grow many kinds of crops in climates that may not be hospitable; whether soil

is the main concern or if the climate is not advantageous. The ability to carefully control temperature is considered the most important advantage of greenhouse farming; especially in the Midwest region where a typical growing season is much shorter. Hydroponics, where growing plants are suspended in a liquid, is quite common as it relates to greenhouse farming. Often the liquid used in hydroponics is simply water, but the water may be infused with specific vitamins or nutrients needed for plant development. As one can imagine, a greenhouse farming operation is quite costly.

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A STUDY WOULD ENTAIL.”**

The objectives of a feasibility study to assess the practicality of greenhouse farming on land owned by Willard Airport should be to:

- Determine whether the land available for greenhouse farming would be of sufficient size for a potential commercial grower;
- Determine what would need to be brought to the site in terms of infrastructure to entice a potential commercial grower;
- Determine recommended methods for movement of any commercial grower's product (how would it get to market?);
- Determine what, if any, approval would be needed from the FAA to allow such an operation on airport property;
- Determine what the estimated revenue to the airport would be and whether that provides greater future revenue potential than what is currently being received for the land;
- Determine if there is an educational tie in which could be developed between a commercial grower and the University to provide further, non-monetary benefit to the public University system which would set the region apart.

Within the study itself, there should be research on similar facilities to provide clarity on what demand exists for crops grown under glass. Again, greenhouse farming already exists in the state of Illinois with a number of flower and produce greenhouses currently operating. Examination as to what their lease rates are and term of lease should be included to provide a benchmark for the Airport should it pursue the option further once the study is complete.

While indication from existing commercial greenhouse corporations as to whether they would be interested in establishing a Willard Airport location would be nice, such a fact-finding mission is not the intent of the feasibility study. Once the study is completed and the results reviewed, Willard Airport staff can then decide whether it is worth pursuing. If so, working with regional partners as well as with the assistance of the Champaign County Economic Development Corporation will be imperative to the next steps.

Finally, a five to six-month timeline is reasonable for this type of feasibility study where multiple objectives are being investigated and researched. The report, provided in written form, should also be summarized and presented to University and Airport officials to ensure the full findings are clear and understood.

SOLAR POWER GENERATION



As discussed in the previous report, Airport interest in solar energy is growing rapidly. Solar is a renewable energy source contributing to national goals of sustainability, energy independence, and air quality improvement. It is particularly well-suited to airports because of available space and unhindered terrains. It does not need unobstructed sunshine to generate electricity and can work in climates with frequent changes in the weather, like that of Illinois.

Ameren Illinois does have a number of renewable energy programs which could benefit CMI as noted before. Two that are still of particular interest are becoming a Qualifying Facility (QF)

and Net Metering. QF still appears to be the better option for CMI to explore as it would allow the airport to produce and use their own energy to reduce the airport's overall utility bill and still sell additional energy generated, if any. Net metering, on the other hand, does not allow you to sell additional energy created.

The state of Illinois' Power Agency has a program of interest as well titled Illinois Shines. Illinois Shines, also known as Adjustable Block Program, is a state-administered incentive program supporting the development of new solar energy generation in the state. According to the program's website, you can participate in the program in one of two ways:

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CHANGES IN THE WEATHER,
LIKE THAT OF ILLINOIS."**

- > You may host a new solar photovoltaic (PV) system on your rooftop or on your property, directly offsetting your energy usage; or
- > You may participate as a subscriber to a community solar project—a large, centralized solar project for which you “subscribe” to a share of its output.

In the case of Willard Airport, the installation of a new solar farm on airport property may qualify in this program. The installation of such a solar farm would need to be completed by an “Approved Vendor” the state recognizes. The vendor then applies to the Illinois Shines program for the airport to be a part of the system. If the application is accepted, the program provides payments in exchange for 15 years of renewable energy credits. Participating in the program helps the state meet its renewable energy goals, which were ambitious from the onset. However, the program has a potential roadblock. Currently, the Illinois Shines program website notes it is, “accepting applications for distributed generation projects 10 kW and below. New community solar and larger distributed generation project applications are currently being put on a waitlist.” Without fully understanding the amount of solar power which could be generated with the installation of a solar farm at Willard Airport or knowing what the airport actually consumes for power, the 10kW and below threshold number is geared more for residential rooftop solar panel generation. Thus, any system that Willard Airport would install would not be applicable under that threshold. It would need to join the waitlist of projects for consideration in to the program.

One of the most comprehensive resources available which compiles all known renewable energy programs across the US is the Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency (DSIRE). This website lists programs available, broken down by state, for entities to explore. The website contains various funding programs and how they provide assistance (i.e. grants, loans, rebates). While most programs are updated, the ones which have not been do contain links to the respective agency’s website for further clarification.

Federal grant programs were also investigated for solar panel installations. While several programs are in existence, Willard Airport would not qualify. For example, the US Department of Agriculture offers a Rural Energy

for America Program (REAP). The program itself is structured well and has funding associated, but the airport does not qualify based upon location to nearby cities. The US Department of Energy was also researched for new and upcoming options with little luck. At the time of this report, the best options are those already discussed in this section and lie within Ameren Illinois programs or with the Illinois Power Agency.

EXPANDED CUSTOMS OPERATIONS



Willard Airport is fortunate in 2020 to have a new general aviation US Border Patrol customs and immigration facility opening. There are very few airports the size of Willard that are Ports of Entry. It will be especially useful for longer haul private jet traffic, as it can process up to 20 passengers per flight.

The new facility is not designed to handle larger charters, but there could be an opportunity to develop a facility for the future during an eventual terminal remodel. While its highly unlikely the Champaign-Urbana market could support year 'round international scheduled or charter service, it could support periodic service to resort destinations such as Cancun. It could also support international travel for University of Illinois students and athletics teams.

The University of Illinois football team is scheduled to play in Dublin, Ireland to begin its season in 2021. If Willard had a larger customs facility it could potentially support a nonstop flight to Dublin and then process the coaches, players, and fans as they return.

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There is a precedent for this type of growth into a terminal-located Federal Inspection Service (FIS) facility. Rochester International Airport (RST) in Minnesota saw increasing use of its general aviation customs facility due to the growth of international travel to Mayo Clinic. In 2015, the federal government agreed that the facility

was simply too small and needed greater capacity to clear the amount of people coming from around the world to do business in Minnesota or visit Mayo Clinic.

To address RST's particular needs, the design team developed a new type of Federal Inspection Station that expands the functionality of the main terminal and provides use of a jet bridge to domestic commercial operations when it is not in use by Customs for wide- and narrow-body aircraft. The team had to demonstrate the design's efficacy and security to the Department of Homeland Security before it could be built. The total cost of the project was \$12 million, which was paid for through federal grants with a local funding share of \$3.8 million from the City of Rochester backed by Passenger Facility Charges (PFCs).

Now, RST is the first airport in the country to have a hybrid FIS. "We also wanted to make sure the

airport was positioned to process larger international charter aircraft in the future," Airport Director John Reed said.

The new FIS is four times larger than the previous Customs facility. With 20,000 square feet of space, it is large enough to hold 150 people and equipped to process 75 passengers per hour. More than 200 aircraft and approximately 1,200 passengers travel through the RST Customs facility each year.

The airport gained additional space for the new FIS by redesigning the main terminal, which was originally a mirror design with ticketing and baggage on both sides. Today, all ticketing counters are in one area and baggage is in another. John Reed reports that federal personnel who have visited to assess the changes were succinct in their comments: "We should make this a model for the rest of the country."

FIGURE 5: NEW FIS FACILITY, ROCHESTER INT'L AIRPORT (RST)
SOURCE: ROCHESTER INT'L AIRPORT



ON-FIELD PARTNERSHIPS



The Airport and the University have done much work to foster the continued development of on-field partnerships between tenants and other aviation assets. There are additional initiatives where Airport leadership can use its contacts and industry position to bring together tenants on projects that will help stabilize the Airport's budget while better positioning tenants for success.

This strategic plan encourages the Airport to work to foster partnerships to develop business in three areas: the development of an aircraft maintenance and technology program at the Parkland College Institute of Aviation; ensuring the viability of the pilot training program offered by Parkland; and a potential partnership in the future to privatize replacement hangars.

PARKLAND AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Parkland College's Institute of Aviation offers pilot training. It does not currently offer aircraft maintenance programs. Boeing's technician forecast predicts a world demand for 754,000 new technicians by 2037. The Asia-Pacific region represents the largest need at 257,000, with North America at 189,000, and Europe needing 132,000. The global aviation maintenance technician workforce will need to add almost 38,000 new technicians annually in order to meet the projected demand. There is no current training adequate to meet that demand. In fact, there are only 87 certified maintenance training programs in the United States.

The Aeronautical Repair Station Association (ARSA) says 81% of the global MRO market is made up of small or medium enterprises with fewer than 500 technicians. In the US the proportion of small MROs is higher at 85%. FlightStar fits squarely within this category. ARSA says those small enterprises are the ones that will suffer most from maintenance technician shortages.

With the need for maintenance technicians, FlightStar's position as an important aircraft maintenance provider for Envoy Airlines and private aviation, and Parkland's established Institute of Aviation, there is a critical mass at Willard Airport for a program to find success. A similar dynamic exists at Tucson International Airport, where Ascent Aviation and Bombardier have large aircraft maintenance facilities. The local Pima Community College has leveraged the help of those experts to develop a world-leading maintenance training program.

FIGURE 6: PIMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE A&P PROGRAM
SOURCE: PIMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Pima's Aviation Technology Program's Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) courses are approved by the Federal Aviation Administration and run year-round. It is one of a handful of programs where students conduct hands-on learning on commercial transport aircraft. The aviation sector of Southern Arizona's

economy offers high-paying jobs with dozens of local, national and international maintenance, repair and overhaul companies based in Tucson, including Bombardier, Ascent Aviation Services and Aerovation. Nationwide aviation industry growth is fueled by increased demand for new aircraft and new aviation technologies.

In addition to the 19-month main program, there is also a "Part 65" program where anyone who worked on aircraft in the military can come to Pima Community College, take a test to gauge their skill level, compare that

to what is required by the FAA for licensure and complete an eight-week boot camp program to fill in their knowledge gap.

PCC also offers the first part of the A&P training to high school students through a JTED program. Students from any of the participating high schools in Pima County, if selected, can receive training during night classes. When they graduate from high school, the students can transition months ahead into the main program, saving them money and time to enter the industry even earlier.

Willard Airport leadership should work to continue to foster relationships between FlightStar and Parkland College. It should be a champion for any programs that would offer funding to get a maintenance training program started. It should continue to develop a model, likely based on Pima Community College, for the future development of expanded aviation programs at Parkland.

FUTURE OF PILOT TRAINING

Due to the pandemic, demand for pilots will be much lower than forecast for the next several years. By the fall, an estimated 15,000 pilots are likely to be furloughed by US airlines. It will take a number of years for those pilots to be re-absorbed into the aviation network. For students leaving high school, becoming a pilot could be less attractive than it was just six months ago. This presents significant risk for Parkland and illustrates why the diversification of aviation programs could be important.

Beyond the next several years, it is likely that airlines will again experience a pilot shortage. Once demand returns, pilots will be in demand. More than 12,500 US pilots will face mandatory retirement by 2025, at age 65. Willard Airport leadership should work with Parkland to ensure the right communications and messaging are available to encourage enrollment in Parkland's pilot training program.

Key messaging includes those things that have changed with pilot training during the pandemic and those that are unlikely to change. Among the changes:

- > Airlines have temporarily paused hiring due to COVID-19;
- > The short-term outlook for passenger airline pilot jobs is poor;
- > The short-term outlook for cargo airline pilot jobs is stable;
- > Parkland has implemented measures to maintain a safe and healthy training environment.

There are many things that will not change post-pandemic, including:

- > Long-term demand for airline pilots remains at strong levels (beyond three to five years);
- > Mandatory retirements at airlines will continue with over 3,000 pilots needed per year to replace them;
- > Interest rates for financing flight training are at historic lows;
- > Flight training continues at Parkland;
- > If starting training today, the timeframe it will take for a new student to become an airline pilot has remained unchanged.

Willard Airport leadership's goal should be the ongoing viability of Parkland's Institute of Aviation. It is important for the Airport to continue fostering aviation learning – even in a pandemic. Parkland's enrollment for pilot training is currently at its highest point ever. The Airport's role is to ensure the Institute of Aviation has the resources to grow, to become self-sufficient, and to ensure its status as a long-term airport tenant.

PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP FOR NEW HANGARS

It was clear in the strategic options document that neither Willard Airport nor the University of Illinois will have the resources to develop new hangars or to replace aging hangars near the former airline terminal. As infrastructure ages, Willard Airport should seek support in the form of a public-private partnership for the replacement of aging hangars.

No private partner is immediately evident, so this project could extend beyond the intended five-year timeframe of this document. But companies like Western, LLC have a wealth of experience in developing projects for airports with a specialization in hangar development.

Western writes, “Public-Private Partnerships allow municipalities to complete large airport development projects more quickly. Many municipalities struggle to raise the necessary capital for much-needed infrastructure investments that would ultimately lead to prosperity at the airport and in the community, it serves.”

The private partner is responsible for raising and providing the funds to develop the asset – for design and construction through to completion. Public-private partnerships typically have contract periods of 25 to 30 years or longer. Financing comes partly from the private sector but requires payments from the public sector and/or users over the project's lifetime. The private partner participates in designing, completing, implementing, and funding the project while the public partner focuses on defining and monitoring compliance with the objectives.

At the appropriate time, Willard Airport can consider releasing a request for proposals for hangar developers to replace aging hangars. The Airport is more likely to receive responses if there is identified demand for the hangar space.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM



In simplest terms, Community Engagement programs bring groups of people with a common interest together. Community engagement is both an art form and a scientific process that fosters long-term relationships. Done successfully, airport sponsored community engagement programs can create airport advocates and brand loyalists as it allows people to perceive themselves as being included. Five airport sponsored community engagement program options will be discussed in this section: Airport 5k “Fun Runs”, National Aviation Day Events, Customer Appreciation Day(s), Airport Press Days, and Airport Therapy Dog programs.

AIRPORT 5K RACE

Airport 5Ks also referred to as “Airport Fun Runs” or “Race the Runway” events are unique community programs which require significant advance planning. However, if done in collaboration with a strong partner, the results can be very rewarding both in terms of airport support and public exposure. It is recommended that initial planning begin 15-18 months in advance to ensure ample time for preparation; especially for the Airport’s first event. In future years, the planning timeline can to be reduced as processes would already be in place. Because of the complicated nature of organizing such a large event, the following steps should be used as a planning guide. While this list is not all encompassing, it provides a base for the scope needed for a successful event.

- > Find a partner (Local or Airline) to co-host the 5K with;
- > Set a realistic budget;
- > Identify, apply for, and plan the logistics of the 5k including any necessary Federal approvals;
- > Plan out sponsorship opportunities, costs, and packages;

- > Promote the 5K race;
- > Outline the run of schedule/plan for the day of the race;
- > Identify steps needed to re-open the Airport runway following the completion of the race.

Finding a strong partner and event co-host will help to alleviate the staff burden of planning such an event and also help generate media attention. Depending on which partner is willing to assist in the 5K, there could even be incentives worked into the registration for racers. Possible partners could include: United Way of Champaign County, local chapters of the American Red Cross, Second Harvest Heartland, Wounded Warrior Project of Illinois or Big Brothers Big Sisters; any willing organization should be considered. As an example of thinking outside the box in terms of partners, the local chapter of Boy Scouts of America coordinates most efforts associated with the Chippewa Valley Air Show held in Eau Claire, Wisconsin every other year.

The first phase of planning also includes the development of an event budget. This will help to ensure adequate airport and/or sponsor funds are available to host such an event. While a strong partner may be trusted to coordinate and promote the event, CMI should budget Airport funds for most things associated with event logistics. Part of the budgeting process should include the development of sponsorship levels, which could then be sold to help offset the cost of the event. In the event of a shortfall, the airport needs to be prepared to cover reasonable costs. Reasonable event costs may include the rental of barricades, traffic cones, safety vests, additional security costs, tents, tables, chairs (if needed), overtime for Airport staff, temporary (mobile) signage, portable toilets, etc.

Once an event co-host partner is found and an event date is selected, the planning process can begin. With a date selected, decisions related to event logistics should be dealt with next. Examples of logistics include:

- > The route for the Airport 5K;
- > The number of participants/racers allowed entry;
- > Entry fees;

- > Amount of proceeds that will be donated back to the sponsoring charity;
- > Number of Staff/Volunteers needed;
- > Awards/Prizes for participants/winners.

After these details are identified, approvals for hosting a runway race should be sought from Federal and local officials. For instance, temporary modifications to the Airport Security Plan may require approval from the Transportation Security Administration's local Federal Security Director (FSD). Coordination with local law enforcement and the Air Traffic Control Tower will need to be undertaken as will discussion with the entity who will be providing first aid to attendees. Dialogue on where to allow race attendees to park will need to be had. Will they be directed to park offsite and then attendees bused in or will there be enough room for attendees and their family to park onsite while still maintaining parking access for those traveling into or out of the airport that day? Plans for inclement weather will need to be developed and when the decision is made to cancel the event will be made. All of these items should be considered when planning out the logistics of the event.

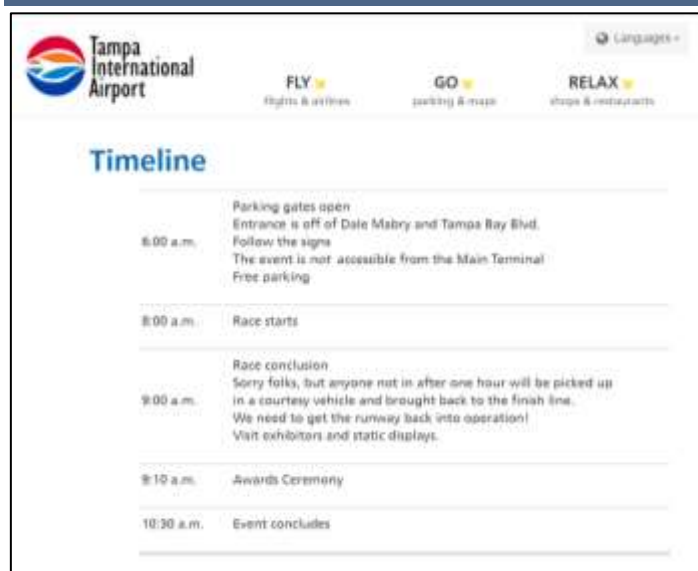
Sponsorship opportunities should offset the cost of hosting the race itself. As mentioned above, defining what those sponsorship levels include and the cost associated with them, will need to happen early on. A tiered approach such as silver, gold, and platinum levels could be utilized or an à la carte sponsorship list, of race specific items, including medals, race day t-shirts, participant drinks/snacks could be offered. The details within each sponsorship package and race information will need to include the expected number of racers, expected number of spectators, how the business entity will be recognized, and if they will receive free race entries as part of their sponsorship.

Approximately 5 to 6 months from the actual event, promotion of both the event and of participant registration should be launched. Online registration will ease the burden on race organizers and will allow another platform to promote sponsors. A press release series on the event should be crafted with planned release dates. Creative assets for social media platforms and the airport website should be developed with a goal to draw attention to

the upcoming event. Email blasts can be used to specifically target participants and social media can be used for outreach to local and regional running organizations and clubs. Promotional speaking opportunities (if possible) should be coordinated as well as additional earned media opportunities. Recall, however, that a decision as to how many race participants to allow should have been made early on in the planning process and exceeding the number is not recommended to ensure all participants are able to enjoy the race.

As the event draws near, a run of schedule for the race day will need to be developed. The date, time, and route were already selected, but the run of schedule should answer what time any vendors or volunteers are expected to show up, when parking lots open for race participants, when registration packets and race bib pickups are available, what time the event officially ends, etc. It can be fine-tuned up until a week before the event, but the run of schedule helps finalize the agenda for all in attendance. Most Airport 5K races are not all-day events rather, generally open around 6am with all participants, spectators and volunteers removed from inside airport fencing by mid-day.

FIGURE 7: TAMPA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT 5K TIMELINE
SOURCE: TAMPAAIRPORT.COM



Finally, while the race may be over, work for the Airport staff and event volunteers is not. Immediately following the race, the Airport environment needs to be returned to a safe operating environment, operational security checks made, and arrangements for rented items to be picked up. A detailed and thoroughly vetted schedule for these items needs to be developed. It is suggested an after-action meeting be scheduled to review what went well, what can be improved upon, and discuss whether a future event should be scheduled. Ideally, that would be undertaken within a week of the event.

Airports across the country who have had or currently host an Airport 5K include Tampa International Airport (TPA), Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport (PHF), and Nashville International Airport (BNA). Reaching out to their Airport administration for tips and “lessons learned” before beginning the process of hosting such an event is advisable. Industry organizations including AAAE and ACI-NA may also have guidance and event best practices they can share with member airports.

NATIONAL AVIATION DAY EVENT

In addition to paid and in-kind (donated) advertising, earned media opportunities allow the airport to generate publicity through non-paid promotional efforts. This may be accomplished through public relations efforts such as the distribution of press releases or participating in high-profile community events. Earned media can also be gained through organic traffic on the airport’s social media platforms. One such opportunity to pursue earned media is on National Aviation Day.

National Aviation Day occurs each year on August 19 and is a national US observation day celebrating the development of aviation. The holiday was established by Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1939) and designates the anniversary of Orville Wright's birthday as National Aviation Day. It is just one example of an industry related “holiday” that can be used to attract interest to the Airport and also create a level of awareness around the importance of the aviation industry.

Earned Media Opportunities

Earned media coverage is an essential and powerful tool to an integrated marketing program. Earned media often carries more weight and credibility in the minds of travelers than paid advertising because it is viewed- and often delivered -through a news reporter.

Ideas for earned media opportunities on National Aviation Day include:

1. **Host an “Insiders View of Aviation Press Day”** at the airport, allowing local press behind the scenes access to capture new b-roll footage of maintenance equipment and aircraft landing. Ideas for conducting this type of event are listed below.
 - Developing a list of key local officials, stakeholders and media to invite;
 - Set up a media invitation series, complete with aviation fun facts, inviting the VIPs and media to come to the Airport on August 19. Series of “invites” should include facts about aviation and CMI airport history;
 - Coordinate a timeline of events for the day, such as:
 - Media/guest check in (and time-slots, depending on the list size);
 - Refreshments and décor;
 - List of tour locations and activities/speakers that will take place during the day (allow guests/media to choose time-slots);
 - Possibly find a key aviation official or retired aviator to speak at the event;
 - Provide all passengers in the terminal with a special “treat” in the terminal (more in a section below) and allow media the chance to view this/photograph the passengers engaging with CMI staff.
 - Provide opportunity for media to call CMI staff to set up a 1-1 session if they are unavailable on the set date.

2. **Dedication of an Aviation Model or Park** With planning, the Airport could also commemorate a plaque or model plane for the Wright Brothers – and use the day and event as an unveiling of the monument or plaque. An example of this is the Akron-Canton Airport who unveiled such a model in 2003, on the 100th anniversary of the Wright Brother’s first flight, by opening their CAK Aviation Park to commemorate the Wright Brother’s first flight and the dawning of the aviation age. The

model is still on airport property today and serves as an important landmark on the facility, namely for occasions related to aviation achievements. In 2009, the monument and associate Aviation Park was renamed the Fred Krum Aviation Park in honor of the Airport's late director, Fredrick J. Krum.

3. **Passenger Appreciation Event on National Aviation Day** In conjunction with the above "Media Day" events, the Airport could set up aviation related food, education, and activity stations within the terminal to engage inbound and outbound travelers. These stations would also be available for the media and VIP guests as described above. Stations could include:

- > **Aviation-themed Refreshments** Airplane cutout cookies, customized CMI bottled water (sticker/labels printed and designed for the occasion),

baskets filled with the snacks that American Airlines serves in-flight, additional snacks and drinks denoted in an aviation fashion (i.e. a "fueling station" sign). It should be noted overly

"messy" refreshments are not advised. An airplane cutout cookie that is individually wrapped allows guests to choose one and take it with them. That airplane cookie, branded with CMI information/logo, then lives with the guest as they make their way to their final destination and consumes it later.

- > **Build a Paper (or wooden model) Airplane Station** Allow guests to select an aircraft model or printed paper airplane template to build a model. This would work well with existing

FIGURE 8: SOCIAL MEDIA APPRECIATION DAY IMAGES
SOURCE: SYR AIRPORT FACEBOOK PAGE



CMI collateral by utilizing the standup CMI banner as a target for the planes to fly through once built. If funds are available, Willard Airport could offer small “SWAG type” prizes to guests and passengers for attempting the game.

- **Aviation Trivia Station** – Similar to the above model station, CMI could also set up a trivia booth where passengers could pick up a trivia sheet, sit down in their own seats to fill it out, and drop it off for a chance to be entered to win an aviation themed prize following a drawing. The drawing could be a larger item such as a restaurant gift certificate or a set of luggage. This will also allow CMI to collect passenger data for future e-database lists.

FIGURE 9: SOCIAL MEDIA TRIVIA
SOURCE: CAK AIRPORT FACEBOOK PAGE



4. **Highlight Tenants** Utilize Social Media and/or press releases to highlight tenants and offerings in the week leading up to National Aviation Day. Examples of these programs include:
 - National Aviation week trivia on social media: Use the opportunity to highlight fun facts the public is not aware of. Airport could use this week to promote services and gain airport advocates, including general aviation tenants and commercial service options. CMI could send out something once per day for the week or month leading up to National Aviation Day.
 - On National Aviation Day itself, the Airport could post photos highlighting the activities of the terminal that day and/or commemorating the importance of Aviation.

Larger National Aviation Day activities do exist, but these events are not always executable by regional airports. The above still allows for Willard Airport to engage the community and share the importance of aviation in the public's daily life. As with any activity, costs (unintended or not) need to be taken into account. One way to spread the cost out is to mass order SWAG that can be used throughout the entire year while adding in only a certain amount of special "extras" for the day. The Illinois Division of Aeronautics may have some free items to handout such as activity books or aviation books perfect for small children. Conversations with the appropriate officials well in advance should be undertaken to ensure they allocate the appropriate amount to CMI's activity.

To reduce refreshment costs and involve airport tenants, CMI could approach Einstein Bros. Bagels, a vendor in the main terminal, if they would like to participate by providing water, soda or other liquid refreshments at a reduced cost. Social media recognition could then highlight their involvement.

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Airport would be unlikely to host National Aviation Day events in 2020. The above ideas still work for 2021 and beyond.

CUSTOMER APPRECIATION DAY

Customer appreciation day is a time to celebrate and say "thank you" to all those who have patroned your business. Airport customer appreciation days are no different; it allows the airport to express gratitude to current and former passengers who have chosen to fly with Willard Airport. It acknowledges that without their business, CMI could not achieve what CMI has achieved thus far. It is a way to thank them for their continued loyalty. Appreciation day(s) can be structured to occur one specific day, spreadout across one specific week, or recurring one day per month. While there is no right answer, for the purpose of structuring an appreciation day for CMI, it is recommended to start with one specific day allowing for expansion, if successfully received, in the years to come.

In determining what date might be appropriate to show appreciation, there is no perfect answer. However, National Customer Appreciation Day is April 18th; thus, it could provide a great opportunity to begin the endeavor. The key part in whatever date selected is to make it known in advance. This can be done quite efficiently through social media, the Airport's website, airport newsletters, airport blogs, and through the use of e-blasts using the Airport notification/distribution list. News media contacts could be pitched the story in advance with an Airport representative interviewed, reiterating how thankful CMI is for everyone's patronage. Alerting the public that not only does CMI appreciate their business, but we will be highlighting that appreciation on a set date is imperative; especially if there are giveaways or activities that are being offered and people must be present to win.

FIGURE 10: BRADLEY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BLOG
SOURCE: BRADLEYAIRPORT.COM



Working with local Airport concessionaires and tenants, appreciation days could involve a “freebie” for passengers/patrons. Perhaps it is a free cup of coffee or plain bagel at Einstein Bros. Bagels® for passengers in the sterile area. Airport staff and Einstein Bros. Bagels® could work out an agreed upon amount to give away, with certain thresholds requiring additional approval from Airport staff. Following the event, an invoice would then be submitted to administration for payment to the tenant. Other options might include free parking for those who enter the short term parking lot on the designated day or a chance to win a pair of tickets or 50,000 AAdvantage points on American Airlines. Almost anything can be given away and there is no right or wrong answer for what to include. If a larger scale item is given away, it is recommended to host the giveaway on social media which allows everyone the opportunity to enter, even those who are not flying out that day. Food items such as a decorated cookie that is pre-packaged from a local bakery, is always popular. These can be

handed out both pre-and post security along with CMI branded bottles of water. CMI swag (stuff-we-all-get, or in other words, trinkets) is always popular and appropriate to provide. Swag could include pens, sunglasses, hand sanitizer, face masks, t-shirts, stress balls, etc.

Free items for children traveling that day are also popular. CMI coloring books, crayons, paper airplane kits, educational airport books are all great ideas to have on hand and provide for free. It also shows the airport is kid-friendly; essential for families worried about traveling with small children. Games to play at the airport gate could also work. BINGO is a great, easy game to work into the gate area; especially for children. Large quantities of BINGO game boards could be purchased online in advance or even printed in-house, Airport staff could call the numbers and those who win, receive a fun aviation themed prize. Even with COVID still present, the BINGO cards could be discarded after one use while the BINGO caller numbers could be reused if done by the same individual. Aviation themed BINGO would also work well with symbols used on BINGO cards versus the traditional game; significant options exist for consideration.

General aviation should also be recognized during any appreciation event. While general aviation can often be overlooked, private and charter aircraft contribute to the Airport's bottom line and should be included. Examples of general aviation appreciation day items could include Willard Airport swag, a certain amount of AvGas (100LL) gallons free to the customer (one-time use), a gift card to a local restaurant to utilize the next time the pilot is in town, etc. Almost anything that is provided to customers in the main terminal could also be provided to general aviation through partnership with the local FBO, Flightstar.

CMI customer appreciation day is limitless; bounded only by budget and manpower. The true purpose is to communicate how grateful CMI is to all who fly, have flown, or will fly from CMI. How that is accomplished is endless.

PRESS/MEDIA DAYS

An Airport press day is designed to allow members of the media to capture updated b-roll footage of the airport, terminal, and airlines to use in future reporting. By hosting a large, one day press day, a few times a year, the media can capture images and footage throughout all seasons to use when appropriate and relevant within news stories. A dedicated press day also saves Airport staff time in that they are able to escort multiple individuals at a time to film behind-the-scenes footage versus repeating the request for multiple news agencies at multiple times throughout a given period. Press days also build relationships with local media as it provides a chance for the media to meet Airport staff members face-to-face, allowing them to reach out for comment, story ideas, and obtaining information from the airport itself rather than speculating or seeking out “anonymous” sources.

Planning an airport press day does not have to be complicated. Identifying a specific date to hold such an event might be the most difficult part. Typically, Friday through Sunday are the slowest news days meaning skeleton crews might exist; therefore, any hope of grabbing a reporter or photographer to come grab footage on one of those days could be difficult. On the other hand, the vast majority of press releases inundate newsrooms on Tuesday and Wednesday. So what day is the best? Sending out a media alert on Monday or Tuesday for a Thursday press day is recommended. While not every news agency will be able to make it, the intent is not to capture everyone, but allow them the opportunity to come. Hosting press days throughout the year in various seasons will accommodate nearly every news outlet. A media alert should be sent over on either Monday or Tuesday of the selected week identifying the who, what, where, when, and why of the Press Day. Pre-packaged and airport branded refreshments should be available as well as some Airport swag and business cards. Any printed collateral with updated route maps, airport statistics, and operational statistics should be made available at that time.

A general outline of what a press day could look like includes access to the following:

- > Updated introductions to key Airport staff members including press/media contact information;
- > Updated access to Airport brand assets including logos;
- > Updated access/review of operational stats;
- > Pre-Security and Post-Security terminal tour (major areas including baggage system; nothing sensitive in nature);
- > Airside footage of aircraft landing/taking off;
- > Airside footage of Air Traffic Control Tower and/or ARFF building;
- > ARFF fire truck(s) footage.

Timing should be scheduled to coincide with flight arrivals and departures to convey a sense of busyness in the terminal and at the gate. Normally, a 2-hour window of time is more than enough to allocate to a press day. Members of the media may not be able to stay the entire time but it is about providing access to these areas that is the most important.

THERAPY DOG PROGRAM

Airport Therapy Dogs are designed to calm anxious travelers with their peaceful demeanor and friendly face. The act of petting the dog brings a momentary reprieve to the nervous or anxious flyer who may be dealing with a recent death or perhaps flying out to a job interview. Whatever the stressor is, spending a few minutes before a flight with a Therapy Dog can bring a sense of peace to the individual playing with the animal.

According to the Alliance of Therapy Dogs, Airport Therapy Dogs have been around since the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 and have become more and more popular as the travel landscape evolves. In 2018 alone, Alliance of Therapy Dogs noted there were 58 Airport Therapy Dog programs in the United States with interest

spreading globally. With interest continuing to rise and the current travel situation at an all-time stress high, there are still a number of questions an Airport should consider prior to launching one. They include:

- > What insurance requirements will be necessary? Who will hold the coverage?
- > Where will the Therapy Dog be allowed (pre/post security or both)?
- > What type of schedule would be best? Once a week? Once a month?
- > What is the overall cost and staff time an Airport has to manage and run a Therapy Dog program?

Finding a reputable organization to partner with will answer the majority of the questions above. Three large Therapy Dog organizations include: Therapy Dogs International, Alliance of Therapy Dogs, and Pet Partners. All have experience setting up programs with Airports across the country and would be a great source of information. These organizations certify the handlers and their dog, but do not facilitate the actual set up of a program. Rather, they can put you in touch with those handlers in the area to see what their comfort level is in bringing their dog to the Airport. Just as no two people are alike, no two Therapy Dogs are alike and while they may be certified, it does not mean that each certified dog is suited for an airport setting. Some may be too distracted by the stimuli to do their job effectively in an airport environment.

In reviewing each of the organizations listed above, two of the three note they provide comprehensive general liability insurance for all of their volunteers. Scheduling of Therapy Dogs would need to be agreed to between the Airport and the Handler/Volunteer. In non-hub or small hub airports, Airport Therapy Dogs typically visit the airport for two to three hours on a monthly basis during peak operational activity days. Where the Handler and the Therapy Dog is allowed to roam is decided on by Airport staff, but if post-security is selected, most Airports choose to issue them an Airport approved security badge rather than escort them with Airport personnel.

Regarding costs to the Airport, most choose to invest in shirts for the Therapy Dog Handler indicating who they are so people feel comfortable approaching the dog. At Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP), volunteers stand in the terminal mall near a sign which attracts attention as people traverse the terminal mall. According to an article on Therapy Dogs in the 2017 May-June edition of Airport Improvement Magazine, there are unexpected benefits to programs such as these. The animals and their handlers become goodwill ambassadors for the Airport as they go throughout the community. They are able to share their experiences and humanize the airport experience while out and about– a benefit no one foresaw.

After researching Airport Therapy Dog programs and determining there is very little financial exposure to having a program such as this, CMI would benefit greatly from being able to host this type of program. It is recommended the Airport reach out to these two local Chapters of Pet Partners to speak with them about volunteers who may be interested in helping CMI launch their Airport Therapy Dog program.

> Pet Partners of the Tri-State (Carmel, IL):

sit.stay.heal@hotmail.com

(618) 240-0319

www.facebook.com/PetPartnersoftheTriState/

> Pet Partners of Illinois (Chicago, IL):

illinois@petpartners.org

<https://petpartners.org/illinois>

AOPA FLY-IN EVENT



The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) frequently presents Request for Proposals for airports throughout the United States to consider hosting an AOPA Fly-In. Willard Airport has previously expressed interest in hosting these events but has yet to secure one.

An AOPA Fly-In is an opportunity for local airports, communities, and regions to work together to bring aviators and aviation enthusiasts from hundreds of miles to enjoy a weekend exploring the community, discovering the airport, developing friendships, and deepening their aviation experiences. Airports that host an AOPA Fly-In can expect between 3,000 and 7,000 attendees over a two-day period, who will fly in more than 500 aircraft to the event. Economic impact to the local economy is estimated to be around \$750,000.

From 2020 to 2022, AOPA will hold up to four fly-ins each year, rotating around the country for maximum coverage and access to the majority of the nation. Willard Airport would be a preferred location because of its position in the middle of the country. About 75% of AOPA members are within a day's flight of Willard Airport by private aircraft.

The AOPA Fly-In is a two-day event held on a Friday and Saturday during the spring, summer, or fall months. It is focused around the local airport and seeks to draw pilots and aviation enthusiasts together for flying, fun, friends, and food.

The event consists of two parts:

Friday

- > Intensive “Early Bird” Workshops around core aviation skill topics;
- > Daytime local activities and excursions, tours of local attractions, fly-outs, etc.;
- > Exhibit Hall and Aircraft Displays;
- > Evening Social Events;
 - > Exhibit Hall Happy Hour;
 - > Barnstormers Party – great food and entertainment;
 - > Aircraft Camping,

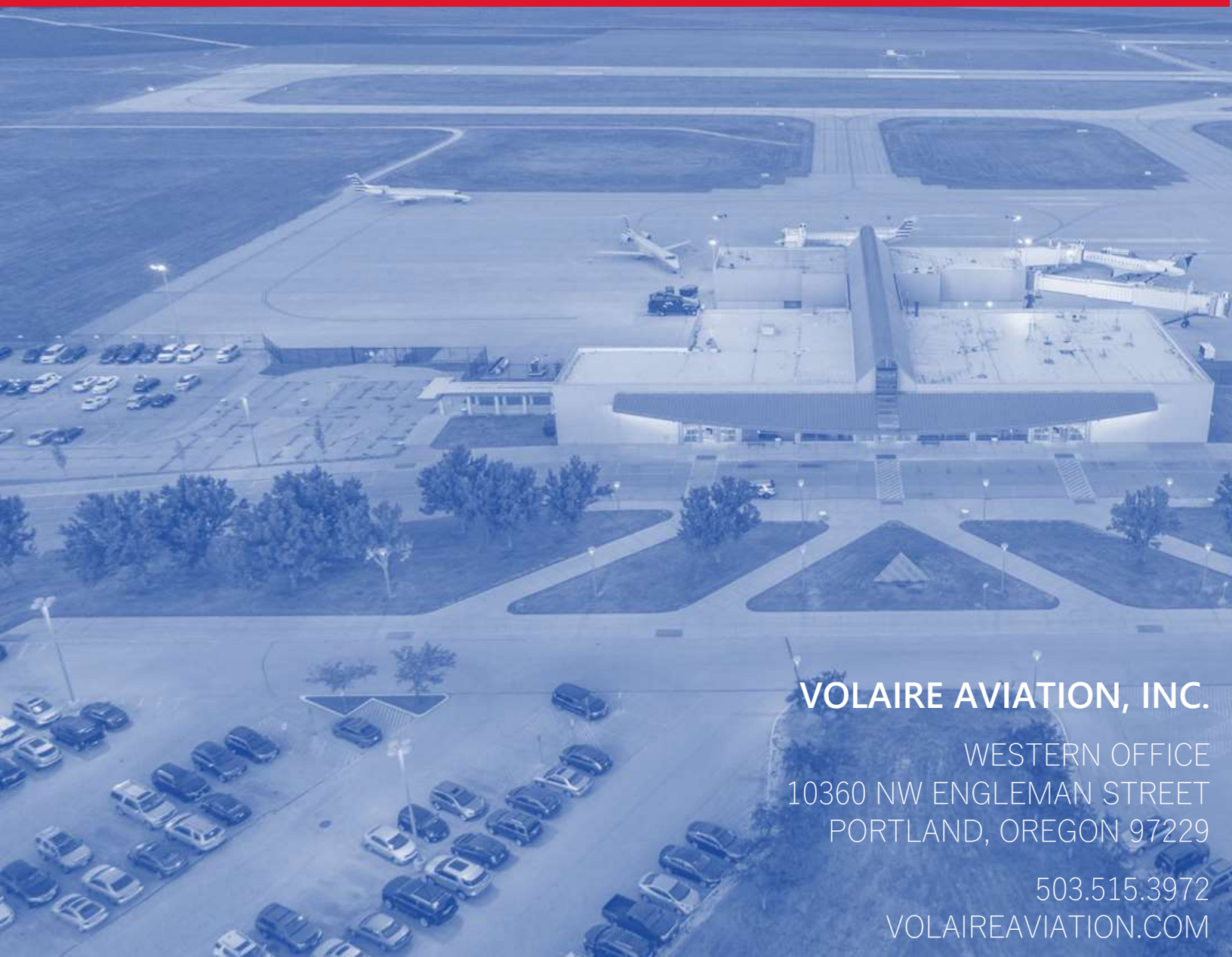
Saturday

- > Pancake Breakfast;
- > Exhibit Hall, Aircraft Display, Educational Seminars;
- > Aeronautical Demonstrations;
- > Pilot Town Hall with AOPA President and CEO Mark Baker.

The most effective AOPA Fly-In location will be one where there are other reasons to come to town than just the aviation event. AOPA values creating opportunities for pilots to bring their families and “make a weekend of it.” When the pilot can engage the family in positive, memory building experiences, everyone wins. The family gains new appreciation for the place of flying in mom and/or dad’s lifestyle. The local community benefits from new interest in the surrounding attractions. The airport businesses benefit from ongoing interest to return to see more.

AOPA is most interested in working with local communities, CVB's, amenities, and attractions to provide additional reasons to attend, thereby increasing both the value proposition to the attendee and the value proposition to the local economy. Working together to incentivize activity and overnight stays beyond the airport event are healthy additions to the AOPA Fly-In.

With this in mind, Willard Airport leadership should work with Visit Champaign County on a proposal to host an AOPA Fly-In event within the next five years. The Airport should contact AOPA to understand the submission process and award timeline.



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