West Michigan Airport Authority

Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023) Action Plan

Adopted: March 13th, 2022

Mission Statement

To provide the community with state-of-the-art global air access to strengthen the local economy and improve the area's quality of life.

Fiscal Year 2023 Action Plan

OPERATIONS

- **Review & Revise Airport Standards:**
  Review Airport minimum operating standards to ensure they are not only in alignment with the Airport's development goals and obligations under federal, state and local laws but also adaptable to changing climates in the aerospace industry and wider economic environment overall.

- **Review Existing Operational Agreements:**
  As the aerospace industry changes it's important to ensure our operational agreements also keep pace. In the past, the Airport Authority has relied on expansive "umbrella agreements" designed to encompass a wide array of strategically valuable services to the airport. Though there are substantial benefits to this approach, there are also opportunities for friction as well. The goal is to ensure that the Authorities standing agreements provide the necessary services and experiences users expect while also remaining adaptable enough, and provide the Authority flexibility, to ensure challenges are met and services are delivered without interruption. Staff will explore where it makes sense to contract with partners on agreements which cover a wide array of on field services and where it makes sense to contract with service providers for limited services.

- **Review Staffing Structure:**
  Given the expanding role of the Director and responsibilities associated with the Airport Manager duties now under their purview, and the increase of demands from tenants, users, and changing economic environment overall, staffing needs to evolve to respond to challenges and opportunities - both existing and on the horizon. Expanding staff of the Airport Authority will be critical in both meeting the day-to-day administrative duties and responsibilities of the airport and in responding to shifting dynamics. Additional staff will

also provide strategic redundancy of expertise to meet the needs of customers, tenants, and users.

- **Outline strategic goals for Airport reflecting in the COVID Era:**
  The Airport has been proactive in identifying key strategic priorities both in responding to the emergence of COVID threat and beyond. Given that COVID variants continue to define operations across sectors, it's important that the airport continues to both remain engaged and responsive to the challenges presented. The Authority has been quick to learn lessons from the early stages of the pandemic and continues to respond to as new issues arise. It's important for the Authority to remain tied into conversations, partnerships, and collaborations related to COVID response in our industry as well as remain mindful of and responsive to opportunities driven by the ongoing pandemic.

- **Review Standing Maintenance and Service Agreements and Plan for Ongoing Challenges Related to Staffing:**
  The Airport has not been immune to the ongoing staffing shortages across the country and has felt impacts in various areas of operations. Most notably, service agreement RFP responses have been more tepid than we would have initially anticipated. Of note, Landscaping Services has proven difficult to secure competitive bids, as most companies are at or above their current capacity. The Authority will work to establish partnerships with local government departments and other similar organizations where applicable to offset these challenges. Staff will continue to review RFPs to ensure they are written competitively, are attractive, and address the baseline needs of the Authority. Staff will also look for creative solutions in both our bidding process as well as possible collaborations with local partners to raise the competitive appeal of our RFPs.

- **Rollout Gallagher Verify System**
  The City of Holland's Finance Department, which manages the airport's finances and accounting, is partnering with AJ Gallagher (the Airport's insurance broker) to roll out their Verify System. Verify tracks contracts & leases, expiration & renewal dates, as well as required documentation (licenses and insurance certifications) and will follow-up to ensure documents are up-to-date. This is a subscription service the City has already adopted, and the airport automatically be involved in. Staff will work with the City's finance department to collect and upload all standing leases & support documents. Once complete, Gallagher will take over tracking and following up on these items, providing significant process efficiencies to the Authority.

- **Updated Auditing practices and requirements:**

As part of the Annual Audit report, Treasurer McCammon briefed the Board on upcoming changes to public auditing requirements. These changes will be substantial and will require additional involvement and attention from Airport Authority Staff. Staff will work closely with City Finance to get up to speed on these changes and implement the new practices accordingly.

- **Update Land Management Practices:**
  With the USDA wildlife Management Agreement signed, part of their role and responsibility will be to provide the airport with recommendations on how to address on field conditions to minimize wildlife habitation and, ultimately, the threat of a wildlife strike. As part of this, they will likely have key insights into how we manage our ag leases and other similar land management practices. Their recommendations could feasibly include everything from planting, harvesting, and tilling operations to recommendations regarding plantings. In addition, we'll also have the support of the Outdoor Discovery Center who has a long-established working relationship with our local farmers.

COMMUNICATIONS

- **Expand direct outreach engagement efforts with Airport Users:**
  We will continue to prioritize communications to users while also building engagement. Our users are one of our biggest potential advocacy groups on behalf of the Airport. Our users are well connected across all levels of the aerospace and aviation community. Building their engagement with airport operations as well as keeping them informed on strategies and priorities is invaluable. As potential infrastructure spending begins to be more defined, it will be important to establish clear channels of engagement for our users across the board regarding their perspectives on needs.

- **Continue outward facing engagement on happenings at the Airport**
  Build on the engagement strategies and momentum of FY21 & FY22 as well as the strategic partnerships established along the way. Partnerships with groups like FlightPath, STEM Flights, Civil Air Patrol, Dream Flights, and Wings of Mercy all likely have still untapped potential to elevate the profile of West Michigan Regional. In FY23 it will remain more important than ever to grow the community engagement piece of operations here at the airport. Likewise, these partnerships have potential to lead to and attract new partnerships and establish a sense of belonging/community here.

Similarly, on the economic development end, continuing to highlight growth opportunities, both underway and planned, is critical in building interest from new developers, companies, etc. that may be interested in locating to the Airport.

- **Incorporate economic impact and development opportunities as part of Airport Branding**
  With a protocol established, it will be important for the Authority to couch key development efforts and opportunities in the terms of direct economic impact, when applicable. This information will be valuable for the Authority Board in their decision-making capacity and will more directly highlight responsible stewardship of valuable community resources. While the intent is not to use this tool as a sole indicator in approving new opportunities, it will nonetheless serve as a valuable datapoint in directing growth.

- **Develop Marketing Materials targeted at Aviation related businesses and operations**
  Continue to ensure marketing materials (physical & digital) are targeted to high value/high priority aerospace operations. By balancing direct mailers, person-to-person connections, and targeted ads in the digital space, we intend to have a robust business development and engagement strategy for driving sustainable growth at the airport.

- **Review youth/student engagement opportunities**
  Carried forward from FY22. Youth/student engagement is critical as these young minds will eventually be the voters, policy makers, and businesses which engage with and support the airport. These are also the innovators and visionaries who can help guide the authority into the future. COVID has disrupted "traditional" outreach efforts through schools, youth organizations, etc. The Authority will work with Boileau as well as establish partnerships with other youth focused organizations to identify new outreach strategies in a post COVID landscape. As schools return to in-person attendance, due to the availability of PPE and vaccines, we are optimistic that the potential for on field engagement will expand.

- **Maintain up-to-date information on COVID impacts of Airport Operations**
  As COVID fluctuates, we will update operational policies accordingly. We have begun enacting stricter mask enforcement in public spaces for staff operating at the Airport. Enforcement with transient traffic remains difficult without consistent policies across regions.

  The Omicron variant, and future variants, will continue to present real and pending threats to both on field operations, to stability across the state and US, and to health and safety generally. Until the pandemic is under control, uncertainty will remain high.

Capital Projects

- **Complete design for North Hangar Park Taxilane**
- **Wetland Mitigation for North Hangar Park Taxilane**
- **Leverage Infrastructure Spending to Move up North Taxilane Construction Schedule**
- **Identify list of deferred maintenance projects**
- **Identify potential opportunities for future airport expansion**

ECONOMIC STRUCTURING

- **Federal Infrastructure Spending Bill:**
  In late CY 2021/early 2022 the US government authorized an expansive infrastructure spending bill which, in CY 2022 may allocate substantial funding for capital investment to the airport. It is also anticipated that this increased funding will continue for the following four years. Details remain sparse at the moment, but as FAA & MDOT-AERO work through how these funds can be allocated, it will become increasingly more important for the airport to both identify deferred maintenance projects as well as new strategic infrastructure, where applicable.

- **Emergent Technologies:**
  Both MDOT-Aeronautics and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation have established new offices focused on emergent technologies. Likewise, Michigan's Governor has prioritized establishing a commercial drone corridor across the state and certification of the first all-electric aircraft is on the near-term horizon (1-3 years). The Airport Authority will need to remain proactively engaged in planning for these new emergent technology systems and identifying both potential opportunities and impacts on the airport while also working to establish key strategic partnerships.

- **Build engagement & partnership with potential new Airport Authority member communities:**
  Beginning in early 2022, following engagement & interviews with key stakeholders throughout the community, communications and outreach initiatives will be focused on treating every year as a ballot year, and marketing and messaging will reflect this.

  The Authority will need to benchmark the viability of ballot initiatives in any potential target community and will also need to build engagement with relevant community leaders and stakeholders.

- **Draft Business Development Plan for the Airport Authority**

  As part of the airport's priority in attracting new business and development on airport property, the authority will continue to build upon efforts established in FY21 & 22 as well as coordinate with established community partners. Growth will be focused on establishing a sustainable mix of services and resources on the field to both meet existing needs and support for future operations. Goals should be reviewed on a regular basis, but continue to be summarized as follows:

  - Attract new aviation businesses
  - Attract new developers on Airport property
  - Establish a process for getting Airport property development ready
  - Identify opportunities in new tech at the Airport
  - Identify mid- and long-term land use opportunities for vacant airport property

- **Coordinate with Economic Development Partners in the region:**

  Beyond development at the airport staff will work closely with Economic Development Partners in the region to identify opportunities for the airport to support local and regional businesses. In tandem, staff will work closely with the emergent technology organizations outlined above. The focus would be for the airport to expand its role in serving the economic interests of its member communities and establish its voice in key policy decisions moving forward. Part of this effort will also include engagement with other similar travel focused entities in the region.

  Michigan maintains one of the most robust and well-integrated aviation networks in the United States, and West Michigan Regional is centrally located between major hubs (Detroit, Chicago, and Grand Rapids). These factors lend to the marketability of WMRA for new development opportunities.

- **Continue to pursue land sale of Parcel K**

  Following the release of Parcel K, a listing agreement for the parcel was fully executed in January 2022. The property will be listed at $799,000. It is the intent to leave the parcel listed until competitive offers are received. The Airport Building & Development committee will review offers received and will provide final recommendation regarding acceptance of a final offer.