



Wittman *Regional Airport*
Oshkosh



Winnebago County

Wittman Regional Airport Vision Study

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Overview

Wittman Regional Airport is a general aviation airport located in Oshkosh, WI. Owned by Winnebago County, the airport has a major economic impact on the community, contributing more than 850 jobs, \$35.6 million in wages, and \$2.2 million in tax revenue and lease payments to the local economy.¹ The airport is also the location for the annual EAA AirVenture Fly-In, which contributes \$170 million of economic benefit to the state's Fox Valley region each year.² The third-busiest airport in the state,³ Wittman Regional Airport is poised to bring additional benefits to the local community, state, and region with the recent addition of an aviation business park. To reap these additional benefits will require a collaborative effort and a marketing plan that captures the strategic vision of current stakeholders and airport management.

This report is a summary of five focus groups with regular airport users: tenants, employees, hangar owners, hangar renters, and general users. The feedback gathered in these focus groups can serve future marketing and organizational development needs, while also helping to meet the end goal of the airport community in coming together with a more unified voice. This report details the similarities and differences across each group and provides suggestions for future actions. A few key findings include:

- All user groups perceived that Wittman Regional Airport had the capacity for significant growth and development. Users would prefer a busy airport that required them to take a few extra minutes to get on the runway over an underused airport.
- Many of the major resources needed for future growth and development (physical space, airport business park, ATC, EAA, and an active and growing community) were perceived as already in place. Airport users share a desire for greater recognition and support of the role the airport plays in the community.
- A focused strategic plan, dynamic leadership, and a strong marketing effort were perceived as needed to support and expand the airport.
- Focus group members wanted to be involved in additional conversations and efforts to increase usage of the airport and expand the number of tenants and businesses that are located on or near the airport.
- While focus group participants shared similar goals, each group described the strengths and weaknesses of the airport a bit differently, suggesting different approaches might be needed for each target audience.

¹Neiswender and Biedermann, 2013

https://blogs.ces.uwex.edu/cnred/files/2017/01/CRD-Departmental-Paper-Wittman-Regional-Airport-final-submittal-APA-January-2015_NEW.pdf

²

<https://www.eaa.org/en/ea/eaa-news-and-aviation-news/news/09-21-2017-airventure-contributes-more-than-170-million-in-economic-benefit-to-area>

³ <http://wisconsin.gov/Documents/travel/air/airport-info/2017activity.pdf>

Methods

Five focus groups were held with users and employees of Wittman Regional Airport to learn more about their use of the airport, why they value the airport, and how they would like to see the airport grow and change in the future. One focus group was held with employees. Three focus groups were conducted with hangar renters, owners, and general users. One focus group was held with commercial tenants of the airport. Due to scheduling conflicts, the researchers conducted one individual interview with a commercial tenant, using the same protocol used for the focus groups. In total, 40 participants were interviewed.

Focus groups were moderated by two trained researchers with doctoral degrees in communication. Focus groups lasted 90 minutes and were held at the Wittman Regional Airport conference room. Three specific actions were taken to ensure participants were comfortable sharing their complete opinions: (1) airport employees were not invited to the user focus groups; (2) members of the Winnebago County Board were not invited to any of the focus groups; and (3) focus group conversations were not recorded, but comprehensive notes were taken. It should be noted that two members of the county board arrived at the airport shortly before the first focus group began and expressed their desire to participate. While greatly appreciative of their commitment and interest in the focus groups, the researchers asked that the board members depart 20 minutes into the session as the presence of those who are perceived as authority figures is known to influence participant behavior. The board members graciously agreed in order to ensure participants were comfortable expressing their views, and thus preserve the integrity of the data collected.

Following the focus group meetings, notes were analyzed to determine common themes across the five sessions. We begin by providing an overview of the shared goals expressed across the focus groups. Next, we use the focus group themes to unpack and explain the perspectives of each user group and how they perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the airport. We conclude with suggestions for future research with additional audiences and next steps for creating a shared vision of the airport.

Shared Goals

One goal of this project was to begin developing a shared vision that might speak to the needs of all airport users. Across the focus groups, there were several shared goals for the airport, including:

- 1. Increased growth and expanded usage of the airport.** In particular, participants noted the capacity for increases in both general aviation and commercial use of the airport. Participants saw little opportunity for or advantage to a return of airline passenger service.
- 2. Development of the Aviation Business Park.** Participants appreciated the infrastructure in place for development of the aviation business park and expressed frustration that commercial businesses have not yet begun to move into the park. The development of a business and marketing plan for the aviation business park was a clear need expressed in all groups. Participants wanted to see an incentive package and marketing plan to attract new businesses.
- 3. Better engagement and communication with current users.** Users expressed that while the airport support staff provided good communication, the limited number of staff, the leadership turnover, and the structure of county board committee meetings were limiting opportunities for users to communicate with leadership about the strategic vision and plan for the airport. The need for increased opportunities for feedback and a clearer communication plan were expressed across the groups.
- 4. Energized and dynamic airport leadership.** All groups viewed the role of airport director as pivotal to the future growth and development of the airport, and expressed the desire for a dynamic leader who can promote and advocate for the airport in the community and with local and state government groups.
- 5. Increased visibility and improved relationships with local community.** Participants shared a desire that the community would recognize and appreciate the role of Wittman Regional Airport more broadly and not confuse Wittman Regional Airport with EAA. Increased visibility and better relationships were perceived to be essential for increased support of the airport.
- 6. Greater collaboration and increased support from all groups.** Participants expressed a desire for increased collaboration among airport staff, users, county board, aviation subcommittee, city council, and chamber of commerce. The airport needs to be seen as a shared resource across the community and only with collaborative efforts can the airport grow and the Aviation Business Park reach capacity.

What will help with achievement of these shared goals?

Participants identified several strengths and opportunities that can facilitate the achievement of these shared goals. In the table below, we have sorted these advantages into internal and external attributes that can facilitate goal achievement. Following the table, key strengths are described more fully with sample statements from participants.

Strengths: Internal attributes that help us achieve our goals	Opportunities: external conditions that are helpful in achieving goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Airport runways have been updated and operations processes can expand to accommodate large events such as AirVenture ● Airport facilities can accommodate a wide range of planes and users (multiple runways and approaches, tower control, ILS) ● Convenient location (e.g. proximity to US 41) ● Dedicated and responsive grounds crew and support staff ● Passionate and responsive airport users ● Current commercial tenants support airport development and growth ● Current general aviation users support airport development and growth ● International recognition provided by partnership with EAA and opportunities for annual meeting with aviation industry leaders during AirVenture ● Favorable hangar rental pricing compared to other regional airports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New state and federal funding for defense, emergency response, aviation, and aerospace development ● Higher-education institutions provide training and instruction for skilled workforce ● Joint county and city support for Aviation Business Park ● Infrastructure and space available at Aviation Business Park ● Recreational opportunities and events in Oshkosh ● Possible collaboration with other regional airports (e.g. provide commercial overflow for Appleton, share flight instructors with other small GA airports) ● Possibilities for collaboration with many local institutions for community development and business development (e.g. FVTC, UW Oshkosh, Oshkosh Corporation, Go EDC, Chamber of Commerce, etc.)

Wittman Regional Airport is easily accessible.

- **Physical location:** many users live in Oshkosh, which makes for easy access, but even those driving up to 50 miles to use the airport choose Oshkosh over other options because it is not too busy and it is easy to get to the airport given the location right off the highway.
 - *"Only a mile from home. Because of the ILS approach, you can get in here in bad weather - the best place around."*
- **Easy to navigate security checkpoints:** the current system of fencing, watchful tenants, and access codes keeps the airport feeling secure. Tenants expressed appreciation that they don't have to show badges and pass through extensive security checkpoints to access their planes.
 - *"I rented in ATW while I was waiting for a hangar to open up here. The security was a pain there. Here I can be in the air in 15-20 minutes."*

Airport facilities and friendly, responsive staff accommodate a wide range of aircraft and users.

- **Runways and choice of approaches** accommodates any type of aircraft in any type of weather.
 - *"The runways are huge. If you can't get in on these runways, you are hopeless."*
 - *"Any size planes can land and takeoff here."*
 - *"You can leave here and go to Europe."*
 - *"Good for flight training since there are so many options for approaches."*
- **Tower and Air Traffic Control** provide opportunities not available in many area general aviation airports.
 - *The towered airport and Instrument Landing System (ILS) make this an "airport you can fly into no matter the weather."*
 - *"Working with a tower regularly keeps you sharp and able to fly into any airport."*
 - *"Helps attract corporate clients and needed for EAA."*
- **Maintenance facilities** onsite both bring in aircraft and provide local tenants opportunities for service.
 - *"With Meyer and New View, I don't have to travel 100 miles to get someone to work on the plane."*

- **Snow removal** is much better than other general aviation airports making this an advantage for general aviation users.
 - *“The snow guys are night and day better compared to the old ones.”*
- **Airport maintenance and support staff** are responsive and easy to work with when maintenance issues come up or rents are due. The small airport staff works well together and responds to customer requests and needs.
 - *“A lot of personal attention.” “Constant communication with Pete. He’s always looking out for tenants.” “Diana is great.”*
- **Fair hangar rental prices and land leases** when compared with other airports and a waiting list for hangars shows capacity for growth.
 - *“Land leases are more friendly. You’ll own your building longer here than other places.”*

AirVenture and EAA make this a “special place to be.”

- Because of EAA and AirVenture, Wittman Regional Airport is held up as a special place in the aviation community with a local and international reputation. While AirVenture requires some accommodation by year-round tenants, it also offers them the opportunity to see different aircraft, meet new people, and celebrate aviation.
 - *“I’ve flown all over the world, and when you say you fly out of Oshkosh, it’s like saying you fly out of Mecca.”*

Airport users are passionate about aviation, Oshkosh, and Wittman Regional Airport.

- Participants described the airport as underutilized, under capacity, and a great opportunity for development that will benefit the greater Oshkosh community.
 - *“There is so much potential here.”*

The Aviation Business Park provides a location for future commercial development.

- Development of the new Aviation Business Park was viewed as the greatest opportunity for airport development. Participants in the focus groups were frustrated at the slow rate of development of the business park and hoped to see a stronger business case to bring in new organizations.
 - *“We have potential in the business park. It seems to be stalled as people try to decide if we need tenants first or infrastructure first.”*
 - *“If they could court an avionics business, that would make a huge impact. People know Oshkosh around the world.”*

University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and Fox Valley Technical College provide educational opportunities to develop a skilled workforce.

- While the current workforce was viewed as insufficient to support significant growth, participants recognized the possibility for development of a larger skilled workforce through partnerships with local educational institutions.
 - *"Great work ethic in Oshkosh, but not enough people to the fill jobs. Thank goodness we have the tech school."*

Oshkosh has events, recreational opportunities, and a growing downtown that can draw people to the community.

- Participants reported that there are several events and activities in the community that might draw visitors, but they need more marketing and a clear access path for people who fly in to Wittman Regional Airport.
 - *"We need a courtesy shuttle to the arena, EAA, The Grand."*
 - *"If someone had good transportation from here to The Grand, why not fly in for a show?"*
 - *"We have attracted jets because of the new arena. Larry the Cable Guy flew in. We need a list of area amenities ready for them. Maybe this is where the Chamber comes in."*

State commitment to development of the aerospace industry in Wisconsin and regional interest in the development of an aviation and aerospace hub could be leveraged to entice businesses to locate in the Aviation Business Park.

- The successful collaborative efforts of the City of Oshkosh, Winnebago County, Oshkosh Common Council, Wittman Regional Airport, AeroInnovate and other partners demonstrate the possibility for future collaboration to recruit new business partners to the local community.
- While focus group participants did not have many specific ideas for how to leverage these partnerships, they believed that external funding for development could be located and businesses could be attracted if sufficient incentives were provided.
 - *"We can have industrial development. We need to get the city and county to work together on infrastructure."*
 - *"Tech isn't just in Cali anymore. We can bring it here if we have a strategic plan."*
 - *"Why not make this a hub of aircraft completion centers? Can we not attract more commercial groups like this? There are some synergies that aren't being explored."*

What could prevent achievement of these shared goals?

Participants identified several weaknesses and threats that may need to be addressed in order to achieve these shared goals. In the table below, we have sorted these advantages into internal and external attributes that can limit goal achievement.

Weaknesses: Internal attributes that limit/prevent fulfilling our goals	Threats: External conditions that limit/prevent goal achievement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Insufficient staff to meet demands of future expansion (e.g. assistant director, business development director, marketing staff) ● Poor relationships between prior airport director and some airport users ● Lack of shared strategic vision for the airport creates challenges reaching new markets and audiences ● Underdeveloped communication processes between and among airport users, leadership, county board, and community members ● Large and diverse county board lacks aviation expertise and is perceived to provide limited input opportunities for airport users ● Current airport facilities unable to accommodate future growth: limited staff for maintenance and snow removal, no community space for general aviation community ● Limited FBO (no deicing, limited maintenance, avionics) ● Limited and aging buildings and infrastructure (hangars, terminal building, maintenance shop, lack of high speed internet outside of airport terminal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limited amenities and services compared to surrounding GA airports ● Community perceives airport as inactive and/or confuses airport with EAA AirVenture ● Wittman Regional Airport not viewed as a “destination airport” by GA pilots in the state ● Unclear vision and decentralized leadership for Aviation Business Park development ● Low unemployment rate and competition from other regional communities makes it hard to find and maintain workforce ● Unclear or underdeveloped incentives for relocating to Oshkosh (e.g. quality of life, public schools, real estate, weather) ● Unclear or undeveloped incentives (tax, financing, etc.) for new businesses considering relocating to Oshkosh ● Decline in number of GA pilots and decreased demand for equipment and support services.

Wittman Regional Airport is not a “destination airport” other than during the week of EAA AirVenture.

- **Lack of available services:** No restaurant, pilot shop, or welcoming terminal facilities onsite leads to general aviation pilots flying away rather than to Oshkosh.
 - *“It isn’t a destination, except during AirVenture.”*
 - *“It would be nice to have a draw, to have a place for GA pilots to gather like the diner in Madison.”*
 - *“My friend flew in on a Saturday and couldn’t purchase oil here which makes this tough on GA pilots.”*
- **Lack of knowledge of available services:** General aviation users perceived little awareness among the local and state aviation community of services that are currently available including: FBO services (courtesy car, free transportation to the EAA museum, and conference room facilities) and access to restaurant and hotel facilities through the gate by the Hilton Garden Inn.
 - *“Services are offered on the field, but people just don’t know.”*

At several points during the focus group, participants were educating one another about available services demonstrating a lack of shared knowledge of these services.

- **No flight school** or classes for the general public or recreational pilots. Fox Valley Technical College has a training program, but this is not accessible by the general public or recreational pilots looking to build their skills.
 - *“We need a flight school here. The average person can’t walk in and learn to fly.”*

While some updates have been made, many airport facilities were perceived to need updating and increased staffing.

- **Snow removal and deicing facilities** need to be improved for commercial tenants. While general users praised the snow removal efforts, commercial pilots sometimes chose to fly into Appleton instead of Wittman Regional Airport because limited funding and staff prevent snow removal at the desired rate.
 - *“With a limited crew, you can only do so much.”*
 - *“We’ve lost out on business because the runways aren’t plowed.”*
- **The number of staff is viewed as insufficient** to adequately maintain all facilities at the desired level and accommodate future growth.
 - *“You often have three things that need to be done, but only manpower for 2.”*
 - *“We could use more people out in the field”*

- **The dated and largely empty terminal building** is viewed as a wasted opportunity for development by most tenants and renters. These users would like to see an updated terminal building, preferably with a restaurant and general aviation pilot shop, which would help make Wittman Regional Airport into more of a destination airport. While maintenance staff see the cost of maintaining and updating the current terminal building as cost-prohibitive, general users didn't view the terminal that way and felt that tearing down rather than maintaining the terminal was a waste of money.
 - *"The terminal is a disaster."*
 - *"We need a nice terminal to attract business."*
- **Hangar space** is insufficient and dated. A long and perpetual wait list for hangars at the airport has led some tenants to choose to rent in Fond du Lac or other area airports. The poor design of some hangars leads to difficulties managing ice and snow. Participants were not aware of any master plan for hangar development and feared continuation of what they perceived as a haphazard plan to maintain old hangars and develop new hangars.
 - *"There are hangars available, but you wouldn't want to put a plane in them. There are rivers running through them and planes freezing."*
 - *"They had a big building they tore down that could have been used to store planes. There seems to be a disconnect between the county board and the airport. They tore down a building that could have been used with no plan to replace it."*
 - *"There needs to be a master plan for how and where to build hangars. Other airports have this."*
 - *"There was no planning years ago for where to put hangars."*

Poor communication between and among airport staff, county board, and users causes confusion and leads to division.

- **Lack of communication leads to confusion** about the short term and long term plans for the airport. For example, participants were confused about the choice to tear down rather than replace or update certain hangars when there is a wait list for hangars. This created a perception that airport management and leadership are slowly tearing down rather than investing in the airport.
 - *"We were caught in a windstorm in the fall and they said they were tearing down the terminal. There were 6 different stories, but no one came directly to us and said here's what's going on. I was trying to figure out what to do and then I talked to maintenance and found out none of the stories were true."*
 - *"We have surprises coming from the county board. We were supposed to be involved in meetings, but were never invited."*
 - *"The different users don't see the need to work together. They all have different needs."*

- Participants perceived **limited opportunities to give feedback** to airport management staff and the county board. They expressed the desire for more reciprocal relationships and greater opportunities for conversation and collaboration.
 - *"The board needs more information."*
 - *"The tenants need to be able to provide feedback."*
 - *"There are monthly meetings of the board we can attend, but the agenda is scripted so you can't voice your opinions."*
- Participants were **largely unaware of marketing efforts** and **perceived insufficient marketing to be an issue** for both the business park and the airport.
 - *"Who are they marketing to? If you ask anyone in Oshkosh who isn't an aviation person, they just think it is EAA."*
 - *"I don't know where they are marketing the business park. I've never seen ads in the aviation publications."*
 - *"Social media should be part of the marketing."*
 - *"Add information to the website about who flies out of here."*

The community has misconceptions about the airport and is largely unaware of the role the airport plays in the community.

- User groups felt that with the exception of EAA AirVenture, **many in the community perceive the airport to be dormant**, even though the FAA ranks it as the third-busiest airport in the state. Perceptions of dormance were linked to multiple factors: the belief that airline passenger service was the primary use of the airport, a lack of knowledge concerning other uses of the airport (e.g. commercial tenants, corporate jets, private jets, sport aviation, recreational aviation), and an inability to see activity when driving by as the primary runway is interior and largely hidden from public view.
 - *"People don't know it's here except one week a year."*
 - *"Because of the fence, the North-South runway is hidden from public view. If they don't see anything on the East-West, they think nothing is going on."*
 - *"People don't believe that this is the third-busiest airport in the state. The tower reports those numbers, but people don't believe it."*
 - The airport is often confused with EAA AirVenture, which has both positive and negative connotations in the community.
 - *"A lot of people rent their houses and form lasting relationships with people and enjoy it."*
 - *"People who don't like it don't see the economic benefit; they just see the busyness and the traffic."*

There is no shared strategic vision for the airport, which limits development and marketing opportunities and frustrates current users.

- During the focus groups, many possibilities for development were offered as ideas (see Appendix A for a list of ideas), but **no clear strategic vision emerged even though the desire for a shared vision was clear.**
 - *"There needs to be a master plan."*
 - *"There is no vision for the airport. Expand - but there's nothing done to make that happen."*
- Participants believed that **leadership for that shared vision had not yet emerged.** Blame for the lack of shared vision was frequently shifted from the county board to the prior airport director and to others. In the end, all users seemed to desire a collaborative effort to move forward.
 - *"The county board needs to have more faith."*
 - *"We need more people to write to the county board or attend meetings."*
 - *"We all need to be careful of getting wrapped up in regulations and have more vision."*
 - *"The airport director needs to be a visionary."*
 - *"You need someone with significant ideas that can make their proposals work."*
 - *"Something positive needs to happen. A plan for the airport can't just come from the county board, the airport director. It needs to be an ad hoc committee."*
- Currently, **leadership for the development of the aviation business park is unclear** to participants. They are unsure if the airport, county, city, or some other entity is responsible for business park development. Participants believed that leadership needed to be more clear and that a business case with sufficient incentives would be needed to attract new commercial tenants to the airport and the business park.
 - *"No one is going to come without incentives."*
 - *"Big companies need incentives."*
 - *"Without backing from the city or county, the business park is never going to fill."*
 - *"There needs to be a rubber-stamped package ready to go if a company is ready to come in. We move like snails. It would take years."*

Considerations for Engaging Current and Future Airport Users

Engaging the external general aviation and commercial aviation communities for the purpose of increasing overall usage at Wittman Regional Airport requires a greater understanding of these target audiences. The paragraphs below and the table on page 14 provide some key differences between the current user groups at Wittman Regional Airport. These differences can be sources of miscommunication and acknowledging them up front can help with future marketing and strategic planning efforts. Future research is needed to determine the values, selling points, vulnerabilities, and key information sources for potential future general aviation and commercial users and tenants.

- Specifically, **some of the things the general aviation community feels are advantageous (runway length, control tower, ILS) were seen by current commercial users and tenants as having little to no potential to attract new commercial users** or influence decisions about airport tenancy; meaning, such features are either not unique to Wittman Regional Airport when comparison airports are considered or, while seen as nice to have, are not features that would be deciding factors when choosing an airport.
- Additionally, **other facets of Wittman Regional Airport carry numerous pros and cons that complicate their use as potential methods for attracting new users and tenants.** For example, while participants perceived EAA's annual AirVenture as a positive event for the airport and the Oshkosh community, as well as something they personally enjoy, many did not see it as a feature that would convince general aviation users or commercial tenants to relocate to Wittman Regional Airport as their home base. However, some participants argued that the proximity to EAA and AirVenture could be used to market the airport to businesses related to sport aviation. Although it should also be noted that one participant cited what can be described as extremely unfavorable costs associated with relocating an entire business and offered significant skepticism that a company would do so for the "cool factor" of being near EAA and AirVenture. Several commercial tenants expressed their affinity for EAA and AirVenture, but also described how the annual July event limits their airport access and, in some cases, necessitates relocating their planes for the week, which could be a potential barrier when recruiting new commercial tenants.
- **Both users groups cited word-of-mouth as their primary source of information about the airport and expressed both pros and cons with this approach.** On the positive side, all users wanted to have direct communication and conversations with the airport staff and director. On the negative side, when official communication was unavailable, participants spoke to other users, leading to a chain of miscommunication and rumors. **More channels of communication could clarify key messages, limit the spread of rumors or misinformation, and help participants feel more involved and engaged with the airport.**

Comparison of Target Audience Perspectives

	General Aviation Users	Commercial Users and Tenants
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Affordability ● Accessibility ● Connection to Oshkosh ● Connection with community of aviators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Affordability ● Accessibility ● Connection to Oshkosh ● Return on investment ● Available workforce
Comparison Airports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clintonville (CLI) ● Reedsburg (C35) ● Fond du Lac (FLD) ● Iola (68C) ● Appleton (ATW) ● Manitowoc (MTW) ● Eagle River (EGV) ● Wautoma (Y50) ● Madison (MSN) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appleton (ATW) ● Madison (MSN) ● Waukesha (UES) ● Sheboygan (SBM) ● Eau Claire (EAU) ● Anoka (ANE)
Potential Selling Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Long runways that can accommodate any type of aircraft, which most comparison airports don't have ● No airline traffic ● No TSA ● ILS ● Affordable leases ● Accessibility ● Tower/air traffic control ● Snow removal ● Proximity to EAA and AirVenture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No airline traffic ● No TSA ● Personal attention from airport staff ● Accessibility ● Affordable leases ● Proximity to EAA and AirVenture
Potential Vulnerabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Few airport-organized fly-in events ● Limited FBO ● Aging hangars/hangar condition ● Not enough hangars ● Terminal building/amenities ● Lack of a flight school/instruction ● Lack of community/gathering place for pilots ● Lack of awareness about how to access needed information ● Some desired information not available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most comparison airports offer equal runways and ILS systems ● Companies have trouble finding and keeping qualified employees (ATW competition) ● No deicing services ● Limited FBO ● Airport needs more employees for maintenance and management ● Terminal building ● Lack of awareness about how to access needed information ● Some desired information not available ● Snow removal limited ● Proximity to EAA and AirVenture
Key Information Sources	Word of Mouth	Word of Mouth

Strategies for Achieving Shared Goals

As noted at the beginning of the report, six shared goals emerged from these focus groups:

1. Increased growth and expanded usage of the airport.
2. Development of the Aviation Business Park.
3. Better engagement and communication with current users.
4. Energized and dynamic airport leadership.
5. Increased visibility and improved relationships with local community.
6. Greater collaboration and increased support from all groups.

This project is a first step toward achieving goals three and six. The recent hiring of Jim Schell as a new airport director is a move toward achieving goal four. While progress is being made toward the achievement of some of these goals, a clearer shared vision and clearly communicated strategic plan will be needed to achieve them all. The insights of the participants related to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the airport can aid in the development of a plan to achieve these shared goals by capitalizing on the positive and addressing the negatives. While a collaborative effort will be needed to develop a strategic plan to accomplish these shared goals, the final section of this report provides a few insights that can aid in moving Wittman Regional Airport toward a shared development plan and marketing initiative.

Focus Area	Recommended Action Items
Commercial Development Targets Goals 1 and 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A packet of information about development opportunities available in print and digital form (on website) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Would require a major investment in marketing materials and inclusion of information regarding local and state incentives for new development ● One-on-one meetings with potential commercial tenants attending AirVenture to develop relationships and explore potential for future collaborations ● Working with an airport development consultant who specializes in development of aviation and aerospace industry parks ● Website link to the GO EDC information about the Aviation Business Park (https://greateroshkosh.com/site-selection/aviation-business-park/) ● Create a collaborative committee with representatives from all current user groups, airport management, county board, and community charged with creating and executing a strategic vision for the airport and Aviation Business Park.

Focus Area	Recommended Action Items
<p>Communication with Current Users and Tenants</p> <p>Targets Goals 3 and 6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quarterly email updates (e.g. via a system like Emma or Constant Contact in order to track open rates) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Additional editions if important communication needs to be communicated ● Add “airport updates” section on website and provide more frequent website updates ● Adding reports, articles, and examples of marketing materials to the website (e.g. “pressroom,” “in the news”) ● Social media posts, or posts redirecting to the website if the information to be shared is not a fit for the social media strategy ● Regular (perhaps quarterly or biannual) meetings with current users, tenants, and airport staff ● Promote calendar of events section on website or let users know to watch Facebook for list of events ● Provide updates on opportunities to provide feedback to the county board and aviation committee
<p>General Aviation Development</p> <p>Targets Goal 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide easy-to-find information about the airport pertinent to this audience on the website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hangar availability and cost, maps, fuel prices, conditions, courtesy cars, maintenance facilities, schedule of events, conference rooms, bathrooms, other amenities, etc. ● Add links to Chamber of Commerce, local attractions, lodging and amenities ● Conduct additional research on target audience values and needs ● Review how apps and other websites present information about Wittman Regional Airport and track best strategies for reaching new users (see Appendix B for a list of possible channels for information) ● Make materials developed for other groups (such as Aviation Business Park marketing materials) easily accessible on website

Focus Area	Recommended Action Items
Community Relations Targets Goals 5 and 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop new partnerships and expand current partnerships with local businesses and nonprofits including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oshkosh Area Chamber of Commerce ○ Greater Oshkosh Economic Development Company ○ Local businesses and nonprofits ○ Oshkosh Area School District ○ Fox Valley Technical College ○ University of Wisconsin Oshkosh ● Provide more opportunities for community members to come to the airport and see the airport activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Educational programs or field trips with local schools ○ Partnerships with EAA for fly-in breakfasts ○ Develop a conference space in a new/updated terminal ○ Provide tours to community groups such as Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts (tower tours, airport tours, airport tenant tours) ○ Partnerships with tenants for tours of businesses (e.g. tours of historic planes being refurbished by Basler, EAA museum) ● Tactics to communicate positive messages to the Oshkosh community about the airport, some of which are already being done, include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● News releases, advertisements, and sponsored content for local media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oshkosh Northwestern, Oshkosh Herald, Oshkosh Independent, television, radio ● Social media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facebook <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Curated content (sharing posts) from local businesses and about local events with addition of original comment ■ Following and creating posts linking to local businesses and nonprofits to develop reciprocal social media relationships/cross-promotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Linking using account names and hashtags ○ Instagram <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adding link to website (top right, to replace Twitter link as that account appears dormant) ■ Using community hashtags (e.g. #oshkosh)

Wittman Regional Airport Vision Study Appendix A

Participant Ideas for Airport Development

- **Aviation business park development ideas**
 - “The park could have a runway with houses.”
 - “What about the government? Can they go to the military and see if they want a place up here?”
 - “Why couldn’t we have a Sporty’s or Aircraft Spruce on the field? We have EAA, huge runways, why couldn’t we attract a big retailer? Maybe we need a TIFF?”
 - “Garmin went into an airport and that increased traffic to the airport. If they could court an avionics business that would make a huge impact.”
 - “Maybe Gulf Stream needs a third plant here. They are going to be space-limited in Appleton.”
 - “Tool and die - we have a wealth of talent here. We need to publicize that.”
 - “Paint is an industry that’s changing. People are having to build new facilities, why not here?”
 - “MRO Operations.”
 - “Attract completion facilities here - cabinet makers, etc. A lot of skilled labor here. Why not make this the hub of aircraft completion centers?”
 - “I presented to the aviation committee about the millions of dollars the federal government has available to make this a disaster emergency airport. Working with the DOT would be a good place to start.”
 - “We need to make this a real home for sport aviation outside of EAA.”

- **FBO development ideas**
 - “Other companies coming in are going to need a full service FBO. Need another one on the South end of the airport.”
 - “We need more conference rooms. People do a lot of meetings in airport conference rooms.”
 - “Deicing is a factor whether you’re big or little. You can get one used for \$50,000 - it’s a small investment to draw people in and provide a good service.”
 - “A courtesy car doesn’t need to be fancy, but it affects people’s decisions about flying into an airport.”
 - “This could be a corporate reliever airport for Appleton. The more commercial flights they have, the harder it gets for corporate flights. Keep jet fuel prices low and you bring people in. People that can’t go nonstop East to West coast and bring them in. Provide them with menus, deliver food, etc. Create a positive experience so they come back.”
 - “Arrange for customs to drive down and clear your plane - pseudo international.”

Participant Ideas for Airport Development

- **Terminal development ideas**
 - Air freight operation
 - "We need to market the airport for air freight operation - FedEx, UPS - but you would have to have enough staff to make it work...where the terminal is would be about perfect for a sorting facility because of the infrastructure around it - the ramps, runways."
 - Activities for kids
 - "In Madison, there's a jet room that people bring their kids to."
 - "Flabob airport in Southern California is doing great things to get kids involved. Also Aspen, Colorado."
 - History museum
 - "Market the history"
 - "People come in and ask about the plane hanging up in the terminal entrance."
 - "Partner with EAA to bring more history to the airport itself."
 - "Oshkosh Truck mini-museum, Bazler history."
 - Training center and/or Conference Space
 - "This place could be converted into a training center for the public in building a plane or refurbishing a plane."
 - "We need to get more young people into aviation."
 - "If the community would hold more events here, you could bring in different organizations."
 - "Rent the conference room and add conference facilities."
 - Restaurant or microbrewery
 - "Having a restaurant with an FBO attracts people, but it has to be something the public would use."
 - "Maybe a microbrewery"
 - "Need to have a space where people can watch planes take off and land."
 - Signage
 - "Put up a new sign"
 - Apply for grants
 - "Use a grant writer to apply for grants to do some improvements."
- **Development around airport (JC Penney building)**
 - "We need to consider development around the airport like the JC Penney building. It is within the airport development program, but they don't know what to do with it."

Participant Ideas for Airport Development

- **General Aviation development ideas**
 - Infrastructure Development
 - "Wash station you can pull up to"
 - "Water in the hangars - a spigot for a hose to wash the plane."
 - "Need more bathrooms and a map to them."
 - "Could triple our t-hangars out here and not break a dent."
 - "If the county doesn't want to build hangars, why not find a private company to do it?"
 - Pilot Shop
 - "Have a real radio shop/avionics shop on the field."
 - "A full pilot shop: radio, plane rental, charter, gas maintenance. Wisconsin Aviation has multiple shops around the state."

- **Event ideas to increase traffic to airport**
 - "Wednesday night hamburger social - moves around to different airports and will be here in June. Needs to happen more often"
 - "Bonanzas to Oshkosh - an organization of people that live all over the country and fly in formation. Can they come in more often?"
 - "Airport calendar of events that includes EAA events on the website."
 - "A training day for general aviation pilots who are new to landing with a tower. This would be a great place for training."
 - "People get excited about Stearman planes. People would come out for that if they knew it was going on."
 - "The airport needs to partner more with EAA 252 and have community days at the airport."
 - "All of the other events in town could use the airport more. People could fly in and get transportation to other events."

Wittman Regional Airport Vision Study Appendix B

Participant Resources for Airport and Aviation Information

- Print and Web
 - Midwest Flyer (<http://midwestflyer.com/>)
 - Trade a plane (<https://www.trade-a-plane.com/>)
 - Avweb (<https://www.avweb.com/>)
 - Aviation pros (<http://www.aviationpros.com/>)
 - DBAA (<http://www.dbaa.biz>)
 - DOM (<http://dommagazine.com/>)
 - GAMA (<https://www.gamaaviation.com>)
 - AOPA (<http://www.aopa.org/>)
 - WI DOT Event list
(<http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/aeronautics/trng-evnts/flyins.aspx>)

- Apps
 - SocialFlight app (<http://www.socialflight.com/>)
 - ForeFlight (<https://www.foreflight.com/>)
 - FltPlan (<http://www.fltplan.com/>)
 - Garmin Pilot (<https://buy.garmin.com/en-US/US/p/115856>)
 - AirNav (<http://www.airnav.com/>)
 - Airport Courtesy Cars (<https://www.airportcourtesycars.com/>)



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As teachers, researchers, or consultants, Jennifer and Andrew are committed to asking questions that inspire people to think deeply and consider the most inclusive, effective, and ethical strategies for collaboration and organizing. They have served as advisors to both for-profit and nonprofit organizations working to address communication challenges and cultural change.

Jennifer has published research in several journals including *Communication Studies*, *Health Communication*, and *Management Communication Quarterly*. She is currently an associate professor and chair of the UW Oshkosh Communication Department and chair of the UW Oshkosh Interfaith Dialogue and Education Alliance.

Andrew's research has been published in diverse journals including *Telemedicine and e-Health*, *Communication Studies*, *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*, as well as in chapter form in the recently published book *Social Media and Politics: A New Way to Participate in the Political Process*. He is currently an associate professor and chair of the UW Oshkosh Department of Radio TV Film.