

## 5. BRADLEY AIRPORT

Previous editions of this Transportation Plan recognized the importance of Bradley International Airport as both a transportation facility and as an engine of economic growth, and the 2004 Plan included a detailed policy supportive of improving the airport, improving access to the airport, or supporting other actions needed to fully realize the economic growth benefits that the Airport can generate. This Plan reaffirms those goals and endorses specific recommendations first identified in the 2004 Plan. While the policies and recommendations are general in nature, they are supportive of further development of the Airport and they are based on work done for the Bradley Area Transportation Study, the Gallis Report, the Transportation Strategy Board, and the ongoing Airport Master Plan and Airport noise study.



Bradley International Airport is both a major transportation facility and an economic resource for the Capitol Region and the State of Connecticut. The Airport is served by fifteen airlines, including two low-fare carriers, operating over 270 daily flights. In 2006, Bradley Airport handled 6,907,042 passengers (enplanements and deplanements) and 162,384 tons of cargo. Compared to other airports nationwide, in 2005 Bradley ranked 53<sup>rd</sup> in volume of passengers served and 35<sup>th</sup> in volume of air cargo handled (2006 figures are not yet available.)

International Service. Beginning July 1, 2007, Northwest Airlines will begin the first daily, nonstop transatlantic service out of Bradley International Airport to Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam the Netherlands. From Amsterdam, passengers can connect to 80 destinations throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa and India. In the latest Economic Impact Survey, it was determined that Bradley contributes \$4 billion in economic activity to the State of Connecticut and the surrounding region, representing \$1.2 billion in wages and 18,000 full-time jobs.<sup>1</sup>

From a regional perspective, the Airport provides a critical link to the nation's air transport system and the nation's economy. The Airport's importance as a potential engine of economic development was previously noted in the Gallis Report where its role was defined as providing fast and convenient access to the national and international transportation systems. The presence of good quality air service within the Region that is so easily accessible gives the Region a competitive advantage in those economic sectors and industries that rely on fast and convenient delivery of people and goods. These advantages can help stimulate a substantial amount of economic growth.



If we are to achieve the full benefit that the Airport can offer, we must plan properly -- appropriate land use regulations, good road systems, adequate infrastructure, and full consideration of the potential impacts on adjacent communities. Proper planning is necessary to assure: (1) that we realize the maximum growth potential from the Airport, and (2) that the growth occurs in a manner that provides maximum benefit with minimum disruption to the environment, neighborhoods, towns, and the Region.

<sup>1</sup> Passenger and cargo statistics, air carrier and economic data from Bradley International Airport Marketing Department, 2/2007.

## Better Ground Access

The Airport currently enjoys good roadway access, but has limited transit access. Route 20 and I-91 offer good access to most parts of the Airport for most users. However, to support anticipated development on and near the Airport, it will be necessary to improve roadway access and to develop better transit access to the Airport.

**ROADWAY ACCESS.** To help facilitate economic development in the area in and around the Airport, which is designated as a 'regional growth center'<sup>2</sup>, good roadway access is needed. Four roadway improvements were proposed in the Bradley Area Transportation Study and are described below.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS.**

1. **Westside Access Improvement.** To address problems of access to cargo facilities on the west side of the Airport, it is recommended that Bradley Park Road be extended on a new section of roadway north to Russell Road.
2. **Northside Access Improvement.** To accommodate future development on the north end of the Airport, it is recommended that a new 2-lane connector road be built ( 1 lane in each direction) from Route 75 to the Route 190 bridge. This 4.3 mile road provides a more direct route from the north end of the Airport and it will divert about 3000 - 4000 vehicles a day from Suffield center. To minimize environmental and community impacts, this road would be designed as a 2-lane, at grade roadway with a moderate design speed of 35 mph. Before a final commitment is made to this project, an environmental review must be completed.
3. **Route 75 Improvements.** To address existing operational and safety problems on Route 75 from just south of Route 20 to Route 140, it is recommended that a center turn lane for left-turning vehicles be constructed, driveway modifications be made to allow for better access management, that streetscaping and sidewalks be provided, and that a new service road for businesses be constructed.
4. **International Drive – Bradley Park Road.** To improve access to the commercial areas immediately near the Airport, make minor improvements to Bradley Park Road & International Drive. Address operational problems and create attractive gateways to airport-related development areas.

**TRANSIT ACCESS: LINK TO NEW HAVEN–SPRINGFIELD RAIL** The BATS report and the Regional Transit Strategy both called for better transit access to the Airport. Current transit access is limited to taxis and the Bradley Flyer bus route. While improved bus service is needed (see below), the two studies mentioned above also proposed providing a transit connection between the Airport and the proposed New Haven–Hartford-Springfield (NHHS) commuter rail service. A passenger connection of this sort would provide a good reliable link to the Airport from the three major cities in the Knowledge Corridor, and it would provide a link to the New Haven Line rail service.

The State completed its commuter rail feasibility study in 2006, and recommended that a bus shuttle be provided as a connection between the commuter rail station in Windsor Locks and the airport.

### **RECOMMENDATION.**

1. **Transit Connection between the Airport & the NHHS Commuter Service.** Provide a good transit connection to the proposed NHHS commuter rail service by instituting a direct shuttle bus service from the Airport to the Windsor Locks rail station.

**TRANSIT ACCESS: BUS SERVICE.** Given the very limited transit service to the Airport today, some bus service improvements are needed. The Bradley Flyer is the only regular bus service between the

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 1: Linking Land Use and Transportation.

Airport and downtown Hartford and it was designed to serve employees at the Airport, not air travelers. The following Airport bus service recommendations were identified in various studies conducted recently.

**RECOMMENDATIONS.**

1. **Service to Hartford for Air Travelers.** To be more effective in serving the air traveler market, Bradley Flyer service should be adjusted as follows:
  - *More Destinations.* Serve more destinations downtown such as hotels, major employers, and the new convention center when it is built.
  - *New Direct Service.* When feasible, provide direct service between the airport and downtown, in addition to the employee-focused service now provided.
  - *More Frequent Service.* Provide more frequent service.
  - *Better Equipped Buses.* Provide buses better suited to serve air travelers. Existing buses do not have luggage racks to accommodate bags and suitcases that most travelers carry.
  - *More Marketing.* Market bus service directly to air travelers with better signs in the terminal, better information on Airport kiosks and websites, through major downtown employers, and through the Visitors and Convention Bureau.
2. **Service via Blue Hills Corridor.** For the short term, develop supplemental bus service to the Airport that builds on the recommendations from the Griffin Busway study to enhance service within the Blue Hills corridor. In the long term, develop full service to the Airport via the Griffin Busway.
3. **Service to Springfield and other Cities within Bradley's Market area.** Support the efforts to develop bus service between the Airport and other key cities such as Springfield and New Haven.

## Better Opportunities for Appropriate Economic Development

Bradley International Airport presents a tremendous opportunity for economic growth for the Region as a whole, and for airport-related development within the immediate vicinity of the Airport itself. This fact was recognized in the Gallis Report, the DECD land use study, the Airport Economic Impact Study, and the Bradley Area Transportation Study. However, in order to realize the Airport's full economic potential, sufficient and appropriate planning must be done, and supportive programs must be put in place. The Council of Governments supports planning (state, regional, and local) that helps achieve the Airport's economic development potential in a manner that has minimum impact on the environment and on neighborhoods in the general vicinity of the Airport.



**REGIONAL GROWTH CENTER.** With the adoption of the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development in 2003, the Airport area was designated as one of six 'regional growth centers' in the Capitol Region. This designation is intended to encourage economic development within areas that have both the potential for a lot of economic growth and adequate infrastructure to support such growth.

**RECOMMENDATION.** The Council should continue its designation of the Airport area as a Regional Growth Center, and continue to develop policies that support economic growth in these areas.

**ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS.** The roadway improvements recommended under Better Ground Access will help facilitate economic development on and around the Airport.

**RECOMMENDATION.** The roadway improvements described above should be implemented.

**PRE-APPROVED SITES.** The lack of pre-approved or 'shovel ready' construction sites at the Airport has hindered efforts to promote development at the Airport. Some prospective businesses chose not to locate at Bradley when confronted with timeframes of 6 - 18 months to get necessary environmental

permits. The Transportation Strategy Board and others have suggested that State officials 'pre-approve' selected development areas for construction. The appropriate planning and analysis needs to be done in advance so as to make the sites 'shovel ready' when developers express an interest.

**RECOMMENDATION.** Support proposals by the Transportation Strategy Board and others to establish pre-approved development sites at the Airport.

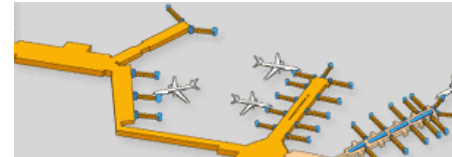
**NOISE-TOLERANT LAND USES.** The State, Region, and towns should encourage only noise-tolerant land uses near the Airport. Noise levels under airport flight paths can be very high and can interfere with residential and many commercial activities. While buildings can be sound insulated to reduce noise levels, certain land uses such as residences, schools, and nursing homes are still inappropriate near flight paths. Town development regulations need to both restrict the types of uses allowed in areas affected by Airport noise, and require the appropriate level of noise insulation for buildings within these areas. Town plans and development regulations should be consistent with the Airport Master Plan, and with recommendations in the Part 150 Noise Exposure and Compatible Land Use Study.



**RECOMMENDATION.** Support policies that discourage noise-sensitive land uses near flight paths, and that encourage construction techniques with adequate noise insulation.

## Better Air Passenger Service

The Region's residents and businesses are fortunate to have an easily accessible airport that offers good connections to the national air transportation system. However, the air travel market is volatile and competitive. Bradley's market area is constantly in flux as competing airports in Providence, RI; Worcester, MA; and Manchester, NH seek to increase their market areas. It is important that Bradley maintain the quantity and quality of service it currently has, and that efforts be undertaken to improve service as well. To that end the Council of Governments supports efforts to improve existing service and expand service into new markets.



We need to do more to improve and expand domestic service from Bradley. In the face of competition from other regional airports, Bradley needs to do more marketing to promote existing services and to attract more passengers and air lines. In addition, while Bradley has facilities to process international travelers, it currently has no regularly scheduled international air service. However, Northwest Airlines will offer scheduled nonstop daily service to Amsterdam in the Netherlands beginning July 1, 2007. The State considers this "the start of the establishment of the region's transatlantic bridge to . . .the world." It "is a major economic boost for the State of Connecticut and the surrounding region as it places Bradley squarely on the world stage."<sup>3</sup> Direct connections from Bradley Airport to international destinations offer a tremendous advantage to regional businesses that compete in international markets. Continuing to attract scheduled international service should be a high priority for Bradley.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS.**

1. **Improve Domestic Service.** Support efforts to improve and promote domestic passenger service.
2. **Develop International Service.** Support efforts to develop scheduled international service.

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<sup>3</sup> Bradley International Airport press release, 10/13/06.

## Better Air Cargo Service

Bradley has great potential as an air cargo facility because of its easy ground access, uncongested airport facilities, and proximity to New York and Boston. The ease of getting in and out of Bradley, combined with the good regional highway system, make it attractive to air cargo handlers seeking to serve not only the Hartford-Springfield area, but other parts of New England as well. While Bradley's air cargo services cannot compete with New York and Boston on price, they can offer faster delivery times in most parts of New England, and often can offer faster delivery times into New York City and Boston as well. The following two recommendations reflect the Council's support for continued improvement of air cargo capabilities at the Airport.



### **RECOMMENDATION.**

1. **Capitalize on Air Cargo Potential.** Continue to improve Bradley's air cargo capabilities and services, and capitalize on problems that New York and Boston airports are experiencing due to increasing ground and air congestion.
2. **Multimodal Cargo Center.** Evaluate making Bradley a true *multi-modal* freight facility by improving rail freight access to the Airport, and developing support facilities for trucking. The multimodal cargo center at the airport in Charlotte, North Carolina should be evaluated as a possible model for Bradley.

## Community Sensitive Planning

The continued development of Bradley International Airport can offer tremendous transportation and economic development benefits to the Region and the State. Development must, however, be done in a manner that is sensitive to the concerns of adjacent communities. Noise and traffic issues need to be addressed, and plans need to be prepared through a cooperative approach with the affected municipalities. The Council of Governments fully supports the development of Bradley International Airport while recognizing that Airport planning must be done in a manner that gives full consideration to the potential impacts the Airport can have on neighboring communities. Airport planners need to work with local officials and residents to minimize impacts, including noise and traffic, from Airport activities.

**RECOMMENDATION.** Planning for Airport improvements must be done in a manner that is sensitive to community concerns, and must involve local officials in the planning process.