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**AIRPORT COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM**

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## **ACRP SYNTHESIS 65**

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# **Practices to Develop Effective Stakeholder Relationships at Smaller Airports**

## ***A Synthesis of Airport Practice***

**CONSULTANTS**

Bryan O. Elliot  
Robert B. “Rusty” Chapman  
and  
L. William Kelly  
Delta Airport Consultants, Inc.  
Richmond, Virginia

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**Cover figure:** Airport stakeholders. *Credit:* Shutterstock.

## FOREWORD

Airport administrators, engineers, and researchers often face problems for which information already exists, either in documented form or as undocumented experience and practice. This information may be fragmented, scattered, and unevaluated. As a consequence, full knowledge of what has been learned about a problem may not be brought to bear on its solution. Costly research findings may go unused, valuable experience may be overlooked, and due consideration may not be given to recommended practices for solving or alleviating the problem.

There is information on nearly every subject of concern to the airport industry. Much of it derives from research or from the work of practitioners faced with problems in their day-to-day work. To provide a systematic means for assembling and evaluating such useful information and to make it available to the entire airport community, the Airport Cooperative Research Program authorized the Transportation Research Board to undertake a continuing project. This project, ACRP Project 11-03, “Synthesis of Information Related to Airport Practices,” searches out and synthesizes useful knowledge from all available sources and prepares concise, documented reports on specific topics. Reports from this endeavor constitute an ACRP report series, Synthesis of Airport Practice.

This synthesis series reports on current knowledge and practice, in a compact format, without the detailed directions usually found in handbooks or design manuals. Each report in the series provides a compendium of the best knowledge available on those measures found to be the most successful in resolving specific problems.

## PREFACE

*By Gail R. Staba  
Senior Program Officer  
Transportation  
Research Board*

Key airport stakeholders and users include airline passengers, airport customers, the overall community in which the airport is located, airport neighbors, concessionaires, airlines, fixed-base operators, government tenants (e.g., FAA and TSA), other airport tenants, pilots, and the general public. Airport operators need to understand each stakeholder group and how to best form partnerships that enhance the airport’s functional capabilities, maintain or enhance aviation services, provide a platform for the airport to be an integral part of the broader community it serves, and/or yield positive economic growth and returns. The purpose of this report is to describe effective practices and tools, communication techniques, feedback loops, and case examples that highlight how leaders at smaller airports proactively manage stakeholder relationships.

Information used in this study was acquired through a broad literature review, surveys, interviews, and case examples that identify: (1) potential stakeholders through stakeholder analysis; (2) how successful airport leadership relates to various stakeholders on a daily and long-term basis; (3) examples of governing requirements that affect these very diverse relationships; and (4) examples of best practices, tools, and techniques for proactively and effectively managing these relationships.

Bryan O. Elliott, Robert B. “Rusty” Chapman, and L. William Kelly, Delta Airport Consultants, Inc., Richmond, Virginia, collected and synthesized the information and wrote the report. The members of the topic panel are acknowledged on the preceding page. This synthesis is an immediately useful document that records the practices that were acceptable within the limitations of the knowledge available at the time of its preparation. As progress in research and practice continues, new knowledge will be added to that now at hand.

## CONTENTS

1	SUMMARY
5	CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION
	Background, 5
	Methodology, 5
	Report Structure, 7
8	CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW
	Stakeholder Theory, 8
	Stockholders and Stakeholders, 8
	Stakeholder Attributes, 9
	Stakeholder Identification and Analysis, 9
	Stakeholder Engagement (Government/Non-Profit), 11
	Stakeholder Engagement (Airports), 15
	Application, 21
24	CHAPTER THREE SURVEY AND INTERVIEWS
	Background, 24
	Survey, 24
	Interviews, 30
	Users, 31
	Policymakers, 31
	Tenants, 31
	Economic Development Agencies, 32
	Government/Regulators, 32
	Public and Airport Neighbors (Airport Community), 32
	Service Providers, 32
	Conclusions from the Survey and Interviews, 33
35	CHAPTER FOUR CASE EXAMPLES
	Background, 35
	Airport Community, 36
	Asheville Regional Airport—Community Engagement, 36
	Venice Municipal Airport—Community Engagement, 38
	Friedman Memorial Airport—Decision Making Through Public Engagement, 39
	Economic Stakeholders, 42
	Florence Regional Airport—Building Economic Vitality, 42
	McKinney National Airport—Building Economic Vitality, 43
	Airport Users, 45
	Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport—Seamless Customer Service, 45
	Airport Tenants and Users, 46
	University of Oklahoma—Max Westheimer Airport—Safety Committee, 46
	Airport Community, 48
	Morristown Municipal Airport—Community Engagement, 48

50	CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH
	Conclusions, 50
	Further Research Considerations, 52
54	REFERENCES
56	APPENDIX A AIRPORTS PARTICIPATING IN THE SYNTHESIS SURVEY
57	APPENDIX B SURVEY
60	APPENDIX C CHECKLIST FOR BUILDING EFFECTIVE STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS

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Note: Photographs, figures, and tables in this report may have been converted from color to grayscale for printing. The electronic version of the report (posted on the web at [www.trb.org](http://www.trb.org)) retains the color versions.



# PRACTICES TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS AT SMALLER AIRPORTS

**SUMMARY** The environment in which our nation’s system of airports operates is dynamic, tumultuous, and challenging. Airport leaders are proactively engaging stakeholders in information-sharing initiatives, implementing efforts to work collectively to develop policies and programs, and/or partnering or collaborating with such entities and individuals in order to guide their organizations through these times and produce positive results for their facilities and communities.

Airports have many stakeholders including regulators and government partners, non-governmental organizations, industry advocacy organizations, and users who have daily impacts on the airport or are affected by decisions made by airport operators. Key airport stakeholders and users include airline passengers, airport customers, the overall community in which the airport is located, airport neighbors, concessionaires, airlines, fixed-base operators, government tenants (e.g., FAA and TSA), other airport tenants, pilots, and the general public. It is important that airport operators understand each stakeholder group and how to most effectively form partnerships that enhance the airport’s functional capabilities, maintain or enhance aviation services, provide a platform for the airport to be an integral part of the broader community it serves, and/or yield positive economic growth and returns.

Given the breadth and depth of stakeholder groups, proactive engagement requires considerable time, energy, coordination, and sustained effort. Oftentimes, larger airports benefit from the availability of a professional staff to facilitate and manage stakeholder relationships. Smaller airports are limited in their ability to generate revenue; therefore, they are constrained in terms of both funding and dedicating staff to support such initiatives. Although resource-constrained, leaders at smaller airports inherently understand that the development and nurturing of positive relationships with stakeholders contributes directly to efficient airport operations, increased revenues, improved safety and services, and form the foundation for future economic growth for their facilities and their communities. Such leaders understand that poor stakeholder relationships can adversely impact an airport, manifested in the form of formal complaints, poor customer service, or loss of ability to expand or even operate.

The objective of this synthesis is to describe effective practices, tools, communication techniques, feedback loops, and case examples that highlight how leaders at smaller airports proactively manage stakeholder relationships. To provide a useful synthesis of effective practices, data are presented through a broad literature review, surveys, interviews, and case examples that identify: (1) potential stakeholders through stakeholder analysis; (2) how successful airport leadership relates to various stakeholders on both a daily and long-term basis; (3) examples of governing requirements that affect these very diverse relationships; and (4) examples of most effective practices, tools, and techniques for proactively and effectively managing these relationships.

The literature review revealed an evolution of stakeholder relationship practices beginning with the basic definition of a “stakeholder” as perceived in the private sector to practical applications of stakeholder engagement efforts in governmental, non-profit, and airport environments. The literature indicates that these applications focus primarily on customer service, implementation of airport development projects, and public engagement.

The on-line survey was designed to allow respondents to indicate their perceptions of the level of importance and effectiveness of their relationships with the identified stakeholder groups, describe the extent to which they have extensive and proactive engagement with these groups, and how involved each group is in setting policy and decision making. It also identified what tools and techniques they employ to communicate with and engage stakeholders in making decisions. Lastly, each respondent was asked to rate their perception of the effectiveness of their working relationship with each group.

The survey achieved a 91% return rate (29 of 32 airports) and produced the following broad findings:

- Airport management at both general aviation and air carrier airports ranked airport users and tenants as the most important stakeholders, but emphasized that all stakeholders are important.
- Airport management at both general aviation and air carrier airports tended to rank the importance of stakeholder groups in a similar manner.
- Airports that ranked economic development stakeholders as “high” have strong partnerships with those groups.
- The extent of proactive engagement with the general public and airport neighbors is not as high as other stakeholder groups.
- The tools and techniques utilized by airports align with current most effective practices for stakeholder engagement, such as the model developed by the International Association for Public Participation Spectrum of Public Participation.
- The need to engage stakeholders is often issue-driven rather than as the result of a decision by the airport to develop an ongoing program of interaction and solicitation of input on airport matters.

Following compilation of the results of the on-line survey, in-depth interviews were conducted with 25 of the survey respondents (78%) to obtain further insight into stakeholder engagement strategies, tools, and techniques. Airport managers were selected for interviews based on their willingness to provide information and if their responses to the survey indicated there were additional things to learn about their engagement of stakeholders. Based on feedback received from these interviews it appears that an airport leader’s personality as well as the philosophy of the governing body that he or she works for play a significant role in the extent of an organization’s stakeholder engagement efforts. Comments such as: “Interacting with people is in my DNA” to “It’s how I’m wired” repeatedly surfaced from those who are proactive in reaching out to stakeholder groups. Likewise, many indicated that his or her governing body expects outreach and stakeholder engagement to be the norm and a critical indicator of successful job performance. Others in the industry noted how they attempt to build a group of “Ambassadors” who are educated and energized about their airport and the role it plays in their community. Often, these individuals are business, civic, and non-profit community leaders not affiliated with airport operations or governance; however, because they understand the airport’s role they can assist in times of crisis or struggle in keeping the community focused on “key messages” and the long-term value of the airport. One airport indicated that it has an “Ambassador Go-Team” consisting of 10 to 12 business leaders available on-call to assist with new business leaders understanding of an airport’s value and/or to dispel myths or negative perceptions. Relatively few of those interviewed indicated they had a comprehensive strategic plan to guide the development, implementation, and measurement of performance for their stakeholder engagement efforts. Again, many viewed such work as typical or expected as part of their job duties and profession. These interviews also provided a greater understanding of the effectiveness of strategies for achieving an airport’s desired outcomes. The following general themes and observations were obtained through these interviews:

- A key to good stakeholder relationships is the proactive development of a positive relationship based on open communication, trust, and transparency.
- All stakeholders are important; the extent of engagement may vary from time to time and depend on the particular airport issue.
- The airport manager’s physical presence in the community helps to promote good stakeholder relationships.
- All stakeholders cannot be satisfied all of the time; sometimes one stakeholder group’s wishes may be in opposition to those of another stakeholder group.

- Educating stakeholders about airport activities and the value of the airport is important.
- It is important to distribute information to stakeholders in a timely manner about controversial airport plans before potentially inaccurate information has an opportunity to spread.

Based on the results of the literature review, the on-line survey, and the in-depth interviews, a broad range of issues representing various stakeholder groups were identified as potential subjects of case examples. The airports and corresponding case example topic areas are provided here:

Airport	Stakeholder Topic
Asheville Regional Airport	Community engagement
Venice Municipal Airport	Community engagement
Florence Regional Airport	Building economic vitality
McKinney National Airport	Building economic vitality
Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport	Seamless customer service
Friedman Memorial Airport	Decision making through public engagement
University of Oklahoma–Max Westheimer Field	Enhancing safety through engagement of airport tenants and users
Morristown Municipal Airport	Airport community engagement—Social media, newsletters and websites

There is currently considerable information about the development of stakeholder relationships and stakeholder engagement, especially as it relates to specific airport issues. Although this knowledge base is extensive, relatively few of the 25 industry professionals who were interviewed reported they had a comprehensive strategic plan to guide the development, implementation, and measurement of performance for their stakeholder engagement efforts. Again, many viewed such work as typical or expected of their job duties and profession. Although it is laudable that so many airport industry professionals perceive proactive stakeholder engagement as a core business and leadership function, the apparent lack of a systematic effort to assess performance in this area is perhaps one area for further research. Delving into an analysis of the existence and effectiveness of key performance indicators that offer quantifiable “markers” of success or improvement areas in stakeholder engagement techniques would parallel current business and non-governmental practices and tools for creating a “high-performing organization.”

As the airport industry continues to evolve and exist in a dynamic and challenging environment, further research into how airports of all sizes currently employ principles of high performance and implement various programs that promote performance benchmarks could be worthy of further consideration. More importantly, research into how the use of these principles can yield positive outcomes for airports and the communities they serve could produce guides, recommendations, and strategies to achieve higher performance in stakeholder engagement and other core business functions.

Based on the results of this report, there does *not* appear to be a need for additional research regarding specific stakeholder engagement techniques. However, there does appear to be a need for increased awareness of the available guidance and a sharing of the tools and techniques that airports use. Appendix C provides a checklist of effective practices for airport professionals to use when assessing their readiness to undertake a stakeholder engagement process or program, strategize, formulate and implement such a plan, and assess outcomes. This checklist is linked to the models discussed in the literature review chapter, practices discovered through the survey process, and the case examples that highlight successful stakeholder engagement efforts.

## CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

Airports operate in dynamic and challenging environments. Increasingly, political, financial, regulatory, and operational pressures and challenges require airport leaders to pursue the development of effective working relationships with a myriad of individuals and entities, both interdependent on and oftentimes independent of an airport, to ensure the long-term viability of their facilities. The purpose of this study is to collect, gauge, and report on current practices and techniques utilized at small airports to foster and sustain effective working relationships with stakeholders. For purposes of this analysis, small airports are defined as general aviation, reliever, non-primary commercial service, and non-hub primary airports. It further seeks to describe how the development of strong stakeholder relations has assisted airport leaders with addressing these pressures and challenges and/or promoted the economic vitality of a region, and solved broader problems and issues confronting airports and the communities they serve.

## METHODOLOGY

To understand the outreach and engagement efforts used by leaders at small airports this study first sought to understand the definition of “stakeholder” and the role such an entity or individual may assume for purposes of interfacing with, or being embedded in, the operation of an airport.

Schaar and Sherry, in “Analysis of Airport Stakeholders” (2010), submit that a stakeholder can be defined as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organization’s objectives” (Freeman 1984). With this definition in mind, Schaar and Sherry concluded, based on a review of available literature, that the following are airport stakeholder groups:

- Passengers
- Air carriers
- General aviation users
- Airport organization investors and bond holders
- Concessionaires
- Service providers
- Employees
- Federal government
- Local government
- Communities affected by airport operations
- Non-governmental organizations
- Business, commerce, tourism, arts, sports, and education organizations
- Parking operators and ground transportation providers
- Airport suppliers.

The following stakeholder groups were identified for evaluation as part of this synthesis:

- *Airport policy makers and elected officials.*
- *Airport users*—passengers, pilots, and aircraft owners.
- *Airport tenants*—Fixed-base operators (FBOs), specialized aviation service operators (SASOs), concessionaires, and other tenants.

- *Airport community*—neighboring residents and businesses, local government officials, non-general public, and the news media.
- *Economic stakeholders*—regional partnerships, chambers of commerce, visitors bureaus, and business organizations.
- *Government regulators*—FAA, TSA, environmental agencies, and state agencies.
- *Service providers*—consultants, volunteers, city finance department, and police.

This list is often referred to as “external” stakeholders. Developing positive relationships with and between internal stakeholders such as airport staff are, of course, also important, but is not a focus of this study. The “service providers” in the previous list refer to those stakeholders that are not airport employees (internal stakeholders). In addition, although commercial air service and airline recruitment efforts are critical to the success and economic sustainability of many small airports and communities, the scope for this study did not include evaluation of either.

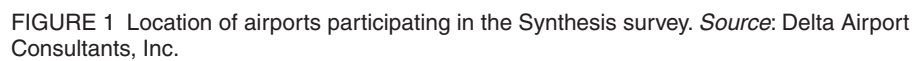
Although non-governmental organizations were not specifically identified as part of this study, they can often have significant influence on airport activities. An example of this is when non-governmental environmental preservation organizations weigh in on large airport development projects. Stakeholder engagement using some of the principles outlined in this study may be useful for airport management when engaging in these situations. There may also be community charity-based non-governmental organizations. Airport officials may wish to engage them in a similar manner to the airport community stakeholders listed previously.

With the definition of stakeholder and the groups of individuals and entities to be evaluated in this study established, an extensive review of the literature was undertaken to identify effective tools and techniques being utilized in the industry to build effective partnerships, engage stakeholders, and produce positive outcomes and results for airport facilities and the greater communities they serve. Sources of literature included data mining the World Wide Web, airport websites, review of other industries (e.g., health, energy, education, and other transportation modes), other applicable ACRP reports and their bibliographies, and city and county resources. Resources suggested by the study topic panel members were also reviewed. Although the focus of this study is on small airports, the literature review extended to airports of all sizes, since some strategies, tools, and techniques utilized at larger facilities may be transferrable to the study group identified for this analysis.

Concurrent with the literature review, an on-line survey was developed and issued to 32 airport leaders at facilities of diverse size and type located throughout the United States. These leaders were identified through an extensive industry outreach effort aided by input from study topic panelists, chapters of the AAAE and NASAO, FAA leaders, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), and general knowledge of such airports. The goal of this synthesis was to identify small airports that have attempted to build effective stakeholder relationships and compile various strategies, tools, and techniques to ensure their effectiveness. The survey aided in identifying issues that drive stakeholder engagement, the types of stakeholders engaged, and how such interface occurs.

Prospective survey participants were informed of the scope and purpose of the study, timing for issuance of the on-line survey, and the potential for the need for more in-depth interviews to obtain additional information. Appendices A and B provide a list of the airports participating in the survey, a sample of the e-mail message used to contact prospective leaders, and the on-line survey questions. Once feedback on the test site was addressed, the survey was issued through a commercial on-line survey instrument. Twenty-nine of the 32 targeted airport leaders responded, a return rate of 91%. Figure 1 shows the locations of the participating airports.

From the completed surveys it was determined that more in-depth telephone or personal interviews were appropriate for 25 of the 29 airports. These interviews were designed to obtain further insight and document stakeholder engagement strategies, tools, and techniques. In addition, an understanding of the effectiveness of these strategies and any lessons learned from such experiences were documented in order to build data and understanding toward developing highlighting and describing various issues, stakeholder groups, and engagement strategies.



This report is organized in five chapters, with a Summary and three appendices. Chapter two provides a summary of the literature review. Chapter three presents and analyzes the results from the on-line survey, as well as feedback obtained from the follow-on interviews. The case examples are presented in chapter four, while chapter five offers the reader conclusions and observations regarding possible further study. The appendices provide a list of participating airports, the on-line survey, the project team's guide for personal interviews, and a checklist offering suggestions for airport professionals to consider in developing an effective stakeholder engagement process or program.



## CHAPTER TWO

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

This Synthesis study includes an extensive review of the literature related to stakeholder engagement and the development of stakeholder relationships. This chapter summarizes the evolution of the stakeholder concept from its inception in 1963 as a managerial tool for corporations, to its current use in the private sector, as well as in government, non-profit agencies, and non-government organizations. The goal for this literature review is to provide the reader with a broad understanding of the genesis of the stakeholder concept and the tools to enable formulation of simple but usable stakeholder engagement plans.

Sources for this literature review were found through extensive Internet searches using various search engines, on-line book vendors, professional journals, and the Transportation Research Information Database search engine (TRID) available through TRB. Sources reviewed also included other industries (e.g., health, energy, education, and other transportation modes), other applicable ACRP reports and their bibliographies, and city and county resources. Resources suggested by the study topic panel in the final scope for this project were also reviewed. All literature in this report is fully cited in the References section of this study.

This literature review first identifies those works that formed and refined current stakeholder theory, stakeholder analysis, and stakeholder engagement techniques. Beyond consideration of these core concepts, an overview of current stakeholder engagement practices in non-airport settings is discussed, followed by consideration of airport-specific literature and practices.

**STAKEHOLDER THEORY****Stockholders and Stakeholders**

Much of the early literature on this topic explored the concept that there are more legitimate influences on how a corporation should be managed than just those stockholders with a direct financial stake in that corporation. By definition, corporations have always had responsibility to their stockholders; any action taken by such an entity must ultimately benefit the stockholder (Mitchell et al. 1997).

The original use of the term stakeholder in reference to managerial practices can be traced back to an internal memorandum at the Stanford Research Institute in 1963, which defines stakeholders as “. . . those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist” (cited in Freeman and Reed 1983).

In 1984, Freeman’s *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach* defined stakeholders as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives.” Freeman further argued that for firms to successfully engage stakeholders they must first understand the legitimacy of the stakeholder and provide for routine interaction to understand their concerns (Elias et al. 2000). Although researchers differed in their opinions of stakeholder concepts, most are in agreement that Freeman’s definition, and his methods for stakeholder analysis, formed the basis for most current stakeholder theory.

For the purpose of this Synthesis study, an airport stakeholder is defined as any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the airport’s objectives.

## Stakeholder Attributes

Much of the literature since 1984 has addressed the need to better define stakeholder attributes, determine appropriate stakeholder groups, and develop most effective practices for stakeholder involvement and engagement.

Although Freeman offered a basic framework by which corporations could identify and engage stakeholders, the stakeholder approach was very much viewed from a business and profitability perspective. Stakeholders were to be managed or “dealt with” (Frooman citing Freeman 1999) to the greatest extent possible, all in pursuit of the corporation reaching its goals. The firm’s relationship with stakeholders was unidirectional with “relationships viewed from the firm’s vantage point” (Frooman 1999).

Goodpaster (1991) began weaving social responsibility into the mix as he explored ethically responsible management. He asserted that there are two broad categories of stakeholders: (1) those that can affect the firm, and (2) those that can be affected by the firm (Frooman 1999). Goodpaster holds that those affected by the decisions of a firm are “moral stakeholders.” He concludes that corporations have a moral obligation to look past just their fiduciary responsibility toward profits and account for certain moral criteria in their business practices (Goodpaster 1991).

## STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS

Putting stakeholder theory to practical use requires an understanding of what a stakeholder is and using that knowledge to determine who the stakeholders would be for a particular initiative. In “Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience: Defining the Principle of Who and What Really Counts” Mitchell et al. (1997) offered a practical model that could be implemented to determine who the stakeholders would be for a particular initiative and to rank their possible influence in the process. They expanded on Freeman’s recognition that stakeholders will change over time and their “investment” or ownership in a particular outcome changes depending on the strategic initiative under consideration. Their model is based on the assumption that stakeholders possess or are attributed to possess one, two, or three of the following attributes:

1. The stakeholder’s power to influence the firm;
2. The legitimacy of the stakeholder’s relationship with the firm; and
3. The urgency of the stakeholder’s claim on the firm, with urgency based on the following two attributes:
  - Time sensitivity—the degree to which managerial delay in attending to the claim or relationship is unacceptable to the stakeholder, and
  - Criticality—the importance of the claim or relationship to the stakeholder.

By including urgency as an attribute, a dynamic component was introduced into the process whereby stakeholders attain or lose importance in the minds of managers (Elias et al. 2000). As observed by Mitchell, managers determine the importance and prominence of stakeholders based on their perception of the relative power, legitimacy, and urgency of a stakeholder. Their stakeholder typology (Figure 2) provided a means for corporations to determine which stakeholders would require the most resources to manage, while taking into account situational uniqueness.

The authors concluded that groups or individuals possessing just one stakeholder attribute (areas 1, 2, and 3) retain low importance and relevance; therefore, they warrant little or no attention by the firm. As individuals and groups begin to possess two attributes (areas 4, 5, and 6) they depict tendencies toward moderate importance and expect responsiveness from the firm. Because of these expectations, these individuals or groups require more engagement. Highly engaged stakeholders (area 7) possess or are perceived to possess all three stakeholder attributes. The combination of power, legitimacy, and urgency make such stakeholders the highest priority for a given initiative. Figure 3 ranks the relevance for the stakeholder attributes as depicted in the stakeholder typology model.

1. Dormant stakeholders: These stakeholders have the power to impose their will on others, but they lack legitimacy and urgency; therefore, their power remains dormant.



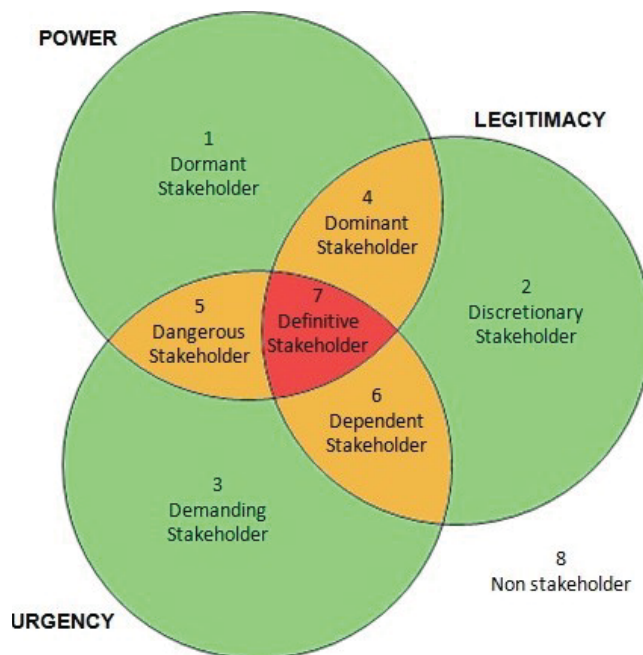


FIGURE 2 Stakeholder typology. *Source:* “Stakeholder Analysis for Systems Thinking and Modeling” (Elias et al. 2000).

2. Discretionary stakeholders possess legitimate claims, but have no power to influence the organization or present urgent claims.
3. Demanding stakeholders: These stakeholders have urgent claims, but neither the power nor the legitimacy to enforce them.
4. Dominant stakeholders have both the power and legitimate claims in the organization giving them significant influence in the project.
5. Dangerous stakeholders have power and urgency, but lack legitimacy. They are seen as dangerous as they may gain legitimacy or urgency if circumstances change.
6. Dependent stakeholders lack power, but have urgent and legitimate claims.
7. Definitive stakeholders have power, legitimacy, and urgency and therefore are to be engaged.
8. Non-stakeholders have no power, legitimacy, or urgency.

Determining where a particular stakeholder falls in relation to others on the typology model helps one determine the level of attention that a particular stakeholder would receive.

The identification of what the term stakeholder means, and how private-sector organizations have sought to engage such groups and individuals, has been a source of research for more than 50 years. It

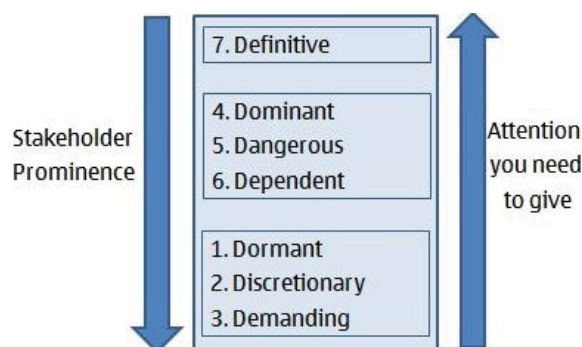


FIGURE 3 Stakeholder attributes—Ranking. *Source:* “Stakeholder Analysis for Systems Thinking and Modeling” (Elias et al. 2000).

is clear that the concept of stakeholder engagement has evolved from a managerial tool and doctrine to a vital and vibrant aspect of decision-making models for many organizations. With the advent of social media, a more informed and involved citizenry, and the transparency in which many organizations evaluate and make policy and business decisions, the concept of stakeholder engagement will likely remain a key business tool and practice.

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT (GOVERNMENT/NON-PROFIT)

The previous section of this chapter summarized literature about the general aspects of stakeholder theory, stakeholder identification, and stakeholder analysis related to for-profit organizations. The following section provides a summary of literature related to stakeholder engagement practices for governmental and non-profit entities. The terms “engagement” and “participation” are used interchangeably, with “participation” used much more prevalently in Europe.

In “A Ladder of Citizen Participation,” Arnstein (1969) stated “. . . citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power.” She used a ladder to depict the gradations of citizen participation (Figure 4).

The bottom two rungs depict areas where the public would not be enabled, but “cured” or “educated” as a substitute for actual participation. The “Informing” and “Consultation” rungs depict levels where the public may be heard and have a voice; however, it is merely a token level of participation because those holding the power take no action. “Placation” is a higher degree of “Tokenism” in that the public may be allowed an advisor role, but those holding the power retain the right to decide. “Partnership” represents an area where citizens begin to gain “Power” because they are provided the opportunity to negotiate and engage in trade-offs. At the “Delegated Power” and “Citizen Control” levels, citizens are afforded decision-making or full managerial power. Arnstein’s theories form the basis for much of the engagement theory that followed, and many public participation programs and protocols are developed based on similar graduated methodologies.

In 2008, Meredith Edwards wrote *Participatory Governance*, focusing on arrangements by which citizens and other organizations outside of government could be involved in the decision-making process. Her research describes three possible levels of participation between non-government players and the government:

1. When information alone is provided, it is a one-way relationship.
2. When government consults, it is a two-way relationship whereby the government is gaining feedback from the public and, hopefully, in turn providing feedback on how the public input affects decisions.
3. If active participation occurs, then the government not only gains feedback from the public, but also develops options reflecting their concerns.

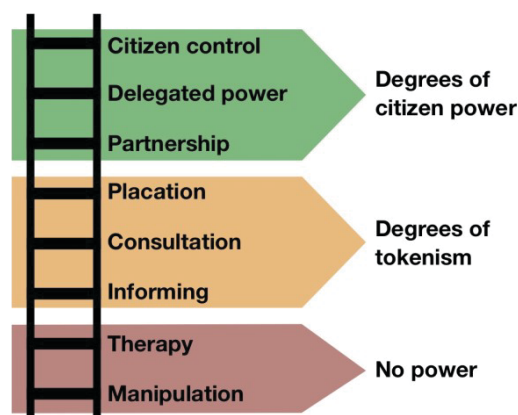


FIGURE 4 Ladder of citizen participation. *Source:* *A Ladder of Citizen Participation* (Arnstein 1969).

Edwards concludes that most policy processes will require some form of active participation by the non-government players. Whether participation occurs, when it occurs, and how it occurs will depend on the policy issue at hand.

Various practices and techniques for civic engagement in local government settings are based on work conducted by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). IAP2 is an international organization focused on the advancement of the practice of public participation in private, public, institutional, and non-profit agencies. This entity defines “public participation” as a

... means to involve those who are affected by a decision in the decision-making process. It (public participation) promotes sustainable decisions by providing participants with the information they need to be involved in a meaningful way, and it communicates to participants how their input affects a decision (*Source: International Association for Public Participation*).

Through extensive research and a review of practices around the world related to public participation, IAP2 has concluded that public meetings, surveys, open houses, workshops, polling, and citizen advisory committees are among the types of tools commonly used to engage the public and provide a means for direct involvement in the decision-making process. Beyond merely cataloging these tools, IAP2’s research efforts have produced the “Spectrum of Public Participation” (2007). IAP2 designed this tool to aid with determining the appropriate level of public participation based on the process or decision to be made by an organization (Figure 5).

The Spectrum shows that various levels of public participation are both appropriate and dependent on the goals, time frames, resources, and levels of concern in the decision to be made. The Spectrum

## IAP2’S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM



The IAP2 Federation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public’s role in any public participation process. The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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FIGURE 5 Spectrum of Public Participation. *Source: International Association for Public Participation.*

holds that the tools and techniques deployed by an organization range from being merely informative to actual empowerment depending on the goal it has for public participation as well as its pledge to the public (i.e., stakeholders) on how it will utilize solicited input in its decision-making process. IAP2 stresses the importance of an organization determining in the formative stages of its decision-making process what its public participation goals are and the corresponding level or desired level of public participation. IAP2 also encourages public involvement when determining these goals and objectives and gives the public a voice in how they can participate.

Public administration scholars and practitioners have adapted the “Spectrum of Public Participation” (2007) to more specifically address the use of these tools in local government settings. The following articles focus on adaptation of the “Spectrum” by federal, state, and local public administrators: Lukensmeyer and Torres (2006); “Connected Communities: Local Government as a Partner in Citizen Engagement and Community Building” (2010); and Huggins and Hilvert (2013)

Huggins and Hilvert build on work by the IAP2 as well as Lukensmeyer and Torres and the Alliance for Innovation to propose sample tools for local government leaders to use for the various levels of public engagement as depicted in Figure 6.

Tools for informing the public include fact sheets, websites, and open houses. As citizens become more and more empowered and involved in the decision-making process, the types of tools can advance to conducting workshops (Involving) to “Citizen Juries,” ballots, and delegated decisions (Empower). These authors also provide the rationale and drivers for increased public participation in local government decision making, concluding that because of the 2008 global “Great Recession,” an explosion in social media and other electronic platforms for sharing information, and formation of more active and engaged special interest groups, it makes good business sense for local governments to actively inform and seek out public input on the critical decisions they face.

The city of Ventura, California, offers a definition of “civic engagement” that appears to capture the essence of these practices for many local government bodies:

Civic engagement is the process by which our citizens’ concerns, needs, and values are identified prior to decisions being made. It allows our residents the opportunity to contribute to and become involved with the City’s decision making process. Two-way communication and problem solving from the onset result in better decision-making by the City supported by our residents. The heart of a healthy democracy is a citizenry actively engaged in civic responsibility for building communities, solving community problems and participating in the electoral and political process. This is what we strive for (*Source: City of Ventura, California website*).

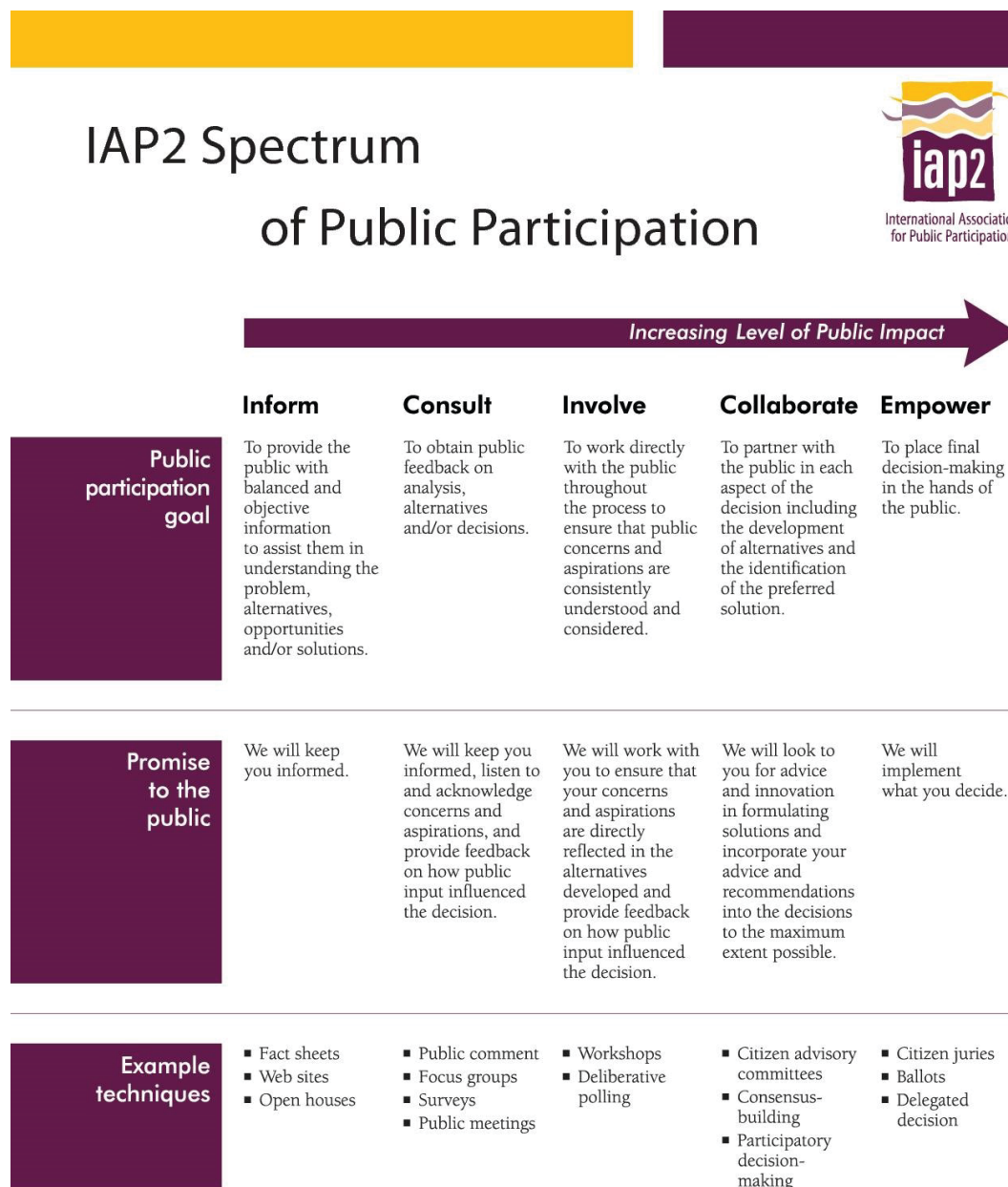
Stakeholder participation has been recognized as a necessary component of success for many types of initiatives all over the world. In 2001, the African National Bank developed the *Handbook on Stakeholder Consultation and Participation in African Development Bank Operations* (2001). The handbook’s introduction stresses that managers recognize the importance of participation and require the adoption of participatory development.

... participation is essential to the achievement of its overarching objectives of poverty reduction and sustainable development. Participatory approaches have been shown to enhance project quality, ownership and sustainability; to empower targeted beneficiaries (in particular, women and poor people); and to contribute to long term capacity building and self-sufficiency.

The handbook leads the user through a step-wise process for stakeholder selection and ranking to communication plans. Likewise, the European Commission, Health and Consumers Directorate establishes policies for health care issues on behalf of the European Union. The Directorate’s current *Code of Good Practice for the Consultation of Stakeholders* (n.d.) offers principles, definitions, and standards for the engagement of stakeholders. Of particular note are the Directorate’s ten consultation standards summarized here:

1. Plan our consultations early in the policy-development process.
2. Explain why we are consulting and how we are going to take stakeholders’ views into account.
3. Involve the widest spectrum of stakeholders in our consultations.





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FIGURE 6 ICMA Public Participation Spectrum. *Source:* Public Management (August 2013).

4. Organize consultations to be convenient and accessible.
5. Analyze the input to distinguish between opinions and fact.
6. Give feedback to stakeholders.
7. Report back on next steps and timeline.
8. Communicate the results of consultations.
9. Act on the results of consultations.
10. Evaluate consultations and review our process for improvement.

With the roots for stakeholder engagement formed in the private sector, the literature points out that in recent years many public-sector and non-profit entities have embraced more proactive citizen engagement activities in an ongoing and comprehensive fashion in recent years.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT (AIRPORTS)

This literature review also focused on issues specific to the airport industry and sought to identify how stakeholder theory, identification and analysis, and engagement practices applicable to for-profit and governmental organizations are used by airport leaders.

In 2005, Melissa Burn developed *An Assessment of Airport Community Involvement Efforts*, in which she studied and analyzed the often strained relationships between airports and their surrounding communities, and she recommends several strategies that airports could use to improve those relationships. Burn noted that very few airports engage in “dialogue mechanisms, such as advisory committees that include citizen representatives, and rarely continue them beyond the life of the specific study for which they were convened.” Burn concludes that, ultimately, changes in attitudes and practices for both airports and their hosting communities will remain unchanged until they develop a “new set of processes for shared communication and cooperation.” She recommends that airports establish standing committees on airport community relations that involve all airport stakeholders, and that airports implement “permanent outreach punctuated by increased activity during a growth project or noise study.”

Schaar and Sherry’s 2010 report, *Analysis of Airport Stakeholders*, identified airport stakeholders, their goals for the airport, and relationships among the stakeholders. The authors contend that most airports in the United States have characteristics similar to public utilities in that they typically are publicly owned, require high capital investments, infrastructure duplication is considered inefficient, and they operate under revenue-neutral financial regulations. It is within this context that Schaar and Sherry developed a stakeholder model depicting airport stakeholder interrelationships, airport organizational boundaries, airport service boundaries, and system loops. They concluded that, based on their model, airport management can only control matters that relate to airport infrastructure, operational procedures, and efficiency specific to their own organizations (Figure 7).

Schaar and Sherry argue that system loops can be significant because they demonstrate how a change that positively affects one stakeholder may have a negative effect on another. For instance, when air traffic increases, the associated increase in noise has a negative effect on communities located near the ends of the runways. Relating this interrelationship to the work of Mitchell et al. (1997), the neighbor off the end of the runway may have been a dormant stakeholder (powerful but quiet), but he now has a legitimate and urgent claim; therefore, that stakeholder is now a definitive stakeholder possessing all three salient attributes.

A major aspect of some of the literature reviewed for this report pointed to airport organizations embracing the concepts of customer service. *ACRP Synthesis 48: How Airports Measure Customer Service Performance* (Kramer et al. 2013) offers practices, tools, and techniques used by the industry to measure and monitor customer service performance related to users of facilities and amenities. This report also demonstrates that in terms of the overall delivery of aviation services to the public, the airport operator has limited control over the methods, means, and/or employee behavior and appearance of direct service providers such as the airlines, rental car agencies, ground transportation providers, concessionaires, FBOs, and the TSA.

Because of the inherent disconnect in service delivery between airport owners and operators and these direct service providers, the literature review led to consideration of basic concepts and principles for customer service. In particular, the work of Jan Carlzon, former chief executive officer of Scandinavian Airlines (SAS), was reviewed. In his 1987 book, *Moments of Truth*, Carlzon describes the processes and paradigms used to transform SAS to a customer-driven company. Carlzon promotes the concept of how a collection of “Moments of Truth” form the “Customer Service Cycle.” Through his work, the concept of a Moment of Truth in the realm of customer service is now defined as:

An instance of contact or interaction between a customer and a firm (through a product, sales force, or visit) that gives the customer an opportunity to form (or change) an impression about the firm (*Source*: Business dictionary.com).

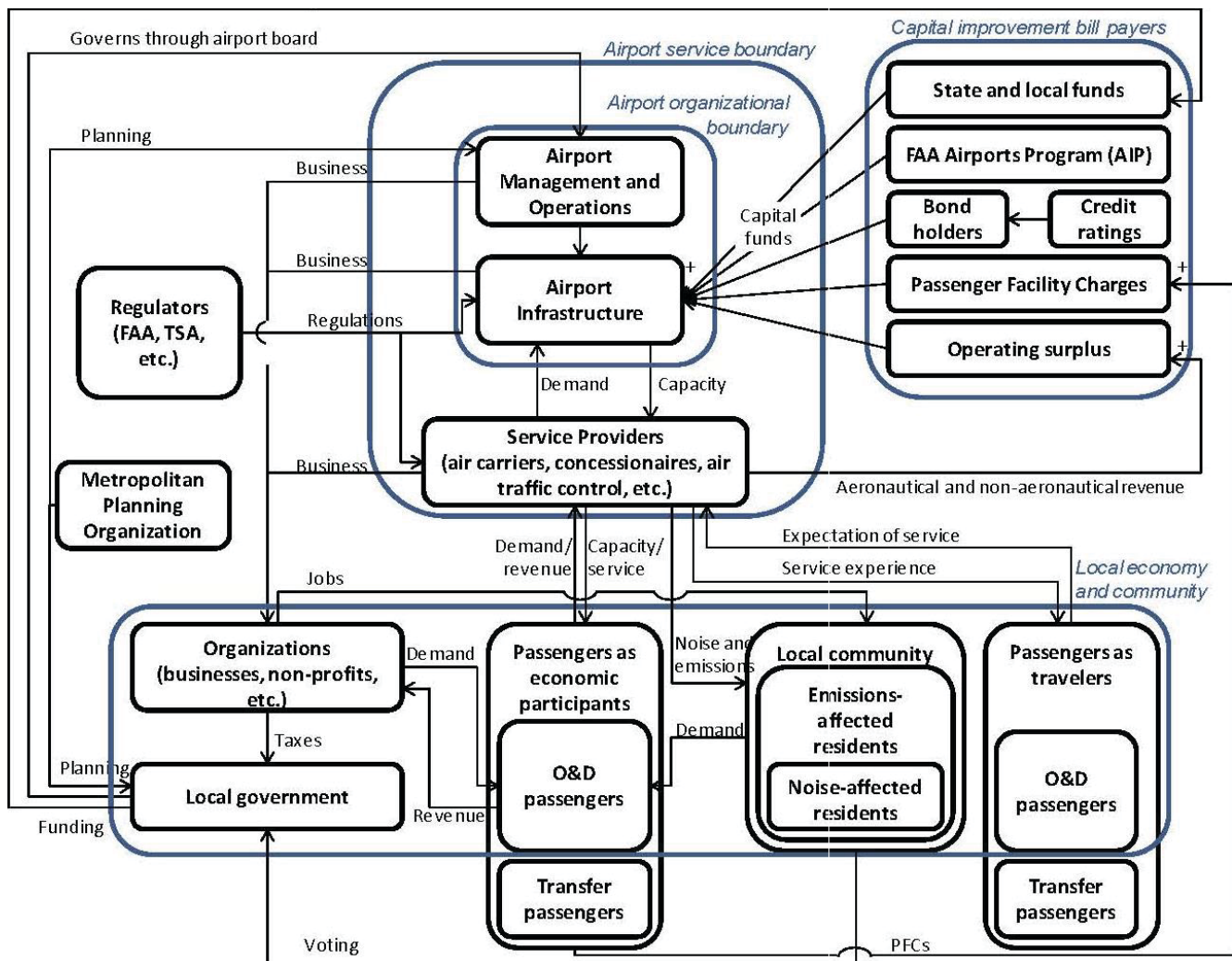


FIGURE 7 Financial, customer, and other relationships between airport stakeholders. Source: *Analysis of Airport Stakeholders* (Schaar and Sherry 2010).

Carlzon further maintains that a customer experiences multiple Moments of Truth in the course of an encounter with an entity and such a collection forms the basis for the “Cycle of Service” with impressions being made by consumers all through a service delivery cycle. Figure 8 provides an example of a Cycle of Service related to an individual going to the movies:

Carlzon maintains that he utilized these concepts in redefining SAS as a customer-driven company. He further holds that “a company that recognizes its only true assets are satisfied customers, all of whom expect to be treated as individuals and who won’t select SAS as their airline unless we do just that.” *ACRP Report 48* (Kramer et al. 2013) documents how airport leaders have embraced Carlzon’s principles and are deploying them in an effort to offer a seamless experience for all customers who come in contact with their facilities and service providers.

In addition to *ACRP Synthesis 48*, review of the literature revealed that the following ACRP reports detail efforts to identify and engage airport stakeholders:

- *ACRP Report 85: Developing and Maintaining Support for Your Airport Capacity Project* (Futterman et al. 2013) reiterates the need to understand the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder and to build and maintain support by stakeholders throughout a project cycle. The report identifies stakeholder involvement as one of the primary components for successful capacity projects. It emphasizes how to understand project opposition and show respect to opposition

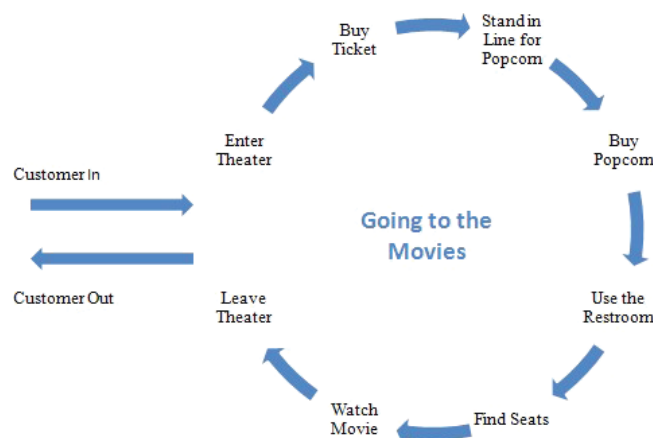


FIGURE 8 Cycle of Service. *Source:* Florida Consumer Service Institute.

groups. Investigators suggest keeping the process transparent and addressing the specific needs of each of the stakeholder groups through communications tailored to address their specific concerns.

- *Legal Research Digest 22* (Wyatt 2014) investigates the role of airport sponsors in airport planning and environmental reviews of projects subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The digest provides a summary of relevant statutes and regulations, the different stages for environmental review and actions, “special-purpose” environmental laws, and the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders. In general, the airport sponsor can satisfy the FAA’s requirement, and thereby NEPA requirements, for public hearings by providing an opportunity for a “gathering” under the direction of a designated hearing officer, the opportunity for the public to “speak and hear,” and adequate documentation of the proceedings.
- *ACRP Synthesis 20: Airport Terminal Facility Activation Techniques* (Lyons and Powell 2010) describes stakeholder management as a key component to the project’s success and that it is vital that the stakeholders feel engaged and involved. The study identifies stakeholders to include all parties with an interest in the successful activation and operation of new airport terminal facilities. This includes both internal airport stakeholders (e.g., airport operations and maintenance, police, management, and staff) and external stakeholders such as airlines and airport tenants. The study discusses using focus groups, workshops, interviews, and consultations as methods to identify and engage stakeholders, then meetings with each stakeholder independently to assess their impact and level of involvement in various stages of the project. After the various stakeholders are assessed, a communications plan can then be established that lists the types of meetings that stakeholders should attend, the purpose of each meeting, and the frequency of the meetings.
- *ACRP Report 77: Guidebook for Developing General Aviation Airport Business Plans* (Aviation Management Consulting Group, Inc. et al. 2012) identifies the role, value, and reasons for having an airport business plan as it applies to airports of all sizes. It highlights the elements of an airport business plan and addresses each step of the development and implementation processes. The guidebook recommends that internal and external airport stakeholders be involved in these processes. It identifies internal stakeholders as policymakers, the airport sponsor, advisory bodies, and airport staff. It identifies external stakeholders as airport businesses; aircraft owners and operators; industry colleagues; community leaders and associations; aviation consultants; economic development organizations; local, regional, and state planning and transportation agencies; chambers of commerce; and educational institutions.
- *ACRP Report 15: Aircraft Noise: A Toolkit for Managing Community Expectations* (Woodward et al. 2009) assists airport managers by suggesting tools and techniques that can be used to incorporate “people issues” into the planning process. The toolkit contains useful information for airports of all sizes, from the small airport with perhaps just one full-time employee, to large commercial service airports. By utilizing surveys, interviews, case examples, and literary reviews investigators developed a series of most effective practices, tips, techniques, and lessons learned, from both within and outside of the aviation industry. An accompanying CD-based



toolkit contains more than 200 examples of noise and public participation documents that have proven successful in communicating information to the public. This toolkit provides a useful reference for anyone in the process of initiating or upgrading a communications program and provides:

- Techniques that contribute to effective airport communication;
- Mutual benefits of building strong airport public relations;
- Outcomes the airport could expect by building good relationships with the surrounding community; and
- Methods for implementing a successful approach for community engagement, including attributes of different types of engagement.

Through their research, the investigators identified the following six keys to effective communications:

1. Build trust through good two-way communications,
  2. Put senior leadership out front,
  3. Use graphics to illustrate the message,
  4. Have a transparent process,
  5. Select staff for service-oriented attitude (people skills), and
  6. Be ahead with communication.
- In *ACRP Report 20: Strategic Planning in the Airport Industry* (Ricondo and Associates Inc. 2009) investigators used surveys to determine who the appropriate internal and external stakeholders were and to rank them as to what degree of involvement those stakeholders should have in the process. The following scale was developed for airports to use as a guide (Figure 9).

The investigators then developed a series of matrices that airports could use to identify each stakeholder's needs and level and methods of engagement (Figure 10). One matrix was developed for each stakeholder.

The types of participation will be determined by the planning team through interviews and by the use of a power versus interest grid. Investigators suggested using interviews and discussions to map stakeholder's expectations by answering the following questions:

- What is the stakeholder's interest in our organization?
- What is the stakeholder's expectation from its relationship with our organization?
- What contribution could the stakeholder make to our organization?
- What is the stakeholder's influence on our organization?
- What is the stakeholder's current opinion of our organization?

After expectations are revealed, the planning team then needs to develop its communications strategy by determining how to involve each stakeholder. Investigators suggest using a power versus interest grid to plot each stakeholder in order to finalize its communications strategy (Figure 11).

Airports can use this information to complete the matrices for each stakeholder and develop their communications plan. Although this approach is designed for a strategic planning project at a commercial service airport, the techniques described could be adapted to any size airport or type of airport project.

The literature review revealed some examples of governing requirements and organizational guidance that address airport stakeholder relationships including:

- Airport Mission Statement. Some airports have mission statements that mention working cooperatively with other entities and partnering with stakeholders.
- Airport Leasing Policies. *ACRP Report 47: Guidebook for Developing and Leasing Airport Property* (Crider et al. 2011) discusses the importance of stakeholder engagement when developing airport lease policies.

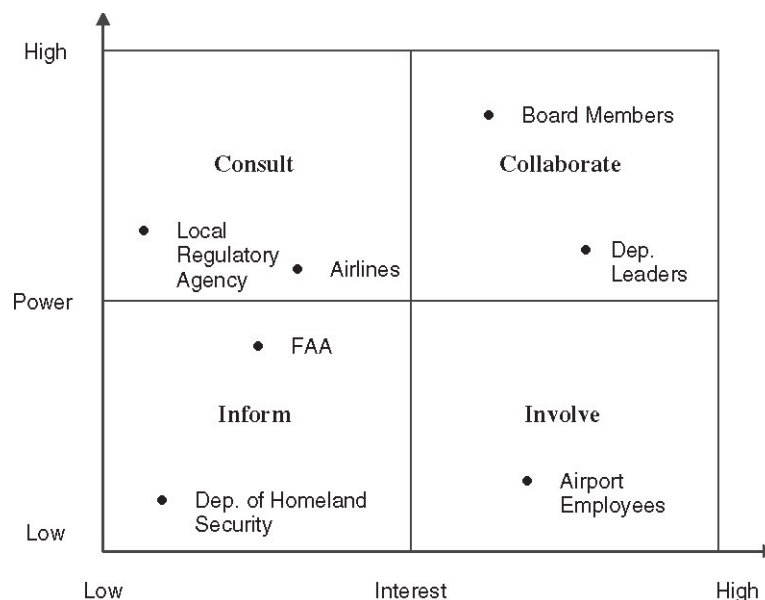


FIGURE 9 Strategic planning process stakeholders. *Source: ACRP Report 20: Strategic Planning in the Airport Industry* (Ricondo and Associates, Inc. et al. 2009).

Who Are Our Stakeholders and How Should They Be Involved?

External					
Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder Name	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate (Planning Team Member)
LOCAL BUSINESS/COMMUNITY LEADERS					
Questions to Ask:		Communication Delivery Method:			
Information Needs:		Date/Frequency of Event:			

FIGURE 10 Sample stakeholder matrix. *Source: ACRP Report 20: Strategic Planning in the Airport Industry* (Ricondo and Associates, Inc. et al. 2009).



Note: Dep. Stands for Department.

Sources: Adapted from Colin Eden and Fran Ackerman, *Making Strategy: The Journey of Strategic Management* (London, UK: Sage Publications, 1998).

FIGURE 11 Stakeholder grid.

- **Grant Obligations.** Community issues are addressed in FAA's Airport Improvement Program Grant Assurances 6, 7, and 8. These assurances are designed to ensure that the airport sponsor accounts for the existing plans, interests, and concerns of both the surrounding community (particularly local planning agencies) and current airport users before entering into an airport development or leasing agreement.
- **Air Traffic Control.** FAA policy conveyed in its internal orders indicates that air traffic managers must negotiate a letter of agreement when operational and procedural needs require the cooperation and concurrence of other persons, facilities, and/or organizations.

The National Air Transportation Association published and distributed a guidance document written from the point of view of the user and tenant stakeholder entitled *Things to Do to Maintain Good Working Relationships with Your Airport Management Authority* (n.d.). This document lists the following 16 action points that aviation service organizations can use to build better relationships with airport sponsors:

**National Air Transportation Association's  
*Things to Do to Maintain Good Working Relationships  
with Your Airport Management Authority***

Adequate leasehold agreements, fair treatment through the non-discriminative enforcement of minimum standards, and economic viability are just a few of the many issues with which aviation service organizations and their airport management authorities wrestle. NATA's Airport Committee created the following action points highlighting activities that will help to create positive working relationships when implemented.

- Communicate—provide your airport with annual data of your FBO's financial contributions.
- Demonstrate the value of your business to the community (Air Med/Search and Rescue/Fire, etc.). Build community awareness of your company.
- Be proactive.
- Do your homework! Educate the airport!
- Attend meetings of airport governing bodies.

- Attend special events of governing bodies (e.g., ribbon cutting ceremonies, open house, etc.).
- Inform the airport of initiatives you plan to do.
- Provide tours.
- Provide a document to the airport management authority summarizing your activity for the coming year that highlights its value to your airport.
- Sponsor/host charitable/community/political events whenever possible (public relations).
- Invite airport management to weekly/monthly staff meetings.
- Know the hot button issues at your airport. Be able to discuss them.
- What are the challenges that face your airport and its administration? Your input as an aviation professional may be helpful.
- Identify lawmakers (federal, state, and local). Contact them.
- Make the business community your ally. Remember aviation is a business tool.
- Build a good relationship with the local media. Get to know individual reporters. *(Reporters are generally interested in learning to fly, air shows, etc. Aviation is always a leading topic in the news. Become a background resource to help a reporter understand things aviation.)*

The literature review found that many airports have formal community outreach programs. For example, Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) initiated a new Strategic Plan in 2000. Although DFW is a large hub airport, its programs and the principles upon which they are based can be helpful to airports of all sizes as they seek to improve stakeholder engagement. As part of DFW's Strategic Plan, the DFW Board of Directors initiated a proactive program committed to pollution prevention, source reduction, and waste minimization. To promote those efforts, DFW developed a comprehensive outreach program that included numerous environmental educational events and initiatives throughout the community.

One such DFW outreach campaign identifies wildlife awareness and education for both airport users and the general public about how wildlife can endanger air traffic. Printed materials were distributed and displayed and on-line access provided through the airport website allowing the public to post questions or file complaints on wildlife issues. The Airport Development Department's Capital Development Program (CDP) communications team is responsible for developing and delivering outreach programs such as World of Wings, sight tours, and presentations to interested parties. These programs promote the CDP infrastructure and innovations, technologies, and environmental stewardship.

DFW's regular communications are distributed through quarterly bi-lingual newsletters and made available online to local communities and stakeholders. Topics include capital improvement project updates, environmental impacts relative to construction projects, and descriptions of pending projects.

In addition, DFW's Environmental Affairs Department Noise Compatibility Office operates a 24-hour hotline to address public concerns about aircraft noise. The office uses several measures to help educate the public on flight trends and, if necessary, investigates unusual noise patterns as a result of public input.

Beyond the review of available literature on airport stakeholder engagement, a host of airport websites were searched in an attempt to identify airports that have very public and proactive engagement efforts. The following website page demonstrates how the Munich Airport pursues both stakeholder and community engagement efforts (Figure 12). Within the stakeholder section, it provides links for several different types of stakeholders:

## APPLICATION

This literature review synthesizes works that could ultimately provide guidance for airports in their efforts to understand and develop effective stakeholder engagement plans. Early works were largely theoretical in nature and developed from a private-sector managerial point of view. As the theory

- COMPANY PROFILE
- SERVICE PORTFOLIO
- ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE PROTECTION
- WORKFORCE AND WORK ENVIRONMENT
- COMMUNICATION & RESPONSIBILITY
- Community engagement
- Economic reach
- Regional growth partnerships
- Stakeholders
  - › Air transportation industry
  - › Business partners
  - › Employees
  - › Government and associations
  - › Media
  - › Ministries and authorities
  - › Our region
  - › Passengers and visitors
- FACTS & FIGURES

Communication and social responsibility

## Stakeholders



Flughafen München GmbH and its subsidiaries regularly engage in dialogue with its key stakeholder groups.

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### ENGAGING WITH AIRPORT STAKEHOLDERS

We have a fair exchange of opinion, based on mutual trust with airlines and partner businesses, as well as passengers and employees. The latter are included by such means as through ongoing surveys. We also work closely with neighboring communities and partner organizations in our immediate local area, as their support is crucial to our current and future success as a business organization. Through our regional liaison office, we maintain intensive contact with local communities, policymakers, and citizens' groups.



[enlarge \(1 image\)](#)

### EXAMPLE FOR DIALOGUE WITH OUR STAKEHOLDERS:

- We continuously conduct surveys to keep track of passenger and employee's opinions and perceptions, and take active steps to maintain strong relationships with airline companies and partner businesses.
- The company has a regional liaison office, which conducts an ongoing dialogue with communities, decision-makers and citizens' groups in the region.
- As a member of various industry associations and advocacy groups, we regularly exchange ideas with leaders and policymakers.
- We coordinate closely with the relevant government ministries and offices when it comes to compliance with legal requirements and discussions surrounding industry issues.
- We engage in extensive corporate communications work aimed at fostering an open dialogue, both with a wide variety of media and with our stakeholder base.



FIGURE 12 Munich Airport website—Stakeholders. *Source:* <http://munich-airport.com/en/company/dialog/gruppen/index.jsp>.

evolved into practical application, its implementation grew well beyond private corporate use. Governments, non-profits, and non-governmental organizations use stakeholder engagement techniques to consult, engage, and empower the public. Airports, managing essentially as public entities, operate within a complicated network of stakeholders. Understanding systematic and comprehensive engagement approaches will facilitate more productive working relationships between airport management and airport stakeholders.

The models and concepts relative to stakeholder analysis and engagement as reflected in this literature review were used to help develop the Appendix C checklist. The checklist is a tool to help airport professionals assess their readiness to undertake a stakeholder engagement process/program, strategize and formulate such a plan, implement it, and assess outcomes.



## CHAPTER THREE

## SURVEY AND INTERVIEWS

### BACKGROUND

This study included a survey and interviews designed to help identify practices, tools, and techniques for engaging stakeholders at small airports. A geographically diverse group of 32 airports was invited to participate in the on-line survey. Twenty-nine responses were received from the 32 airports contacted, a 91% return rate. Airports participating in the survey were selected based on the project team's familiarity with them, the ACRP Topic Panel's suggestions, and volunteers from an industry outreach effort. Seventeen general aviation and 12 air carrier airports responded. The general aviation airports ranged in activity levels from low (fewer than 30 based aircraft) to very active facilities in large metropolitan areas (general aviation reliever airports). From the 29 airports, 25 airport directors were later interviewed to learn more about their stakeholder engagement activities. This feedback formed the basis for the case examples presented in chapter four and are provided to benefit other airports. Appendix B is a copy of the online survey questionnaire and a list of questions used in subsequent interviews.

### SURVEY

The project's on-line survey consisted of 20 questions designed to learn about the importance placed on the stakeholder groups identified in Table 1 of this report, and how airport management views the effectiveness and extent of their engagement with these stakeholders. The survey also asked about tools and techniques the airport uses for engagement. Following is a summary of the responses.

Questions 1 and 2 identified the airport and its location.

Question 3: *From the list provided below, identify and rank the top stakeholder groups ("1" as the highest) you consider important to your ability to successfully deliver aviation services in your community.*

Figures 13–15 provide a summary of answers to Question 3.

Observations from answers to Question 3 included:

1. No airport ranked the general public or service providers as the most important stakeholder.
2. Several respondents indicated they believe all of the stakeholder groups are important and that their ranking does not mean to exclude any group as not being important enough to engage.
3. There was no real difference in how general aviation airports responded versus air carrier airports. Most airport managers indicated that airport users and tenants in their opinion were very important stakeholders to their airport's success.
4. The three airports that ranked economic stakeholders first have very robust partnerships with economic development organizations and mutual high-level goals and initiatives that promote the economic development of their community. Airports that ranked economic development stakeholders lower than most other stakeholders tended to be in urban or large communities that had many other economic development generators.

Questions 4–10: *On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being extensive/proactive and 5 not at all, please indicate the extent to which you actively seek and consider the opinions and input of each of the following stakeholder groups in airport decision-making. Note: Each stakeholder was represented by a separate question.*

TABLE 1  
STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Airport	Location	Type
Ada Municipal	Ada, OK	General Aviation–Local
Camarillo	Camarillo, CA	General Aviation–National
Chino	Chino, CA	General Aviation–National
Everett–Stewart	Union City, TN	General Aviation–Local
Harry Stern	Wahpeton, ND	General Aviation–Local
Jack Edwards National	Gulf Shores, AL	General Aviation–Regional
Jackson County Reynolds Field	Jackson, MI	General Aviation–Regional
Laconia Municipal	Laconia, NH	General Aviation–Regional
McKinney National	McKinney, TX	General Aviation–National
Morristown Municipal	Morristown, NJ	General Aviation–National
Naples Municipal	Naples, FL	General Aviation–Regional
San Bernardino International	San Bernardino, CA	General Aviation–Regional
Scottsdale	Scottsdale, AZ	General Aviation–National
Sedona	Sedona, AZ	General Aviation–Local
Smyrna	Smyrna, TN	General Aviation–National
University of Oklahoma Max Westheimer	Norman, OK	General Aviation–Regional
Venice Municipal	Venice, FL	General Aviation–Regional
Asheville Regional	Asheville, NC	Air Carrier–Non hub
Central Nebraska Regional	Grand Island, NE	Air Carrier–Non hub
Columbia Regional	Columbia, MO	Air Carrier–Non hub
Florence Regional	Florence, SC	Air Carrier–Non hub
Friedman Memorial	Hailey, ID	Air Carrier–Non hub
Golden Triangle	Columbus, MS	Air Carrier–Non hub
Huntington Tri-State	Huntington, WV	Air Carrier–Non hub
Northwest Arkansas	Bentonville, AR	Air Carrier–Small hub
Redding Municipal	Redding, CA	Air Carrier–Non hub
Roanoke–Blacksburg Regional	Roanoke, VA	Air Carrier–Non hub
Roswell International Air Center	Roswell, NM	Air Carrier–Non hub
Tri-Cities	Pasco, WA	Air Carrier–Non hub

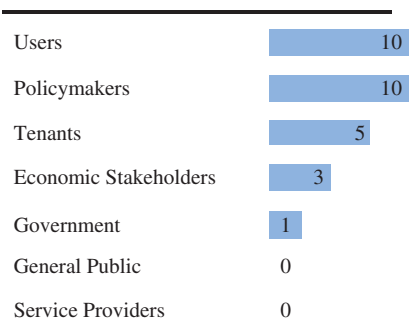


FIGURE 13 Top ranked group in importance by number of airports.

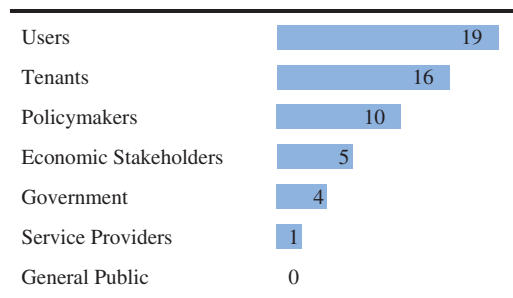


FIGURE 14 Top two ranked groups in importance by number of airports.



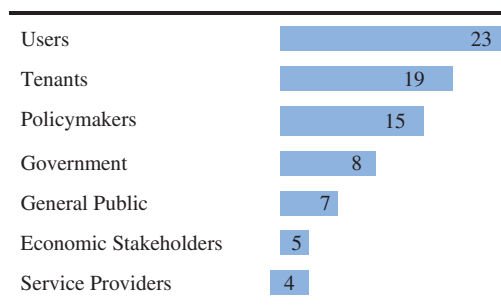


FIGURE 15 Top three ranked groups in importance by number of airports.

Figures 16–22 provide a summary of answers to Questions 4–10.

Observations from answers to Questions 4–10 included:

1. The extent to which an airport leader proactively engages with a stakeholder group tends to be aligned with the importance placed on the group indicated in answers to Question 3.
2. The extent of proactive engagement is less with the general public and airport neighbors than other stakeholder groups. During the interviews, two airport directors indicated that engagement with airport neighbors is oftentimes reactive; for example, noise complaints, and the target audience for proactive engagement is not as clear as with some other stakeholder groups.

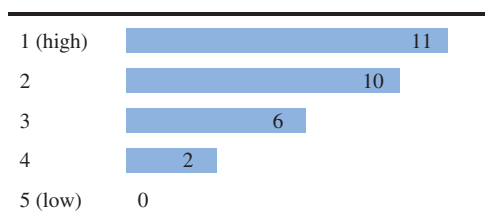


FIGURE 16 Extent of engagement (number of airports) group: Users.

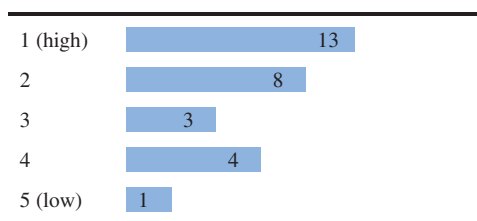


FIGURE 17 Extent of engagement (number of airports) group: Policymakers.

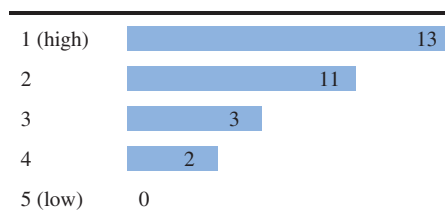


FIGURE 18 Extent of engagement (number of airports) group: Tenants.

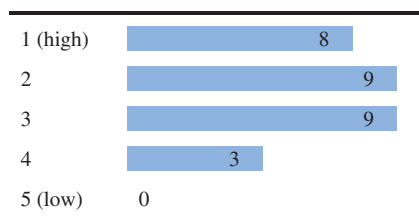


FIGURE 19 Extent of engagement (number of airports) group: Economic development.

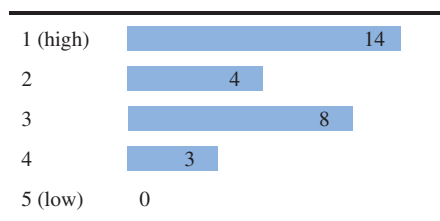


FIGURE 20 Extent of engagement (number of airports) group: Government regulators.

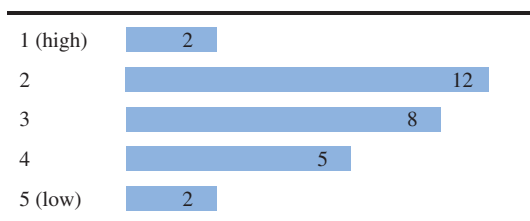


FIGURE 21 Extent of engagement (number of airports) group: General public–airport community.

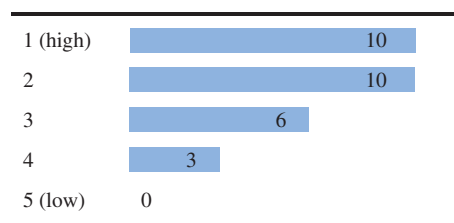


FIGURE 22 Extent of engagement (number of airports) group: Service providers.

- Those airports ranking policymakers lower in importance tended to have a formal airport authority or airport commission as its governing structure versus city or county governance.

*Question 11: What tools do you use to communicate with stakeholder groups and seek to build effective relationships with such groups?*

A collective list of answers to Question 11 follows:

- Speaking to civic and service clubs about the airport
- Newspaper articles/press releases about the airport
- Holding press conferences when appropriate
- Airport website

- City/county website with information about the airport
- Social media such as a Facebook page and Twitter
- Airport newsletters
- E-mail subscriptions with e-blasts to tenants and users
- Use of tenant cell phone numbers to disseminate critical information
- Direct mailings to airport neighbors
- Providing users and tenants with timely construction/airport status updates using Twitter
- Mobile message boards
- Tenant newsletter
- Use of a public relations firm to disseminate the message
- Regular meetings by airport management with tenants and user groups
- Active participation by airport management in city/county council meetings
- Active participation by airport management with tourism industry groups
- Informal discussions with pilots to solicit their feedback on airport services
- Formation of airport advisory groups
- Open door policy for airport management to talk with general public
- Airport management meetings with airport neighborhood groups and individuals on their “turf”
- Public workshops in connection with master plans and noise compatibility studies
- On-line surveys
- Monthly coffee talks with the general public
- Face-to-face meetings with FAA, TSA, and state aviation officials
- Formation of focus groups to address specific issues
- Participation by airport management on local boards such as the Economic Development Council
- Participation by Economic Development Council members on the Airport Board
- Guided airport tours for neighborhood groups, policymakers, and economic development groups
- Luncheons with brokers and bankers
- Legislative forums for elected officials
- Blood, coat, and/or food drives at the airport
- Ribbon cuttings
- Annual holiday receptions
- Regular luncheons with tenants
- Public aviation events such as fly-ins, antique aircraft, festivals
- Programs to reach out to youth such as Boy Scouts and Young Eagles
- Tenant pot luck luncheons rotated among tenants
- Seasonal tenant appreciation day
- Fish fry for the Rotary Club.

Observations from answers to Question 11 included:

1. Tools being used for stakeholder engagement can be broken into broad categories such as:
  - general one-way communication from the airport outward;
  - direct interface with stakeholders, especially relative to specific issues;
  - engagement techniques to promote partnerships; and
  - festive events that promote positive relationships.
2. Airport management’s physical participation is a key element of many of the techniques used.

Questions 12–18: *On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being excellent and 5 poor, please rate your perception of the effectiveness of your working relationship with each of the stakeholder groups. Note: Each stakeholder was represented by a separate question.*

Figures 23–29 provide a summary of the answers to Questions 12–18.

Observations from the answers to Questions 12–18:

- The effectiveness of engagement with each stakeholder tends to be aligned with the importance placed on the group and the extent to which an airport leader is reaching out and engaging the group as indicated in answers to Questions 3–10.

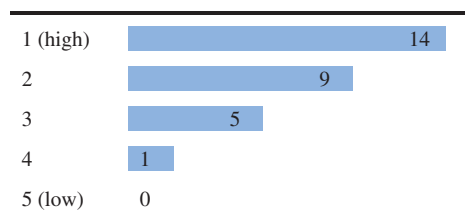


FIGURE 23 Effectiveness of engagement (number of airports) group: Users.

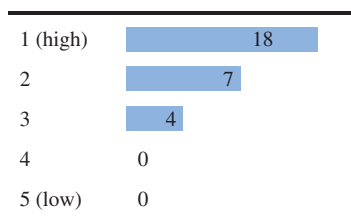


FIGURE 24 Effectiveness of engagement (number of airports) group: Policymakers.

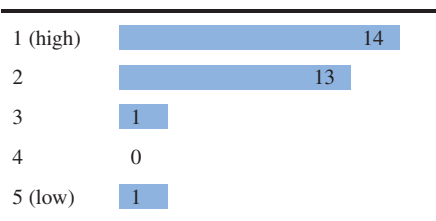


FIGURE 25 Effectiveness of engagement (number of airports) group: Tenants.

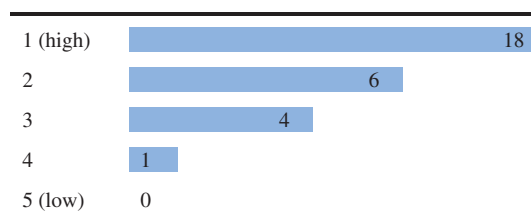


FIGURE 26 Effectiveness of engagement (number of airports) group: Economic development–Stakeholders.

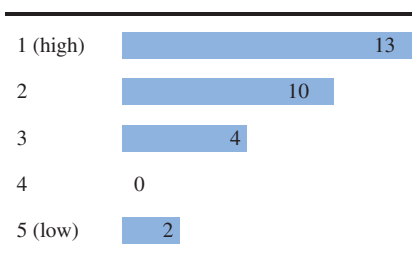


FIGURE 27 Effectiveness of engagement (number of airports) group: Government regulators.

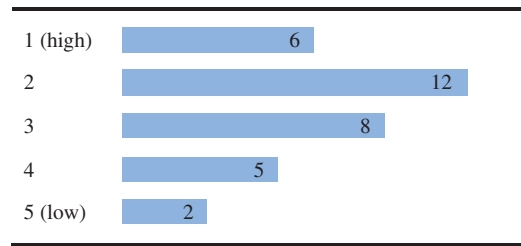


FIGURE 28 Effectiveness of engagement (number of airports) group: General public–airport community.

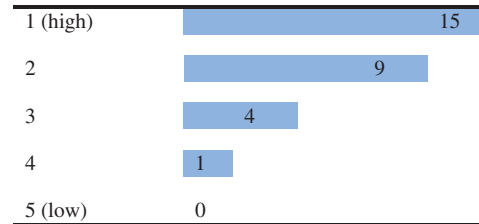


FIGURE 29 Effectiveness of engagement (number of airports) group: Service providers.

- The perception of those surveyed is that the effectiveness in engagement with the general public and airport neighbors is less than other stakeholder groups. During the interviews, several airport directors indicated that engagement with airport neighbors is oftentimes reactive; for example, noise complaints, and the concern of the stakeholder cannot always be satisfied.
- Although ranked lower in importance than other stakeholder groups, the effectiveness of engagement with service providers is ranked high. Those interviewed indicated that service providers are often considered an extension of airport staff or are under contract and participate in the daily activities of the airport; therefore, management does not consider them an external stakeholder in the same sense as other groups.

**Question 19:** *Do you have a particularly effective working relationship with a specific stakeholder group that you would be willing to discuss with us?*

Answers to Question 19 were generally “yes” with little specificity. The follow-up interviews provided more insight to these relationships and are discussed later in this chapter.

**Question 20** provided contact information for the person completing the survey.

A high-level summary of observations from both the survey and follow-up interviews is provided at the end of this chapter.

## INTERVIEWS

Twenty-five airport directors were willing to be interviewed to offer additional insight and tools for building stakeholder relationships. Most of these interviews were done by telephone and several were conducted in person. Each interview included questions to supplement the survey answers and focused on tools and techniques for the various stakeholder groups. Appendix B provides a list of questions that helped guide the interviews. The actual questions used during the interview varied from airport to airport depending on the specific issues being discussed.

General comments received during the interviews included:

- The relationship an airport has with its immediate neighbors is impacted by its relationship with other stakeholders such as tenants and pilots. Also, airport neighbors can have a direct influence on how well the airport serves its tenants and users.

- Development and monitoring of positive working relationships and partnerships, open communication, inviting input into the process by those potentially affected, and education and outreach all aid in the successful outcome of the airport and its operations.
- The key to successful development of an airport is to have the backing and support of all stakeholder groups. This is done through communication and education.
- The airport director should make him/herself known to the local media and encourage them to contact the manager first when an issue comes up.
- Open communication, stakeholder input, and education on issues while they are in policy development go a long way to developing a positive working relationship.
- Occasional letters to the editor are effective to communicate a strategic message.
- Encourage employees to get involved in the community.
- Get the message out that the airport benefits the community as well as those that use it.
- Certain projects require direct engagement with neighbors, tenants, and users.
- Airport issues drive the extent and type of stakeholder engagement. For example, an ongoing master plan has very different stakeholder needs than a plan to increase airport rates and charges.
- The airport's governing structure can influence the need for certain stakeholder engagement. For example, a formal Airport Authority may not need the degree of engagement with policy-makers that a city- or county-owned airport would have.
- Do not forget impacts on the public and neighbors during construction of projects.
- All stakeholders are important. The level of engagement may vary from time to time depending on current or looming issues.

Specific responses regarding tools and techniques for stakeholder engagement of each group are as follows.

### **Users**

- Outreach to pilots: seek to meet their needs while encouraging them to fly friendly and minimize the impact on airport neighbors.
- Ask pilots for input on how to minimize noise impacts.
- Ask pilots for feedback on customer service.
- Do not overlook the importance of engaging unique users such as “snowbirds” or seasonal users such as those who visit resort area airports.
- Promote a Fly Safe, Fly Quiet program.

### **Polymakers**

- Keep them informed, especially if an issue arises that will impact or has impacted their constituency.
- Make sure policymakers and the public and/or airport neighbors are on the same page.
- As airport manager, respect policymakers and their need to know.
- Maintain a positive and proactive relationship with Congressional representatives

### **Tenants**

- Practice open communication and seek input early in the process so the group is “brought in” to the outcome.
- Open communication is critical to a positive relationship.
- Hold quarterly meetings to understand the tenant and user's perspective and to help prioritize capital improvements.
- Quarterly meetings and constant communication with tenants are keys to fostering a successful relationship.
- There is an opportunity for constant ongoing communication with tenants at small airports; the airport manager is accessible at small airports.
- Tenants can provide a pulse-check of proposed policies.
- Communicating plans for construction and temporary airport conditions is very important.

### **Economic Development Agencies**

- Partner to bring events to the community that promotes the area or region through air travel.
- Demonstrate the airport's positive economic benefit and job creation.
- Promote travel by the Economic Development organization to promote the region in support of the airport.
- Embrace the airport's role in developing business.
- Use focus groups with an aviation cross section for marketing purposes.
- Participate in local business groups.
- Serve as an officer with the Chamber of Commerce.
- Work directly with the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development organization to accomplish specific goals and targeted corporations.
- Establish a relationship and communicate with local bankers.
- Give the Chamber of Commerce and business leaders tours of the airport.
- Include an Economic Development organization member on the Airport Advisory Council or Airport Board.

### **Government/Regulators**

- For Air Traffic Control develop a culture and partnership so that their customer service is top notch for pilots while minimizing the impact on neighbors; for example, specifying a departure route that avoids flight over noise-sensitive areas.
- Maintain open communications with regulators, have a consistent capital improvement plan, deliver projects on time for efficient grant closure.
- Work together with FAA, the state, and other government offices as partners for a mutually beneficial outcome.
- Have regular face-to-face meetings with FAA and the state aviation agency. Do not forget the various FAA offices such as Airports, Civil Rights, Air Traffic, and Facilities.
- Maintain a good relationship with Congressional and state and local representatives.

### **Public and Airport Neighbors (Airport Community)**

- Education and outreach to groups ensures issues are addressed.
- Personal visits to homeowners are effective.
- Airport management would participate in professional and civic organizations.
- Conduct events at the airport such as Santa Claus fly-in, aviation art contest, aerobatic competitions, Sky School for kids, and Boy Scout and Civil Air Patrol events.
- Engage the community on its turf and invite them to yours (the airport).
- Give to the community; for example, right-of-way for a sidewalk.
- For master plans, noise studies, and environmental assessments go beyond the minimal requirements to ensure there is active engagement with the community.
- As part of the master plan process, visit and brief every nearby homeowners association.
- Canvass the neighborhood with postcard invitations to attend public workshops.
- Provide follow-up to noise complaints and mail letters to pilots who are not following fly friendly recommendations.
- Visit the site of a noise complaint and hear what they are hearing.
- Get information out to the public about an issue before the detractors have a chance to put out their story.
- Get realtors on board to head off problems when home buyers are not familiar with the airport.
- Educate the public about the airport's value.
- Explain safety and geometric standards to the public and neighbors.
- Use PowerPoint and handouts when talking with the public.

### **Service Providers**

- Develop a relationship that ensures that high-quality services are provided by law enforcement and fire protection.

- Treat the airport's day-to-day service providers as if they are part of the airport family.
- High-quality consultants add credibility to the airport and are critical when dealing with airport neighbors.
- Contractors are truly extensions of staff. Show them they are valuable and keep them informed.
- The relationship with some service providers is contractual and is to be managed accordingly.
- Ensure volunteer and other airport service providers have the proper training, especially when they work on the airport.

The interviews also sought to understand what resources airports use for stakeholder engagement. In almost all instances, the response was that the airport manager does most or all of it. A few airports also use an assistant manager, while one utilized a public relations firm to provide support and assistance. A few airports used the local business community to help educate the public and policymakers about the economic value of the airport. Many airport managers stated that policymakers and the governing body relied on them for stakeholder engagement because the airport manager is the subject matter expert.

The interviews inquired about what personal skills are needed for stakeholder engagement and how does one acquire them including:

- Know how to come across as up-front and transparent.
- Be ahead of an issue; learn how to anticipate.
- Be consistent in messages developed about the airport.
- Exercise patience and persistence.
- Listening skills are important. Learn from stakeholders.
- Polish and practice public speaking skills.
- Have an outgoing personality; be outgoing.
- Need good people skills.
- Be flexible.
- Do your homework and be knowledgeable when working on an issue.
- Take a team view and believe that you will learn from others.
- Be willing to ask for help and feedback.
- Be a good teacher.
- Reflect on other managers that you have had; learn from them.
- Skills are primarily developed from on-the-job experience.
- Seek experiences that help you develop public speaking skills and gain confidence.

## CONCLUSIONS FROM THE SURVEY AND INTERVIEWS

Airports and their stakeholder groups are all different; however, the following are broad conclusions about airport stakeholder relationships and engagement based on the survey and follow-up interviews:

1. Proactively building and maintaining positive ongoing stakeholder relationships that are characterized by open communication, transparency, and trust is a key to being able to resolve issues and/or meet mutual goals.
2. All stakeholders are important. The level of engagement for each varies from time to time and is often driven by the nature of a shared goal or to address a specific issue or stakeholder concern.
3. Issues that require building stakeholder relationships and engagement include: airport strategic/business/master planning, customer service, airport development, construction phasing impacts, airport operations, environmental impacts, airport leasing policies, setting of rates and charges, and economic development initiatives. These types of issues often drive the nature and extent of the stakeholder engagement.
4. Airport management's availability to stakeholders and virtual and physical presence (both regular and when needed) in the community is key. Participation in civic groups is important.
5. Stakeholders can impact one another. Sometimes their goals are in opposition (e.g., users vs. neighbors). Sometimes it is not possible to satisfy all stakeholder concerns.



6. Educating stakeholders about the airport's services, value of the airport, and airport operational requirements is important. It is preferable to do this proactively rather than when a confrontational issue arises.
7. There are many tools and techniques for engaging stakeholders. These can be categorized as communication, education, direct engagement to build a relationship, direct engagement to address issues, and festive events.
8. Primary skills to use for airport management are people skills such as effective communication, public speaking, empathy for the stakeholder, and negotiating.
9. It is important to give information to stakeholders about an issue before they have an opportunity to make up their own information. This is critical when anticipating opposition to a major airport initiative.
10. The importance that airport management places on a particular stakeholder is influenced by the governing structure of the airport, the experience or tenure of the airport manager, and the specific issue(s) of concern to the stakeholders.
11. Stakeholder engagement appears to be driven primarily by the airport manager's understanding of its importance as well as the manager's personality and abilities. Airport mission and vision statements and other airport governing documents are not the greatest driver.
12. An airport's economic impact and contribution to job creation drives many airport issues and the need for a variety of stakeholder engagement initiatives.

The practices and principles relative to stakeholder analysis and engagement as reflected in surveys and interviews were used to develop the Appendix C checklist. The checklist is a tool to help airport professionals assess their readiness to undertake a stakeholder engagement process/program, strategize and formulate such a plan, implement it, and assess outcomes.

## CHAPTER FOUR

**CASE EXAMPLES****BACKGROUND**

Based on responses to the on-line survey and personal interviews, several case examples were developed describing most effective management practices related to stakeholder engagement techniques reflecting a variety of issues at small airports in the following focus areas:

- Airport Community—Community Engagement (3)
- Airport Community—Decision Making Through Public Participation (1)
- Economic Stakeholders—Building Economic Vitality (2)
- Airport Users—Customer Service (1)
- Airport Tenants—Building a Culture of Safety Through Engagement (1)
- Government Regulators—The Power of One Voice (1)

These case examples (Table 2) were selected because they represent a variety of airport issues and demonstrate the effectiveness of good stakeholder relationships. They also are examples of how stakeholder engagement has helped address these issues. Although Northwest Arkansas is a small hub air carrier airport and not “small” for purposes of this study, its case provides lessons for all airports.

Although survey responses for this analysis did not indicate high priority or extensive engagement with the public, several innovative engagement strategies for such stakeholders were brought to light during the interview phase. As such, three airports are highlighted as case examples for work accomplished around building forums for collaborative decision making, enhancing relations with airport neighbors, and forming alliances with non-profit and non-governmental entities. Moreover, the interview phase brought forward the extent of key relationships airport leaders build and maintain with economic development agencies and interests. Two case examples are presented that provide background on strategies to further the economic prosperity of a region by an airport and how one is attempting to leverage available non-aeronautical property for commerce and light industry. The interview process also discovered how a group of airport leaders rallied around an issue of extreme importance and implemented a focused advocacy effort to effect a proposed change in policy and funding cuts by the FAA.

Table 3 provides a summary of stakeholder engagement attributes for each entity evaluated and highlighted in these case examples. The stakeholder group, level of engagement, and tools utilized for engaging stakeholders are offered. These attributes are defined and discussed in previous sections of this report as noted here:

- Table 1: Identified Stakeholder Groups: Practices to Develop Effective Stakeholder Relationships at Small Airports
- Figure 6: Public Participation Spectrum
- Figure 10: Sample Stakeholder Matrix
- Figure 11: Stakeholder Grid

Each case example subject is introduced in a “Background” section followed by a summary of the situation it faced, the action it took, and the results it achieved through its action. Key takeaways and lessons learned are offered by the authors and airport leaders at the conclusion of each case example.

TABLE 2  
AIRPORTS AND INDUSTRY ORGANIZATION CASE EXAMPLES

Airport	Identifier	Stakeholder Topic
Asheville Regional Airport, Asheville, NC	AVL	Community Engagement
Venice Municipal Airport, Venice, FL	VNC	Community Engagement
Friedman Memorial Airport, Hailey, ID	FMA	Decision Making Through Public Engagement
Florence Regional Airport, Florence, SC	FLO	Building Economic Vitality
McKinney National Airport, McKinney, TX	TKI	Building Economic Vitality
Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport, Bentonville, AR	XNA	Seamless Customer Service
University of Oklahoma–Max Westheimer Airport, Norman, OK	OUN	Enhancing Safety Through Engagement of Airport Tenants & Users
Morristown Municipal Airport, Morristown, NJ	MMU	Community Engagement—Social Media, Newsletters and Websites

## AIRPORT COMMUNITY

### Asheville Regional Airport—Community Engagement

#### *Airport Background*

The Asheville Regional Airport (AVL) is located in the Blue Ridge Mountains region of western North Carolina, approximately ten miles south of downtown Asheville near the town of Fletcher. AVL is owned and operated by the Greater Asheville Regional Airport Authority (GARAA), an independent public body consisting of the city of Asheville and counties of Buncombe and Henderson. The airport is classified in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) as a primary, non-hub, commercial service airport served by Allegiant, Delta, United, and American Airlines. It offers a full complement of general aviation services to the public through Belle Aircraft Maintenance, Landmark Aviation, and WNC Aviation.

TABLE 3  
A SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ATTRIBUTES

	AVL	VNC	FMA	FLO	TKI	XNA	OUN	MMU
<i>Stakeholder Group</i>								
Policymakers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Users	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Tenants	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Community	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Economic Stakeholders	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Government Regulators			✓	✓	✓		✓	
<i>Stakeholder Engagement Level</i>								
Inform	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
Consult				✓		✓		
Involve	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
Collaborate		✓	✓		✓		✓	
<i>Tools</i>								
Social Media	✓					✓		✓
Website	✓		✓			✓		✓
Events	✓							
Sponsorships	✓							
Airport Programs	✓							
Public Forums/Workshops		✓	✓					
Consensus Building		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Advisory Committee		✓	✓		✓		✓	
FAA Liaison/Support					✓			
Surveys						✓		
Employee Recognition						✓		
Customer Service Training						✓		
Safety Committee							✓	
Scholarship Program								✓
Advocacy: Press Releases, Congressional Letters								

Asheville is the largest city in western North Carolina, and it is located approximately 51 miles north of Greenville, South Carolina, and 99 miles west of Charlotte. In addition to being known for the natural beauty of the surrounding Blue Ridge Mountains, Asheville is a cultural and tourist center. The greater Asheville region is home to a diversified economy that is based on advanced manufacturing, technology, professions and technical services, health care, education, and tourism.

### *Situation*

In 2010, GARAA strategically assessed its Marketing and Public Relations Communications Plan. In the course of undertaking this initiative, GARAA determined that for AVL to build and maintain a sustainable and effective business platform, key linkages to the broader community served by the airport were needed. This introspective review and assessment led GARAA to the conclusion that it very much needed to find avenues to create engaged and excited “Airport Ambassadors” in the 11-county region it serves. GARAA also recognized that the establishment of a network of “Airport Ambassadors” was beyond the reach of traditional airport marketing initiatives such as print, electronic, and television and radio advertising. Further, AVL’s leaders embraced as a core value of their organization the concept of their facility being intricately linked to the economic vitality of western North Carolina, with its connectedness extending to human service agencies, the arts and cultural endeavors, and other non-profit/non-governmental organizations.

### *Action*

GARAA’s strategic assessment of its Marketing and Public Relations Communication Plan led to the adoption of an updated plan that included a series of goals and objectives aimed at establishing programs to engage, in a meaningful and positive manner, the general aviation community of AVL, as well as a host of entities in the western North Carolina region. Through these engagement efforts, the GARAA seeks to form lasting mutually beneficial relationships that will enable the airport to give back to the communities it serves, while achieving positive goodwill and affinity from all in its service area.

Following are highlights of several programs and initiatives GARAA has implemented to yield community goodwill, while at the same time build its connectedness to the region, its role in the region, and brand affinity:

- *Runway 5K Run*—an annual event designed to invite the community to AVL. The runway is closed and a 5K run is conducted. In addition, static aircraft and aviation displays are provided. Partnerships for past events have included a local hospital, which also sponsored a Health Fair for participants and guests. Proceeds raised from the 5K run have benefited Breast Cancer Awareness. More recently, funds have been donated to the Western North Carolina Pilot’s Association Scholarship Program.
- *“Community Connections Wall”*—located in the AVL Air Carrier Terminal is an area dedicated to highlighting the work of non-profit human and public health agencies. Up to 12 agencies can be profiled at one time. This area provides travelers with information on the important mission and role that these agencies provide citizens of the region.
- *Employee Non-Profit Agency Involvement*—the GARAA encourages all of its employees to dedicate their time and skills to assisting non-profit agencies in the region. Employees are granted leave to assist agencies during normal business work hours. Agencies benefitting from GARAA staff work include The United Way, Habitat for Humanity, a local food bank, and the Alzheimer’s Association.
- *Non-Profit Agency Event Sponsorships*—GARAA has established a program that enables non-profit agencies to apply for direct funding or in-kind support from AVL for special events, contests, and activities. GARAA has criteria in place that it utilizes to make decisions on such requests and weighs the exposure and return on its investment in such events in making funding allocation decisions.

### *Results and Lessons Learned*

In 2012, the GARAA retained a firm to conduct a “Community Perception Survey.” This used a random telephone survey to build a portfolio and understanding of the desires of air travelers in the region as well as their perceptions of AVL. The results provided the foundation to quantifiably measure the effectiveness of its public outreach program. It will be repeated in 2015, at which time the Authority will be able to measure outcomes and results. In the meantime, the airport hosts a vibrant and active electronic and social media program. Through guest posts GARAA is receiving positive feedback on its community engagement efforts and concludes that it is making positive connections, building brand affinity, and fostering goodwill.

The key to GARAA’s success in this area is a commitment by senior airport leadership and its governing board to such initiatives, the establishment of written parameters and metrics for determining the merits of applications from agencies seeking the airport’s support, and fostering an organizational culture built on a set of values that embraces the notion of an airport being critically linked to the overall community it serves and not an island unto itself.

### **Venice Municipal Airport—Community Engagement**

#### *Airport Background*

Venice Municipal Airport (VNC) is a general aviation airport located in the small resort town of Venice, Florida, approximately two miles south of the downtown area on the Gulf of Mexico. It is conveniently located near area beaches, golf courses, restaurants, shops, and other amenities. The airport is classified in NPIAS as a general aviation reliever airport. VNC was built in the early 1940s by the U.S. government to serve as a flight training facility during World War II. At the end of the war, the airport was given to the city of Venice.

VNC is owned and operated by the city of Venice. It has two 5,000-foot intersecting runways, one FBO, several maintenance shops, a flight school, many hangars, and other airport facilities. There are 266 based aircraft and nearly 60,000 annual aircraft operations.

#### *Situation*

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) described VNC in a January 2014 article as an airport that had suffered from benign neglect prior to 2011. AOPA reported that airport leadership faced considerable opposition from the local community situated around the airport as growth was discouraged during a controversial master plan update. AOPA indicated that “detractors attempted to nibble away at the airport’s 835-acre footprint.” Airport neighbors urged shortening of the primary runway, wanted to deny businesses from basing at the airport, and encouraged non-aeronautical uses that would marginalize its aeronautical mission. Airport opponents were elected to the city council, which made focusing on a solution an even greater priority.

Although the airport was self-sustaining and contributed significantly to the local economy, opponents called out the airport for noise and jet traffic. Unsubstantiated information was disseminated through blogs, letters to the editor, and even by flyers at yard sales. Opposition to the airport had affected the city’s ability to properly maintain it and complete important projects to improve infrastructure and to modify airport geometry to meet FAA standards. Millions of dollars in programmed grant funds were returned to the state. Opposition also adversely impacted the airport’s ability to fully meet its potential in generating revenue. Visiting jet customers were heckled from outside the perimeter fence. Some long-time tenants left for nearby airports and VNC developed an unwelcoming reputation.

#### *Action*

New airport management and local aviation leaders recognized that better communication with the local community and improving stakeholder relationships were keys to turning the airport around.

The Venice Aviation Society, Inc. (VASI), comprised of airport users and tenants, also reached out. VASI describes itself as the voice of Venice general aviation and is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting both general aviation and community interests in the airport. From Angel Flights, to Agape Flights, flight training, business and leisure travel, the VASI goal is to promote safe and sustainable general aviation at the Venice Municipal Airport. VASI's mission statement is:

1. To promote, support, and encourage the continued use of the Venice Municipal Airport as a general aviation facility.
2. To educate concerned citizens as to the airport's importance to the public welfare.
3. To provide a forum whereby those concerned with utilization of the facility may voice their concerns.
4. To advise the appropriate authorities regarding safety, security, utilization, and other concerns at the airport.
5. To provide a forum for the flying public regarding aviation matters.
6. To support the city, county, state, and federal authorities in carrying out their duties regarding aviation and the utilization of the Venice Municipal Airport in disaster, welfare, and other public service.

The new airport manager, with the help of VASI and a new mayor and council members, was able to "tell the airport story." Approval of an airport layout plan that demonstrated VNC's commitment to being a good neighbor while enhancing aviation safety helped to build trust and quell critics. The manager visited neighboring homeowners associations, made presentations about the airport to civic groups, hosted public meetings, and wrote editorials that were printed in local newspapers.

The authority was better able to communicate with airport neighbors about how much income the city derives from tenants and users, how only 3% of the airport's takeoffs and landings are from jets, and that FAA was not planning on taking residential housing, as was previously rumored. The airport manager indicated that stated issues such as noise were symptoms of deeper, underlying concerns. Listening to voiced concerns and getting to the root problem were key to better communication with airport neighbors.

### *Results and Lessons Learned*

With a supportive mayor and city council, the work of VASI members, leadership from the new airport manager, and support from FAA, relationships with airport neighbors and the general community significantly improved. Following through with its commitment, Venice recently reconstructed its noise mitigation runway and the airport now meets FAA standards. The based aircraft owners and businesses now enjoy a vastly improved airport and greater support from the community.

Venice leaders have demonstrated the importance of stakeholder groups engaging with one another to better communicate and, thus, improve the ability to maintain and operate a safe and sustainable airport.

## **Friedman Memorial Airport—Decision Making Through Public Engagement**

### *Airport Background*

The Friedman Memorial Airport (FMA) is located in Hailey, Idaho, and is jointly owned by the city of Hailey and Blaine County. It is operated by the Friedman Memorial Airport Authority (FMAA) Board, which is comprised of appointees from the city and county as well as an at-large member who is jointly appointed by both owners. The airport is classified in NPIAS as a primary, non-hub commercial service airport served by Alaska, Delta, and United. It offers a full complement of general aviation services to the public.

The Wood River Valley is a region in south-central Idaho in Blaine County. It is named after the Big Wood River, which flows through the area. The region has four incorporated cities: Bellevue,



Hailey, Ketchum, and Sun Valley and is home to a robust and growing tourism sector including the Sun Valley Resort. Approximately 78% of the land area of the county is public property and includes the Sawtooth National Forest and National Recreation Area.

### *Situation*

FMA does not currently meet required FAA airport design standards. The airport lacks adequate runway to taxiway separation for the class of aircraft it serves; U.S. Highway 75 is located too close to FMA's runway, the width of its runway safety areas does not conform to FAA standards, and runway object free area encroachments exist. Moreover, FMA is severely space constrained; operating on a mere 220 acres and surrounded by dense residential and commercial development, several schools, and, as noted earlier, a U.S. highway. Severe mountainous terrain exists in close proximity to FMA on its eastern, western, and northern boundaries. This condition prevents the installation of conventional navigational aids that would allow scheduled commercial airlines as well as high-performance general aviation aircraft to operate safely and efficiently in all weather conditions. Because of these terrain limitations, operations are conducted "head-to-head" with aircraft arrivals occurring primarily from the south and departures primarily to the south, which severely limits FMA's capacity. Owing to the presence of adjoining residential land, voluntary noise abatement procedures for aircraft are also in place.

Efforts to find solutions to these restrictions have been ongoing for approximately 30 years through evaluation of options to expand FMA at its existing location, as well as identification of possible, more desirable sites to construct a replacement airport. A major expansion undertaken in an effort to resolve these restrictions would significantly impact the surrounding community and pose substantial environmental consequences. In 2006, following adoption of a 2004 update to FMA's Master Plan, FMAA initiated a Site Selection and Feasibility Study to identify and determine the viability of a new airport site that would conform to FAA design safety standards and mitigate existing operational restrictions, to serve the Wood River Region and surrounding areas.

### *Action*

For the 2006 Wood River Region Airport Site Selection and Feasibility Study, FMAA established technical criteria for replacement airport sites and also formulated a vision and requirements for public participation, engagement, and decision making to guide the recommendations proposed for its consideration.

According to this 2006 study, each replacement site was to be comprised of a minimum of approximately 1,200 acres and provide at least one 8,500-foot primary runway capable of supporting all-weather airport operations, meet FAA airport design criteria, offer reasonable and timely ground access to and from communities in the region, and have minimal impacts on the environment.

Beyond the technical aspects of this planning study, FMAA sought to establish and offer maximum opportunities for stakeholder involvement and engagement in its decision-making process. The involvement process included:

- Formation of a 25-member Site Selection Advisory Committee with membership comprised of individuals and entities with a vested interest in, and knowledge of, FMA.
- Public information workshops held throughout the study process.
- Presentations at FMAA meetings by the committee, staff, and consultant team.
- Utilizing public places as repositories for key project documents for public viewing.
- Presentations by FMAA and staff members to government entities and special interest groups.
- Development of a web page to provide easy access to information and to give and receive public input.

FMAA and its project team held fast to the conviction that thorough and detailed dissemination of information with ample opportunity for meaningful public input was vital to the success of the



planning process and the project. As noted by FMA Airport Director Rick Baird: “We believe very strongly in engaging stakeholders in making decisions and realize that we can’t go from Point A to Point B without bringing the public along.”

Sixteen replacement airport sites were identified for consideration. Through deployment of the technical review standards as well as the public participation and engagement efforts listed previously, the Advisory Committee produced a ranking of the three finalist candidate sites and a recommended, preferred site. With receipt of the Advisory Committee’s technical recommendation in-hand and knowing that its vision for a proactive public participation and engagement process was achieved, FMAA selected a replacement airport site and requested that FAA undertake an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process as a pre-requisite to undertaking construction of a replacement airport.

FAA initiated this work as required by NEPA and scheduled the fall of 2011 as its target date for the publication of its findings. Recognizing the value and importance of public engagement efforts beyond typical public information workshops, airport leaders encouraged FAA to emulate its efforts as part of the EIS process. FMA believes that FAA originally attempted to offer such a level of public participation; however, as its study progressed, such engagement efforts appeared to diminish resulting in stakeholders expressing concern to FMAA for its inability to participate and be actively involved in the EIS effort. For a number of reasons, including the looming federal statutory requirement for all airport runway safety areas to meet FAA design standards by the end of 2015 and the U.S. Budget Sequestration, FAA announced suspension of the FMA EIS effort on August 22, 2011.

Since suspension of the EIS process, FAA, in conjunction with FMA and its stakeholders, has initiated a \$32 million program to attain compliance with FAA airport design standards within the footprint of the current airport site to the greatest extent possible. Upon completion of this program in 2015, FMA will meet runway safety area standards, provide for parking of all aircraft outside the runway object free area, and have a minimum runway to parallel taxiway separation of 320 feet. Although these elements will achieve partial compliance, FMA will still need to operate with several modifications to FAA airport geometric design standards. Finally, these projects will not provide all-weather instrument capabilities for the airport.

### *Results and Lessons Learned*

FMAA views the current construction program as a short-term remedy for the region and is committed to continuing to pursue a replacement airport in the long term. In addition, airport leaders will continue proactive use of collaborative public and citizen engagement strategies such as citizen advisory committees and participatory decision making to guide decisions for future aviation facilities. These strategies align with the International Association for Public Participation’s “Collaborate” model. In June 2011, just before the FAA’s suspension of its EIS effort, FMAA published *The Community’s Vision—Recommended Vision Statement and Goals*. This document describes the process in place to engage users and stakeholders in establishing a vision for a new airport. Furthermore, in October 2011, airport leaders prepared a communications plan to offer the measures to be utilized in pursuing a replacement airport.

The effect of this outreach and engagement effort for the replacement airport project is now utilized in other areas of decision making for airport leaders. Indeed, public participation and engagement is thoroughly embraced by FMAA in making decisions at the airport. When it learned that trees at the approach end of its runway might impact flight activity, FMAA worked with the adjoining landowner, as well as an arborist and other special interest groups, to devise a solution that did not require removal of the trees. This type of problem solving, paralleling the International Association for Public Participation’s (IAP2) “Public Involvement Spectrum in Local Governance,” is becoming more and more an active management tool for FMAA in the delivery of services and issue resolution for the region it serves.

## ECONOMIC STAKEHOLDERS

### Florence Regional Airport—Building Economic Vitality

#### *Airport Background*

Florence Regional Airport (FLO) is a public-use, non-hub commercial service airport located three miles east of the city of Florence, South Carolina. It consists of approximately 1,440 acres and is owned and operated by the Pee Dee Regional Airport District (District). The District includes the city of Florence and the counties of Florence, Dillon, and Marion. US Airways offers service to Charlotte and the District provides FBO services to the public.

Historically, agriculture and railroads have served as the economic drivers for the greater Pee Dee region of South Carolina; however, over the past several decades its economic base has been transforming. Today, its economic activity is much more diverse and is a growing force in the finance, pharmaceutical, rail and trucking services, health care, and manufacturing sectors of the U.S. economy, including Honda of South Carolina, McLeod Medical System, Otis Elevators, Johnson Controls, General Electric Medical Systems, Roche Pharmaceuticals, and Sonoco.

#### *Situation*

With the loss of Delta Connection service to Atlanta, the District began to assess both how FLO could position itself to become more closely linked to the overall economic development of the Pee Dee region, as well as diversify its revenue base. In recent years, the District has been developing a strategy to utilize 400–500 acres of existing airport property not required for aeronautical purposes for a business park, commercial/manufacturing purposes, and/or to support intermodal movement of goods and products throughout the eastern United States. It realized that the aerospace industry in Charleston was revitalizing and growing that region of the state, while BMW and its affiliates and partners are spurring economic activity in the Greenville/Spartanburg region. This effort defines an economic niche for the Pee Dee region and engages FLO in a meaningful and productive way to enhance aviation services to the region and/or provide land for businesses to locate and prosper.

#### *Action*

The District understood that multiple agencies coordinate economic development activities in South Carolina including the South Carolina Governor’s Office, the South Carolina Department of Commerce, the North East Strategic Alliance, and the Florence County Economic Development Partnership. It further understood that to promote itself and its property for potential economic development it would be crucial to have a qualified entity verify the suitability of its property for commerce and manufacturing ventures. As such, the District applied for and was selected to participate in Duke Energy’s “Site Readiness Program.”

According to the Duke Energy website, this program is designed to:

... identify, assess, improve, and increase awareness of industrial sites in the Duke Energy region. The goal of the program is to increase the inventory of industrial sites throughout the Carolinas, and to advance the state of readiness of these sites.

As a participant in this program, the District will benefit from an initial assessment conducted by a nationally known site selection consultant and the development of conceptual plans from land-use and site planners for its 400–500 acre tract of land. In addition, the District is eligible to receive matching grant funds from Duke Energy for constructing improvements recommended by these studies. In exchange for the services and grant-in-aid support from Duke Energy, the District agrees to allow the energy provider with the opportunity to compete to provide services to the proposed uses of its developed land.

Beyond participation in the Duke Energy Site Readiness Program, the District is also seeking to be certified through the South Carolina Department of Commerce’s Site Certification Program. It has

retained a real estate firm to assist with the identification of parcels within this tract of land, provide opinions of value for these tracts, and identify the availability of public utility services (electric, gas, water, and sewer) to each section of property.

### *Results and Lessons Learned*

The District is positioning FLO to leverage one of its greatest assets, available and unencumbered land, to further enhance the economic vitality of the greater Pee Dee region of northeastern South Carolina. In doing so, it is seeking to attain long-term financial self-sufficiency for FLO, be less dependent on airline revenue to meet operating expenses, and foster strong working relationships with its business and economic development partners and stakeholders to offer enhanced aviation services.

In terms of stakeholder awareness and engagement, FLO leadership holds that its knowledge of Duke Energy's Site Program was based on a strong personal relationship between one of its Board members and a key company representative. Understanding and being aware of the backgrounds and resumes of key business leaders and appointees to governing bodies is crucial in building stakeholder relations and creates synergy that can serve as the foundation to produce positive results for the airport and its region.

## **McKinney National Airport—Building Economic Vitality**

### *Airport Background*

McKinney National (TKI) is a general aviation reliever airport located in McKinney, Texas, one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. TKI is owned by the city of McKinney and is operated by the McKinney Airport Development Corporation. It is home to many of the largest and most active corporate flight departments in the Dallas Metroplex region including Traxxas, Ag Power, Encore Wire, United American, Torchmark, Texas Instruments, First Flight, and Monarch Air.

Major employers in McKinney include Raytheon, Torchmark/United American Insurance, and Encore Wire. Since 2010, the city has consistently been recognized by *Money Magazine* as one of the top five places to live in the United States.

### *Situation*

Between 2000 and 2014, the population of the city of McKinney grew 174%, from 54,369 to 149,082 (estimated). With the formation of the McKinney Economic Development Corporation in 1993, the city has actively sought to "support the development, expansion, and relocation of new and existing companies." It has strategically pursued and attracted key business investments in the fields of aerospace, clean manufacturing, corporate headquarters/offices, healthcare, and high technology, which has spurred this growth in population and brought new and attractive jobs to the region.

TKI and the McKinney Airport Development Corporation have worked closely with the city's economic development efforts to position the airport to meet and exceed the general aviation needs of the city's businesses, corporations, citizens, and guests. This alignment in mission and focus is emphasized in TKI's adopted mission statement, which is to

... develop the premier general aviation reliever airport in North Texas, with future commercial service goals. Our operational goals include providing business aviation with safe, secure access to the international air transportation system.

To fulfill this mission, the city and the Airport Development Corporation recognized the need to upgrade TKI's airfield infrastructure because the runway length at that time and overall airport facilities lacked the capability to meet the needs of existing and potential corporate clients. In addition, both realized the need to focus on their customers and develop strategies to ensure that all services offered at TKI were of the highest caliber and consistently exceed customer expectations.

*Action*

During the same 14-year period that McKinney was experiencing a 174% growth in population (2000–2014), the following capital improvement projects were completed at TKI to address the identified facility needs:

- Construct fire station to serve airport and city
- Expand aircraft parking apron
- Construct five clear span aircraft storage hangars
- Extend access road for industrial land
- Construct two corporate hangars
- Upgrade airport perimeter security system
- Establish on-site U.S. Customs Service
- Acquire 170 acres
- Construct 93 aircraft t-hangars
- Upgrade and expand aviation fuel farm
- Establish full-time ARFF staffing
- Construct taxi lane for enhanced access to hangar sites
- Launch a “Fly Friendly” initiative
- Update airport master plan
- Conduct Part 150 noise study
- Construct new 7,002-ft × 150-ft runway with 450,000 lb of weight bearing capacity
- Construct new air traffic control tower.

Although all of these projects were vital to TKI positioning itself to meet the aviation needs of its region, the \$70 million runway, taxi lanes, new air traffic control tower, and security access control system have positioned the airport to be a premier general aviation facility capable of fulfilling its vision to provide “business aviation with safe, secure access to the international air transportation system.” In terms of the customer service aspect of the city’s vision for TKI, it completed the purchase of all assets owned by the then privately owned and operated FBO in 2013 and began operation of general aviation services as McKinney Air Center.

In addition to the significant capital investments in facility enhancements made at TKI over the past 14 years, as well as transitioning its FBO services to the airport, strong ties exist between airport leadership and the city’s Economic Development Corporation. Both complement efforts to recruit and retain major employers to the city as well as base aviation assets at TKI. A proactive approach is utilized to secure additional corporate aviation activity at TKI including offering financial incentives to qualifying businesses.

*Results and Lessons Learned*

In May 2014, FltPlan.com’s Pilot’s Choice national recognition program awarded McKinney Air Center with its “Pilot Choice Award” recognizing the city’s owned and operated FBO for excellence in customer service. FltPlan.com also recognized TKI’s air traffic control tower for the quality services it provides to pilots using this facility. Also in May 2014, Monarch Air, a leading provider of aviation services, selected TKI for a major expansion of its operations. According to a press release issued by the city of McKinney, it will lease a large portion of a 53,750 square-foot hangar and office facility at the airport in order to offer a wide range of services including aircraft maintenance, flight training, charter service, fleet management, acquisitions, and sales for the private sector. In the fall of 2014, TKI announced that it was breaking ground on a new 18,000 square-foot hangar to house several new major corporate tenants.

Aggressive economic growth, coupled with leadership that understands the value and importance of providing both the appropriate facilities and services to customers, has positioned TKI to achieve its mission and vision. With realization of its mission, TKI will be positioned to assist and complement the further growth and prosperity of the city of McKinney.

## AIRPORT USERS

### Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport—Seamless Customer Service

#### *Airport Background*

Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport (XNA) is a public-use, small hub commercial service facility located in Benton County, Arkansas, approximately 15 miles northwest of the city of Fayetteville. The Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport Authority (NWARAA) operates XNA and is comprised of the cities of Bentonville, Fayetteville, Rogers, Siloam Springs, and Springdale, and Benton and Washington counties. XNA opened in November 1998 as a replacement airport for commercial airline traffic previously served by Fayetteville's Drake Field. It is served by American, United, Delta, Allegiant, and US Airways and provides a full complement of general aviation services.

According to U.S. Census data, XNA serves one of the fastest growing regions in the United States. It is the northwest Arkansas region's gateway to the world. Headquartered in the XNA service area is the world's largest retailer Walmart, as well as Tyson Foods, an international leader in food production and processing. There are also 30 corporate headquarters located in the region. The presence of these industry leaders, coupled with activity spurred by the University of Arkansas and a growing tourism sector, requires XNA to provide superior service and amenities to its customers.

#### *Situation*

Since its inception, XNA leaders have understood the need to offer a full complement of air service from a myriad of providers in order to meet the travel demands of northwest Arkansas businesses, suppliers, partners, the University of Arkansas, and the region's citizens and guests. From its start, XNA has committed itself to providing guests, visitors, and residents unparalleled customer service through its employees as well as its airlines, concessionaires, and other airport stakeholders.

Airport management has embraced the concept of the "Cycle of Service" as espoused by Jan Carlzon of Scandinavian Airlines and his corresponding "Moments of Truth" that customers encounter with each touch-point in the chain of interactions that leads to the delivery and/or receipt of a service. While embracing these core concepts, XNA, like many U.S. commercial service airports, struggles with the concept that it, as the airport owner and operator, has little to no control over the interactions customers have with entities and employees not under its direct control or oversight such as the airlines, rental cars operations, TSA, ground transportation providers, or other concessionaires and service delivery providers on the airport.

#### *Action*

Fundamental to building an airport-wide initiative aimed at providing exceptional customer service XNA leadership held that the Airport Authority, through its leaders, employees, systems, relationships, and service delivery methods needed to lead this effort through example. Therefore, it launched efforts internal to the Airport Authority that empowered and encouraged all of its employees to foster a culture of exemplary customer service. XNA developed programs to create employee buy-in and proactively encourage all to offer their ideas for implementation of programs aimed at enhancing the customer's experience. In addition, XNA retained Interactive Dynamic Solutions, a professional training and development firm, to supply its staff with customer service training to provide the necessary skills and tools to deliver quality customer service both internal and external to the organization. Through this effort, it is the desire of XNA leadership to motivate and engage all employees in providing exceptional service and to understand the inter-connectedness of airport facilities and operations with the movement of passengers and customers whether airline passenger, rental car customer, or guest. Airport Authority employees are also encouraged and challenged to identify programs and initiatives that will improve the traveler's experience at XNA.



To further its efforts to interact with XNA customers and receive timely feedback on services, approximately two years ago airport leadership undertook to update and enhance its social media strategy. XNA overhauled its website and launched its social media through development of a Facebook page, and establishment of accounts with Twitter, Linked-In, and Instagram. Currently, approximately ten Airport Authority staff members monitor and follow-up on posts and messages to these various accounts as part of their job responsibilities. The Airport Director responds to all customer service complaints received about service provided at XNA. Beyond feedback obtained through social media and the airport's website, kiosks are located throughout the air carrier terminal that offer passengers and guests an opportunity to provide direct feedback on services and employees.

Recognition and rewards for exceptional customer service at XNA come in various forms. Beyond the intrinsic value of self-worth that praise offers for a job well done, XNA sponsors a program entitled "Did You Know" that enables a customer to recognize an airport employee for providing exceptional customer service. When this feedback is received, XNA provides that employee with a prize, shirt, or other commendation. In addition XNA sponsors a holiday luncheon each year where its leadership team serves all airport employees and thanks them for their work and dedication to service.

### *Results and Lessons Learned*

The ultimate objective for airport leadership is to ensure that XNA is the friendliest and most accommodating commercial service airport in the United States. This is accomplished through active engagement with Airport Authority employees, progressively interacting with employees of airport tenants and concessionaires, and providing each with the tools to deliver quality service. Furthermore, the culture being built by XNA is formed on the understanding that each employee interaction with a customer is a "Moment of Truth"; a very short period of time in which he or she can influence a customer's experience with XNA. They view themselves as a customer of the Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport; a gateway to the world that provides exceptional services, facilities, and amenities.

## **AIRPORT TENANTS AND USERS**

### **University of Oklahoma—Max Westheimer Airport—Safety Committee**

#### *Airport Background*

The University of Oklahoma—Max Westheimer Airport (OUN) is located in the center of the state, approximately 20 miles south of Oklahoma City. The airport is classified in NPIAS as a general aviation reliever airport. It is one of two reliever airports for Oklahoma City and is capable of handling executive class jet aircraft.

OUN is owned and operated by the University of Oklahoma, has two runways, a contract air traffic control tower, 94 based aircraft, and in excess of 54,000 annual operations. Cruise Aviation is the airport's one full-service FBO. The University has an active aviation program with three tracks—Professional Pilot, Aviation Management, and Air Traffic Management, and student groups make up a significant number of the tenants and users of the airport.

The Oklahoma Airport Operators Association named OUN as its 2011 "Airport of the Year."

#### *Situation*

There are unique safety challenges and opportunities at the airport with its active university flight instruction program, National Intercollegiate Flying Association chapter, full-service FBO, contract air traffic control tower, and the other based and transient users. It is challenging to ensure that this diverse group experiences both a safe airport operating environment and is offered opportunities to provide their expertise and knowledge to making the airport as safe and secure as it can be. Efforts to

improve airport safety also provide an opportunity to integrate learning experiences with the robust student programs.

### *Action*

Although not required, OUN has fully embraced the principles of FAA’s Safety Management System (SMS). SMS is a formalized approach to managing safety by developing an organization-wide safety policy, developing formal methods of identifying hazards, analyzing and mitigating risk, developing methods for ensuring continuous safety improvement, and creating organization-wide safety promotion strategies. A key element to the success of SMS is the identification of stakeholders and addressing their concerns.

As part of the SMS program, OUN airport management has formed a multi-disciplined Aviation Safety Committee that engages airport stakeholders with a specific goal to improve airport safety. Committee members include:

- Airport Manager
- Airport Director of Operations
- FBO
- University Department of Aviation Program Director
- University Chief Flight Instructor
- University Aviation Safety Officer
- University real estate representative for the airport
- Air Traffic Control Tower Manager
- FAA, Oklahoma City TRACON Manager
- National Intercollegiate Flying Association flight team (coaches and student representatives)
- Aviation Student Advisory Board.

Because OUN is in close proximity to Tinker Air Force Base, a representative from the Safety Office at this military base is also invited to participate in meetings every six months. This committee meets at least monthly to analyze and mitigate safety risks that are documented in a robust safety reporting system applicable to all aircraft operated as part of the OUN flight training program. The risks include, but are not limited to, air traffic control incidents, training, wildlife, infrastructure, personal vehicles, pilot checklists, transient traffic reports, and all suggestions. Committee members also assess the safety aspects of construction phasing for airport projects.

Students may have input to airport safety using hazard identification forms. They may also choose to discuss issues in person or through e-mail with their chief flight instructor or the Safety Committee’s student representative.

Airport staff and committee adhere to this process for reviewing and following-up on all safety reports and suggestions:

1. Identify the hazard,
2. Assess the risk of the hazard,
3. Analyze risk control measures,
4. Make risk control decisions,
5. Implement risk control, and
6. Supervise and review implementation.

### *Results and Lessons Learned*

OUN’s Aviation Safety Committee mission is to improve airport safety as well as safety within the Class D airspace around the airport. It has also increased the university students’ awareness of the importance of aviation safety by breaking down traditional “silos” that often exist in communications



by and between stakeholders. The students now have a model for how stakeholders can be engaged that makes the airport better. Airport management has learned that a key to strengthening an airport safety culture is to actively involve stakeholders.

## **AIRPORT COMMUNITY**

### **Morristown Municipal Airport—Community Engagement**

#### *Airport Background*

Morristown Municipal Airport (MMU) is located on approximately 638 acres in Morristown, New Jersey, serving the New York metropolitan area. The airport is classified in NPIAS as a general aviation reliever airport. Construction at MMU began in the early 1930s under a Works Progress Administration grant, but was completed under a Civil Aeronautics Authority grant in the 1940s. It opened in November 1943. The airport was closed to the public during World War II and used for Army Air Corp and Navy flight training. In 1945, the Army returned the airport to Morristown.

MMU is owned and operated by the town of Morristown, but operated by DM Airports Ltd. It has two intersecting paved runways; runway 5-23 is 5,998 feet long and runway 13-31 is 3,997 feet long. The airport houses 12 corporate hangars, 11 individual aircraft hangars, three flight schools, one aircraft maintenance facility, and one full-service FBO. It has approximately 200 based aircraft of which approximately 70 are jets. Thirty-one companies base their aircraft at MMU. The airport supports more than 120,000 operations per year.

#### *Situation*

As a key access point not only to the Morristown area but also the New York Metropolitan area, MMU airport has a diverse clientele. It caters to a wide range of aviation users with different needs for information. In addition, as with many other airports in urban areas, several large, high-density housing developments have encroached upon airport boundaries. There is now a need to be able to easily disseminate information not just to the aviation community, but also the local community.

#### *Action*

To accommodate the information requirements of its wide range of users and the community, DM Airports Ltd. provides outreach by utilizing mixed media including a website, Facebook, e-mail alerts, and a quarterly newsletter. Airport management has implemented a process whereby all users and stakeholders are invited to subscribe to these media sources.

A well-organized and comprehensive website allows for easy navigation to information tailored to the type of user. The based tenants and transient pilots are able to access information about FBOs and other aviation services based at the airport, airfield status, landing fee information, noise abatement procedures, customs services, airport associations, area lodging and attractions, and transportation. Pilots are encouraged to complete an on-line survey on service quality; participants are provided with the chance to win a monthly drawing for a \$100 Amazon gift card.

The website offers the Morristown community several opportunities to find information on airport history, operations, economic impact, tours, employment, and construction that may impact the surrounding area. The airport's Noise Abatement Program includes a telephone hotline, links to an e-mail address, and an on-line Noise Complaint Form.

Social media outlets such as Facebook provide timely updates to the community concerning airport operations and events at virtually no cost to the airport. In addition, information for both the aviation and residential community is available through e-mailed Airport Alerts. Users can subscribe to the following: airfield closures, airfield conditions (weather), construction, fuel farm (tenant only),

general airport alerts, a newsletter, and security advisories. The quarterly *MMU Airmail Newsletter*, published jointly by the management company, Morristown Aviation Association, and Morristown Airport Pilots Association details airport social events, airport construction updates, and other general airport happenings. The newsletter also reminds pilots to be respectful of the surrounding community by following noise abatement procedures.

Building strong ties to the community is exemplified through the scholarship program. For more than 13 years, the airport operator has provided five area students with an annual scholarship to be used toward tuition, books, or college fees.

### *Results and Lessons Learned*

Airports can employ many different forms of communication to make accessible or distribute information. Websites, social media, newsletters, and e-mail alerts all offer effective means by which airports can distribute that information to a broad audience quickly, inexpensively, and using minimal resources.

## CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

### CONCLUSIONS

This synthesis provides a summary of observations from a literature review, survey, interviews, and case examples. Although all airports are different and have a variety of challenges and stakeholder issues, some common themes were observed relative to airport stakeholder relationships and engagement, which are discussed in this chapter.

Airports that have successful stakeholder engagement programs appear generally to employ the techniques conveyed in the stakeholder literature discussed in this study. Specifically, they identify who the stakeholders are, discern what stakeholder objectives are, and engage them as needed using various tools and techniques. This may not be the airport's formal process, but it tends to typically play out in this manner.

Many airport managers embrace the belief that the most effective way to engage stakeholders is to develop and maintain positive ongoing relationships that serve as a good foundation when specific issues are to be addressed. This is often done with regular two-way communication between airport management and the stakeholder; education of stakeholders about the airport's activities, plans, and programs; and the formation of partnerships when there is a mutual goal. An example of such a partnership is the one between the airport staff and economic development agencies. Educating stakeholders about the airport's services, the value of the airport, and airport operational requirements is important. It is preferable to do this proactively rather than when an issue arises.

The definition of a stakeholder as used in this report is *any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organization's objectives*. This definition appears to be consistent with actual practices at airports with the types of organizations they engage on a regular basis. These organizations and some of the reasons they are considered stakeholders include:

- *Policymakers and elected officials* can directly affect the success of an airport. In many cases, the policymaking board employs airport management and the need for stakeholder engagement may be obvious. Regardless, a trusting relationship characterized by open communication is very important. Elected officials as a stakeholder group have constituents such as airport neighbors who are also stakeholders. It is important that policymakers have a good understanding of the airport's mission, its value to the community, and its strategic plans so they can perceptively consider airport budgets, educate airport neighbors, and represent the broader community when necessary.
- *Airport tenants and users* including airport customer service, airport operations, development plans, construction phasing, leases, and rates and charge policies are key stakeholders for many airport initiatives. It is important that airport management maintains open communication with tenants and users and fully considers their needs.
- *Economic development agencies* typically have a shared goal with the airport; that is, promote the economic growth of the community and create jobs. The relationship between this stakeholder group and the airport is very much a partnership; economic development organizations can be instrumental in the development of airport lands for both aeronautical and non-aeronautical uses. Their programs can also directly influence the demand for additional airport infrastructure and services, including the need for corporate hangars and a longer runway for business jet traffic.

- *Airport neighbors and the general public* can be significantly affected by the airport and vice versa. This is particularly the case with aircraft noise or airport expansion plans that might encroach on land adjacent to the airport. This stakeholder group can directly impact the ability of an airport user to obtain the service it desires; for example, a user's need for a longer runway that is opposed by airport neighbors.
- *Government regulators* such as local, state, and federal agencies have responsibilities for establishing regulations for airports and monitoring airport compliance. Examples include the issuance of environmental permits and grant assurances. Some agencies also provide funding for airport development. Establishing and maintaining a good relationship with them is very important. Some government regulators such as FAA Air Traffic Control and the TSA also serve as airport tenants and provide customer service to airport users.
- *Service providers* include consultants, volunteers, the city finance department, and law enforcement. These stakeholders directly impact the airport's operations and services. In turn, airport initiatives will affect them. Open communication and positive contractual relationships with these groups is very important.

Although non-governmental organizations were not specifically identified as part of this study, they can often have significant influence on airport activities. An example of this is when non-governmental environmental organizations weigh in on large airport development projects. Stakeholder engagement using some of the principles outlined in this study may be useful for airport management when encountering these situations. There may also be community charity-based non-governmental organizations such as the Sierra Club and Angel Flight, Inc. Airport officials may wish to engage them in a manner similar to that of the airport community stakeholders discussed earlier.

The level of importance and the level of engagement placed on each varies and is often driven by the nature of a shared goal or the need to address a specific issue or stakeholder concern. Also, the importance that airport management places on a particular stakeholder may be influenced by the governing structure of the airport and the experience or tenure of the airport manager. Issues that confront airports and drive the need for stakeholder engagement include:

- Customer service (users, tenants, public)
- Airport operational environment (users, tenants, public, government, service providers)
- Airport strategic planning (policymakers, economic development, users, tenants, government, public)
- Airport master planning (policymakers, economic development, users, tenants, government, non-governmental organizations, public)
- Environmental assessments (public, government regulators)
- Land-use planning and zoning (public, policymakers)
- Adoption of airport budgets (policymakers, tenants, users)
- Preparation of airport capital improvement plans (tenants, users, public)
- Project phasing and construction (users, tenants, public)
- Airport leasing policies (tenants)
- Airport rates and charges (users, tenants)
- Airport rules and regulations (tenants, users, public)
- Safety and security plans (users, government regulators, service providers).

There are many tools and techniques available for engaging stakeholders. Those used by airport management depend on their purpose, the urgency of the engagement, and the issue at hand. These tools and techniques can be categorized as information sharing, direct engagement to proactively maintain positive relationships or to address issues, and festive events. Tools and techniques used by those airports completing the survey are discussed in chapter three and can be summarized as follows:

- Information sharing (general)
  - Speaking to civic clubs
  - Newspaper articles and press releases
  - Airport website

- Social media
- Airport newsletters
- E-mail subscription with e-blasts to tenants and users
- Direct mailings to airport neighbors
- Mobile message boards
- Use of a public relations firm to get the message out.
- Direct engagement
  - Regular meetings with tenants and user groups
  - Active participation in city and county council meetings
  - Active participation in tourism industry groups
  - Informal discussions with pilots to solicit their feedback on airport services
  - Formation of airport advisory groups
  - Open door policy for airport management to communicate with the general public
  - Airport management meetings with airport neighborhood groups and individuals on their “turf”
  - On-line surveys
  - Monthly coffee talks with general public
  - Face-to-face meetings with FAA, TSA, and state aviation officials
  - Public workshops in connection with master plans and noise compatibility studies
  - Formation of focus groups to address specific issues
  - Participation by airport management on local boards such as an economic development council
  - Participation by economic development council members on the airport board
  - Guided airport tours for neighborhood groups, policymakers, and economic development groups
  - Luncheons with brokers and bankers
  - Legislative forums for elected officials
  - Use of airport ambassadors.
- Festive events to promote positive relationships
  - Blood, coat, or food drives at the airport
  - Ribbon cuttings
  - Annual holiday receptions
  - Regular luncheons with tenants
  - Public aviation events such as fly-ins, antique aircraft, festivals
  - Programs to reach out to youth such as the Boy Scouts and Young Eagles
  - Pot luck luncheons rotated among tenants
  - Seasonal tenant appreciation day
  - Fish fries for the Rotary Club.

Airport management’s availability to stakeholders and a physical presence in the community is a key to effective engagement. Also, it is important for airports to dispense information to stakeholders about an issue before the stakeholder has the opportunity to develop its own information. This is critical when anticipating opposition to a major airport initiative.

Appendix C provides a checklist of issues and steps for airport professionals to consider in understanding the need for and scope of a stakeholder engagement program. This checklist is built on current most-effective practices revealed through all work elements of this study.

## **FURTHER RESEARCH CONSIDERATIONS**

As noted in chapter two, there is a wealth of literature available regarding general stakeholder practices as well as recommendations in other ACRP documents about engaging stakeholders for specific types of issues.

Although it was determined that many airport leaders view stakeholder engagement and fostering strong relationships with vested individuals and groups as critical to the success of an airport, relatively few appear to have a comprehensive strategic plan to guide the development, implementation, and

measurement of performance for such work and initiatives. This apparent lack of a systematic effort to assess performance in this area is perhaps one area for further research.

Delving into an analysis of the existence and effectiveness of key performance indicators that offer quantifiable “markers” of success or improvement areas in stakeholder engagement techniques would parallel current business and non-governmental practices and tools for creating a “high-performing organization.” As the airport industry continues to evolve and exist in a dynamic, tumultuous, and challenging environment, further research into how airports of all sizes currently employ principles of high performance could be worthy of consideration.

More importantly, research into how the use of these principles can yield positive outcomes for airports and the communities they serve could produce guides, recommendations, and strategies for achieving higher performance in the area of stakeholder engagement and other core business functions.



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## APPENDIX A

### Airports Participating in the Synthesis Survey

Airport	Location	Type
Ada Municipal	Ada, OK	General Aviation—Local
Camarillo	Camarillo, CA	General Aviation—National
Chino	Chino, CA	General Aviation—National
Everett–Stewart	Union City, TN	General Aviation—Local
Harry Stern	Wahpeton, ND	General Aviation—Local
Jack Edwards National	Gulf Shores, AL	General Aviation—Regional
Jackson County Reynolds Field	Jackson, MI	General Aviation—Regional
Laconia Municipal	Laconia, NH	General Aviation—Regional
McKinney National	McKinney, TX	General Aviation—National
Morristown Municipal	Morristown, NJ	General Aviation—National
Naples Municipal	Naples, FL	General Aviation—Regional
San Bernardino International	San Bernardino, CA	General Aviation—Regional
Scottsdale	Scottsdale, AZ	General Aviation—National
Sedona	Sedona, AZ	General Aviation—Local
Smyrna	Smyrna, TN	General Aviation—National
University of Oklahoma–Max Westheimer	Norman, OK	General Aviation—Regional
Venice Municipal	Venice, FL	General Aviation—Regional
Asheville Regional	Asheville, NC	Air Carrier—Non-hub
Central Nebraska Regional	Grand Island, NE	Air Carrier—Non-hub
Columbia Regional	Columbia, MO	Air Carrier—Non-hub
Florence Regional	Florence, SC	Air Carrier—Non-hub
Friedman Memorial	Hailey, ID	Air Carrier—Non-hub
Golden Triangle	Columbus, MS	Air Carrier—Non-hub
Huntington Tri-State	Huntington, WV	Air Carrier—Non-hub
Northwest Arkansas	Fayetteville, AR	Air Carrier—Small hub
Redding Municipal	Redding, CA	Air Carrier—Non-hub
Roanoke–Blacksburg Regional	Roanoke, VA	Air Carrier—Non-hub
Roswell International Air Center	Roswell, NM	Air Carrier—Non-hub
Tri-Cities	Pasco, WA	Air Carrier—Non-hub

Source: FAA, *General Aviation Airports: A National Asset* (May 2012) and the latest FAA record of air carrier airport enplanements.

## APPENDIX B

### Survey

#### Introductory Electronic Mail Message to Survey Participants

Dear: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our research effort associated with the Airport Cooperative Research Program Synthesis Project 11-03/Topic S01-09, “Practices to Develop Effective Stakeholder Relationships at Small Airports.” We have identified your airport as one of 30 from around the country that have effective stakeholder relationships and we would like to learn more about the tools and techniques you have used to build these relationships and corresponding outcomes.

As we transition from our the industry outreach phase of our project to research implementation, we are asking that you take a few moments to complete a very short on-line survey to provide more details on the nature and scope of your stakeholder engagement and relationship efforts. Please take a few moments between now and August 22nd to access the following link and complete our introductory survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YRMYNMM>

Upon receipt of all surveys we will compile results and undertake Phase II of our research effort which will involve a more in-depth interview.

Again, we sincerely appreciate your time and assistance with this project. If you should have any questions concerning our work program or effort feel free to contact us.

#### Survey Questionnaire

1. **Airport Name**
2. **Airport Location**
3. **From the list provided below, identify and rank the top stakeholder groups (“1” as the highest) you consider important to your ability to successfully deliver aviation services in your community. Rank from 1 to 7 using drop down menu. Notes:**
  1. The list will rearrange as your select the rankings. 2. Air service development is not within the purview of this project.

Policymakers and elected officials

Airport users; i.e., passengers, pilots

Airport tenants; i.e., airlines, FBOs, SASOs, concessionaires, and other tenants

General public (includes airport neighbors)

Economic development agencies; i.e., regional partnerships, chambers of commerce, visitors bureau, and business organizations

Governmental regulators; i.e., federal/state/local

Service providers; i.e., consultants, volunteers, city finance department, police

4. **On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being extensive/proactive and 5 not at all, please indicate the extent to which you actively seek and consider the opinions.**

Policymakers and elected officials

Airport users; i.e., passengers, pilots

Airport tenants; i.e., FBOs, SASOs, concessions, and other tenants

General public (includes airport neighbors)

Economic development agencies; i.e., regional partnerships, chambers of commerce, visitor's bureau, business organizations

Governmental agencies; i.e., federal/state/local

Service providers; i.e., consultants, volunteers, city finance department, police

**5. What tools do you use to communicate with stakeholder groups and seek to build effective relationships with such groups? Examples: speeches, town hall meetings, newsletter, website, regular meetings, social media, etc. Please describe below.**

**6. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being excellent and 5 poor, please rate your perception of the effectiveness of your working relationship with each.**

Polymakers and elected officials

Airport users; i.e., passengers, pilots

Airport tenants, i.e., airlines, FBOs, SASOs, concessionaires, and other tenants

General public (includes airport neighbors)

Economic development agencies; i.e., regional partnerships, chambers of commerce, visitor's bureau, and business organizations

Governmental agencies; i.e., federal/state/local

Service providers; i.e., consultants, volunteers, city finance department, police

**7. Do you have a particularly effective working relationship with a specific stakeholder group that you would be willing to discuss with us? If so, please describe below.**

**8. Please provide the most effective means for our study team to contact you for additional information.**

Phone

E-mail

Name

Thank you for participation in our survey!!

## Interviews

As a follow-up to the on-line survey, management from 25 of the surveyed airports were interviewed to learn more specific information about tools, techniques, good practices, and their experiences with stakeholder engagement. The following is a list of questions that helped guide the interview team. The actual questions used during each interview varied from airport to airport and depended on the airport's survey responses and the specific topic being discussed.

1. Thank the interviewee for completing the survey and mention anything gleaned from their survey answers.
2. Describe initiatives, problems, or issues that prompt you to engage stakeholders for input on decisions, inform them of airport activities, or attempt to gain support and buy-in for projects or programs.
3. How do you determine a stakeholder's objectives?
4. How do your airport's stakeholder engagement strategies link to your vision and goals?
5. What techniques are used for stakeholder engagement?
6. What personal skills are needed and how did you acquire them?
7. What resources do you use?

8. How is social media used, if at all?
9. What techniques do you use to be transparent about airport activities and decisions?
10. Please tell us about the different roles of the airport manager, policymaker, and/or others at your airport relative to stakeholder engagement.
11. Do you have an example of where things went awry and lessons were learned?
12. How do you know whether your efforts are effective?
13. What are your daily and long-term techniques for stakeholder engagement?
14. Conclude with some reflection upon possible case examples.



## APPENDIX C

### Checklist for Building Effective Stakeholder Relations

Based on the results of the literature review, surveys, and case examples a list of considerations and suggestions for building effective stakeholder relations was developed. These elements are presented as a checklist that can serve as a means to assess organizational readiness, formulate strategies, implement initiative and programs, and evaluate outcomes.

Checklist for Building Effective Stakeholder Relations	
	Notes
<b>ASSESS</b>	
As a Leader, am I ready to undertake a Stakeholder Relations Program?	
Do I possess the necessary skills?	
Public speaking	
Marketing	
Public relations	
Social media	
Do I need outside assistance or discuss with other leaders their approaches and techniques?	
Why do I need a Stakeholder Relations Program?	
Resolve conflict?	
Address a specific issue?	
Involve stakeholders in determining the future of our airport?	
Provide effective communications and public relations during an airport planning, environmental, or construction project?	
Obtain stakeholder feedback on a critical issue?	
Inform stakeholders about a specific issue or the airport in general?	
Promote the airport or educate others on the value of the airport?	
Build/foster improved working relationships with stakeholders?	
Address/resolve misconceptions and perceptions about the airport?	
Become more linked to our broader community?	
Have airport more engaged in economic development activities and initiatives?	
Who are the key Airport Stakeholders?	
Airport policymakers and elected officials	
Airport users	
Airport community	
Economic stakeholders	
Government regulators	
Service providers	
Do I understand the attributes of key stakeholder groups?	
What is the stakeholder's interest in our organization?	
What is the stakeholder's expectation from its relationship with our organization?	
What is the stakeholder's influence on our organization?	
What is the stakeholder's current opinion of our organization?	
Do I have support for building and implementing a Stakeholder Relations Program?	
Government body?	
Staff?	
What are my goals?	
What does success look like? Visualize end-result	
How will airport and community benefit from such a program?	
What can go wrong and how would I address these issues?	

<b>Checklist for Building Effective Stakeholder Relations</b>	
	<b>Notes</b>
<b>STRATEGIZE</b>	
If my skills need “sharpening” or to be further developed, how do I build them and how long will it take to achieve?	
If support is lacking from this initiative, how do I build?	
Staff meetings or retreat to develop concept?	
Engage policymakers in one-on-one discussions?	
Discuss with governing body in a retreat setting?	
Interview tenants, users, pilots, key business, and community leaders?	
Survey our current focus groups or gauge stakeholder readiness and disposition?	
Determine issues to be addressed through Stakeholder Engagement	
Customer service	
Capital Improvement Program implementation	
Master planning	
Environmental assessment or issues	
Business and/or community support for airport	
Airport management guiding documents: Rules/regulations, leasing policy, minimum standards	
Airport operations—safety, security, SMS	
Determine tools for Implementation	
Inform	
Consult	
Involve	
Collaborate	
What groups or individuals do I need to collaborate with to be successful?	
Is there a “champion” that can assist me in developing and delivering this initiative?	
<b>IMPLEMENT</b>	
Inform	
Schedule speaking to civic and business clubs	
Develop press releases on airport activities and conduct media interviews	
Build a vibrant airport website	
Employ social media to create connections to community	
Publish newsletters	
Develop an e-mail contact list and issue e-blasts to tenants and users	
Issue direct mailings to airport neighbors	
Sponsor mobile message boards about airport events	
Use a public relations firm to get the airport’s message out	
Consult	
Hold regular meetings and informal discussions with pilots, tenants, and user groups to solicit their feedback on airport services	
Form an airport advisory group to seek input on airport matters	
Have an open door policy for airport management to talk with the general public or invite citizens and neighbors to the airport for a tour or to discuss specific issues	
Schedule face-to-face meetings with FAA, TSA, and state aviation officials	
Conduct focus group sessions with identified stakeholders to address specific issues and solve problems	
Sponsor luncheons with key business leaders in the community	
Hold legislative forums for elected officials	
Conduct on-line surveys	
Involve	
Attend and participate in public meetings for city/county council meetings	
Participate in tourism industry group	
Form an airport advisory group to seek input on airport matters	
Develop an Airport Ambassador Program	
Seek appointment to local chamber of commerce and economic development boards	
Have an open door policy for airport management to talk with general public or invite citizens and neighbors to the airport for a tour or to discuss specific issues	
Conduct focus group sessions with identified stakeholders to address specific issues and solve problems	

<b>Checklist for Building Effective Stakeholder Relations</b>	
	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Collaborate</b>	
Hold blood, coat, and food drives at the airport	
Invite civic and not-for-profit human service agencies to visit the airport	
Highlight and invite stakeholders to airport ribbon cuttings and special events	
Sponsor annual holiday receptions and events for tenants and the general public	
Hold regular luncheons with tenants	
Sponsor and plan public aviation events such as fly-ins, antique aircraft, and festivals	
Sponsor programs to reach out to youth (Boy Scouts and Young Eagles)	
Hold tenant pot luck luncheons rotated among tenants and sponsor a tenant appreciation day	
Employ social media to create connections to community	
<b>EVALUATE</b>	
What worked well? Why?	
What did not work well? Why?	
Did I achieve my goals?	
What did I learn and what might I do differently next time?	

Source: Delta Airport Consultants, Inc.

Abbreviations used without definitions in TRB publications:

A4A	Airlines for America
AAAE	American Association of Airport Executives
AASHO	American Association of State Highway Officials
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ACI-NA	Airports Council International-North America
ACRP	Airport Cooperative Research Program
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
APTA	American Public Transportation Association
ASCE	American Society of Civil Engineers
ASME	American Society of Mechanical Engineers
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
ATA	American Trucking Associations
CTAA	Community Transportation Association of America
CTBSSP	Commercial Truck and Bus Safety Synthesis Program
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOE	Department of Energy
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FMCSA	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
HMCPR	Hazardous Materials Cooperative Research Program
IEEE	Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
ITE	Institute of Transportation Engineers
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (2012)
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NASAO	National Association of State Aviation Officials
NCFRP	National Cooperative Freight Research Program
NCHRP	National Cooperative Highway Research Program
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
NTSB	National Transportation Safety Board
PHMSA	Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
RITA	Research and Innovative Technology Administration
SAE	Society of Automotive Engineers
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (2005)
TCRP	Transit Cooperative Research Program
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (1998)
TRB	Transportation Research Board
TSA	Transportation Security Administration
U.S.DOT	United States Department of Transportation

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