

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jobs Expansion and Transportation Task Force Members
FROM: Daniel Rosenthal, Chair
SUBJECT: Discussion and Adoption of Final Report of Key Findings and Recommendations
DATE: 02/24/15

Thank you for your service on the Jobs Expansion and Transportation (JET) Task Force.

On Wednesday, February 25, the JET Task Force will meet to discuss and adopt our Final Report of Key Findings and Recommendations.

This effort began a year ago, when the Mayor Michael B. Coleman contacted me to head a Community effort to help make Port Columbus "Ohio's Airport" and our transportation center.

Later that spring, you joined me in this effort, as the Mayor created and charged the JET Task Force with exploring and recommending ways our Community could enhance direct air service from Port Columbus; strengthen the economy of the Port Columbus area; and make Port Columbus our region's transportation center.

The Task Force organized into three working groups to conduct its business. The Air Services working group was chaired by Geoff Chatas, the Regional Transportation working group was chaired by William Murdock, and the Economic Development working group was chaired by Jean Carter Ryan. These working groups met regularly to develop findings and recommendations to inform the Task Force report. The full Task Force met on six occasions to examine pertinent matters, receive working group updates, and advance its charge.

Before us today is the responsibility to discuss and approve the Final Report. In the following paragraphs, I will set forth some final thoughts on changes and instructions that we should consider advancing today.

Before doing so, I again acknowledge your efforts over the past 10 months. Motivated by the Mayor's mandate to explore these important matters and the direct ties between Port Columbus, air and ground transportation, and economic development, we learned how we could make our Community stronger and made important recommendations to succeed.

We introduce our Final Report stating that in the early days of commercial aviation, our City leaders made a bet on Columbus and built our original airport and proclaiming, "Port Columbus, America's Greatest Air Harbor."

Simply put, I believe the Final Report says it is time again for us to make a bet on Columbus and Central Ohio. It is time for our Community to invest in Ohio's Airport, in better air service, enhanced public transportation to connect the region and the growth and beautification of the airport district.

Task Force Action

Based upon the leadership of our working group chairs and your efforts, we have met the Mayor's charge and are in a position to act upon the Final Report. Before doing so, I propose we make two important and substantive additions to the report.

(1) Amend "Promoting Economic Development" section to include new recommendation (page 9, summary page 4) to:

"Create a development district focused on economic development, master planning, and job creation in the area around Port Columbus;"*

Declaring a development district and establishing formal parameters like geography and governance, and tasks, like master planning, transportation investments, and economic development could focus and accelerate the implementation of the JET recommendations. Certainly, the fact that this area falls within several political jurisdictions may present some challenges to creating such a district, but a multi-jurisdictional partnership that includes the private sector and community leaders also could bring great strength to this effort. Like many of our recommendations, more research and discussion will need to take place, but this recommendation will help bring focus to our economic development priorities.

(2) Amend the "Sustaining These Efforts Over Time" section's "Air Services Committee" recommendation to include:

Establishing an "Air Services Committee" of businesses, institutions, and local government to partner and advise on air service market priorities, establish policies, determine methods to provide community incentives for direct air service, and ***oversee implementation of community marketing efforts of any flight resulting from such incentives;****

I think it is important to assure the Community that if the Air Services Committee would recommend Community incentives for new air service, in partnership with the public and private sectors, the committee would view it as part of its duty to work to help fill these flights. To this end, I recommend adding language to this recommendation that conveys the Committee also would oversee the coordination of efforts to work with business and institutional travelers, community organizations charged with promoting travel and attracting conventions to Columbus.

****proposed new language in bold italics.***

Staff Instruction

Upon adoption of the Final JET report, there are a number steps the Task Force needs to provide instruction to staff to position the work for the Community. I recommend the Task Force instruct staff to:

- (1) Correct any typographic errors, make non-substantive edits to improve the report, and assure that information provided or summarized within the report is identified in a resource list, post the revised report on the JET Website, and send a news media advisory about the posting;
- (2) Print sufficient “black and white” copies of the report to distribute under a letter of transmittal key stakeholders including: Mayor and Council of the City of Columbus; Franklin County Commission; Mayors and City Councils of the Cities of Gahanna and Whitehall; Mifflin Township Board of Trustees; Columbus Regional Airport Authority; Central Ohio Transit Authority; and Task Force members;
- (3) Send copies of the report to neighborhood, regional, and state stakeholders, including: East Columbus Civic Association; Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission; the Governor of the State of Ohio; Jobs Ohio; Columbus 2020; Greater Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce; Experience Columbus; the Presidents of the Ohio State University and Columbus State University;
- (4) Offer that Task Force members or staff will provide briefings to report recipients and to schedule such briefings upon request;
- (5) Prepare, produce, and post a marketing report based upon the Final Report that includes graphics and other visual aids to help with the understanding of the Final Report;
- (6) Request that the City use the JET web presence to update the Community on stakeholder efforts to advance the recommendations of this report.

I look forward to discussing this memorandum at our meeting and working with you to work with the Community to advance our Task Force Recommendations.