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# Letter of Transmittal

February 25, 2015

The Honorable Michael B. Coleman  
Mayor  
City of Columbus  
90 West Broad Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Mayor Coleman:

In the early days of commercial aviation, our City leaders made a bet on Columbus and built our original airport, proclaiming “Port Columbus, America’s Greatest Air Harbor.”

Sharing this great faith in the Columbus Spirit, Mayor Coleman, you contacted me a year ago to head a community effort to help make Port Columbus “Ohio’s Airport” and our transportation center.

Later that spring, you created and charged the Jobs Expansion and Transportation Task Force (JET) with exploring and recommending ways our Community could enhance direct air service from Port Columbus; make Port Columbus our region’s transportation center; and strengthen the economy of the Port Columbus area.

The JET Task Force quickly understood how these topics are interrelated. When we started the Task Force’s work, we represented the second-largest airport in the United States without non-stop service to the San Francisco Bay Area. We also represented one of the country’s largest cities that does not offer daily public transportation connecting our airport with our community. You recognized the direct ties between Port Columbus and economic development, and your mandate motivated our team’s work throughout the last year.

On behalf of the JET Task Force, I am pleased to present our Final Report of Key Findings and Recommendations. The report represents the hard work of our Task Force members, who broke into three working groups and met, researched, and discussed the matters associated with our important charge. They then reported their work to the full Task Force who completed this Final Report.

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.

Of all the things that the Task Force learned during our work, perhaps the most staggering was the economic impact of nonstop air service. Your announcement last week that Southwest Airlines is adding nonstop Oakland service to the San Francisco Bay Area is just the start. Industry experts estimate that daily domestic air service from Columbus to the Bay Area can generate an annual economic impact for the region of over \$20 million. In looking at the

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relationship between venture capital investment and direct air service to the Bay Area, on average, cities with direct air service to the Bay Area are exposed to \$110 million in venture capital funding per year versus \$11 million for cities without direct service. I believe that flights like this one are critical investments to ensure and enhance our community's future.

Indeed, air service goes hand in hand with economic development, with how airlines perceive a community. Your leadership has laid the foundation for attracting and improving air service, and now we must build off that success. That the State of Ohio does not have year round, daily nonstop service to any city in Europe is surprising, and I can think of no better place to attract that service than Ohio's Airport. But adding nonstop service to Europe does not happen overnight. Austin, Texas, recently added nonstop service to London after three years of the public and private sector working together successfully to recruit London and British Airways,– proactively.

The Columbus Regional Airport Authority (CRAA) has done good work to build relationships with air carriers and renovate our airport and the district surrounding it. The CRAA also has done very impressive work in attracting international air cargo service to Rickenbacker. But the work required goes far beyond the CRAA and requires us to be proactive and aggressive as a community. We must think “outside the box,” marshal community time and resources consistent with our Columbus2020 strategy, and bring some of that swagger that defines you into the airport conversation.

We thank you for the opportunity to serve our community and stand ready to work with you to fulfill the vision laid out in the following report.

Sincerely,



Daniel Rosenthal

Chair,

Jobs Expansion and Transportation Task Force

cc: The Honorable Andrew Ginther, President of Columbus City Council;  
The Honorable Members of Columbus City Council;  
The Honorable Marilyn Brown, President of the Franklin County Commission;  
The Honorable Paula Brooks, Franklin County Commissioner;  
The Honorable John O'Grady, Franklin County Commissioner;  
The Honorable Becky Stinchcomb, Mayor of the City of Gahanna;  
The Honorable Kim Maggard, Mayor of the City of Whitehall;  
The Honorable Susan Tomasky, Chair of the Columbus Regional Airport Authority;  
The Honorable Dawn Tyler Lee, Chair of the Central Ohio Transit Authority;  
The Honorable Eric Phillips, Chair of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission;  
President Michael Drake, The Ohio State University;  
President David Harrison, Columbus State University;  
Alex Fischer, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Columbus Partnership;  
Kenny McDonald, Chief Economic Officer of Columbus 2020; and  
Members of the Jobs Expansion and Transportation Task Force.