

# Priority Rating Model

For the

Air Service Enhancement Program  
2021

Wyoming Aeronautics Commission

WYDOT Aeronautics Division

# Contents

- Air Service Enhancement Program Priority Rating Model..... 3
- Projects that will use the ASEP Priority Rating Model ..... 3
  - 1) Primary Air service..... 3
  - 2) Growth Air Service ..... 3
- Ranking Project Types Using the ASEP Priority Rating Model ..... 3
  - Distribution of Points..... 3
- Statutory Intended Benefits..... 4
- Economic Benefit.....7
- Community Involvement ..... 8
- Differentiating Characteristics..... 11
- Definition of Terms and Acronyms..... 14
  - Acronyms .....14
  - Definitions.....15
- Works Cited.....16

## **Air Service Enhancement Program Priority Rating Model**

The Air Service Enhancement Program (ASEP) Priority Rating Model (PRM) includes four (4) categories, which encompass related criteria, for the purpose of estimating the potential success of any proposed project seeking a match from the ASEP. The degree to which each proposed project achieves each criterion will be scored and multiplied by the priority weight for that category. Particular preference is given to statutorily intended benefits, and those benchmarks already set forth by the Wyoming Aeronautics Commission (WAC), for determining a project's success.

### **Projects that will use the ASEP Priority Rating Model**

#### **1) Primary Air Service**

The WAC recognizes the need to maintain access to the national air transportation system at Wyoming's nine (9) commercial airports. Per the Commission response to the Wyoming Legislature Service Office (LSO) Audit Committee Recommendation #12 and #14 (Wyoming Legislature Management Audit Committee, 2012), this is defined as up to "two (2) round trips per day to a hub airport as defined by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)". These types of projects include, but are not limited to:

- Up to twice daily, industry standard reliable service, to a hub airport as defined by the FAA.

#### **2) Growth Air Service**

Growth Air Service may include any project that is complementary, or growth oriented, in addition to an airport's already established primary service. These projects types include, but are not limited to:

- Daily, reliable service to a second, third, etc. hub airport as defined by the FAA.
- Additional flight frequency, above Primary Air Service, to one (1) hub airport.
- Seasonal service designed to transport tourist traffic into Wyoming.
- Less than daily or seasonal service to leisure destinations such as Las Vegas, or Phoenix.

The evaluation of projects by the Division will use an initial review for eligibility to assure that each project meets state statute, Commission policies, grant assurances, regulations and precedence. WYDOT would consider projects on a case-by-case basis and provide a written response back to the community if not eligible. Eligible projects will then be assessed and ranked by the Division using evaluation categories as presented in the PRM. The Sponsor may appeal a projects ineligibility via a written request to the Wyoming Aeronautics Commission.

### **Ranking Project Types Using the ASEP Priority Rating Model**

Projects will be ranked through a score card method, whereby particular attributes of the proposed project and the Sponsor or community, will be evaluated on metrics that are indicative of fulfilling statutory mandated requirements, or maximizing project success based on available state funds.

## Distribution of Points

A total of 1,415 total possible points are available from this model. The share of total possible points is:

Statutory Benefit: 560 points / 39.6%

Economic Benefit: 420 points / 29.7%

Community Involvement: 290 points / 20.5%

Differentiating Characteristics: 145 points / 10.2%

## Statutory Intended Benefits

Criteria Weight: 20

The initial partition of this model is centered on evaluating how a project addresses the six (6) statutorily intended benefits, pursuant to Wyoming Statute 10-3-601(b), and considerations to whether a project maintains Primary Air Service, all of which are established as benchmarks of determining a project's potential success as set forth in Aeronautics Rules Ch. 4, § 4. The six (6) statutorily intended benefits, weighted equally, include:

1. Increasing the minimum number of enplanements at airports facing a possible loss of federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding (would restore or maintain the 10,000 enplanement minimum to qualify for \$1 Million annually in AIP entitlement funds);

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Statutory Benefit	20	Increasing the number of enplanements at airports facing a possible loss of federal AIP funding	Brings total above 10,000 during first calendar year of contract	5
			Brings total above 10,000 by second calendar year of contract	3
			Does not bring above 10,000 but improves	1
			Airport will already achieve 10,000 enplanements for any calendar year during proposed service	0

- A projection of enplaned passengers will be made in the application, and vetted by Division staff, to verify if the project would be able to achieve the minimum 10,000 enplanements. If the project would bring enplanements up to the 10,000-passenger threshold within the first calendar year of service, it would receive a higher score than if the project were to achieve this in a later calendar year. Accounting projected 10,000 enplanements would be strictly for the calendar year wherein the service takes place, excluding any implicit or additional pending air service proposals.

2. Increasing passenger enplanements at commercial airports in Wyoming;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
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<b>Statutory Benefit</b>	<b>20</b>	Increasing passenger enplanements at commercial airports in Wyoming	<b>Year-round, annual service level</b>	Increase in enplanements of $\geq 75\%$	Or	Forecasted increase in enplanements of $\geq 8,000$	<b>Seasonal / leisure or recreation oriented service</b>	Increase $\geq 6\%$	5
				Increase $\geq 50\%$ but $< 75\%$		$\geq 5,000$ but $< 8,000$		Increase $\geq 4\%$ but $< 6\%$	3
				Increase $\geq 25\%$ but $< 50\%$		$\geq 3,000$ but $< 5,000$		Increase $\geq 2\%$ but $< 4\%$	2
				Increase $< 25\%$		$< 3,000$		Increase $< 2\%$	1

- Projects responsible for a substantial increase in, or for all enplanements at an airport will score the most points. These projects provide the best opportunity to fulfill statutory benefits and benchmarks set forth. Seasonal traffic, or non-year-round leisure-oriented traffic, will be scored separately using a lower increase in total traffic. The base for the calculated increase will be the anticipated capacity before the addition of the proposed service. Example: If a proposed project were to take place from December 12, through April 4, the base capacity would be the projected, published capacity for those dates.

3. Increasing frequency, or sustaining flight operations, from commercial airports in Wyoming to regional airport hubs;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification				Scoring Value
<b>Statutory Benefit</b>	<b>20</b>	Increasing flight frequency or sustaining flight operations to regional airport hubs	<b>Year-round, annual service level</b>	$\geq 12$ flights/ week	<b>Seasonal / leisure or recreation oriented service</b>	$\geq 4$ Flights/ week	5
				$\geq 10$ flights, but $< 12$		$\geq 3$ but $< 4$ flights	3
				$\geq 6$ flights, but $< 10$		$\geq 2$ but $< 3$ flights	2
				$\geq 1$ flight, but $< 6$		$\geq 1$ but $< 2$ flights	1

- Under this statutory intended benefit, those projects providing the greatest number of frequencies would score higher.

4. Increasing the number of Wyoming passengers originating flights in Wyoming commercial airports rather than airports in other states;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
<b>Statutory Benefit</b>	<b>20</b>	Reducing passenger leakage to out of state airports	Project introduces carrier which is projected to be responsible for at least 90% of all capacity	5
			Project introduces at least once daily jet service to airport	5
			Project introduces a new marketing carrier with at least once daily, year-round service to a second hub airport	5
			Project introduces a new carrier with at least once daily, year-round service to a third hub airport	3

			Project introduces a second or third hub by the same marketing carrier	2
			Project introduces additional capacity to same hub (Upgrading or additional flights)	2
			Project introduces at least 2x weekly leisure service	1

- Project would improve the airports current leakage rate to out of state airports.
- Previous data and regional case studies indicate retention typically improves the most when<sup>1</sup> (5 points):
  - Project introduces new carrier which is responsible for 90% or more of all airline traffic.
  - Project introduces at least once daily jet service to airport.
  - Project introduces a new carrier with at least daily, year-round service to a second hub airport.
- Significant leakage reduction (3 points):
  - Project introduces a new third carrier with at least daily, year-round service, to a third hub.
- Some leakage reduction (2 points):
  - Project introduces a second or third hub airport by the same carrier.
  - Project introduces additional capacity to same hub airport (Or upgrading of flights).
- Minimal leakage reduction (1 point):
  - Project introduces less than daily leisure-oriented service.
- Project may only score for one (1) of the above criteria.
- If the project will impact service to surrounding airports, WYDOT will prepare and share an analysis of the impact with those airports consistent with the sensitivity level of the project.

<sup>1</sup> Research conducted by the Division using data from: Diio Mi “Market Intelligence for the Aviation Industry”, and Airline Reporting Corporation – Market Locator

<sup>2</sup> Sources: (Holloway, 2008), (Barney, 2013), (Martin, 2009)

5. Increasing the consistency of service;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Statutory Benefit	20	Increasing the reliability of service	Reliability of Airline is $\geq$ Industry Standard	6
			Reliability of Airline is $<$ Industry Standard, but $\geq$ 95%	3
			Reliability of Airline is $<$ 95%	1
Statutory Benefit	20	Increasing the on-time performance of service	On-time performance of airline is $\geq$ industry standard	6
			On-time performance of airline is $<$ industry standard, but $\geq$ 75%	3
			On-time performance of airline is $<$ 75%	1

- Airlines operating within the proposed project that have industry standard reliability and on-time performance (OTP) or better will receive the highest score value. Industry standard will be defined as the average reliability and OTP from all U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) reporting carriers for the previous year’s operating months. Example: A project with proposed service by an airline for May – August of 2016 would require industry standards or better for

reliability and OTP for May – August of 2015.

6. Lowering airfares in Wyoming communities as a result of an air service enhancement grant;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Statutory Benefit	20	Lowers air fares	Project introduces a U/LCC airline	2
			Project would increase average monthly capacity/population ratio above .22	2
			Project would increase average monthly capacity/population ratio above .13	1
			Project would improve average monthly capacity/population ratio but not above .13	1

- Data suggests a correlation in the more capacity relative to the population within communities served by small and non-hub airports, the lower the average airfare. Comparing data from 20 non-EAS communities in Wyoming and in the region suggests the same. Exceeding a threshold ratio of available seats per capita taken from these communities was split into terciles.

## Economic Benefit

Criteria Weight: 15

Pursuant to Aeronautics Rules Ch. 4, § 4 (b), “Increasing or sustaining economic benefit or facilitating new or existing business opportunities, by providing adequate air service to Wyoming communities”, the economic benefit criteria includes measures to determine a proposed project’s anticipated economic impact to the community, to the airport, and its relative impact to the estimated cost.

1. Economic impact from proposed service;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Economic Benefit	15	Economic impact from proposed air service	2020 ASEP ROI ≥ 50	14
			2020 ASEP ROI ≥ 21, but < 50	10
			2020 ASEP ROI ≥ 10, but < 21	6
			2020 ASEP ROI ≥ 4, but < 10	2

- The “Economic Impact from Proposed Air Service” will be determined from the 2020 update to the Air Service Enhancement Program (ASEP) return on investment (ROI) study. An ROI analysis estimates the economic benefit for each flight supported through WYDOT’s ASEP. The direct impact of each ASEP-supported flight is analyzed based on two categories: 1) off-airport visitor spending, and 2) on-airport related activities, such as businesses and organizations engaged in day-to-day airport operations and projects. The higher a project’s ROI, the more points it will score.

2. Economic benefit above proposed cost;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Economic Benefit	15	Total Economic Impact number calculated from 2020 ASEP ROI study/state dollars requested	Increase in excess of 400%	14
			Increase ≥ 300%, but < 400%	10
			Increase ≥ 200%, but < 300%	6
			Increase ≥ 200%	2

- From the previous calculation, the expected economic impact amount will be used to determine what the estimated impact would be above the projected cost sought from the state. A lower state match request would produce more favorable results in this measure.

## Community Involvement

Criteria Weight: 10

Significant community involvement, participation, and investment, in all stages of the air service development process, are widely understood within the airline industry as an important factor in gauging the potential success of air service. The community involvement portion of the PRM takes into consideration factors such as whether a community has a task force dedicated for procuring and supporting air service, a detailed marketing plan for the proposed service, and if a community makes a “substantial financial and time commitment to the enhancement (of air service)”, as described by W.S. 10-3-601(d) (v). An airport applying for grant funds is encouraged to include letters of support for, or involvement with, a project to strengthen the application.

1. Community lead task force;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Community Involvement	10	Community lead task force	Yes	5
			No	0

- A community lead task force is recognized as a valuable asset for an airport in air service development. From Airport Cooperative Research Program, Report 18, “Passenger Air Service Development Techniques”: *The other critical resource that airports absolutely must have for an effective ASD effort is people with the expertise and enthusiasm to help. Most small community airports have capable staff already working at the airport that can fill important needs. But to be successful, ASD efforts usually must rely on a task force that includes other local professionals and outside consultants. The skills and expertise that consultants can bring to ASD issues can be complemented by local professionals who bring the background and insight into the community’s strengths.*
- A community lead task force is defined as a sanctioned organization, committee, team, task-force, or consortium, created specifically for the development and success of air service within the

community. A task force must meet at least quarterly.

2. Market specific marketing and promotional plan;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Community Involvement	10	Market specific marketing plan for proposed service	Yes	3
			No	0

- A marketing, advertising, or promotional plan is essential to building awareness of air service in the community and generating additional demand. The Division will require a marketing plan, to coincide with a grant for any service, which is specific to the market and will run the duration of the service. General recommendations for a successful marketing plan will be included with future application information.

3. Historic involvement in air service;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Community Involvement	10	Historic involvement in air service	Yes	2
			No	0

- A community, airport, or sponsor that has displayed active, routine, and historical involvement in promoting and procuring air service in the state, whether it be for the ASEP or not, would receive the score for the criterion. Examples may include attending various industry trade shows or events such as Routes, ACI JumpStart, or AAEE meetings for air service. Examples of what the sponsor has done to promote air service would be included in the application.

4. Demonstrated involvement with airline partner;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Community Involvement	10	Demonstrated involvement with airline partner	Yes	2
			No	0

- If a community, airport or sponsor has had an active and engaging approach with the proposed carrier this score would be received. Examples may include in-person meetings with the airline, seeking promotional giveaways from the carrier, seeking a marketing funds match with the carrier or plans to do so upon launch of service.

5. Community efforts to secure additional funding for air service, pursuant to W.S. 10-3-601(d)(iii):  
 “Participation by the commission is necessary to the success of the enhancement because funding

from other sources for the enhancement is unavailable.”

a) Community efforts to secure federal assistance;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Community Involvement	10	The applicant airport has fully pursued available federal funds for air service	Yes	4
			No	0

- Based on the professional judgement of the Division staff, the applicant airport has fully pursued available federal funds for air service, including the Small Community Air Service Development (SCASD) Program, or is otherwise ineligible for federal funds.

b) Community efforts to secure cash contributions;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Community Involvement	10	Community efforts to secure cash contributions as a match for an air service MRG	Three (3) or more sources	8
			Two (2) or more sources	5
			One (1) source	2

- Number of local sources where funds are procured from to include, but not be limited to; community economic development organizations, local city or county government, and local businesses, to provide cash contributions as match to a Minimum Revenue Grant. Value for this combined definition is based on the diversity of community support, with 3 or more sources receiving the highest Value.
- Local businesses are the most important users of a proposed service as they will be attributed with generating the most revenue, and generally the most passengers. A donation made by local businesses toward the local match shows commitment by the most prominent users and increases the chances of success, which is why the sources of funding have been pieced out for gauging potential project success. *“Other sources of revenue not derived directly from an airport’s operations can also support an ASD program. **The most important sources of outside (non-airport) funding are private corporations and related associations. The greater the involvement of private corporations, the greater the likelihood of success in retaining existing or attracting new service.** If the business travel needs of corporate employees are not being met, it can be in the best interest of local businesses to support improved air service. Resorts, hotels, convention/visitors’ bureaus, and area attractions that depend on travel and tourism may financially support ASD efforts”* (Martin, 2009)

c) Community in-kind contributions;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Community	10		≥10%	5

Involvement		In-kind contributions as a percent of the total MRG	≥5% but <10%	3
			≥0% but <5%	1
			No in-kind contributions	0

- Frequently, with newly proposed air service, community businesses and other stakeholders contribute non-monetary products, services, or goods, towards creating and generating demand. Examples include marketing firms providing some level of service, advertisers offering a discount for billboards or news media coverage (Martin, 2009). This can include any fees waived by the airport.

d) Maximum community dollar match.

Max dollar contribution	# of dollars committed to service	\$
	Actual community % match	

- The maximum dollar amount the community can contribute to the MRG local match would include, but is not limited to, SCASD grants, economic development organization contributions, local government contributions, and local business contributions.

## Differentiating Characteristics

Criteria Weight: 5

This portion of the PRM contains additional considerations that are unique or differentiating to an airport, community, or characteristics inherent within the proposed service that would contribute to a project's potential success. A larger population base, for example, would be favorable to the potential success of air service, as well as having an airline that supports code shares or interline agreements.

1. Core-based statistical area population (CBSA);

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Differentiating Characteristics	5	Core-Based Statistical Area (CBSA) population	Great than or equal to 45,000	4
			Greater than or equal to 35,000 but less than 45,000	2
			Less than 35,000	1

- The population within the Core-Based Statistical Area (CBSA) as defined by the U.S. Census bureau. CBSA was chosen as it includes adjacent areas that are socioeconomically tied to the urban center. Thresholds were created by generating the 33<sup>rd</sup> and 66<sup>th</sup> percentiles of the population set. A higher CBSA population would score higher, as there are more people able to be served by a proposed service and an increased chance of fulfilling statutorily intended benefits.

2. Miles driven to largest leaked out-of-state market;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Differentiating Characteristics	5	Drive time to largest leaked out-of-state market	≥ 280 miles	4
			≥ 130 miles, but < 280 miles	2
			< 130 miles	1

- Those airports within close proximity (under 130-mile drive) of a large hub airport have a significant hurdle overcoming that airports lower air fare and multiple destination choices. Communities that are relatively isolated generally from other hub airports have a better chance of securing more passengers.

### 3. Airline code-share;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Differentiating Characteristics	5	Proposed airline includes connective opportunities on airline branded and/or code-share flights at the proposed destination airport	Yes	6
			No	0

- If the airline(s) within the proposed service has a code-share agreement in place at the connecting hub airport, it will be scored favorably. A code-share allows passengers greater convenience in booking to additional onward destinations, and gives the service greater visibility to perspective passengers. Example: SkyWest, operating as United Express, is able to code-share with United Airlines and other airlines in the Star Alliance such as Lufthansa.

### 4. Airline interline and or baggage agreement;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Differentiating Characteristics	5	Airline interline/baggage agreement	Yes	2
			No	0

- If the airline(s) within the proposed service has a baggage interline agreement in place at the connecting hub airport it will be weighed favorably. This allows passengers greater convenience in having bags transferred directly to their continuing flight regardless of the airline they may be on.

### 5. Community or sponsor input on pricing or revenue management aspect;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
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<b>Differentiating Characteristics</b>	5	Community engagement on, and periodic review of, pricing	Yes	3
			No	0

- The community or sponsor will provide a commitment on the application to ensure community engagement on pricing and periodic review. Also, a demonstrated history of active involvement in pricing should be supplied with application. If these requirements are met, the maximum value will be received.
- An exit survey/questionnaire would be required, to report back to WYDOT, for the airport to show that this has occurred. If it did not occur, it may be noted for future awards.

6. Community or sponsor input of scheduling;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
<b>Differentiating Characteristics</b>	5	Community engagement on scheduling	Yes	3
			No	0

- The community or sponsor will provide a commitment on the application to ensure community engagement on scheduled times for flights. Also, a demonstrated history of active involvement should be supplied with application. If these requirements are met, the maximum value will be received as it would improve the desirability of the flight schedule, improving ridership and the chance of success.
- An exit survey/questionnaire would be required, to report back to WYDOT, for the airport to show that this has occurred. If it did not occur, it may be noted for future awards.

7. Scheduled times of proposed service are ideal for the service type;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
<b>Differentiating Characteristics</b>	5	Scheduled times are ideal for type of service	Yes	2
			No	0

- If, in the Division's professional judgement, the proposed scheduled times of the service are desirable, or ideally suited to the type of service, it would be scored favorably. An example would be weekly service intended to bring tourists into the state is best suited for Weekends, or a once daily service would ideally be an originating flight that would overnight at the airport applying. Unsatisfactory types of schedules may be a once daily service with only a mid-afternoon departure, or flights departing before 5 a.m. Supporting evidence for timings would include supplying connecting flight information such as number of top destinations connected to.

8. Cost, or Minimum Revenue Guarantee (MRG) required, per available seat;

Criteria	Priority	Definition	Qualification	Scoring Value
Differentiating Characteristics	5	State cost (MRG required) per available seat	< \$30	5
			≥ \$30 but < \$50	2
			≥ \$50	1

- Calculated as the total match requested from the state for the service divided by the number of seats the proposed service would generate. A lower cost per seat translates into a well negotiated proposal with a higher degree of community investment, and reduced risk for a greater chance of success.

## Definition of Terms and Acronyms

### Acronyms

- AIP Airport Improvement Program
- ASEP Air Service Enhancement Program
- CBSA Core-Based Statistical Area
- CPA Capacity Purchase Agreement
- FAA Federal Aviation Administration
- U/LCC Ultra Low-Cost Carrier or Low-Cost Carrier
- MRG Minimum Revenue Guarantee
- OTP On-Time Performance
- PFC Passenger Facility Charge
- SCASD Small Community Air Service Development
- USDOT U.S. Department of Transportation
- WYSASP Wyoming State Aviation System Plan

### Definitions

Baggage Agreement – Ability for one (1) airline to seamlessly transfer baggage from their carrier to another at a hub airport.

Code-share – Two (2) or more airlines share the same flight. Sharing, in this sense, means each airline publishes and markets the flight under its own airline designator and flight number as part of its published timetable or schedule.

Growth (Enhanced) Air Service – Any air service that is complementary or growth oriented, in addition to an airport’s already established primary service.

Leakage – Rate at which residents of a local airports catchment area use other airports

Marketing Carrier – An airline that sells its own code or brand as part of a code-share agreement on a flight actually operated by another carrier or by its own aircraft. Example: For a flight on Delta Connection, Delta Airlines would be the marketing carrier.

Minimum Revenue Guarantee – Agreement that establishes a target amount of revenue that a carrier will receive for operating a particular service to a particular destination over a given length of time. They may be expressed as a minimum amount that will be generated from passengers (ticket sales) provided that carrier meets certain operating requirements.

Operating Carrier – Airline which the marketing carrier uses to operate a flight. Example: All flights under the moniker “United Express” are operated by various regional carriers.

Primary Air Service - Up to twice daily, industry standard reliable service, to a hub airport as defined by the FAA.

Retention – Rate at which the residents of an airports catchment area use that airport.

Seasonal Service – Air service capacity that is not sustained at a year-round level, specifically added to capitalize on seasonal demand peaks inside or outside the state.

Small Community Air Service Development – Established by Congress under the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, P.L. 106-181 (AIR-21), to help small communities enhance their air service. Administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the program provides grants to help small communities achieve sustainable air service. An additional goal of the program was to generate creative air service proposals that could be implemented in other small communities.

Source – Any single fund, entity or compilation of similar entities contributing at least 10 % of the total match. For example: Total local match: \$250,000

- City: \$25,000 / 10% (Source 1)
- SCASD: \$100,000 / 40% (Source 2)
- Local businesses: \$25,000 / 10% (Source 3)
- Economic development organization: \$50,000 / 20% (Source 4)
- Seventh/Sixth Penny: \$50,000 / 20% (Source 5)

Upgrading – Substituting larger, higher capacity aircraft for smaller aircraft

Year-round service – Air service that is published at a stable, predictable, and consistent level at any given time during a year. **Works Cited**

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