Schaumburg Regional Airport
Strategic Plan



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REPORT SUMMARY

The Schaumburg Regional Airport is a successful general aviation airport that serves the needs of pilots, businesses, and the local community. It is recognized within the aviation community as a gateway airport to the Chicago area given its proximity to downtown Chicago, O'Hare International Airport, the I-90 and northwest suburban business corridors, and local rail and highway transportation access. The Airport has thrived under the ownership of the Village of Schaumburg and could further benefit from the development of a strategic plan to guide investment and growth going forward. The strategic plan establishes a vision statement, mission statement, core values, and a list of strategic priorities setting the direction and ensuring the success of the Schaumburg Regional Airport over the next 20 years.

Airport staff sent out surveys to receive feedback received from Schaumburg Regional Airport stakeholders including business tenants, the Pilot's Technical Advisory Committee, and the Schaumburg Regional Airport Advisory Commission. In addition to surveying stakeholders, a joint Pilot's Technical Advisory Committee and Schaumburg Regional Airport Advisory Commission meeting was held to solicit feedback and discuss survey results. It is important for Schaumburg Regional Airport, airport business tenants, and local aviation stakeholders to have a unified vision for the future of the Schaumburg Regional Airport. The overarching theme from the stakeholder feedback centered on the Schaumburg Regional Airport should be the premier general aviation airport in northeastern Illinois. All stakeholder feedback received has been included throughout the report to develop the strategic vision for the airport including the key recommendations.

The Vision and Mission Statement for the Schaumburg Regional Airport is based on the results from the stakeholders. These two statements help provide the airport with goals and standards to follow moving forward over the next 20 years. The Vision Statement is Schaumburg Regional Airport strives to be the number one general aviation airport in Northeastern Illinois, serving pilots and the local community. The Mission statement is The Schaumburg Regional Airport will provide a first class general aviation experience for tenants, visitors, and the community at large.

Schaumburg Regional Airport is a general aviation airport with unique characteristics such as having an award-winning restaurant, a modern terminal, excellent aviation facilities, and a diverse tenant base which makes it well suited to different types of aviation. The airport provides aircraft hangars, fuel services, flight training, charter services, meeting rooms, sight-seeing, and a restaurant that provides jobs and sparks an interest in aviation for the community. There is room to expand and grow the airport with the addition of new T-Hangars and land for a tenant to build privately-owned hangars. Adjusting fuel pricing may also increase the number of operations at the airport, attract more visitors and tenants, and increase overall fuel sales.

Key Recommendations of this report offer step by step direction as to how the long term goals for the airport can be achieved. They are listed in order of importance and allow for the Village of Schaumburg and Schaumburg Regional Airport to be successful over the next 20 years.

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

The Schaumburg Regional Airport is a successful general aviation airport that serves the needs of pilots, businesses, and the local community. It is recognized within the aviation community as a gateway airport to the Chicago area given its proximity to downtown Chicago, O'Hare International Airport, the I-90 and northwest suburban business corridors, and local rail and highway transportation access. The Airport has thrived under the ownership of the Village of Schaumburg and could further benefit from the development of a strategic plan to guide investment and growth going forward. The strategic plan establishes a vision statement, mission statement, core values, and a list of strategic priorities setting the direction and ensuring the success of the Schaumburg Regional Airport over the next 20 years.

This report represents the culmination of a review of past practices, current operations, trends in general aviation, and stakeholder feedback from business tenants, pilots, and the Pilots Technical Advisory Committee and the Schaumburg Regional Airport Advisory Commission. The information gathered, resulted in key findings developed into a list of strategic priorities. Through the implementation of the report's strategic priorities, Schaumburg's Regional Airport will continue to be one of the most successful general aviation airports in the Midwest.

Airport History



The Schaumburg Regional Airport traces its roots back to World War II when it served as an Optional Landing Field (OLF) for pilots training at the Glenview Naval Air Station. Historical names include; Roselle Field, Roselle Airport, and Schaumburg Airpark, and eventually named the Schaumburg Regional Airport. The Village of Schaumburg purchased the Schaumburg Airport in 1993 with assistance from the Federal and State governments, which funded 90% and 5% of the purchase, respectively. The village funded the remaining 5% and became the owner of the Schaumburg Regional Airport. The village agreed to operate the airport and also provides grant assurances to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) each year in exchange for the granted funds and annual entitlement funds for maintenance of the airport facilities.

One of the requirements of the grant assurances is for the local sponsor to strive to become a self-sustaining airport. A self-sustaining airport is one where airport revenues are sufficient to cover airport expenses. Currently, the airport maintains a fee and rental structure that provides revenues used to offset its cost. In 1998 construction of the 26,000 square foot terminal building was completed, including space for a restaurant, public meeting rooms, and space for businesses to operate. In 1999, the airport saw the arrival of two new fuel farms consisting of Jet-A and 100LL fuel and a self-service station for 100LL users. From 2000 to 2001 the airport installed 32 new hangar units and a Precision Approach Path Indicator to assist pilots with the correct glide

path. The Village of Schaumburg has continued to invest in Schaumburg Regional Airport to provide the best experience for local tenants and pilots on the general aviation community. An Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) was installed in 2017 to provide pilots with up to date weather information when flying at the airport. Terminal upgrades made in 2018-2019 such as energy efficient LED lighting, furniture, flooring, and painting provide a wonderful place for pilots to gather and business tenants to operate. All of these improvements have led to where the airport stands today, a new and modern general aviation airport.

Airport Today



The Schaumburg Regional Airport encompasses approximately 120 acres of land and is at an elevation of 801 feet. The airport supports approximately 40,000 annual aircraft operations (takeoffs & landings), of which an estimated 46 percent are local general aviation and 53 percent are transient general aviation. The remaining one percent is considered air charter. Approximately 100 aircraft are based at Schaumburg, of which 10 are multi-engine aircraft.

To provide shelter for the aircraft, the airport constructed five T-Hangar buildings that can accommodate over 52 aircraft. Hangars A, B, and C were constructed in 2001, while D and E were built in the 1970's. Building A contains units ranging from 1,125 to 1,725 square feet. Building B is larger and the unit sizes range from 1,440 to 1,950 square feet. Building C can accommodate multi-engine aircraft and provides units that are 3,600 square feet. Buildings D and E are 1,280 square feet and accommodate smaller general aviation aircraft.

Airport Tenants

Schaumburg Regional Airport has a diverse array of tenants located at the Airport. The majority of based aircraft are single engine piston powered aircraft. These aircraft are flown for business and private transportation and recreation. These aircraft are located in T-Hangars and tied down on the ramp. Many aviation businesses are also located on the field and provide services such as flight training, news reporting, aircraft sales, charter operations, and aircraft maintenance. These businesses own aircraft that include helicopters and turbo-prop aircraft. The terminal building includes a full service aviation-themed restaurant that attracts the local public and pilots from around the country. With the diversity of tenants at the Airport, many different streams of revenue support airport operations supporting it through tough economic times as seen with the economic recession of 2008 and more recently the COVID-19 pandemic.

Northwest Flyers

Northwest Flyers is a traditional Fixed Based Operator (FBO) that provides fuel services, and maintenance at the airport. Northwest Flyers is housed in the terminal building and their permitted activities include aircraft fueling, ramp services, aircraft engine maintenance, airframe maintenance, aircraft charter and leasing, and flight training. They currently rent a total of 13,952

square feet at the Airport, which includes offices and hangar space. Under a separate "Management Services License Agreement" the ownership of Northwest Flyers provides management services at the airport that include the moving of aircraft, emergency response, closing of the airport, managing the Unicom, and inspection of the airport.

Pilot Pete's

Pilot Pete's is an aviation-themed restaurant located on the upper floor of the terminal building, occupying a total of 7,202 square feet. The restaurant overlooks the active runway and provides visitors with a first-class view of aircraft landing and departing. Pilot Pete's is well known in the aviation community and makes the Schaumburg Regional Airport a popular destination for pilots. They have received many awards that include the Daily Herald's reader choice for themed restaurants and the $100 Hamburger Club that is the Top 10 airport restaurants in the country. That makes Pilot Pete's and Schaumburg Regional Airport a must stop for the local community and pilots looking to make a trip.

Airplanes USA

Airplanes USA is an aircraft dealer and brokerage network firm. They facilitate aircraft transactions while connecting buyers and sellers worldwide. They are located on the lower level of the terminal building and provide the airport with another unique aviation service. Airplanes USA currently rent one office of 162 square feet.

AM Air Service

AM Air Service is a federally regulated commercial operator (FAA Part 135) helicopter charter company that provides multiple services such as helicopter sightseeing, aerial photography, surveying, and utility and environmental patrols. They are located in the C row of hangars, with a rental space of 3,600 square feet.

Bachman Aero

Bachman Aero is a based helicopter flight training school located in the B section of the hangars, with a rental space of 1,872 square feet. They provide helicopter training for the new and experienced pilots.



US Helicopters Inc.

US Helicopters is a commercial charter service and leases its aircraft to the local news networks. US Helicopters has contracts with several local news stations and they are located in the C row of hangars, with a rental space of 7,200 square feet. The Schaumburg Regional Airport provides a quick take-off and central location for the Chicago news helicopters.

Economic Impact

Schaumburg Regional Airport is estimated to have an annual economic impact of $18.9 million based on a 2014 Economic Impact Study of the Schaumburg Regional Airport conducted by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) (Figure 1-1). IDOT determined that the total impact of the Airport brought about 162 total jobs, a payroll of $5 million, and a total impact of $18.9 million. The airport supports numerous businesses, business travelers, and people who fly aircraft for personal or business transportation, recreation, and visitors all of whom contribute in turn to the local economy. The Schaumburg Regional Airport estimates over 60% of the flights in and out of the airport are for business purposes. It is estimated nationally that 65% of general aviation flights are conducted for business and public services; these include flight training, flight tours, utility and environmental patrols, and more.



Figure 1-1

SECTION 2 – STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

This section provides an overview of the feedback received from Schaumburg Regional Airport stakeholders including business tenants, the Pilot's Technical Advisory Committee, and the Schaumburg Regional Airport Advisory Commission. In addition to surveying stakeholders, a joint Pilot's Technical Advisory Committee and Schaumburg Regional Airport Advisory Commission meeting was held to solicit feedback and discuss survey results. These two groups are tasked with providing oversight over the Schaumburg Regional Airport and have historical operational knowledge. Both the survey results and the joint meeting discussion are included in the stakeholder feedback findings.

It is important for Schaumburg Regional Airport, airport business tenants, and local aviation stakeholders to have a unified vision for the future of the Schaumburg Regional Airport. The overarching theme from the stakeholder feedback centered on the Schaumburg Regional Airport should be the premier general aviation airport in northeastern Illinois. All stakeholder feedback received has been detailed in this section and has been used by the Village of Schaumburg to develop the strategic vision for the airport including the report key recommendations.

Survey Questions and Response

The following survey questions were distributed to tenants at the Schaumburg Regional Airport, the Pilot's Technical Advisory Committee, and the Schaumburg Regional Airport Advisory Commission. A summary of the major themes in the survey responses are provided below. Individual responses to each survey question can be found in Appendix A.

Vision for Airport

What is your overarching vision for Schaumburg Regional Airport in the next 20 Years?

All the participants of the survey made it clear the Schaumburg Regional Airport should be the premier general aviation airport in Northeastern Illinois while looking to expand its role in the community and with aviation-related businesses. Specific suggestions for how the Airport can expand and grow include opportunities such as becoming an executive airport where business people can arrive in close proximity to industry in Schaumburg, continue to grow its flight training operations, and expand into a viable business aviation hub by obtaining approval for an instrument approach. Improve accessibility to additional aviation operations at the airport.

New Projects

What are some projects you would like to see completed at the Airport?

The most common suggestions for projects that stakeholders are looking for is the approval and implementation of an instrument approach and the construction of additional hangars. An instrument approach allows aircraft to arrive in non-visual weather conditions which would be conducive to attracting more business users and greater utilization of the airport in general. Most airports (and every other general aviation airport in the Chicago area) have at least one instrument approach procedure. While Schaumburg Regional Airport is currently unique in this area for its lack of such functionality, the close proximity to O'Hare International Airport has been the primary reason an instrument approach has not been supported by IDOT and the FAA.

The Village of Schaumburg has tried moving forward with this multiple times, but has been denied by IDOT, the FAA, and O'Hare.

All hangars at the Schaumburg Regional Airport are occupied and there is currently a waiting list of over 80 people. Stakeholders feel that additional hangars would bring the Airport and business tenants increased fuel sales, additional maintenance, new businesses, and additional rental revenue.

Additional projects that were suggested include improving and maintaining airport infrastructure, providing observation and picnic seating areas at the fence line for people in the community to enjoy the airport and observe aircraft operations, and advancing the airport through the deployment of new technology such as an Automatic Dependent Surveillance – Broadcast (ADS-B) which would allow for operations during inclement weather. Schaumburg Regional Airport has an advantage over many general aviation airports due to the relatively new age of the terminal building, runway, and hangars. Continuing to improve and update the Airport with emerging technology was also suggested as a way to make Schaumburg Regional Airport a top general aviation airport.

Additions to the Airport

What has been the best addition to the airport in the last 20 years?

Schaumburg Regional Airport over the last 20 years has gone through major changes. The Village of Schaumburg purchased the airport and built a new terminal building, updated the runway, built new hangars, and installed a full-service restaurant. This was a vast change from the old privately-owned airport that was built in the 1960s.

Stakeholders noted that since the village took ownership of the airport, the village has continued to invest in the airport. Survey responses varied but many stakeholders felt that the upgraded runway, bringing in an aviation-themed restaurant, building modern hangars, constructing an Airport Weather Observation System (AWOS), and hiring on a full-time professional Airport Manager to oversee the daily operation of the airport were some of the best investments at the airport in recent years.

New Businesses

What kind of new businesses would you like to see based at the airport?

Airport stakeholders are always looking for additional businesses to be based at the airport to provide unique and special services you can't find anywhere else. Schaumburg Regional Airport currently has a restaurant, full-service Fixed Base Operator and flight school, aircraft charter operation, helicopter flight school, helicopter charter, and aircraft sales. Stakeholders suggested that additional flight schools that offer unique flight training or new aviation-focused shops would help to boost traffic at the airport and increase the chance of a younger tenant base. Other interests include a paint/interior shop, an avionics shop, a small pilot shop, and an office for aviation insurance.

Airport Help

What can the Airport offer you/your business to help over the next 20 years?

The Village needs to continue to cater to the average general aviation (GA) pilot. This means meeting the pilot's needs to use his or her aircraft for business and personal transportation and facilitating visitors using their aircraft for those purposes. Typically, the main goal of a general aviation pilot is to fly at a reasonable price. Stakeholders responded that the airport could best support them by providing low-cost affordable hangars, reasonable fuel prices, an instrument approach, a small pilot shop, and a feeling of community.

Airport Strength

What do you see as the Airport's greatest strength?

Stakeholders felt that Schaumburg Regional Airport's greatest strength is its location within the greater Chicagoland area. Its proximity to downtown Chicago and O'Hare International Airport provides users the best opportunity for easy access to the city and northwest suburbs. With the large number of people living in the Chicagoland area, it offers a large customer base of students and pilots to operate out of the airport. Stakeholders also noted that the Village of Schaumburg takes great pride in the airport and has shown it will invest in the airport and provide the best accommodations for pilots. The last strength highlighted is the location to industrial parks in the area to offer businesses the opportunity to take advantage of air travel at the airport.

Airport Weakness

What is the Airport's biggest weakness?

The lack of an instrument approach and lack of hangar space for pilots interested in moving their aircraft to the airport prevents the airport from growing its tenant base. There is currently a waiting list for hangars but the airport is unable to accommodate them. Tie-downs are declining at all airports due to the increasing costs of maintaining aircraft and a desire by pilots to have covered accommodations for their planes.

Fuel prices are also a weakness at the airport due to the high cost compared to local competitors. Based on a recent review of fuel prices, prices at Schaumburg Regional Airport were consistently 25% higher than local airports. Pilots are flying to other airports to purchase their fuel and saving money, rather than filling up at their own airport. The reasons for the higher fuel pricing at Schaumburg Regional Airport are difficult to identify because the current agreement with the Fixed Base Operator (FBO) that administers fuel sales does not require full transparency in pricing and prior attempts by the village to obtain specifics were rebuffed.

One of the best ways for the Schaumburg Regional Airport to grow is to learn from the perceived weaknesses that have been identified by the airport stakeholders. For example, survey respondents continued to note that they believe that Northwest Aviation, a flight school previously located at the airport 12 years ago is still hurting the credibility of Schaumburg Regional Airport among pilots. Many pilots put money into flight training and were left with nothing once the company went bankrupt. Great progress has been made by the village to ensure tenants and businesses are being heard and responded to, but additional outreach must continue to provide the best service to all pilots.

Another area for improvement noted at Schaumburg Regional Airport was a desire to see new businesses located at the airport. Survey responses noted that both new services and businesses would be a welcome addition to the airport, but it was also noted that competition between businesses at the airport can be a good thing for activity as well as a benefit to customers by keeping costs competitive.

Airport Opportunity

What do you see as the greatest opportunity in the future at the Airport?

A common theme among stakeholders was that the Schaumburg Regional Airport could be positioned to help to address the looming commercial pilot shortage. With the shortage estimated at more than 804,000 pilots over the next 20 years, flight schools at Schaumburg Regional Airport could be aggressively seeking marketing opportunities for training new pilots to fill those positions. The airport should capitalize on the growing need for pilots as part of its strategic initiatives.

Airport Threat

What is the greatest threat to General Aviation in the next 20 years?

The Village of Schaumburg needs to be mindful of the threats that the airport, and general aviation as an industry, could face over the next 20 years and any resulting impact on the success of the airport in future years. Stakeholders indicated that the cost of owning an aircraft is continuing to increase resulting in decreasing airplane ownership and pilots. It was also noted that potential changes to the air traffic control system or changing government regulations could impact general aviation.

More recently, the impacts of COVID-19 on the aviation industry and the significant decline in commercial air travel could have an impact on flight training in the short term, but many observers of the industry feel the long term need to address the future pilot shortage will remain. Nationally, flight school activities remain strong. Surveys of flight schools across the country by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) show that flight school business is up significantly over the same period last year. In addition, the temporary decline in commercial air travel has provided potential growth opportunities for general aviation facilities to fill the gap by providing access to private air travel which has seen an increase during the pandemic. It will be important for general aviation airports to continue monitoring the situation and to be prepared to adapt accordingly.

SECTION 3 - VISION, MISSION STATEMENT AND CORE VALUES

The following section provides an overview of the vision, mission, and core values of the Schaumburg Regional Airport. These guiding principles will serve as the basis for this strategic plan and will be used to guide the priorities for the airport over the next 20 years.

Vision Statement

A vision statement establishes the long term objectives for an airport and helps to guide future decisions. The vision statement also serves to outline the collective beliefs held by the Village of Schaumburg, airport tenants, and other stakeholders in the Schaumburg Regional Airport aviation community.

The following are ideas to include in the Vision Statement based on stakeholder feedback and the Village of Schaumburg's goals for the future of the airport:

- Friendly
- Community Involvement
- Top GA Airport in Chicago
- Self-Sustaining
- Business Development
- Regional Advantage
- Welcoming
- Old Time Airport Feel
- Events for Everyone
- GA Pilot Engagement
- Airline Partnership
- Growth
- Hangar Development
- Creating Future Pilots
- Competitive Fuel Pricing
- Instrument Approach

Based on these core components, the Village of Schaumburg has established the following Vision Statement for the Schaumburg Regional Airport:

Schaumburg Regional Airport strives to be the premier general aviation airport in Northeastern Illinois, serving pilots and the local community.

Mission Statement

Developing a mission statement is important in order to detail why Schaumburg Regional Airport exists as a publicly owned general aviation airport, what its overall goal is, and to define how it will aim to serve all stakeholders now and in the future.

Gathered through stakeholder input, the following are ideas to include in the Mission Statement based on Village of Schaumburg goals and airport tenant feedback:

- Friendly Service
- Community Involvement
- Quality Airport Services
- Self-Sustaining
- Business Development
- Go Green
- Welcoming
- Old Time Airport Feel
- Events for Everyone
- GA Pilot Engagement
- Airline Partnership
- Future Growth
- Student Outreach
- Creating Future Pilots
- Competitive Fuel Prices
- Safety and Security

Based on these core components, the following mission statement has been developed for the Schaumburg Regional Airport:

The Schaumburg Regional Airport will provide a first class general aviation experience for tenants, visitors, and the community at large.

Core Values

Core values are designed to be goals that support the Mission and Vision Statements for the Schaumburg Regional Airport. The airport's core values express how to conduct day-to-day business and provide a consistent set of expectations for all at the airport. They guide all actions and serve as the framework for the decisions and contributions made every day. The Village of Schaumburg transportation staff has decided to adopt the Village of Schaumburg core values as the basis for achieving the airport's vision and mission statement. The Core Values are listed below:

- **Customer Service:** Take personal responsibility for exceeding expectations.
- **Integrity:** Maintain the public's trust and confidence by behaving honestly and ethically.
- **Respect:** Treat others as you would wish to be treated.
- **Teamwork:** Work together to achieve common goals.
- **Trust:** We do what we say we will do.

Together, the mission, vision, and core values of Schaumburg Regional Airport will help set expectations and guide the Village of Schaumburg forward. They provide a clear message to stakeholders of expectations and a clear message to the community for what Schaumburg Regional Airport stands for.

SECTION 4 - SWOT Analysis

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis is a high-level strategic planning tool for organizations to identify and evaluate internal and external influences as they pertain to a common vision or goal. Considering these factors together help identify paths to achieve priorities and goals during the strategic planning process. The SWOT analysis along with the stakeholder feedback, vision statement and mission statement are critical elements to understanding how the Schaumburg Regional Airport can best position itself for success over the next 20 years. The findings for the SWOT analysis are then used as the basis for developing the Key Priorities of the airport.

Strengths

- Location to Chicago/O'Hare
- Age of Facilities and Infrastructure
- Pilot Pete's Restaurant
- Security/Surveillance
- AWOS/Local Weather
- Community Events/Involvement
- Owned by Village of Schaumburg
- Business Diversity

The greatest strength of the airport is its location within Northeastern Illinois and proximity to Chicago and O'Hare International Airport. Its proximity to downtown Chicago and O'Hare provides users the best opportunity for easy access to the city and northwest suburbs. Many people grow up in the area seeing aircraft fly and are interested in aviation. The large number of people living in the Chicagoland area offers a large customer base of students and pilots to operate out of the airport.

The village should also work with airlines such as United who are experiencing a shortage of pilots and are looking to get new pilots trained. The COVID-19 outbreak led to furloughs and layoffs from all airlines in the short term, but as businesses and companies have been reopening demand has started to increase again. The airlines are not finding qualified individuals to hire so they are now working directly with flight schools at general aviation airports to train the next generation of pilots. A flight school partnered with an airline would bring new revenue to the airport and flight school.

The facilities at Schaumburg Regional Airport are also a strength compared to many general aviation airports in the country. Most general aviation airports were built in the '60s and '70s and have older terminal buildings, runways, and hangars. With the village taking an active approach to invest in the airport, the updated and well-maintained facilities will continue to draw pilots looking for the best facilities for their aircraft.

Pilot Pete's Restaurant is also a big draw for any pilot looking to base their aircraft somewhere. There are very few airports that have an award-winning restaurant in the terminal building. Pilot Pete's draws over 100 pilots to fly into the restaurant every month. It is one of the country's top airport restaurants and is always included in the $100 Hamburger Club which is voted on by pilots.

The airport is also very diverse when it comes to the tenant and business base. With a full-service Fixed Base Operator (FBO), maintenance shop, airplane flight school, helicopter flight school, airplane charter, helicopter charter, and aircraft sales, the Schaumburg Regional Airport is well-positioned to meet the aviation needs of the community. It is important for the Village of Schaumburg to support these businesses and continue growing the pilot community. With COVID-19 affecting so many airports, Schaumburg Regional Airport benefited from the diverse businesses that were able to operate and continue generating revenue for the airport.

Weaknesses

- Lack of Instrument Approach
- Landlocked
- No Available Hangars
- Unfriendly Atmosphere
- Fuel Prices
- Airspace Restrictions

The biggest weakness of the Schaumburg Regional Airport as identified by key stakeholders is that it is a visual flight rules only (VFR) airport lacking an instrument approach procedure. A VFR airport means that you need to have conditions suitable for flying with clear visibility. This makes it difficult for people who fly for business or on a timeframe because they can't utilize the Airport if the weather is bad. In bad weather, these people then have to land elsewhere and commute back to Schaumburg Regional Airport by car.

Implementing an Instrument Approach procedure for Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) would allow the Village of Schaumburg to expand how pilots can use the airport and would provide additional business opportunities including increased access for people flying on business and increased interest in attracting business tenants and business hangars on the east and west end of the airport. To pursue an instrument approach procedure the village would need to update the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) as the first step in moving forward with requesting an instrument approach.

It should be noted that the village has initiated some preliminary discussions with the Illinois Department of Transportation Division of Aeronautics (IDOT) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to pursue an instrument approach in the past. While an IFR approach has not been supported by IDOT or the FAA in the past due to Schaumburg Regional Airport's proximity to O'Hare Airport, changes in regulations and technology may provide opportunities in the future to implement IFR.

Another weakness identified by stakeholders and the SWOT analysis is that the Schaumburg Regional Airport can be perceived as an unfriendly and unwelcoming airport. Great progress has been made by the village to ensure tenants and businesses are being heard, but feedback was received that there are still opportunities to improve the "friendliness" of the airport and that additional outreach must continue to demonstrate that Schaumburg Regional Airport is welcoming to all tenants, visitors and members of the community.

Excessively high fuel prices at the airport were another weakness raised in stakeholder interviews and during the joint PTAC/SRAAC meeting. The airport consistently has some of the

highest fuel prices for 100LL fuel among other local general aviation airports. 100LL prices are on average 25% higher than local general aviation airport competitors and turn potential transient customers away from the airport. Additionally, many Schaumburg Regional Airport tenants fly to other local airports like Lake in the Hills and DeKalb to fuel their aircraft, because it saves them money as compared to fueling at Schaumburg Regional Airport. This also leads to a loss of tax revenue for the village due to a lack of fuel sales.

The Fixed Based Operator (FBO), Northwest Flyers, currently has the contract for fueling at the airport. Discussions with the FBO should occur in order to find a way to address the fuel pricing problem for local tenants and provide a fuel revenue stream for the village. In the future, should the village's FBO agreement be modified, the village could also consider handling fuel operations itself. Many local airports control their own fuel services and realize the full revenue of fuel sales.

The last weakness identified through the SWOT analysis is the lack of hangar space and limited areas to develop in the future. The village currently has 52 hangars that are all full with aircraft and a waiting list that includes over 80 people. In 2017, the village completed a Hangar Feasibility Study that indicated that there is demand for new hangars. The village had considered beginning preliminary work on plans to construct additional hangars to bring in additional revenue and to provide replacement hangars as the D and E hangars reach the end of their useful life, but due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Village of Schaumburg will have to re-evaluate the demand and financial impacts to determine whether or not to proceed with the project. The village needs to keep in mind that to receive federal funding the airport needs to maintain a customer base of 50-75 tenants. If the older D and E hangars were to be decommissioned additional hangars would need to be built to keep the tenant base up.

Opportunities

- New Hangar Development
- Pilot Shortage
- IFR Business Expansion
- Partnership with Airlines
- Airport Open House
- Green/Electric Aircraft

The greatest opportunity for Schaumburg Regional Airport is a new hangar development that would increase the amount of tenants at the airport that would also provide a new source of revenue for the airport. The Village of Schaumburg tried to move forward with constructing new hangars in 2008, but the economic recession led to a lack of funding and decreased pilot interest. While new hangars would increase the tenant base at Schaumburg Regional Airport and bring additional revenue to the airport, the cost to construct new hangars is expensive and gauging pilot interest can be difficult. It is important for the Village to gauge interest and look for a deposit from potential tenants before moving forward with additional hangars. New hangars could also bring new business tenants to the airport and more jobs for the local economy. As it becomes more expensive to own and operate an aircraft, particularly for recreational purposes, demand for hangars is increasing as compared to tie-downs because pilots are looking to protect their investments. With the decline in demand for tie-downs, there is an opportunity to revisit how the existing tie-down areas are used going forward.

There continues to be a pilot shortage for the airlines and the aviation industry has a significant demand for additional students to be trained. The number of pilots anticipated to be needed to meet demand is estimated to be 804,000 over the next 20 years according to Boeing's 2019 Pilot and Technician Outlook. Based on this need for pilots, there is an opportunity for flight schools to expand their operations and to increase the number of students they are training. There is a significant opportunity for Schaumburg Regional Airport and its flight schools to partner with major airlines to establish a partnership/flight school at the airport to provide additional training to their future pilots. This type of arrangement is in place at other general aviation airports throughout the country and could have a very positive impact on the airport and flight school.

Finally, continuing to pursue an instrument approach would open many business opportunities for local Schaumburg companies to base their flight operations out of Schaumburg Regional Airport. There is also room to expand on the east side of the airport for custom-built offices and hangars. Without an instrument approach, it is not anticipated that there will be demand for these custom developments since these businesses would be subject to weather conditions to determine when they could fly in and out of Schaumburg Regional Airport.

Threats

- General Aviation User Fees
- Lack of interest
- Drones
- Expense/Cost of Flying
- No Political Support for Airport
- Poor Economy

General Aviation (GA) as an industry has threats that must be taken into consideration by all general aviation airports. These threats can be associated with an increased cost of flying, incompatible land developments around airports and new aeronautic regulations. The Schaumburg Regional Airport needs to identify and plan for these threats in order to remain a viable general aviation airport for many years to come.

One such threat is that the cost of flying continues to increase for the average pilot. Aircraft acquisition and maintenance costs continue to increase as the current fleet of GA aircraft ages. Insurance costs also have seen significant increases.

A current regulatory threat is the discussion of implementing Aircraft User Fees that would be paid by a pilot every time they utilize air traffic control services or fly in controlled airspace. This would lead to an additional cost to an already expensive industry. With the cost of flying increasing and with the threat of additional fees, it is becoming more difficult for the average person to take up flying, especially for personal transportation and recreational purposes. These increasing costs make it vital that the village considers how fees impact the overall cost of flying. Currently, Schaumburg Regional Airport only charges a hangar license fee, however other State, County and local taxes and fees such as leasehold taxes, fuel taxes, landing fees, etc. have been identified by other agencies and/or businesses as a potential revenue source that would impact airport tenants and the overall cost of flying at Schaumburg Regional Airport. While it is important that the Schaumburg Regional Airport be self-sustaining, maintaining affordable fuel

prices, keeping hangar rents competitive, and supporting businesses located at the airport will be critical to keeping the aviation community growing.

Incompatible land use and development around airports creates one of the primary threats to the success of airports. Residential development around existing airports can lead to noise complaints and loss of community support for airports. Construction of obstacles that interfere with or encroach into the airport's airspace can create hazards to navigation. The best way to address these concerns is through appropriate zoning and land use planning that prevents incompatible developments in the areas surrounding and adjacent to the airport.

To continue future growth of and interest in aviation and future community support for the airport, the village must be proactive in trying to engage the community in aviation as part of industry-wide efforts to recruit new pilots. There are currently three events based at the airport that provide the community an up close look at the airport. These events are used to introduce the community to the airport, to provide an understanding of the services available at the airport, and to get new people interested in aviation. The current events hosted at Schaumburg Regional Airport are the Father's Day Pancake Breakfast, the Santa Fly-In, and Hops & Props. The village allows all aviation groups to use the airport meeting room free of charge to encourage aviation enthusiasts to take advantage of the airport. This includes the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), Schaumburg Pilots Association, Civil Air Patrol, Wing Scouts, and a rocketry club. Each event and group offers a unique experience and an opportunity to see what a general aviation airport and specifically the Schaumburg Regional Airport offers.

The last significant threat to the Schaumburg Regional Airport is a poor economy. Based on data collected by airport staff, when the economy is down and there is less expendable income, the general aviation community is impacted. This could then lead to a lack of revenue to maintain and operate the airport. The village will have to keep an eye on the economy and ensure that the airport is generating as much revenue as possible. Diverse businesses and full hangars on the field helped the airport weather any negative impacts from COVID-19 and continued generating revenue.

SECTION 5 – CONCLUSION AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Schaumburg Regional Airport is a general aviation airport with unique characteristics such as having an award-winning restaurant, a modern terminal, excellent aviation facilities, and a diverse tenant base which makes it well suited to different types of aviation. The airport provides aircraft hangars, fuel services, flight training, charter services, meeting rooms, sight-seeing, and a restaurant that provides jobs and sparks an interest in aviation for the community.

There is a saying in the aviation community: "A mile of road will take you a mile; A mile of runway will take you anywhere." An airport is a unique regional transportation asset. Much like an interstate highway interchange or marine harbor provide access and economic opportunities to a region, an airport is part of a national transportation infrastructure that provides businesses, visitors, and travelers an even greater dimension of nationwide access. This provides economic benefit and growth opportunities for Schaumburg and the entire northwest and west suburban region. Airports are also centers of relief efforts in times of crisis. It is in our interest to maintain and grow this important transportation asset.

Schaumburg Regional Airport is an important economic generator for the community. Based on the stakeholder feedback, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified for Schaumburg Regional Airport, key recommendations have been identified that will help Schaumburg Regional Airport become the top general aviation airport in northeastern Illinois.

Aviation is continuing to grow since the economic downturn but the Village of Schaumburg will need to continue monitoring the financial stability of the airport. There is room to expand and grow the airport with the addition of new T-Hangars and land for a tenant to build privately-owned hangars. Adjusting fuel pricing may also increase the number of operations at the airport, attract more visitors and tenants, and increase overall fuel sales.

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to create an identity for Schaumburg Regional Airport through the Vision and Mission Statements and to implement that vision over the next 20 years. Village staff, business tenants, the Pilot Technical Advisory Committee, and the Schaumburg Regional Airport Advisory Committee all provided valuable feedback that directly informed the development of a Strategic Plan for the Schaumburg Regional Airport. The Key Recommendations offer more specific direction as to how the long term goals for the airport can be achieved.

Key Recommendations

1. Update the minimum standards to ensure the airport provides the best opportunity to attract new businesses to the airport.

2. Explore new technology and businesses that will continue to expand the tenant base and bring value to the airport.

3. Investigate new ways to bring diverse businesses to the Airport to increase revenue that will allow the airport to thrive in all economic situations.

4. Continue to ensure that Schaumburg Regional Airport is served by a valued destination restaurant that will draw visitors to the Airport.

5. Develop and build new T-Hangars for the airport to meet the current demand and to ensure federal funding compliance if older hangars become unusable. The new hangars should be affordable, have confirmed pilot demand through deposits, and have a solid financing plan to ensure the economic viability of the project before moving forward.

6. Continue working and communicating with IDOT and FAA to pursue the installation of an Instrument Approach.

7. Identify ways to lower the current cost of fuel for tenants and visitors at the airport and provide a fuel revenue stream for the village. More fuel sold at the airport can provide potential direct revenue for the village as well as tax revenue back to the airport.

8. Create a plan using knowledge learned from COVID-19 to ensure safe and effective operations in case of a future pandemic or another significant event.

9. Create new tenant and business opportunities by marketing more around the community, at events, and in local publications.

10. Continue to invest in airport infrastructure and facilities to ensure that the Schaumburg Regional Airport remains a well-maintained airport.

11. Provide additional community outreach to highlight the benefits of the airport to the community and to get the general public interested in flying.

12. Work in partnership with the flight schools located at the Schaumburg Regional Airport and the airlines to explore an opportunity to develop a flight training partnership.

Key Recommendations (continued)

13. Work with current groups at the airport such as Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), Civil Air Patrol, and other airport stakeholders to create new events to get new people involved in aviation. All groups could help with ideas to bring new events to the airport.

14. Work with existing tenants, businesses, organizations, and transient pilots to obtain feedback on the environment at Schaumburg Regional Airport. Using that feedback, airport staff can work to ensure that all interactions at the airport provide a friendly and welcoming feel to everyone that visits Schaumburg Regional Airport.

15. Follow industry trends to remain competitive with other general aviation airports when it comes to new trends and technology in aviation.

16. Work with local businesses to understand how Schaumburg Regional Airport can serve as a better resource for them.

SECTION 6 - COVID-19 IMPACTS ON GENERAL AVIATION

While the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may have caused temporary slowdowns in aviation activity during the short period when "stay-at-home" orders were in effect, General Aviation (GA) activities remained as strong as ever over the first six months of 2020 taken as a whole. While there have been negative impacts on commercial air travel, FAA statistics gathered at a sampling of GA airports across the country show a 15% increase in GA activity over the same period last year due in part to people utilizing GA for transportation as opposed to airlines or other sources of public transportation. Sale of 100LL and Jet-A fuel are very important to the survival of most airports and fixed based operators (FBOs). Due to stay at home orders, operations and fuel sales at Schaumburg Regional Airport saw a temporary decline of 25% during the period "stay at home" orders were in effect from March to June 2020. However, given the operational statistics noted above, it is expected that these sales will recover. Since the stay at home order was lifted in June 2020, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) traffic counts at Schaumburg Regional Airport have increased 35% and fuel being purchased by the FBO has returned to pre-pandemic levels.

During the "stay-at-home" order, some non-essential businesses located on the field of some GA airports struggled such as aircraft tours, skydiving, and airport restaurants. However, aviation maintenance and flight schools across the country have continued to see high levels of business activity. Flight training operations across the country have actually seen an increase in activity over the same period as last year. Fortunately, the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) released a coronavirus guide listing essential workers which includes flight instructors as essential workers. Surveys of flight schools across the country by Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) indicate that flight training operations are significantly up over the same period last year.

One of the largest nationwide aircraft sales brokers reports that July 2020 was their strongest sales month ever recorded based on the number of aircraft sales, with each aircraft sold above aircraft valuation price. In addition, the temporary decline in commercial air travel has provided potential growth opportunities for GA facilities to fill the gap by providing access to private air travel which has seen an increase during the pandemic. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and industry statistics showing increased GA activity over last year present reason for optimism that some sectors of private aviation may experience growth opportunities and demonstrate that the pandemic will have no negative long term impact on GA.

Fortunately, Schaumburg Regional Airport was deemed essential and has been operating daily through the pandemic. Due to a diverse business and tenant base, the airport has continued to operate with minimal impacts on revenue and flight operations. Only minor impacts to operations were felt resulting from temporary reductions in flight activities while the "stay-at-home" order was in effect.

In response to the pandemic's impacts, general aviation airports were included in the CARES Act passed by Congress to help offset revenue losses presented by the virus. The total amount of funds allocated to the CARES act for U.S. airports was a total of $10 billion. Public airports in

Illinois received approximately $446 million in funding to cover expenses and help offset the effect of COVID-19. The Village of Schaumburg was allocated $30,000 for the Schaumburg Regional Airport and an additional $1,000 for operating and maintaining the Schaumburg Helistop. This funding is being used to offset operating expenses associated with both facilities. It is still uncertain how COVID-19 will affect the economy moving forward but airport staff will continue to monitor the impacts of the pandemic on the Schaumburg Regional Airport.

SECTION 7 – APPENDIX A – SURVEY RESULTS

Introduction

This report provides an overview of survey results submitted by Business Tenants and Pilot Technical Advisory Members. Responses from the survey will be used to help develop the Schaumburg Regional Airport Strategic Plan.

Discussion

The Village of Schaumburg Transportation Department developed a Strategic Plan to serve as a guide for the next 20 years of the Airport. It is important for Schaumburg Regional Airport, airport business tenants, and local pilots to have a unified vision of how to move forward to ensure the ongoing success of the airport. The goal is to have Schaumburg Regional Airport be the premier general aviation airport in the Chicagoland Area, and the survey responses will identify areas of focus in achieving that goal. Below are the questions and responses from the survey:

What is your overarching vision for Schaumburg Regional Airport in the next 20 Years?

- To become the destination airport of choice for general aviation pilots flying to the Chicago area.
- To see the airport expand its role as a gateway to the Chicago area for business and recreational visitors as well as to continue and expand its flight training operations through continued marketing and growth of the flight school
- To see Schaumburg airport become an executive airport where businessmen/women can arrive and be close to the industrial/business area of Schaumburg as well as businesses in the surrounding suburbs.
- To see the airport continue to grow into a viable aviation hub.

What are some projects you would like to see done at the Airport?

- More hangar space competitively priced for tenants. This includes more T-hangars as well as large box hangars that accommodate and attract more airport businesses.
- Outdoor, covered seating/eating area for visitors and pilots would make the airport more welcoming.
- An instrument approach, ILS, or GPS.
- Improved lighting outdoors and in hangars.
- Sun Ports for tenant aircraft parked on the ramp.
- Improved self-serve fuel infrastructure that works reliably.
- Extend Wi-Fi access to the hangar areas.
- Fix problems with AWOS wind readings.

What has been the best addition to the airport in the last 20 years?

- Pilot Pete's
- AWOS
- Quality hangar space
- Updated Runway
- Terminal Building
- Airport Manager

What kind of new businesses would you like to see based at the airport?

- Additional flight schools
- Paint/Interior shop
- Avionics shop
- Pilot shop
- Aviation insurance

What can the Airport offer you/your business to help over the next 20 years?

- Small pilot shop to offer competitively priced aircraft supplies, oil, tires, fluids, filters.
- More reasonably priced hangars. Many only require a shelter and electrical power. Those hangars should be the least expensive and most prevalent on the airport property.
- Instrument approach
- Lower cost fuel
- Keep the cost of flying as low as possible. Low fuel costs, maintenance costs, training costs, hangar costs. General aviation is competing with many other avocations. Price sensitivity is as important as ever for this industry.
- Competitive fuel pricing and longer hours of service. Jet Fuel service is not available after 7 pm during the winter hours and 8 pm during the summer months. Closing at 10 pm Monday-Friday would be a better option.
- Just continued support and ways to get the community involved at the airport. More events that showcase what we have at 06C and boost overall opinions about have such a great treasure in their own town!

What do you see as the Airport's greatest strength?

- Location, central to many important places and business in the area and Chicago.
- Financial support from Schaumburg.
- Great location, access to expressways and rail line, great facility, and infrastructure.
- Proximity to Schaumburg Industrial park, and the surrounding suburbs. Good access to expressways, a short drive to Chicago, and very close to the Metra station.
- Location/proximity to the city and ORD.

What is the Airport's biggest weakness?

- The most common complaint I hear is the airport has an "unfriendly" feel. Some comments are based on the negative stigma a former Airport Manager left on the airport, while others are more deserved. Ex: At PTAC and SRAAC, we've discussed and understand the need for security, but having everything locked down at all times makes for a very sterile and cold feel. At other airports, people come out on the ramp to greet arriving pilots/passengers and/or are very accommodating once you enter the terminal. We don't see or hear of that kind of hospitality here, and whether the reputation is deserved or not, pilots don't forget. It's been 12 years since a former Airport Manager left this airport, but his disgraceful memories remain.
- Lack of instrument approach and lack of hangar space to meet demand.
- Lack of competition for current businesses based at airport. Competition spurs innovation and reduces costs for customers.
- Many pilots believe Schaumburg Airport not to be friendly.
- Fuel prices could be competitively priced
- Promotion to area of low cost Intro-Flights to generate flying interest. FBO should not be behind a counter and an office, they should be out in the open and greet every person that comes into the facility.
- Landlocked

What do you see as the greatest opportunity in the future at Schaumburg Regional Airport?

- To be a commerce hub to other business in the area.
- Promoted open house on a monthly basis, activities not under the Village control.
- There is a looming commercial pilot shortage, estimated at 120,000+ pilots in the next 4 to 5 years. This is a result of pilots retiring, and not enough new pilots coming up to fill those positions. Flight schools could be at or near capacity right now, training pilots to fill those positions. Alliances are already being made between airlines and flight schools. Schaumburg Airport should be capitalizing on the growing need for pilots.
- Attracting more business users and charter flights with instrument approach. We should also do more community engagement by providing observation/picnic areas at the fence line where the public and particularly children can easily and comfortably view the airport and watch airplanes.
- Taking advantage of the massive demand for new pilots and aviation/avionics technicians. Schaumburg could make it appealing for additional flight schools and/or technical schools to be based at 06C. Schaumburg should mandate the restaurant be open for breakfast in addition to lunch and dinner to increase transient aircraft traffic to the airport.

What is the greatest threat to General Aviation in the next 20 years?

- User fees, if implemented, are a big problem. The aging of the current fleet of airplanes is also a problem since newer ones come at such a high price tag.
- As land becomes scarcer, it becomes more valuable, and developers will team with politicians to pressure airports into closing down
- Expense/cost of flying.
- Lack of interest in aviation. I would like to see if Schaumburg Airport could put together a campaign to promote aviation and gain the interest of younger people to begin flying.

- Lack of public/political support for the cost of maintaining an airport – which is why it is critical to expand community engagement by stressing the value of GA and airports to the community, creating a public friendly space at the airport as described above, and make the airport competitive and attractive for tenants in the ways described above so as to attract more tenants and business which helps the airport remain financially sustainable and profitable.
- Non pilot aircraft, will take over all major airspace especially around major cities
- Government regulations especially for small airports within major airports and their "Airspace"
- Cost of fuel, Hangar space and insurance which in turn pushes smaller planes and operators to locations farther away from urban development to airports like DeKalb and Joliet.