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How Does Aviation Help New England Be New England

Introduction

New England has an unusually high reliance on air transportation. The region generates 2.5 air passenger trips per year per capita, almost 80 percent higher than the national rate of 1.4. While this is a remarkable fact, a closer look reveals that several of the essential attributes of New England offer a plausible explanation for this high level of air travel. These attributes can be grouped into four categories geography, economy, population and cultural and scenic resources. Taken together they portray the very essence of New England. And underlying this portrait is a vision of the critical role of high quality air transportation in sustaining the variety of attributes that combine to sustain this essence. Let's take a closer look at these.

Geography → Economy → Population → Resources

The factor that weaves these attributes together is air transportation.

Geography

New England's location in the northeast corner of the country tends to turn New Englanders toward air travel. While high-speed rail offers a good alternative to New York, Philadelphia and Washington, business travelers have few alternatives to air beyond this range. For most trips to other parts of the country, the convenience and speed of air travel is compelling. And with the emergence of low fare service, an increasing percentage of New England-based leisure travelers have come to prefer air travel as well.

Economy

Some economists believe that economic growth will flow toward areas with a critical mass of people who are creative, enterprising, and collaborative.¹ This "creative class," scientists, engineers, academics, doctors, and media professionals, seek to locate in places that exhibit certain qualities. These include an appreciation of individual merit, a tolerant social environment, an academic atmosphere, and opportunities to participate in active, outdoor recreational pursuits. New England fits this profile in a number of ways: the number of educational institutions, the culturally and ethnically diverse cities, the heritage of independent thinking, and easy access to a wide range of recreational experiences. As just one example of the existence of this type of economy in New England, the percentage of New England's jobs in the medical, educational, and "information" fields is nearly 20 percent - as compared to just under 15 percent for the country as a whole.²

¹Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*

²As of February 2006, "New England Economic Indicators," Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, April 2006.

While advances in telecommunications and information technology have substituted to some degree for face-to-face communication, there still is a tremendous reliance on travel among participants in the knowledge industries. And the region's acknowledged national leadership in education and medicine also tend to support the use of air travel. Researchers, medical professionals, patients, faculty, students, and conference participants travel to and from New England in great numbers and they do it by air.

Finally, international markets are increasing in importance for the New England economy. This is especially true of the rapidly developing Asian economies which are expanding in sectors (high technology, communications, etc.) that are of relevance to New England's own economy. The correspondence between these economies naturally contributes to the region's high rate of business air travel.

Population

Income and education levels that are well above the national average characterize the region's population. The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that two of the 5 most affluent states are Massachusetts and Connecticut. These higher incomes support higher levels of leisure air travel. This has been further stimulated by the expansion of low fare airlines throughout the New England market. And it is yet to be determined the extent to



The degree to which the New England economy relies on its airports can be seen by considering a few other facts: in 2004, over 45 million people traveled by air from a New England airport to destinations in all 50 states and numerous countries. Over 700 metric tons of cargo - from electronic components and fresh flowers to tuna and maple syrup - was transported by aircraft from Logan Airport.

Airports are also a very important center of business activity in the region. It is estimated that the combined impact of revenues and payrolls generated by the NERASP airports exceeds 13 billion dollars per year.

which leisure travel will grow, as baby boomers enter retirement with higher levels of disposable income and greater inclinations to travel than previous generations.



Scenic and Cultural Resources

It has been said that had the United States been settled from West to East, all of New England would today be a national park. While that may be debatable, what is less debatable is that a sensational landscape is the touchstone of the New England regional identity. The New England landscape is alive with spectacle, variety, and compelling natural beauty. It speaks to all of us: natives, long-time residents and even the college students who come, graduate and decide to stick around awhile. A natural magnet for tourism, the New England landscape is a human-scale panorama. It extends from the embrace of the Housatonic Valley to the hilly sanctuaries of the Berkshires; from the lakes of Central Massachusetts to the Maine coast; from the salt marshes of Cape Cod to Vermont's Mount Mansfield; and from the kettle ponds of Rhode Island's South County to the majestic Presidential Range of New Hampshire. There are few geographic brands as successful as "made in New England," whether the product being sold is fall foliage, ski vacations, striper fishing, or maple syrup. Of course, the ultimate New England "product" is much of our national heritage; this includes, for example, pilgrims' landings, sea trading, whaling, ship building, and the first shots fired in the war for independence. These qualities make New England a popular destination for

travelers from throughout the country and abroad, and they travel here overwhelmingly by air.

Summary

The special attributes discussed above - involving geography, economy, population and resources - are essential ingredients in the formation of the New England identity. And these attributes tend to support one another. For example, the cultural and scenic qualities of the region are one of the "qualities" that attract "creative class" industries; and the existence of these industries produces a population with higher levels of income and education. And the factor that weaves these attributes together is air transportation. It provides the ready two-way access between New England and the national and international markets essential for the function of

the region's economy and the lifestyle of its population.

It was the recognition of this reliance of New England on air transportation services that forged the alliance of the region's state aviation agencies and major airports, and motivated them to undertake this study. Given this understanding of why New Englanders fly 80 percent more frequently than the national rate, it is essential to have a strategy for developing an airport system that supports the aspirations of the region's population and industries. This report describes both the analytical underpinnings and the specific actions comprising such a strategy for ensuring the vitality of the regional airport system through the next twenty years. ✈



An example of how New England leads in knowledge industries is demonstrated by its role in medical training. Nearly 10 percent of the 375 member institutions of the Council of Teaching Hospitals (COTH), which represents the best hospitals in the country, are located in New England. Massachusetts alone, the cornerstone of the New England medical sector, is home to 16 COTH member institutions, nearly one-half the New England total.