



## Airport Master Plan

---

# KANSAS CITY DOWNTOWN AIRPORT – WHEELER FIELD

Appendix E

# Economic Impact Study





## Airport Economic Impact Study

# KANSAS CITY DOWNTOWN AIRPORT - WHEELER FIELD



# AIRPORT ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY



## Kansas City Downtown Airport – Wheeler Field Kansas City, Missouri

Prepared by

**Kimley»»Horn**

Under the Airport Master Plan project being led by:



2023



## Contents

I.	Executive Summary .....	1
1.	Introduction .....	3
	Kansas City Regional Overview .....	3
2.	Study Background .....	5
	Sources of Economic Activity at Airports .....	5
	Airport Administration.....	6
	Airport Capital Expenditures.....	6
	Business Tenants .....	6
	Visitor Spending .....	7
	Measures of Economic Impact .....	7
	Economic Impact Levels .....	8
	Study Methodology.....	9
	Data Collection and Assumptions .....	9
	Estimating Impacts Using IMPLAN .....	11
3.	Economic Impact of MKC .....	12
	On-Airport Impacts .....	12
	Direct Impacts of On-Airport Activities.....	12
	Multiplier Impacts of On-Airport Activities.....	13
	Total Impacts of On-Airport Activity.....	13
	Off-Airport Impacts.....	14
	Direct Impacts of Off-Airport Activity.....	14
	Multiplier Impacts of Off-Airport Activity.....	14
	Total Impacts of Off-Airport Activity .....	15
	Total Airport Impacts .....	15
4.	Airport Economic Impact Summary.....	16
5.	Qualitative Benefits of MKC .....	16
	Critical Care and Transfer Center at Children’s Mercy Hospital of Kansas City.....	16
	Angel Flight Central.....	18
	Professional Sports Supported by MKC .....	19
	ATD Flight Systems.....	21
	WildBlue Aircraft Sales.....	22





## List of Tables

Table 1-1. Overview of Historic and Future Socioeconomic Trends in the Kansas City MSA (2002-2042) ..	5
Table 1-2. Comparison of Socioeconomic Trends between the United States and Kansas City MSA .....	5
Table 2-1. Economic Impact Level Definitions .....	8
Table 3-1. Direct Impacts of On-Airport Activities .....	12
Table 3-2. Multiplier Impacts of On-Airport Activities .....	13
Table 3-3. Total Impacts of On-Airport Activity .....	14
Table 3-4. Direct Impacts of Off-Airport Activity .....	14
Table 3-5. Multiplier Impacts of Off-Airport Activity.....	15
Table 3-6. Total Impacts of Off-Airport Activity .....	15
Table 3-7. Total Impacts of All Airport Activity .....	16

## List of Figures

Figure I-1. Total Annual Economic Impacts of MKC .....	2
Figure 1-1. Aerial Image of MKC.....	4
Figure 2-1. Sources of On- and Off-Airport Economic Activities at MKC.....	6
Figure 2-2. Relationship of Economic Impact Measures .....	7
Figure 2-3. Cycle of Economic Impact .....	9



## I. Executive Summary

The Kansas City Downtown Airport - Wheeler Field (MKC) is a general aviation facility located in the heart of Kansas City. Owned and operated by the Kansas City Aviation Department, MKC serves as an economic generator for the Kansas City region. The Airport provides an essential link between the Kansas City region and the larger air transportation network for many residents and businesses who utilize general aviation services. By offering corporate aviation facilities needed to transport people and goods in and out of the area, MKC supports numerous business tenants at the Airport, facilitates air cargo movements, serves as a base for air medical operations, and much more. This economic impact study quantifies the significant annual economic contribution of the Airport to the region and highlights the tremendous qualitative value of the Airport to the local community.

The Airport generates economic impact from on- and off-airport activities, including:

- **Airport Administration** – includes airport management, airport operations, and contracted services
- **Airport Capital Expenditures** – includes airport construction projects
- **Business Tenants** – includes business tenant operations and tenant construction projects
- **Visitor Spending** – includes spending by non-local travelers in the Kansas City region

Three measures of economic impact are used to represent the results of this study, which include jobs, payroll, and output. **Jobs** represent the number of employed people dependent on the Airport, **payroll** represents the value of wages and benefits generated from those jobs, and **output** represents the expenditures needed to administer the Airport, sales of goods and services by business tenants, budget expenditures by public agencies located on airports, costs of capital expenditures, and visitor spending.

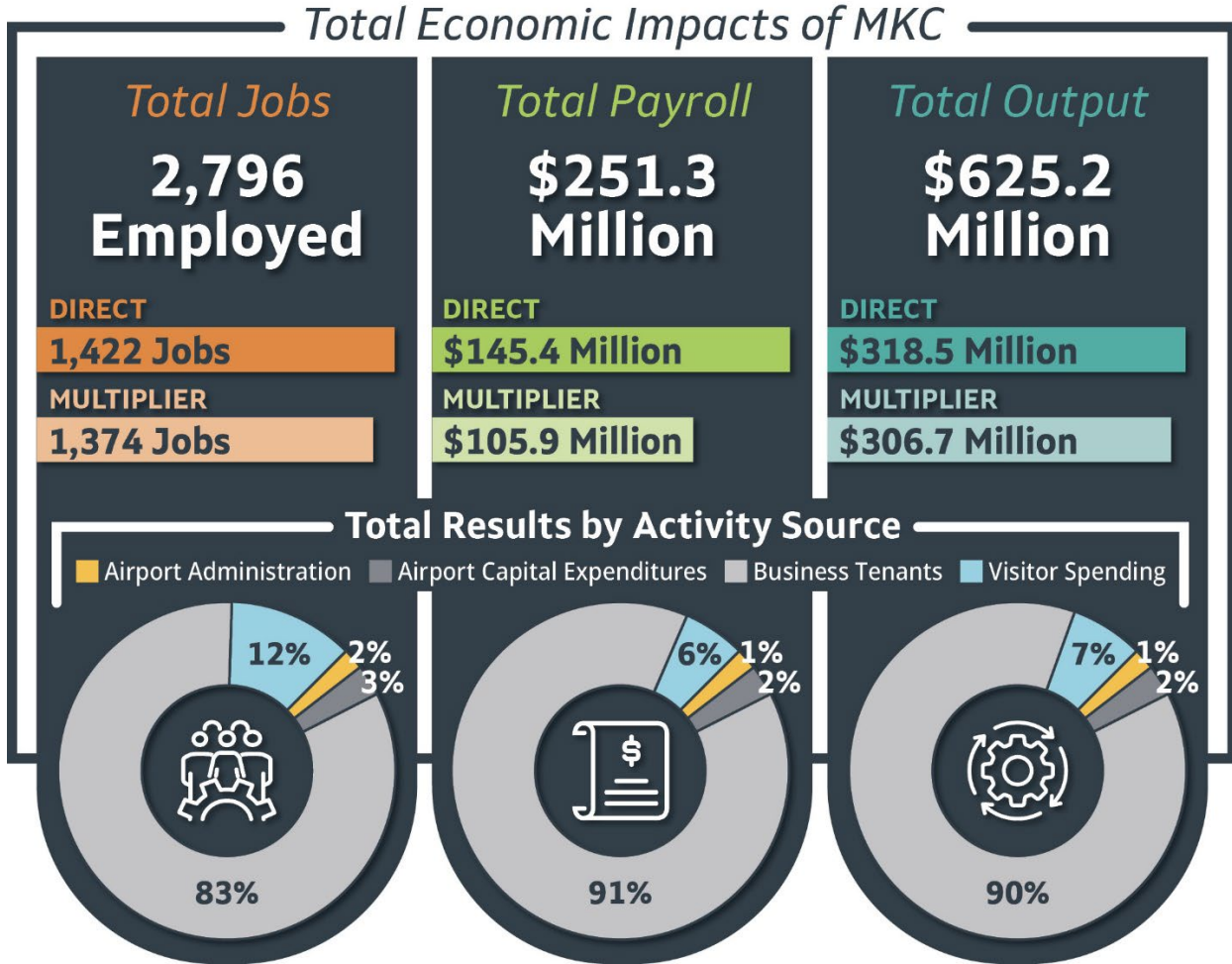
To describe where in the economic cycle the impacts are being generated, this study identified the direct, multiplier (indirect and induced), and total impact of each source of economic activity, expressed by the three measures: jobs, payroll, and output. **Direct** impacts represent the initial effects of on- and off-airport activity which is generated by or because of the Airport. **Multiplier** impacts are the combination of indirect and induced impacts. *Indirect* impacts occur when businesses associated with direct impacts buy goods and services from other businesses in the Kansas City region (also called supplier sales), and *induced* impacts occur when employees associated with direct or indirect activity spend their income on goods and services within the region (also called income re-spending). The sum of direct and multiplier impacts represent the total impact of the Airport.

**Figure I-1** presents the total impacts of all activity, including the separation of direct and multiplier impacts, and provides the source of the impacts by activity (airport administration, airport capital expenditures, business tenants, and visitor spending). Results indicate that almost 2,800 jobs are supported with an associated payroll of more than \$251 million and a total output of over \$625 million, annually. Much of the data used in this study was collected directly from MKC, business tenants, and visitors via an extensive survey period. Any data that was not available from primary sources was collected from verified secondary sources and all data were modeled in IMPLAN, an industry-leading economic modeling program.





Figure I-1. Total Annual Economic Impacts of MKC



Sources: IMPLAN, Kansas City Downtown Airport - Wheeler Field, Business Tenants, Kimley-Horn. Note: Dollar values are rounded to the nearest thousand, therefore totals may not sum due to rounding.



## 1. Introduction

Airports are economic drivers in their communities, providing an array of employment opportunities, helping to attract new businesses, retaining existing businesses, supporting the movement of goods in and out of the region, and providing air transportation for business and leisure travelers. Quantifying the economic impact of airport activity is an important step for an airport to take as it not only demonstrates to the broader public the value of the airport within the regional economy but can also validate and garner continued support for future investment into the facility. For this reason, as part of the ongoing Airport Master Plan process, the Kansas City Downtown Airport - Wheeler Field (MKC or Airport) completed an airport economic impact study (AEIS) to determine the annual economic contribution of the Airport based on 2022 activity.

This study provides an overview of the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which was selected as the study region, then defines important economic impact terms and details the methodology used to model MKC's economic impact. Following that contextual information, the economic impact of MKC is presented by activity type and in total followed by a discussion on the qualitative benefits that the Airport brings to the region.

### Kansas City Regional Overview

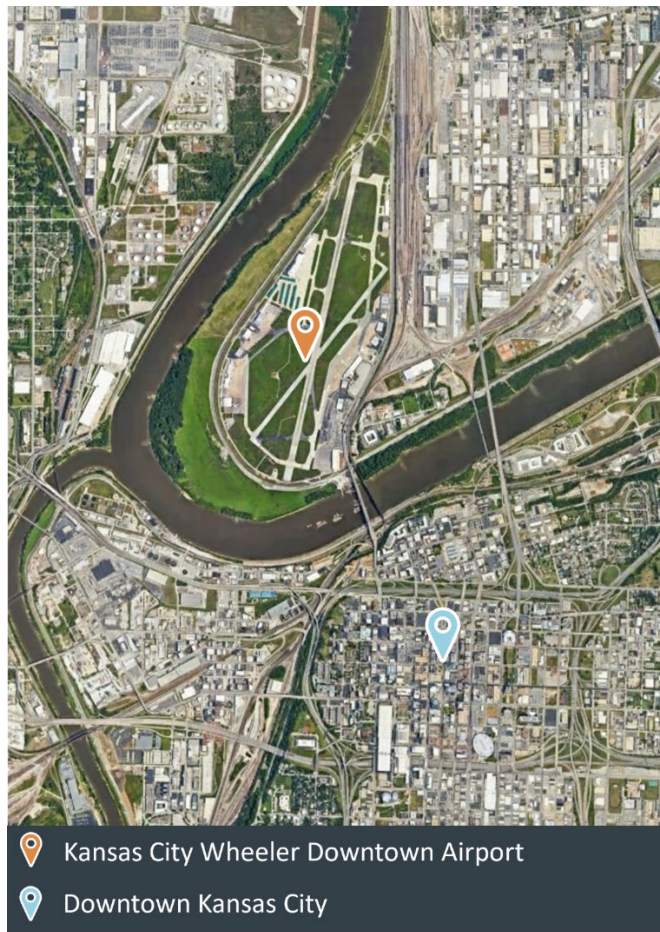
MKC is a general aviation (GA) airport located in downtown Kansas City, Missouri. Opened in 1927 as the "Kansas City Municipal Airport," the Airport provided commercial flights for various airlines and served as the original headquarters for Trans World Airlines (TWA). However, the role of the Airport shifted in the 1960s when jet and passenger traffic increased, and the airfield became too congested and could no longer support the demand of commercial service aircraft. As a result, the Kansas City International Airport (MCI) opened in 1972 as a separate commercial service airport to accommodate MKC's commercial service activity. MKC was rebranded and renamed the Kansas City Wheeler Downtown Airport and became the premier downtown GA facility that it is today, offering charter services, aircraft maintenance and sales, flight schools, and ground transportation while also supporting numerous business tenants on the airfield.

MKC is located less than one mile from downtown Kansas City, just northwest of the city center, across from the Missouri River in Clay County. The location of the Airport in relation to downtown Kansas City is shown in **Figure 1-1**.





Figure 1-1. Aerial Image of MKC



Source: Google Earth Pro.

According to socioeconomic data collected from Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., the current population for the Kansas City MSA is 2.22 million people. In 2002, the population was approximately 1.86 million, which equates to a 19 percent growth over the past two decades. It is anticipated that the population will grow another 13 percent over the next 20 years, totaling 2.5 million people in 2042. The historic and future projected growth result in an estimated 34 percent total increase in population from 2002 to 2042, as shown in **Table 1-1**. **Table 1-1** also presents the historic and anticipated future growth in total employment and gross regional product (GRP) for the Kansas City MSA. An estimated 345,916 jobs are expected to be added to the regional economy in the next 20 years. In 2002 the GRP was slightly less than \$100 billion and by 2022 the GRP grew approximately 42 percent to \$136 billion. Over the next 20 years, the GRP is projected to increase to slightly more than \$200 billion, which is roughly \$64 billion more between 2022 and 2042. These projections indicate a growing economy, with more jobs and increased population which results in more demand on the city’s infrastructure, including MKC.



**Table 1-1. Overview of Historic and Future Socioeconomic Trends in the Kansas City MSA (2002-2042)**

Indicator	Historic: 2002	Current: 2022	Future: 2042	2002-2022 % Change	2022-2042 % Change	2002-2042 % Change
Population	1,858,778	2,215,629	2,499,208	19%	13%	34%
Employment	1,199,998	1,450,767	1,796,683	21%	24%	50%
GRP	\$96,147,287,000	\$136,433,685,000	\$200,184,961,000	42%	47%	108%

Sources: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., Kimley-Horn.

The compound annual growth rates (CAGRs) of these socioeconomic indicators: population, employment, and GRP, between 2002 and 2042 are compared to the CAGRs of these same indicators on the national level in **Table 1-2**. As shown, the population CAGR for Kansas City and the United States (U.S.) are equal, while the employment and GRP CAGR are comparable, with U.S. employment and gross domestic product (GDP) increasing by 0.2 percent faster on a year over year basis than the Kansas City MSA. As a note, gross domestic product (GDP) is used as an equivalent measure to GRP, except GDP is calculated at the national level instead of the regional level.

**Table 1-2. Comparison of Socioeconomic Trends between the United States and Kansas City MSA**

Indicator	2002-2042 Kansas City MSA CAGR	2002-2042 U.S. CAGR
Population	0.7%	0.7%
Employment	1.0%	1.2%
GRP/GDP	1.8%	2.0%

Sources: Woods and Poole Economics, Inc., Kimley-Horn.

As the economy in the Kansas City region continues to flourish, demand for airport services at MKC will continue to increase. The location of MKC creates a convenient and efficient link for business travelers, medevac operations, and cargo transport (among others) as evidenced by extensive usage and reliance on the Airport.

## 2. Study Background

The following sections provide important information for interpreting the results presented in **Section 3. Economic Impact of MKC**. This information details the types of activity accounted for in this study, defines the economic impact measures and levels used to present results, and presents the methodology employed to determine the current economic contribution of MKC.

### Sources of Economic Activity at Airports

There are a wide variety of activities that occur both on and off an airport that contribute to a facility's overall economic impact. For MKC, there are four sources of economic activity included in this study, which are organized by on- and off-airport activities, as shown in **Figure 2-1**. A summary of the types of activities included in these sources is presented in the following sections.





Figure 2-1. Sources of On- and Off-Airport Economic Activities at MKC

On-Airport	Off-Airport
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Airport Administration</li> <li>Airport Capital Expenditures</li> <li>Business Tenants</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitor Spending</li> </ul>

Source: Kimley-Horn.

### Airport Administration

Airport administration is a catchall term that encompasses the day-to-day operations occurring on an airport and the staff necessary to support these operations. It is important to note that day-to-day airport operations can be conducted by staff who are directly employed by the airport (airport-sponsored employees), as well as employees working under contracts utilized by an airport (contract employees). Airport-sponsored employees typically perform the administrative functions of an airport such as airport management and other airport business operations. Airport-sponsored employees may also perform airport maintenance and airport operations functions, like ground services duties. The airport sponsor may also opt to contract out some functions such as landscaping, janitorial or laundry services, mechanical services, and others. These contract employees and/or firms are included within the airport administration activity source. By definition, activity in this source is considered on-airport activity.

### Airport Capital Expenditures

Airport capital expenditures are the costs associated with airport construction projects which may include facility improvements, airfield or terminal expansions, or large-scale maintenance projects on an airport. Capital expenditures do not include routine maintenance or general operations and maintenance expenditures (these are accounted for in the airport administration activity source). Airports may build new hangars, extend runways, reconstruct taxiways, expand terminals, and ground transportation parking lots, and more. These activities generate economic activity because of the jobs supported by the construction work or other type of work performed, including professional services (e.g., planning and engineering design services). Airport capital expenditures are considered an on-airport activity.

### Business Tenants

Airport tenants are businesses located on an airport who lease property and have employees at their on-airport location. These airport tenants may include aviation-related businesses such as Fixed-Base Operators (FBOs), flight schools, and aircraft maintenance businesses, or non-aviation-related businesses such as marketing agencies, warehousing, or other professional services that are conducted on airport property. Business tenants produce economic activity via their employment and day-to-day operations, as well as from the capital expenditures made by these businesses. Business tenants may incur capital expenses as they expand or rehabilitate their facilities. Economic impact pertaining to tenants' capital expenditures is often minimal and is therefore presented in conjunction with other impacts of airport tenant activity, rather than being presented separately as airport capital expenditures are. It is important to note that this category does not include private aircraft owners who hangar their aircraft at an airport and are not associated with an on-airport business. Those impacts are accounted for under "Airport Administration" as an airport may receive revenues from hangar leases and may also generate revenue from fuel sales. Airport tenant activity is considered an on-airport activity.



## Visitor Spending

Visitor spending is the only off-airport activity source accounted for in this study. When visitors fly into Kansas City via MKC from outside the region and spend money in the area on hotels, food and beverage, entertainment, retail, ground transportation, and more, they are adding new money into the region’s economy and their spending supports jobs and business activity across several industries. The economic impact generated from visitor spending is attributable to the Airport because these visitors would not have brought their money into the economy if it weren’t for the Airport facilitating their arrival. It is important to note that only passengers arriving from outside of the Kansas City MSA were considered for the visitor spending analysis. These “true visitors” can be traveling for business, leisure, or both and are counted in the analysis whether they stay less than a day or multiple days.

## Measures of Economic Impact

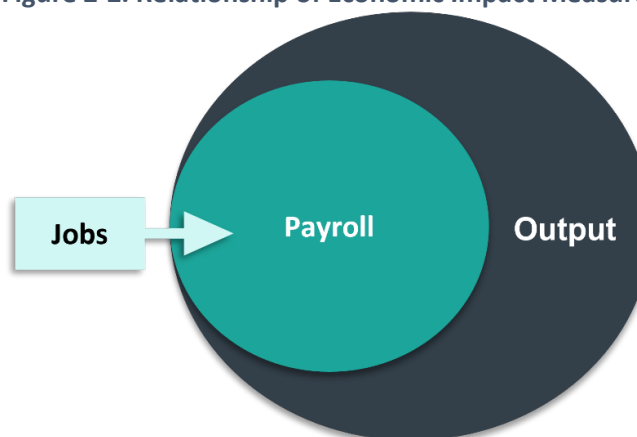
Economic impact measures are used to describe the type of impact generated from on- and off-airport activity described in **Sources of Economic Activity at Airports**.

There are three measures used to quantify the economic impact of MKC: jobs, payroll, and output. **Jobs** represent the number of employed people supported by the Airport’s presence and associated with payroll and output. It is the only measure not presented in a dollar value. It is important to note that jobs are representative of total employment headcount and not a full-time equivalent (FTE) count based on full-time and part-time employment. More information on the use of FTE is presented in **Estimating Impacts Using IMPLAN**.

The **payroll** measure is the value of the total salaries, including wages and benefits, that are earned by the identified jobs.

Finally, **output**, sometimes referred to as business revenues or even economic impact, represents the expenditures needed to administer the Airport, sales of goods and services by business tenants, budget expenditures by public agencies located on airports, costs of capital expenditures, and visitor spending. It is important to note that even though payroll and output are both expressed in terms of dollars, these measures cannot be summed, as payroll is a component of output. **Figure 2-2** presents an illustration of the relationship between jobs, payroll, and output.

**Figure 2-2. Relationship of Economic Impact Measures**



*Source: Kimley-Horn.*



## Economic Impact Levels





The economic impact levels of direct, indirect, and induced are commonly used to describe where in the economic cycle the impact is being generated and are used to derive total economic impact.

**Direct** impacts are those that occur directly from on- and off-airport activity supported by an airport. Examples of this include airport-sponsored or contract jobs, the wages of an airport tenant’s staff, or the revenue of a sports venue which is supported by visitors arriving to the region via the airport.

**Indirect** impacts are generated when a share of direct business revenues is used to buy goods and services from another business in the region to support their operations. Examples of this include a business tenant outsourcing annual tax preparation, or a sports venue purchasing training equipment from a local manufacturer. When this business-to-business spending occurs, it supports jobs, payroll, and output from the other business selling their services and goods (in this example, the tax accountants and manufacturers). These indirect impacts are sometimes referred to as “supplier sales.”

**Induced** impacts occur when the income earned by direct and indirect jobs is spent on goods and services in the region. Examples of this include when airport-sponsored employees (an example of direct jobs) and employees of the local training equipment manufacturers (an example of indirect jobs) spend their wages in the community, such as tickets to a professional sports game or paying contractors for home repair. As these employees spend their wages in the local community, their spending supports a portion of those local jobs at the other businesses (in this example – sports venues and home contractors). These induced impacts are sometimes referred to as “income re-spending.” **Table 2-1** includes definitions for each of the three impact levels.

**Table 2-1. Economic Impact Level Definitions**

Impact Level		Definition
	 <b>Direct</b>	The starting point of economic impacts generated from the immediate effects of on- and off-airport activity sources, including the initial impacts of airport administration, airport capital expenditures, business tenants, as well as spending from visitors.
<b>Multiplier Impacts</b>	 <b>Indirect</b>	One of two multiplier effects generated from direct impact activities. Occurs when businesses associated with direct impacts buy goods and or services from other businesses in the Kansas City region. This is sometimes referred to as “supplier sales.”
	 <b>Induced</b>	The other multiplier effect generated from direct and indirect impact activities. Occurs when workers associated with direct or indirect activity spend their income on goods or services in the Kansas City region. This is sometimes referred to as “income re-spending.”
	 <b>Total Impact</b>	The sum of the direct and multiplier (indirect and induced) impacts.

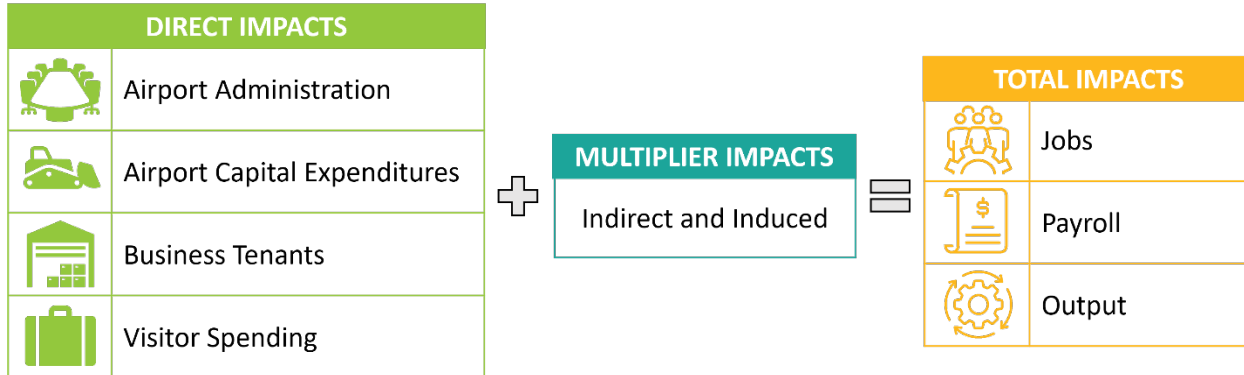
Source: Kimley-Horn.





**Figure 2-3** presents an overview of the economic impact cycle showing how direct jobs, payroll, and output from on- and off-airport activities spur additional indirect and induced jobs, payroll, and output that when summed, result in a total economic impact.

**Figure 2-3. Cycle of Economic Impact**



Source: Kimley-Horn.

## Study Methodology

This section documents the data collection process and type of data collected for each of the aviation activities included in the analysis. Following the overview of the data collection process is a summary of how IMPLAN, an industry-accepted economic modeling software, is used to fill gaps in missing data and generate the indirect and induced impacts of direct activity occurring on- and off-MKC.

### Data Collection and Assumptions

The data collection process included the development of three brief surveys, one for MKC Airport management to complete, one for business tenants to complete, and one for passengers departing from MKC to complete. The information collected in these surveys is summarized in the following sections.

#### *Airport Administration*

An in-person site visit was conducted to collect the Airport administration data. The Airport management team provided information on the number of staff employed by the Airport, the type of jobs performed by employees, data on contract employees and firms, payroll, operational expenses, capital expenditures (see **Airport Capital Expenditures**), and a listing of businesses that rely on the Airport although not necessarily located at the Airport. In addition, the Airport also provided a list of the tenants on the airfield that would need to be contacted for this analysis. More information about the tenant data collection is shared in **Business Tenants**.

#### *Airport Capital Expenditures*

Capital expenditure information necessary to determine the direct and multiplier impacts of on-airport construction was collected from Airport management. Historic capital expenditure data was requested to develop an average annual capital expenditure cost to be used in the economic modeling process. Developing an average annual capital expenditure cost is important because capital projects and spending can significantly fluctuate year to year. Using only the capital expenditures from the study year could artificially over or underestimate the impacts of construction on an annual basis if the Airport had a year of significant spending (e.g., a large-scale capital project) or a year of minimal spending (e.g.,



between large programs). As such, using an average annual capital expenditure amount levels out the year over year variance for this input, creating a more accurate picture of the annual impacts of on-airport construction and other capital expenditures.

### ***Business Tenants***

The business tenant structure at MKC is unique, with some tenant leases being administered directly by the Airport (five) and other tenant leases being administered by another tenant, as subtenants (21). Each one of these tenants were contacted and surveyed. The information requested from tenants included employment and payroll information, as well as capital expenditure information, so an average annual capital expenditure amount could be calculated and used in the modeling process.

### ***Visitor Spending***

To estimate the number of true visitors traveling to the Kansas City region via MKC, flight operations data was obtained from Flight Aware, an online flight tracking software. Data was purchased from this vendor for all operations into and out of MKC for calendar year 2022. This dataset includes details on annual operations at MKC, including the aircraft N-number, type of aircraft, aircraft owner and owner location, as well as the destination and origin airport for each operation, and date and time of arrival and departure.

To calculate the total visitors arriving through MKC, all operations were filtered to exclude operations of any aircraft that is based at MKC utilizing a list of aircraft N-numbers for all aircraft based at the Airport. This filter was applied to identify the number of operations that were likely to have brought passengers from outside of the Kansas City region to the area who spent money in the region and outside the Airport. Next, each aircraft type associated with this subset of operations was assigned a seating capacity based on the make and model provided in the Flight Aware dataset. After assigning the estimated number of seats on all the aircraft arriving at MKC, a load factor was applied to reflect industry averages for private aviation as GA aircraft are rarely operating at full capacity. This multi-step assessment resulted in an estimate of over 72,500 total GA visitors arriving annually via MKC.

With the total number of GA visitors arriving through MKC established, the next step was to determine an average spending per visitor amount. This was estimated using multiple sources. First, responses from the online visitor survey developed for MKC (referred to as the MKC Visitor Survey) were reviewed. The visitor survey conducted at MKC resulted in 50 responses from passengers. Of these 50 surveys, 31 responded that they were visiting from outside the broader Kansas City metropolitan area, and of those, 17 responses confirmed the total amount of money spent while visiting the Kansas City area.

Due to this relatively low number of usable survey responses, it was necessary to compare these results to peer airports' published visitor spending results. MKC is classified as a National airport in the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) 2023-2027 National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). Peer airports selected for comparison include eight airports that are also classified as National in the NPIAS and serve a similar role as MKC in their local regions and in the national airspace system (NAS). A review of recently completed AEISs for these peer airports was conducted to identify the per visitor spending amounts used for comparison to the results of the MKC Visitor Survey. The MKC Visitor Survey, along with the peer airports included in this review, resulted in an average per visitor spending of \$358 per trip. This per trip spending amount is multiplied by the number of visitors to determine an estimate for direct visitor spending.



## Estimating Impacts Using IMPLAN

As previously noted, the IMPLAN model was used in this study to estimate the annual economic contribution of MKC. IMPLAN is the most widely used input-output (I/O) economic model in the U.S. The model is built using data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), U.S. Census, and U.S. Department of Commerce. IMPLAN Version 6.4, the most recent version, was used to model the economic impact of MKC, which reflects the current economic measures (i.e., jobs, payroll, and output) for 564 industry classifications. The IMPLAN model for this study was calibrated specific to the economy and industry relationships within the Kansas City MSA. The primary data collected from the project's surveying efforts were added to the IMPLAN model, then the IMPLAN model was used in the following three ways:

- 1. Fill in data gaps to estimate direct impacts:** IMPLAN can estimate the three measures of economic impact previously noted: jobs, payroll, and output as long as at least one of the measures is known. For example, when only the number of jobs is known for an airport tenant, IMPLAN can generate the associated payroll and output based on the type of job and industry. This is often required as tenants can be hesitant to divulge salary information or revenues. When only the output is known (such as in the case of capital expenditures or visitor spending), IMPLAN can generate the employment and payroll associated with that construction or total spending amount. In some instances, two of the three measures are known where IMPLAN will estimate the third. For example, when payroll and output (business revenues or sales) are known but employment isn't, IMPLAN will estimate an employee headcount (jobs) associated with the provided inputs. It is important to note that IMPLAN uses headcount under the consideration that the payroll information provided includes both full- and part-time wages.

IMPLAN does this using industry ratios which are derived primarily from county-specific U.S. Department of Commerce and Department of Labor data sets calibrated in the model which are aggregated to the selected region, in this case the Kansas City MSA. These ratios reflect a measure of productivity (business output per employee) and income levels based on the number of jobs for each industry on-airport and in hospitality sectors (for visitor spending).

- 2. Apply retail margining:** While spending on retail reflects the purchase price of an item sold, only a portion of the purchase price is recognized as actual revenue for the retail store. This portion, referred to as margin costs, reflects the "mark-up" value that retail stores add to the price of goods to cover their operating costs and profit. Only the mark-up on the retail item produces revenue and economic activity for local retailers. Revenue generated by that mark-up supports employee payroll and operating costs of the business (e.g., rents, utilities, capital, and other expenses), not the gross revenue collected by the retail business or industry. To isolate the revenues that accrue to retailers, the margin percentage was applied to the value of all retail goods sold. For example, if retail sales at a local souvenir shop total \$800,000, they may have only profited \$500,000 of these sales since it may have cost the business \$300,000 to purchase the items for sale from wholesalers or distributors. This concept is referred to as retail margining and was applied to accurately reflect the economic impacts of retail spending as it relates to the visitor spending impacts. It is important to note that retail margining only applies to the retail spending conducted by visitors to the Kansas City region and does not apply to the businesses at MKC as there are no retail tenants at the Airport.





- 3. Derive multiplier impacts:** IMPLAN’s I/O model traces the flows of money in an economy using patterns of industry purchases and sales with other industries (for indirect impacts) and patterns of householding spending (for induced impacts). These patterns are used to demonstrate how revenues earned in direct transactions have subsequent impacts in an economy. For MKC, IMPLAN was used to trace the circulation of output, using these industry relationships, to calculate the extent to which indirect and induced activity (multiplier impacts) support additional jobs and payroll for the people in the Kansas City MSA, and additional revenues for businesses. Put simply, IMPLAN is used to calculate the indirect and induced impacts based on the direct activity occurring on- and off-airport.

### 3. Economic Impact of MKC

The following sections present the results of the MKC AEIS. The results are organized by on-airport and off-airport impacts before presenting the total impact of both on- and off-airport activities. Within each section the impacts are also presented by level, including direct, multiplier (indirect and induced), and total impacts. This presentation provides a granular breakdown of the economic impact generated by MKC in terms of activity source and where the impacts are occurring within the economic cycle. As a note, the results presented in this section are in current dollars.

#### On-Airport Impacts

As noted in previous sections, on-airport impacts include activity from Airport administration, Airport capital expenditures, and business tenants.

#### Direct Impacts of On-Airport Activities

As shown in **Table 3-1**, there are 29 direct jobs associated with Airport administration activity, which includes 24 Airport-sponsored employees and five employees associated with services contracted out by the Airport. These 29 jobs support approximately \$1.9 million in direct payroll, and a direct output of approximately \$3.7 million. Direct impacts of Airport capital expenditures supported 36 jobs, associated with almost \$3.0 million in payroll, and \$7.3 million in direct output. The 27 business tenants (and the capital expenditures associated with those tenants) supported 1,131 jobs, which generated approximately \$131.8 million in payroll, and approximately \$285.5 million in direct output. When combined, the *direct* impacts of on-airport activity support 1,196 jobs, approximately \$136.7 million in payroll, and \$296.4 million in output.

**Table 3-1. Direct Impacts of On-Airport Activities**

Activity Source	Jobs	Payroll	Output
Airport Administration	29	\$1,927,000	\$3,700,000
<i>Airport Employees</i>	24	\$1,800,000	\$3,499,000
<i>Airport Contract Services</i>	5	\$127,000	\$201,000
Airport Capital Expenditures	36	\$2,973,000	\$7,258,000
Business Tenants	1,131	\$131,767,000	\$285,451,000
<b>Combined On-Airport Direct Impacts</b>	<b>1,196</b>	<b>\$136,667,000</b>	<b>\$296,409,000</b>

*Sources: IMPLAN, Kansas City Wheeler Downtown Airport, Business Tenants, Kimley-Horn. Note: Dollar values are rounded to the nearest thousand, therefore totals may not sum due to rounding.*



## Multiplier Impacts of On-Airport Activities

**Table 3-2** presents the indirect and induced impacts of on-airport activity, including Airport administration, capital expenditures, and tenant activities. As shown, there were 6 indirect and 13 induced jobs associated with Airport administration which includes Airport employment and contract services. These jobs supported \$353,000 in indirect and \$704,000 in induced payroll impacts, generating approximately \$1.2 million in indirect and \$3.2 million in induced output impacts related to airport administration.

Indirect and induced impacts associated with airport capital expenditures supported 15 and 21 jobs, respectively, which supported approximately \$2.5 million in payroll and almost \$7.5 million in output when the multiplier impacts are combined.

The business tenant impacts, which include both employment and capital expenditures, supported 485 indirect and 720 induced jobs, which resulted in a combined multiplier impact of \$95.1 million in payroll, and approximately \$273.3 million in output, when indirect and induced impacts are combined. The multiplier impacts of all on-airport activities combined include 1,260 jobs, approximately \$98.6 million in payroll, and \$285.2 million in output.

**Table 3-2. Multiplier Impacts of On-Airport Activities**

Activity Source	Impact	Jobs	Payroll	Output
Airport Administration	Indirect	6	\$353,000	\$1,183,000
	Induced	13	\$704,000	\$3,221,000
<i>Airport Employees</i>	<i>Indirect</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>\$329,000</i>	<i>\$1,118,000</i>
	<i>Induced</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>\$658,000</i>	<i>\$3,081,000</i>
<i>Airport Contract Services</i>	<i>Indirect</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>\$23,000</i>	<i>\$65,000</i>
	<i>Induced</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>\$46,000</i>	<i>\$140,000</i>
Airport Capital Expenditures	Indirect	15	\$1,188,000	\$3,576,000
	Induced	21	\$1,284,000	\$3,888,000
Business Tenants	Indirect	485	\$41,512,000	\$111,203,000
	Induced	720	\$53,549,000	\$162,136,000
<i>Subtotal On-Airport Indirect Impacts</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>506</i>	<i>\$43,052,000</i>	<i>\$115,962,000</i>
<i>Subtotal On-Airport Induced Impacts</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>754</i>	<i>\$55,537,000</i>	<i>\$169,245,000</i>
<b>Combined On-Airport Multiplier Impacts</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>1,260</b>	<b>\$98,589,000</b>	<b>\$285,207,000</b>

*Sources: IMPLAN, Kimley-Horn. Note: Dollar values are rounded to the nearest thousand, therefore totals may not sum due to rounding.*

## Total Impacts of On-Airport Activity

The total impacts of on-airport activity are presented in **Table 3-3**. As shown, the total number of jobs, payroll, and output associated with Airport capital expenditures are higher than the total impacts associated with Airport administration, however, business tenant impacts were the highest out of all activity sources. Airport administration supported 48 jobs when accounting for direct, indirect, and induced impacts. These 48 jobs supported almost \$3.0 million in total payroll, which is associated with \$8.1 million in total output. Airport capital expenditures supported 72 jobs throughout the economic cycle, which generated approximately \$5.5 million in payroll and approximately \$14.7 million in output. There were 2,336 jobs attributable to airport tenant activity, which generated almost \$227.0 million in



total payroll and approximately \$558.8 million in total output. When direct and multiplier impacts are combined, there are a total of 2,456 jobs associated with all on-airport activity, resulting in approximately \$235.3 million in payroll, and approximately \$581.6 million in total output.

**Table 3-3. Total Impacts of On-Airport Activity**

Activity Source	Jobs	Payroll	Output
Airport Administration	48	\$2,983,000	\$8,104,000
<i>Airport Employees</i>	41	<i>\$2,787,000</i>	<i>\$7,698,000</i>
<i>Airport Contract Services</i>	7	<i>\$196,000</i>	<i>\$406,000</i>
Airport Capital Expenditures	72	\$5,445,000	\$14,722,000
Business Tenants	2,336	\$226,828,000	\$558,790,000
<b>Total On-Airport Impacts</b>	<b>2,456</b>	<b>\$235,256,000</b>	<b>\$581,616,000</b>

*Sources: IMPLAN, Kansas City Wheeler Downtown Airport, Business Tenants, Kimley-Horn. Note: Dollar values are rounded to the nearest thousand, therefore totals may not sum due to rounding.*

## Off-Airport Impacts

The off-airport activity accounted for in this study is related to spending by true visitors traveling to the Kansas City region via the Airport. Visitors include business and leisure travelers, staying for varying lengths of time. The following sections present the impacts of visitor spending by direct, multiplier, and total impacts.

### Direct Impacts of Off-Airport Activity

As shown in **Table 3-4**, spending from the estimated 72,523 annual visitors traveling into MKC supported 226 direct jobs, resulting in a direct payroll impacts of \$8.7 million and direct output of \$22.1 million.

**Table 3-4. Direct Impacts of Off-Airport Activity**

Activity Source	Jobs	Payroll	Output
Visitor Spending	226	\$8,706,000	\$22,104,000
<b>Off-Airport Direct Impacts</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>\$8,706,000</b>	<b>\$22,104,000</b>

*Sources: IMPLAN, Kansas City Wheeler Downtown Airport, Kimley-Horn. Note: Dollar values are rounded to the nearest thousand, therefore totals may not sum due to rounding.*

### Multiplier Impacts of Off-Airport Activity

When considering the multiplier impacts of annual visitor spending, there are 52 indirect jobs and 62 induced jobs supported by this off-airport activity, summing to 114 jobs attributable to multiplier effects. Approximately \$3.6 million indirect and \$3.8 million induced payroll impacts were generated from visitor spending, resulting in \$10.0 million indirect and \$11.5 million induced output, respectively. When combined, the multiplier impacts of visitor spending supported more than \$7.3 million in payroll and approximately \$21.5 million in output.





**Table 3-5. Multiplier Impacts of Off-Airport Activity**

Activity Source	Impact	Jobs	Payroll	Output	
Visitor Spending	Indirect	52	\$3,551,000	\$10,009,000	
	Induced	62	\$3,790,000	\$11,476,000	
<b>Off-Airport Multiplier Impacts</b>		<b>N/A</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>\$7,341,000</b>	<b>\$21,485,000</b>

Sources: IMPLAN, Kimley-Horn. Note: Dollar values are rounded to the nearest thousand, therefore totals may not sum due to rounding.

### Total Impacts of Off-Airport Activity

The off-airport impacts presented in **Table 3-4** and **Table 3-5** are combined in **Table 3-6** to present the total impacts of off-airport visitor spending activity. As shown, there are 341 jobs supported by the true visitors traveling through MKC, which generated \$16.0 million in payroll and approximately \$43.6 million in total output.

**Table 3-6. Total Impacts of Off-Airport Activity**

Activity Source	Jobs	Payroll	Output	
Visitor Spending	341	\$16,047,000	\$43,588,000	
<b>Total Off-Airport Impacts</b>		<b>341</b>	<b>\$16,047,000</b>	<b>\$43,588,000</b>

Sources: IMPLAN, Kansas City Wheeler Downtown Airport, Kimley-Horn. Note: Dollar values are rounded to the nearest thousand, therefore totals may not sum due to rounding.

### Total Airport Impacts

The total economic impacts of activity occurring on- and off-airport at MKC is presented in **Table 3-7**. The activity associated with business tenants, including employment and tenant construction projects, had the highest impact compared to the Airport administration, Airport capital expenditures, and visitor spending related activities, across all economic measures. Considering that there are 27 businesses that fall within the business tenant activity category it is not surprising that this type of activity yielded the highest impact.

As shown in **Table 3-7**, almost 3,000 jobs in the Kansas City MSA are supported by the direct and multiplier impacts of on- and off-airport activities. These jobs generated approximately \$251.3 million in total payroll and \$625.2 million in total output. It is important to note that these impacts are considered annual impacts, which means that in 2022 alone the Airport contributed an estimated \$625.2 million to the regional economy. It is anticipated that this impact will be generated year over year and will continue to increase as demand for aviation services increase, new facility improvements are completed, and new businesses come to the area.



**Table 3-7. Total Impacts of All Airport Activity**

Activity Source	Jobs	Payroll	Output
Airport Administration	48	\$2,983,000	\$8,104,000
Airport Capital Expenditures	72	\$5,445,000	\$14,722,000
Business Tenants	2,336	\$226,828,000	\$558,790,000
Visitor Spending	341	\$16,047,000	\$43,588,000
<b>Total Impacts</b>	<b>2,796</b>	<b>\$251,303,000</b>	<b>\$625,204,000</b>

*Sources: IMPLAN, Kansas City Wheeler Downtown Airport, Business Tenants, Kimley-Horn. Note: Dollar values are rounded to the nearest thousand, therefore totals may not sum due to rounding.*

## 4. Airport Economic Impact Summary

MKC’s convenient downtown location, diverse mix of business tenants, friendly and knowledgeable staff, and comprehensive services, makes it a premier GA Airport for the Kansas City region. Activity occurring on the Airport and the impacts of visitors traveling through the facility generate approximately \$625.2 million annually to the region’s economy. This annual total impact translates to supporting almost 3,000 Kansas City region jobs, and approximately \$251.3 million in payroll. The findings of the MKC AEIS demonstrate that the Airport brings immense value to the region, not only through economic contributions, but also through career and pilot training, critical emergency response, business support, and more. As the region’s economy continues to grow and diversify, the demand for the aviation services offered at MKC will also increase, growing the economic impact of the Airport over time.

## 5. Qualitative Benefits of MKC

While calculating the economic impact of MKC in terms of dollars contributed to the economy is critical to understanding the quantitative value of the Airport to the regional economy, there is more to the story than just the numbers. MKC offers comprehensive GA services to the aviation community within the region. With its convenient downtown location, it is the preferred facility for business and leisure travelers looking for easy access to the heart of Kansas City. Moreover, the Airport provides opportunities for career development through several pilot and aviation training centers, supports critical emergency and medical response operations, provides a space for entrepreneurs to make their businesses a success, and plays an important role in Kansas City’s almost billion-dollar professional sports industry.

The following sections highlight some of the businesses and organizations that operate out of or rely on MKC on a routine basis to support their continued operation. These stories were documented through direct conversations with representatives of these businesses, providing a firsthand account of the value that the Airport provides. These stories present only a small sample of businesses and organizations that rely on the Airport to fulfill their missions and demonstrate that the value of the Airport goes beyond the annual \$625.0 million in economic contributions to the economy.

### Critical Care and Transfer Center at Children’s Mercy Hospital of Kansas City

The Children’s Mercy Hospital in Kansas City is home to a comprehensive Critical Care Transport Team that staffs 120 people, which includes ground unit transportation teams, air transportation teams, and trained medical professionals. Medical air transportation operations to support Children’s Mercy Hospital occur multiple times a day, seven days a week, at any time of day or night. Operations are



conducted by both rotorcraft and fixed-wing aircraft. Under a contract with PHI Air Medical, there are two rotorcraft and one fixed-wing aircraft dedicated exclusively to the air transportation needs of Children’s Mercy Hospital. Most operations by rotorcraft<sup>1</sup>, and all operations by fixed-wing aircraft, are initiated from the Children’s Mercy base<sup>2</sup> at MKC. A rotorcraft will depart from MKC to pick up the patient, then directly return to Children’s Mercy to complete the patient transfer at one of two hospital helipads. A fixed-wing aircraft will depart from MKC to pick up the patient and will return to MKC where a ground transportation unit will be waiting to transfer the patient from the Airport to the hospital. Therefore, while Children’s Mercy is equipped with two helipads, they rely heavily on MKC to fulfill most of their air transportation duties. All air transportation operations occurring in support of Children’s Mercy have two pilots on board, as well as a clinical care team.

The Children’s Mercy base at MKC, which is leased and operated exclusively for Children’s Mercy operations, includes hangar space for their fleet of three aircraft, office space for pilots, mechanics, and clinical staff, and storage space for equipment. On any given day there are usually six pilots, two aircraft mechanics, and anywhere between three and six clinical staff based at MKC. The pilots and mechanics are technically employees of PHI Air Medical, whereas the clinical staff on-site are employees of Children’s Mercy.

All air transportation operations initiated from the Children’s Mercy Critical Care Transport involve patient transfers, and most transfers are considered emergencies. Due to the special training clinical staff receive, patients often receive some element of care midflight and clinical staff can perform most procedures, except surgery, during transportation. Air transportation operations occurring for Children’s Mercy are considered interfacility transportations, which means the patient is being transferred from another hospital or another medical provider’s care to Children’s Mercy. The patients who require transportation to Children’s Mercy are pediatric, neonatal, or are pregnant, and need advanced care that cannot be performed at the facility where they originated. Children’s Mercy has the capability to travel anywhere in the continental United States for patient transfers, however, most of their operations occur in the western half of Missouri and across Kansas.

In speaking with the Director of the Critical Care Transport Team, it was evident that MKC’s downtown location is essential for providing efficient and effective care for patients at Children’s Mercy, as well as patients receiving care at the other major hospitals in Kansas City’s metropolitan region, including Saint Luke’s Hospital, North Kansas City Hospital, and the University of Kansas Hospital. A lot of emergency medical service companies use MKC for their air transportation needs, as do organ procurement organizations, and if MKC was not available, all level one trauma centers in the region would be impacted. The Director even noted that if Children’s Mercy could not base their air transportation team at MKC, it would cripple their operations. Not only does MKC provide a convenient location for Children’s Mercy patients, but the Airport also provides ample space for their hangar, offices, and equipment, provides easy access to fuel, and operates a 24/7 air traffic control tower. The Director noted that no other GA or commercial service airport in the region can meet their needs quite like MKC does. When MKC was closed due to construction, Children’s Mercy found it very challenging to continue

---

<sup>1</sup> The only rotorcraft operations that begin at the hospital occur if the rotorcraft is completing a patient transfer and is called out for another call before returning to the MKC base.

<sup>2</sup> PHI Air Medical Base is leased by Children’s Mercy Hospital and is therefore exclusively used to support operations at Children’s Mercy Hospital.





operations at the same level. The 24/7 fuel that MKC provides is also a huge benefit to any medical air transportation operator as many flights cover long distances and if pilots cannot fuel up before departing, they'd have to stop somewhere halfway to fuel up before completing the flight, impacting the health and safety of the patient being transferred.

The Director also noted that airports like MKC provide a lifeline to rural communities, as air transportation is often the only way that patients needing emergency medical treatment in these remote areas can access the advanced health care they need. Without airports like MKC, many patients wouldn't have the same level of care available to them, which is why it is so crucial to support MKC now and into the future.

## Angel Flight Central

Angel Flight Central is a non-profit organization headquartered at MKC that serves the 10-state region of the upper-Midwest territory, including Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, South Dakota, and North Dakota. Angel Flight Central's mission is simple, "serve people in need by arranging charitable flights for health care or other humanitarian purposes." While the organization started in Kansas City at MKC, the important work that the organization does spreads far beyond the region with sister organizations across the country fulfilling the same mission.

Angel Flight Central started with one person who learned that a child in his church community needed to travel out of state for a medical procedure and the family was struggling to afford this travel, so he offered to fly the child to the destination free of charge in his personal aircraft. In that moment, the vision for Angel Flight Central began, and the organization has been saving lives and lifting spirits ever since its establishment in 1996. In 2022 alone, Angel Flight Central provided free essential air travel to more than 2,400 people. Since its inception, the non-profit has helped more than 30,000 passengers, flying over 11 million nautical miles.

Angel Flight Central relies on fundraising events, private donors, and small community grants to operate, which provides greater flexibility to the organization compared to the requirements of accepting state or federal grants. People in need of Angel Flight Central's help don't need to fill out lengthy and complicated forms or meet income or other requirements. Instead, individuals complete a brief form stating why they need the transportation and why they could benefit from the financial support offered by Angel Flight Central's services. Angel Flight Central understands that even a family in a secure financial situation may struggle to pay for the high cost of air transportation on top of regular daily expenses and expensive medical treatments, so the opportunity to be served by Angel Flight Central should be open to all who need it. Angel Flight Central is committed to spreading the word and reaching as many people as they can to educate them about the services they provide. Staff members at Angel Flight Central regularly post on social media, coordinate with the local rotary club and the other social service organizations, and attend conferences, support groups, and other public gatherings to advertise their services in the hopes of reaching new people in need. Angel Flight Central has the capacity to help even more people than they do now, with most flight requests being picked by volunteer pilots within hours of the request coming in, showing that there are always pilots eager and willing to help.

There are 11 volunteer pilots that support Angel Flight Central operations out of MKC, with other pilots volunteering across the greater Kansas City region out of other airports. These pilots not only volunteer their time, but also use their own aircraft, and pay for the fuel. Pilots will fly approximately 300 miles



from their base airport, and if the passenger needs to go further, Angel Flight Central will coordinate with other volunteer pilot organizations, and another volunteer pilot will take the passenger the rest of the way. The pilots that operate out of MKC hangar their aircraft at MKC and purchase fuel from the FBOs on-site. MKC is in a great location to support Angel Flight Central because of the major hospitals in the area, such as the University of Kansas Health Center and Children’s Mercy Hospital. Angel Flight Central is proud to call MKC their home and appreciate the support they receive not only from the Airport but also the businesses on the Airport that offer discounts on fuel sales and provide ramp or covered parking spaces for incoming Angel Flight Central operations. The headquarters of Angel Flight Central could be located anywhere in the city but they choose to be at MKC for the convenient downtown location, and staff like to be on the airfield and welcome passengers as they arrive or depart.

While most operations supported by Angel Flight Central are for transporting patients for non-emergency medical needs, the team and volunteers at Angel Flight Central want to do everything they can to make a difference in their community. One example of this is volunteers supporting other transportation needs such as flying children with special needs or certain medical conditions across the country to attend summer camps suited to their needs. Additionally, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteer pilots flew doctors, nurses, and medical equipment to remote communities to ensure these communities had access to medical care. Angel Flight Central also transports breast milk to rural Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUS), transports blood and plasma to hospitals, and brings service dogs to their new owners.

Going above and beyond to support their community is second nature at Angel Flight Central. While Angel Flight Central typically does not take on emergency medical transportation operations because the pilots aren’t medically trained for that type of operation, however, a time-sensitive request came in for a teenager who was on a waiting list for a heart transplant when a heart become available at a hospital outside of the area. Within minutes of the request coming in, a volunteer pilot called and said he’d take on the flight and was headed to the Airport to get his aircraft ready for the flight. This teenager was a passenger on Angel Flight Central years ago early on in his diagnosis, so it was incredible for the Angel Flight Central team to see how their efforts helped this individual over time, from early treatments to an eventual heart transplant.

With a passionate and eager roster of pilot volunteers, a committed staff, and very few barriers to receiving their services, Angel Fight Central sees no limits to the help that they can provide and are looking forward to growing their impact with every passing year. In addition to helping the people in medical need, Angel Flight Central staff also get people excited about aviation. Many of the passengers at Angel Flight Central are kids who may be apprehensive about traveling far for their medical needs but getting to travel in a private aircraft with a friendly pilot not only excites them, but it is often the beginning of an interest and passion for flying and all things aviation.

### Professional Sports Supported by MKC

Kansas City is home to a booming major-league sports industry, with the professional baseball, football, and soccer teams contributing nearly \$1 billion in revenues annually, according to a recent Kansas City Business Journal article.<sup>3</sup> MKC plays an important role in supporting this industry as the Airport is used

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bizjournals.com/kansascity/news/2022/10/24/chiefs-nfl-mlb-mls-nwsl-royals-revenue-earnings.html>



by the Kansas City Royals Major League Baseball (MLB) and Sporting Kansas City (Sporting KC) Major League Soccer (MLS) teams to travel to and from away games across the country.

Sporting KC is one of 29 teams currently in MLS, 26 of which are in the U.S. and three are in Canada. The team has a long history in the area, being introduced as one of 10 MLS charter members ahead of the inaugural 1996 MLS campaign. The MLS season is long, running from February to October, and according to the official MLS website, Sporting KC regularly plays over 20 away matches per year, which results in a significant amount of air travel needed to transport players and staff. On a typical trip there will be around 45 Sporting KC members traveling for away games, which includes approximately 20 or more players, six coaches, 10 technical support staff, and five front office staff.

Recently, Sporting KC moved away from traveling via scheduled commercial airline service and now relies on charter-based air travel on a Boeing 737-800 through Sun County Airlines out of MKC. Using charter service from MKC has benefitted the team in many ways, including the convenience of aircraft operations and the downtown location. Many of the club's players live within the downtown area, so being close to the Airport that they travel in and out of is a time-saving benefit. Sporting KC staff and players can also park their personal vehicles near the ramp, giving them peace of mind that their vehicles are in a secure area, and making access to the ramp and the aircraft seamless. Sporting KC noted that MKC is one of the better, simpler airports to travel in and out of among all MLC cities, and they appreciate the Airport staff, security personnel, and FBO staff who are friendly and welcoming. Visiting teams coming to play Sporting KC also use MKC and are generally picked up and dropped off by a local charter bus and taken to their hotels downtown.

The Kansas City Royals were established as an MLB team in 1969 and played their first game in Municipal Stadium and eventually went on to play at Kauffman Stadium (called "The K" by locals), where they play today, located adjacent to Arrowhead Stadium, the home of the Kansas City Chiefs. The MLB season runs from March through October, with the Kansas City Royals playing a remarkable 162 games during the season, and approximately half of those games are away. The team travels across the country for away games and may travel 25 times or more from MKC, per season. The Kansas City Royals travelers include the team members, as well as managers, owners, and other support staff, and they all travel out of MKC. The team charters a Boeing 737-900 through United Airlines and has done so for the past 14 years. The convenient downtown location of MKC and the ease of chartered air travel is a major benefit to the team, as the team can travel on a more flexible schedule, can easily access the Airport, and can park their personal vehicles in a secure area while they are away. The time saved, easy commute, simple boarding process, and flexible charter schedule saves the players and staff are greatly appreciated and support additional rest and recovery over the course of their long 162-game season. Kansas City Royals operations staff rely on the numerous services available at MKC including fuel sales, ground handling services, parking, security screening, and bus services. For a team of 25 players, plus coaching staff, and other support staff, access to MKC makes traveling for away games during their eight-month long season a breeze.

Sporting KC and the Kansas City Royals may play very different sports, but one thing they have in common is their reliance on the charter-services offered at MKC to travel to and from their away games. Both teams note the unbeatable convenience of MKC's downtown location, secure parking lot for their vehicles, as well as the friendly staff and comprehensive services provided at MKC as the reason why they continue traveling through the Airport. It is important to note that while both teams rely exclusively on MKC to get to and from their away games, the fans of both teams are also relying on the



air transportation services offered within the Kansas City area to travel with and support their team during away games. Similarly, fans of opposing teams playing in Kansas City also rely on these same services. Sporting KC and the Kansas City Royals' dependence on MKC demonstrates the strong economic link between the Airport and the steadfast professional sports industry in Kansas City.

Looking forward, MKC will play a prominent role in welcoming and transporting national teams, delegations, and international visitors when Kansas City hosts FIFA World Cup 2026. Kansas City is one of 16 host cities for the summer soccer competition, renowned as the most popular and most watched sporting event in the world. Athletes, coaches, soccer officials and fans from across the globe will travel to and from Kansas City for the duration of the six-week tournament, which will be the largest event the city's history and have an unprecedented economic impact on the region.

## ATD Flight Systems

---

ATD Flight Systems is a full-service flight training and charter operation based at MKC that was opened in 1996 by a pilot who started flying in the 1970s. ATD Flight Systems has been owned and operated by that same pilot's family since the business opened and is one of the largest flight schools in all of Kansas City. MKC's convenient downtown location made it a perfect fit for ATD Flight Systems because it makes it centrally located, close to population centers, and easy to access for a wide range of Kansas City residents.

The school started out with one small simulator located in a room around the size of a big closet, with one training aircraft. ATD Flight Systems now has a fleet of 13 aircraft, one larger simulator, and continues to grow. ATD Flight Systems offer two FAA-certified programs for their students. One of the programs allows students to achieve their license in a more structured environment, like a traditional higher-education program, with a set course syllabus and set duration of time for completion. The other program allows students to achieve their certification in a more flexible environment, where students can work through the program at their own pace as their schedule allows. ATD Flight Systems is a one stop shop for pilots-in-training, as students here can work towards several certifications, whether for enthusiasts looking to earn their private pilot license, individuals working towards earning their instrument rating, looking to obtain their flight instructor or instrument flight instructor certification, or for those looking to work as a commercial pilot, it can all be done at ATD Flight Systems. The school also has two designated pilot examiners (DPE) on staff to administer flight testing. At any given time, there is approximately 75 to 100 students working toward their certification at ATD Flight Systems, and one of the most rewarding aspects of working at ATD Flight Systems is getting to see students work through the program and go on to achieve great things in the field. In addition to supporting their students' growth, ATD Flight Systems has partnered with Red Tail Academy in the past, a local non-profit in the area that is committed to exposing, educating, and mentoring underrepresented youth in the aviation industry.

In addition to the full-service flight training offered at ATD Flight Systems, the business is also certified with the FAA to support commercial operations, allowing them to provide charter services and manage aircraft. Managing an aircraft means that ATD Flight Systems is responsible for all administrative duties of the aircraft, such as bookkeeping and scheduling routes, as well as maintenance responsibilities. ATD Flight Systems currently manages one Cessna Citation Bravo fixed-wing aircraft and is looking to potentially add more jets to their fleet in the future. As a part of the charter operations, ATD Flight Systems supports medical air transportation, including organ transportation for medical emergencies, which is an incredible benefit to the medical community in the region. ATD Flight Systems has also flown





local sports teams’ scouts around the country who are looking to recruit athletes for one of the many professional sports teams in the area.

ATD Flight Systems is a resilient and formidable force on the airfield, recovering quickly after a catastrophic wind event in 2023 totaled nine of their 13 aircraft by replacing their damaged fleet in only two short months. ATD Flight Systems hopes that their resilience demonstrates their commitment to the industry and to their community. ATD Flight Systems is committed to growing at MKC and plan to make MKC their home for many years to come. While the business currently leases hangar space at their airport, as they continue to grow over the next five to ten years, they hope to build a hangar of their own, as space allows. ATD Flight Systems understands the importance of the aviation industry and sees no limits to the benefits that MKC provides to the community.

## WildBlue Aircraft Sales

WildBlue Aircraft Sales started in 2006 and offers services related to buying and selling aircraft. WildBlue Aircraft Sales focuses on owner-flown, cabin class aircraft, single or twin-engine aircraft that are typically used by individuals for business purposes or personal use. Early on, and still today, the business’s strong reputation brings in new and returning clients. The business’s focus on delivering exceptional service by way of acquiring and selling quality aircraft and a seamless sales process with informed and friendly people, drives much of their business forward.

While WildBlue Aircraft Sales once maintained an office lease at MKC, the business is now operated offsite, however reliance on MKC remains strong. WildBlue Aircraft Sales leases a hangar on the Airport and relies on the Airport to connect to clients all over the country. The owner of WildBlue Aircraft Sales, Chris Kirk, noted that due to the niche service of aircraft sales most of his clients come from elsewhere in the country, so he frequently flies out of MKC to meet with potential buyers and sellers, and many clients fly into MKC to meet with Chris as well. WildBlue Aircraft Sales has worked with clients throughout the U.S. and across five continents, so having efficient access to MKC is critical for their services.

Chris has long been passionate about aviation, following in his grandfather’s footsteps, and has been flying for a long time in Kansas City. Chris noted that aviation in Kansas City has always been a vibrant industry and over time the Airport has been transformed into a world-class facility. MKC supports a broad range of aviation activity, with a particular emphasis on flight training and serving the Fortune 500 operators in the area. Chris understands that while he sees the immense value MKC brings to the community, many others may not be aware, so aviators have a responsibility to spread awareness of that value and give back to the community.

Giving back to the community is in the very makeup of WildBlue Aircraft Sales. Chris noted that the company earmarks a percentage of their annual profits to donate to charitable aviation activities, with a focus on supporting two charities, Challenge Air and Angel Flight. Challenge Air board members and staff are committed to changing the perception of children with special needs through the gift of flight. Challenge Air hosts “Fly Days” throughout the year, which give special need children the opportunity to sit co-pilot and experience flight firsthand. This experience eliminates the belief that these children are limited and helps them grow to their full potential, as they find courage within themselves and build their self-esteem. Challenge Air’s mission statement says it best when they say, “while allowing the children to see if they can fly a plane, they can do anything”. Every year, typically the first Saturday after Labor Day, Challenge Air puts on a Fly Day hosted at MKC and WildBlue Aircraft Sales is always happy to



# KANSAS CITY DOWNTOWN AIRPORT – WHEELER FIELD



volunteer and make the day a success. The MKC Fly Day is always a successful event, with 120 kids typically participating and 20 or so pilots volunteering their time and skills to make the day unforgettable.

WildBlue Aircraft Sales is also involved in supporting and donates money to Angel Flight, a non-profit organization that arranges for free air transportation for medically related needs (see **Section 4.1**). Patients transported via Angel Flight are financially constrained and typically travelling for non-critical surgeries, chemotherapy, dialysis, and other treatments. Pilots volunteer their time, skills, and aircraft to help these individuals get the care they need in a timely and cost-free manner.

WildBlue Aircraft Sales is a Kansas City business with a global sphere of influence, finding the right aircraft for the right person, and the firm relies on MKC to make those national and global connections. MKC’s world-class facilities and commitment to its users and the community make it a great facility to support Wildblue Aircraft Sales’ needs.

This page intentionally left blank



## Community Benefits of MKC

While calculating the economic impact of MKC in terms of jobs and dollars contributed to the regional economy is important, there is more to the story than just the numbers. The Airport provides opportunities for career development through several pilot and aviation training centers, supports critical emergency and medical response operations, provides an excellent location for aviation businesses, and plays an important role in Kansas City's almost billion-dollar professional sports industry. Highlighted below are just a few examples of the organizations and users who rely on MKC and the connection it provides to the greater air transportation system.

**Angel Flight Central** is a non-profit organization headquartered at MKC that provides charitable flights in their 10-state region. Charitable flights are donated to individuals in need of air medical transportation that do not require in flight medical monitoring. In addition, AFC provides free air transportation for other humanitarian efforts, like flying children with special needs to summer camps and flying service puppies to their new owners. In 2022 alone, AFC arranged free essential air transportation for more than 2,400 people, and since their inception they've helped more than 30,000 people. MKC is in a great location to support AFC because of the major hospitals in the area, such as the University of Kansas Health Center and Children's Mercy Hospital.



**ATD Flight Systems** is a full-service flight training and charter operation based at MKC. The Airport's convenient downtown location made it a perfect fit for ATD Flight Systems because it is centrally located, close to population centers, and provides easy access for a wide range of Kansas City residents. ATD Flight Systems has grown significantly since it first opened and now has fleet of 13 aircraft and a simulator to support the two Federal Aviation Administration-certified programs they offer to students. At any given time, they have 75 to 100 students enrolled and working toward their certification. As a part of their charter operations, ATD Flight Systems supports medical air transportation, including organ transportation for medical emergencies.



**Professional Sports** including the Kansas City Royals Major League Baseball (MLB) and Sporting Kansas City (Sporting KC) Major League Soccer (MLS) teams are heavily reliant on MKC. Both teams travel to and from away games across the country via charters from MKC. Sporting KC typically travels 17 times during their season, with each trip carrying around 45 people. Half of the Kansas City Royals' games are away and the team travels at least 25 times from MKC for these games, transporting the team of 25 players and many others, including managers, owners, and support staff. Sporting KC and the Kansas City Royals may play very different sports, but one thing they have in common is their reliance on the charter services at MKC. Both teams note the unbeatable convenience of MKC's downtown location, as well as the friendly staff and comprehensive services provided at MKC as major benefits.



**WildBlue Aircraft Sales** started in 2006 and focuses on sales of owner-flown, cabin class aircraft, either single or twin-engine, that are typically used by individuals for business purposes or personal use. Most of the firm's business comes from outside the region, requiring flights out of MKC to meet with potential buyers and sellers and many clients fly into MKC during the decision-making process. The firm has worked with clients throughout the U.S. and across five continents, so having efficient access to MKC is critical for their services.



**Children's Mercy Hospital of Kansas City** bases their air transportation unit at MKC where they lease hangar, office, and storage space to support the pilots, mechanics, and clinical staff fulfilling their air transportation operations. Children's Mercy noted that no other airport in the region could support their operations quite like MKC can. The Airport's provision of 24/7 fuel, an air traffic control tower, facilities, and convenient location provide immense value to all hospitals in the region. According to interviewees, if MKC was no longer available for medical air operations, it is likely that all Level I trauma centers in the region would be impacted.



# Airport Economic Impact Study

## KANSAS CITY WHEELER DOWNTOWN AIRPORT

KANSAS CITY, MO.

The Kansas City Wheeler Downtown Airport (MKC) is a general aviation facility located in the heart of Kansas City. Owned and operated by the Kansas City Aviation Department, MKC serves as an economic generator for the Kansas City region. The Airport provides an essential link between the Kansas City region and the larger air transportation network for many residents and businesses who utilize general aviation services. By offering corporate aviation facilities needed to transport people and goods in and out of the area, MKC supports numerous business tenants at the Airport, facilitates air cargo movements, serves as a base for air medical operations, and much more. This economic impact study quantifies the significant annual economic contribution of the Airport to the region, and highlights the tremendous qualitative value of the Airport to the local community.

### Sources of Economic Activity at MKC

MKC generates economic impact through several on-airport activities, as well as off-airport visitor spending. The four major sources of economic activity at the Airport are shown below.

#### On-Airport Activities



##### Airport Administration

- Airport management
- Airport operations
- Contracted services



##### Airport Capital Expenditures

- Airport construction projects



##### Business Tenants

- Business tenant operations
- Tenant capital expenditures (construction projects)



#### Off-Airport Activities

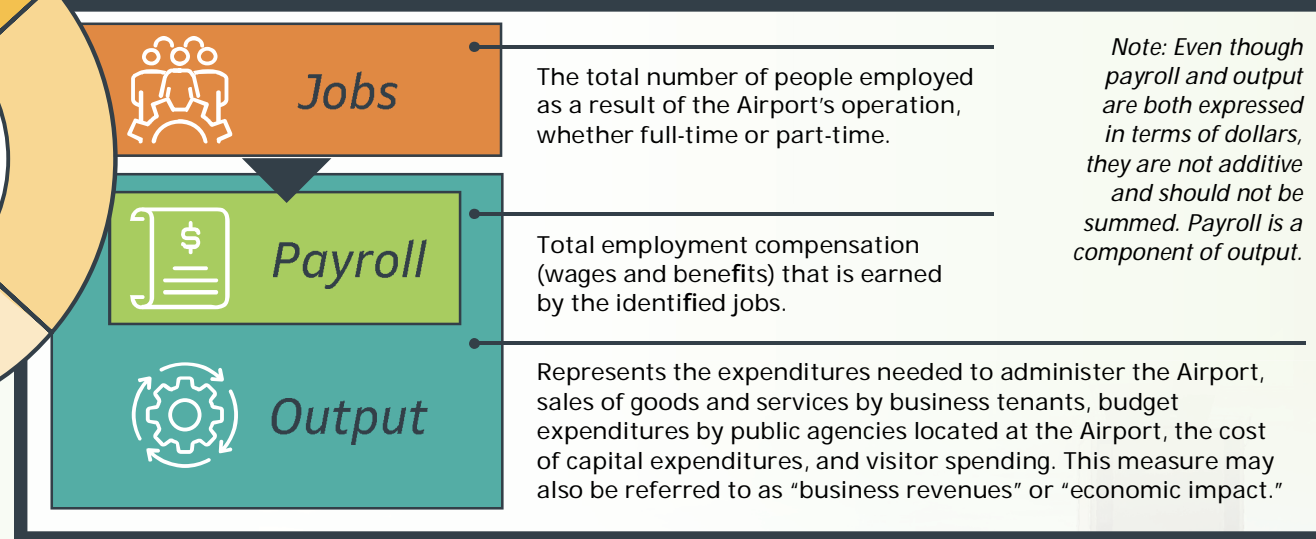
##### Visitor Spending

- Non-local visitors spending money in the Kansas City region



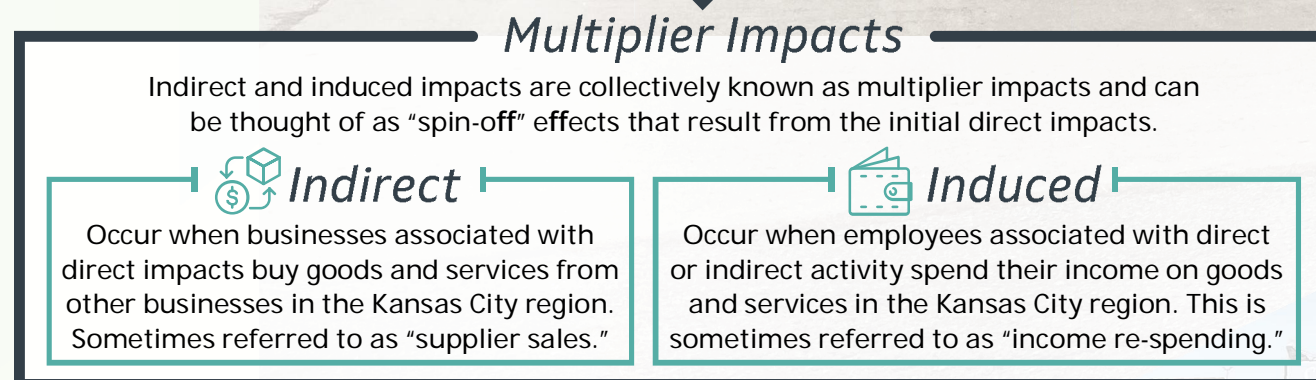
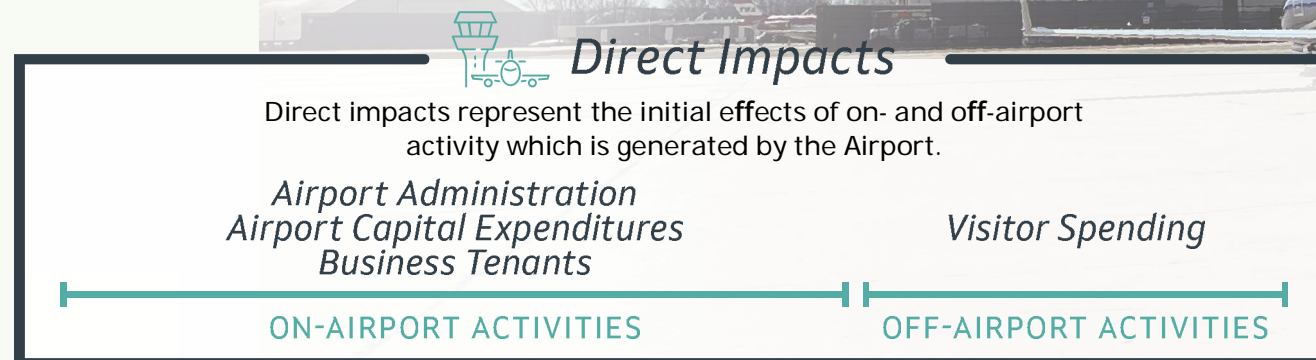
## Measures of Economic Impact

There are three measures used to express the economic impact of MKC: jobs, payroll, and output.



## Economic Impact Levels

The economic impacts of MKC are presented at three distinct levels to describe where in the economic cycle the impact is generated.

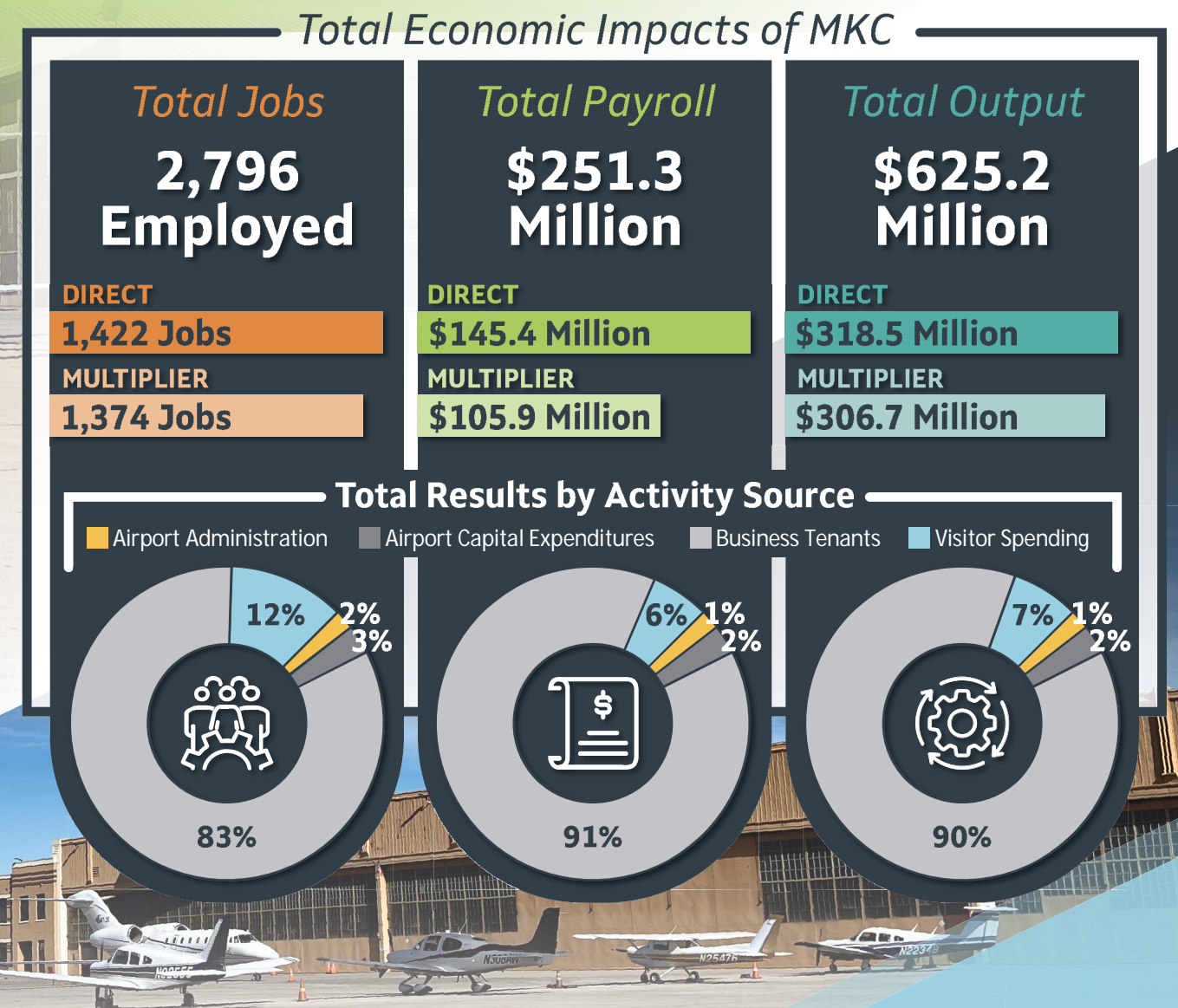


## Methodology

Comprehensive data collection was essential for calculating accurate economic impact results representing calendar year 2022. Primary data sources such as the Airport staff, business tenants, and visitors were relied upon to estimate direct impacts. These data were obtained through an on-site visit, as well as in-person, over-the-phone, and online surveying efforts. Various industry sources were also consulted to supplement the data collected, when necessary. A nationally recognized economic model, IMPLAN, was used to derive the multiplier impacts.

## Results

Activity occurring on the Airport and the impacts of visitors traveling through the facility contribute approximately \$625 million annually to the region's economy. This total impact supports nearly 2,800 jobs in the Kansas City region, with a payroll of over \$250 million.



Sources: IMPLAN, 2022; Kansas City Wheeler Downtown Airport, 2022; Business Tenants, 2022; Kimley-Horn, 2023.  
Note: Dollar values are rounded to the nearest thousand, therefore totals may not sum due to rounding.