
2020
A YEAR IN REVIEW
Asheville
REGIONAL AIRPORT



OUR VISION

To be a champion for exceptional customer experiences and economic vitality.

OUR MISSION

To provide an exceptional airport experience with a focus on people, service, commercial and general aviation, and to contribute to the regional economy.

OUR CORE VALUES

People • Caring • Excellence • Integrity
Respect • Service • Adaptability



a note

Lew Bleiweis, A.A.E.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Greater Asheville Regional Airport Authority

Each year, we highlight our most recent accomplishments and activities into an annual report. 2020 was a year like no other. We began 2020 on the heels of the biggest year in the history of the airport — we served 1.6 million passengers, which was an astounding 43% increase over the previous year. And the growth continued into early 2020. We broke passenger records in January, and again in February, and were on track to have a stellar March. In January, two airlines announced significant air service additions, essentially guaranteeing an even bigger year of passenger service at AVL moving forward.

But, as the whole world learned, there are no guarantees.

2020 will forever be known as the year of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Much of our year focused on a response to the pandemic. Airports are part of the nation's critical infrastructure — and vastly important to the movement of people, goods and services. Therefore, we had to keep the airport operating in the safest and health-focused way possible, and we proudly rose to that challenge.

Even during this overwhelmingly unprecedented time, we also stayed focused on longer-term recovery and the growth we know will return. This involved infrastructure enhancements, terminal design planning and more.

And yes, we even welcomed some new flights in 2020. Amazing.

Take a look at our highlights in this brief review. Remember: recovery is happening in the aviation industry. Our growth trajectory will return. Travel is woven into the fabric of our lives for many, many reasons, and we continue to be ready when you're ready.

+ THE PANDEMIC

On March 13, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic.

Life changed across the globe, almost overnight. The aviation industry was affected significantly, and air travel nearly ceased for several months. Like most of the nation's airports, Asheville Regional Airport's passenger utilization dropped by 97% through the month of April, an unprecedented decline.

The aviation industry responded quickly.

Airports, airlines, general aviation, concessionaires and other aviation partners began working together to implement policies and procedures to create the safest and healthiest travel journeys possible. At AVL, we immediately created a transparent web page dedicated to COVID-19 updates for the public. This soon evolved into a comprehensive campaign called #AVLTravelSmart, which included changes in the terminal, enhanced cleaning procedures, education, continually updated information based upon Centers for Disease Control guidelines, and more.

AVL received $14 million from CARES Act funding.

Critical to the airport industry's ability to keep the national aviation infrastructure operational, airports across the country received relief funding to help them weather storm. The funds were designated for payroll, debt service and operational needs. Of significance: no AVL employees lost their jobs due to the pandemic, and the airport was able to waive or defer rents and fees for a period of time for airlines and other tenants.

AVL employees stepped up in a big way.

Many members of our team are front-line critical infrastructure workers — such as our housekeepers, maintenance crews, operations specialists, public safety officers and guest services clerks. With solid COVID-19 planning and guidance, our employees kept the airport open, operational — and safe — for each other and the traveling public. In fact, our housekeeping team was highlighted by our local ABC affiliate, WLOS-13, as "Hometown Heroes."

AVL received ACI Health Accreditation.

AVL was the first NC airport to achieve global accreditation from Airports Council International, a testament to our commitment to do all we can to create a safe and healthy airport environment.



+ THE FUTURE



What's next?

A focus on infrastructure enhancements was important in 2020. We know our extraordinary growth will recover, and future-focused planning and development occurred in 2020.

UTILITY UPGRADE

Underground utilities, many which were original to our 1961 building, were upgraded along Terminal Drive, in partnership with the City of Asheville and Metropolitan Sewer District.

GROUND TRANSPORTATION LOT UPGRADE

We reconfigured our ground transportation lot to centralize all modes of ground transportation.

SOUTH APRON EXPANSION PROJECT

An expansion of our south apron was under construction throughout 2020, which will result in additional aircraft parking space in 2021.

NEW PARKING AREAS

Prior to the pandemic, our parking areas were at capacity during peak travel times. A remote shuttle lot with 300 spaces was completed in summer 2020, and will be commissioned when needed as growth returns. The cell phone lot was relocated to this new parking area in summer 2020.

RUNWAY 17-35 COMMISSIONED

An exciting milestone occurred when we commissioned our new replacement runway on November 5, a project that started in 2014. While we could not hold a public event due to the pandemic, we celebrated internally with a socially-distanced ribbon-cutting on the new runway. Runway 17-35 will serve the airport and region for decades to come.

PURCHASE OF BROADMOOR GOLF LINKS

The Greater Asheville Regional Airport Authority purchased Broadmoor Golf Links, the public golf course adjacent to the Runway Protection Zone on the south end of the airport. The purchase was strategic, allowing for future nonaeronautical revenue diversification, as well as upholding the FAA's requirement that airports promote compatible land use in areas near the airport.

AVL FORWARD TERMINAL MODERNIZATION & EXPANSION PROJECT

The extraordinary growth at AVL during the past six years revealed the tangible need for a larger and modernized airport terminal — at a more accelerated pace than master planning had predicted. The first step — an 18-month architectural design process.

Highlights include:

PUBLIC INPUT

We began the year with a significant public input process that ultimately identified the key design goal for the expanded terminal: to design a "modern gateway humbly rooted in timeless natural beauty."

OPERATIONAL GOALS IDENTIFIED

Important operational goals were also identified, based upon careful analysis of growth trajectories, future aircraft fleet mix at AVL, and the projected physical space needed for airport operations for the next 15-20 years:

- Expansion of the terminal from 7 gates to 12 gates, with ample room for passenger flow
- Additional aircraft parking space
- Expanded and modernized ticket lobby, TSA screening, baggage claim, concessions space
- Centralized power plant
- Flexible design, to allow for enhancements and innovations as air travel evolves

OUR KEY PARTNERS:

Architecture Firm: Gresham Smith

Construction Manager: Hensel Phelps

Local contractor: Vannoy Construction

The design will be completed in 2021, with construction most likely starting in 2022.

NEW AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER

In order to prepare for the expanded airport terminal, the existing air traffic control tower will eventually need to be demolished. This means a new tower must be constructed. In 2020, the planning for this project began with the Federal Aviation Administration.

+ BOARD AND SENIOR STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Greater Asheville Regional Airport Authority
Board | Fiscal Year 2019-2020



Matthew Burril
CHAIR
Appointed By: Buncombe County



Brad Galbraith
VICE CHAIR
Appointed By: City of Asheville



Thomas Apodaca
MEMBER
Appointed By: Henderson County



George Erwin, Jr.
MEMBER
Appointed By: Henderson County



Susan Russo Klein
MEMBER
Appointed By: City of Asheville



Britt Lovin
MEMBER
Appointed By: GARAA Board



Carl H. Ricker, Jr.
MEMBER
Appointed By: Buncombe County

Noteworthy



Michael Reisman, A.A.E.
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MEMBER
American Association of Airport Executives Board



John Coon, A.A.E.
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
+ MAINTENANCE
MEMBER
North Carolina Airports Association Board



Tina Kinsey, A.A.E.
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
PR + AIR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT
PAST CHAIR
Airports Council International - North America
Marketing, Communications + Customer Experience
Steering Committee



Samuel Sales, A.M.F.
INTERIM PUBLIC SAFETY CHIEF
DESIGNATION ACHIEVED
Airport Master Firefighter – American
Association of Airport Executives

+ AIR SERVICE GROWTH AND RECOVERY



2020 was unlike any other year in the history of aviation, with travel nearly ceasing in the month of April, followed by a slow partial recovery through the year. Though the year was tough from an air service perspective, AVL was one of the more fortunate airports in the country. Airlines maintained most routes (at lower frequencies), and even added or announced new routes during the year. Our airport's passenger throughput, by percentage, was consistently above the national average, a positive indicator for continued recovery.

NEW ROUTES

AMERICAN

Early in the year — American announced new seasonal weekend service to Chicago and Washington, D.C., and daily service to LaGuardia (New York City). These new routes were suspended when the pandemic occurred.

ALLEGIANT

Prior to the pandemic, Allegiant announced four new seasonal routes: Austin, Boston, Chicago and Houston. While start dates were delayed, all four routes were launched by late summer 2020. Allegiant also announced nonstop service to Las Vegas would start in March 2021 — the farthest west-bound nonstop destination ever served from AVL.

YEAR-END ROUTE MAP

At year-end, AVL's route map held strong at 18 nonstop airport destinations (including two airports in Chicago), down from 22. We lost a few, gained a few — but maintained a strong complement of options for travelers, including frequent daily connections to and through major international hubs.

Financials

At June 30, 2020, the Authority's assets exceeded liabilities by $169,081,647. That is an increase of more than $14.2 million from 2019 and an increase of $30.6 million from 2018.

SOURCES OF AUTHORITY REVENUE

PARKING	36.8%
AIRLINES	23.7%
RENTAL CARS	20.0%
FBO/GENERAL AVIATION	7.4%
CONCESSIONAIRES	4.9%
OTHER	5.4%
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	1.8%



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