ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT FOR
ST. SIMONS ISLAND AIRPORT

September 2020
Annual Economic Impacts for St. Simons Island Airport

Residents, businesses, and visitors benefit from the state’s well-developed airport system. While supporting transportation, healthcare, tourism, and commerce, airports contribute to the economy. The Economic Impact Study identified specific economic impacts associated with the St. Simons Island Airport and other airport benefits. Key impacts for the St. Simons Island Airport follow.

Georgia Airports Mean Business.

Airports in Georgia generate positive economic impacts as well as support many other sectors of local and state economies. In the summer of 2019, the Georgia Department of Transportation undertook a statewide study to estimate the annual economic impact of 102 study airports. The study estimated economic impacts for seven commercial airports and 95 general aviation airports. This report includes impacts related to St. Simons Island Airport and summarizes all Statewide Airport Economic Impacts.

According to Site Selection Magazine, Georgia is ranked as the #1 state for doing business.

Annual Economic Impacts for St. Simons Island Airport

The table below provides information on the sources of annual economic impact estimated for the St. Simons Island Airport. For more information on the impacts reported here, consult the study’s Technical Report available at dot.ga.gov/IS/AirportAid.

### Annual Economic Impacts for St. Simons Island Airport

**Georgia Airports Support Connectivity**

A flight from a Georgia airport is a gateway to over 40,000 worldwide airports, including over 19,000 airports in the US alone. When employers seek to relocate or expand, proximity to an airport is among the top 10 factors they consider in their decision making. Georgia’s tourist industry also depends on the efficiency of air travel.

This map depicts destinations for flights departing from and arriving at St. Simons Island Airport on any given day. This information is generated from the FAA’s National Offload Program (NOP). Flights represent only a fraction of all destinations that can be reached directly from the airport. The map helps to show how the airport supports the travel needs of businesses, visitors, and residents of the airport’s service area.

**St. Simons Island Airport Flight Map**

**Top Five Destinations for St. Simons Island Airport**

1. Atlanta, Georgia  
2. Athens, Georgia  
3. Augusta, Georgia  
4. Savannah, Georgia  
5. Macon, Georgia

**Economic Impacts for St. Simons Island Airport**

The table below provides information on the sources of annual economic impact estimated for the St. Simons Island Airport. For more information on the impacts reported here, consult the study’s Technical Report available at dot.ga.gov/IS/AirportAid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Economic Impacts for St. Simons Island Airport</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Payroll</th>
<th>Spending</th>
<th>Total Economic Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Airport Management &amp; Business Tenants</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>$3,684,300</td>
<td>$7,367,600</td>
<td>$11,051,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Investment</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>$2,619,700</td>
<td>$10,725,000</td>
<td>$13,344,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Aviation Visitor Expenditures</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>$7,384,300</td>
<td>$11,446,500</td>
<td>$18,830,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>$13,688,300</td>
<td>$29,539,100</td>
<td>$43,227,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Annual Visitors**

53,129

**Employment Supported**

488

**Annual Payroll**

$13,688,300

**Annual Spending**

$29,539,100

**Annual Economic Impact**

$43,227,400

**Airport-Supported Annual State & Local Sales & Income Tax Revenues**

$1,743,070
Economic Impact Categories and Measurements

The study identified impacts related to airport management (day-to-day airport operations), aviation-related business tenants, average annual capital investment, expenditures from visitors arriving on general aviation aircraft, and expenditures by visitors arriving on scheduled commercial airline flights. For each of these five categories, impacts were measured for employment, payroll, spending, and annual economic activity. Annual economic activity is the sum of payroll and spending. In addition, the study estimated state and local tax revenues that are generated by airport-supported activities.

Statewide Economic Impacts

Shown below are total annual statewide economic impacts. All economic impacts shown in this report for Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport were obtained from a separate study for that airport conducted by the City of Atlanta. As shown, when all Georgia airports are considered, total annual statewide economic impacts are estimated at 450,502 jobs, $9.2 billion in annual payroll, and $73.7 billion in annual economic activity.

Statewide Economic Impacts All System Airports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Hartfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport*</th>
<th>Commercial Study Airports</th>
<th>General Aviation Study Airports</th>
<th>State Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>383,242</td>
<td>52,376</td>
<td>14,893</td>
<td>450,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payroll</td>
<td>$16.7 billion</td>
<td>$1.3 billion</td>
<td>$271 million</td>
<td>$9.2 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Activity</td>
<td>$66.8 billion</td>
<td>$2.2 billion</td>
<td>$828 million</td>
<td>$73.7 billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 2016-2017 Technical Report, City of Atlanta Economic Impact Study

Economic Impact Categories and Measurements

The study identified impacts related to airport management (day-to-day airport operations), aviation-related business tenants, average annual capital investment, expenditures from visitors arriving on general aviation aircraft, and expenditures by visitors arriving on scheduled commercial airline flights. For each of these five categories, impacts were measured for employment, payroll, spending, and annual economic activity. Annual economic activity is the sum of payroll and spending. In addition, the study estimated state and local tax revenues that are generated by airport-supported activities.

Study Methodology

Data collection and survey efforts identified direct economic impacts in each of the five impact categories using an approved FAA methodology. A state input/output model (IMPLAN) was used to estimate additional indirect and induced impacts, sometimes referred to as multiplier impacts. Combined, direct plus indirect/induced impacts equal total state or airport specific economic impacts.

The direct impacts that start at the airport multiply within the state economy. The $150 of direct impact spent with the grocery results in additional payroll (induced impacts) for the grocer’s employees. As the grocery buys supplies, this additional business to business spending results in indirect impacts.
St. Simons Island Airport

St. Simons Island is located in southeast Georgia; the Island is located in close proximity to Interstate 95. The population within a 30-minute drive of the airport is estimated at over 70,000; second homeowners and visitors to the Golden Isles, however, increases the resident population significantly during certain months.

McKinnon-St. Simons Island Airport is five miles east of Brunswick. The primary runway, Runway 04/22, is 5,584 feet long. The crosswind runway, Runway 16/34, is 3,313 feet long. The airport accommodates a variety of aviation-related activities including corporate/business jets, recreational flying, police/law enforcement, aerial photography/surveying, ultra-lights, experimental aircraft, tourism, and sightseeing.

There are approximately 10 aviation-related businesses located at the airport. These tenants provide a variety of ground transportation services and various types of aircraft maintenance. Accommodating visitors to the area is one of the airport’s primary roles. Golden Isles Aviation is the airport’s fixed based operator (FBO), providing fueling and other services to aircraft using the airport. Hilton Hotels airport’s primary roles. Golden Isles Aviation is the airport’s fixed based operator (FBO), providing fueling and other service to aircraft using the airport. Hilton Hotels has a facility located at the airport that provides conference and meeting facilities; the airport is a popular location for business meetings.

Examples of How St. Simons Island Airport Supports Its Community

There is a good chance you benefit from different activities that the airport supports. Airports support the state’s agricultural and forestry industries, and power companies rely on airports to keep electricity flowing. State and federal agencies use airports to protect the environment, and law enforcement benefits from airports. Businesses throughout Georgia rely on airports to improve their efficiency. Examples of how the airport benefits the community follow.

Tourism/Recreation: The area served by the airport is one of Georgia’s premier tourist destinations. Not only do the Golden Isles attract leisure visitors, but many travelers come to the area for business. Each year, the area attracts an estimated 2.5 million visitors. The area is a popular destination for vacationers staying at one of the area’s world-class resorts; enjoying the unique ecology of the area; golfing, fishing, playing tennis, or enjoying other recreational attractions. The area hosts professional golf tournaments, business conferences, and corporate retreats. Convenient air access, provided by the airport, helps travelers reduce their travel time, which allows for more recreational and business activities. While travelers are in the area, they have expenditures for lodging, food, ground transportation, retail purchases, and various recreational activities. Air visitor spending helps to support hundreds of local jobs and infuses hundreds of thousands of dollars into the local economy each year.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is an American scientific agency within the United States Department of Commerce that focuses on the conditions of the oceans, major waterways, and the atmosphere. As part of NOAA’s Southeastern Regional Office, their Southeast Fisheries Science Center is charged with protecting marine life and their habitat along the Golden Isles. NOAA bases a plane at the airport to help NOAA monitor and observe the endangered North Atlantic Right Whale. With only 95 breeding females remaining, protecting every whale is a priority to preserve the species. The airport also has occasional ad hoc cargo flights carrying sea turtles for relocation programs supported by NOAA. The airport plays an important role in protecting and preserving the area’s marine community.

Resiliency and Emergency Services: The Coast Guard is responsible for an array of maritime duties, ranging from ensuring safe and lawful commerce to performing rescue missions in severe conditions. The Coast Guard operates over 200 different fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. Protecting the delicate ecosystem of our oceans and search and rescue efforts are vital Coast Guard missions. The Coast Guard works with a variety of groups and organizations to protect endangered marine species. The elevation of most of the area in and around St. Simmons is below sea level. Often storm surge blocks roads and other conventional means of transportation. The airport is positioned geographically at the highest elevated point on the Island. When the roadway system floods due to hurricanes or other storms, the airport provides the only access to and from the Island, as roadways and marinas are typically out of service during these conditions.

Business Use: As noted, the area is a popular location for hosting business conferences and retreats. When companies are seeking locations to host such events, they look for locations where attendees can arrive conveniently by air to minimize travel time and increase productivity. Golden Isles Aviation joined forces with MMI Hospitality Group to build a Home2Suites by Hilton just steps away from the airport’s new terminal facility. The complex is the first of its kind in the United States. The facility optimizes business travel time to the area. As commercial and residential development has increased along the Golden Isles, many construction companies have increased their use of the airport. Companies are able to use air travel to efficiently check on the status of several projects within the course of one day.

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Data collection and analysis for this study took place before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Results reflect conditions at Georgia airports prior to that time.