CITY OF MANSFIELD, OHIO
A Richland County Community

Cleared for Takeoff:

Mansfield Lahm Regional Airport

Economic Development Strategic Plan v3.5

July 15, 2026

2026 to 2031

Prepared by:
City of Mansfield Administration
Mansfield Lahm Regional Airport Management
Mansfield Department of Economic Development

Prepared for City Council Review and Adoption

Executive Summary

Mansfield Lahm Regional Airport encompasses approximately 2,034 acres, operates with an active control tower, and holds a combination of physical infrastructure, defense identity, and emerging aviation network position that no peer community in north-central Ohio can match. This plan organizes that advantage into six strategic pillars and provides the City of Mansfield with a clear framework for the investments and partnerships required to activate it.

The city is not starting from zero. Infrastructure investment in the airport corridor is already underway. A comprehensive planning effort for the northwest corridor, led by EMH&T, is extending water and sewer infrastructure to the west side of the airport, improving SR 13 access, and updating zoning to welcome emerging industries. The water line loop planned around the airport will add meaningful redundancy and capacity to the system and directly improves the development readiness of the West Side Taxiway 14 site. This economic development strategy is the next step in a program of investment the city has already begun.

The case for deliberate strategy around a defense and aviation asset is well established in Ohio. Communities that have aligned around major installations over the long term have seen mission employment grow substantially because they were ready when opportunities arose. Mansfield holds that same opportunity with the 179th Cyberspace Wing and with Ohio's Advanced Air Mobility corridor network now forming around it.

Six pillars organize the plan:

1	**Aviation Innovation and Workforce Center (508 Building)**
2	Airport Real Estate, Site Readiness, and Land Strategy
3	**Targeted Aviation Business Attraction**
4	Defense Adjacency and 179th Cyberspace Wing Alignment
5	**Advanced Air Mobility: Ohio Corridor Node Strategy**
6	Airfield Readiness, Grant Execution, and Governance

Supporting analysis for each pillar, including the Ohio competitive landscape, airport infrastructure data, development site details, the T-hangar governance analysis, the grant funding table, workforce market research, and a plain-language AAM infrastructure overview with FAA graphics, is provided in the appendices to this plan.

Vision and Strategic Positioning

Position Mansfield Lahm Regional Airport as Ohio's premier inland aviation execution node: where technicians are trained, aircraft are maintained, cyber and intelligence adjacency creates economic differentiation, and next-generation aviation becomes operational.

The Five Node Factors

Mansfield's competitive position rests on five specific assets held simultaneously. No peer community in the region can make the same claim. These factors are the foundation of every external positioning argument in this plan.

THE FIVE NODE FACTORS

Mansfield Lahm is the only non-major-metro airport in Ohio's central corridor that simultaneously holds all five inland node credibility factors.

1. **9,000-foot primary runway.** Accommodates aircraft categories that smaller regional airports cannot, from corporate jets to heavy cargo and AAM platforms. A prerequisite for serious commercial and defense-adjacent operations.
2. **Controlled (towered) airspace.** An operational control tower provides instrument approach capability, separation services, and the operational credibility that commercial and defense-adjacent users require.
3. **179th Cyberspace Wing.** An on-airport Air National Guard unit with a cyber and intelligence mission. No peer community in north-central Ohio holds this combination.
4. **Aviation Innovation and Workforce Center (508 Building).** An on-airport facility with public street access on one side and direct airfield access from the other. Rare at any general aviation airport.
5. **ODOT AAM Corridor Designation.** ODOT's corridor planning team has identified Mansfield as a technically necessary stop on the Columbus-Cleveland route based on current aircraft range limitations.

Why Inland Is an Advantage

For Mansfield, being inland is a feature, not a limitation. Current eVTOL aircraft have effective ranges of roughly 50 to 100 miles, making inland nodes structurally required to make corridor networks function. Less-contested airspace makes low-altitude AAM operations more practical than in dense coastal metros. Industrial land adjacent to the airport is available at a fraction of comparable coastal sites. And Mansfield positioned between Columbus and Cleveland is a connector story, which is more durable than positioning as a smaller version of either city.

What Advanced Air Mobility Means

Advanced Air Mobility refers to electrically powered vertical takeoff and landing aircraft, cargo drones at scale, and automated air taxi services. Ohio's Department of Transportation is actively planning statewide air corridors, designated low-altitude routes where AAM operations will be organized. The National Advanced Air Mobility Center of Excellence, NAAMCE, in Springfield is the state's primary hub. Mansfield's position as a technically necessary corridor stop between Columbus and Cleveland is a central element of this plan. AAM operations count toward airport operations totals, affecting airport classification and tower justification over time.

Pillar 1: Aviation Innovation and Workforce Center

PILLAR 1 | AVIATION INNOVATION AND WORKFORCE CENTER
The 508 Building becomes the front door for regional aviation talent.

The 508 Building is an on-airport facility with public street access on one side and direct airfield access from the other. FAA approval is required for certain uses and should be confirmed as a near-term step. The building is currently unoccupied and in good condition following its prior manufacturing use.

Market research from Team NEO's Advanced Aerospace and Defense practice confirms that Airframe and Powerplant certification is the single highest-demand credential in aviation maintenance, appearing on more than 12,500 job postings in 2025. The national A&P instructor workforce is flat while enrollment is growing, creating a structural gap that programs with strong local instructor recruitment can exploit. Defense employer postings also show significant overlap between A&P credentials and security clearance requirements, connecting the workforce strategy directly to the defense adjacency argument in Pillar 4.

The recommended model is city-as-landlord with a community college or career-technical education partner as operator. This protects the city's investment and prevents the single-operator failure mode. The program should include an A&P foundation track, an emerging AAM and eVTOL maintenance track, and a flight training track that leverages the airport's tower, dual runways, and low-traffic environment. The airport's controlled airspace and low traffic density make it a genuinely strong flight training environment. A flight instructor recruitment strategy targeting recently retired military and commercial pilots in the region is the practical path to rebuilding flight training capacity.

The Mansfield Airport Advisory Commission has served in an advisory capacity for more than two decades and brings together many of the stakeholder relationships that a workforce center initiative would need to draw on. Groups with that kind of institutional knowledge and community connection are often well positioned to take on expanded roles when new programs are being stood up.

KEY ACTIONS (FIRST YEAR)

1.1 Confirm FAA approval requirements for 508 Building workforce training use and initiate the approval process.
1.2 Convene a local employer roundtable to define the first credentials the center should offer.
1.3 Shortlist operator models: community college partnership, city-operated, or hybrid.
1.4 Develop a 508 Building facility and equipment concept with renovation scope and cost estimate.
1.5 Apply for FAA Workforce Development Grant (up to $1M) and identify JobsOhio and Perkins V funding.
1.6 Develop a flight instructor recruitment strategy targeting recently retired military and commercial pilots.
1.7 Explore an Airframe and Powerplant and AAM maintenance training partner for the 508 Building, including established aviation maintenance schools.

Pillar 2: Airport Real Estate, Site Readiness, and Land Strategy

PILLAR 2 | AIRPORT REAL ESTATE, SITE READINESS, AND LAND STRATEGY
Matching airport land, hangars, and capacity to the users Mansfield wants to attract.

All development adjacent to the airfield must be evaluated against runway protection zones, approach surface requirements, and building restriction lines. The airport's current Airport Layout Plan dates to 2009. Initiating an ALP update is a near-term priority that will formally document current constraints and development opportunities, and is fundable through an FAA planning grant.

Northwest Corridor Investment

The City of Mansfield has an active planning and infrastructure program underway for the northwest corridor, led by EMH&T. That program includes extension of water and sewer infrastructure, SR 13 access improvements that are already paving the way for growth to the north and west, zoning updates to welcome emerging industries, and a planned loop of the water line around the airport that will add redundancy and capacity to the system. These investments materially improve the development readiness of the West Side Taxiway 14 site and demonstrate that this plan is the next step in a program of investment already underway, not the beginning of a new one.

Development Sites

West Side Taxiway 14. A potential 150-acre site on the west side of the airport, adjacent to the taxiway, combining city-associated parcels with privately owned agricultural land at Airport Road. Utilities including electric, water, sewer, natural gas, and fiber are available in the vicinity and being actively extended as part of the northwest corridor infrastructure program. The city has the tools to support development through annexation and utility extension for the right project, which is the standard mechanism for large industrial site delivery in Ohio. Target uses include large-footprint MRO or sustainment operations, aerospace manufacturing, defense-adjacent facilities requiring airside proximity, and AAM ground operations and support infrastructure as that sector matures. All development proposals require evaluation against applicable FAA runway protection zones and building restriction lines.

Corporate Hangar Expansion. The existing corporate hangar area has immediate capacity for approximately two additional 10,000 square foot hangars within the current footprint. An extension of the existing taxiway serving that area would open additional land for new box hangar construction, providing a phased path to expanded commercial hangar capacity. This is the most actionable near-term hangar development opportunity on the field.

J. Gilbert Baird Corporate Airpark. The Baird Airpark on the east side of the airport was platted in 1988 with 12 lots and reserved taxiway connections. Lots 8, 9, and 10 are available. Existing development is present in the airpark and accessible from SR 13 via Baird Parkway. Any new construction is subject to standard FAA Part 77 height review, and the reserved taxiway connection would require FAA coordination to activate.

Airport South. Land south of the terminal area with road access but no direct airfield access due to the National Guard installation's intervening frontage. Suited for aviation-supporting uses that do not require taxiway access: logistics, light manufacturing, and ancillary business services.

T-Hangar Strategy

The airport's three T-hangar rows represent approximately 32,756 square feet of aircraft storage capacity dating to the 1940s. A 2026 appraisal established combined building value at $370,000. A Row and B Row contain individually held units in an informal condominium arrangement; all unit holders lease the underlying land from the city. C Row is under a single private ground lease with deferred maintenance.

Demand for hangar space is documented: aircraft owners commute from surrounding counties because they prefer Mansfield's runway and services over closer airports. The airport is not capturing that demand because the current product is not competitive. Enforcement of existing hangar use standards is underway. City ownership of the T-hangar rows is the appropriate long-term outcome, enabling unified management, consistent standards, and grant eligibility for improvements. A legal review of the A and B Row ownership structure is the necessary first step.

Apron extension toward the 508 Building is supported by airport leadership and should be included in the capital improvement plan, creating additional aircraft parking and supporting future AAM ground operations.

KEY ACTIONS (FIRST YEAR)

- 2.1 Apply for FAA ALP Update grant to initiate Airport Layout Plan revision.
- 2.2 Commission a legal review of A Row and B Row T-hangar ownership and title structure.
- 2.3 Complete a condition assessment and lease compliance review for all three hangar rows.
- 2.4 Evaluate taxiway extension concept for corporate hangar area and include in ALP update scope.
- 2.5 Include apron extension toward 508 Building in capital improvement plan and initiate AIP scoping.
- 2.6 Coordinate airport development strategy with the EMH&T northwest corridor planning effort.

Pillar 3: Targeted Aviation Business Attraction

PILLAR 3 | TARGETED AVIATION BUSINESS ATTRACTION
Specific users where Mansfield's assets align with real market demand.

Aviation is too broad a category to market. This plan recommends identifying a short list of specific user types and recruiting them actively. Target-user profiles should drive hangar design, real estate configuration, workforce curriculum, and external marketing.

MRO and Sustainment	Strongest near-term lane. Ties directly to the 508 Building workforce concept and existing maintenance activity. An existing local avionics and maintenance operator is expanding toward turbine capability. A new regional MRO with a dedicated hangar is the complementary target. National Air Logistics Center capacity constraints are pushing more sustainment work into the private contracting community, creating durable demand for qualified regional MRO operators.
Defense-Adjacent Suppliers	Aerospace, IT, and cyber support users connected to the 179th's mission. Addressed in Pillar 4. The defense spending environment and the validated demand for cyber and autonomous systems capability makes this lane more credible than it has been at any prior point.
Charter and Air Taxi	Attainable near-term play that builds service confidence and hangar utilization. Corporate arrivals are destination-driven. Ground transportation improvements, including reliable rideshare access and quality rental car service, are part of making the airport competitive for this traffic.
Selective Cargo and Logistics	Two to three specific shipper or commodity relationships tied to local manufacturers, medical logistics, or time-critical freight. The multimodal position strengthens this story: Ashland Railway's Mansfield railyard sits directly across SR 13, and the Mansfield Railport transload facility is nearby. Air, road, and rail connectivity is a differentiator for logistics-oriented prospects.
AAM Support and Manufacturing	Electric charging, ground operations, training, and OEM demonstration hosting. This lane also includes airframe assembly and component or drone manufacturing, which typically seek facilities of 200,000 to 300,000 square feet with or without airside access.
General Aviation Growth	Based aircraft growth, improved T-hangars, flight training recovery, and transient traffic are the foundation. The airport is already drawing aircraft owners from surrounding counties. Delivering a competitive hangar product is the highest-leverage near-term revenue move available.

Technology-enhanced marketing means building highly specific prospect packages for each lane using workforce and economic intelligence data from JobsOhio's Advanced Aerospace and Defense supersector research and Team NEO's credential and employer analysis. Specific, data-informed outreach consistently outperforms generic airport promotion.

KEY ACTIONS (FIRST YEAR)

- 3.1 Define 3 to 5 target-user profiles with specific facility, workforce, and apron requirements.
- 3.2 Commission a hangar concept study tied to those profiles.
- 3.3 Engage Team NEO and JobsOhio to validate demand and identify active Ohio prospects.

3.4 Build prospect packages for each attraction lane using workforce and economic intelligence data.
3.5 Develop a general aviation marketing plan tied to improved hangar conditions.
3.6 Work with hospitality and transportation partners to improve ground connectivity from the airport.

Pillar 4: Defense Adjacency and 179th Cyberspace Wing Alignment

PILLAR 4 | DEFENSE ADJACENCY AND 179TH ALIGNMENT
Ohio's cyber and intelligence aviation brand starts here.

The 179th Cyberspace Wing's mission encompasses both cyber operations and intelligence functions. That combination on the fence line of a general aviation airport with a 9,000-foot runway creates a differentiated economic development identity that no peer community in north-central Ohio can replicate. The current national defense investment environment, with documented surges in defense spending and explicit demand for cyber and autonomous systems capability, makes this adjacency more valuable than at any prior point in the airport's history.

A significant portion of the 179th's personnel serve on a part-time basis and currently live outside the Mansfield area. High-wage employment with defense-adjacent contractors in the airport corridor could attract some of those airmen to establish primary residence locally, connecting the defense adjacency strategy to Mansfield's broader employment and population goals.

A companion strategy focused specifically on leveraging the 179th's presence for economic development is being developed separately. That plan addresses specific facility types, security requirements, and partnership structures. This pillar ensures the workforce, real estate, and attraction pillars are structured to receive defense-adjacent users when those opportunities mature.

Defense adjacency for Mansfield is not about classified programs managed by the city. It is about the ecosystem of companies and functions that surround a cyber and intelligence mission: IT and cybersecurity firms, simulation and training support, logistics and sustainment operations, and professional services oriented toward defense contracts. The overlap between Airframe and Powerplant credentials and DoD security clearance requirements creates a bridge between the 508 Building workforce center and defense employer attraction.

KEY ACTIONS (FIRST YEAR)

- 4.1 Coordinate with the companion defense leveraging strategy and align pillar framing before plan adoption.
- 4.2 Identify defense-adjacent opportunity lanes suitable for public marketing materials.
- 4.3 Ensure 508 Building curriculum includes security clearance pathway awareness.
- 4.4 Develop a workforce narrative connecting defense contractor employment to 179th part-time personnel.

Pillar 5: Advanced Air Mobility, Ohio Corridor Node Strategy

PILLAR 5 | ADVANCED AIR MOBILITY: OHIO CORRIDOR NODE STRATEGY
Mansfield is already on the map. The job now is to make that designation permanent.

At the April 2026 DriveOhio Alliance meeting at NAAMCE, the corridor planning team confirmed that Mansfield had long been identified as a needed stop on the Columbus-Cleveland route, not as an aspirational partner, but as a functional network requirement driven by current aircraft range limitations. The window to shape the corridor map is open now.

Columbus to Mansfield to Cleveland	Primary corridor. Surfaced organically in ODOT's own work. Range constraints make Mansfield a technically necessary stop.
Springfield to Mansfield to Akron/Canton	Connects Mansfield to the NAAMCE hub and northeast Ohio markets. Politically and operationally logical given ODOT's co-location in Springfield.
Multi-Corridor Transfer Node	Long-term vision: Mansfield as a transfer-capable inland connector across central, southwest, and northeast Ohio.

In July 2026, the Executive Director of the National Advanced Air Mobility Center of Excellence in Springfield visited Mansfield Lahm, toured the airfield and candidate sites, and offered to place Mansfield on the center's AAM Airport Readiness Tool. That tool maps an airport's power, fiber, navigation aids, land, and routes, and it goes to the Governor's office, JobsOhio, and Team NEO to guide site selection. The state's AAM strategy, drafted by the ODOT AAM Director, sets three phases, with corridor planning underway in 2026 and 2027, and Mansfield's Columbus and Cleveland routes fit that first phase. The task now is to convert a standing relationship into a formal designation and a place on the state's map.

Five arguments support Mansfield's designation: it solves range and routing problems on the Columbus-Cleveland line; it is an implementation airport with existing infrastructure; it supports multiple use cases including medical logistics, public safety, cargo, and training; it fits the federal use-existing-infrastructure framework; and it brings workforce capability into the corridor story through the 508 Building.

FAA Infrastructure Framework

The FAA has published specific guidance governing AAM infrastructure at certificated airports, including Engineering Brief 105A for vertiport design. Three requirements shape Mansfield's planning:

ALP update is a prerequisite. Federally obligated airports must update their Airport Layout Plan to include proposed AAM infrastructure before an FAA airspace review can begin. The ALP update recommended in Pillar 6 is the required first step in the vertiport approval pathway.

Approval timelines are realistic, not fast. FAA airspace review for a vertiport on an existing airport targets 90 working days but is currently running longer for novel facilities. Early engagement with the FAA Great Lakes Regional AAM office is recommended before any infrastructure commitment.

Charging stations must be non-exclusive. Sponsor-built charging stations at federally obligated airports must be available to all aeronautical users. The city cannot structure charging infrastructure as an exclusive arrangement with a single AAM operator.

Charging Strategy

Charging should be planned early and in phases. The FAA prefers charging integrated near the existing fuel farm rather than at a remote edge of the field. A practical first step is an interim mobile charger, sometimes called a charging cube, that lets Mansfield advertise capability before a permanent fast charger is funded. A fence line location can pair airside charging for aircraft with landside charging for electric ground fleets, putting one power investment to two uses. Funding paths include JobsOhio OSIP, the new JobsOhio ADOP program for aerospace and defense sites, and the federal charging infrastructure program administered through ODOT. Because Springfield and Akron Canton already operate fast chargers, Mansfield can serve as a corridor stop even before its own charger is in place, and installing charging materially improves the airport's ability to attract operators.

AAM Manufacturing and Site Readiness

Advanced air mobility is a manufacturing opportunity as much as an air service one. Airframe makers in this sector typically seek facilities of 200,000 to 300,000 square feet and assemble in Ohio near the workforce and supplier base. Mansfield can match that demand with specific sites. The Baird Parkway lots on the east side, roughly 15 acres with a stub taxiway that provides runway access, suit a mid size manufacturer that needs to test what it builds. The north side combination of city and private land, roughly 150 acres, can support a larger airframe operation with direct taxiway access through a coordinated FAA review. The Site Ohio authenticated parcel and the two large existing buildings in the Airport West park suit suppliers and component or drone manufacturers that do not require airside access. The 508 Building workforce center described in Pillar 1 supplies the maintenance and assembly talent these employers need.

A plain-language overview of AAM infrastructure concepts, the FAA regulatory framework, and facility type definitions is provided in Appendix G.

KEY ACTIONS (FIRST YEAR)

- 5.1 Submit a formal corridor node request to the ODOT AAM Director for Columbus-Cleveland designation.
- 5.2 Request ODOT's corridor node selection criteria: infrastructure minimums and planning commitments.
- 5.3 Contact FAA Great Lakes Regional AAM office (AGL-ARP-UAS@FAA.GOV) to initiate early engagement on vertiport and charging station siting.
- 5.4 Identify a compliant landing area consistent with EB 105A and initiate the OE/AAA airspace review.
- 5.5 Evaluate electric charging and power infrastructure requirements and include in ALP update scope.
- 5.6 Organize a Mansfield delegation visit to NAAMCE: City, Airport, Chamber, 179th, employers.
- 5.7 Join DriveOhio Alliance formally and establish a standing Mansfield point of contact.
- 5.8 Complete the ODOT airport survey and provide NAAMCE the data to place Mansfield on the AAM Airport Readiness Tool.
- 5.9 Produce a route and use case analysis for the 50 to 300 mile market covering cargo, medical logistics, and passenger movement, and share it with the ODOT AAM Director and NAAMCE.
- 5.10 Engage Beta Technologies through NAAMCE on Mansfield's fit in its Ohio partner strategy and on hosting a charger.
- 5.11 Attend the NAAMCE Industry Forum and use it to meet manufacturers, the FAA, and NASA contacts.

Pillar 6: Airfield Readiness, Grant Execution, and Governance

PILLAR 6 | AIRFIELD READINESS, GRANT EXECUTION, AND GOVERNANCE
Infrastructure credibility, funding discipline, and clear ownership.

A May 2026 FAA periodic inspection found the airport in compliance across all major categories with three minor administrative findings, all being corrected on schedule. That compliance posture is a meaningful credential in prospect and partner conversations. Open items include POFZ markings and airfield lighting, which belong on the near-term capital list.

VOR decommissioning is a longer-term concern. Mansfield's historic advantage of offering a wide variety of instrument approaches is being eroded as the FAA retires VOR infrastructure nationally. The airport should proactively engage with the FAA to protect remaining approaches and pursue GPS-based alternatives.

The Airport Layout Plan dates to 2009 and must be updated for two reasons: it will formally document current RPZ boundaries, development areas, and building restriction lines for all development sites in Pillar 2; and the FAA requires an updated ALP showing proposed AAM infrastructure locations before any airspace review for a vertiport or charging station can begin. The ALP update is the enabling step for the AAM strategy and is fundable through an FAA planning grant.

Grant pursuit should be treated as an annual operating system. A rolling 18-month grant calendar, standardized Council resolutions for grant authority, and a designated grant owner are the three administrative improvements that would most improve execution capacity. The full grant funding table is provided in Appendix E.

The Mansfield Airport Advisory Commission has provided valuable advisory oversight for more than two decades and brings together many of the stakeholders this plan will need to engage. That institutional knowledge and those relationships are assets as this strategy moves into execution.

KEY ACTIONS (FIRST YEAR)

- 6.1 Apply for FAA ALP Update planning grant.
- 6.2 Designate a grant owner responsible for the funding calendar and application pipeline.
- 6.3 Standardize City Council resolutions for grant apply, accept, execute, and match authority.
- 6.4 Build and publish an 18-month grant and capital calendar.
- 6.5 Add POFZ markings to near-term capital project list and address through FAA AIP.
- 6.6 Initiate FAA engagement on VOR approach protection and GPS alternative development.

Action Plan Summary

This section consolidates every key action from the six pillars into a single numbered list for tracking and assignment. Each action is numbered by pillar and sequence, so that action 5.2, for example, is the second key action under Pillar 5, matching the numbering used in each pillar section. Owners shown are proposed and are to be confirmed with the responsible parties before the plan is adopted.

Pillar 1: Aviation Innovation and Workforce Center

1.1 Confirm FAA approval requirements for 508 Building workforce training use and initiate the approval process. *(Owner: Airport Management)*

1.2 Convene a local employer roundtable to define the first credentials the center should offer. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

1.3 Shortlist operator models: community college partnership, city-operated, or hybrid. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

1.4 Develop a 508 Building facility and equipment concept with renovation scope and cost estimate. *(Owner: Airport Management)*

1.5 Apply for FAA Workforce Development Grant (up to $1M) and identify JobsOhio and Perkins V funding. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

1.6 Develop a flight instructor recruitment strategy targeting recently retired military and commercial pilots. *(Owner: FBO Operator)*

1.7 Explore an Airframe and Powerplant and AAM maintenance training partner for the 508 Building, including established aviation maintenance schools. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

Pillar 2: Airport Real Estate, Site Readiness, and Land Strategy

2.1 Apply for FAA ALP Update grant to initiate Airport Layout Plan revision. *(Owner: Airport Management)*

2.2 Commission a legal review of A Row and B Row T-hangar ownership and title structure. *(Owner: Law Director)*

2.3 Complete a condition assessment and lease compliance review for all three hangar rows. *(Owner: Airport Management)*

2.4 Evaluate taxiway extension concept for corporate hangar area and include in ALP update scope. *(Owner: Airport Management)*

2.5 Include apron extension toward 508 Building in capital improvement plan and initiate AIP scoping. *(Owner: Airport Management)*

2.6 Coordinate airport development strategy with the EMH&T northwest corridor planning effort. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

Pillar 3: Targeted Aviation Business Attraction

3.1 Define 3 to 5 target-user profiles with specific facility, workforce, and apron requirements. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

3.2 Commission a hangar concept study tied to those profiles. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

3.3 Engage Team NEO and JobsOhio to validate demand and identify active Ohio prospects. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

3.4 Build prospect packages for each attraction lane using workforce and economic intelligence data. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

3.5 Develop a general aviation marketing plan tied to improved hangar conditions. *(Owner: FBO Operator)*

3.6 Work with hospitality and transportation partners to improve ground connectivity from the airport. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

Pillar 4: Defense Adjacency and 179th Cyberspace Wing Alignment

4.1 Coordinate with the companion defense leveraging strategy and align pillar framing before plan adoption. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

4.2 Identify defense-adjacent opportunity lanes suitable for public marketing materials. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

4.3 Ensure 508 Building curriculum includes security clearance pathway awareness. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

4.4 Develop a workforce narrative connecting defense contractor employment to 179th part-time personnel. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

Pillar 5: Advanced Air Mobility, Ohio Corridor Node Strategy

5.1 Submit a formal corridor node request to the ODOT AAM Director for Columbus-Cleveland designation. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

5.2 Request ODOT's corridor node selection criteria: infrastructure minimums and planning commitments. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

5.3 Contact FAA Great Lakes Regional AAM office (AGL-ARP-UAS@FAA.GOV) to initiate early engagement on vertiport and charging station siting. *(Owner: Airport Management)*

5.4 Identify a compliant landing area consistent with EB 105A and initiate the OE/AAA airspace review. *(Owner: Airport Management)*

5.5 Evaluate electric charging and power infrastructure requirements and include in ALP update scope. *(Owner: Airport Management)*

5.6 Organize a Mansfield delegation visit to NAAMCE: City, Airport, Chamber, 179th, employers. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

5.7 Join DriveOhio Alliance formally and establish a standing Mansfield point of contact. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

5.8 Complete the ODOT airport survey and provide NAAMCE the data to place Mansfield on the AAM Airport Readiness Tool. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

5.9 Produce a route and use case analysis for the 50 to 300 mile market covering cargo, medical logistics, and passenger movement, and share it with the ODOT AAM Director and NAAMCE. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

5.10 Engage Beta Technologies through NAAMCE on Mansfield's fit in its Ohio partner strategy and on hosting a charger. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

5.11 Attend the NAAMCE Industry Forum and use it to meet manufacturers, the FAA, and NASA contacts. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

Pillar 6: Airfield Readiness, Grant Execution, and Governance

6.1 Apply for FAA ALP Update planning grant. *(Owner: Airport Management)*

6.2 Designate a grant owner responsible for the funding calendar and application pipeline. *(Owner: City Administration)*

6.3 Standardize City Council resolutions for grant apply, accept, execute, and match authority. *(Owner: Law Director)*

6.4 Build and publish an 18-month grant and capital calendar. *(Owner: Economic Development)*

6.5 Add POFZ markings to near-term capital project list and address through FAA AIP. *(Owner: Airport Management)*

6.6 Initiate FAA engagement on VOR approach protection and GPS alternative development. *(Owner: Airport Management)*

Success Indicators

These indicators define measurable progress across the plan's five-year horizon and should be reviewed annually.

Year 1

- 508 Building operator model selected; facility concept and first funding applications complete.
- FAA approval pathway for 508 Building uses confirmed.
- Formal ODOT corridor node request submitted; NAAMCE delegation visit complete.
- Mansfield added to the NAAMCE AAM Airport Readiness Tool.
- Route and use case analysis for the 50 to 300 mile market delivered to the ODOT AAM Director.
- Interim charging capability available at the airport.
- T-hangar legal review and condition assessment complete.
- FAA ALP Update grant application submitted.
- 18-month grant calendar established.
- Airport development strategy coordinated with EMH&T northwest corridor plan.

Years 2 and 3

- First workforce training cohort launched with employer-validated curriculum.
- Mansfield designated as a primary node on at least one ODOT AAM corridor.
- Letter of intent or signed lease from a target MRO, cargo, or business attraction prospect.
- T-hangar Phase 1 improvement complete; based aircraft count growing.
- Corporate hangar expansion underway or permitted.
- Electric aviation charging infrastructure installed or fully funded.
- AAM manufacturer or supplier prospect identified for a Baird Parkway or Airport West site.

Years 4 and 5

- Workforce center producing credentialed technicians entering local employment.
- Large commercial hangar under construction or occupied.
- Mansfield recognized as a contributing node in Ohio's AAM ecosystem.
- ARFF Index C upgrade funded and underway.
- General aviation traffic and based aircraft growing year over year.
- Defense-adjacent users established in coordination with companion strategy.

Closing

Mansfield Lahm's runway is long. Its airspace is controlled. Its location between Columbus and Cleveland is not an accident of geography; it is a strategic asset that Ohio's own AAM planners have already validated. The Super Guppy lands here. The 179th Cyberspace Wing's cyber and intelligence mission is on the fence line. The 508 Building is ready. The railyard is across the street. Water and sewer infrastructure is being extended to the west side. The state is building a corridor network and Mansfield is already on it.

What this plan provides is structure: six pillars, a clear sequencing logic, an accountability framework, and a one-year action plan to prove the strategy is real. The opportunity does not require Mansfield to outspend Springfield or outbuild Columbus. It requires clarity about what Mansfield is, discipline about which moves to make first, and the organizational will to execute.

Cleared for takeoff.

City of Mansfield, Ohio | Mansfield Lahm Regional Airport | Confidential Draft | July 2026

APPENDICES

The following appendices provide supporting analysis and reference material for each pillar of this plan.

Appendix A: Ohio's Aerospace Ecosystem and Competitive Landscape

Ohio's Aerospace Network

Wright-Patterson AFB / AFRL	Advanced aviation testing, defense procurement, and Agility Prime eVTOL program. Mission growth has historically followed communities with long-term deliberate strategy around their installation.
NAAMCE / Springfield-Beckley	National AAM center of excellence, eVTOL testing, Beta Technologies vertiport, Joby Aviation investment, SkyVision, DriveOhio Alliance hub. Mansfield built an active relationship with the center through a July 2026 site visit and is being added to the center's AAM Airport Readiness Tool.
NASA Neil Armstrong Test Facility	Plum Brook Station, Sandusky. Mansfield Lahm is the operational airport of record. The Super Guppy lands at Mansfield and assets are transported to Armstrong for testing.
DriveOhio / ODOT AAM Division	State-level corridor planning and AAM policy. The ODOT AAM Director's team identified Mansfield as a Columbus-Cleveland corridor node.
JobsOhio Advanced Aerospace and Defense	Ohio's primary economic development organization operates an Advanced Aerospace and Defense supersector. Mansfield's pitch should be coordinated through this framework.
Ohio Manufacturing Base	Richland County and surrounding region's aerospace and defense supplier base creates demand for maintenance, sustainment, and workforce the airport can directly serve.

Competitive Landscape

Springfield-Beckley / NAAMCE	State AAM epicenter. Complementary, not competitive. Springfield built the testing infrastructure over a decade. Mansfield connects to the network Springfield anchors.
Rickenbacker (Columbus)	Cargo hub with international service. A different category. Mansfield serves north-central Ohio shippers for whom Rickenbacker is the right destination but not the right origin.
Akron-Canton	Closest peer in scale and history, but without Mansfield's defense adjacency, runway capability, or AAM corridor position.
Findlay, Portage County, Zanesville, Marion, Knox County	Mansfield's true peer group among non-major-metro Ohio GA airports. None hold all five node factors simultaneously.

Appendix B: Airport Infrastructure Data

Runway Data

Runway 5/23 (Primary)	9,000 feet. Primary instrument runway with ILS approach to Runway 32. Accommodates corporate jets, cargo aircraft, military transports including the Super Guppy, and all anticipated AAM and eVTOL platforms. Exceeds the primary runway length at most Ohio peer general aviation airports, which typically range from 5,000 to 7,000 feet.
Runway 14/32 (Crosswind)	6,800 feet. At this length, the crosswind runway alone exceeds the primary runway at many comparable Ohio airports, giving Mansfield genuine all-weather operational flexibility.
Flight Training Value	Tower operations, dual long runways, multiple precision and non-precision approaches, and low traffic density create conditions difficult to find elsewhere in the region. Students and instrument-rated pilots can practice approaches and tower communications without competing with commercial traffic.
Total Airport Area	Approximately 2,034 acres across Franklin and Madison Townships.

FAA Inspection Status

A May 2026 FAA periodic inspection under 14 C.F.R. Part 139 found Mansfield Lahm in compliance across all major operational categories. Three minor administrative findings were identified involving documentation and training record tracking. None warranted legal enforcement action. All are being corrected on schedule. Records were found well-organized, ANG ARFF training documentation was received, and AEP reviews were documented.

Airport Layout Plan

The current Airport Layout Plan was last updated in 2009 and establishes runway protection zones, building restriction lines, and development area designations. An ALP update is recommended as a near-term priority, fundable through an FAA planning grant, and is a required prerequisite for FAA approval of any vertiport or charging station.

Appendix C: Development Site Detail

Site 1: West Side Taxiway 14

Approximately 150 acres on the west side of the airport adjacent to the taxiway, combining city-associated parcels with privately owned agricultural land at 353 Bauer Road. The City of Mansfield's northwest corridor planning effort, led by EMH&T, is extending water and sewer infrastructure to this area, improving SR 13 access, and updating zoning to welcome emerging industries. A planned water line loop around the airport will add redundancy and capacity to the system. Utilities are being actively extended as part of this program. Annexation and utility extension remain the delivery mechanism for a qualifying project. All development proposals require evaluation against FAA runway protection zones, approach surfaces, and building restriction lines prior to commitment.

Target uses: large-footprint MRO or sustainment operations, aerospace manufacturing, defense-adjacent facilities requiring airside proximity, AAM ground operations and support infrastructure.

Site 2: Corporate Hangar Expansion

The existing corporate hangar area has capacity for approximately two additional 10,000 square foot hangars within the current footprint without requiring new taxiway construction. An extension of the existing taxiway serving the corporate hangar row would open additional land for new box hangar construction. This is the most actionable near-term hangar development opportunity on the field. Taxiway extension scope and alignment should be included in the ALP update.

Site 3: J. Gilbert Baird Corporate Airpark

The Baird Airpark was platted in 1988 as a 12-lot development of approximately 60 acres accessible from SR 13 via Baird Parkway. Lots 8, 9, and 10 are believed to be available. Existing development is present in the airpark. Any new construction is subject to FAA Part 77 obstruction standards. The reserved taxiway connection in the 1988 plat would require FAA coordination to activate. Site topography includes meaningful grade change; grading and stormwater management costs should be assumed in any development proforma. With runway access from the reserved stub taxiway, this site suits a mid size advanced air mobility manufacturer that needs to test what it builds.

Site 4: Airport South

Land south of the terminal area with road access but without direct airfield access due to the National Guard installation's intervening frontage. Suited for aviation-supporting uses that do not require taxiway access. Building height constraints from the Runway 32 approach surface apply.

Appendix D: T-Hangar Governance and Redevelopment Analysis

A Row, B Row, and C Row are located at 2101 Harrington Memorial Road and together represent approximately 32,756 square feet of aircraft storage. A Row and B Row are each approximately 10,828 square feet; C Row is approximately 11,100 square feet. All three date to the 1940s.

A May 2026 appraisal by Sours, Buie and Associates established the combined building value of all three rows at $370,000, excluding the underlying land. A Row and B Row contain individually held units in an informal condominium-style arrangement not reflected in Richland County Auditor records. Individual units have changed hands for amounts ranging from $4,000 to $12,000, with more recent listings above that range. C Row is held by a single private leaseholder. All unit holders lease the underlying land from the city under parcel 0289050082000.

The informal resale market confirms that latent demand exists for hangar space at Mansfield. The airport is not capturing any value from those transactions. The appraisal recommends a qualified legal opinion before the city pursues any acquisition, consolidation, or redevelopment. The three-track strategy is: legal review and governance reconciliation first; private leaseholder engagement on C Row maintenance compliance second; phased capital improvement or acquisition once governance is established third. City ownership of the T-hangar rows is the appropriate long-term outcome, enabling unified management and grant eligibility for improvements.

Appendix E: Grant Funding Framework

FAA Airport Improvement Program	Core federal program for airfield improvements, pavement, lighting, ARFF, and planning. Typically 90 to 95 percent federal share for general aviation airports. Annual application cycle.
FAA ALP Update Grant	Planning grant for Airport Layout Plan revisions. Recommended as an immediate application.
FAA Workforce Development Grant	Up to $1 million for aviation workforce programs. Directly applicable to the 508 Building training center.
ODOT Office of Aviation / OAIP	State infrastructure grants and planning support. Mansfield should have projects on the OAIP calendar annually.
JobsOhio	Workforce and economic development grants within the Advanced Aerospace and Defense supersector.
EDA Public Works	Federal Economic Development Administration program for public infrastructure supporting job creation.
Ohio 166 Loan Fund	Ohio Department of Development program for real estate and infrastructure tied to job creation.
Defense Community Infrastructure Program	Administered by the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (oldcc.gov). Funds infrastructure in communities hosting defense installations.
JobsOhio ADOP	Aerospace and Defense version of the OSIP infrastructure program. A potential funding path for airport power, charging, and site infrastructure tied to the 179th and to aerospace attraction.

Appendix F: Workforce Market Research

The following data is drawn from Team NEO's Advanced Aerospace and Defense practice and Lightcast job posting analysis for 2025.

National Maintenance Workforce	The United States civil commercial aviation maintenance workforce exceeds 431,000 personnel. No oversupply is evident in any regional labor market analysis.
A&P Credential Demand	Airframe and Powerplant certification appeared on 12,538 job postings in 2025, the single highest-demand credential in the aviation mechanic category.
Instructor Supply Gap	Aviation maintenance technician school enrollment rose 9 percent year over year in 2024, but the certified instructor workforce remained flat.
Defense Credential Overlap	Defense employer postings show significant overlap between A&P credentials and DoD security clearance requirements.
Composites Demand	Composites demand is expected to grow as next-generation aircraft frame materials shift. Regional proximity to advanced materials research resources positions north-central Ohio favorably.
JobsOhio Supersector Alignment	JobsOhio's Advanced Aerospace and Defense supersector identifies this space as a priority sector expected to reach trillion-dollar market scale.

Appendix G: Advanced Air Mobility, A Plain-Language Overview

Advanced Air Mobility is a term the Federal Aviation Administration uses to describe a new category of aircraft that is electric, highly automated, and capable of vertical takeoff and landing. These aircraft are sometimes called eVTOLs, air taxis, or flying cars. The category also includes large cargo drones. Most current designs carry a pilot and four to six passengers. Companies including Joby Aviation, Archer, Beta Technologies, and Lilium have built and flown full-scale aircraft. Several are in the FAA certification process. Ohio is one of the leading states preparing infrastructure for commercial operations.

What These Aircraft Need

Vertiport	A facility designed for the full range of eVTOL operations: landing, takeoff, taxiing, parking, and storage. Classified as a type of heliport under FAA regulations. Requires an updated Airport Layout Plan and FAA airspace review before construction at a federally obligated airport.
Vertistop	A simpler facility: a designated landing and takeoff pad without full terminal or storage infrastructure. The lower-cost entry point for communities entering the AAM network. Identifying a compliant vertistop location is Mansfield's recommended near-term first step.
Electric Charging	Most eVTOL aircraft use large battery packs rechargeable in roughly 15 to 20 minutes with Level 3 DC fast charging. FAA rules require that sponsor-built charging stations at public airports be available to all operators on a non-exclusive basis.
Airspace Corridors	ODOT and the FAA are working to designate low-altitude air corridors where AAM operations will be coordinated, functioning similarly to highway routes connecting population centers. Mansfield's position between Columbus and Cleveland makes it a technically necessary corridor stop based on current aircraft battery range.

FAA Regulatory Framework

Engineering Brief 105A	The FAA's primary design standard for vertiports. Covers physical dimensions, downwash caution zones, approach and departure paths, and marking requirements.
14 CFR Part 157	Requires notification to the FAA before constructing a new vertiport. For vertiports at federally obligated airports, the process begins with an ALP update.
14 CFR Part 77	Governs obstruction evaluation and protection of navigable airspace. All proposed AAM facilities must be reviewed through the FAA's OE/AAA system.
ALP Update Requirement	Federally obligated airports must update their FAA-approved Airport Layout Plan to show proposed AAM infrastructure before a formal airspace review can begin.
Approval Timeline	The FAA's goal is to complete airspace reviews within 90 working days. Vertiport cases are currently taking longer because the aircraft involved are not yet fully certificated.

What This Looks Like

The following images are from the Federal Aviation Administration's official AAM infrastructure guidance. The first illustrates where vertiports and vertistops can be sited, including existing airports. The second shows the standard marking for an eVTOL landing area.

Figure 1: Optional locations for vertiports and vertistops, including existing airports. Source: Federal Aviation Administration.

Figure 2: Standard eVTOL landing area marking per FAA Engineering Brief 105A. Source: Federal Aviation Administration.

Where Mansfield Fits

Mansfield's advantage is not that it needs to build a vertiport today. Its advantage is that it already meets the physical prerequisites: a certificated towered airport, a long primary runway, adequate land with active infrastructure investment underway, and a position on a corridor that ODOT's own planners have identified as requiring a stop. The plan's recommended sequence is to complete the ALP update, begin early FAA engagement, install charging integrated with the fuel farm, and designate a compliant landing

area. Because these aircraft land on a conventional runway whenever one is available, a vertical only vertiport is not the near term goal for a field with a 9,000 foot runway. That sequence positions Mansfield as a first-mover in the corridor network without requiring large speculative capital investment before the industry's regulatory framework is fully in place.