

Frequently Asked Questions



Question: What is Project Propel?

Answer: A simple way to make every company and institution in our region, more competitive immediately.

Question: Why is Project Propel important?

Answer: The time is right to capitalize on the regional growth momentum. Project Propel, over time, will allow for additional growth with new nonstop routes, larger aircraft, and additional frequencies on existing routes.

Question: Are there enough people traveling by air in our region to make a difference?

Answer: Pre-pandemic, there were over 820,000 people that flew from our region. Only 418,000 (50 percent) of these people chose to fly local from SBN. If an additional 20 percent more travelers choose to fly local, the impact on our region would be significant.

Question: Is my company signing a contract?

Answer: No. You are signing a letter agreeing to making South Bend International Airport your first choice for air travel, if the cost of the ticket purchase is \$300 or less than a flight out of Chicago's airports.

Question: When do you expect the impact of the policy change to be realized?

Answer: Project Propel is an on-going effort. We believe the impact will be realized within a year of sustained increased usage of travel in and out of South Bend International Airport. We can first expect an increase in current flight times and options. This will be followed by larger aircraft and an increase in more daily flights.

Question: How frequently are airline representatives met with?

Answer: Air service development is an ongoing, continuous effort. In addition to face-to-face meetings, airport executives communicate with airline representatives via video calls and email.

Question: What new nonstop routes do you expect to start flying from the South Bend airport?

Answer: Top unserved markets include nonstop flights to Denver, Washington D.C. and New York City.

Question: Doesn't this just benefit the airport?

Answer: Most people don't realize that our airport is an economic engine for our region. The economic impact of SBN is over 1.7 billion dollars annually. This includes 471 jobs at the airport and over 6,500 jobs in our region attributed to the airport. The success of this campaign will provide tangible results benefitting both business and leisure travelers with more nonstop routes and lower fares.

Question: Why haven't we done this before?

Answer: Project Propel was kicked off in 2018 and was paused as travel was slowed due to the pandemic. With the boost from multi-county coordination in the region and the focus on population growth, quality of life and talent attraction, improving our direct connections to economic hubs across the country makes sense.

Question: How many organizations need to sign on for this strategy to work?

Answer: The goal is to present 75-100 Fly Local policy letters to the national airline carriers to demonstrate the level of corporate commitment involved.

Question: When this is successful, will the airport need to expand again?

Answer: We do not foresee an immediate need for expansion. However, if there is a reason to expand, we will look forward to that opportunity because it will mean that our region is prospering economically.

Question: What if you have businesses sign letters and nothing happens?

Answer: This is unlikely. This type of initiative has worked in other regions around the country with incredible success.

Question: I'm a small business with few employees, will it really make a difference if I participate?

Answer: Every single letter will make a difference. These letters demonstrate that our region supports the initiative.