

Chapter 3 - T. F. Green Airport Air Passenger Survey

Departing passenger surveys were conducted at T. F. Green Airport during the week of October 19, 2005. This section outlines the survey design and conduct, data tabulation procedures and key findings.

3.1 Survey Design and Conduct

The purpose of the surveys was to understand visitor expenditure and length of stay characteristics, which are used to estimate the indirect impacts associated with visitors who arrive by air.

Approach – The survey approach obtained a representative sample of passengers using the airport at all times of the day over a five-day period during a “typical” week. The week was selected specifically to avoid holiday periods (e.g. Columbus Day, Thanksgiving, etc.). A total of five interviewers conducted the interviews over an eight-hour period that varied by day. Surveyors obtained a representative sample of passengers by moving up and down the terminal from gate to gate, in which passengers were interviewed where they gathered.

The Transportation Security Agency (TSA) and the airlines were notified in advance of the interviews by a letter from the Rhode Island Airport Corporation. Airline representatives did not seem to find the interviewing activities intrusive, or to impede their ability to distribute boarding passes and board passengers. To facilitate the process, TDA provided a small space in the terminal where surveyors manage the survey process

Survey responses were entered directly into PDAs (personal digital assistants) at the terminal during the passenger interview, thereby eliminating paper. The PDAs were routinely collected every couple hours and exchanged for freshly charged PDA's. Upon collection, the collected survey data in each PDA was downloaded into a laptop computer.

Passengers Surveyed – The initial goal was to obtain approximately 2,500 departing passenger surveys, representing the full spectrum of passengers from early morning until late evening over a five-day period. The actual number of surveys obtained during the 4-day period was 2,672, representing approximately 5.0% of the average weekly enplanements. The distribution of survey responses over the four-day period is summarized below in **Exhibit 3-1**.

Exhibit 3-1
Departing Passenger Survey Responses
 Rhode Island Airport Economic Impact Study – Update 2006

<u>Survey Date</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Wednesday, October 19, 2005	521	19.5%
Thursday, October 20, 2005	767	28.7%
Friday, October 21, 2005	809	30.3%
Saturday, October 22, 2005	575	21.5%
Total	2,672	100.0%

3.2 Survey Findings

Of the total 2,674 surveys, 36.7% (981) were visitors to the New England area, 61.0% (1,634) were residents, and 2.3% (62) were connecting passengers, as summarized below in **Exhibit 3-2**. Breakdown of the results mark a notable difference compared to the 1999 in which residents comprised only 48.0% (versus 61.0%). Time of year can account for such variance. For this reason the U.S. DOT schedules, based on a national 10% ticket sample were also analyzed. The database suggest that the annual share of visitors flying into T.F. Green approximates 58.6%.⁹ To estimate the number of visitors for this analysis, the share of connecting passengers identified in the survey (2.3%) was used, and the remaining passengers were broken down using the U.S. DOT percentages.

Exhibit 3-2
Survey Results and Estimated Passengers by Direction
 Rhode Island Airport Economic Impact Study – Update 2006

Direction	WSA Departing Pass Survey				U.S. DOT ¹		2006 Estimate ²	
	2006 Study		1999 Study		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent				
Connecting Pass.	62	2.3%	152	7.4%	na	na	132,870	2.3%
Resident of Region	1,631	61.0%	991	48.0%	308,102	58.6%	3,280,465	57.2%
Visitor to Region	981	36.7%	922	44.6%	217,634	41.4%	2,317,222	40.4%
Total Passengers	2,674	100.0%	2,065	100.0%	525,736	100.0%	5,730,557	100.0%

¹ DOT O&D Survey, reconciled to Schedules T-100 and 298C T-1.

² Total (including enplaning and deplaning) based on *Monthly Airport Passenger Activity Summary*, Dec. 2005; RIAC

Visitor Surveys, Visitor Persons and Average Expenditures – Of the 981 visitor survey responses, 36 either refused to answer the expenditure queries or the expenditure responses were suspect. The remaining 945 were usable, of which 57.1% were conducting business, 39.1% were personal/vacation, 3.2% were combined business & personal/vacation and 0.6% were military, as

⁹ Note that the U.S. DOT source does not provide an estimate of connecting

shown in **Exhibit 3-3**. These responses reflect expenditure patterns for 1,389 visitors, which suggest an average of 1.5 visitors per surveyed passenger. The average length of stay for all visitors to the area is 5.2 days.

Exhibit 3-3
Trip Purpose, Length of Stay and Average Visitor Expenditures
 Rhode Island Airport Economic Impact Study – Update 2006

	Trip Purpose				
	Business	Personal/ Vacation	Business & Pers/Vac	Military	Total
Surveys					
Number	547	360	32	6	945
Percent	57.1%	39.1%	3.2%	0.6%	100.0%
Visitors & Length of Stay					
Persons	709	624	50	6	1,389
Avg. Persons/Survey	1.3	1.7	1.6	1.0	1.5
Length of Stay	2,496	4,360	311	55	7,222
Avg. Stay	3.5	7.0	6.2	9.2	5.2
Average Expenditures per Visitor Day					
Lodging	\$99.61	\$28.26	\$36.18	\$43.06	\$69.92
Food & Beverage	48.33	34.33	37.29	22.73	42.46
Transportation	42.05	17.11	29.89	34.97	32.09
Retail	6.73	18.06	14.85	3.04	11.30
Entertainment/Other	<u>4.22</u>	<u>6.73</u>	<u>5.15</u>	<u>0.60</u>	<u>5.19</u>
Total	\$200.94	\$104.49	\$123.36	\$104.38	\$160.95

Visitor Expenditures Type – Of the 945 visitors who responded to the expenditure question, the average daily expenditure per person totaled \$160.95. Based on the average stay of 5.2 days, the average daily expenditure per visitor approximates \$836. The average stay varied between 3.5 days for business travelers to 7.0 for personal recreation. Similarly, the average daily expenditure varies from \$104.49 for personal/vacation to \$200.94 for business travelers

To calculate visitor impacts, car rental and ground transportation expenses are excluded because the firms that provide these services typically are either located at the airport or service the airport, and the impacts associated with these firms are included in the direct impact calculation. Therefore, to avoid double counting, the taxi and ground transport expenditures are excluded from the average visitor impact calculation. Given this adjustment the average visitor expenditures per day used in the visitor impact calculation totals \$128.86 (excluding taxi and ground transport) as shown above (Exhibit 3-3). Expense breakdown suggests that the largest average expenditure is lodging, \$69.92 per night, per person; this average accounts for visitors who stay with friends or family, or share a lodging with other travelers. The second highest expenditure type, food and beverage averages, \$42.46 per day.