

ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE
NEWS RELEASE



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Airport Transfer Agreements Approved by Kent County Board of Commissioners

GRAND RAPIDS – The Gerald R. Ford Airport Authority (GRFIAA) and Kent County Board of Commissioners reached three agreements this morning, moving closer to federal approval of the Airport having its own governance. The agreements are required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to transfer control of the Airport from the County to the Authority. Kent County has owned and governed the Airport for 52 years.

The process to transfer the Airport to an Authority started in 2014 and required State legislative approval. “These agreements took more than just the work of the current Airport Authority board; credit goes to the previous Airport board for having the foresight and wisdom to prioritize this effort,” said Kent County Commissioner Roger Morgan, who is also the Chair of the GRFIAA Board. “We also had great, bi-partisan support from our local State lawmakers and the Office of the Governor through this process. These agreements give the Airport Authority the flexibility to develop policies and procedures tailored specifically to meet their needs. This is truly a watershed moment for Gerald R. Ford International Airport.”

The agreements needed in the Authority’s FAA application include:

- A Lease and Asset Transfer Agreement, transferring the Airport’s assets, buildings, fixtures, equipment, personal property, employees, and financial obligations of the Airport from the County to the Authority;
- An Assignment and Assumption Agreement, transferring the rights, titles and interests under all Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) Records of Decision and all outstanding grant agreements between the FAA and the County;
- An Intergovernmental Services Agreement, continuing some County services and operational support to the Authority for up to 30 months from the effective date (unless extended by mutual agreement).

The agreements would take effect upon the FAA’s approval of the transfer. “This has been a smooth process so far, thanks to the leadership and cooperative nature of the Kent County Board of Commissioners and the Airport Authority Board,” said Brian Ryks, Executive Director of the Gerald R. Ford International Airport. “We are fortunate to have leaders who understand the challenges of this industry and are willing to work with us, knowing that in the end, what benefits the Airport will benefit our entire region.”

The Airport generates more than \$3.1 billion in direct and indirect economic impact to the region. “We are proud to have contributed to the Airport’s success since the County received ownership in 1963,” said Dan Koorndyk, Chair of the Kent County Board of Commissioners. “This Board recognizes that air travel is an increasingly competitive environment. We believe an Airport Authority will create a stronger business model that will lead to better customer service and foster more air service development.” The FAA decision is expected by July 1, 2016.

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