

AIR MOBILITY CORRIDOR

IN TRAVERSE CITY & GRAND TRAVERSE BAY



THE FUTURE OF OUR AIRWAYS: COMMERCIAL DRONE SKYWAYS

Imagine a future where commercial drones operated in safe and regulated 'airspace highways'. Where drones can deliver goods and essentials, especially to remote and rural communities, advancing social equity, improving the environment, and supporting economic growth. By developing and testing the feasibility of air mobility corridors in Michigan, our Great Lakes Region can be at the forefront of building out and commercializing this technology for North America and beyond.

THE VISION: AIR MOBILITY CORRIDORS FOR MICHIGAN

In early 2022, Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced an initiative to spur the development of air mobility corridors in Michigan. The first stage of this initiative is to study the feasibility of commercial drone skyways in suitable locations across the state of Michigan and internationally through a partnership with Ontario.

The State of Michigan will explore whether small drones can be flown beyond the line of sight of a pilot and used in operations such as just-in-time delivery, medical transport, or other small-scale deployment of unmanned aerial systems (UAS), more commonly known as drones. The information gathered from this feasibility study will be used to further decision-making in preparing for the future of advanced air mobility in North America, making Michigan a global leader in the development and deployment of mobility technologies that will benefit society, protect the environment, and strengthen our economy.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The use of commercial drones is rising, and with it comes substantial benefits to the economy and the environment. **The use cases for drones expand exponentially when they can operate both beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) and autonomously.** For example, it provides a new mobility option for services, such as fast delivery of essential supplies and prescription medication, public safety, and even organ delivery.

Infrastructure must be developed to put established drone hardware and technology into best use and practice. There are challenges related to public acceptance, the enforcement of rules and regulations, and communication between branches of government and drone pilots. **The safe integration of drones into national airspace and communities at scale is possible through the development of digital infrastructure, strategic partnerships, and thought leadership.**

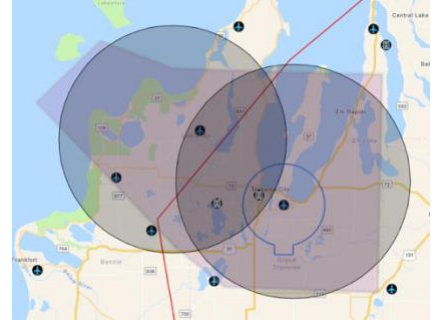


Airspace Link is partnering with the State of Michigan via the Michigan Department of Transportation to carry out a BVLOS study in three locations in Michigan. Airspace Link is a company that has developed products and services to support where industry regulations allow drone operations through the full foundation for advanced drone integration including Beyond Visual Line of Sight Autonomous Operations.



The Grand Traverse Region as a Testbed for Commercial Drone Technology

The Grand Traverse region will be one of three use case studies in Michigan intended to provide transferable and repeatable knowledge in establishing safe drone skyways. Traverse City and Grand Traverse Bay, with our mixed land use of forested areas, agricultural land, residential and commercial, coupled with our proximity to Lake Michigan and open water, make the region well positioned to offer **a testbed in which to analyze and establish the viable operation of drone skyways** in the following use cases:



- RURAL** | Remote package delivery, e.g., pharmaceutical, food, retail
- INFRASTRUCTURE** | Roads, utilities, telecom, oil & gas
- MARITIME** | Public safety, shore to ship
- AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES** | Vineyards, orchards, natural areas

Read the Article: [Traverse City Is A Study Site Of Potential Drone Corridors In Michigan](#) ~ The Ticker, October 7, 2022

Aviation Assets of the Grand Traverse Region:

- Traverse City is home to **Northwestern Michigan College's UAS program** - the only Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) UAS Collegiate Training Program in Michigan. NMC's Engineering Technology UAS Degree includes training in electrical systems, hydraulics, robotics, technical and programming design, and GIS.
- **Northwestern Michigan College's Aviation Program** is an FAA-approved flight training and ground operations school to train pilots and technicians.
- The **United States Coast Guard Air Station in Traverse City** oversees search and rescue operations across the Northern Great Lakes, including all of Lake Michigan and a greater part of Lake Superior and Lake Huron.
- Traverse City is home to **Michigan Technological University's Grand Traverse Area Research Center**, providing access to advanced MTU Unmanned Aerial Vehicles research and development programs.
- Traverse City's **Cherry Capital Airport** is the third-largest airport in Michigan in passenger traffic.

Traverse Connect

Traverse Connect is serving to facilitate the key partners, stakeholders, and community buy-in that is needed to streamline the initial research study to be completed by Airspace Link in partnership with MDOT in the Grand Traverse Region. Looking to the near future, Traverse Connect can also serve to facilitate bringing new enterprises to the region that are at the forefront of drone commercialization and BVLOS skyway infrastructure, providing them with a test bed for innovations, facilitating key partnerships and introductions, navigating state infrastructure, and assisting with site selection for company offices and headquarters.

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