

The Triumph of Flight®

A Prospectus for the Wright Brothers Airplane Factory Site



At the turn of the 19th century, on bits of wallpaper at an old drafting table, brothers Orville and Wilbur Wright designed the world's first controlled, powered, heavier-than-air flying machine in their bicycle shop in Dayton, Ohio. When they flew it on the dunes of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, on December 17, 1903, they demonstrated that man could fly. Back home two years later, the brothers reworked that experimental design, building the world's first practical airplane, capable of long sustained flights and safe landings. The success of the 1905 Flyer was the advent of human flight and the birth of aviation, an achievement historians would come to recognize as one of the most pivotal in human history.

The all-volunteer, non-profit organization, the **Wright Image Group (WIG)**, plans to build an inspiring 270' tall monument memorializing this achievement. Simply named the **Triumph of Flight®**, this monument will brand Dayton (and Ohio) as the birthplace of aviation and become

one of the many tourism "must-sees" that honor important events and achievements in history. Just as the Gateway Arch celebrates the role St. Louis played in the settlement of the American West, the *Triumph of Flight®* will highlight, for the whole world to see, Dayton's role in the genesis of human flight.

The monument will be centrally located in the **National Aviation Heritage Area (NAHA)**, the federally designated 8-county region around Dayton – home to 17 partner organizations that share America's aviation heritage and stories with tourists from around the globe. The visibility and prominence of the monument will prompt motorists to stop and discover premiere aviation attractions like the National Museum of the United States Air Force, Armstrong Air and Space Museum, WACO Air Museum, and Carillon Historical Park, and will also result in widespread national and international publicity. The *Triumph of Flight®* will symbolize Dayton's highly skilled science and technology workforce and its leadership in the advancement of aerospace technologies today. It will be a magnet for new business.

The **economic impact** of this monument on the Dayton region will be significant. A study by the Wright Image Group estimated that the range of visitors to the *Triumph of Flight®* would be between 195,513 and 280,358, annually. These new visitors to the Dayton area would generate annual direct spending of between \$21.7 million and \$31.5 million. To realize this economic boost would require a relatively modest investment by the community. The Wright Image Group estimates the cost to build the monument, as

now envisioned (see figure below) at \$8.9 million. This estimate includes fencing, a picnic area, and a playground. It excludes land and any extraordinary development costs necessary to ready a site for construction. Those additional expenses could increase the cost to nearly \$11.6 million. Even that estimate, however, is less than half of the forecasted annual economic benefit.

Atop the monument's angled pedestal will soar a facsimile of the **Wright Brothers' 1905 Flyer**, the world's first practical airplane, mounted in a slight climbing turn secured by 24 cables swept to the rear, thus creating the illusion of flight. The material for both the pedestal cover and the Flyer will be stainless steel mesh. At night, the mesh on the pedestal will be illuminated from within, while the Flyer will be lit by floodlights creating a beacon that captures the interest of all who see it on the horizon. At the base, along the circular walkway, STEM inspired kiosk-type "portals" will educate visitors and students alike about the monument, the Wright Brothers, Dayton's contributions to aviation and aerospace, and tourist information related to many sites throughout the Heritage Area. Managers from represented sites would be responsible for the content on their portal – e.g., previews of what is available, driving directions, operating hours, and admission prices. Used in this manner, the monument will serve as a guidepost for visitors, identify other area attractions, and generate increased visitation rates for all.



Economic development planning for the Factory site is still in the early stages, so integration of the *Triumph of Flight*® can still be done easily. Further, an advantage of this integration to the WIG is that the entire project can be best understood as a commercial economic development that will strengthen the workforce of the community and create opportunities and incentives for businesses to relocate to the Wright-Dunbar area and beyond. In addition, locating at the Factory site provides additional incentive for both federal and state government to support the entire development, including the monument, as well as incentives for individual donors, knowing that it will be the focus of an active, well attended destination.

Ultimately, locating the *Triumph of Flight*® at the Factory site will enhance the synergistic relationship between all the other elements there, and create a destination whose total value will far exceed the value of all its parts. It will be a fitting symbol of the inspiration, entrepreneurship, and innovation which has always characterized the Greater Dayton community.

The development concept of the 52-acre Factory site includes enhancements to make it a family gathering, reunion, educational, food, and entertainment destination. The aviation heritage context of such a venue would make it a community treasure. In addition, the Factory site will include ample parking for both cars and larger vehicles. Organizations like the National Aviation Hall of Fame and others could consider utilizing the Factory site for their own purposes.

The Wright Image Group has built a **donor base** of over 500 individual and corporate donors with 382 individuals donating an average of \$1400 each and 145 companies donating an average of \$2400 each.

Pledges restricted for construction* total \$496,800, including \$250,000 re-appropriated by the State of Ohio in its FY2020-2021 Capital Improvement Budget. Cash in hand and pledges (both restricted and unrestricted), and the value of services rendered, as of March 31, 2021, amount to a total project value of \$1,230,000. This provides a firm base for the project to move forward.

Community Interest Survey: In the spring and summer of 2021, the WIG entered into a partnership with NAHA to survey the Dayton community's interest, attitudes, and desires with respect to the *Triumph of Flight*® prior to redefining the project as a regionally rather than nationally focused effort. WIG and NAHA hired an outside consultant, Mr. David Ramey of Strategic Leadership Associates (SLA), Inc., to conduct that survey. In concert with both clients, Mr. Ramey developed appropriate questions for the survey, identified 58 potential community leaders, thought leaders and other key informants as interviewees, and provided a generic *Triumph of Flight*® prospectus and relevant endorsements to them all, requesting their voluntary participation on a non-attribution basis. He conducted confidential interviews with 33 of those informants and consolidated their comments and thoughts into a final report.

A number of significant **results emerged**. The most important to the WIG was that the majority of respondents believed that the *Triumph of Flight*® monument would be a source of pride and value to the community and would provide some economic and tourism value – particularly relating to other historical assets in the community. The visual aspects of the monument were especially appealing to respondents, and a majority of them thought the symbolism was highly appealing. They also felt that the achievement of flight was something that definitely merits such a monument. Respondents also shared a strong belief that representing Dayton's legacy of flight to the world is our history – past, present, and future. Many of them held the view that in the long-term, the *Triumph of Flight*® would add significant value to the community in the future and would be well received.

Foremost was respondents' preference for the *Triumph of Flight*® to have a much deeper connection to the assets of the aviation heritage community, particularly those associated with the Wright Brothers. The majority felt that other aviation heritage assets co-located with the monument and expanded facilities for the monument itself were very appealing. Museum-like display areas or a visitor center and kiosk-like connections to all regional aviation heritage sites were also very appealing.

Many respondents felt that the *Triumph of Flight*® should function as the gateway to the often overlooked and underrated Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park. In their view, co-locating the monument with the park's headquarters was important for optimizing the value to all regional aviation-related assets.

From the standpoint of project management, another key result was that the WIG needed a substantial partnership, with organizations like the National Park Service, Dayton History, NAHA, and the City of Dayton, to make the project a reality.

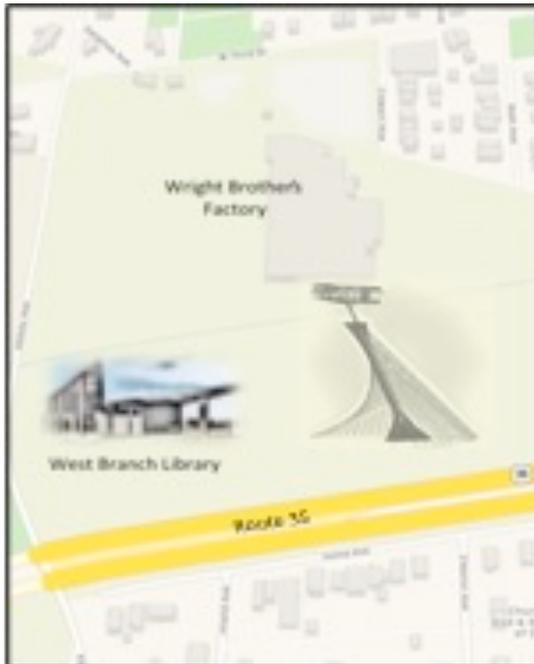
Scenario Development Planning: Based on these results, the WIG re-engaged SLA to assist in developing such a partnership and a new project scenario that reflected those key survey results. Mr Ramey organized and conducted scenario development meetings, with Dayton area organizations and entities that could potentially be partners. Those organizations were:

* All restricted pledges are based upon a location at the intersection of I-70/I-75. Those pledges will require confirmation/renewal for the Factory site.

Aviation Trail, Inc.
The City of Dayton
Dayton History
The National Aviation Hall of Fame
The National Aviation Heritage Alliance
Five Rivers MetroParks
Sinclair Community College
Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park
The Wright Family Foundation

The primary **purpose of these meetings** was to create a preferred scenario and discuss alternative scenarios which position the *Triumph of Flight*[®] as a signature asset or beacon to other aviation heritage assets in the community. A second objective was to identify and create a strong partnership with other organizations which could come together to make the *Triumph of Flight*[®] a destination that offers educational and entertainment aspects as well as community engagement.

Months of internal deliberation by the WIG led to a **final decision that the Factory site offered the highest probability of success** as the site for the monument. This was based on the potential for the Factory site



to ultimately include the educational, entertainment, and community engagement factors that would be essential. The potential synergism between those factors and the monument itself were a very attractive feature from the standpoint of fund-raising. It was also apparent that strong partnerships could be formed with the National Park Service (NPS), NAHA, and the City of Dayton as early as initiation of the project. Additional partnerships, such as the National Aviation Hall of Fame and Sinclair College, could be possible later.

There are many factors, when combined, which make the Factory site the favored location for the *Triumph of Flight*[®]. The strongest single factor is the City's commitment to the economic development of the Factory site. Development of the Factory site is already in progress with a new branch of the Dayton Metropolitan Library, just recently opened to the public. Also, the City has committed to developing all required infrastructure for the Factory site and cleanup landscaping as well. The City has expressed strong

interest in including the *Triumph of Flight*[®] in its economic development plan for the Factory site.

For its part, the **NPS committed to relocating the headquarters** of the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park from its current location to buildings 1 and 2 of the five original factory buildings. The NPS will redevelop these two buildings to include an aviation museum-type environment focusing on exhibits of public interest, including those relating to the legacy of the Wright Brothers. Also envisioned are classroom spaces, a theater, administrative offices, and a public meeting venue.

NAHA also has vested interests in the Factory site's potential to become a major tourist attraction and a focus of aviation heritage activities and continues to work closely with the NPS to help make its HQ relocation successful.

All three of these organizations – the City of Dayton, the NPS, and NAHA – are willing, supportive partners of the WIG in building the Triumph of Flight© at the Factory site.

In closing, the **Triumph of Flight**® monument commemorates an extraordinary historic achievement that originated in Dayton and forever changed the world. Who could have foreseen a flying machine, imagined and built in our hometown, would eventually lead to flight on another planet – from the “...sands to the stars.” This tribute to aviation and aerospace will elevate the way people think about Dayton and the way Daytonians think about themselves. Join the Wright Image Group in creating a “brand” for Dayton, and with it, a nationally recognized tribute to the **TRIUMPH** of flight!

Endorsements:

“This monument’s innovative design will remind us of the Wright Brothers’ achievements and excite and inspire future generations. This monument ... will honor the great achievements of Ohio aviation and aerospace leaders, including the Wright Brothers, John Glenn, and Neil Armstrong.”

Mike Turner, Congressman, Ohio District 10 (May 2021)

“Building the Triumph of Flight® at the Wright Brothers Factory Site will make it the centerpiece of that economic development effort, “brand” Dayton as the birthplace of aviation, and create dynamic synergies between all the other activities planned there, taking a big, bold step toward making Dayton one of America’s premier cities in which to live, work, raise children, and grow old.”

Jeffrey Mims, Mayor, City of Dayton (August 2022)

“The National Aviation Hall of Fame joins in the celebration of the combination of the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park and the original Wright Brothers Airplane Factory with the Triumph of Flight. I applaud their vision and look forward to welcoming them as a fellow heritage site in Dayton, the Birthplace of Aviation.”

Michael J. Quiello, Board Chairman, National Aviation Hall of Fame (October, 2022)

“The Triumph of Flight monument draws attention to Dayton as the birthplace of aviation and future of aerospace innovation. Whether drawing people on the highway to stop or school children to dream big, it will be a wonderful tribute to the Wright Brothers legacy and Ohio’s contribution to aviation.”

Susan Richardson, President, National Aviation Heritage Alliance (October, 2022)

“I believe that this monument will cement permanently, and internationally, the United States... and Dayton, Ohio, as the birthplace of aviation.”

George Voinovich, Former Ohio Governor (and Senator) (June 2015)

“Your design truly symbolizes Ohio’s rich aviation heritage... and will no doubt play a valuable role as we look to establish a brand for Ohio that encompasses our distinct travel assets. The monument’s visibility ... will benefit the Dayton region and all of Ohio.”

Mary Cusick, Former Director, TourismOhio (May 2014)

