



OHIO'S ADVANCED AIR MOBILITY ACTION PLAN



*A Pathway to Safe,
Scalable AAM Deployment*

October 2026

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Acronyms

Table 1. Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AAM	Advanced Air Mobility
ADSP	Automated Data Service Provider
AFRL	Air Force Research Laboratory
AGL	Above Ground Level
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AIP	Airport Improvement Program
ANSP	Air Navigation Service Provider
ASSURE	Alliance for System Safety of UAS through Research Excellence
ATC	Air Traffic Control
AUVSI	Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International
BVLOS	Beyond Visual Line of Sight
C2	Command and Control
CNS	Communication, Navigation, and Surveillance
ConOps	Concept of Operations
CTOL	Conventional Takeoff and Landing
CUAS	Counter-Uncrewed Aircraft System(s)
DE	Digital Enterprise
DFR	Drone as First Responder
DOT	Department of Transportation
DoW	Department of War
eIPP	eVTOL Integration Pilot Program
EV	Electric Vehicle
eVTOL	Electric Vertical Takeoff and Landing
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNSS	Global Navigation Satellite System
GPS	Global Positioning System
GRC	Glenn Research Center
ID	Identification
KCAK	Akron-Canton Regional Airport
KSGH	Springfield-Beckley Municipal Airport
MARCS	Multi-Agency Radio Communication System

Acronym	Definition
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NAAMCE	National Advanced Air Mobility Center of Excellence
NAMRU	Naval Medical Research Unit Dayton
NAS	National Airspace System
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NASAO	National Association of State Aviation Officials
NASIC	National Air and Space Intelligence Center
NAVAID	Navigation Aids
NPRM	Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
ODOT	Ohio Department of Transportation
OEM	Original Equipment Manufacturer
OFRN	Ohio Federal Research Network
P3	Public-Private-Partnership
SLTT	State, Local, and Tribal Territory
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
STOL	Short Takeoff and Landing
xTM	Extensible Traffic Management
UAS	Uncrewed Aircraft System
U.S.	United States
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
UTM	UAS Traffic Management
VTOL	Vertical Takeoff and Landing

Executive Summary

Ohio is internationally recognized as the “Birthplace of Aviation,” thanks to the Wright Brothers’ pioneering flight experiments in their hometown of Dayton. On November 7, 1910, Ohio was the first state in the Union that successfully delivered a raw product (10 bolts of silk) via air, proving the value of aviation as a tool for transporting goods and services. This early innovation helped establish Ohio as a place where aviation research, aerospace manufacturing, military aviation, and skilled talent have grown together over time, shaping the state’s continuing role in advancing flight technologies.

Building on this legacy and a thriving air transportation ecosystem, the State, through the Ohio Department of Transportation’s Advanced Air Mobility Division, has launched a comprehensive Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) Action Plan to accelerate the safe integration of next-generation aircraft into Ohio’s transportation system. Ohio’s emphasis over the next three years is to establish and validate the infrastructure, operational concepts, workforce, and policy framework necessary to support routine commercial AAM operations. The goal is not simply to study AAM, but to create the conditions under which safe, scalable, and economically viable operations can occur in Ohio.

Ohio’s Vision for AAM

Accelerate the integration of AAM into real-world operations in Ohio, delivering new transportation options and economic benefits statewide.

Early Achievements and Readiness

Ohio’s AAM program reflects a deliberate progression from early planning and analysis to operational readiness, building on foundational efforts such as the 2021 Advanced Air Mobility Economic Impact Study¹ and the 2022 Ohio Statewide AAM Framework,² which clarified the value of AAM and aligned stakeholders around a coordinated path to deployment.

Ohio’s AAM program builds on a foundation of operational testing and demonstrated capabilities. Since initiating its focus on AAM through DriveOhio,³ the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) has completed over 200 successful AAM test flights at Springfield-Beckley Municipal Airport (KSGH),

What is this Plan?

This three-year plan (2026-2029) is Ohio’s practical action plan for bringing AAM into real-world operation. It integrates emerging aircraft technologies and digital infrastructure into a coordinated, three-year strategy that prioritizes safety, public benefit, and measurable progress. It focuses on demonstrated use cases, phased deployment, and data-driven decision-making to integrate next-generation aviation into Ohio’s transportation system.

Why Does This Matter Now?

AAM is moving from concept to reality. Aircraft are nearing certification, infrastructure is being deployed, and federal policy is evolving quickly. Acting now allows Ohio to shape how these technologies are introduced within the state, align investments with public priorities, and position itself to respond effectively as the industry matures.

What Will This Plan Deliver?

This plan will inform policy development, infrastructure planning, and investment decisions through real-world experience and data-driven insight. It will establish the partnerships, infrastructure, workforce, and policies needed for routine operations, positioning Ohio not just to test AAM solutions, but to lead its responsible adoption and successful commercialization.

¹ <https://drive.ohio.gov/programs/advanced-aviation/advanced-air-mobility/advanced-air-mobility-economic-impact-study>

² <https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/drive.ohio.gov/programs/aam/reports-studies/aam-framework.pdf>

³ <https://drive.ohio.gov/>

proving the state's commitment to innovation. Key infrastructure, including advanced airspace technologies and electric aircraft charging stations is already in place or being evaluated to support the operation of electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) and conventional takeoff and landing (CTOL) aircraft throughout Ohio.

Operational testing in Ohio is supported by the SkyVision ground-based detect-and-avoid system, a collaborative development of the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) and ODOT's Uncrewed Aircraft System (UAS) Center. Early AAM and UAS operations at KSGH leveraged initial SkyVision deployments (SkyVision 1.0) to enable safe, beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operations. Future testing and pilot project activities will incorporate SkyVision 2.0, which will provide enhanced surveillance and operational monitoring capabilities to support more complex use cases.

Ohio's readiness is reinforced by significant public and private investment. Over the past decade, JobsOhio has catalyzed more than \$1.2 billion in aerospace and advanced aviation investments statewide, including major manufacturing and technology projects that support AAM aircraft development, testing, and supply-chain growth.

The state also benefits from the National Advanced Air Mobility Center of Excellence (NAAMCE)⁴ in Springfield, which provides dedicated facilities, controlled airspace access, and operational support for AAM testing and evaluation. In parallel, Ohio is home to advanced aircraft developers and manufacturers conducting testing, certification, and manufacturing activities in the state.



Figure 1: BETA Technologies AAM Aircraft

These efforts, combined with Ohio's robust aerospace manufacturing base and nationally significant research and test facilities, position the state to support early AAM operations and inform future scaling as technologies and regulatory frameworks mature.

Regional Coordination and Partnerships

As part of its AAM planning and federal engagement efforts, Ohio collaborated with more than 72 partner organizations spanning local and state governments, federal agencies, private industry, airports, healthcare providers, logistics companies, academia, and research institutions. This extensive stakeholder engagement created a durable network that Ohio will continue to leverage to share lessons learned, refine operational concepts, and advance AAM readiness.

Ohio is also working closely with neighboring states including Michigan, Indiana, and Kentucky, to explore shared planning considerations, policy alignment, and the future potential for cross-border AAM operations.

Three-Phase Implementation Approach

Ohio's AAM Action Plan is organized into three sequential phases designed to move from readiness to implementation, ultimately preparing for broader integration of all types of aircraft within the National Airspace System (NAS). Each of these phases will lead to an incremental mission with progressing advancement in complexity and Concept of Operations that will be developed through a collaborative approach that aligns safety, technology and market readiness. It is important to note that the implementation of AAM, like other transportation systems, is not a one-dimensional challenge. To fully integrate AAM into the NAS as well as into our local, state and national economies, a strategic, cross-functional approach is necessary. No one organization, agency or discipline will accomplish this endeavor on their own, nor will it follow a fixed timeline. Rather, this effort will unfold as an iterative, long-term process that requires continuous learning, supported by both technical expertise and a strong emphasis on human understanding and thoughtful engagement.

⁴ <https://naamce.com/>

This document sets the course for that process and the eventual reality of a new, transformational mode of transportation for Ohio.

► **Phase 1: Planning (2026-2027)**

Focuses on establishing statewide alignment, air and ground infrastructure analysis, and foundational planning for multi-platform advanced aircraft operations and data management. Activities center on defining priorities, coordinating with local and regional partners, advancing airspace and infrastructure planning and assessment and preparing data systems, and reporting frameworks.

Key Outcomes: Established frameworks for stakeholder coordination and government roles and responsibilities, including potential public-private partnership (P3); preliminary infrastructure needs identified; workforce and community engagement strategies initiated; airport readiness planning assistance; design and performance of simulated flight testing with strategic partners. Development of formal Concept of Operations for AAM and/or UAS aircraft to fly BVLOS over an extended range to identify digital infrastructure requirements and to conduct safety performance analysis.

Mission Focus: Establish program objectives, collaboration framework and execution plan in preparation for operational flight activity to test and validate digital infrastructure.

► **Phase 2: Implementation (2027-2028)**

Market driven pilot and demonstration activities to generate real-world operational insight to establish initial operational AAM route(s). These efforts will test AAM use cases across varied environments and will be designed to inform safety, regulations, infrastructure needs, data exchange requirements and mechanisms, and policy considerations.

Key Outcomes: Real-world operational data collected to support safety cases and regulatory input; digital information exchange demonstration for scalability; use-case viability demonstrated across key applications including market readiness; pilot and demonstration operations conducted within a defined operational route(s); infrastructure and workforce requirements refined based on field experience.

Mission Focus: Initial and mid-level airspace and operational complexity with real life-oriented operations using CTOL package, medical specimen, and demonstrated specialist/mission execution personnel leading to evaluation of eventual vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL), short takeoff and landing (STOL) and UAS servicing scheduled routes supported by automation.

► **Phase 3: Preparing to Scale Operations (2028-2029)**

Synthesize lessons learned from earlier phases to refine policies, identify infrastructure investments, define the roles for the state, communities, and industry in the AAM ecosystem, strengthen regional coordination, and prepare the state for broader AAM adoption as regulatory and market conditions mature.

Key Outcomes: Evidence-based policy and investment priorities established; workforce pipelines and training programs expanded; foundation set for long-term adoption and private investment; preparing Ohio's commercial/operational digital backbone for expanded operations.

Mission Focus: Proof of urban integration, higher-density VTOL and hybrid CTOL operations enabled by Ohio's Digital Enterprise network of sensors providing communications, command and control (C2), surveillance, sequencing and weather services.

Core Implementation Components

Ohio's AAM Action Plan is built on cross-cutting foundations that shape every aspect of implementation. A digital enterprise framework establishes how operational and infrastructure data are shared among operators, infrastructure owners, public agencies, and federal partners. Statewide and multistate policy coordination addresses the reality that AAM operations frequently cross jurisdictional boundaries, requiring early and sustained alignment across local, state, and regional partners on issues such as infrastructure siting, public safety integration, data governance, and community engagement. Pilots and demonstrations, anchored by Ohio's participation in Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) projects and close collaboration with industry and academic partners, serve as the primary mechanism for generating real-world operational evidence across use cases including medical logistics, infrastructure inspection, public safety, and cross-border cargo.

Together, these foundations feed directly into six core implementation components that define what is needed to move from early activity to sustained, scalable operations.

Pillar 1: Infrastructure

Enterprise approach to supporting current and future AAM needs, includes airports, vertiports, energy systems, communications, navigation, surveillance, and supporting digital capabilities needed to create a sustainable and scalable transportation system; enabling a cooperative operating environment that allows new businesses to flourish and airspace awareness to ensure safety and address security concerns.

Pillar 2: Policy

Focuses on local, state, and multistate coordination to address land use, public safety, data sharing, environmental considerations, and regulatory alignment.

Pillar 3: Proof of Concept & Integrated Operations

Advances AAM testing, demonstrations, and active research projects across Ohio to generate real-world data that informs policymaking, identifies gaps, addresses challenges, and showcases the future of aviation.

Pillar 4: Workforce

Building tomorrow's workforce to ensure Ohio has the skilled pilots, technicians, engineers, planners, and public sector staff needed to support AAM operations and research over time.

Pillar 5: Funding

Leverages public private co-investment and federal, state, and private resources to support pilot programs, infrastructure, and long-term scalability.

Pillar 6: Engagement

Emphasizes early, transparent, and continuous coordination with communities, airports, industry, public agencies, elected officials and end users.

Introduction

AAM is a transformative air transportation concept that introduces new classes of aircraft, including electric and hybrid VTOL, CTOL, and STOL vehicles, and uncrewed drones, to move people and goods in ways that existing systems cannot. The near-term benefits are tangible: faster medical deliveries, more efficient supply chains, enhanced infrastructure inspection, improved emergency response, and new mobility options for underserved and rural communities. As aircraft technology, battery performance, and autonomous systems continue to mature, AAM has the potential to reshape how states plan, fund, and operate their transportation networks.

Nationally, AAM is gaining momentum. The FAA is actively developing regulatory pathways to support increasingly complex operations, including expanded BVLOS flights and other advanced uncrewed aircraft operations. Multiple aircraft manufacturers are progressing through aircraft type certification, and several states have launched dedicated AAM programs to position themselves for early adoption. At the federal level, FAA and NASA initiatives are generating operational data, refining airspace integration concepts, and building the safety cases needed to support broader deployment. At the same time, pending FAA regulatory actions such as Parts 108 and 146 are important milestones that will help move advanced aviation from demonstrations toward routine commercial operations.

Realizing the full potential of AAM, however, requires addressing several interdependent challenges at the state and local level. Infrastructure such as vertiports, charging stations, communication networks, and the digital systems needed for robust, real-time data sharing, situational awareness, and operational coordination must be planned and developed alongside existing aviation facilities. New aircraft types must be safely integrated with current air traffic management systems without disrupting conventional operations. Policies and regulations must keep pace with evolving technology while remaining flexible enough to adapt as the industry matures. And public confidence must be built through transparent engagement on safety, noise, privacy, and equitable access. Meeting these challenges demands active leadership from state and local governments, close coordination across transportation and aviation stakeholders at every level, and sustained collaboration with universities and industry partners.

Ohio is well positioned to meet this moment. The state brings a deep aviation heritage, nationally significant research and test infrastructure, an experienced aerospace workforce, and a broad coalition of public and private partners already engaged in AAM planning and testing. To formalize and accelerate this work, Ohio created a dedicated AAM Division within ODOT with the mandate to coordinate cross-sector research, testing, and deployment of advanced aviation technology. Recognizing that AAM must coexist and integrate with both traditional aviation and surface transportation, Ohio's approach emphasizes collaboration, data-driven policy, and phased implementation that will build on operational evidence rather than assumptions.

About this Document

This Action Plan is designed to guide ODOT's AAM Division in executing, coordinating, and tracking Ohio's AAM program over the next three years to transition the state into routine commercial operations. While it serves as an internal planning and decision-making tool for state leadership, it is also intended to be useful to local governments, federal agencies, industry, and academic partners who play a role in Ohio's AAM ecosystem. In particular, this document includes a dynamic operational component focused on research and testing of advanced aircraft and aviation technologies in real-world operating environments across Ohio, supported through coordination with stakeholders and partners and informed by planned formal outreach and engagement activities.

Technical Focus

Ohio's AAM vision and concept of operations will ultimately function in every class of airspace. Early operations will occur principally in Class G and E, at lower altitudes, and in cooperative operating environments below 5,000 feet above ground level (AGL) and will transition into Class C and D in close proximity to airports, heliports, and vertiports.

Platforms will range from fully electric VTOL and CTOL aircraft to STOL hybrid propulsion systems, including both crewed and uncrewed operations. Ohio's integrated approach and use of layered mitigations to address safety and operational concerns will enable BVLOS operations to occur in urban, suburban, and rural environments. Key airspaces and systems will include:

- FAA Air Traffic Control (ATC) controlled airspace.
- Ohio's Digital Enterprise for use of and inclusion in cooperative operating environment airspace.
- Existing infrastructure like SkyVision 1.0 and 2.0 ground-based radar for surveillance integration and safety mitigation for BVLOS operations.

Constraints will include weather minima, communications latency and spectrum, C2 link integrity, aural and visual disparity and the communities' desire and acceptance. These are baseline considerations to be addressed in addition to technical aircraft certification and operations specifications requirements.

Ultimately, Ohio is building an integrated airspace that may serve as a national model with multiple aircraft types and operators in all classes of airspace.

Figure 2: Joby Aviation Aircraft



Ohio's Aviation Legacy

Ohio's pioneering role in aviation dates back over a century, from the Wright Brothers' first flight experiments to hosting the first U.S. commercial cargo flight in 1910. This deep aviation heritage has fostered a robust ecosystem of aerospace innovation and leading academic programs in Ohio that uniquely position the state to lead in AAM. Today, Ohio is home to extensive AAM research, testing, and manufacturing infrastructure.

ODOT's AAM Program

In 2018, DriveOhio⁵ was established as a one-stop shop for smart mobility, spurring cross-sector collaboration on cutting-edge transportation technologies. Through DriveOhio and the Ohio UAS Center,⁶ the state built a strong foundation for AAM by conducting extensive flight testing, developing safety frameworks, and coordinating with federal and industry partners. This work was complemented by the 2021 Advanced Air Mobility Economic Impact Study⁷ which established a clear understanding of the potential economic and societal benefits of AAM for Ohio and helped inform strategic investment priorities. The 2022 Ohio Statewide AAM Framework⁸ formalized this work, aligning state agencies, local governments, airports, and industry around a common approach to AAM integration and providing a blueprint that has informed subsequent testing, investment, and regulatory engagement.

Created in 2025, ODOT's Advanced Air Mobility Division⁹ builds on work initiated by DriveOhio and focuses on integrating aerial mobility with existing transportation systems. The AAM Division and the UAS Center, both part of DriveOhio, have already demonstrated Ohio's capability by conducting **200+** successful AAM test flights at KSGH, one of the nation's first dedicated AAM flight test airports. These flights, supported by the AFRL's SkyVision¹⁰ radar system, have tested uncrewed aircraft in BVLOS scenarios and provided a safe development environment for AAM technologies. SkyVision 2.0 upgrades will improve alerting, mapping, and configurable operational support for larger and more complex UAS and eVTOL aircraft, helping Ohio safely plan for more advanced multi-aircraft and multi-operator operations.



Figure 3: BETA Technologies AAM Simulator

Ohio's history of advancing aviation, aerospace, and national defense runs deep, but what sets this state apart is our readiness to embrace the future.

— Governor Mike DeWine

⁵ <https://drive.ohio.gov/home>

⁶ <https://drive.ohio.gov/programs/advanced-aviation/uas-center>

⁷ <https://drive.ohio.gov/programs/advanced-aviation/advanced-air-mobility/advanced-air-mobility-economic-impact-study>

⁸ <https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/drive.ohio.gov/programs/aam/reports-studies/aam-framework.pdf>

⁹ <https://drive.ohio.gov/about/news/march-2025-next-generation-of-air-mobility-taking-flight-in-ohio>

¹⁰ https://www.afrl.af.mil/Portals/90/Documents/HQ/SkyVision_Factsheet_0419.pdf?ver=XL3TjD95sxs9hhXMQ8Hn7A%3D%3D

Research and Test Facilities

Ohio's research and test infrastructure spans federal, military, academic, and state assets that collectively support the full AAM development lifecycle.

Federal and Military Research Assets

NASA's Glenn Research Center¹¹ contributes expertise in propulsion, power, and communications. The AFRL¹² at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and the Ohio Federal Research Network (OFRN)¹³ connect defense, academic, and industry research efforts, reinforcing Ohio's role as a nationally significant hub for advanced aviation research and development. Through a longstanding partnership with ODOT at Springfield-Beckley Municipal Airport, AFRL conducts advanced flight research and testing using the SkyVision ground-based detect-and-avoid capability. This partnership has supported BVLOS uncrewed aircraft operations and airspace-integration research, including MQ-9 BVLOS operations in the National Airspace System without a chase aircraft—providing a tangible example of the capability's relevance to future AAM applications.



Figure 4: MQ-9, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc.

AAM-Dedicated Facilities

The NAAMCE¹⁴ in Springfield brings together industry, government, and academic partners, providing modern facilities and operational capabilities to support flight testing and demonstration activities. The Ohio UAS Center supports integrated air and ground mobility testing and traffic management coordination.

Higher Education Research Ecosystem

Ohio's seven Carnegie R1 research universities contribute strengths in aerospace engineering, materials science, autonomy and artificial intelligence (AI), battery and propulsion systems, human factors, and systems integration. Working alongside the state's federal laboratories, manufacturers, and test ranges, these institutions support fundamental research, vehicle design, digital engineering, certification analysis, workforce development, and real-world testing. These universities form a powerful statewide ecosystem for advancing AAM, each contributing distinct capabilities that align with critical needs across the AAM development lifecycle. Research being done by these universities includes:

- Advanced energy and propulsion research, including battery chemistry, energy storage, electric power systems, electric aircraft propulsion, lightweight power systems, thin-film solar technologies, and propulsion partnerships.
- Uncrewed and autonomous aircraft testing and operations, including vehicle design, flight testing, FAA-authorized operations, flight over people, autonomous flight research, and detect-and-avoid systems.
- Avionics, navigation, sensing, surveillance, communications, flight control, and global positioning system/global navigation satellite system (GPS/GNSS) technologies that support safe and reliable AAM operations.

Ohio's Carnegie R1 Research Universities

- Case Western Reserve University
- Kent State University
- Ohio University
- The Ohio State University
- University of Cincinnati
- University of Dayton
- University of Toledo

¹¹ <https://www.nasa.gov/glenn/>

¹² <https://www.afrl.af.mil/>

¹³ <https://ohiofrn.org/>

¹⁴ <https://naamce.com/>

- Low-altitude airspace integration and management, including surveillance, air traffic control, air traffic management, airport infrastructure, transportation systems engineering, and modeling and simulation.
- Autonomy, robotics, artificial intelligence, trustworthy AI for aerospace, AI-enabled decision-making, and human factors research.
- Advanced aerospace materials, structures, composites, manufacturing, computational fluid dynamics, experimental aerodynamics, and aeroacoustics.
- Aviation policy and regulation, technology commercialization, workforce development, and collaborative research with federal and defense partners.

Ohio also benefits from a strong ecosystem of community colleges and universities that support AAM workforce development and applied research including Baldwin Wallace University, Bowling Green State University, Central State University, Clark State College, Columbus State Community College, and Sinclair Community College. This network spans hands-on training, technician education, and federally aligned aviation research. A key element of this ecosystem is participation in the Federal Aviation Administration's Alliance for System Safety of UAS through Research Excellence (ASSURE).¹⁵

Sinclair Community College is a member of ASSURE and is also an FAA-designated National UAS Training and Certification Center, uniquely positioning the institution at the intersection of workforce development and FAA-aligned research. Through industry-supported curricula and applied training programs in UAS and aviation technologies, Sinclair prepares technicians and operators to support emerging AAM operations, autonomy, and enabling infrastructure.

The Ohio State University is also an ASSURE member and conducts FAA-prioritized research that supports the development, certification, and safe integration of uncrewed and advanced aircraft systems relevant to future AAM deployment.

Ohio's academic institutions work collaboratively to leverage their AAM research and training expertise on behalf of many federal and state agencies but are truly invaluable assets for ODOT and its AAM success.

Public-Private Partnerships

Ohio's AAM efforts are supported by strong and sustained public-private collaboration across government, industry, academia, and local partners.

JobsOhio, the state's private, nonprofit economic development corporation, has catalyzed more than \$1.2 billion¹⁶ in aerospace and advanced aviation investments statewide. These investments include \$325 million for Joby Aviation's¹⁷ aircraft manufacturing facilities in Dayton and \$742 million for a new advanced aviation technology campus (Anduril's Arsenal-1 Hyperscale Manufacturing Facility)¹⁸ in central Ohio, reflecting long-term industry confidence in Ohio's

aerospace workforce, supply chain, and research capabilities. Recently, Electra.aero, Inc. (Electra) and JobsOhio announced future investment in manufacturing facilities in Springfield, Ohio.

Ohio's industry engagement spans a broad set of original equipment manufacturers, operators, and technology developers, many of which maintain a significant presence in the state. Companies such as Anduril, BETA



Figure 5: Anduril Campus

¹⁵ ASSURE is an FAA-designated Center of Excellence focused on advancing the safe integration of uncrewed aircraft systems into the NAS, with research areas that directly inform AAM, including system safety, airspace integration, and certification-related challenges.

¹⁶ <https://www.jobsohio.com/newsroom/news-press/jobsohio-powers-hartzell-propellers-new-innovation-center-with-2m-grant>

¹⁷ <https://www.jobyaviation.com/news/joby-selects-dayton-ohio-birthplace-of-aviation-for-first-scaled-manufacturing-facility>

¹⁸ <https://www.anduril.com/news/anduril-building-arsenal-1-hyperscale-manufacturing-facility-in-ohio>

Technologies,¹⁹ Joby Aviation,²⁰ Sierra Nevada Corporation,²¹ Electra,²² and NEOEx Systems²³ are among those engaged through manufacturing, testing, research, or planning activities. Beyond these firms, Ohio has cultivated a wide network of airports, utilities, local governments, academic institutions, and technology providers that are positioned to participate as AAM use cases mature.

Ohio's Unique Value

Ohio's value to AAM lies in the scale, diversity, and integration of its aviation ecosystem. The state has 176 public-use aviation facilities, including publicly owned airports in 84 of its 88 counties and eight commercial service airports generating \$13.3 billion in total gross domestic product (GDP).²⁴ This extensive and well-distributed network provides a uniquely comprehensive platform for testing, refining, and scaling AAM operations across a wide range of real-world conditions.

This aviation network directly supports operational diversity. Ohio's airports serve major metropolitan areas, mid-sized communities, and rural regions, enabling testing across different airspace classes, infrastructure constraints, business opportunities and community contexts. This breadth allows the state to evaluate how AAM operations perform in varied environments and to develop deployment strategies in collaboration with local communities, airports and stakeholders that are adaptable across different use cases and commercial markets.

Ohio is home to nationally significant federal research institutions, including NASA's Glenn Research Center and AFRL at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, alongside a long-standing aerospace manufacturing and systems engineering base. These assets provide technical rigor, safety culture, and applied research capacity that directly inform AAM development and integration efforts.

Importantly, Ohio is moving beyond research into coordinated planning and early deployment. The state is aligning aviation decisions with transportation, energy, and digital infrastructure considerations, ensuring that AAM is integrated into broader mobility and infrastructure systems rather than developed in isolation. With a large and diverse airport network serving major hubs, mid-sized metros, and rural communities, Ohio can support near-term operations while planning future vertiports where demand, infrastructure, and community readiness align.

¹⁹ <https://beta.team/>

²⁰ <https://www.jobyaviation.com/>

²¹ <https://www.sncorp.com/>

²² <https://electra.aero/>

²³ <https://neoexsystemsinc.com/>

²⁴ <https://www.transportation.ohio.gov/business/publications/ohio-airport-directory>

Alignment with Federal Priorities

National Strategy Context

The U.S. government has set ambitious goals to ensure global leadership in AAM, emphasizing safety, security, innovation, and community benefits.

Ohio's AAM program is closely aligned with these federal priorities and is positioned as a key contributor to national AAM efforts. The United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT's) AAM National Strategy (2025)²⁵ establishes six core pillars to guide the safe coordinated integration of AAM into the national transportation system:

- Airspace integration
- Infrastructure
- Safety and security
- Community planning and engagement
- Workforce development
- Increasing automation

Ohio's ecosystem includes multiple original equipment manufacturers and technology providers, supporting a competitive environment that aligns with national goals related to innovation and industrial leadership. The state also benefits from long-standing partnerships with federal research and defense organizations, including the AFRL and other Department of War (DoW) entities, which contribute expertise in safety assurance, security, and operational rigor relevant to future AAM integration. Ohio's model also builds on successful public-private investment engines, including JobsOhio and OFRN, to share costs and accelerate industry growth.

Ohio's AAM program has been developed in close alignment with evolving federal AAM initiatives including the FAA's eVTOL and AAM Integration Pilot Program (eIPP)²⁶ and the U.S. Advanced Air Mobility National Strategy.²⁷ Ohio is proceeding with its own implementation plans while remaining well positioned to incorporate relevant data, lessons learned, and best practices from other federal pilot projects and integration efforts as they emerge. The state's AAM program was explicitly designed to fulfill both industry needs across Ohio and its partner states while supporting broader national objectives for safe and scalable AAM deployment. **Table 2** summarizes how Ohio's plan contributes to each national AAM goal. Ohio's approach with particular focus on Digital Enterprise infrastructure addresses many of the key Pillars and Recommendations set forth in the AAM National Strategy.

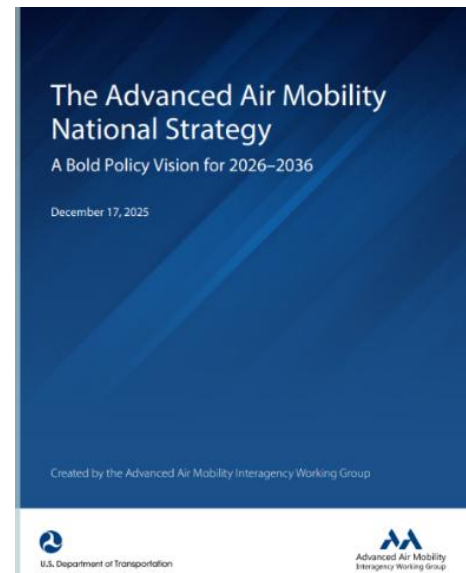


Figure 6: Cover of USDOT AAM National Strategy

²⁵ <https://www.transportation.gov/aam-strategy>

²⁶ <https://www.faa.gov/newsroom/eipp-what-you-need-know>

²⁷ <https://www.transportation.gov/aam-strategy>

Table 2. Ohio's Alignment with the National AAM Strategy

Pillar	USDOT/FAA AAM Strategy Recommendation	Ohio's Strategy
Airspace Integration	1.2 Support research, development, testing, and implementation of new surveillance solutions for low-altitude, high-density operations.	Ohio's SkyVision capability integrated with local sensors provides robust low altitude airspace awareness.
	1.3 Research new methods of communication between aircraft and air traffic management to enable air traffic to be more efficiently managed.	Digital Enterprise will facilitate fast transmission of flight critical communications, command and control.
	1.4 Establish information exchange protocols, technology requirements, and security requirements for integrated updates to facilitate free flow of information among providers of air traffic management services in cooperative environments.	Digital Enterprise will define the communication protocols and security requirements for free flow of safety and operational critical information between air traffic management and operators.
	1.5 Research and develop the requirements, roles, and responsibilities expected of third parties in complementary air traffic management and surveillance operations and the related regulatory framework.	Ohio's Digital Enterprise will create an open marketplace for third-party services (automated data service providers or ADSPs) to enable fresh concepts, is scalable, and secure.
Infrastructure	2.1 Use existing regulations, standards, policies, and processes, where applicable, to encourage and facilitate the use of existing or repurposed infrastructure for near- and medium-term AAM operations.	Ohio will use a hybrid of state-owned assets and privately owned cell towers along with existing fiber networks to provide the Digital Enterprise.
	2.2 Engage with state, local and tribal territory (SLTT) governments and industry on future models for planning and financing AAM infrastructure while funding existing programs for early operations.	Develop public-private-partnerships to deploy sensors and leverage fiber networks that could generate revenue for the state.
	2.3 Identify facility and equipment requirements specific to remotely piloted/supervised and autonomous AAM aircraft at airports, vertiports, and heliports and assist with demand/capacity balancing of low-altitude airspace.	Deployment of the Digital Enterprise will facilitate third-party ADSPs to enable autonomous aircraft to operate and to moderate low-altitude air traffic to safe and acceptable levels.
	2.6 Address aviation spectrum needs and spectrum bands for future airspace management transformation.	Partners have deployed restricted spectrum capabilities in the Springfield area that Ohio can leverage as an integral piece in the Digital Enterprise.
Security	2.8 Develop enhanced weather detection, forecasting, and reporting network capabilities for AAM operations.	Leading industries have already deployed usable advanced weather systems in Springfield.
	3.6 Establish a working group to evaluate AAM cyber vulnerabilities, identify gaps, and develop recommendations for any required legislative, policy, or regulatory changes.	Ohio will leverage its R1 university research teams to identify cyber vulnerabilities and recommend mitigations to maintain a secure and safe Digital Enterprise network.
	3.7 Ensure agency Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs) are updated as the AAM industry evolves and leverage best practices for cybersecurity in accordance with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) framework for protecting Personally Identifiable Information (PII).	Ohio, assisted by its R1 university collaborators, will deploy best practices for cybersecurity in accordance with NIST standards for its Digital Enterprise.

Pillar	USDOT/FAA AAM Strategy Recommendation	Ohio's Strategy
Community Planning & Engagement	4.1 Clearly communicate information and guidance on roles, responsibilities, and best practices for AAM planning to SLTT governments.	Ohio is engaged with local governments and authorities to communicate the future of aviation and proper roles within the state.
	4.4 Identify mission-critical AAM use cases supporting public safety, disaster response, medical transportation, and other needs and publish case studies.	Ohio is deploying Drone as a First Responder (DFR) throughout the state including digital infrastructure and third-party services to enable operations. Ohio is discussing future use cases for emergency services and medical delivery with key stakeholders.
Workforce	5.3 Promote AAM and aviation in existing and emerging workforce development programs and plans at both the K-12 and post-secondary levels and engage with existing White House-level organizations to ensure AAM is considered in national strategies that promote technical innovation, excellence, and workforce development initiatives.	Ohio is engaged with its R1 universities and local community colleges to develop the next generation pilots, operators, technicians, and engineers for the UAS/AAM space. Ohio will enhance its reach through community events, classroom engagements, and science fairs for K-12 schools.
Automation	6.2 Assess the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of virtual testing to provide data needed to understand widescale use of increasingly autonomous aircraft and scaled operations.	Ohio's SkyVision and Springfield advanced UAS/AAM ecosystem provides the data, collection capabilities, and expertise to analyze and assess advanced aviation operations.
	6.4 Maintain and coordinate government aircraft testing and evaluation efforts to accelerate safe AAM aircraft to market.	Ohio maintains and operates an expansive fleet of UAS and will soon have access to larger AAM aircraft for testing. Understanding their requirements to operate on-demand and at scale within a digital enterprise ecosystem will be a focus of its efforts.

Collaboration with FAA & Federal Programs

Ohio's AAM Action Plan is built to align with federal aviation policy and to support active coordination with federal agencies responsible for airspace safety, certification, and system integration. In addition to the FAA, this includes collaboration with NASA, the DoW, and the USDOT, each of which plays a distinct role in advancing AAM capabilities and deployment.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

Ohio works closely with the FAA to ensure that AAM activities are aligned with national safety objectives and emerging integration frameworks. Through participation in FAA programs, Ohio supports FAA priorities related to BVLOS operations, mixed operations at active airports, and the development of data-driven safety cases for advanced aircraft integration. These activities are intended to inform future FAA policy, certification pathways, and airspace management concepts, while remaining consistent with FAA regulatory authority.

Department of War (DoW)

Ohio's collaboration with the DoW is primarily advanced through partnerships with the AFRL and the Ohio Air National Guard at Springfield-Beckley Municipal Airport. These partnerships support joint research and testing of uncrewed and advanced aviation technologies, including BVLOS operations in controlled airspace and ground-based detect-and-avoid capabilities. Activities conducted in coordination with AFRL and Guard partners provide operational data relevant to both defense and civil aviation use cases, while reinforcing Ohio's role as a test environment that bridges military and civilian airspace integration challenges.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

As NASA continues conducting research, testing and providing data to safely integrate electric aircraft and drones into the national airspace, Ohio will be working with NASA Glenn Research Center and other NASA Centers focusing on vehicle automation, airspace integration, noise reduction, and infrastructure development over the next three years through planned partnership agreements.

U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)

USDOT supports Ohio's AAM initiatives through policy alignment, multimodal planning, and targeted infrastructure investments that enable advanced aviation operations. Federal funding and research programs administered by USDOT help connect AAM deployment with surface transportation systems, digital infrastructure, and regional mobility objectives. This coordination ensures that AAM development in Ohio complements broader transportation safety, resilience, and economic development goals.

Pillar 1: Infrastructure

Before AAM can deliver on its promise of moving people, transporting goods, and providing critical services, the systems and infrastructure that enable these operations must be in place, both on the ground and in the air. Digital infrastructure technologies and system integration tools along with traditional ground infrastructure will ensure that all aircraft, both traditional and emerging, have the ability to operate, communicate, navigate and be surveilled in a future integrated airspace. Recent national analysis reinforces the scale and importance of infrastructure needs. As highlighted in the UAM Geomatics²⁸ report, AAM will only become a viable transportation system if infrastructure is developed in parallel with aircraft certification and regulatory progress.

The advanced communication networks and airspace surveillance services necessary must be created and linked in a manner where all participants have access and input to essential airspace data. Leadership and investment in this emerging airspace ecosystem will enable early adopters to establish sustainable commercial operations in Ohio. Ultimately, these efforts will enable a cooperative surveillance mesh that will align with Part 146 Automated Data Service Providers (ADSPs) and AAM data exchange requirements.²⁹

Ohio is positioned to take on this challenge by prioritizing a phased, demand-driven infrastructure strategy—leveraging existing aviation assets, aligning digital and physical systems, and advancing infrastructure in tandem with operational testing. More information and concept description aligning Ohio’s digital and physical AAM infrastructure, including use of existing aviation, communications, tower, fiber, and public-safety assets, is provided in **Appendix A**. Ohio’s infrastructure strategy is shaped by near-term operational use cases, including medical and cargo logistics, infrastructure inspection, public safety missions, on-airport operations, and operations that may span jurisdictions or cross-border environments, and focuses on upgrading and leveraging existing assets, including airports, heliports, communication towers, fiber, where possible, while planning for new vertiports, energy systems, and cybersecurity capabilities where additional investment is warranted. Currently, Ohio is evaluating new methods to integrate various digital technologies through its Digital Enterprise (DE) framework, a robust approach to integrate existing and planned digital infrastructure alongside physical assets to support the safe scaling of AAM operations.

Ohio’s approach to aviation infrastructure is intended to support early operations, reduce unnecessary upfront investment, and ensure that future infrastructure decisions are guided by demonstrated operational needs. Aviation infrastructure in Ohio is a team effort including open dialogue and partnerships with the ODOT Office of Aviation, airports, NAAMCE, aviation industry stakeholders and academia.



Figure 7: Communications Tower at Ohio University, Ohio University

²⁸ <https://www.uamgeo.com/post/aam-aircraft-are-nearing-takeoff-the-real-bottleneck-is-infrastructure>

²⁹ Part 146 is part of an FAA Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Normalizing Unmanned Aircraft Systems Beyond Visual Line of Sight

Digital Enterprise – Foundational Enabler and Federated Data Exchange

The DE constitutes a federated data exchange and C2 framework that supports cooperative operating environments where BVLOS operations can be performed safely. The concept is consistent with the FAA's proposed Part 146 ADSP requirements and aligns with USDOT and FAA data exchange services.

Ohio's DE serves as a planning and operational framework for evaluating how communications, surveillance, information exchange, and coordination capabilities may support future AAM operations. It is not a single system, platform, or technology solution but rather an enabling architecture that helps Ohio and its partners evaluate operational data, coordination requirements, governance approaches, and infrastructure needs as AAM operations become more frequent and complex. The DE integrates operational, infrastructure, and environmental data to support AAM operations across Ohio. By providing improved situational awareness, information sharing, and coordination capabilities, it helps stakeholders identify operational needs, evaluate infrastructure gaps, and inform future investment and policy decisions. Because technologies and regulations continue to evolve, the framework is intended to remain flexible while supporting informed decision-making consistent with federal authorities and oversight responsibilities.

Each participating DE node acts as a separate AAM data exchange service that aggregates and redistributes verified air and ground data. This includes aircraft position and intent, weather, surveillance, infrastructure, and emergency status. The DE supports safety by implementing data quality controls, monitoring system performance, and maintaining acceptable latency thresholds. The DE complements but does not replace existing Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP)/NAS services. Initially, it will operate in an information

access and sharing capacity. Over time, it will transition to a statewide federated data exchange with diverse stakeholders providing and receiving data in accordance with emerging federal regulations.

The DE will enable situational awareness across State, Federal, and operator communities, ensuring interoperability consistent with Remote Identification (Part 89) and other data-sharing requirements. As federal rulemaking evolves, including anticipated Parts 108 and 146, Ohio will continue refining the DE framework to align with emerging operational, safety, and data-sharing requirements.

Extensible Traffic Management as a Digital Capability

As AAM operations scale in frequency and complexity, Ohio will use extensible traffic management (xTM) capabilities as part of its broader DE approach. These capabilities are intended to complement—not replace—existing FAA air traffic control systems, particularly in low-altitude environments and higher-tempo operations where traditional surveillance and coordination may be limited.

Ohio's approach is to use xTM functions incrementally and use data generated from real operations. Early evaluations focus on digital services operating in a “shadow mode,” where they provide advisory information alongside existing human procedures rather than exercising operational control.

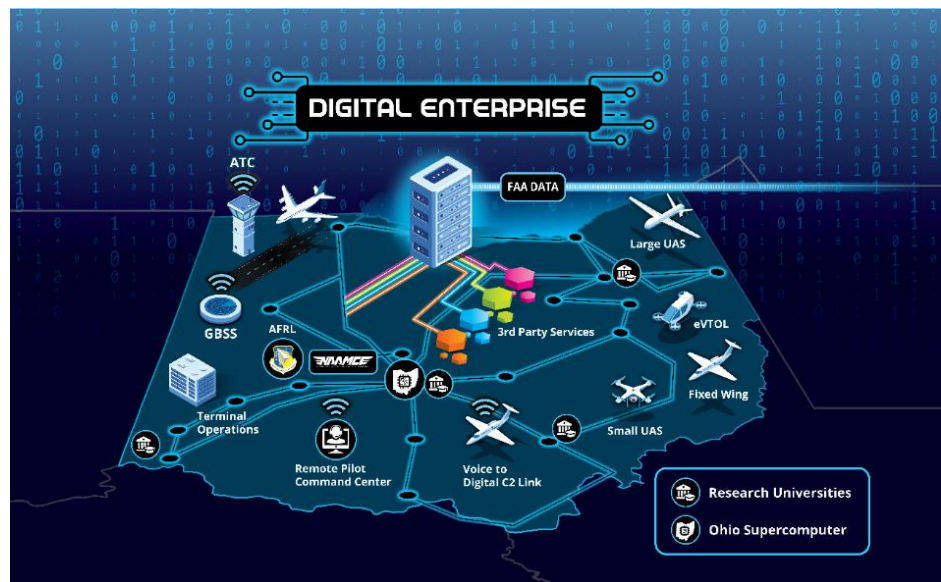


Figure 8: Digital Enterprise

Why the Digital Enterprise Matters Now

Planned, near-term AAM use cases will introduce operational demands that exceed the visibility provided by today's systems. These operations increasingly involve uncrewed BVLOS flight, higher operational tempo, and activity in areas with limited surveillance and communications coverage. Without improved data integration, these conditions can lead to fragmented awareness and inconsistent coordination among stakeholders.

These operational activities will depend on reliable third-party data services and shared situational awareness (for example, weather services, C2 infrastructure, detection and tracking, and data synchronization capabilities) to support safe coordination when multiple parties operate in the same airspace.

The DE allows Ohio to address these challenges incrementally by layering technology solutions that will use data generated from real operations to identify gaps, test coordination approaches, and inform future decisions in a measured, evidence-based, and cost-effective manner.

In the near-term, Ohio will advance planning efforts to define the scope and boundaries of the DE, informed by operational needs, partner roles, and evolving federal guidance. These efforts constitute the early development and implementation of the airspace infrastructure necessary to pursue scalable AAM operations.

Vertiports and Heliports

Ohio is taking a measured approach to preparing aviation facilities for AAM operations, with an emphasis on adapting existing sites where feasible. This measured approach is consistent with the phased vertiport strategy described in **Appendix A**, which prioritizes evaluation and adaptation of existing airports, heliports, hospital helipads, and aviation-capable sites before considering added fiscal burden for new purpose-built vertiports. Facility planning is informed by use cases that require predictable access to airports and medical facilities, as well as safe integration with existing airport activity.

Key activities include:

- **A planned statewide vertiport and heliport assessment**, to evaluate how existing heliports could be upgraded to align with emerging FAA vertiport design guidance.
- **Identification of potential improvements** related to lighting, approach and departure paths, charging capacity, and safety features.
- **Evaluation of elevated hospital helipads** as potential prototypes for dual-use facilities capable of supporting both helicopters and eVTOL aircraft.

The goal is to integrate AAM infrastructure into Ohio's existing aviation system rather than starting from scratch, saving time and cost. For early flights, conventional airports will be used, but by the end of the three-year period Ohio will work toward establishing a dedicated AAM vertiport or an upgraded heliport for public use. This could be at a location like Springfield, leveraging NAAMCE assets, or a hospital rooftop retrofitted with eVTOL charging stations.

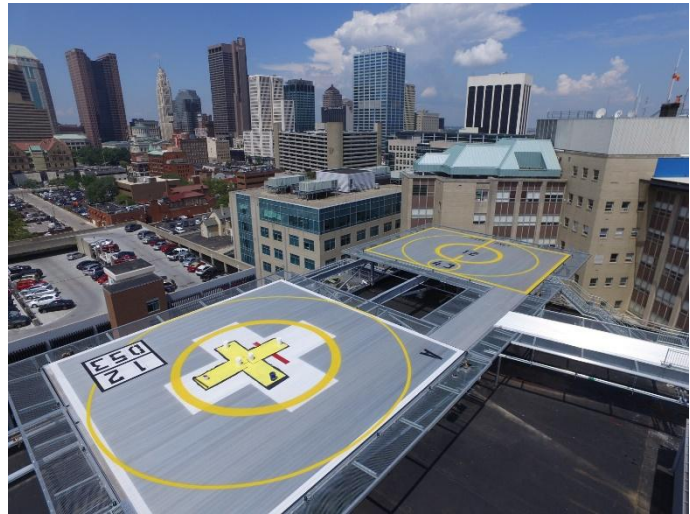


Figure 9: Grant Medical Center AAM Landing Area

Energy and Charging Networks

Electrified AAM aircraft require reliable and resilient energy infrastructure. Ohio's approach builds on existing capabilities while testing additional technologies as use cases mature. Energy planning prioritizes operational reliability and turnaround needs for logistics and medical missions, where delays or downtime directly affect service viability.

Current and planned efforts include:

- **Use of existing electric charging infrastructure**, including fixed charging stations at KSGH and Akron–Canton (KCAK), supported by mobile charging units for operational flexibility.
- **Coordination** with airport authorities, utilities, and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) to deploy additional high-speed charging at priority locations and along emerging operational routes.
- **Evaluation of hydrogen fueling capabilities**, including the use of mobile liquid hydrogen refueling systems to support long-range UAS operations. These efforts include operational testing with mobile refueling assets provided by OEMs.



Figure 10: BETA Technologies' Electric Charging Infrastructure

Operational data on charging times, energy demand, grid impacts, and refueling processes will be collected to inform future infrastructure planning and standards development.

Communications and Navigation Infrastructure

Reliable communications and navigation capabilities are foundational to AAM operations, particularly for BVLOS flight in low-altitude and non-radar-covered airspace. Ohio's infrastructure approach integrates physical communications assets with the DE concept to provide C2 functions throughout flights, improve situational awareness, and support safe coordination among airspace users.

This infrastructure is particularly important for use cases such as infrastructure inspection, medical logistics, public safety missions, and on-airport operations, which may involve higher operational tempo and limited traditional coverage. ODOT has begun evaluating the availability, completeness, and accuracy of navigational aid (NAVAID) information and other digital surveillance and communications systems across Ohio airports to support future AAM and UAS operations. This effort focuses on understanding the current navigation environment that AAM operators are likely to have access to, particularly as operations expand beyond traditional airport-centric activity. This evaluation is intended to support informed infrastructure and regional planning by ensuring that future AAM route concepts and operational planning efforts are grounded in a comprehensive and accurate picture of existing navigational infrastructure. Key elements of this approach include:

- **Expanding aviation-grade wireless communications** to support command-and-control connectivity, including partnerships with providers.
- **Supporting deployment of navigation, surveillance, and sensing capabilities** at key operating areas, such as ground-based augmentation systems and localized weather sensors.
- **Advancing electronic conspicuity** by improving the ability of aircraft and supporting systems to detect, identify, and share position and intent information through a combination of onboard equipment and ground-based sensors.
- **Leveraging existing state assets, including fiber networks and smart infrastructure**, to enable secure data exchange among aircraft, operators, and coordination centers.
- **Evaluating enabling services that support multi-operator coordination**, including weather services, C2 infrastructure, detection/tracking capabilities, and data synchronization functions where applicable.
- **Making cybersecurity a core requirement across AAM planning**, with particular focus on communications and navigation data sharing.

Together, these capabilities support the DE objective of federated data sharing and improved awareness without duplicating or replacing existing FAA systems. The emphasis is on using layered communications and surveillance to strengthen reliability, particularly in environments where traditional coverage is limited.

Safety, Security, and Ground Facilities

Infrastructure planning addresses ground safety, security, and resilience at AAM operating areas, including airports, vertiports, and hospital facilities. These efforts also support the development of AAM critical infrastructure protection policies, addressing physical security, cybersecurity, and resilience of key aviation and data systems. Ohio will:

- **Work with airports as they assess ground-risk and physical-security needs at operating sites**, including access control, perimeter protection, emergency response equipment, and cybersecurity considerations.
- **Use deployments as an opportunity to evaluate security models** across different facility types (e.g., public vertiports versus rural airports or hospital sites).
- **Assist interested airports** in coordinating with electric utilities to evaluate adequate power availability as charging demand increases.

Infrastructure Action Plan

Phase 1 – Planning (2026-2027)

- ▶ **Early Coordination with Key Stakeholders and Federal Partners:** Initiate coordination with utilities, airports, local governments, and FAA UAS and AAM integration offices to align physical and digital infrastructure planning with federal expectations for federated information sharing and structured data reporting.
- ▶ **Infrastructure Governance and Roles:** Establish infrastructure governance and roles by clarifying responsibilities among ODOT, DriveOhio, participating operators, airports, utilities, and third-party service providers for infrastructure deployment, data contribution, access, and use.
- ▶ **Ohio Digital Enterprise (DE) Scope Definition:** Define the scope and boundaries of Ohio’s DE approach, documenting which data types will be prioritized and what is out of scope.
- ▶ **Statewide Airport and Heliport Assessment for Vertiport Readiness:** Initiate a phased, statewide vertiport readiness assessment aligned with emerging FAA design guidance.
- ▶ **Existing Infrastructure Asset Inventory:** Initiate an inventory of existing charging, fueling, communications, utility and state-owned digital infrastructure assets that can support early AAM operations.
- ▶ **Initial Infrastructure Needs by Priority Use Case:** Confirm initial infrastructure needs associated with priority AAM use cases, including infrastructure inspection, medical package delivery, on-airport operations, public safety missions, and cross-jurisdiction or cross-border contexts, with attention to communications coverage, C2 connectivity, navigation and sensing needs, and electronic conspicuity.
- ▶ **State-Level AAM Traffic and Data Coordination Framework:** Define the approach for a state-supported AAM traffic and information management capability that complements FAA systems through data sharing and enables aircraft tracking, data exchange, and operational coordination.

Phase 2 – Implementation (2027–2028)

- ▶ **DE Flight Demonstration:** Demonstrate the technology and data available through the pilot DE operating areas with an AAM vehicle. During deployment, evaluate security models.
- ▶ **Pilot Energy Infrastructure Deployment and Testing:** Deploy, if not already on-site, and test energy infrastructure at pilot locations (e.g., electric and hydrogen), and track performance under operational conditions.
- ▶ **Infrastructure Readiness Guidance Development:** Develop infrastructure readiness guidance for airports, facility owners, and partners including C2, tracking/detection, weather, interoperability support, and cybersecurity considerations.
- ▶ **Operational Evaluation of Communications, Navigation, Surveillance (CNS), Sensing, and Weather Support:** Evaluate CNS, sensing, weather support, and C2 connectivity in operational settings including: controlled airspace, rural/low-infrastructure areas, and on-airport mixed operations. This includes data and operational lessons learned from SkyVision 2.0.
- ▶ **Operational Data Collection and Performance Monitoring:** Collect operational data related to energy use, reliability, safety, and maintenance to support performance evaluation.
- ▶ **Infrastructure Requirement Refinement:** Refine infrastructure requirements based on pilot project results and operational evidence, including communications, navigation, sensing, and digital coordination needs.

Phase 3 – Preparing to Scale Operations (2028–2029)

- ▶ **Critical Infrastructure Protection Framework:** Establish policies and guidance for protecting AAM-related infrastructure, including vertiports, communications systems, data networks, and cybersecurity.
- ▶ **DE Growth:** Continue to deploy infrastructure to support DE growth into new operating areas.
- ▶ **Future Investment and Partnership Prioritization:** Identify priority areas for future investment and public private partnerships in infrastructure.

Pillar 2: Policy

AAM development has outpaced many existing aviation policies and regulations, leaving unresolved questions about how new aircraft and operations fit within existing rules. Ohio's strategy treats policy development as an integral component of implementation, proactively testing scenarios and sharing insights with local, state, and federal partners to help regulations keep pace. This proactive approach helps prevent inconsistent requirements from emerging across jurisdictions and supports a coordinated, predictable regulatory environment. This includes evaluating emerging topics such as overflight permissions, liability considerations, and the interaction between state authority and federal regulatory frameworks.

Ohio's policy objective is straightforward: enable safe and efficient AAM operations while avoiding fragmented or conflicting rules that slow deployment or reduce public trust. To support this objective, Ohio coordinates with peer states, federal partners, and national industry organizations to share lessons learned and promote alignment. This includes engagement with organizations such as the Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI)³⁰ and the National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO)³¹ to help inform policy discussions with industry perspectives and ensure that state-level policy considerations are informed by broader national trends and best practices, without duplicating or conflicting with federal oversight.

Policy Accelerator

A central element of Ohio's policy strategy is the establishment of an AAM Policy Accelerator to provide a forum for coordination among state and local policymakers, including metropolitan planning organizations, airport authorities, municipal governments, and economic development agencies.

The Policy Accelerator is designed to share data and lessons learned from AAM pilot operations across Ohio regions and, in the future, neighboring states, identify and harmonize policy approaches that affect cross-jurisdictional AAM operations, and develop model policies and guidance that can be adopted consistently across jurisdictions.

Initial activities under the Policy Accelerator include:

- Reviewing existing state and local laws related to uncrewed aircraft operations, vertiport siting and zoning, noise-compatible land use planning, and property rights.
- Hosting facilitated workshops and working sessions at NAAMCE to translate operational experience into practical policy guidance.
- Identifying inconsistent or incompatible local requirements that could constrain future AAM expansion.
- Developing coordinated policy recommendations across neighboring states to reduce regulatory friction and support scalable operations.



Figure 11: National Advanced Air Mobility Center of Excellence

Evidence-Based Policy Development

Ohio recognizes that durable policy must be grounded in operational reality. The state is using scenario-based demonstrations to test how existing laws and regulations perform under real AAM operating conditions.

Where existing regulatory pathways allow, Ohio will work with operators to obtain appropriate approvals and authorizations (e.g., Part 107 BVLOS waivers, Part 108 authorizations once final, and experimental airworthiness

³⁰ <https://www.auvsi.org/>

³¹ <https://nasao.org/>

certificates) to conduct pilot operations. These operations are structured to generate data that can support future policy refinement, including updates to certification pathways, operational approvals, and infrastructure standards.

This approach allows policymakers to move from temporary accommodations toward clearer, more consistent rules informed by demonstrated performance and observed risk.

Through this work, Ohio expects to contribute a set of practical policy outputs, including:

- Model state and local policy language related to AAM operations and infrastructure.
- Evidence-based recommendations to support federal rulemaking and guidance updates.
- Guidance for local governments on community engagement, emergency response coordination, and infrastructure readiness.

Key Policy Focus Areas

Ohio's AAM pilot projects are intentionally designed to address policy gaps identified by federal agencies, industry stakeholders, and state and local governments.

Airspace and Traffic Management

Existing air traffic rules were not developed for frequent, low-altitude AAM operations. Ohio's mixed-airspace and BVLOS demonstrations will generate insights related to flight management, dynamic routing, separation concepts, contingency management, and interoperability with xTM services. Interactions between larger AAM aircraft and small UAS conducting Drone as a First Responder (DFR) or package delivery operations will help inform federal air traffic management policies. These findings are intended to inform FAA policy development.

Data Sharing and Reporting

There is not yet an established framework for reporting AAM operational data to regulators. When conducting AAM demonstrations, Ohio will demonstrate structured data collection and reporting approaches to illustrate how AAM data can integrate with existing FAA systems and support safety oversight.

Operations data, where appropriate, can also be shared with aviation ecosystem partners and other industry stakeholders to enhance safety, interoperability, and efficiency in both the xTM environment and integration of AAM aircraft into conventional airspace.

Noise and Environmental Considerations

While AAM aircraft offer potential noise and emissions benefits, regulatory standards for noise certification and environmental review are still evolving. Ohio will collect operational noise data and community response information in coordination with research partners to support development of appropriate federal guidance for environmental review and public engagement.

Counter UAS

Counter-Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (CUAS) refer to the technologies, capabilities, and policies used to detect, identify, track, and, when necessary, mitigate unauthorized or potentially hazardous UAS operating within controlled or sensitive airspace. CUAS is not a direct component of AAM, however, it represents a critical consideration within the broader low-altitude airspace environment in which AAM operations will occur.

While not a direct issue for AAM, as policy for advanced aviation is being discussed, it will be important for state departments to work together to ensure as new policies come out for one area of advanced mobility, the policies do not inadvertently harm another area. The Division of AAM has been making connections with the Ohio Department of Public Safety to ensure the policies reflect all the AAM needs for Ohio's future. Additional information on CUAS is available in **Appendix A**.

Policy Action Plan

Phase 1 – Planning (2026-2027)

- ▶ **AAM Policy Accelerator Establishment:** Establish a working group of state and local agencies, including airport authorities, to coordinate AAM policy development and develop practical guidance.
- ▶ **Inventory of Existing AAM-Relevant Policies:** Compile existing federal, state, and local policies affecting AAM operations, including zoning, noise, public safety, and data-sharing authorities.
- ▶ **Identification of Policy Constraints on Planned Operations:** Evaluate how policy constraints may affect planned AAM routes, particularly for cross-jurisdiction operations.
- ▶ **Definition of Priority Policy Questions for Pilot Project Evaluation:** Define priority policy questions to be evaluated through AAM pilot projects (e.g., BVLOS approvals, vertiport siting, community engagement requirements, data security and restrictions).
- ▶ **Assessment of Overflight and Liability Considerations:** Evaluate legal and regulatory considerations related to AAM overflight, risk allocation, and liability, in coordination with federal guidance and evolving rulemaking.

Phase 2 – Implementation (2027–2028)

- ▶ **Policy Performance Testing Through Active AAM Pilot Projects:** Use active AAM pilot projects to test how existing policies perform under real operating conditions.
- ▶ **Structured Policy-Relevant Data Collection:** Collect structured data related to takeoff and landing operations, airspace use, data sharing, noise exposure, and operational approvals.
- ▶ **Coordination with FAA on Policy-Relevant Operational Findings:** Coordinate with FAA offices to share operational findings that inform certification, airspace, and traffic management policy development.
- ▶ **Development of Draft Model Policies Through the AAM Policy Accelerator:** Develop draft model guidance and policy concepts through the AAM Policy Accelerator based on pilot project results.

Phase 3 – Preparing to Scale Operations (2028–2029)

- ▶ **Documentation of Validated Policy Insights:** Document validated policy insights and recommended updates based on operational evidence.
- ▶ **Finalization of Model State and Local AAM Policy Guidance:** Finalize model state and local policy guidance for AAM operations, infrastructure siting, and community engagement.
- ▶ **Interstate Policy Alignment for Routine Operations:** Align policy approaches across participating states to support routine cross-border AAM operations.
- ▶ **Publication of Guidance and Lessons Learned:** Publish guidance and lessons learned to support broader adoption beyond pilot locations.

Pillar 3: Proof of Concept & Integrated Operations

Operations are a critical component of Ohio's AAM strategy and serve as the bridge between planning, technology development, and long-term commercialization. Ohio's approach emphasizes proof of concept and integrated operations activities that test emerging concepts in real-world environments and generate practical insight to inform policy, infrastructure investment, workforce development, and market readiness.

Ohio's operational focus is centered on deploying AAM in real-world environments to validate safety, performance, integration with existing aviation systems and operations, and commercial viability. These activities are intentionally use-case driven and designed to answer practical questions such as how new aircraft interact with existing air traffic control systems, how digital infrastructure supports safe flight, and how these systems can deliver measurable public and economic value. Potential operational purposes include applied research to support federal partners, workforce training and credentialing, and business model validation that could transition to sustained commercial services.



Figure 12: SkyVision 1.0

Operations as a Proof of Concept and Integrated Operations Framework

Ohio's Operations as a Proof of Concept and Integrated Operations Framework is designed to be ongoing and adaptive, recognizing that innovation in AAM will continue to emerge from a wide range of public- and private-sector stakeholders across the state. In addition to state-led initiatives, Ohio will monitor, coordinate with, and, where appropriate, engage in AAM-related research, testing, and demonstration activities conducted by universities, airports, local governments, industry partners, and federal collaborators. This includes working with emerging partners on flight testing, operational planning, and related implementation activities where those efforts align with Ohio's statewide objectives.

This approach provides Ohio with a structured mechanism to:

- Leverage operational data and lessons learned from activities led by others.
- Selectively engage in projects that advance statewide objectives or address priority technical or policy questions.
- Acknowledge and align with parallel efforts occurring at airports, research institutions, and industrial sites across Ohio.
- Maintain flexibility to incorporate new participants, technologies, and use cases as they emerge over time.

Deployment of Digital Infrastructure

A core operational activity under Pillar 3 is the understanding, assessment, and deployment of adequate digital infrastructure to support all advanced aviation aircraft, building directly on the DE framework introduced in Pillar 1. Ohio will assess candidate operating areas and route structures based on mission need, airspace characteristics, infrastructure readiness, and digital support requirements. Initial analysis will focus on medical and cargo use cases using real operations to evaluate how digital and physical infrastructure perform together.

This work will place particular emphasis on identifying infrastructure gaps, including communications, navigation, surveillance, sensing, C2, weather, and electronic conspicuity needs, and on understanding how those requirements vary by mission, altitude, aircraft type, and operating environment. Ohio's approach recognizes that no single technology stack will fit every mission. Instead, the state will evaluate a layered infrastructure model in which different

combinations of ground-based sensors, surveillance capabilities, communications links, and digital services are used to support different operating conditions and levels of complexity.

The resulting operational data will help Ohio refine infrastructure priorities, assess costs, inform standards development, and contribute evidence relevant to state and national policy discussions. This activity will also provide an early opportunity to understand how third-party digital service providers may support future operations as FAA regulatory pathways, such as Part 146, mature.

Selection and Evaluation of a Digital Operating Area

- **Select and assess a candidate operating area.** Evaluate candidate routes and operating areas based on mission demand, airspace characteristics, public benefit, airport and facility access, and infrastructure readiness. Identify key gaps in communications, navigation, surveillance, sensing, weather support, and electronic conspicuity.
- **Evaluate a medical cargo use case in a real market context.** Use medical logistics and cargo missions as an initial application for testing how aircraft, infrastructure, operators, public agencies, and end users interact under real operating conditions, including flights by platforms such as CTOL aircraft and long-range drones where appropriate.
- **Evaluate the role of third-party digital services.** Assess how emerging third-party providers may support conformance monitoring, deconfliction, situational awareness, and other digital functions, and generate operational evidence relevant to future Part 146 implementation and broader digital infrastructure planning.
- **Generate standards, data, and policy insight.** Use operational results to produce structured data that can inform standards bodies, state and local guidance, and national policy discussions related to infrastructure, procedures, safety assurance, and scalable integration.

Phased Operational Maturity

Operational activities will follow a phased approach that builds capability and confidence over time. Early efforts will emphasize CTOL aircraft that leverage existing procedures, followed by progressively more advanced operations incorporating new aircraft types, automation, and autonomy. Simulation, ground-based testing, and incremental flight activities will be used to reduce risk while accelerating learning and informing future deployment decisions.

Workforce, Public Safety, and Research Integration

Operations also support Ohio's broader goals related to workforce development, education, and research.

Partnerships with universities and research institutions enable applied research, pilot and technician training, and the evaluation of emerging concepts such as remote services and alternative air traffic management approaches. These activities ensure that operational testing contributes to long-term readiness across the aviation ecosystem. Ohio's operational approach also includes coordination with law enforcement, fire departments, and emergency medical services to define standardized operating procedures (SOPs) for AAM-enabled missions.

Priority Operational Use Cases

Ohio's operational activities will prioritize use cases that align with public benefit, economic development, and long-term commercialization objectives, including, but not limited to:

- **Medical Logistics:** Time-critical transport of donor organs, blood products, medical supplies, and, where appropriate, patients, to improve speed, reliability, and access across urban and rural areas.
- **Cargo and Logistics:** Routine and just-in-time movement of goods to support regional supply chains, enhance multimodal logistics, and reduce congestion and delivery times.
- **Emergency and Disaster Response:** Operations that support emergency management, disaster response, and continuity of communications and logistics during severe weather or other disruptive events.
- **Infrastructure Inspection and Monitoring:** Inspection of transportation, energy, and public infrastructure to improve safety, reduce costs, and enable more frequent and proactive maintenance.
- **Research, Training, and Workforce Development:** Applied research operations, pilot and technician training, and testing of emerging operational concepts in partnership with universities and public-sector stakeholders.

Proof of Concept and Integrated Operations Action Plan

Phase 1 – Planning (2026-2027)

- ▶ **Development of Operational Concept of Operations (ConOps):** Develop clear concepts of operations for digitally supported operating areas and route structures that can accommodate piloted aircraft and uncrewed systems, including roles, responsibilities, assumptions, infrastructure needs, and interfaces with existing aviation systems.
- ▶ **Identification of Priority Operating Areas:** Select and assess candidate operating areas and route structures by evaluating airspace characteristics, infrastructure readiness, digital connectivity, market demand, public benefit, environmental considerations, and suitability for priority use cases such as medical logistics and cargo.
- ▶ **Simulation and Modeling Activities:** Use simulation and modeling tools to test operational scenarios, traffic interactions, contingency procedures, and phased integration approaches prior to initiating live operations.
- ▶ **Establishment of Research and Workforce Partnerships:** Coordinate with university and research stakeholders to support applied research, pilot and technician training pathways, and evaluation of emerging operational concepts, including remote services and digital airspace management.

Phase 2 – Implementation (2027–2028)

- ▶ **Public Safety SOP Development:** Develop and test standard operating procedures for AAM use by law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services through pilot deployments.
- ▶ **Initiation of Early Flight Operations in Selected Operating Areas:** Begin live operations using CTOL aircraft and long-range uncrewed platforms, as appropriate, to validate selected operating areas, test medical and cargo mission assumptions, and evaluate coordination with existing air traffic control, airport operations, and use of digital infrastructure.
- ▶ **Incremental Flight Testing:** Conduct progressively complex flight activities using structured risk-management measures, including ground monitoring, chase aircraft where appropriate, and clearly defined test envelopes.
- ▶ **Integration and Evaluation of Layered Digital Infrastructure:** Deploy and assess communications, surveillance, sensing, C2, weather, electronic conspicuity, and data-sharing capabilities within active operations to determine how layered infrastructure combinations perform across different mission types, altitudes, aircraft classes, and operating environments.
- ▶ **Early Operational Use Cases Demonstration:** Apply operational capabilities to use cases that support research, workforce development, and early commercial validation, ensuring activities are tied to measurable outcomes.

Phase 3 – Preparing to Scale Operations (2028–2029)

- ▶ **Expansion of Operations to Additional Aircraft and Use Cases:** Expand operations to include VTOL aircraft and other advanced platforms within validated operating areas, informed by lessons learned from earlier medical, cargo, and digitally enabled operational activities.
- ▶ **Refinement of Procedures for Increased Operational Tempo:** Update operational procedures, airspace coordination methods, and digital infrastructure requirements to support higher flight volumes and mixed-vehicle operations.
- ▶ **Capture and Documentation of Operational Lessons Learned:** Systematically collect operational data and lessons learned to inform policy development, infrastructure investment planning, and coordination with federal and regional partners.
- ▶ **Preparation for Sustained Commercial Operations and Digital Service Integration:** Develop operational frameworks, partnerships, governance structures, and digital service integration approaches that support the transition from pilot activities to scalable long-term commercial AAM and UAS operations, including future engagement with certified third-party service providers as regulatory pathways mature.

Pillar 4: Workforce

The aircraft, software, and infrastructure behind AAM will only work if people are trained to build, operate, maintain, and manage them. Ohio's AAM strategy recognizes that workforce readiness must evolve in parallel with technology, infrastructure, and policy to ensure long-term operational viability and economic benefit. This includes developing talent across a wide range of disciplines, including pilots, maintenance technicians, engineers, software developers, data analysts, emergency responders, and aviation policy professionals.

Ohio benefits from a strong and established aviation education and research ecosystem. Community colleges and universities across the state already support aviation training, research, and applied testing, and have proven to be critical assets in advancing Ohio's broader aviation and aerospace objectives. These institutions provide both the technical workforce required for near-term operations and the research capacity needed to address longer-term AAM challenges. In 2025, DriveOhio conducted 64 outreach events with students and educators, impacted over 100,000 students through educator engagement, and trained more than 50 certified drone pilots statewide through its workforce development efforts and District Drone Deployment.



Figure 13: Drone at DriveOhio STEM Event

Building on Existing Programs

Ohio has a robust foundation in aerospace education and training. The state boasts specialized programs such as Sinclair Community College's UAS training curriculum,³² which offers simulator training and flight labs for drone operations. This and other community college programs, along with university research centers at The Ohio State University, Kent State University, Ohio University, and others, have been aligning their coursework to emerging AAM competencies. DriveOhio is collaborating with these institutions and industry partners to expand offerings – for example, developing new AAM pilot and technician training programs and credentials in partnership with OEMs.

Joby Aviation has established manufacturing facilities in Ohio and is working closely with local colleges to train up to 500 skilled workers per year at its Dayton plants. These workers will build eVTOL components, such as propeller blades, to FAA standards, gaining experience that directly feeds into AAM industry needs.

K–12 and Higher Education Pipeline

DriveOhio has developed a suite of free, publicly available curriculum resources to build early awareness of AAM and smart mobility careers:

The K–12 Educator Toolkit³³ provides ready-to-use curriculum organized by grade band and topic area, with over 1,400 total registrations from educators across Ohio since its launch. The toolkit includes three signature learning experiences: **FormulatE** (electric vehicle education), **IntegratE** (smart city exploration including electric delivery robots and drones), and **ElevatE**, which focuses specifically on drones and AAM by



Figure 14: ElevatE Curriculum

³² <https://www.sinclair.edu/program/params/programcode/uas-s-aas/>

³³ <https://drive.ohio.gov/workforce/educator-toolkit>

having students act as engineers and pilots, designing and building model vertiports while learning the physics of flight and air traffic logic.

The Ohio STEM Learning Network³⁴ Statewide Design Challenge engages students in real-world transportation and energy problems. The 2025 challenge attracted over 200 teachers, reached more than 60,000 students and engaged 50+ industry judges and mentors, with AAM industry partners including BETA Technologies.

The Campus Collection,³⁵ a higher education toolkit published by DriveOhio, provides free curriculum, work-based learning projects, and career pathways for smart mobility on the ground and in the air, supporting post-secondary instruction and applied learning.

DriveOhio has hosted AAM-specific workforce events including the NAAMCE K-12 STEM Curriculum Innovation Workshop, AAM/UAS Air Camp for middle and high school students, the Aerospace Talent and Resource Fair in Cleveland, and professional development workshops for school districts in Springfield, Cincinnati, and Fairbanks.



Figure 15: DriveOhio Campus Collection Flyer

Workforce Development Focus Areas

Ohio's education and workforce efforts are focused on preparing talent that can adapt as AAM operations mature. Key focus areas include:

- **Aviation Operations and Maintenance**
Training for pilots, remote operators, maintenance technicians, and safety personnel capable of supporting both conventional and advanced aircraft.
- **Engineering, Autonomy, and Data Systems**
Development of skills related to electric propulsion, autonomy, software, cybersecurity, and data analytics that underpin AAM systems.
- **Public Safety and Emergency Integration**
Education and training for first responders, emergency managers, and public agencies to safely integrate AAM into medical, cargo, and disaster response operations.
- **Policy, Planning, and Community Engagement**
Workforce development related to aviation policy, infrastructure planning, environmental analysis, and public outreach to support informed local and regional decision-making.

These efforts build on existing programs while creating pathways for new certifications, credentials, and applied learning opportunities as operational needs become clearer.

³⁴ <https://osln.org/>

³⁵ <https://drive.ohio.gov/workforce/campus-collection>

Workforce Action Plan

Phase 1 – Planning (2026-2027)

- ▶ **Inventory of Existing Aviation Education and Research Programs:** Inventory existing aviation-related education, training, and research programs across Ohio’s community colleges and universities.
- ▶ **Identification of Workforce Needs for Planned AAM Operations:** Define the occupations, technical skills, and staffing needs associated with planned AAM operations.
- ▶ **Alignment of Academic Partners with AAM Pilot Project Activities:** Align academic partners with AAM pilot project activities to support applied learning, research, technical support and operational evaluation.
- ▶ **Industry Coordination on Skill Gaps and Training Needs:** Coordinate with industry partners to identify priority skill gaps and training needs not sufficiently addressed by existing education and training programs.

Phase 2 – Implementation (2027–2028)

- ▶ **Integration of Students and Faculty into AAM Pilot Project Activities:** Integrate students and faculty into AAM pilot project activities through research, internships, and workforce training programs.
- ▶ **Support for Applied AAM Research Activities:** Support applied research related to operations, maintenance, autonomy, airspace integration, and safety.
- ▶ **Development and Adaptation of AAM-Relevant Curriculum and Credentials:** Develop or adapt coursework, certifications, and training modules aligned with emerging AAM roles.
- ▶ **Cross-Institutional Knowledge Sharing:** Share lessons learned across institutions to promote consistency and scalability.

Phase 3 – Preparing to Scale Operations (2028–2029)

- ▶ **Formalization of Education and Training Pathways:** Formalize education and training pathways to support sustained AAM operations in Ohio.
- ▶ **Expansion of Workforce Programs for Broader Operations:** Expand workforce programs to support additional operators, aircraft types, and use cases.
- ▶ **Publication of Workforce Development Guidance and Best Practices:** Working with higher education providers, publish guidance and best practices for integrating AAM workforce development into regional planning.
- ▶ **Positioning Ohio’s Education Ecosystem for National AAM Needs:** Position Ohio’s education ecosystem as a long-term asset for national AAM workforce needs.

Pillar 5: Funding

A resilient and diversified funding strategy is essential to support Ohio's aviation initiatives and ensure that early deployments can scale into long-term operations. Ohio's approach builds on proven public-private co-investment models, leveraging state resources, local contributions, private capital, and in-kind support to reduce risk and maximize return on investment. This structure allows infrastructure, aircraft, research, and operational activities to progress without reliance on any single funding source.

Public-Private Co-Investment

Ohio's economic development model is anchored by close collaboration between state entities, such as ODOT/DriveOhio, and private organizations. This includes coordination with JobsOhio, a private nonprofit that has already directed more than \$1.2 billion in statewide AAM-related investments, including state-supported incentives for Joby Aviation's new manufacturing facilities in Dayton and Electra's production facility in Springfield. These facilities will produce aircraft and components that directly support statewide aviation modernization goals.

On the public side, the Ohio General Assembly has authorized \$1.2 million in AAM-focused state funding for ODOT/DriveOhio, supporting program management, safety oversight, and targeted infrastructure pilot projects. Additional state and local funding streams, such as airport improvement grants and local economic development programs, can support upgrades to airports and heliports for operations, including lighting, charging, and related facility improvements.

Federal Funding Opportunities

Ohio will continue pursuing federal grants and research funding aligned with aviation, infrastructure, energy, and national security priorities. Applicable programs include:

- FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP),³⁶ for vertiport planning and airport upgrades
- U.S. Department of Energy programs, supporting charging and energy storage technologies
- Department of War research programs, leveraging the presence of Ohio-based federal research partners

These federal pathways complement state and private funding and help reduce the cost of infrastructure modernization and technology development.

Sustainability and Scalability

Financial sustainability is a central objective of Ohio's aviation strategy. Through pilot projects and state-led deployments, the state will assess:

- Operating costs per flight and per pound-mile delivered
- Maintenance and energy costs under real operating conditions
- Potential revenue models (service fees, contracts, subscriptions)
- The role of incentives or credits for low-emission operations

This analysis will inform long-term funding strategies and identify models in which services can operate with limited or no public subsidy. Any identified funding gaps, such as initial capital costs for aircraft, charging systems, or vertiport construction, will be addressed through diversified investment.

³⁶ <https://www.faa.gov/airports/aip>

Funding Action Plan

Phase 1 – Planning (2026-2027)

- ▶ **Identification of Capital and Operational Funding Needs:** Identify capital and operational funding needs associated with initial routes, infrastructure pilot projects, and data systems.
- ▶ **Alignment of State, Local, and Private Resources:** Align state, local, and private resources to support early deployment activities.
- ▶ **Development of Matching-Fund Strategies for Infrastructure Upgrades:** Identify matching-fund strategies for infrastructure upgrades (e.g., airport improvements, charging equipment).
- ▶ **Coordination with Federal Partners on Grant Opportunities:** Connect with federal partners to identify eligible grant programs and timelines.

Phase 2 – Implementation (2027–2028)

- ▶ **Implementation of Public-Private Cost-Sharing Models:** Implement public-private cost-sharing arrangements for pilots and demonstrations.
- ▶ **Leverage of Industry In-Kind Contributions:** Leverage industry in-kind contributions (aircraft, charging systems, comms infrastructure, software).
- ▶ **Pursuit of Competitive Federal Grant Funding:** Apply for competitive federal grants to supplement state and private investment.
- ▶ **Tracking of Expenditures and Cost Performance:** Track expenditures and cost performance across pilot deployments.

Phase 3 – Preparing to Scale Operations (2028–2029)

- ▶ **Evaluation of Business Models and Revenue Pathways:** Evaluate business models and revenue pathways based on pilot data.
- ▶ **Development of Sustainable Funding Structures for Regional Services:** Develop sustainable funding structures for regional services (e.g., cargo, medical, emergency).
- ▶ **Finalization of Long-Term Public-Private Partnership Guidance:** Finalize guidance for long-term P3 approaches to infrastructure and operations.
- ▶ **Reporting of Economic Impact and Investment Outcomes:** Report economic impact, investment attraction, and job creation metrics to state leadership and stakeholders.

Pillar 6: Engagement

AAM will operate in and above the communities it serves, which means the people who live, work, and travel in those places need a voice in how it takes shape. Successful implementation of Ohio's aviation initiatives depends on coordinated participation across a diverse set of stakeholders, each with distinct roles, authorities, and interests. These stakeholders include federal and state agencies, local governments, industry partners, airports, academic institutions, infrastructure owners, end users, and the communities in which operations occur. Ohio's approach emphasizes early, structured, and continuous engagement to ensure alignment, manage risk, and support long-term integration.

Stakeholder coordination is treated as an operational requirement rather than a supporting activity. Clear roles, defined responsibilities, and consistent communication help ensure that decisions related to airspace use, infrastructure, safety, and community impacts are informed, collaborative, and durable.

Key Stakeholder Groups and Roles

Table 3 outlines the key stakeholder groups, their roles and responsibilities, and key activities. As Ohio expands AAM opportunities and builds on early successes, clear guidance and strong collaboration will be essential so stakeholders can meet their roles and responsibilities and advance AAM statewide.

Table 3. Key Stakeholder Groups and Roles

Stakeholder	Role/Responsibilities	Key Activities
Federal Agencies	Regulatory oversight, research collaboration, technical guidance	Aviation safety oversight, airspace management, certification, research (noise, environment, emerging technologies), operational data, lessons learned, inform national standards
State Government (Ohio)	Program sponsor, lead integrator, coordination	Alignment with transportation/economic goals, program governance, funding alignment, policy development, integration with mobility initiatives
Local Governments and Regional Authorities	Implementation, critical role	Land use planning, zoning, permitting, infrastructure coordination, emergency response integration, community engagement, early involvement
Airports and Infrastructure Owners	Access, infrastructure upgrades, coordination	Operating locations, safety, security, operational procedures, integration into aviation environments
Industry Partners	Aircraft, systems, expertise, resources	Workforce development, testing, evaluation, operational concepts
Academic and Research Institutions	Applied research, workforce development, policy analysis	Technical evaluation, data-driven decision-making, innovation
Communities and End Users	Stakeholder engagement, use case definition, impact assessment	Evaluate operational value and market relevance, safety, noise, privacy, local benefit considerations

Engagement Strategy

Bringing new aviation operations into Ohio's skies requires public understanding, trust, and demonstrated value. Community engagement is therefore a core component of this Action Plan. Ohio's engagement strategy is built on transparency, inclusivity, and two-way dialogue, recognizing that as operations expand beyond controlled environments, community members and local officials become central stakeholders in decision-making.

Public Awareness and Education

A primary objective is to increase public understanding of aviation technologies and their potential benefits. ODOT and DriveOhio will support public demonstration events where residents can observe aircraft, interact with project teams, and learn how operations are monitored and managed. Educational materials, including videos, infographics, and classroom-ready resources, will explain concepts in accessible terms and highlight real-world benefits such as faster medical delivery, improved emergency response, and reduced congestion.

Resource Sharing and Collaboration

State, regional, and local agencies will play a central role in the practical application of AAM development and operations in Ohio. While the FAA will continue to oversee aircraft certification, airspace, and operator requirements, state departments of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations, airports, regional agencies, counties, and municipalities will be responsible for many of the decisions that shape how AAM is implemented on the ground. These responsibilities include infrastructure planning, land use and zoning coordination, public safety integration, community engagement, multimodal connectivity, and alignment with regional transportation and economic development goals. To support these efforts, all stakeholders can draw from a growing body of federal strategies, rulemakings, guidance, and industry/academic resources related to AAM, including emerging materials associated with Parts 108 and 146 and other relevant planning and technology initiatives.

ODOT will maintain a current set of key AAM resources on its website and develop additional content tailored to the needs of state, regional, and local agencies as implementation advances. Ohio will also coordinate, where relevant, with broader statewide innovation ecosystem partners, including Ohio Innovation Hub³⁷ initiatives, where their work in digital transformation, aviation, advanced manufacturing, and commercialization may inform AAM-related planning, partnerships, and regional implementation. This will help ensure the plan remains connected to complementary innovation efforts underway across the state.

³⁷ <https://www.youngstownhub.us/about/ohio-innovation-hub-program/>

Several sources and publications are available to assist public agencies, such as:

Table 4. Resources for Public Agencies

RESOURCE	TYPE	WHY IT MATTERS
U.S. DOT Advanced Air Mobility National Strategy (2025) ³⁸	National strategy	Provides the national policy framework for airspace, infrastructure, security, workforce, community planning, and automation, helping agencies understand where local and state actions fit within broader federal objectives.
FAA AAM Comprehensive Plan ³⁹	Implementation planning document	Describes how the FAA is approaching near-term AAM integration and can help agencies anticipate how federal implementation priorities may influence infrastructure, operational readiness, and coordination needs.
Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM): Normalizing Unmanned Aircraft Systems Beyond Visual Line of Sight Operations (Part 108) ⁴⁰	Notice of proposed rulemaking	Signals the expected regulatory pathway for routine BVLOS operations, with implications for infrastructure planning, public safety coordination, local operating environments, and future service models.
NPRM / Regulatory Framework for Part 146 Automated Data Service Providers	Notice of proposed rulemaking	Highlights the emerging digital service layer that may support scalable low-altitude operations, including data exchange, deconfliction, and operational awareness relevant to state and local planning.

Addressing Community Concerns Transparently

The engagement strategy directly addresses common public concerns, including safety, noise, privacy, visual impact, and cost. Ohio will implement a Strategic Engagement Strategy that proactively discusses how aircraft are certified and monitored, how contingencies are handled, and how privacy protections are applied. Noise will be addressed through measured data collected during deployments and from original equipment manufacturers and shared publicly, providing context relative to familiar sources such as helicopters or roadway traffic.

Engagement is structured as a two-way process. Community input will be actively solicited on topics such as preferred operating hours, routing considerations, and sensitive locations. Feedback will be used to refine operations where feasible, demonstrating responsiveness and accountability.

Demonstrating Societal and Local Benefits

Public support is strengthened by clearly connecting operations to outcomes that matter locally. Outreach will highlight tangible benefits from real operations, such as improved medical logistics, reduced truck traffic, or enhanced access during emergencies, rather than asking communities simply to accommodate new activity. Engagement with local councils, economic development groups, first responders, and community organizations ensures that deployment reflects local priorities and values.

³⁸ <https://www.transportation.gov/aam-strategy>

³⁹ <https://www.transportation.gov/aam-plan>

⁴⁰ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/08/07/2025-14992/normalizing-unmanned-aircraft-systems-beyond-visual-line-of-sight-operations>

Experiential Learning and Inclusion

In addition to traditional public meetings, Ohio will use experiential approaches to engagement. These may include interactive demonstrations, simulations, and digital tools that allow residents to track activity, ask questions, and stay informed. A dedicated web presence will provide updates, educational content, and opportunities for feedback. The goal is to move beyond “public acceptance” toward informed participation and shared ownership.

Ongoing Industry Engagement and Market Awareness

In parallel with public engagement, Ohio’s approach requires continuous assessment of the rapidly evolving AAM ecosystem. The industry is advancing quickly across aircraft manufacturing, infrastructure development, enabling technologies, and operational models. To remain competitive and proactive, Ohio will maintain an ongoing industry scan of OEMs, infrastructure and vertiport developers, technology providers, and AAM operators. This effort ensures the state stays aligned with the most relevant and investment-ready companies, understands emerging requirements and constraints, and positions Ohio early as a preferred partner for deployment, testing, and scaling of operations. Proactive engagement with industry allows Ohio to anticipate trends, adapt policies and infrastructure planning accordingly, and remain visible to companies shaping the future of advanced aviation.

Engagement Action Plan

Phase 1 – Planning (2026-2027)

- ▶ **Identification and Confirmation of Key Stakeholders:** Identify and confirm key federal, state, local, industry, academic, and community stakeholders, while maintaining an ongoing scan of the AAM ecosystem to engage relevant OEMs, infrastructure providers, technology developers, and operators as the market evolves.
- ▶ **Definition of Stakeholder Roles and Coordination Mechanisms:** Define stakeholder roles, responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms for information sharing, community outreach, and pilot project implementation.
- ▶ **Establishment of a Strategic Engagement Framework:** Set the approach for addressing safety, noise, privacy, and local impacts.
- ▶ **Early Outreach to Communities and Local Governments:** Initiate outreach with local governments and communities near initial operating areas so local knowledge and concerns can inform planning and pilot project design.

Phase 2 – Implementation (2027–2028)

- ▶ **Integration of Stakeholders into Pilot Planning and Execution:** Integrate stakeholders into planning and execution of pilots and demonstrations.
- ▶ **Public Forums, Briefings, and Demonstration Activities:** Conduct public forums, briefings, and demonstration events in operating areas.
- ▶ **Transparent Sharing of Operational and Safety Information:** Share operational data, noise measurements, and safety information transparently.
- ▶ **Collection and Use of Community Feedback:** Collect and incorporate community feedback to refine operations where appropriate.

Phase 3 – Preparing to Scale Operations (2028–2029)

- ▶ **Documentation of Effective Engagement Practices:** Document effective stakeholder and community engagement practices.
- ▶ **Updates to Local Government and Airport Guidance:** Update guidance for local governments and airports based on operational experience.
- ▶ **Establishment of Standing Engagement Mechanisms:** Establish standing engagement mechanisms for routine operations.
- ▶ **Dissemination of Lessons Learned for Broader Adoption:** Share lessons learned to support broader statewide and regional adoption.

Ohio's Path Forward

Ohio is positioning itself to lead the next era of aviation by creating the conditions necessary for AAM to scale safely, responsibly, and efficiently. While individual demonstrations will remain important, the state's long-term advantage will come from pairing innovation with the physical, digital, regulatory, and operational infrastructure required for sustained deployment and commercialization.

Through its Digital Enterprise and other strategic investments, Ohio can connect infrastructure, data, systems, and stakeholders across the state to support an integrated AAM ecosystem. Continued coordination among state and local government, industry, airports, academia, workforce partners, and communities will help translate emerging technologies into practical services that strengthen mobility, expand economic opportunity, and deliver public benefit.

This Action Plan provides a shared path forward, but it is not a static endpoint. It will evolve as technology matures, regulations take shape, market needs change, and new partnership opportunities emerge. By advancing the actions outlined in this plan, measuring progress, and adapting with purpose, Ohio can move AAM from promising concepts to a safe, scalable, and connected transportation system—demonstrating that in Ohio, the sky is no longer the limit.



Figure 16: Rendering of Electra's Production Facility

Ohio Department of Transportation
Division of AAM | DriveOhio

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AAM Action Plan Timeline

Table 5. Ohio AAM Action Plan Timeline (2026-2029)

PILLAR	PHASE 1: 2026-2027	PHASE 2: 2027-2028	PHASE 3: 2028-2029	KEY PARTNERS
Infrastructure	• Early Coordination with Key Stakeholders and Federal Partners • Infrastructure Governance and Roles • Ohio DE Scope Definition • Statewide Airport and Heliport Assessment for Vertiport Readiness Statewide • Existing Infrastructure Asset Inventory • Initial Infrastructure Needs by Priority Use Case • State-Level AAM Traffic and Data Coordination Framework	• DE Flight Demonstration • Pilot Energy Infrastructure Deployment and Testing • Infrastructure Readiness Guidance Development • Operational Evaluation of CNS, Sensing, and Weather Support • Operational Data Collection and Performance Monitoring • Infrastructure Requirement Refinement	• Critical Infrastructure Protection Framework • DE Growth • Future Investment and Partnership Prioritization	Airports, utilities, operators, FAA, local governments, service providers
Policy	• AAM Policy Accelerator Establishment • Inventory of Existing AAM-Relevant Policies • Identification of Policy Constraints on Planned Operations • Definition of Priority Policy Questions for Pilot Project Evaluation • Assessment of Overflight and Liability Considerations	• Policy Performance Testing Through Active AAM Pilot Projects • Structured Policy-Relevant Data Collection • Coordination with FAA on Policy-Relevant Operational Findings • Development of Draft Model Policies Through the AAM Policy Accelerator	• Documentation of Validated Policy Insights • Finalization of Model State and Local AAM Policy Guidance • Interstate Policy Alignment for Routine Operations • Publication of Guidance and Lessons Learned	FAA, state partners, state/local governments, operators, public safety, community stakeholders
Proof of Concept and Integrated Operations	• Development of an Operational Concept of Operations • Identification of Priority Operating Areas • Simulation and Modeling Activities • Establishment of Research and Workforce Partnerships	• Public Safety SOP Development • Initiation of Early Flight Operations in Selected Operating Areas • Incremental Flight Testing • Integration and Evaluation of Layered Digital Infrastructure • Early Operational Use Cases Demonstration	• Expansion of Operations to Additional Aircraft and Use Cases • Refinement of Procedures for Increased Operational Tempo • Capture and Documentation of Operational Lessons Learned • Preparation for Sustained Commercial Operations and Digital Service Integration	FAA, State transportation agencies, airports, universities, research institutions, industry partners, economic development organizations

PILLAR	PHASE 1: 2026-2027	PHASE 2: 2027-2028	PHASE 3: 2028-2029	KEY PARTNERS
Workforce	• Inventory of Existing Aviation Education and Research Programs • Identification of Workforce Needs for Planned AAM Operations • Alignment of Academic Partners with AAM Pilot Project Activities • Industry Coordination on Skill Gaps and Training Needs	• Integration of Students and Faculty into AAM Pilot Project Activities • Support for Applied AAM Research Activities • Development and Adaptation of AAM-Relevant Curriculum and Credentials • Cross-Institutional Knowledge Sharing	• Formalization of Education and Training Pathways • Expansion of Workforce Programs for Broader Operations • Publication of Workforce Development Guidance and Best Practices • Positioning Ohio's Education Ecosystem for National AAM Needs	Ohio universities + community colleges, NAAMCE, industry/operators, workforce boards, training providers
Funding	• Identification of Capital and Operational Funding Needs • Alignment of State, Local, and Private Resources • Development of Matching-Fund Strategies for Infrastructure Upgrades • Coordination with Federal Partners on Grant Opportunities	• Implementation of Public-Private Cost-Sharing Models • Leverage of Industry In-Kind Contributions • Pursuit of Competitive Federal Grant Funding • Tracking of Expenditures and Cost Performance	• Evaluation of Business Models and Revenue Pathways • Development of Sustainable Funding Structures for Regional Services • Finalization of Long-Term Public-Private Partnership Guidance • Reporting of Economic Impact and Investment Outcomes	State/local sponsors, USDOT/FAA + federal programs, airports, utilities, private partners/investors, operators
Engagement	• Identification and Confirmation of Key Stakeholders • Definition of Stakeholder Roles and Coordination Mechanisms • Establishment of a Strategic Engagement Framework • Early Outreach to Communities and Local Governments	• Integration of Stakeholders into Pilot Planning and Execution • Public Forums, Briefings, and Demonstration Activities • Transparent Sharing of Operational and Safety Information • Collection and Use of Community Feedback	• Documentation of Effective Engagement Practices • Updates to Local Government and Airport Guidance • Establishment of Standing Engagement Mechanisms • Dissemination of Lessons Learned for Broader Adoption	Local governments, communities, airports, operators, public safety, academic partners, FAA/other agencies

Note: The timeline presented is preliminary and contingent upon available funding to support implementation of these activities.

Appendix A. Digital Enterprise Concept and AAM Infrastructure Framework

As a foundational element of Ohio’s future statewide AAM strategy, the Digital Enterprise (DE) ecosystem will be conceptualized, designed, validated, and deployed to enable safe, secure, and scalable UAS and AAM operations across Ohio’s urban, suburban, rural, and interregional environments. This effort will establish a unified physical and digital infrastructure framework that integrates state, federal, local, academic, and industry stakeholders to enable safe, data-driven BVLOS operations and cooperative operating areas across the state.

The DE will serve as a base infrastructure layer for Ohio’s future aviation system, while seamlessly providing an open architecture that integrates with ground transportation digital systems infrastructure. It will integrate communications, surveillance, weather, aircraft intent, infrastructure status, operational constraints, and mission-critical data services into a federated operating environment. Rather than functioning as a single system or platform, the DE will operate as an ecosystem of interoperable services that can support AAM operators, public agencies, infrastructure owners, and federal partners when partnered with state safety and security interests. This approach allows Ohio to build a scalable architecture through public private partnerships that can evolve alongside emerging FAA rulemaking, commercial service models, market needs, and increasing operational complexity.

The DE Architecture provides the foundational data, intelligence, and orchestration layers necessary to synchronize real-time flight information, support Tier 1 failover, keeping mission critical systems operating with failsafe redundant mechanisms, and continue to provide mission-critical, decision support tools. The architecture will leverage state infrastructure and system architecture, commercial AAM service providers, and, when available, FAA and DoW core system components, such as radar feeds necessary for SkyVision deployment. This layered model supports a cooperative airspace operating environment in which aircraft, operators, and public agencies can share verified information while maintaining appropriate governance, cybersecurity, and data-access controls.

A central objective is to evaluate multiple flight paths and cooperative operating areas chosen by market, state and

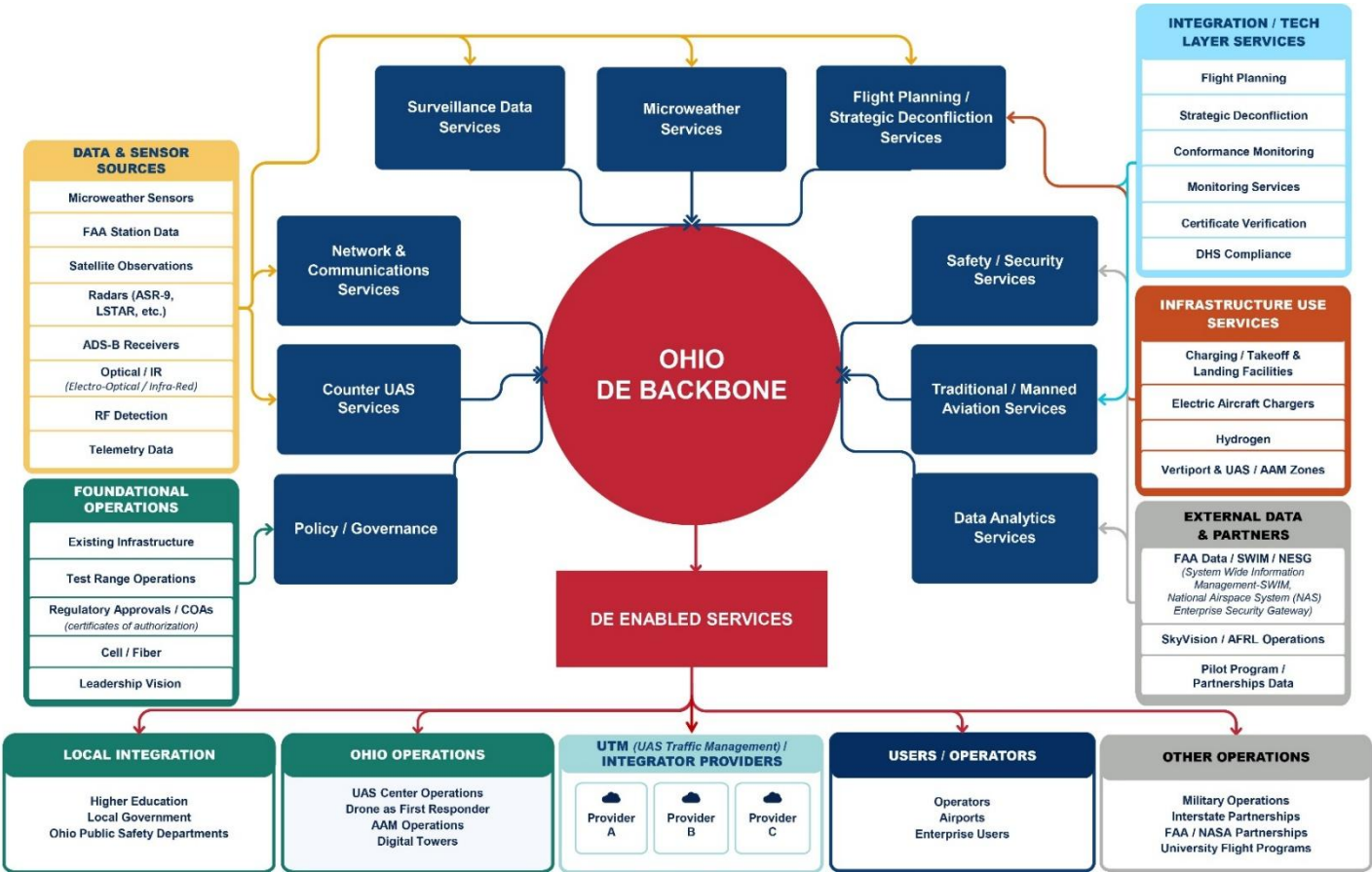


Figure 17: Ohio's Digital Enterprise Architecture

national security interests that will serve as operational testbeds for statewide AAM deployment that supports with leave behind, live operational uses. Candidate cooperative operating areas will be assessed for feasibility, infrastructure readiness, operational complexity, policy considerations, and economic impact potential. These assessments will focus on strategic locations such as Springfield and the NAAMCE, routes connecting high-density population and business hubs, underserved rural areas, and regional or sister-state mobility hubs. The intent is to identify scalable operating models that can support near-term use cases while informing future infrastructure investment and policy decisions.

Through collaboration with federal partners such as FAA, NASA, and the AFRL, and with state and regional partners including ODOT, JobsOhio, NAAMCE, airports, local governments, and industry operators, the initiative will identify and characterize technical requirements for statewide AAM integration. These requirements will include communications coverage, command-and-control connectivity, surveillance, sensing, weather data, data latency, cybersecurity, operational governance, and interoperability between public and private commercial airspace services. The project will

also support data sovereignty and cybersecurity validation by defining how operational data is collected, shared, protected, and retained across the Digital Enterprise environment.

The Digital Enterprise implementation project is intended to move Ohio’s digital aviation ecosystem from research pilots to operational deployments that remain as a long-term statewide capability. The outputs will inform future state program participation, support Ohio’s readiness for federal AAM initiatives, while contributing to the maturation of statewide AAM operations. The project will also directly support the growing set of OEMs, operators, and enabling technology companies establishing manufacturing, testing, and operational activities in Ohio.

Security, Airspace Awareness, and Counter UAS Integration

Security is the first consideration for the DE because safe AAM and UAS operations require persistent, trusted awareness of activity in all classes of airspace. BVLOS operations depend on timely knowledge of cooperative and non-cooperative aircraft, operational (flight path) intent, airspace constraints, and any potential conflicts. The very same airspace-awareness capabilities provided by the DE that support safe AAM and UAS operations will also provide a natural foundation to address CUAS security needs. The DE can provide system-wide airspace awareness, including aircraft detection, identification, and tracking, to support coordination among appropriately authorized state and federal security partners and CUAS activities conducted in accordance with applicable federal authorities and regulations.

CUAS includes both position and activity awareness of an errant, unauthorized, or hazardous drone and, when legally authorized, mitigation of those threats. While mitigation authorities remain limited and must be exercised only by properly authorized entities, the DE can provide the awareness layer needed to detect, identify, track, and characterize UAS activity of all airspace and aircraft types. This capability can support public safety partners by improving shared understanding of airspace conditions without disrupting or exposing commercial operations. In this way, the DE can strengthen statewide aviation security while remaining aligned with federal authorities and applicable privacy, safety, and data-protection requirements.

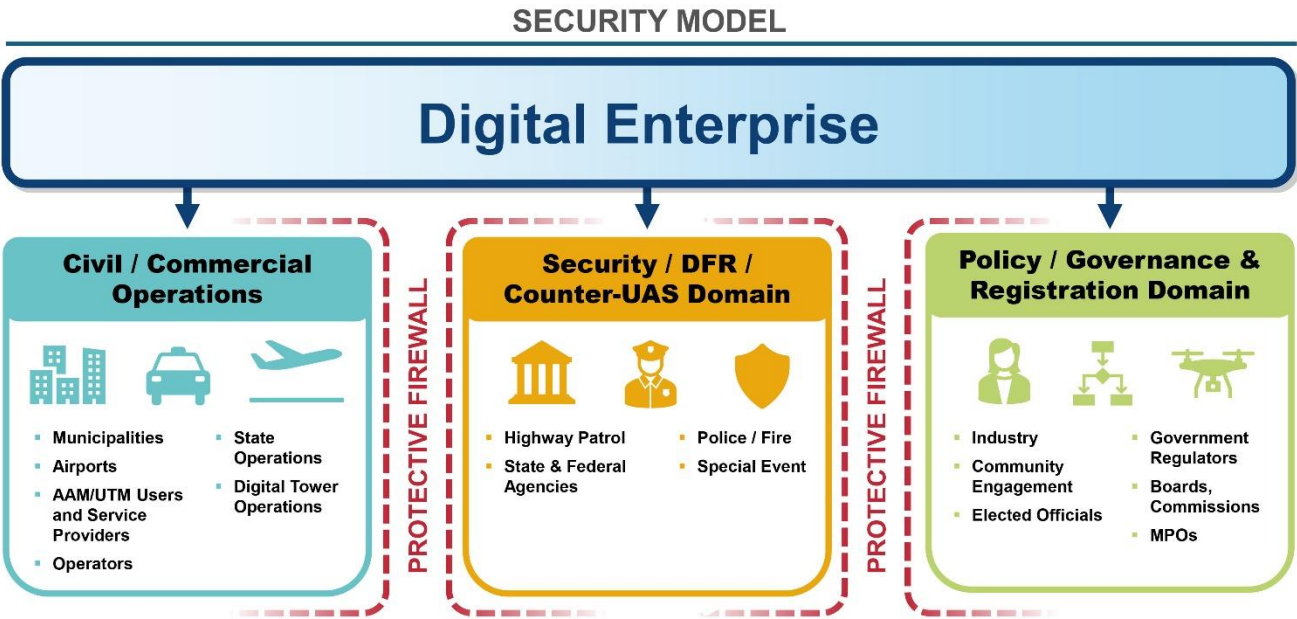


Figure 18: Ohio Digital Enterprise – Security Model

To preserve the integrity of commercial operations and sensitive security UAS Traffic Management (UTM) functions, the DE will incorporate a clear separation between public, commercial, and secure operational environments. Firewalled interfaces between commercial services and authorized security functions would protect operator data, business information, and intellectual property while allowing appropriate information to be shared with authorized public safety or security entities. This structure supports trusted participation by private-sector operators while enabling state and federal partners to maintain situational awareness for safety and security purposes.

This capability is especially important for large public venues and temporary high-density events, such as college and professional sporting events, concerts, major public gatherings, Temporary Flight Restrictions, and Special Governmental Interest operations. In these environments, unauthorized drone activity can create safety, security, and operational risks for the public, event organizers, first responders, and aviation stakeholders. Because airspace awareness is already embedded in the DE concept, a secure state level secure operations function will be firewalled from public and commercial users and represents a logical progression of the system. This security focused function and access will provide authorized agencies with a total airspace awareness at sensitive locations while preserving data and privacy protections for legitimate operators and system participants and the general public on the ground.

Enabling Business Opportunities and Job Growth

The DE will serve as an economic development platform by lowering the barriers for companies to scale AAM services in Ohio. By providing a coordinated digital and physical infrastructure environment, Ohio can offer operators and technology developers a clearer path from concept demonstration to operational deployment. This supports business

attraction, accelerates commercialization, and strengthens the state’s position as a national leader and proving ground for advanced aviation.

The NAAMCE⁴¹ is a critical anchor for this opportunity. Located at Springfield-Beckley Municipal Airport, NAAMCE provides an integrated build-test-fly ecosystem for AAM innovators and supports testing, validation, certification, and commercialization activities. NAAMCE’s capabilities include access to national airspace up to 18,000 feet, BVLOS operational capability, aircraft and system validation support, and a coordinated network spanning government, academia, OEMs, and research institutions. These capabilities help companies answer practical operational questions in a real-world environment and move from technology development toward broader adoption.

The DE will extend the value of NAAMCE beyond a single facility by connecting Springfield’s test environment to all other cooperative operating areas, airports, business centers, rural communities, and healthcare networks across the state. As a statewide digital aviation backbone, the system can help companies evaluate use cases across different geographies, airspace classes, infrastructure conditions, and market needs. This creates opportunities for Ohio to attract and retain aircraft manufacturers, operators, third-party service providers, software and network developers, communications firms, cybersecurity providers, and statewide university interests/enrollment and workforce training organizations.

Ohio’s existing AAM ecosystem already demonstrates the potential for job creation and investment attraction. Multiple stakeholder efforts led by ODOT and JobsOhio have established Ohio as a leading AAM state for implementation, citing assets such as NAAMCE, Springfield-Beckley Municipal Airport, a strong manufacturing presence of leading OEMs producing AAM assets and developing tomorrow’s workforce, seven R1 research universities, and a statewide team approach to aerospace, defense, manufacturing, and technology development. The DE builds on these strengths by creating infrastructure that enables businesses to operate, validate services and business models, and scale in Ohio. Over time, this can support new jobs in aviation operations, software development, cybersecurity, data analytics, infrastructure maintenance, aircraft manufacturing, systems engineering, and public-sector aviation management.

Backbone for Ohio’s Digital Tower Technologies

The DE will support Ohio’s digital tower technologies by providing shared digital infrastructure, surveillance, data exchange, situational-awareness capabilities and automation tools that complement remote airport operations. Digital tower technologies rely on the ability to collect, transmit, fuse, and display aviation information from distributed sensors and airport environments to support safe airport traffic management. Many of these same functions—real-time surveillance, communications connectivity, visual or sensor feeds, weather information, aircraft tracking, and operational status data—are also core components of the DE.

By aligning DE infrastructure with digital tower needs, possibly through public private partnerships, Ohio can avoid duplicative investments and create common digital services that support both traditional aviation and emerging AAM operations. Airports participating in digital tower activities could benefit from improved data connectivity, airspace awareness, weather integration, and secure information sharing. At the same time, AAM and UAS operators could benefit from enhanced awareness of airport activity, approach and departure corridors, and local operating constraints.

This integration would be particularly valuable at airports that serve as early AAM operating hubs or corridor nodes. As operations increase in complexity, shared digital infrastructure can support services to legacy aviation, UAS operations, AAM aircraft, airport operators, remote tower personnel, and public agencies. The DE therefore provides a pathway to connect digital tower modernization with statewide AAM readiness, creating a more integrated aviation infrastructure strategy for Ohio.

Edge Computing and Network Resilience

Edge computing will be an important technical enabler for the DE because many AAM and UAS decisions require low-latency processing close to the point of operation. By processing selected surveillance, weather, communications, and aircraft-status data at or near operating nodes, airports, vertiports, or sensor sites, the system can reduce dependence on distant cloud services and improve response times for mission-critical functions. Industries are already deploying mesh networks of edge computing assets to provide CUAS services. This construct fits perfectly within, and even enhances, a DE implementation.

By utilizing mesh networking infrastructure, edge computing may bridge the gap in communication and high-volume processing constraints and reduce latency on other primary components of the system. This distributed computing model also improves resilience. If connectivity to a central service is degraded, local edge nodes can continue supporting essential awareness, data validation, and failover functions. As Ohio expands cooperative operating areas, edge computing can help the DE scale efficiently by placing computing resources where operational demand, safety requirements, and data volumes are highest.

⁴¹ <https://naamce.com/>

Implementation Strategy - Consideration Given to Efficiency and Responsible Investments

Implementation of the DE should proceed incrementally, beginning with defined operating areas and priority use cases that generate measurable operational and commercial market value. Early activities should focus on documenting system requirements, charging capacity and statewide electrification architecture, mapping existing infrastructure, identifying candidate operating areas, and defining governance structures for data access, cybersecurity, and partner roles. These planning efforts should be followed by operational demonstrations that test layered communications, surveillance, sensing, C2, and data-exchange services under real-world conditions.

Ohio is preparing for eVTOL, CTOL, and STOL AAM. This includes evaluating what infrastructure may be needed for airports, heliports, and future vertiport locations to meet the practical requirements for safe, scalable aircraft charging. Rather than overbuilding ahead of demand, taking a market-informed approach allows early operations and use cases to mature, helping identify where charging stations are most needed and where utilization can support a strong return on investment. As demand becomes clearer, those findings can guide targeted investment in charging infrastructure that supports operational growth while reducing financial and infrastructure risk.

As the system matures, Ohio will use DE deployments to evaluate interoperability between public and private service providers, validate cybersecurity and data-sovereignty models, support CUAS-related awareness functions for authorized users, and inform state and federal policy discussions. Lessons learned from Springfield, NAAMCE, remote tower sites, rural routes, medical logistics flight paths, and regional mobility hubs should be documented and used to refine statewide guidance.

The long-term objective is to establish the DE as a durable infrastructure capability that supports safe AAM scaling, commercial opportunity, public-sector coordination, and statewide aviation security. By integrating physical infrastructure, digital services, airspace awareness, and secure data governance, Ohio can create a practical foundation for routine BVLOS operations and advanced aviation growth across the state.

Vertiport Strategy: Phased Use of Physical Infrastructure

Ohio’s AAM infrastructure strategy will approach vertiports as one component of a broader statewide aviation ecosystem rather than as the starting point for speculative public construction. In the near term, AAM implementation will be able to deploy faster by prioritizing the use of existing aviation infrastructure, including airports, heliports, hospital helipads, public-use aviation facilities, and other sites that already have some combination of aviation access, emergency response familiarity, land-use compatibility, and established operating procedures.

The state’s approach will be phased. Efforts will focus on identifying and validating existing helipads, airports, and aviation-capable sites that could support early AAM operations with limited modification. Ohio will evaluate where select existing facilities may require targeted upgrades, such as electrical capacity, communications connectivity, surface improvements, safety-area enhancements, approach/departure analysis, or integration with digital infrastructure. New, purpose-built vertiports should only be considered where market demand, operator commitments, community acceptance, land-use compatibility, and safety analysis justify additional investment.

Under this approach, Ohio’s role is to create the planning, policy, data, and infrastructure conditions that allow the market to mature responsibly. This allows private operators, local sponsors, airports, health systems, logistics providers, and regional economic-development partners to determine where new AAM landing infrastructure is commercially and operationally justified. This approach helps avoid premature capital investment in facilities that may not align with actual aircraft capabilities, operator business models, public acceptance, or near-term market adoption.

Existing State Infrastructure: MARCS, Tower Networks, and Digital Connectivity

A core principle of Ohio’s AAM and UAS infrastructure strategy is to leverage existing state assets wherever practical before creating new infrastructure. The first step and part of the DE implementation effort will be to inventory and evaluate existing state-owned, state-leased, state-supported, and partner-operated infrastructure assets that may be capable of supporting AAM and UAS operations. This evaluation will include communications towers, microwave backhaul, fiber connectivity, public-safety communications assets, transportation facilities, airports, heliports, rights-of-way, emergency-management facilities, and other physical or digital infrastructure that may help accelerate deployment while reducing duplication of investment.

One area for evaluation is whether existing tower networks, including the **Multi-Agency Radio Communication System**⁴² (MARCS) sites where appropriate, could support the placement of aviation-related sensors, receivers, edge-processing equipment, microwave transceivers, or other communications equipment needed to transmit and receive data associated with low-altitude airspace operations. MARCS is Ohio’s wireless, digital communications network for first responders and public safety agencies and is one of Ohio’s most significant existing statewide assets. The system operates through a statewide platform using 700/800 MHz digital trunked radio technology and is supported by fiber

⁴² <https://das.ohio.gov/technology-and-strategy/marcs>

optic and microwave connectivity. With more than 360 towers, it provides statewide interoperable communications for state, local, and federal public-safety users and supports mobile voice, mobile data, and computer-aided dispatch functions.

Potential functions for existing state infrastructure could include support for cooperative surveillance, remote identification data collection, weather sensing, spectrum monitoring, command-and-control redundancy, airspace characterization, or other approved digital services. Any such use would be evaluated through the appropriate state governance process to ensure that public safety communications remains the primary mission and is not degraded or placed at risk.

This approach positions Ohio to build AAM infrastructure by extending, integrating, and reusing existing public investments rather than starting from a blank slate. By first understanding what assets already exist, where they are located, what technical capacity they have, and what governance limitations apply, Ohio can make more informed decisions about where new infrastructure is truly required and where existing systems can be leveraged to support safe, secure, and scalable AAM and UAS operations.