



Aviation Based Economic Development



The global economy is linked by international airports that allow jet setting business travelers and high value air cargo to quickly move around the world. This has led to the rise of the concept of the *aerotropolis*, which is a combination of an international airport, a city built around the airport, air cargo facilities, and business hub. (For further information on the concept see: Kasarda, John D., and Greg Lindsay. 2011.

Aerotropolis: the way we'll live next. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux). Examples in the U.S. include Memphis, Miami, and Dallas-Fort Worth. In addition to the air cargo industry, these cities are able to attract corporate headquarters,

companies that need to quickly ship high value items around the world, and high tech companies. High-tech professionals travel by air at least 60 percent more frequently than other professionals, giving rise to the term “nerd birds” for commercial aircraft connecting “techie” capitals such as Austin, Boston, Raleigh-Durham, and San Jose. The current examples of aerotropolises are large cities, but now smaller tier cities are exploring aviation-based economic development. With the \$51 million expansion at the Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport, including a new 40,000 square foot air cargo facility which allows the import, export and storage of dry and perishable goods, the Mississippi Gulf Coast has the potential to develop a micro aerotropolis around the cool chain connecting the U.S. with Central and South America. According to Kasarda and Lindsay (2011), the development of an aerotropolis requires an assessment of aviation-linked business and industry clusters, demonstrated commitment to the vision as seen in the establishment of steering committees, strategic planning, and development initiatives, and government/regulatory support through legislation, tax incentives or other mechanisms.

Image Credit: Kasarda, John D., and Greg Lindsay. 2011. *Aerotropolis: the way we'll live next*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.