



Economic Impact Study
Ravalli County Airport
2026



MONTANA
Department of Transportation

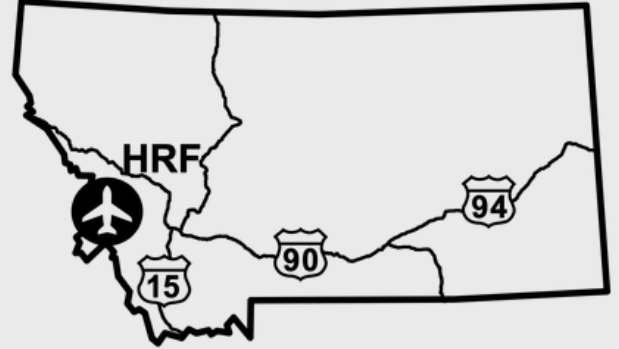


ZENITH
ECONOMICS

Ravalli County Airport Impact

Ravalli County Airport is a public-use general aviation airport located in Hamilton, in Ravalli County in the Bitterroot Valley. Built in 1934 and one of Montana's busiest general aviation facilities, the airfield features a 5,200-foot paved runway and supports approximately 25,900 annual operations. Airport activities include recreational flying, corporate and business aviation, flight training, public charters, aerial surveying, and search and rescue, and the airport serves as a US Forest Service hub for aerial firefighting in the Bitterroot National Forest.

To support airport operations and catalyze surrounding investment, Ravalli County extended a \$4.8 million sewer main from Old Corvallis Road to the airport, bringing municipal wastewater service to the facility for the first time. The new capacity also serves a planned housing development and a 44-acre site where Tonix Pharmaceuticals plans to break ground in 2026 on a \$25 million manufacturing facility expected to employ approximately 120 people.



Total Economic Impact on Montana



Jobs
36



Economic Impact
\$5.5 Million



Payroll
\$1.9 Million

Qualitative Impacts

In addition to generating substantial economic impacts, this airport supports a variety of harder to quantify “Qualitative Impacts” that support critical statewide safety and enterprise. The 2026 Montana Statewide Economic Impact of Airports Study documents the following non-inclusive list of qualitative impacts associated with the airport:



Aerial Firefighting
Supports Wildland Firefighting Operations



Flight Training & Education
Provides Pilot Training and Aviation Education



Emergency Medical Aviation
Supports Air Ambulance Operations



Recreational Flying
Supports recreational flying and access



VIP/Visitor Gateway
Serves as Gateway for High-Profile Visitors and Tourism



Search & Rescue
Supports Search and Rescue Operations

Source: Montana Statewide Economic Impact of Airports.

Montana Airports Support Our State



Jobs
39,400



Economic Impact
\$6.4 Billion



Payroll
\$2.4 Billion

Montana's airport system functions as a critical component of the state's transportation and economic infrastructure, enabling connectivity across a large and geographically dispersed landscape. Through scheduled commercial service and general aviation activity, airports provide access between Montana communities and regional, national, and international markets, supporting passenger travel, freight movement, and time-sensitive operations that cannot be efficiently served by surface transportation alone.

Beyond mobility, Montana's airports support a broad range of economic activity that contributes to employment, income generation, and business operations throughout the state. Aviation-related enterprises, on-airport and nearby businesses, visitor spending associated with air travel, and ongoing investment in airport facilities collectively generate economic activity at the local, regional, and statewide levels. These effects extend across multiple sectors, including tourism, healthcare, construction, professional services, and natural resource industries.

To document both the economic contributions and broader community functions of the state's aviation system, the Montana Department of Transportation undertook a comprehensive, statewide evaluation of Montana's airports. The **2026 Montana Statewide Economic Impact of Aviation** study examines the full scope of airport-related activity, including aviation and non-aviation businesses, visitor spending, capital investment, and secondary economic effects, while also identifying the specific roles individual airports play in supporting residents, businesses, and critical services across Montana.

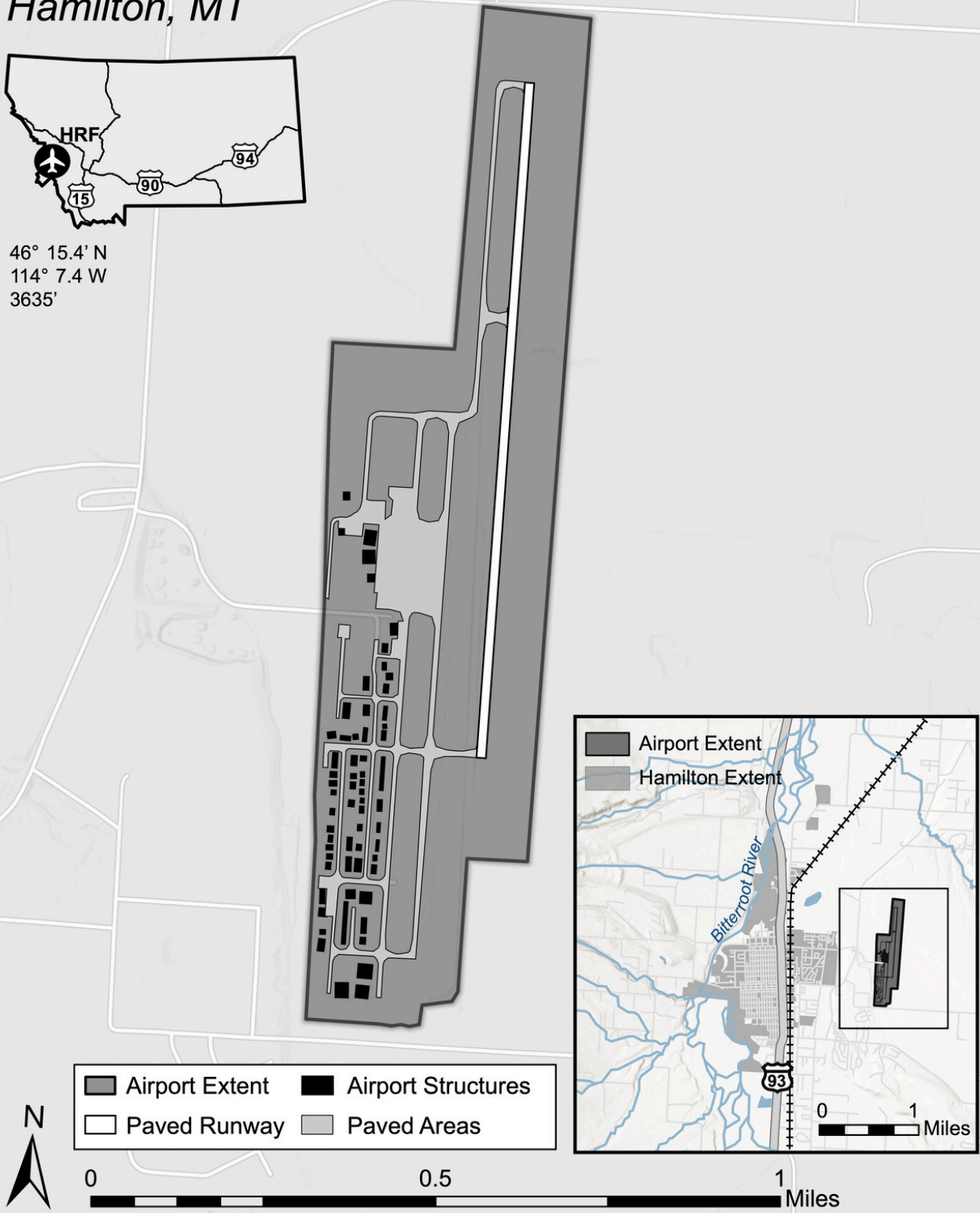


Ravalli County Airport (HRF)

Hamilton, MT



46° 15.4' N
114° 7.4' W
3635'



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