



FARGO HECTOR
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT



THE CHAMBER
FARGO MOORHEAD WEST FARGO

Grounded in Data, Ready for Takeoff

A Roundtable Briefing for Business and Airport Leaders



Agenda

- Welcome from Shannon Full
- Overview of Business Travel Survey
- Airport Updates
 - Shawn Dobberstein, Executive Director, Hector International Airport
 - Michael Lum, Managing Partner, Volaire Aviation Consulting
 - Brandon Halverson, Architect, Mead & Hunt
- Q & A
 - Moderated by Shannon Full



Business Travel Roundtable



Purpose:

- Understand preferences, challenges and opportunities for our regional airport

Goals:

- Share insights from the business community on air travel
- Update on the Fargo Hector International Airport renovation and expansion
- Increase awareness of air service trends
- Identify barriers and growth opportunities

Business Travel Survey

Audience:

- FMWF Chamber members and non-members
- Business travelers

Conducted:

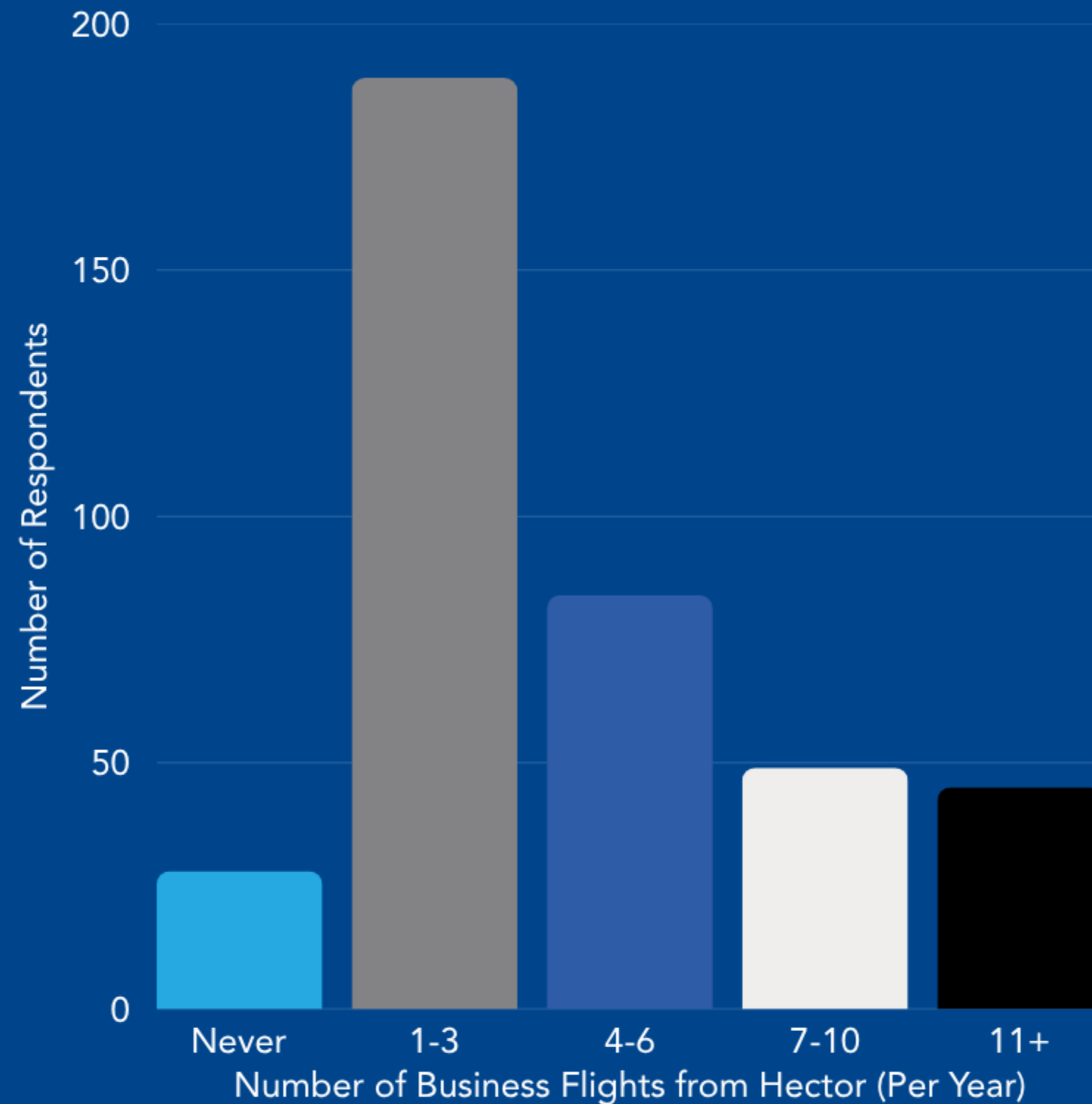
- June 2025 - Distributed to over 6000 people
- 395 respondents
- Respondents – business executives and owners, travel managers

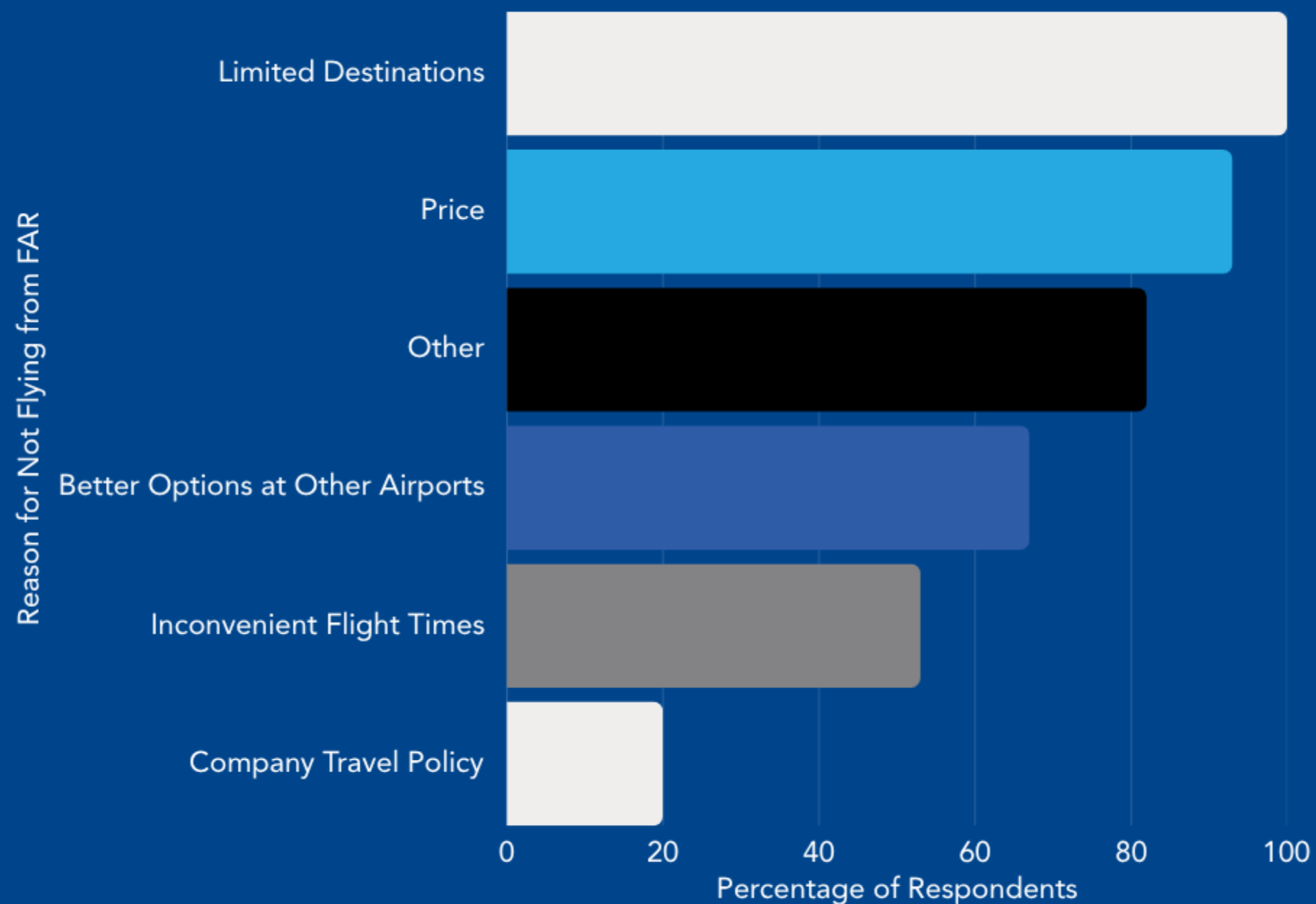


Business Travel Usage at Hector International Airport

Insight:

More than 80% of respondents take at least one business flight per year from Hector International Airport. Almost 50% fly four or more times annually.





Why Businesses Aren't Choosing FAR

- Limited destinations, especially non-stop options
- Non-competitive flight costs
- Competition – other airport options and offerings
- Limited flexibility with schedule

A significant number also cited “other” reasons, including:

- Local or car-based travel
- Job roles don't require travel
- Work/residence outside Fargo
- Private aviation use
- Travel is infrequent or unnecessary

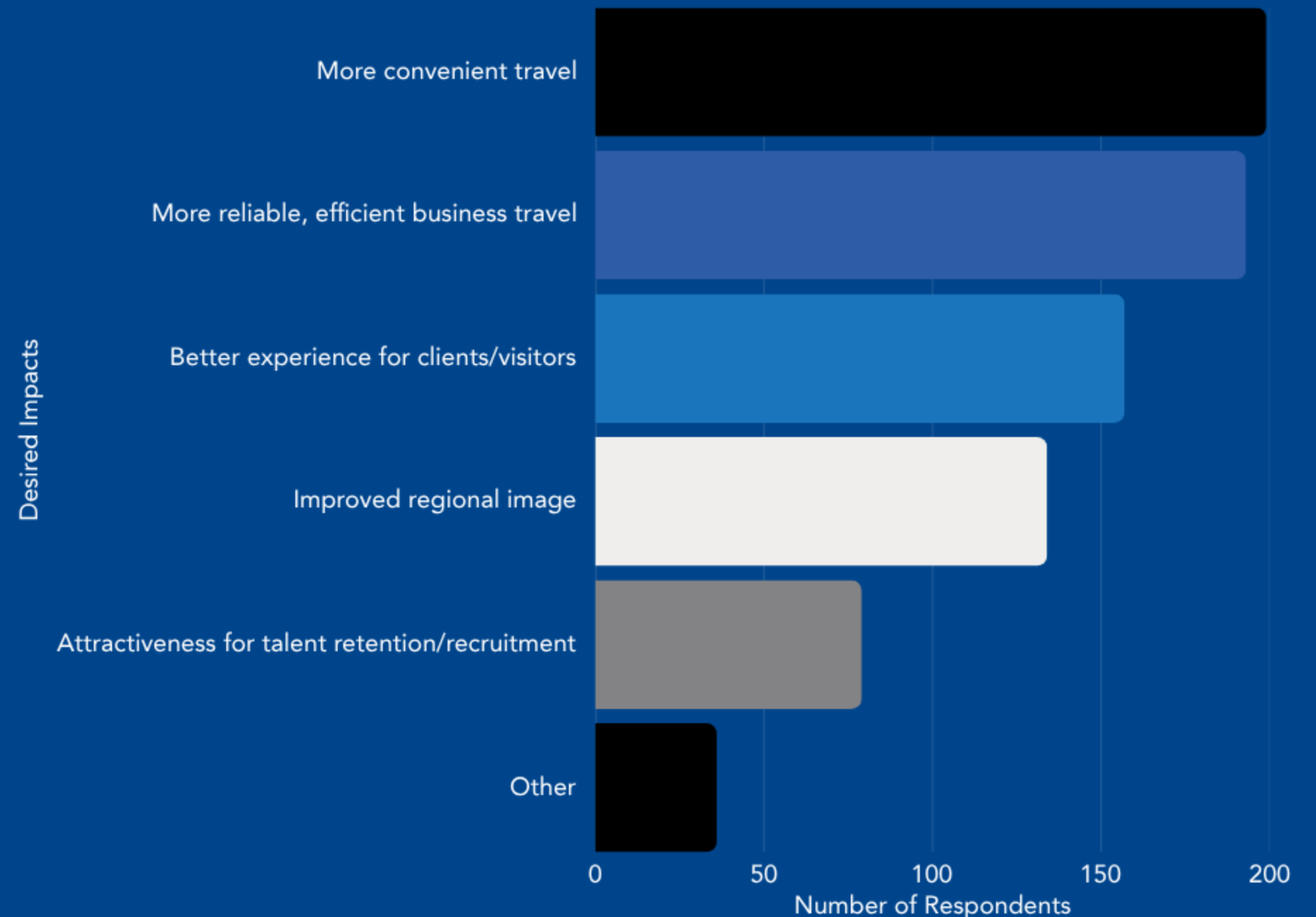
Business Hopes for FAR Expansion

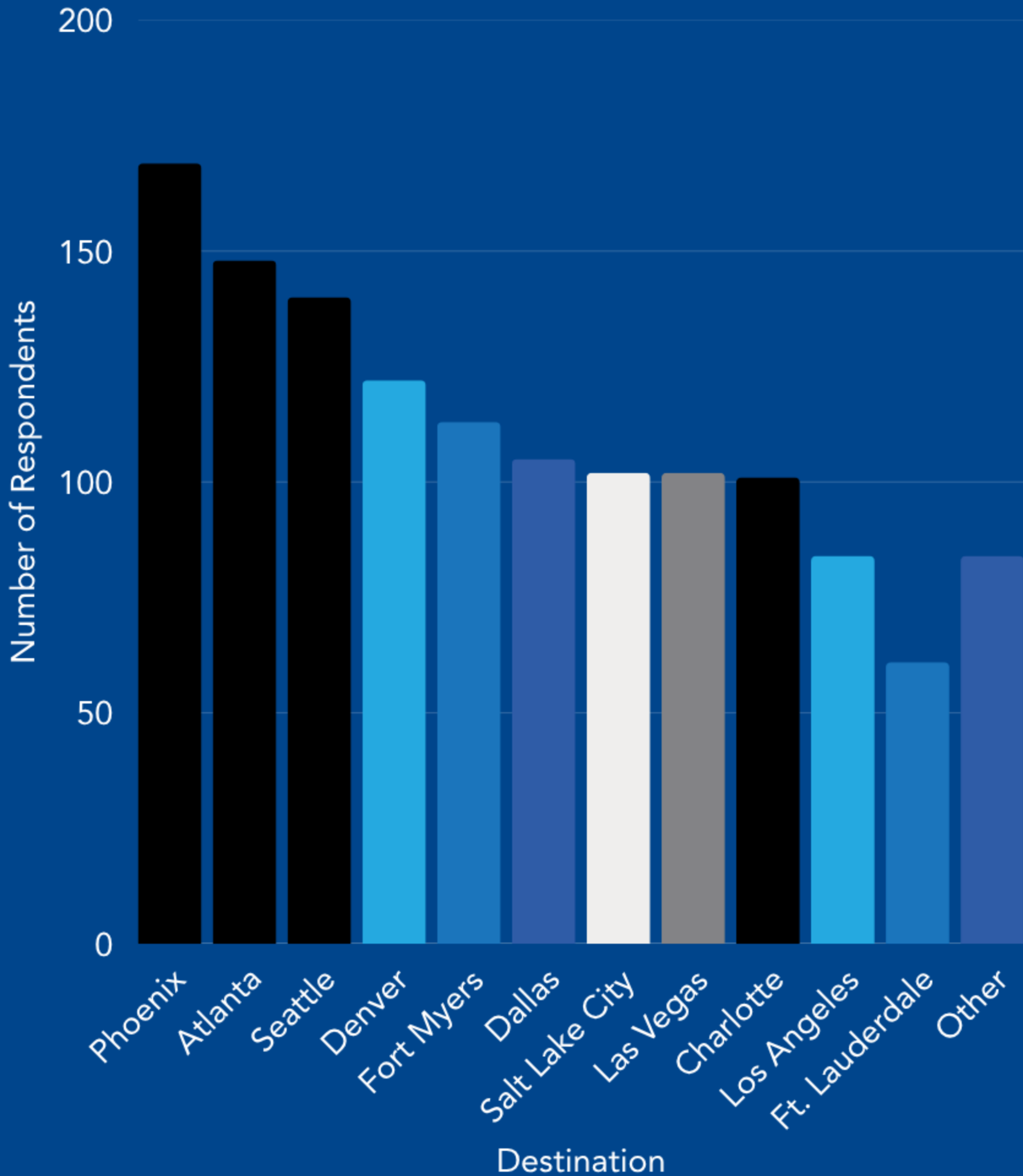
Insight:

Businesses see airport improvements as a way to enhance business travel, improve trip efficiency and elevate the client experience. An enhanced regional brand and talent attraction are also key opportunities.

Other Needs Cited in the Survey:

- Strong demand for more direct flights, routes, and carriers
- Comparative costs and less competition with MSP
- Access to better food options
- More efficient baggage handling
- Business-friendly amenities including business meeting space
- Improved parking and comfortable seating





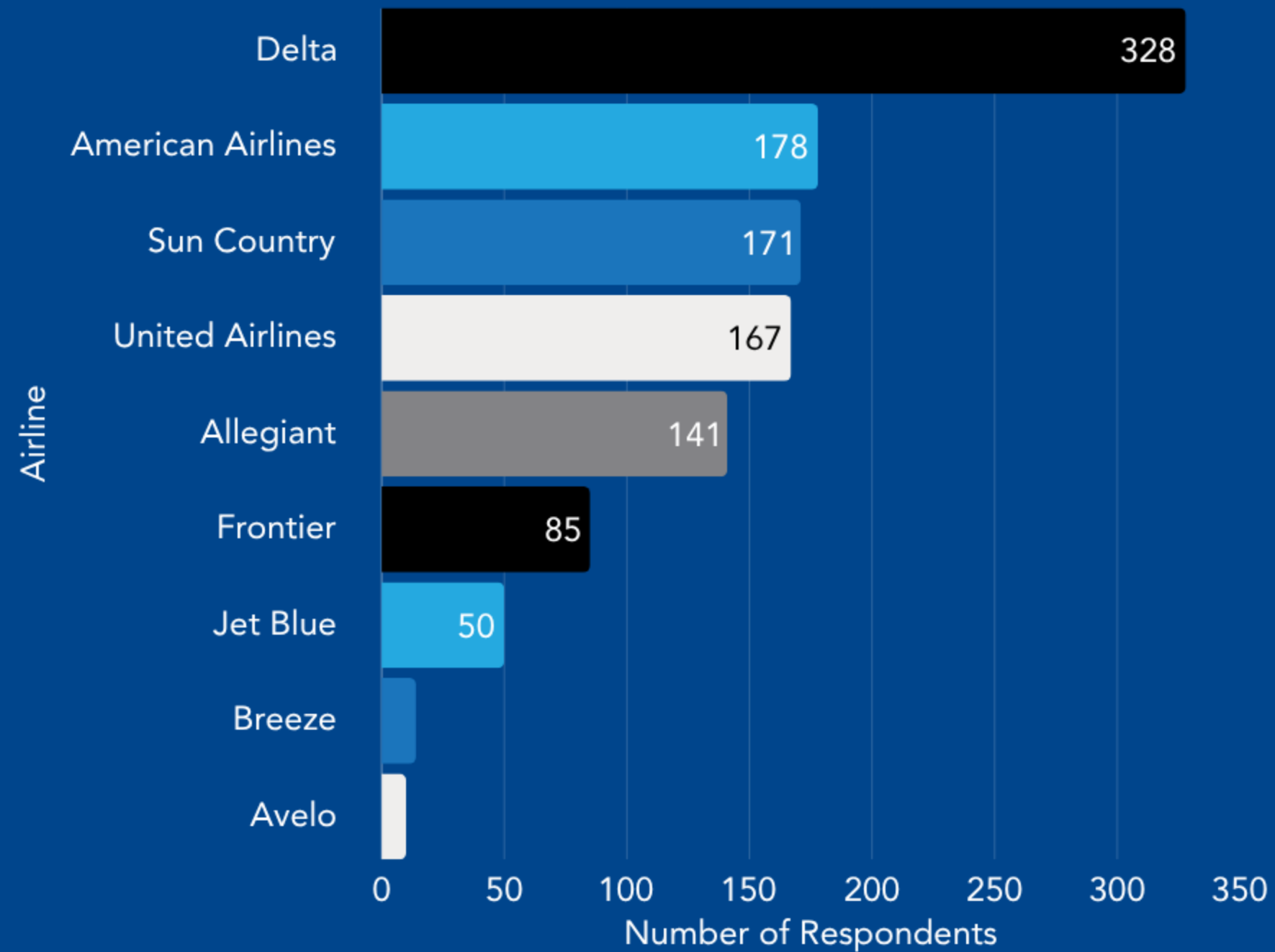
Most Requested Nonstop Destinations

Insight:

Respondents are asking for direct flights to major business hubs, large coastal cities and key leisure destinations, highlighting both professional and personal travel needs.

Popular 'Other' Destinations:

- East Coast: New York City, Boston, Washington D.C., Philadelphia
- Midwest Hubs: Chicago, Omaha, Kansas City, St. Louis, Indianapolis
- Southeast/South: Nashville, Orlando, Tampa, Austin, Fort Wayne
- West/Southwest: San Diego, San Francisco, Portland, Boise, Reno
- Leisure: Cancun, Maui, Key West, Panama City Beach



Most Requested Airlines for Expanded Service

Insight:

Travelers are most interested in expanded service from major carriers—Delta, American, and United.

There's also meaningful interest in low-cost options like Sun Country, Allegiant and Frontier, with niche interest in emerging airlines like Breeze and Avelo.

How Do Travelers Rate Current Airport Amenities at Hector International?

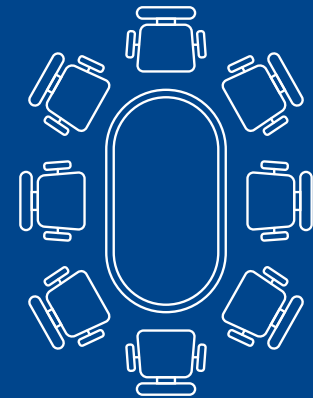
Wi-Fi Reliability



Received the highest satisfaction rating.

66% rated it "Good" or better.

Meeting Space



Earned the lowest ratings.

57% rated them "Poor" or "Fair."

Security Screening



Well received, earning positive ratings.

73% rating it "Good" or better.

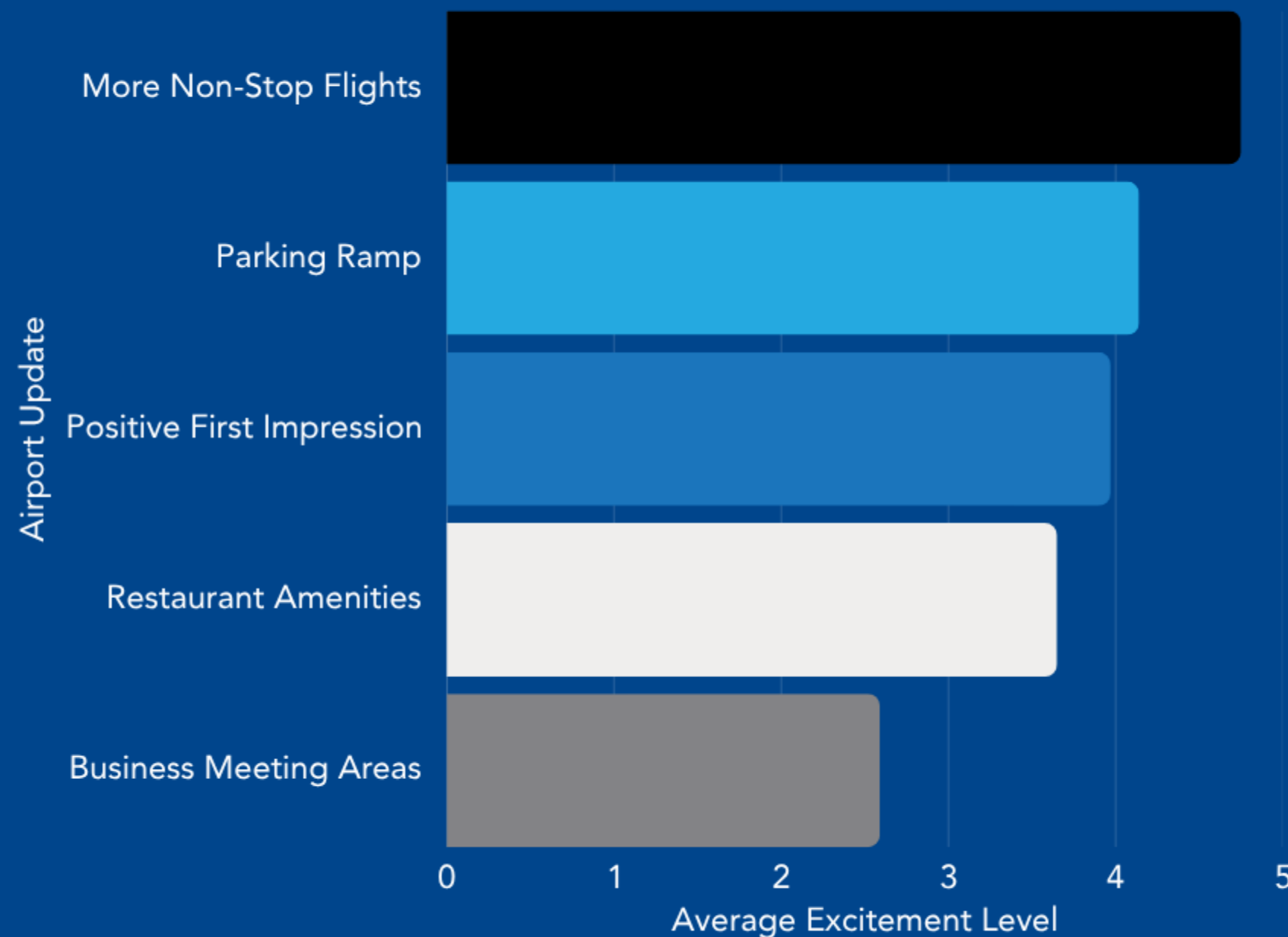
Charging Stations



Showed room for improvement

47% rating them "Fair" or "Poor."

What Travelers Look Forward to with Hector International Airport's Expansion



Non-Stop Flights

Rated 4.75, showing high enthusiasm for more non-stop options.

Parking Ramp

Convenience rated at 4.14, indicating significant interest.

First Impressions

Welcoming airport experience that "tell the story" of our region rated 3.97, highlighting traveler priorities.

Dining Options

Moderate excitement at 3.65, indicating potential for improvement.

Business Areas

Lowest interest at 2.59, suggesting less perceived need for enhancements.

Reflecting a Regional Brand

Travelers want Hector to feel like FMWF – distinctive, vibrant and local. There's strong support for making the airport a gateway that celebrates our region's identity.

Local Flavor Matters



Strong demand for local restaurants, art, products and regional food/beverage experiences (e.g., Drekker, Unglued, Dot's Pretzels).

First Impressions Count



Travelers want a modern, clean and welcoming space that tells a story, highlighting culture, creativity and community pride.

Showcase the Region's Identity



Include visuals, signage and décor that reflect the area's heritage, diversity, economy and unexpected charm (not just NDSU or farm equipment).

Connectivity and Experience



Suggestions included more direct flights, better parking and engaging digital displays that highlight things to do, companies and places to stay.

Top Requested Improvements from Business Travelers at Hector International Airport

Flight Options and Reliability



- Overwhelming demand for more direct flights—especially to major hubs (e.g., Atlanta, Salt Lake City, Charlotte)
- Requests for more flight times (morning and evening)
- Concerns about frequent delays, cancellations and limited frequency of flights

Baggage and Ground Services



- Strong frustration with slow baggage claim, especially at night
- Calls for better staffing for check-in and ramp operations
- Requests for faster deplaning and more efficient ground crew

Parking and Access



- Excitement about the new parking ramp, but calls for:
 - Reservations
 - Shuttles in winter
 - Improved signage
 - Better QR code functionality
 - Requests for shorter walking distances

Food, Beverage and Seating



- Need for better food options, especially post-security
- High demand for sit-down restaurants, coffee shops and quieter bar/lounge areas
- More comfortable seating, workstations, and charging ports

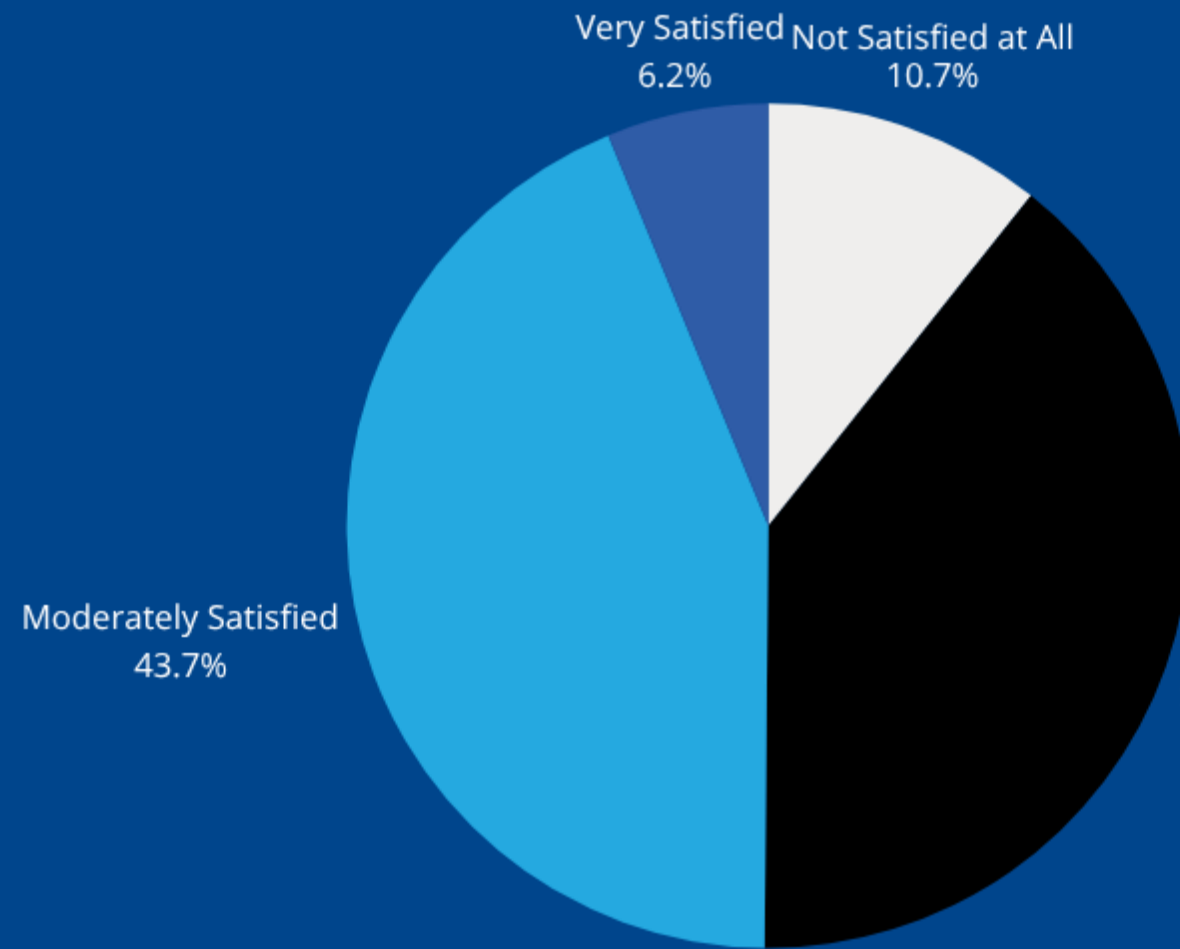
Security and Amenities



- CLEAR lines
- Dedicated TSA PreCheck lanes
- Improved restrooms
- Private business lounges, nursing rooms, and quiet pods

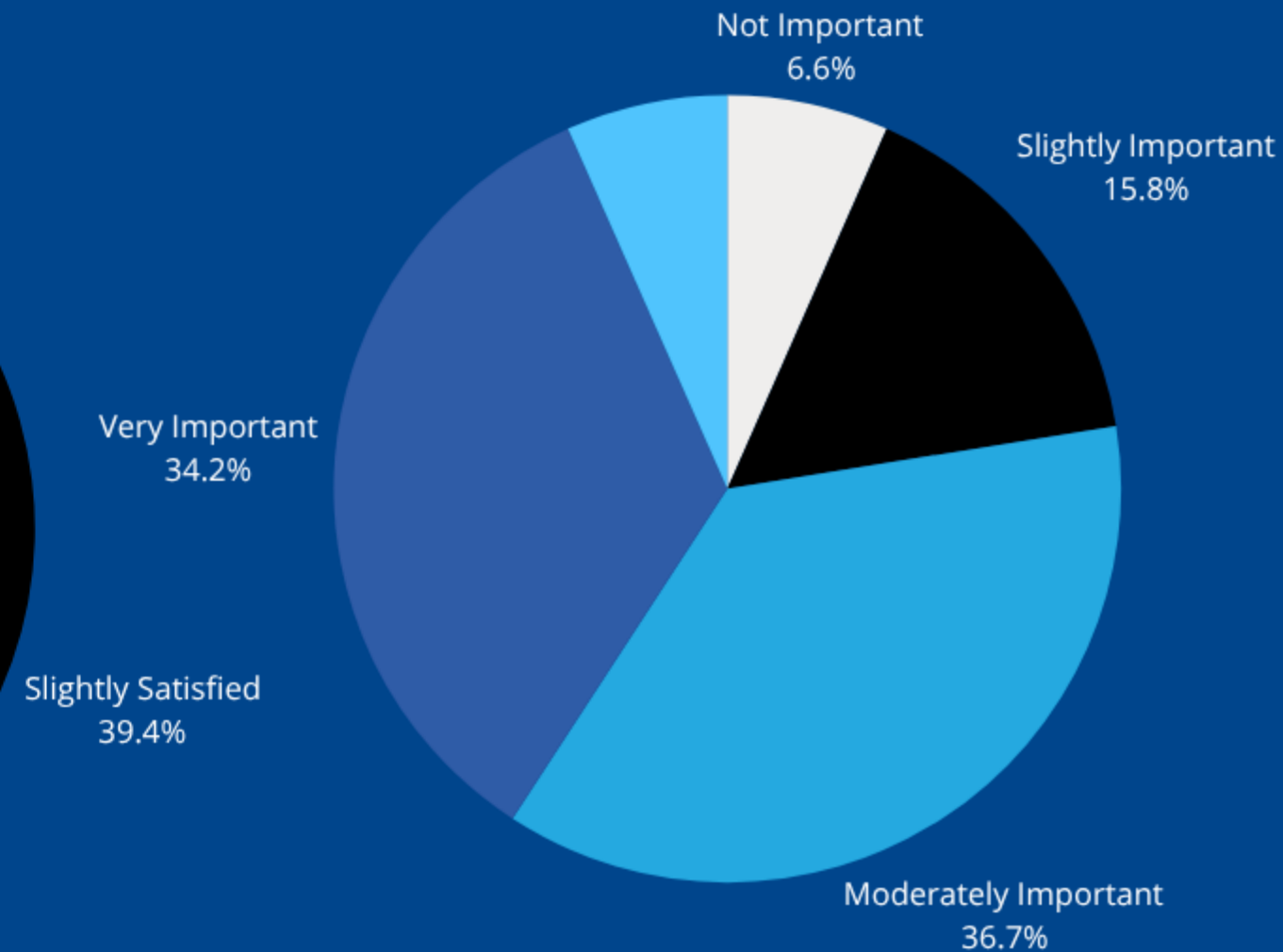
Dining at FAR

Food Satisfaction



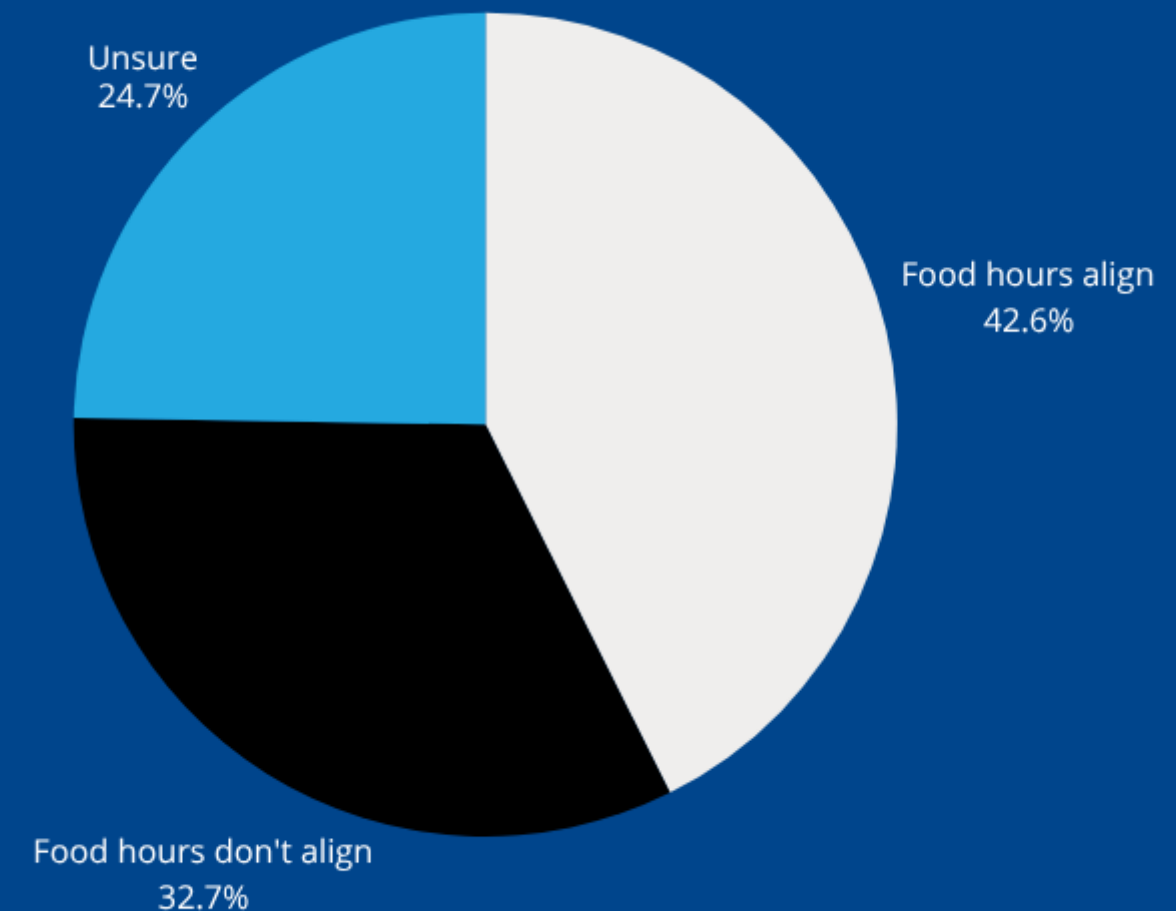
Improved food options can help elevate the airport's overall impression and reflect regional flavor.

Grab-and-Go Options



Convenience matters—travelers want quick, accessible grab-and-go choices.

Service Hours Align with Travel



Most travelers are satisfied with food hours, and better communication or expanded service could reach even more.

What Travelers Want Most from Airport Dining

More Options



- Strong demand for more restaurants, including sit-down, fast food and local fare.
- Popular mentions: McDonald's, Chick-fil-A, Jimmy John's, Starbucks, Thunder Coffee, pizza, sandwiches, sushi.
- Several requests for international and culturally diverse offerings.

Better Coffee Access



- Consistent requests for higher-quality coffee (Caribou, Starbucks, Thunder, Dunn Brothers).
- Earlier hours and quicker service.
- Many want coffee after security and more than one location open in the morning.

More Availability



- Frequent mentions of limited hours, especially early morning and late flights.
- Call for food and beverage options to be open before the first flight and after the last.

Healthier Options



- Requests for healthier food (salads, smoothies, protein snacks, vegetarian/vegan/gluten-free).
- Interest in grab-and-go that includes fresh, not just pre-packaged, items.

Post-Security Dining Options



- Overwhelming call for more food past the security check point.
- Many travelers want the ability to eat or drink near gates and during delays.

Improved Bar and Lounge Experience



- Suggestions for expanded bar seating, sports bar vibes or full-service wine/beer.
- Interest in dedicated bar staff and more seating for casual meals or drinks.



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Airport Update

Shawn Dobberstein

- Executive Director, Hector International Airport

Michael Lum

- Managing Partner, Volaire Aviation Consulting

Brandon Halverson

- Architect, Mead & Hunt (Project Manager for current Airport projects)





Thank you!

We appreciate your commitment to our region's growth. Thank you for helping us make local travel work better for business.
