

A Statement from the Expert Panel:

In November 2021, at the request of New York Governor Kathy Hochul, the Port Authority formed an independent panel of transportation experts and asked us to oversee, guide, and review a study of mass transit options to enhance access to LaGuardia Airport. Over the last year, we have had regular meetings with representatives from the Port Authority, Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), and the consultant team, to refine the evaluation factors, discuss the options, and assess the outputs of the study.

Throughout this process, we have appreciated the depth, rigor, and quality of the analysis performed by the study team, which included the outside expert consultants: Bechtel, WSP, Nelson\Nygaard, Foursquare ITP, and Ramboll. We have been impressed by the due diligence performed to find and present the facts of both the benefits and challenges presented by each alignment and travel option. To supplement the technical analysis, we also reviewed feedback that the Port Authority solicited from elected officials, community stakeholders, and the public at-large.

We are unanimous in our opinion that a one-seat ride via subway from the west is the optimal way to achieve the best mass transportation connection to LaGuardia Airport. In our professional experience, a one-seat ride has been the most successful in encouraging a shift to public transit from other transportation modes. Through the study process, however, it has become clear that there are serious funding and constructability challenges for alignments that run past the southern end of Runway 04-22. The expert study team has been unable to determine the viability of underground tunneling solutions in this area that are compliant with FAA regulations. Additional field surveys and geotechnical studies would be needed to determine whether building a subway south of the runway is feasible, and at what cost (preliminary estimates indicate approximately 12-13 years to completion at an estimated cost of \$5-\$7 billion).

While the cost and constructability issues for the subway option may be prohibitive, there are near-term options (within 2-5 years) that could provide significant benefits to a large number of airport passengers. We recommend that the Port Authority, in partnership with the MTA, advance improvements to bus access as follows:

Q70 LaGuardia Link Improvements

Q70 improvements studied by the panel are projected to provide immediate benefits to approximately 3.5 million passengers per year. We recommend that the following improvements to this route (Option B-1C) be initiated:

- Transit signal priority on Roosevelt Ave and Broadway to minimize travel time
- A mile-long exclusive bus lane built on the shoulder of the northbound Brooklyn-Queens Expressway between Northern Blvd and Astoria Blvd to increase service reliability between Jackson Heights and LaGuardia Airport
- Frequency improvements, as needed, in response to increased demand
- A new specially-designated bus pick-up and drop-off area near Terminal C with direct, exclusive road access to avoid congestion on the airport frontage
- Wayfinding and lighting improvements at Jackson Heights-Roosevelt Av / 74 St (7, E, F, M, R) and 61 St-Woodside Stations (7, <7>, LIRR)
- Enhanced branding and signage to promote the improved service

As presented to us on pages ES-16 to ES-19 of the study team's Executive Summary (Report Section 6.1), this package of improvements to the already successful Q70 service would, on a cost efficient

basis, deliver shorter travel time to and from the Jackson Heights subway station while minimizing community impacts.

New Astoria-Ditmars Blvd Non-Stop Bus Service

We recommend that a non-stop bus service (Option BRT-2), as described to us on pages ES-10 to ES-15 of the study team's Executive Summary (Report Section 7.2), be developed with a connection from all three airport terminals to the N/W line at Astoria-Ditmars Blvd Station, benefitting approximately 3 million passengers per year. Improvements would feature:

- Service to run non-stop "express" directly between Astoria-Ditmars Blvd subway station and the airport serving all three terminals at LaGuardia
- Exclusive use of fully electric buses to eliminate noise and emissions
- Dedicated bus lanes (potentially limited to peak times) on 31st St and 19th Ave with transit signal priority, to minimize travel time
- Improved facilities at Astoria-Ditmars Station, including new elevators and escalators, providing ADA accessibility
- End of the N/W line station will assure ease of use by airport travelers

In closing, we would like to commend the Port Authority and study team for carrying out the in-depth and careful analysis that informed these recommendations.

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