

Media Summary Better Airports Alliance

[UNTANGLING AIRSPACE: Tech, Design Changes Aim To Improve Boro's Overcrowded ...](#)

Queens Tribune - [Domenick Rafter](#) - (Jun 17, 2010)

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[Group forms to find airport congestion solutions](#)

Crain's New York Business - [Hilary Potkewitz](#) - (Jun 24, 2010)

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[New York-Area Congestion Gets Fresh Look from Local Group](#)

Aviation Daily - James Ott - (Jun 30, 2010)

A group has formed to take another stab at relieving congestion and delays at New York-area airports.

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[Coalition Forms To Push for New York-area Airport Improvements](#)

Aviation International News- Jeff Burger - (Jul 5, 2010)

More than two dozen business, civic, labor and environmental organizations have formed a coalition aimed at restoring, maintaining and expanding the New York metropolitan region's airports. Called the **Better Airports Alliance**, the group seeks to "educate residents on the problem of airport delays, provide fresh solutions to relieve congestion and build a consensus for major improvements.



UNTRANGLING AIRSPACE: Tech, Design Changes Aim To Improve Boro's Overcrowded Air Transit Hubs

By Domenick Rafter

The aviation industry is the second largest in the borough of Queens, according to the NYC Economic Development Corporation. The city's airspace sits in the epicenter of one of the busiest travel hubs in the world. At any given time, around 20 percent of the world's air traffic is traveling in the skies within 500 miles of New York City.

Nevertheless, the city's airports, two of which call Queens home, are embarrassingly and dangerously obsolete, and in dire need of renovation, expansion and, in some cases, a complete overhaul.

"It's almost embarrassing when people come into New York and say the airport in, say, Mexico City, is better than the airport in New York," said Kathryn Wylde, President and CEO of the Partnership for New York City.

But the problems with our airports are not only rooted in the aesthetics of outdated structures, but also in the way traffic into and out of the nation's busiest airspace is controlled.

"Until we can better manage our airspace, all these innovative ideas are trapped on the ground," said Christopher Ward, Executive Director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

On Monday, June 14, officials and policy makers met for a conference in Rockefeller Center aimed at improving New York City's airport and airspace. The day, sponsored by Baruch College, was rife with plans and ideas to move air travel into the 21st Century.

Tracking NextGen

NextGen, short for Next Generation Air Transportation, is a series of improvements to the air travel system that the Federal Aviation Administration calls a "comprehensive overhaul" aimed at making air traffic more convenient, dependable and safe, all while reducing fuel consumption and noise pollution.

"NextGen is most the important innovation this nation can undertake for the aviation industry," Ward said at Monday's conference. Instead of relying on radar, some of which dates from the 1950s, NextGen will allow air traffic controllers to guide and control air traffic using a satellite-based system, called the Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B), which will be fully implemented by the end of the decade and has already been put in place in the airspace around Louisville, Philadelphia., Juneau and the Gulf of Mexico, the latter of which was previously unreachable by radar.

The new system will also offer more streamlined tracking and guiding from gate to gate. According to the FAA, NextGen will allow planes to fly closer together, allowing airlines to keep up with current and future demand, and reduce delays while also helping the environment by lessening the number of idling planes at airports.

The system is being implemented gradually. In 2007, the first year NextGen was funded by the federal government, only \$127.6 million was allocated, but in next year's budget, more than \$1.142 billion will support NextGen, which is a major priority for the Obama Administration. U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood called NextGen the FAA's "top priority" shortly after taking office last winter.

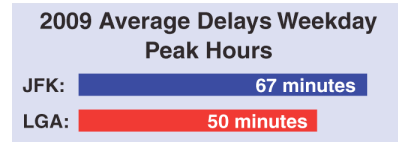
According to the FAA, by 2018, NextGen is estimated to reduce delays by 21 percent, cut carbon

emissions by 14 million tons and reduce fuel use by as many as 1.4 billion gallons.

Ward urged the FAA to begin implementation in New York.

"New York City is the bottleneck for the whole system," said Ward. "It would be smart to implement NextGen here. Let it open on Broadway."

U.S. Rep. Greg Meeks (D-Jamaica), whose district includes JFK Airport said NextGen will not only make air travel better and more efficient, but is a job creator.



"If and when NextGen is fully funded, it will not only make our skies safer, it will also create jobs," said Meeks.

Last year, Secretary LaHood urged airline executives to join the government in pushing NextGen. It appears that the major airlines are supportive. Lorne Cass, Director of Industry Affairs at Delta Air Lines, called NextGen "key to the survival" of Delta and other airlines.

Options For Travelers

Regional jet traffic is on the rise in the United States, according to Roger Cohen, President of the Regional Airline Association. In 2009, more than half of all air traffic into LaGuardia came from regional jets, as well as just under half of all traffic into Newark Liberty and one in five flights into JFK.

Regional jets have been held responsible for clogging up the airspace. One solution to this problem is improving high-speed rail between major cities in close proximity to each other.

The Obama Administration announced it would spend \$13 billion on building and improving high-speed rail between heavily traveled, short-haul routes that are currently served by regional jets. The idea is to entice those who normally travel short routes by air to take the train instead, freeing up airspace.

But this alone doesn't solve the problem. Air travel will still be the mode of transportation of choice for most in the 21st Century and will be what seaports were in the 18th century, railroads in the 19th and interstate highways in the 20th.

Ground Improvements

"The best JetBlue experience can be completely ruined by the Van Wyck Expressway," said Robert Maruster, COO of JetBlue.

New York may be known and respected worldwide for its state of the art mass transit system, but that system is designed to move people into and out of Manhattan. The city's airports are not easily connected to the system and traffic to and from the airports, especially JFK, is a notorious problem.

Pointing out the elaborate ferry and train system designed to move people into and out of Hong Kong International Airport, Robert Davidson, Senior Vice President, Aviation and Transportation Facility Development at STV, an aviation infrastructure design firm, said New York needs to find better ways to get people directly to the airport.

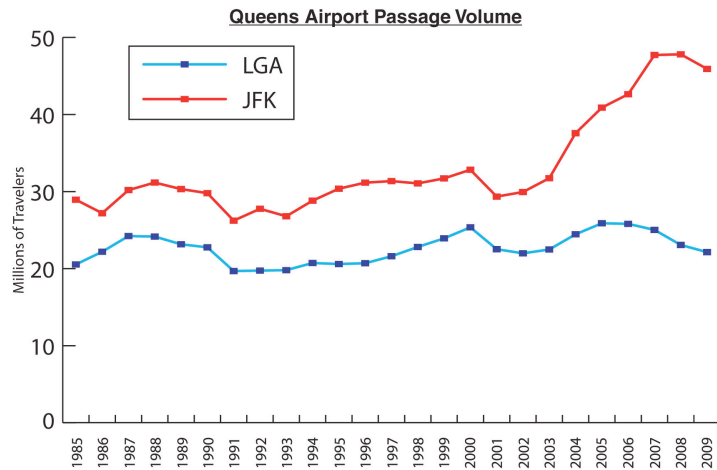
The AirTrain has been a good step, and enormously successful, with ridership numbers way above expectations.

"There was a lot of initial opposition to [AirTrain]," said Rep. Meeks, pointing out that the opposition has disappeared once people saw how little of a negative impact it had on the community, and its positive ramifications.

"Every person on the AirTrain means less cars on the Van Wyck," he said, "And that means less pollution in South Jamaica."

But AirTrain is still not as convenient as transportation systems connecting airports elsewhere in the country and the globe. Ward said a "one-seat ride" from Manhattan to the city's airports is preferable,

and the AirTrain was designed not to preclude that possibility in the future.



The reconstruction of the “bay runway” at JFK, which will be completed at the end of the month “on time and on budget,” according to Susan Baer, the Port Authority’s Director of Aviation, was also aimed at improving the long takeoff queues that have plagued JFK. The new runway, along with NextGen, will allow more takeoffs and landings per hour. Ward said getting funding and building such a runway would have been “impossible” a decade ago.

Terminal reconstruction and redesign is also being considered. The use of terminal space now is different than it was decades ago because modern technology and terrorism has rendered

the need for ticketing halls obsolete.

“Big lobbies just to get a document or get rid of a bag are a little absurd,” said JetBlue’s Maruster, who noted his company’s new terminal has a very small ticketing hall, but a large area beyond security for passengers.

Out of date and archaic terminals create crowds at security lines. American and JetBlue have undergone extensive renovations of their terminals at JFK, and Continental did the same at its Newark hub. Delta plans later this summer to announce a major renovation of its decades-old terminal at JFK, which once housed Pan Am.

Paying For It All

The core problem right now for improvements in the aviation industry is lack of funding. With government budgets running in the red and corporations recovering from the recession, many projects, such as the project to reconstruct the Central Terminal at LaGuardia, have been put on hold.

One option Ward supports is raising the Passenger Funding Charge from \$4.50 to \$7, also supported by Mayor Mike Bloomberg and other policy makers.

Neysa Pranger, Director of Public Affairs for the Regional Plan Association, who was heavily involved in lobbying against MTA cuts, said a grassroots movement for airports and air travel is needed to put public pressure on politicians to support funding for airport and airspace improvements.

Pranger is helping put together a group called Better Airports Alliance, aimed at lobbying for federal and state funding for airport improvements.

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Group forms to find airport congestion solutions

The Regional Plan Association has signed up more than 20 businesses, civic organizations and labor groups to aid in effort to garner federal money that would be used to ease flight delays at New York's airports.

By [Hilary Potkewitz](#)

Published: June 24, 2010 - 3:27 pm

In a last-ditch effort to win federal dollars and attention from the Federal Aviation Administration, local businesses, civic and labor groups plan to announce next week the creation of the Better Airports Alliance, a coalition dedicated to coming up with solutions to decongest New York's major airports.

The Regional Plan Association, a think tank dedicated to tri-state infrastructure improvements, has already signed up more than 20 members for the association, ranging from the Partnership for New York City to the General Contractors Association of NY to American Airlines.

Part of the urgency is that the FAA will soon select two cities for a pilot program of 21st century airport navigation systems, and so far New York's advocates say the agency does not share their enthusiasm for the Big Apple.

New York's busy airports are blamed for three-quarters of flight delays across the country, and those very delays cost the local economy an estimated \$2.6 billion in lost business per year, according to estimates from the Partnership. And air traffic through New York is increasing at a rate of 3% per year.

"They've talked about starting the pilot program in places that have less traffic and would be quote-unquote easier," said Kathy Wylde, president of the Partnership. But that would delay by years New York's turn for an upgrade.

"New York has by far the highest volume of traffic in country, the highest degree of congestion and is the biggest problem for rest of the country, so they should pilot the program here," she says.

Beyond the so-called NextGen navigation technology, the Better Airports Alliance is also angling for a series of airport improvements such as possible airport expansions, revisions to airspace management, and increased use of peripheral airports, all to bring New York's airports into the 21st century. It's hoping the federal government will fund the project, estimated at \$44 billion.

"In Washington terms these days, that's chicken feed," Ms. Wylde added.

Correction: The name of the Regional Plan Association was misstated in an earlier version of this story, originally posted June 24, 2010.

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Aviation Daily

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New York-Area Congestion Gets Fresh Look from Local Group

AIRPORTS

A group has formed to take another stab at relieving congestion and delays at New York-area airports.

The Better Airports Alliance was launched June 29 under the leadership of the Regional Plan Association for the purpose of studying the problem of delays, to find solutions and develop a consensus to support carrying out improvements. The association, an independent organization established in 1922 to improve the quality of life in the 31-county New York-New Jersey-Connecticut metropolitan area, has consulted with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey on a study of congestion and expects to complete the work by fall.

Finding solutions to congestion is a critical need and a "multi-billion-dollar drag on the U.S. economy, says Kathryn Wylde, president and CEO of Partnership for New York City. The Partnership has said congestion is caus-

ing \$2.6 billion in damage to the regional economy each year. Without remedial action, losses from congestion will escalate to \$79 billion by 2025, it added.

Passenger growth of a projected 3% a year will exacerbate a situation best described as "grim," according to officials.

The group applauded the reopening Monday of John F. Kennedy International Airport's Bay runway after a four-month closure for repairs, and it urged installation of the FAA's NextGen air traffic control technology to build capacity. Greater use of the Hudson Valley's Stewart International Airport could provide relief for the entire tri-state region, said Charlie Murphy, VP of Pattern for Progress, another member.

Some 25 organizations signed on, including the AAA, Air Carrier Association of America, the Air Transport Association, consultants Landrum & Brown, American Airlines and Continental Airlines, the Atlantic City International Airport and City College of the City University of New York.

-James Ott, jott@aviationweek.com



Coalition Forms To Push for New York-area Airport Improvements

[By: Jeff Burger](#)

July 5, 2010

Airports

More than two dozen business, civic, labor and environmental organizations have formed a coalition aimed at restoring, maintaining and expanding the New York metropolitan region's airports. Called the Better Airports Alliance, the group seeks to "educate residents on the problem of airport delays, provide fresh solutions to relieve congestion and build a consensus for major improvements.

As part of the effort, the Regional Plan Association will undertake a comprehensive study of airport congestion. It expects to release a report on its findings this fall.

Calling the current state of air travel in the region "grim," the Better Airports Alliance noted that JFK, Newark Liberty and La Guardia rank as the country's most congested airports and that three-fourths of U.S. air travel delays can be traced to problems in the New York region. Air traffic congestion costs the regional economy \$2.6 billion annually, the coalition said. According to the Better Airports Alliance, many of its members are campaigning for immediate deployment of improved navigation systems, known collectively as NextGen, in the New York region.

The Regional Plan Association study will consider other proposals, including expansion of the area's three major airports, greater use of peripheral airports, demand management actions and investment in intercity rail.