

**QCC POSITION PAPER ON THE LAGUARDIA AIRPORT
MASS TRANSIT LINK TO MANHATTAN
(May 1999)**

The Queens Civic Congress as an umbrella organization for ninety-two civic associations in Queens has called for a seamless one seat ride to both JFK and LaGuardia Airports from Manhattan. The one seat ride is not only essential for the economic health and status of both these airports as gateways to the metropolitan area, but it is essential for its economic future and quality of life for the communities surrounding the airports.

LaGuardia airport because of its proximity to Manhattan and its user friendly size is a favorite of the businessman. The traffic congestion caused by the taxi traffic for the short hop into Manhattan is a burden and environmental hazard on not only the communities surrounding the airport but in midtown Manhattan. The Borough President has said the first link to the Queens airports should be to LaGuardia.

Unfortunately, the preliminary scooping plan by the MTA lacks imagination and foresight dooming it to failure. First, the reliance on extending the existing subway or better called an EL system through already populated stable neighborhoods will meet with strong community resistance causing unnecessary delays. Second, the concept that businessmen will hop on the subway with their bags along with other riders is not an attractive solution. In addition, the subway line proposed is a slow local line.

We need to build a system that is attractive to the potential user and that will meet the least amount of resistance. There is another alternative which we demand be made part of the scooping process.

We recommend that the LIRR Port Washington branch at the Willet's Point/ Shea Stadium be utilized to connect with the airport along the Number 7 IRT yard by the Flushing River under the Roosevelt Ave. Bridge (parallel with the Van Wyck Expressway) up to Flushing Bay and either under the Bay or along the Grand Central into the Airport. Since this is a short distance, only one track will be need to be built in order to accommodate trains in both directions.

Advantages of this proposal are:

1. That this right away is along existing public land with no homes nearby to raise objections;
2. The LIRR provides a proven attractive means of transportation for the business traveler;
3. The LIRR presently connects to Penn Station, and many subway lines entering Manhattan (Number 7, the E, F, G, N); and it will ultimately connect with Grand Central Station when the 63rd Street Tunnel is finished.
4. There will be no need to develop a new untested mode of transportation.

5. The length of the connection is short and can be put in place in a short time frame (and maybe even made part of the Flushing Bay clean up project).
6. Commuter rush hours on the existing Port Washington branch would not be a problem for the head ways of the existing trains, because most airport travelers will be moving to and from the airport at different hours.

We need to examine reasonable plans to connect our airports to Manhattan without creating hardships on our communities while at the same time providing a system that people will use.

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President