

Reinvent Albany  
New York Public Interest Research Group  
Riders Alliance  
StreetsPAC  
TransitCenter  
Transportation Alternatives  
Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Hon. Kathy Hochul  
Governor of New York State  
NY State State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

March 22, 2022

**Re: Separate “shuttle” rail lines should be off the table for LaGuardia Airport transit access**

Dear Governor Hochul:

Some of our organizations wrote to you in November 2021 urging that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority act as a full partner in revising New York State’s and the Port Authority’s approach to better connecting LaGuardia Airport with public transit.

We appreciate that the MTA does appear to be participating in Port Authority deliberations on this issue. However, we remain concerned because the recent release of “14 potential mass transit options to LaGuardia Airport” included five entries that bear all of the hallmark flaws of the AirTrain project you took off the table late last year.

The strongest distinction between the options the Port Authority said it is considering is between building new, separate transit lines likely to be run by the Port Authority, and improving and/or creating airport service using New York City Transit’s (NYCT) vast bus and subway systems.

Because NYCT does not operate and has never shown an interest in light rail transit, we believe the light rail options the Port Authority has sketched are shorthand for one-off projects operated by the Port Authority or a contractor. These separate systems will require additional transit transfers, separate fares like the outrageous \$8 the Port Authority charges for the JFK AirTrain and total sacrifice of any economies of scale and common equipment that would be realized by directly connecting bus and subway systems to the airport.

<b>Options integrated with NYC Transit</b>	<b>Separate system options</b>
Bus transit improvements Q70 route	Light rail Woodside
Bus transit improvements M60 route	Light rail Willets Point (Daughter of AirTrain)
Bus rapid transit Astoria Boulevard	Light rail Jamaica
Bus rapid transit 31st St, 19th Ave Ditmars Blvd	Light rail Astoria
Bus rapid transit Northern Blvd	Light rail Jackson Heights
Subway N/W Grand Central Parkway	
Subway N/W 31st St/19th Ave	

All of these problems with non-MTA light rail lines are likely to reduce ridership, make the transit investment much less useful to neighborhoods in Queens, and increase costs.

The ferry option included in the Port Authority's list is somewhat apart from the options categorized above. It would be relatively easy and inexpensive to implement. But it would also require additional transfers to use, has a fare system separate from the MTA's and — like the city's ferry system overall — it would have low ridership and be directly accessible from a very limited set of origin points. For these reasons, we do not recommend it as a primary mode of transit to LGA.

In November we wrote to you that “An airport access project that builds on existing transit networks is most likely to provide mobility benefits across the city and region, and attract greater numbers of airport employees and passengers, with the environmental and congestion benefits of higher transit use.” We continue to believe that is the case, and accordingly urge you to prioritize LaGuardia transit connections that build on the city's bus and subway systems.

Sincerely,

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