

LaGuardia AirTrain – a great idea to spur Good Jobs – with roots in Queens Civic movement

February 21, 2017

By Corey Bearak, *The Public Ought To Know*

Queens, NY – When Governor Andrew Cuomo announced plans for the LaGuardia AirTrain earlier this month, I recalled rejected schemes to connect LaGuardia Airport via subway or rail that raised community opposition with paths running through neighborhoods.

In May 1999, the Queens Civic Congress and its then President (I was its Executive Vice President then and later its President 2008-2010) Sean Walsh **recommended** a connection from Willets Points using either Flushing Bay or the Grand Central

Parkway (the Governor’s recommendation) be part of the scoping process. I always argue that every good idea finds its time, even though this one took nearly 18 years.

A year ago, this space **discussed** an opportunity to integrate the properties east, west and south of the home field of the National League baseball powerhouse New York Mets. While

City still plans a mix of commercial development and housing at Willets Points across 126th Street from Citifield and retail off 126th Street on stadium parking space, the regular rail connection to LaGuardia will make more enticing plans to consider the overlooked amalgam of MTA facilities of substantial size and excellent location across Roosevelt Avenue from Citifield and its parking lot (covered in a June 2015 **commentary**).

The Governor’s focus on improving rail access to LaGuardia stands to unleash growth in an area with existing Rail, subway and bus transit amenities AND enticing cultural, recreational and sports facilities in Flushing Meadows Corona Park – a nice “backyard” for hotel and related development: Good-paying trade union jobs for New Yorkers to build facilities that employ union member service workers.

Devote any cash infusion from developing the MTA's Casey Stengel (NYCT Bus) Depot, and LIRR and subway facilities to fund the transit agency's capital plan.

***Corey Bearak can be reached at StrategicPublicPolicy.com. Find his ebook, *The Public Ought To Know*, at [Kindle](#), [Nook](#) and [Apple iBooks](#).**

