

## Fourth Airport

### The Problem

The Port of New York Authority wants to build a fourth major passenger airport because the volume of air traffic at Kennedy, Newark and La Guardia, even with expansion programs, will soon exceed capacity. A new jet airport will take between 8 and 12 years to go into operation from the time a site is agreed upon; the cost would be between \$500 and \$800 million.

### Proposed RPA Policy

Air traffic at a new jetport is a blighting influence on its surrounding area. No solution to the noise problem is predicted by any responsible authority in the foreseeable future. In fact, it is expected to worsen. All reasonable steps should be taken to delay the construction of a new jetport.

There are several practical ways to lessen the volume and increase the capacity of the existing airports; their implementation would postpone the need for an additional jetport for many years;

1. Increase aircraft size and passengers per aircraft
2. Increase existing airport capacity by improved traffic control techniques, runway extensions and the like.
3. Divert general aviation flights to smaller airports (general aviation accounts for about 25 percent of all aircraft movements at the three airports but only about 1 percent of the passengers).
4. Divert short-haul commercial passengers to improved public high-speed ground transportation (over 20 percent of all aircraft movements at the three airports have their origin or destination at airports in the straight line of the

Northeast Corridor between Boston and Washington; about 30 percent of all movements involve flights of less than 300 miles.)

Against the day when additional air travel cannot be accommodated except at a new facility, one or more airport sites should be reserved, remote from center of the Region or from prospective urban development (examples are Fort Dix in New Jersey and Riverhead, Long Island and the Atlantic Ocean quadrant of the Region.

Plans should be made to facilitate a ground connection with population centers. The prospect that a 50 to 100-mile trip to or from the airport may someday be slower than a 3,000-mile flight across the ocean may seem odd, but it is in fact quite reasonable, even inevitable. It may be a source of amusement, but we had better plan for it.

On the other hand, remote airport sites may be unnecessary if technological advance makes noiseless, vertical take-offs and landings possible at or near the center, in the harbor or elsewhere. In this event, the reserved airport sites could be released for another purpose.