

**® P A** Regional Plan Association

# **TAKING THE PATH TO NEWARK AIRPORT**



**DOWNTOWN  
LOWER  
MANHATTAN  
ASSOCIATION**

Created by RPA for DLMA  
November 2019





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## Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association

Founded in 1958 by David Rockefeller, the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association is a membership organization of key Downtown stakeholders committed to a vibrant business community. For over 60 years, it has served as a networking platform for senior corporate and non-profit executives, as well as a public policy forum and powerful advocate for Lower Manhattan. Regional Plan Association partnered with Lower Manhattan Downtown Alliance to develop this report.

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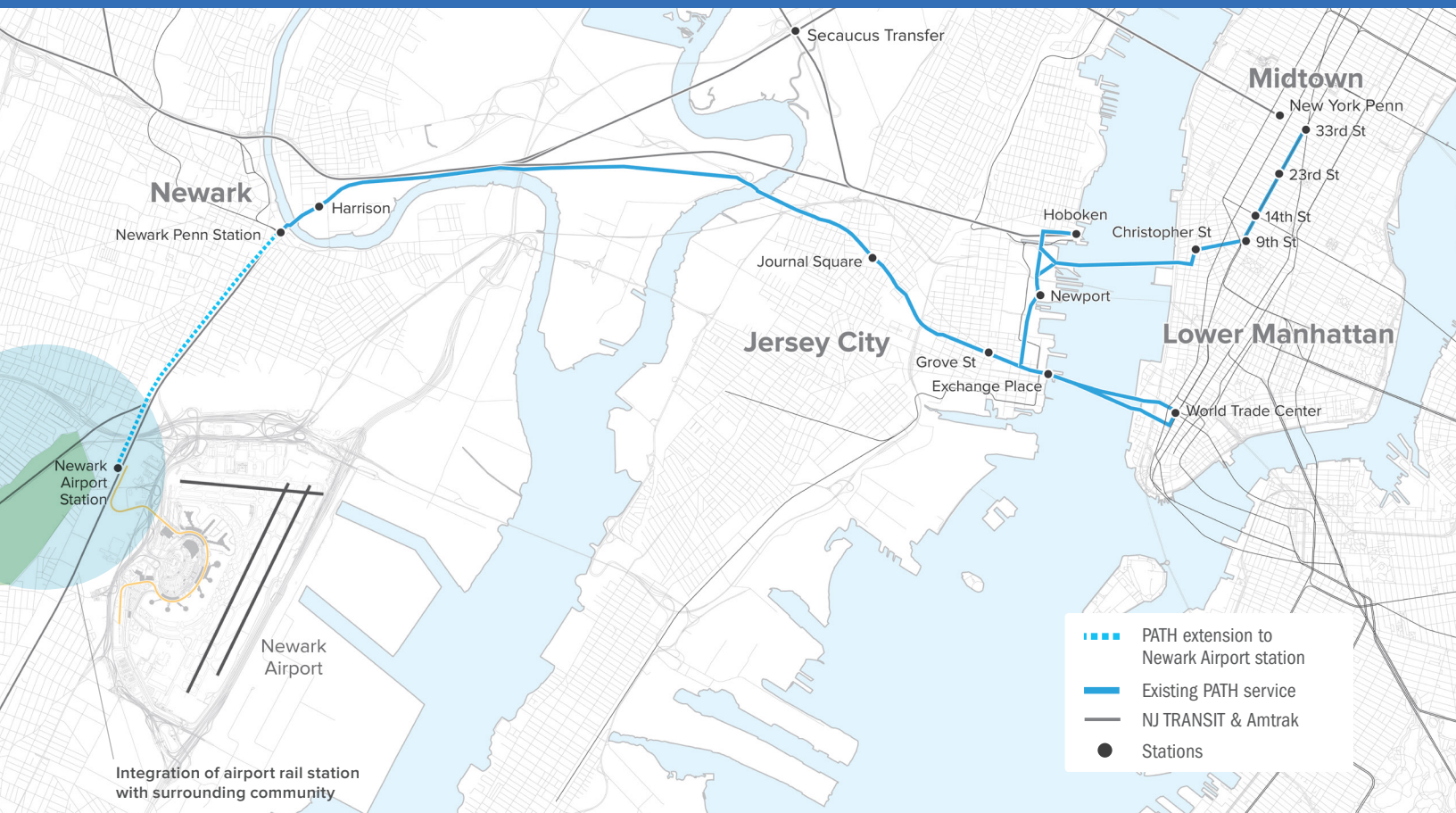
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# Extending PATH to Newark Airport



## The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has included an extension of the Trans Hudson PATH Train to Newark Airport in its capital program.

The project has the potential to not only improve access to the Airport from Lower Manhattan, Jersey City, and Hoboken, but also to greatly enhance transportation options for the neighborhoods surrounding the future station. As demand for air travel grows, the station could be a hub for future development and growth, both within Newark and at the airport.

<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	▶ Extend PATH 2.4 miles from Newark Penn Station to the Northeast Corridor Airport Station
<b>TRAVEL TIME</b>	▶ 36 minutes from World Trade Center to Newark Airport
<b>SERVICE</b>	▶ 24 trains an hour
<b>ANNUAL RIDERSHIP</b>	▶ 2.5 million, growing to 3.6 - 4.3 million over 20 years
<b>CONSTRUCTION COST</b>	▶ \$1.7 billion including extension, station expansion, and new yard costs
<b>POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES</b>	▶ Port Authority Capital Program, federal funding, airport roadway tolls, and development fees
<b>NEWARK NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT</b>	▶ Integrate airport rail station with surrounding neighborhoods to benefit community and region

Over the past decade, continued economic growth from businesses and tourism in Lower Manhattan has elevated the need for better airport access.

As part of its mission to improve the Lower Manhattan business environment, the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association (DLMA) has identified quick, reliable access to Newark Airport as a needed supplement to its current air travel options.

Furthermore, DLMA is increasingly focused on the potential of the proposed PATH extension to strengthen the national and international connectivity that Lower Manhattan depends on.

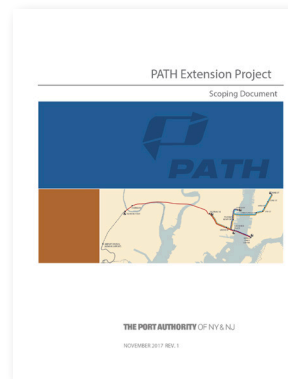
RPA has long supported the PATH extension because of the multiple benefits it could bring to the region and to communities in New Jersey that have strong potential for redevelopment, growing ridership, and the capacity to accommodate tens of thousands of new jobs and housing units. A more detailed analysis of this was presented in the original 2013 report that is referenced and linked to below.

**In 2013**, RPA published a report that forecasted demand for transit access to Newark International Airport and recommended that the PATH be extended from its current southern terminus at Newark Penn Station to a new airport rail station. Since the publication of that report, much has occurred.



**In February 2017,**

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) Board adopted a 10-year capital plan with \$1.7 billion allocated to plan, design, and construct an extension of the PATH system from Newark Penn Station to Newark Airport.



**In April 2017**, PANYNJ approved spending, planning, and contracting measures to take the PATH extension project through the preliminary design and environmental review phases, as well as to provide program and project management services that might be necessary to undertake the extension project.

**In late 2017**, PANYNJ published a draft scoping document and held public meetings. The document and public meetings detailed parameters of the planning study to be advanced, including track alignments, station locations, station designs, and storage yard locations.

**In June 2019**, PANYNJ issued the draft 2017-2026 capital plan reassessment, preserving funding for PATH planning and construction. The reassessment also advances PATH system and AirTrain projects that complement and support a PATH extension. Finally, it also proposes new tolls, fares, and fees to solidify capital plan funding overall, inclusive of extending PATH to Newark Airport.

*“Quick, reliable access to Newark Airport is a vitally important asset for businesses in Lower Manhattan to connect with their markets nationally and internationally.”*

— Jessica Lappin

President, Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association





### Key elements of The Port Authority's 2019 capital plan update include:

- ▶ A \$1.7 billion funding increase to completely rebuild the Newark AirTrain system (construction to begin in late 2020 or early 2021)
- ▶ Investments in PATH system signals, platforms, and railcars to increase passenger capacity on the Newark-WTC line by 40% by 2022
- ▶ Increases in AirTrain fares, from \$5.50 per trip to \$7.75 per trip
- ▶ New fees imposed on airport pick-ups and drop-offs made by for-hire vehicles and taxis

### Prudential Foundation-supported community planning

With support from the Prudential Foundation, a team led by the New Jersey Innovation Institute (NJII) examined the benefits that a PATH extension could offer to south Newark communities. In 2018 and 2019, the NJII-led team held community meetings with clergy and residents, taught an NJIT design studio, conducted outreach with local government and agency leaders, and published a final report. Prudential's support will continue into 2020, and will emphasize communicating community development opportunities and community engagement.

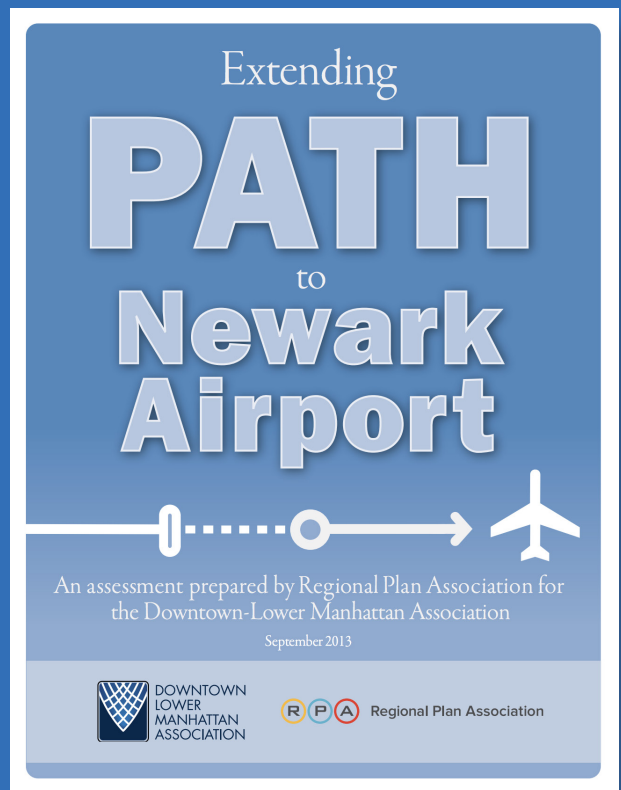


Community meetings in Newark's South Ward

*“The PATH extension enhances Newark’s desirability as a business location and a publicly accessible station would provide increased opportunities in the South Ward’s Dayton community.”*

— Chip Hallock

President & CEO, Newark Regional Business Partnership



RPA's Extending PATH to Newark Airport report aimed to stimulate regional interest in the feasibility, impact, and benefits of extending the PATH system from Newark Penn station south to a direct connection with Newark Airport.

Specifically, the 2013 report recommended a route along the west side of the existing Northeast Corridor south from Newark Penn Station.

The 2013 study showed Newark Airport lagging peer airports internationally in terms of transit accessibility, as well as its competitors in the tri-state region. The study described a potential PATH extension as a solution to this problem.

Regionally, business activity, employment, and population have continued to grow, with significant concentrations of growth along the PATH system in Lower Manhattan, Hoboken, Jersey City, and Harrison.

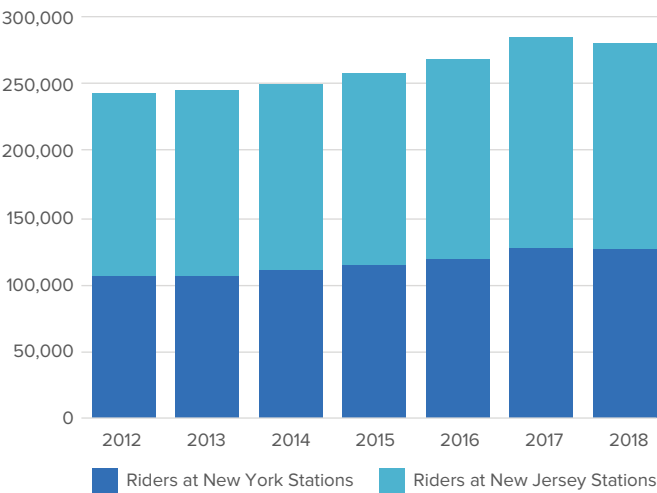
For these reasons, DLMA has partnered with RPA to produce an update to RPA's 2013 report. This report summarizes recent market trends and policy initiatives relevant to the 2013 study's findings and recommendations, and assesses the implications of these developments for the PATH extension.



# Economic and Transportation Trends

The east-west axis defined by the PATH system has been a center of economic growth in the New York metropolitan region since 2013. We have seen strong growth in employment, housing, transit ridership, and aviation activity along PATH east and west of the Hudson River, and in the catchment areas just beyond the system’s termini.

## PATH ridership is growing strongly



Source: PATH Ridership Report (2012 – 2018)

Average weekday ridership on the PATH system grew by more than 15% from 2013 to 2018, indicating continued growth in demand in the corridor for transit-supported travel. This rate of growth outstrips growth rates for both NJ Transit rail ridership and travel on the MTA.



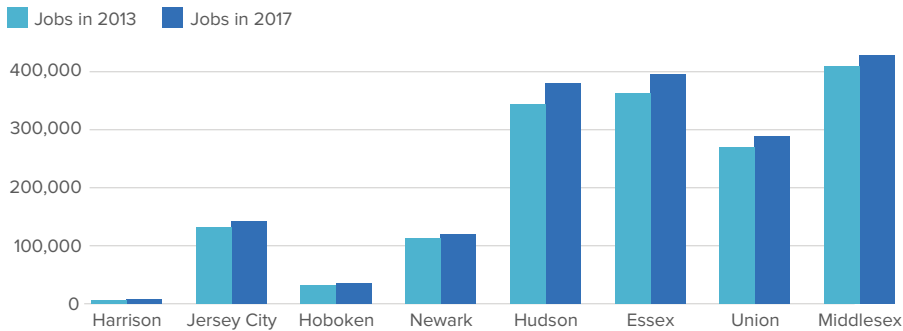
## WTC has greatest ridership growth

The PATH station with the highest rate of ridership growth over the past five years is the World Trade Center Station, which added 16,000 trips per day between 2013 and 2018.

	2013 Daily Ridership	2018 Daily Ridership	5-Year Growth
<strong>New York Stations</strong>	<strong>87,500</strong>	<strong>101,000</strong>	<strong>15.30%</strong>
Christopher St	3,800	4,100	9.00%
9th St	4,500	4,100	-8.50%
14th St	8,000	7,400	-7.20%
23rd St	6,400	7,000	9.40%
33rd St	30,200	27,500	-8.80%
<strong>WTC</strong>	<strong>34,700</strong>	<strong>50,800</strong>	<strong>46.20%</strong>
<strong>New Jersey Stations</strong>	<strong>112,000</strong>	<strong>123,000</strong>	<strong>9.90%</strong>
Newark	22,600	24,100	6.40%
Harrison	5,700	7,000	23.20%
Journal Square	22,000	22,400	1.50%
Grove St	13,500	17,200	27.30%
Exchange Place	12,500	14,100	16.60%
Pavonia/Newport	15,800	15,600	-1.60%
Hoboken	20,100	22,700	12.50%
<strong>TOTAL</strong>	<strong>199,000</strong>	<strong>224,000</strong>	<strong>12.30%</strong>

Source: PATH Ridership Report (2012 – 2018)

## Employment growth in Northern New Jersey is robust



## Job Creation in New York City

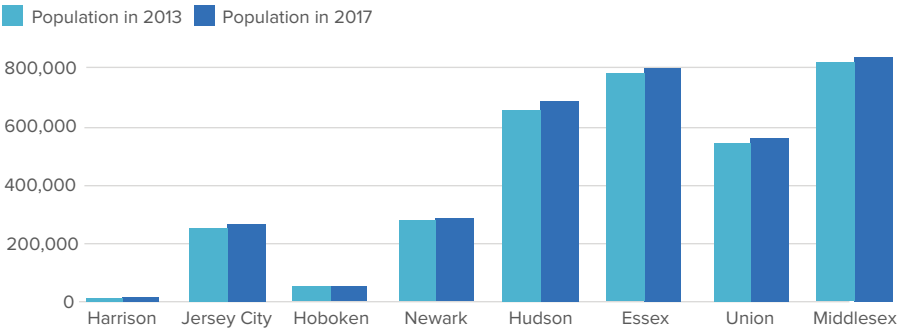
Between 2013 and 2017, employment growth continued strongly in PATH travel markets on both sides of the Hudson. Approximately 135,000 jobs were created in Manhattan and Brooklyn during this time, and 100,000 more were added in Hudson, Union, Essex, and Middlesex Counties in New Jersey.

Source: Census data (ACS 5-year estimates 2009 - 2013 & 2013 - 2017)



# Counties and major cities in New Jersey have seen strong population growth

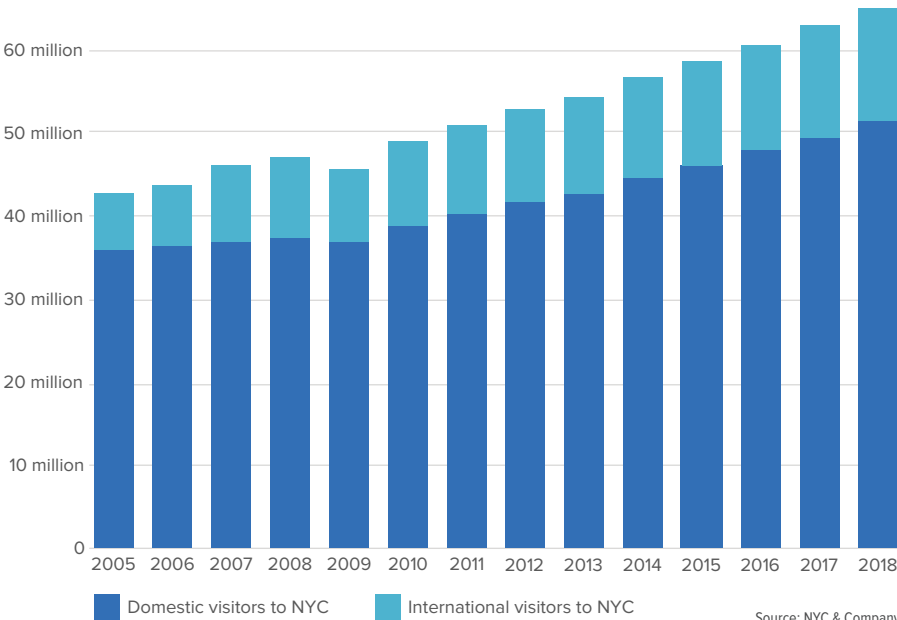
Source: Census data (ACS 5-year estimates 2009 - 2013 & 2013 - 2017)



Population in New Jersey’s primary PATH markets of Newark, Harrison, Hoboken, and Jersey City grew by almost 25,000 in 2013-2017 period, and by about 80,000 combined in Hudson, Essex, Union, and Middlesex Counties.



# The total number of annual visitors to NYC grew from 54 million in 2013 to more than 65 million in 2018.



Source: NYC & Company

# The region's airports are all busier

Airport	Takeoffs and Landings (2013)	Takeoffs and Landings (2018)	Growth (2013 - 2018)	Growth (%)
EWR	413,700	458,700	45,000	10.90%
JFK	406,100	455,500	49,400	12.20%
LGA	370,900	372,200	1,300	0.30%

Source: PANYNJ Airport Traffic report 2013 – 2018

Flights at Newark Airport grew at a slightly lower rate than Kennedy. However, the number of passengers served at Newark’s grew more than 31% during the same period — a rate far outstripping growth at both Kennedy and LaGuardia Airports.



## Trends in Airport Ground Access

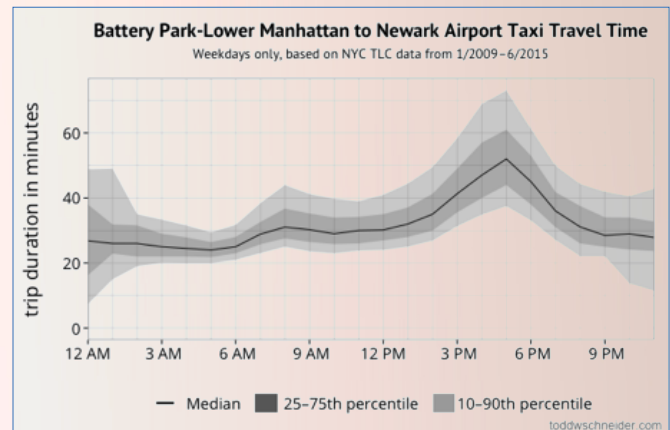
Since 2013, shared ride services such as Lyft and Uber have disrupted personal transportation in the New York metropolitan region, including for airport access.

As passenger growth at Newark increased by more than 30% from 2013-2018, the share of passengers using Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) grew from zero to more than 10%. During that same period, airport access by private automobile declined and rail and bus trips remained unchanged. The explosion of demand for these services has demonstrated the value travelers place on comfort and certainty of getting a ride at prices above what they would pay for comparable trips on transit or taxi.

Increasing TNC-generated congestion means increasing travel-time uncertainty for airport travelers. A late-afternoon car trip from Lower Manhattan to Newark Airport has a 50% chance of taking between 45 minutes and 60 minutes, and an 80% chance of taking between 38 and 72 minutes.

By contrast, a PATH trip from World Trade Center to Newark Airport Station would take about 36 minutes with less travel time variability and at less cost to the traveler.

### Battery Park-Lower Manhattan taxi travel time to Newark Airport



Source: <https://toddwschneider.com/posts/analyzing-1-1-billion-nyc-taxi-and-uber-trips-with-a-vengeance>

Increasing TNC use also means increased uncertainty for airport planners about the extent of demand for future parking needs, as passengers transition from parking private cars at airports to TNC trips. One floor of a parking deck recently constructed at LaGuardia Airport has already been converted from the passenger parking it was originally designed for to TNC pick up/drop off.

**RPA Vision:  
Newark Airport with  
Midfield Terminals**



## Trends in contemporary airport design continue to emphasize seamless connection between rail service and terminal access.

In the last six years, airports in Miami, San Francisco, and Shanghai Hongqiao have either built, funded, or adopted plans for new airport-rail system connections.

Airports like the Manchester, England International Airport are increasingly the focus of “airport city” growth initiatives. In Manchester, a partnership of Manchester Airport Holdings Ltd, Beijing Construction Engineering Group, and Argent Services LLP are developing five million square feet of commercial development as part of an airport expansion that will double passenger capacity and passengers served to 36 million annually by 2030.



### Private residential and commercial development on airport land

Manchester, England International Airport partnered with private construction companies to create private residential and commercial development on airport land, generating resources for airport investment, and building in business. This model for development could be instructive for future growth at and around Newark Airport and the regional rail transportation network.





# Recommendations

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Given the trends and growth detailed above, it is heartening that The Port Authority's updated 2026 capital plan offers the prospect of greatly improved facilities at Newark Airport, in the transportation systems that will connect the airport and its neighbors, and in intermediate communities with destinations and ridership based in Lower Manhattan.

DLMA and RPA look forward to working with PANYNJ and with New York and New Jersey's executive and legislative leadership to bring these improvements to fruition, and to ensure that they deliver the greatest possible benefit to the region. To that end, we offer the following suggestions and recommendations.

## **1. Keep PATH extension funding and planning on track, and keep the public informed and engaged**

Much has occurred in the past three years to advance the PATH extension to Newark Airport, and the inclusion of project funding in the current capital plan is a strong step.

To continue progress, PANYNJ officials should strengthen its partnerships with the public, especially Newark officials and neighborhood groups, and empower stakeholders to advocate for investment in the PATH extension in a way that benefits and supports local residents and businesses.

## **2. Closely coordinate PATH extension planning with Newark community members**

PANYNJ's 2017 project scoping document spoke clearly about the need for a PATH extension to connect directly with properties and public access points on either side of the airport rail station. It was similarly clear about the need to extinguish public access restrictions tied to the use of Passenger Facility Charges for construction of the original airport rail station.

As part of a robust community engagement process, PANYNJ should develop design options to allow pedestrian access for community members and new business tenants to PATH and Airtrain stations at Newark Airport. The agency should also work with local stakeholders to address different station area uses, such as PATH railcar storage, bus lanes and bus stops, and auto pick-up and drop-off.

## **3. Ensure public access to PATH/AirTrain station**

Providing public access to a future PATH/AirTrain Station at Newark Airport is an element of the project's stated purpose. It will help provide equitable transit system access for, and a new economic opportunity in the heart of at-risk communities, benefitting Newark Airport as a hub and destination airport, and contributing to facility funding and financing through land value increases created by direct transit system and airport access.

PANYNJ planners should share as early as possible their plans for how a new PATH/AirTrain station would be accessible to the public and provide the system-wide benefits such access would enable.

## **4. Use PATH extension to improve balance between inbound and outbound travel**

Ridership on the PATH system today is heavily weighted towards inbound travel in the morning peak and outbound travel in the evening peak. PANYNJ should use PATH extension planning and construction to support transit-oriented commercial development around new or refurbished PATH stations to increase reverse travel in peak periods.

By supporting economic development in the Newark Airport rail station area and downtown Newark, the PATH extension could increase travel on PATH in the reverse travel direction and fill seats that are empty today. This would generate new revenue for PATH operations, and reduce the PATH system's subsidy burden on the Port Authority Capital Program.

## **5. Coordinate PATH extension planning and AirTrain reconstruction**

Announced progress on the Newark AirTrain rebuilding project — under construction by early 2021 at the latest — means that the PATH extension and Newark AirTrain projects must be well-coordinated. The AirTrain technology selected, AirTrain alignment and terminal connections, and the ultimate location of a rebuilt Terminal B all will affect PATH extension planning.

Port Authority officials should share details about how AirTrain and PATH extension projects are being coordinated to achieve the greatest possible economic and transit benefits.

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## 6. Consider land value funding strategies if Port Authority Capital Plan is too constrained

PANYNJ has allocated \$1.7 billion for the PATH extension project and \$2 billion for Newark Airtrain in its latest capital program. To the extent that project costs exceed available resources, new sources of funding may be needed.

One potential source of funding is land value increases that could result from adjacent land having new direct access to PATH, NJ TRANSIT, and AirTrain systems.

PANYNJ should explore with partner agencies like New Jersey Economic Development Authority and discuss with adjacent land owners how direct connections with PATH and AirTrain systems would increase the value of station area land, and how to leverage economic value created to support and accelerate project development.

## 7. Develop a federal funding strategy

Though highly competitive, federal transit funds are available for transit projects across the country. Project planners should consider other transit projects in the region, and consider whether federal funding request might be appropriate for this project. Locally-generated revenues such as airport access charges, sales taxes, benefit assessments, impact fees, or property tax surcharges would need to be raised to qualify for the required local match.

PANYNJ should work together with local government partners to explore what combination of local fund sources would be most appropriate to document the strength of local funding commitment for federal reviewers.

## 8. Prioritize transit access to Newark Airport

The rapid growth of rideshare services like Lyft and Uber, and their side-effects on congestion and transit use, have been amply demonstrated in New York and other cities around the country since 2013. Shared ride services to Newark Airport have grown rapidly, auto travel times have become slower and less reliable, and transit use has remained constant or even declined even while air travel has grown sharply.

Improving transit access to Newark Airport is necessary for time-sensitive air travelers to have a reliable travel option to the airport. To realize this goal, all elements of the transit trip must be given priority and quality at least comparable to access enjoyed by auto-based passengers. To do this, Port Authority officials should provide frequent service, transit fares that are competitive with driving, and easy access to terminals for transit passengers.

## 9. Equalize auto and transit costs to Newark Airport

PANYNJ's capital plan includes a 50% increase in the AirTrain fare to \$7.75 to pay for transit system rebuilding costs, and new fees for for-hire vehicles and taxis accessing regional airports. However, no fee has been proposed for personal vehicle trips to and from the airport.

Failure to apply fees to personal vehicle trips neglects the substantial costs necessary to make auto access available to the airports. Applying airport access fees to transit users and not to private cars creates a strong and inequitable disincentive to arrival by transit.

RPA estimates that applying a \$4.00 fee on pick-ups and drop-offs at Newark Airport would generate about \$100 million annually for PANYNJ's capital program. These revenues would be free of the use restrictions attached to many aviation activity-based funding sources and could be used to fund transit access improvements for PATH and improved connections with AirTrain.

PANYNJ should document the annual costs of making roadway access available to automobiles in order to quantify the cost per trip of providing auto access to Newark Airport terminals. PANYNJ should also apply pick-up and drop-off fees to all personal vehicles at Newark and other regional airports, and assure that access charges set are consistent with prioritized access for transit.

## 10. Comprehensively examine system-level PATH needs

The PATH system serves multiple traveling communities in areas with growing populations. Growth expected over the coming decade is expected to absorb much of the new capacity being added in PANYNJ's updated capital plan. Pressure on the system is growing.

Recent Port Authority Capital Plans take important steps to address growth in PATH rail ridership, but a more comprehensive PATH system plan is required to ensure that the proposed extension to Newark Airport will contribute to the broadest and most cost-effective system-wide and user benefits possible. Such a comprehensive strategic review could examine system-wide state-of-good-repair needs, investments needed for operational efficiency and flexibility (e.g., rail-tracks, pocket tracks, interlockings, etc.), railcar fleet expansion needs, demand for new stations, maintenance and railcar storage facility needs, and best practices in rail system technology adoption, including operations, customer communication, last-mile travel needs, fares and fare payment, and performance measurement.





# Regional Plan Association

Regional Plan Association is an independent, not-for-profit civic organization that develops and promotes ideas to improve the economic health, environmental resiliency and quality of life of the New York metropolitan area. We conduct research on transportation, land use, housing, good governance and the environment. We advise cities, communities and public agencies. And we advocate for change that will contribute to the prosperity of all residents of the region. Since the 1920s, RPA has produced four landmark plans for the region, the most recent was released in November 2017. For more information, please visit [rpa.org](http://rpa.org) or [fourthplan.org](http://fourthplan.org).

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