



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 28, 2013

Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan  
NYC Department of Transportation  
55 Water Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10041

Chairman & CEO Thomas Prendergast  
MTA NYC Transit  
2 Broadway  
New York, New York 10004

Dear Commissioner Sadik-Khan and Chairman & CEO Prendergast,

We are writing today to urge you to reconsider the decision to cancel SBS rapid bus service from 125th Street to LaGuardia Airport, and to create more viable mass transportation options to the airport.

At only 8 miles from Midtown Manhattan, LaGuardia serves more than 25.7 million passengers, making it one of the 20 busiest airports in the country. By 2030, over 34 million passengers are expected to pass through its doors.

Just as important, LaGuardia is New York's closest in business airport, in much the same way that Reagan National or Midway serve Washington and Chicago, respectively.

Yet unlike these other airports, and so many other business airports, LaGuardia has no viable mass transit options. Passengers are forced to choose between expensive taxis, inconvenient private bus services from a few locations in Manhattan, or long public bus rides. In particular, time-constrained business travelers see taxis as the only sensible option.

This puts New York decades behind other cities. Reagan National and Midway both have direct low cost train lines to their city centers, and other close-in business airports have innovated to provide access. For example, at Toronto's Island Airport, which serves an increasing number of US passengers, there is a free ferry that arrives in the city center in minutes.

It's long past time for New York City to offer modern, convenient and affordable public transportation to LaGuardia Airport.

SBS rapid bus service is the right start, and we applaud DOT and MTA working together to add the Woodside-Jackson Heights Airport Connector and Webster Avenue SBS lines. The 125th Street route would serve the same purpose. With only six stops between its origin on the West Side and LaGuardia, the route would provide a real option to thousands of riders in Upper Manhattan and along Astoria Avenue in Queens, both burgeoning neighborhoods.

Despite the concerns of a few politicians in one neighborhood, killing the 125th Street route is a giant

step backward. We strongly urge you to reconsider and allow the route to go forward.

And progress shouldn't stop at a few SBS routes. NYCDOT and the MTA should also develop additional Rapid Bus Services to further improve public transportation from the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and Manhattan to LaGuardia Airport. In particular, improving access from boroughs outside Manhattan is responsive to the reality of both residential growth throughout the City and the emergence of thriving business districts like Long Island City and Downtown Brooklyn.

In addition, over the longer-term there should be renewed work with the MTA to provide a rail connection to the airport. Ideas from extending the N/Q lines, to a spur from the LIRR Port Washington Branch, to an Air Train connecting to the subway and LIRR at Woodside or Willets Point should all be seriously explored. The competitiveness of our regional economy and future of our airport system depend on it.

Our common goal of fostering economic growth and improving quality of life for millions of travelers should encourage us to test innovative strategies to increase access to LaGuardia Airport.

We believe there is a real opportunity to make positive changes for the millions of residents and travelers who utilize LaGuardia, and to help New York once again lead the way in innovative and viable public transportation.

We would be happy to have a further discussion on this topic, and look forward to hearing from you. Feel free to contact [sigmund@globalgatewayalliance.org](mailto:sigmund@globalgatewayalliance.org) or (917) 459-7794 at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

**Joe Sitt**

Chairman, GGA  
CEO, Thor Equities

**Lee Sander**

Chairman, RPA  
President & CEO, HAKS Engineering and Architects

**Stuart Appelbaum**

Vice-President, GGA  
President, Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union

**Robert Yaro**

President  
Regional Plan Association

**Stephen Sigmund**

Executive Director  
Global Gateway Alliance

**Thomas Wright**

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