For New York to continue to thrive as a global city, now is the time to not only dream big, but to put shovels in the ground. These proposals may seem aspirational, but New York must see itself in this vision and reshape our city if we are truly going to continue to lead the world. This series offers a new vision for air and rail travel, regional development and connectivity in the New York metro region.

With the ongoing $8 billion redevelopment of LaGuardia Airport and the announced $13 billion plan to transform John F. Kennedy International Airport, our Building the Future of New York series proposes ambitious enhancements to Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR) that extend far beyond the improvements currently underway at the airport.
Recognizing the potential for airports to offer the speed, accessibility and mobility critical to today’s globalized economy, cities across the globe have begun actively pursuing large-scale, mixed-use developments directly adjacent to airports. A key component of these airport-centered urban economic regions or “airport cities,” is their direct connection to the central business district through regional rail. Successful examples of airport cities around the globe include Singapore’s Changi, Amsterdam’s Schiphol and Germany’s Frankfurt and Munich airports. In almost all cases, airport cities benefit from the unique and powerful confluence of transportation modes and the shifting global mindset of businesses.

In the greater New York area, Newark Liberty International, with its proximity to the Northeast Corridor (NEC), is uniquely positioned to become one of these highly regarded multi-modal transportation centers. The airport has nearly 480 acres of contiguous vacant, industrial and low-rise commercial properties located within half a mile that could provide the backbone for a new EWR City.

A new EWR City would:

- Offer 21st-century services, amenities and facilities for passengers, employees and residents.
- Connect the local communities of Newark, Elizabeth and Hillside to economic development opportunities.
- Serve as a hub for corporations, technology companies and service industries that require convenient multi-modal travel and hospitality amenities.
- Facilitate a true one-seat express ride from the city center to the airport.
- Provide an opportunity for resilient development and infrastructure for the future of the region.
Scale Comparison

Newark Liberty International Airport

Amsterdam Schiphol

Schiphol Airport City

Similar in scale to the amount of developable land in Newark, Amsterdam’s Schiphol Airport provides a model for how the intersection of air travel and regional rail can support an urban district.

- Newark projected capacity: +/- 69 million passengers
- Schiphol projected capacity: +/- 70 million passengers
- Schiphol high-speed rail connections to Paris, Berlin, Frankfurt, Brussels and London

Newark Airport Site Opportunities and Constraints

*Newark Airport Plan is based on RPA’s Proposal for Expansion and Redesign
Airport City Vision

EWR City will be a destination in and of itself. The city will be rooted in connectivity, ripping out from a new detached headhouse on Frelinghuysen Avenue, connected directly to a relocated NEC Newark Liberty Airport Station. The rearrangement would create a transit hub at the center of the NEC, the most heavily used rail corridor in the United States, and would facilitate a one-seat express ride from Midtown Manhattan. Moreover, the new headhouse would be the intermediary between EWR City and the airport terminals.

Downtown EWR City, closest to the headhouse, would include a conference center, offices, commercial spaces and hotels. The area neighboring Elizabeth would provide housing and ground-floor retail, while the area closest to the tarmac would serve as a logistics center. Throughout EWR City, there would be opportunities to increase regional green space, including a sloping landscape on the headhouse roof and courtyards between buildings.

In its entirety, the 480-acre EWR City would provide:

19 million gross square feet of new development on 480 acres:
- 11 million gsf office/commercial use
- 4 million gsf logistics use
- 3,500 residential units
- 350 key conference center hotel
- Opportunity for a major destination use

130 acres of open space including:
- 9 acres of multi-modal boulevard/busway
- 18 acres of elevated promenade
- 103 acres courtyards/amenity spaces

*Background Image Credit: Google Earth
Priorities and Recommendations

- Reconfigure Newark Airport by placing a new airport headhouse on the reactivated Newark Airport Rail Station, creating a resilient "airport city" development next to EWR on underdeveloped commercial and industrial sites.
- Develop a new land-use plan that encourages 21st-century commercial, logistic, hospitality and educational uses near EWR for the economic development and sustainability of the new city and surrounding communities.
- Ensure a sustainable and equitable development through a transparent, community-driven process that ensures public and private investments are benefiting local residents and businesses.
- Fund and complete the Gateway Program, which would replace the two two-track Hudson tubes and construct two new passenger rail tunnels connecting New York and New Jersey. Gateway is the keystone to the NEC and the country's most critical infrastructure project.
- Implement the Regional Plan Association recommendations for adding capacity to Newark's airfield.
- Prepare a multi-layered resiliency strategy for the airport that addresses projected sea level rise for the next 100 years.
- Provide a new network of elevated public spaces to encourage health and well-being and take advantage of the views surrounding the new city.
- Encourage Amtrak to run more express trains along the Northeast corridor from Washington, D.C. to Boston to provide low-carbon transit connections to the greater megaregion.
- Expand private investment into this and other infrastructure projects by removing state and federal statutory and regulatory barriers to public-private partnerships, create competitive programs designed to leverage public dollars and expand the use of private activity bonds.