

# “Port Authority of New York & New Jersey Supplemental Accessibility Requirements”

## Guidance document

<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and best practice examples for stakeholders aiming to introduce similar initiatives related to accessibility and assistance to persons with disabilities in an airport environment.</p> <p>The case study is not intended to endorse any technology or provider, but rather provide details of the key considerations as well as various implementation models which could be adopted.</p> <p>The intended audiences may include but are not limited to: Airports, Airlines, Technology Providers, and Regulatory Bodies.</p>
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<b>Scope of this Guidance</b>	<p>This guidance is provided as a source of information to help and support industry players to implement initiatives related to accessibility and assistance to persons with disabilities in and airport environment.</p>
<b>The Case Study Template</b>	<p>In some situations or jurisdictions, a prescribed case study template may be necessary that meets the local requirements of a particular business, organization, or regulatory body. For this guidance document, the following sections provide the general steps involved in developing a business case and/or case studies, including a brief explanation of their purpose, benefits, and considerations.</p>

## **CASE STUDY details**

### BACKGROUND/BUSINESS NEEDS

*As clearly and succinctly as possible, describe the need/gap/issue/opportunity/threats that the project was addressing. How does the project fit into the airport's customer experience vision and initiatives?*

*The drivers for change should be listed here. They may fall into the following categories:*

- **Strategic and Planned** – Alignment with the airport's objectives and long-term vision. For instance, if the main strategic driver is passenger satisfaction, the case study should explain how it will contribute to achieving this objective. Decision-makers and senior executives are most likely to endorse other similar projects if they understand their strategic alignment.
- **Political or Geopolitical** - Ministerial appetite changes or new direction is set by the appropriate authority; new international requirements (e.g., ICAO Standard) are introduced.
- **Commercial/New product to market** – Although typically the least common, a new product on the market may drive the need for change.

The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PANYNJ) is a bistate public agency in New York and New Jersey in the United States. The PANYNJ operates four lines of transportation business that connect NY and NJ and provide a gateway to the New York City metropolitan region: 1. Aviation, 2. Tunnels, Bridges and Terminals, 3. Rail Transit, and 4. Ports.

The PANYNJ Aviation Department oversees four commercial airports – JFK International Airport (JFK), Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR), LaGuardia Airport (LGA), and Stewart International Airport (SWF), as well as one general aviation airport – Teterboro Airport (TEB), collectively serving over 144 million passengers per year. The PANYNJ is dedicated to creating an accessible airport experience for all customers, and our aim is to be a leader in the accessibility space.

As part of that mission, the PANYNJ developed and released its [Supplemental Accessibility Requirements](#) (SAR). The requirements were introduced in 2020 in conjunction with the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a US federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability in the public sector and informs specific accessibility standards in public spaces.

The SAR was born out of a collaboration between the PANYNJ Engineering Department, the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, the Port Authority Abilities Network (an employee business resource group) and expert consultants from the United Spinal Association and Studio 5 Partnership, an architecture firm with extensive accessibility experience. The SAR efforts identified ways the Port Authority could go above and beyond the minimum accessibility requirements in existing laws and codes, including the ADA, and implement best practices and new approaches to achieve cutting-edge accessibility in our facilities. With increased desire for travel, longer life expectancy, and increased societal expectations and awareness, the need for our airports to be accessible is greater than ever before.

The SAR applies to all new PANYNJ construction and facility projects/alterations. When existing facilities are altered, the altered portions must also comply with the requirements to the extent technically feasible.

Since the SAR applies to all new projects, the ongoing redevelopment taking place at the PANYNJ airports is an impactful application of the SAR. The agency's \$30 billion-dollar-plus, public-private redevelopment of its airports includes new terminals at JFK, EWR and LGA, along with extensive airfield improvements that deliver more efficient aircraft operations; new roadway systems, utilities and related enhancements; updated parking facilities; improved food, beverage and concessions; and much more.

## BENEFITS

*Specify and provide estimated Benefits or Business Value realized by the different stakeholders (airport, airline, passenger, others) involved. Also, specify how these benefits have been validated and how their realization has been or will be measured. Benefits can be quantitative and/or qualitative.*

The SAR includes many enhancements to the current ADA requirements, both for physical/visible disabilities and non-visible disabilities. These enhancements, some of which have been advocated for by the disability community for many years, are in the spirit of universal design to create accessible facilities for all people, regardless of disability, age, etc.

One highlight is a set of new space requirements to accommodate the needs of a greater number of people with physical disabilities, including those who use power wheelchairs and scooters. The larger space requirements impact many areas of design, including restrooms, doorways and turning spaces throughout PANYNJ airports.

The SAR aims to achieve full and meaningful integration of people with disabilities to be granted the ability to access and enjoy public and social benefits of our transportation facilities.

Highlights of the SAR at the PANYNJ airports:

- Larger wheelchair turning space (increased from 60" to 67").
- Longer clear floor space for wheelchairs (increased from 48" to 52").
- Hearing loops at airline gates to assist travelers wearing hearing aids to hear announcements.
- Adult changing stations located in family restrooms.
- Enhanced requirements for accessible tables in concessions areas.

Beyond the codified requirements that enhance the experience for customers of the PANYNJ airports, the impact of implementing this program demonstrates our commitment to accessibility as an agency and airport system. In turn, we signal that our facilities are inclusive and welcoming to those who have specific needs based on their disability. By formalizing these requirements, it helps to hold ourselves and our airport stakeholder partners accountable. This benefit is realized through the existence of an active PANYNJ-led SAR committee that has oversight regarding facility projects and must concur for execution.

# CONSTRAINTS

*It is important for the case study to consider the failure of other interrelated projects or to show how such dependencies may impact benefits. The following questions can help determine interdependencies:*

- *Are there regulatory constraints?*
- *Is there a complexity to the solution that should be noted?*
- *Is the project a sub-process of another initiative (e.g., terminal enhancement program)?*
  - *Alignment with other airport strategies and commercial aspirations could further justify the project ahead of time.*
- *What was the biggest challenge faced and how was it solved?*
- *What are the key enablers to make similar projects a success?*

Given the noted need for accessible airports, the SAR successfully strides toward universal design to meet the needs of all passengers regardless of their disability, age, etc. However, accessibility is an evolving body of work. Recognizing that, the PANYNJ is currently working on updating the SAR to make further enhancements that keep up with the times.

Other constraints:

- The SAR does not capture the airport terminals, projects, and structures that were created before the required effective date of 5/1/2021, unless they are undergoing major alterations.
- Logistical and financial constraints.
- Airport operations structure where most of the PANYNJ airport terminals are leased and managed by third party Terminal Operators.

## TECHNOLOGY, PROCESS & INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRED

*What new technology, process, infrastructure, services, etc., were or are required for the successful implementation of similar initiatives?*

The PANYNJ SAR does not require any new technology or infrastructure to implement or maintain.

All construction and renovation projects on PANYNJ property/at PANYNJ facilities must undergo reviews through the PANYNJ Engineering Department in order to be awarded permits to build/renovate. New processes have been implemented since the introduction of the SAR, including updates to include SAR checks in the engineering quality assurance/control and tenant construction alteration processes. The PANYNJ also retains a consultant to review project submissions against SAR requirements. The PANYNJ completes regular in-person audits to ensure compliance.

## LESSONS LEARNED

*What are the lessons learned that you would like to share with the industry to help other industry players to succeed with their implementation? What would you do differently?*

*Examples may be:*

The next iteration of the SAR will acknowledge recent code changes in local law and will clarify conflicting provisions as well as simplify those that caused difficulty for practitioners to implement successfully. The document will also be more succinct and more user-friendly to promote ease of compliance.

## PICTURES AND TABLES

*Please enter any pictures and tables that can help to value and understand the case study.*

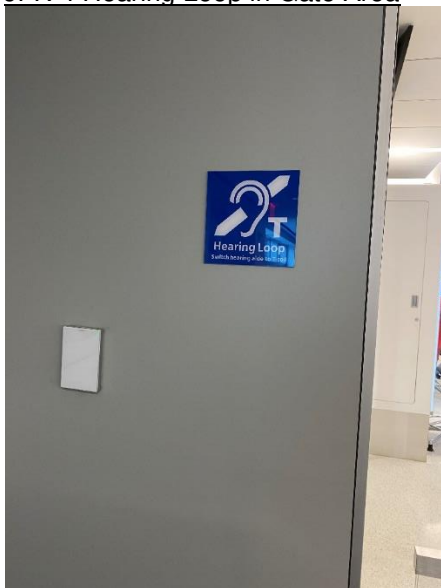
LGA-A Adult Changing Restroom



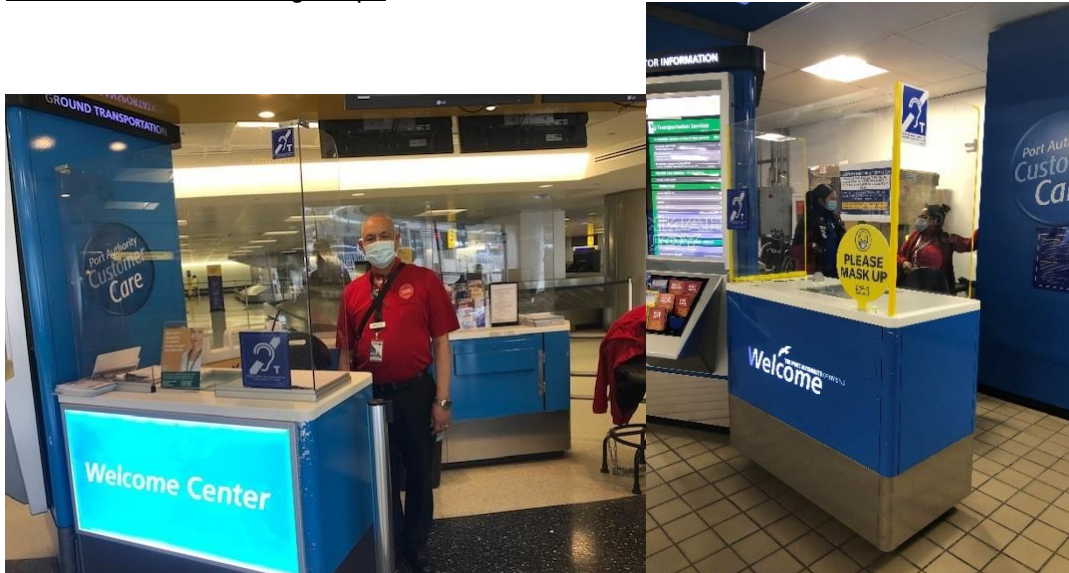
EWR-A Accessible Counter



JFK-4 Hearing Loop in Gate Area



## Welcome Center Hearing Loops



# APPENDIX

*This section can be used to add any additional information and links to other external resources.*

*- End -*