



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gateway National  
Recreation Area –  
Jamaica Bay Unit

Building 69  
Floyd Bennett Field  
Brooklyn, NY 11234

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## Gateway National Recreation Area – Jamaica Bay Unit News Release

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For Immediate Release

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### **Planning Begins for Transportation Enhancements at Gateway NRA**

The National Park Service (NPS) and Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) have initiated planning for several transportation enhancement projects in the Brooklyn and Queens portion of Gateway National Recreation Area. The projects will focus on four locations within the park: Floyd Bennett Field, Jacob Riis Park, Riis Landing, and the former landfills at Pennsylvania and Fountain Avenues.

Floyd Bennett Field is located on Flatbush Avenue just south of the Belt Parkway. The Field was the city's first municipal airport and later functioned as an important Naval Air Station during WWII. This nationally significant heritage is clearly visible in the runways, airplane hangars and control tower building that make up the core of the Field's historic district. The Field also contains a number of areas that are managed primarily for their value as wildlife habitat.

Visitors can enjoy a variety of recreational, educational and cultural activities that complement the historic and natural value of Floyd Bennett Field. The north end of hangar row is currently being developed as a sports complex featuring ice hockey and other sports that will operate on a year-round basis. Other functions housed on the Field include park administrative offices, the Armed Services Reserve Center (Marine Corps), a New York City Police Department training facility and a New York City Department of Sanitation training facility.

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Although there are several entrances to this large site, only the south entrance is currently open. Because visitors, park staff and park tenants all use this one entrance, the Field is subject to periods of high traffic volume which detracts from its primary purpose, creates functional conflicts and results in potentially unsafe conditions for visitors and wildlife. In an effort to separate visitor use from other traffic and to accommodate increased park use due to the new sports complex, one of the transportation projects will explore ways to improve access to and circulation within Floyd Bennett Field.

Potential improvements at Jacob Riis Park focus on vehicular access to this popular ocean beach complex. At the present time, eastern access is limited to Rockaway Beach Boulevard, a route that cuts through a number of adjacent residential areas. The proposed project seeks to create an alternative approach that would reduce outside traffic through these neighborhoods while improving access to Jacob Riis Park for visitors traveling from locations north and east of the Rockaway Peninsula.

Riis Landing may be better known as Station Rockaway, a site previously managed by the US Coast Guard. Plans for this site include its use as a ferry terminal and ground transportation hub. Issues to be addressed by the proposed project include expansion of parking, internal circulation, access to and from Rockaway Point Boulevard, and shuttle service to remote parking areas.

The former landfill sites at Pennsylvania and Fountain Avenues are currently being capped and landscaped by the City of New York. Once this work is complete, the sites will be operated by the National Park Service for passive recreational uses and as wildlife habitat. The proposed transportation enhancement project for this area will focus on simplifying access to the site, site security, limited internal circulation and parking.

All four of these projects are in an initial planning stage. In an effort to both inform the public and to solicit input regarding potential solutions and concerns within the affected areas, the NPS will be hosting two public information sessions about these projects. The first session will be held on **April 6, 2005 from 5:00 - 8:00 pm in the Ryan Visitor Center on Floyd Bennett**

**Field. The second session will be held on April 7, 2005 from 5:00 - 8:00 pm in Building T-149 at Fort Tilden.**

Representatives from the NPS, FHWA and their consultants will be on hand to discuss the projects and to answer questions. In addition, there will be handouts and displays regarding natural, historical and physical features that exist in the four project areas. The displays will be supplemented by a presentation that will be given periodically throughout the session to fully explain the scope and purpose of the projects. The sessions will be in an open house format that allows for people to come and go at any point between the opening and closing hours. Regular park visitors, neighbors, organizational partners, government agencies and interested citizens are invited to attend.

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