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Midway Crossing development project clears a hurdle with FAA approval



A rendering of the proposed Midway Crossing development in Ronkonkoma, which would include a convention center, hotel and sports arena. Credit: JLL / Crawford Architects

By **Brianne Ledda**

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The Federal Aviation Administration has given a green light to the Midway Crossing convention center proposal in Ronkonkoma, clearing a path for Islip Town and Suffolk County to move forward with planning, officials said.

In a letter provided by the town, the FAA said the development proposal would not have an impact on aircraft operations at Long Island MacArthur Airport. The proposal could include a walkway connecting the airport with Ronkonkoma's Long Island Rail Road station.

"The FAA determined it does not have approval authority over the proposed project because ... the project site is not required to accommodate current or future aeronautical demand," the agency said in a statement provided to Newsday on Friday. "ISP [MacArthur] remains responsible for complying with their federal grant assurances and associated requirements, including airspace reviews to ensure the projects do not impact aviation safety."

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The decision allows the project to continue without further FAA reviews or approval, except for safety-related height reviews. Since part of the proposal falls on airport property, federal law required the FAA to evaluate if the agency had approval authority for the project.

WHAT TO KNOW

- **The Federal Aviation Administration** has given a green light to the Midway Crossing proposal in Ronkonkoma, clearing a path for Islip Town and Suffolk County to move forward with planning, officials said.
- **In a letter provided by the town**, the FAA said the development proposal would not have an impact on aircraft operations at Long Island MacArthur Airport.
- **The FAA determination does not apply** to a proposed air terminal at the airport running parallel to the Midway Crossing project, which has separate approval processes, Islip Town officials said.

The FAA determination does not apply to a proposed air terminal at the airport running parallel to the Midway Crossing project, which has a separate approval processes, Islip Town officials said. The entire development would cost [\\$2.8 billion](#), the town said.

The Midway Crossing project, which calls for 2.7 million square feet of new construction, also includes a convention center, a 300-room hotel and health sciences facilities. Planning and construction are expected to take 10 to 15 years.

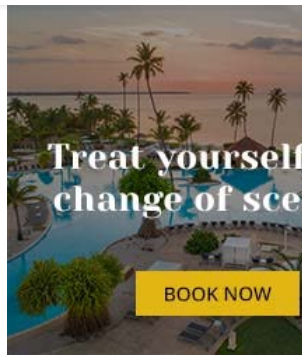
"It's a great step forward," said Mitch Pally, [chair of the funding arm](#) created to oversee Midway Crossing.

"The larger project is being planned around the terminal. If for some reason we don't get approval for the terminal, we would continue with the rest of the project and have the terminal come on at a later date. But they do have separate timelines," he said.

Derek Trulson, vice chairman of the project's master developer, Chicago real estate giant JLL, said hurdles remaining before construction starts "reside in the public sector side of the equation," but the FAA determination "was an important first step and a recognition of the value of the project, not only to the local community in Long Island but to the region."

A federal law enacted in 2018 narrowed FAA jurisdiction over airport land to projects that could impact key airport or aviation functions, easing the federal reviews and approvals required for airport development projects.

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Islip applied for a formal determination to take advantage of the law, known as Section 163, last year, which the FAA granted in December.

Local lawmakers praised the FAA decision on the project, a collaboration between Islip Town and Suffolk County.

"We will continue working with the Town of Islip and our planning partners to ensure the long-term viability of our region," said Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine. He highlighted the economic benefits of the project, which is projected to bring more jobs and tax revenue to the county.

Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), who has advocated to funnel federal dollars into the Ronkonkoma airport, also underscored the economic value of building up the transportation hub and said he was "glad" to facilitate communication between the FAA and Islip Town.

Islip Supervisor Angie Carpenter said in an email the FAA decision will allow the development to "take the next steps in the approval process."

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"The Town views this project as integral to a sustainable future for Islip, Suffolk County and all of Long Island," she said.

The next step will be to start the environmental review process, likely by spring, Pally said. The goal is to start construction in 2025.

CORRECTION: The proposed redevelopment of an air terminal at MacArthur Airport is a parallel project to Midway Crossing, with a separate approval process, Islip Town officials said. A previous version of this story misstated the relationship between the two.

By Brianna Ladda

Brianne Ledda covers the Town of Islip for Newsday. She previously covered Southold and Greenport for The Suffolk Times and is a graduate of Stony Brook University.

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