

Westchester County Airport - Airline Customer Experience

Recommendations for Improving Westchester County Airport Without Changing the Current Capacity of the Main Terminal.

The Airline Customer Experience can be broken into two parts:

I. PASSENGER PHYSICAL PROCESS:

Departing Passengers

Parking	Curbside Support/ Baggage/ Ticketing	TSA Security	Restrooms	Concessions	Seating Areas
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Arriving Passengers

Parking	Baggage/Pick up	Restrooms	Concessions	Seating Areas	Pickup/Garage/ Ground Transportation/ Rental Car
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II. PASSENGER EMOTIONAL SATISFACTION:

Studies of airport customer satisfaction have shown that the following are most important to customers: airport cleanliness, the cleanliness and availability of restrooms, the courtesy of employees, ambiance, ease of wayfinding, queuing, and sense of place.

Suggested ways to upgrade the customer experience within existing terminal footprint and capacity:

- **Coming to and from the parking garage bridge.**

The current direction of the escalator in the main terminal is counterintuitive. When passengers are coming from the parking garage bridge they take the downward moving escalator to the main terminal. They step off the escalator directly into baggage claim near TSA Security. Not only is this area frequently congested, but it also puts passengers on the wrong side of the terminal for airline check-in. Likewise for arriving passengers, after getting their baggage from the carousel they need to carry it to the airline check-in area to take the upward moving escalator to the parking garage bridge.

AIRPORT MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Reverse the escalator direction to and from the parking garage bridge:**
 - **For Departing Passengers:** it is recommended that the escalator goes from the parking garage bridge in the downward direction directly into the airline check-in area.
 - **For Arriving Passengers:** it is recommended that the escalator goes in the upward direction from baggage claim to the parking garage bridge.
- **Due to the aging escalators, the airport management does not feel comfortable with changing the direction of the current escalator equipment out of concern that doing so will break the equipment.**
- **Airport management is advising that new escalators need to be purchased to improve this issue.**
- **Curbside drop-off** (currently using third party company, PrimeFlight).

Staff is often not seen outside to assist passengers. Current staff is not identifying all people who need assistance.
- **Improve passenger luggage support through training and improved staffing. Also having more outside/inside helpers not just for senior citizens but also for families with young children and any others that need assistance.**
- **Easier access to ticketing/check-in.**

Currently passengers enter the terminal through the baggage claim or TSA area, then passengers need to walk alongside TSA security to get to the airline check-in area.
- **Reconfigure the airline check-in area to be more streamlined by having a terminal entrance directly at the airline check-in area.**

- **TSA Security** checkpoint line currently backs up into the baggage claim area.
 - Consider more usage of the overflow TSA Security checkpoint that is by airline check-in. Frequently monitor the queuing times of passengers and have both TSA Security checkpoints open during busy periods.
 - Study car rental counter usage and concession stand usage to possibly move to upper floor to free up space for TSA Security and baggage claim. Moving services out of the terminal building, however, seems unwise as this would result in a net increase in space for servicing airline passengers and could be deemed an increase to the terminal capacity.
- **Restrooms** if possible, additional bathrooms would be useful in the main terminal.
 - Improve signage for directing to second floor restrooms.
 - Updating and modernizing current restrooms.
- **Better usage of seating space before and after security.**
 - The second and third floors of the terminal are being under-utilized. Make better use of this space by possibly sectioning off part of the area to be post-TSA Security. Changes that would create a net increase in space for servicing airline passengers should be carefully analyzed with qualified legal aviation counsel to avoid anything that could be deemed an increase to the terminal capacity.
- New post security secure areas could be used for:
 - Area to de-stress
 - Improved desks/workstations with outlets
 - Nursing station for mothers
- Services and amenities that focus on unique traveler needs.
 - More electrical outlets or charging stations in seating areas
- Baggage logistics
 - Lost baggage representative by the baggage carousel. Improve seating in baggage claim area.
- Currently using same concession vendor before and after security.
 - Choice of concession offerings by having a different vendor before and after security.
- Restaurant / Bar area
 - Consider moving the restaurant post-TSA security. Improve the decor of the restaurant and bar area. According to Airport Management, there is a current RFP for a new restaurant vendor.

- **Ground Transportation.**

It is difficult to schedule ground transportation to and from the airport.

- **Find new vendors to service this market.**
- **Need vendors that are willing to schedule night time arrival ground transportation in advance. Not everyone is comfortable with Uber or Lyft services.**

PASSENGER EMOTIONAL SATISFACTION:

Ambiance:

- Natural Lighting
 - **Good use of natural lighting now. Continue to use natural light as the terminal is improved.**

Interior design of main terminal and jet bridges (jetways):

- Remove dated carpet
 - **Airport Management wants to change to consistent flooring throughout the airport.**

Music:

- Ambient Music
 - **Airports are viewed as a ‘transient’ space where people do not linger for very long. Thus, the music needs to play in the background for listening without the need for concentration. The primary aim of this kind of music is to subtly reduce the general anxiety that travelers experience.**
- Natural features such as plants
 - **Seeing greenery at the airport has been proven to improve moods and reduce stress.**
 - **Indoor greenery boosts air quality by reducing dust levels, increasing humidity, controlling carbon-dioxide concentration, and purifying the air of pollutants and toxins.**
- Repainting
 - **To colors that are generally recognized to alleviate stress.**
- Hang Artwork and local sports memorabilia
 - **A strong sense of place also evokes a sense of pride in travelers returning home or locals who work at the airport.**
- Educational features (historical artifacts)
 - **Leveraging Sense of Place:**
 - **Highlighting the unique culture and geographical attributes of Westchester County.**
 - **They are the first and last opportunity for visitors to experience the history and culture of Westchester County. Currently many Westchester artifacts are hidden on the second and third floor. The presentation can be updated and put on display for more customers to see.**

Consistent Wayfinding Signage:

Wayfinding signage is a system of signs, maps, and other visual cues that help users navigate a space and reach their desired destination. It encompasses a wide range of elements, from directional signs and room numbers to interactive digital displays and lighting. The primary goal of wayfinding signage is to provide clear, concise, and easily understandable information to users, reducing confusion and frustration.

Terminal Capacity:

The Airport Task Force believes that all improvements must be accomplished within the existing footprint of the terminal building and without increasing the terminal capacity to abide by important and longstanding county policy against the expansion of airport facilities.

The Airport Master Plan and County policy and initiatives at the terminal building should reference and adhere to Section 712.462 of the Laws of Westchester County, which specifies that the Passenger Capacity of the Terminal was designed for a capacity of 240 passengers per half hour, without consideration of whether such passengers are enplaning or deplaning. These limitations shall apply to each half hour of airport operations and shall not be aggregated to allow for more passengers in any half hour than is stated in this law.

References:

TRB's Airport Cooperative Research Program (ACRP) Report 157
National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2016. Improving the Airport Customer Experience. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/23449>.

[WOX - Revolutionizing the Hybrid Workplace Experience - Room Booking, Desk Booking, Visitor Management, Service Request, Delivery Room, and more \(woxday.com\)](#)

[Music For Airports: Towards A Better Traveller Experience | Soundsuit.fm](#)

