

SYRACUSE AIRPORT

New look for CNY's 'front door': Syracuse airport terminal to get \$48M facelift

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A rendering of the new exterior at the Syracuse Hancock International Airport. A groundbreaking ceremony was held Tuesday to mark the beginning of the \$48 million construction project.

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The aging terminal at Syracuse Hancock International Airport will get a makeover.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo joined local officials Tuesday to break ground on a \$48.8 million project to upgrade the interior and exterior of the terminal. The improvements will be funded with \$35.8 million from the state, \$9.1 million from the federal government and \$3.9 million from Onondaga County and the Syracuse Regional Airport Authority.

Cuomo first [announced the airport terminal renovation project](#) in January. It was one of the signature initiatives included in his agenda for the year.

The existing concrete canopy outside the terminal will be removed and replaced with a new 650-foot-long canopy with LED lighting. Two glass pedestrian bridges above the passenger drop-off area will be renovated. The bridges will give passengers with mobile tickets an easier route to access the airport.

Perforated steel panels that can withstand harsh weather will be installed on the exterior of the terminal. New energy efficient windows, a rainwater collection system and rooftop solar panels will be part of the upgrades.

The inside of the terminal will feature improved baggage claim areas and ticketing counters. Amenities — beverage, food and retail options — will be upgraded. The downstairs section of the terminal will have more than 140,000 square feet of new terrazzo flooring.

A new feature in the terminal will be the Regional Aviation History Museum. The facility will be designed in partnership with the Onondaga Historical Association.

Cuomo joked that the improvements are necessary because the terminal is "almost as old as I am." The terminal was built in 1962 — 55 years ago. Cuomo is 59 years old.

"After that long, you need a little work," he said.

The airport, according to Cuomo, was a factor in the New York Mets' decision to buy the Syracuse Chiefs. The Mets [announced the purchase last](#)

[week](#) with the intent of making the Chiefs the club's Triple-A affiliate in 2019.

The Mets' current Triple-A affiliate is in Las Vegas, which means players who are called up to the majors would need to travel several hours by plane to New York City. The flight from Syracuse to New York City is much shorter — a little over an hour, according to travel websites.

There are other reasons why the airport needs a facelift. Cuomo said a modern airport can serve as "the gateway to central new York" and play a role in luring businesses to the region.

"It's an airport of tomorrow," Cuomo said of the plans. "It's going to happen. It's going to happen quickly."

Construction is expected to be completed by fall 2018.

Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney touted the advantages of a new terminal for the region's main airport. The airport averages 1 million passenger boardings annually, according to the governor's office.

"Our community will benefit tremendously from the real jobs this project will create as well as the future growth in our tourism and business sectors," she said.

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