



Improved Niagara Falls International Airport to become gateway to the region

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With one of America's most visited attractions in its backyard, Niagara Falls International Airport is embarking on a \$29.7 million improvement project to connect even more visitors to the region's splendor.

The project involves adding a new passenger terminal for the airport, one of the first built in North America since 9/11, as well as apron improvements, new parking, and new roadways around the airport. At well over 69,000 s/f, the new terminal will more than triple the size of the current one, including a second story to allow for jet bridges and holdrooms that can accommodate more than 280 passengers at a time.

With so much more space, the new two-gate terminal will provide for more efficient check-in and processing, food and beverage concessions, full TSA inspection facilities, in-line baggage screening, eight stationary ticket counter stations, a car rental area, and a multi-modal metro transit center. In addition, the terminal will now have the operational capability to process international and domestic flights at the same time, and, with the improved apron, room to accommodate larger aircraft such as Boeing 747s and 757s.

Stantec, whose Buffalo, Rochester, and Vancouver offices contributed to the project, designed the new terminal using the flowing water of the falls and their beauty as inspiration. A unique roof form echoes the waves and movement of the falls, which are intended to also reflect the flow of passengers through the new space.

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression," said Henry Sloma, Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) vice chairman. "With this new airport, we're going to stun visitors before they even get to the falls. We have, in our backyard, one of the Seven Wonders of the Natural World. Soon we will have a gateway worthy of that distinction and worthy of the people of this region."

Stantec is one of North America's leading architectural and engineering design firms, particularly in the area of airport terminal design. In fact, one out of every three passengers in North America today travels through an airport where Stantec provided design services, including the airports in Vancouver, Chicago O'Hare, the Bahamas, and many others. As exemplified in the Niagara Falls Airport terminal, Stantec strives to connect its airport designs to the essential characteristics of the location's landscape, culture, and community.

"We really wanted to express the beauty, splendor, and power of the Falls with a terminal that meets the needs of the sophisticated 21st century airline passenger," said Stanis Smith, senior vice president of Stantec. "The new terminal reflects all of this and truly serves as an entryway to the entire region."

That new gateway idea is complemented with improved access to the site via new circulatory roads,

including a roundabout that maintains traffic between the existing terminal and the new one. Added parking will also help the airport with its increased demand.

Stantec's team incorporated a number of green elements into the project as well, including the use of building materials with low environmental impact and efficient mechanical and electrical systems in the terminal. The design also reduces energy consumption by using natural daylighting in all major spaces, large roof overhangs and external sun screening to prevent heat gain, and a high-performance glazing system for the windows. All of the site work was also carefully designed and permitted to comply with new, more stringent stormwater management regulations in New York State, which involved planning an underground stormwater detention system and a pump station that meet water quality standards.

The NFTA is well positioned to take advantage of the newly improved airport since it is located within 500 miles of 55% of the U.S. population and 62% of Canada's. The airport is just 15 minutes from the Falls itself, and 10 miles from two international border crossings. What's more, the airport already has one of the longest runways in the state, making it capable of accommodating the largest aircraft in the world. And based on the project's Terminal Area Plan and reviews of adjacent airport usage, the new terminal is expected to grow from 24,000 enplanements annually to over 125,000 in its first five years of operation.

"This is an economic lift to the region," said NFTA commissioner and aviation committee chairman Carmen Grant. "Each visitor to Niagara Falls spends at least \$200 and thanks to this project, we are going to see more of them. This is also fantastic for residents who want to become tourists themselves."

Stanis Smith is senior vice president of Stantec, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

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