

# InfrastructureUSA

## Guest on THE INFRA BLOG

**Patrick J. Foye, Executive Director, Port Authority of New York & New Jersey**

**Conversation with Steve Anderson, Managing Director, InfrastructureUSA**

### **Smart Cities NYC '17: Unleashing the Power of Governments**

The premise of the Smart Cities Conference and initiative is to unleash the power of the local and state governments in the pursuit in innovative resolution of vexing issues across the nation. And I think the conference is a part of that dialogue. I think it's very important.

### **Infra Innovation Across the Board**

Social media, I think it's fair to say, has changed everything. If a train derails or there is an unfortunate incident on an air carrier the odds are that many people are going to be filming that, sending it to Facebook, sending it to Twitter, and information explodes at an extraordinary velocity. In the transportation field autonomous vehicles, autonomous trucks, platoon trucks, drones, I think, have the ability to literally transform the landscape. There's innovation going on on the technology side, on the big data side, in construction and on the permitting and the financing side—including public-private partnerships, which I think are finally beginning to establish a foothold in the United States. I think we lag behind much of the rest of the world, and I think the private sector bringing its innovation and creativity and capital could be a big part of the solution to the infrastructure problems.

### **The Rail Resurgence**

Commuter travel, whether it's air travel, rail, MTA subways, Long Island Railroad, is at higher-than-ever levels. It's easier for the public to engage. There's way more information out there, and people have the ability, instantaneously, to communicate with friends to tell them about challenges, problems on their commutes. I think that level of higher engagement is a terrific thing, and obviously rail is in the middle of a renaissance. Interesting fact: two thirds of the people that used to travel between Washington and New York used to travel by the shuttle, by air, and a third by rail; and now the numbers are reversed: it's two thirds by Amtrak or other regional rail and a third by air, and I think that speaks to the resurgence in rail. And I think also increasing numbers of travelers are interested in being responsible commuters, whether it's a trip across the Hudson or a trip to Washington, and I think that influences their choice of commute and travel as well.

### **Huge Improvements Coming to the NYC Metro Area**

Governor Cuomo is going to open the new Kosciuszko Bridge, the Port Authority is going to open the first lanes of the Goethals Bridge between Staten Island and New Jersey in the first half of this year. It's being done as a public-private partnership. You can see the extraordinary progress on the Tappan-Zee Bridge. The Port Authority: you can look at our web cam on our web site and the lower level of the Bayonne Bridge, which is being demolished to allow larger container ships to enter the harbor, that lower level is rapidly disappearing, which is good news. It's the point of the project. We began work on a \$4 billion P3, public-private partnership, at LaGuardia last June 1st. If you travel by LaGuardia on the Grand Central Parkway, the amount of work going on, the number of cranes in the air, steel being erected, prefabricated sections of the West End Garage, it's extraordinary. We're planning to do the same thing at JFK. Port Authority's got a \$32 billion capital plan over ten years, and we were approved by our board in February and we're in the midst of executing on that.

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