

Islip approves \$25M in funding for projects

The approval of bonds includes \$6 million to pay for design costs of a new concourse and an upgraded baggage claim terminal at MacArthur Airport.



Upgrades are proposed for the MacArthur Airport baggage claim area. Photo Credit: Newsday/J. Conrad Williams, Jr.

By Antonio Planas

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The Islip Town Board Tuesday approved funding for more than \$25 million in capital projects, including fixing roads and parks and improvements at the town airport.

Councilors voted 5-0 in favor of issuing nine bonds totaling \$25.09 million, including \$6 million for design costs of a new west concourse and renovations to the baggage claim terminal at Long Island MacArthur Airport.

The town's funding approval puts MacArthur on track to move up the priority list to compete for \$60 million in construction costs of the concourse and baggage claim area from a \$1 billion grant program overseen by the Federal Aviation Administration, officials said.

Also included in the bond resolutions are:

- \$9 million for road improvements;
- \$3.095 million for acquiring heavy-duty vehicles and equipment;

- \$1 million for park improvements;
- \$900,000 in drainage improvements and
- \$1.320 million in facility upgrades.

Officials issue bonds under general categories to have flexibility. Bonding for specific projects means money can only be spent for those purposes and any money leftover could go wasted, officials said.

Town Comptroller Joseph Ludwig told board members, “What you have in front of you are the same generic bond resolutions we do year in and year out. They are to help replace our aging infrastructure, as well as our aging equipment. ... Overall, we are borrowing less than we did last year.”

The town board last March approved \$26.5 million in bonds.

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Councilors approved the bonds early in the year in order to avoid the possibility of a rise in interest rates, Ludwig said. Islip has a AAA bond rating from Moody's Investors Service, the agency's highest credit rating.

Islip Supervisor Angie Carpenter at the meeting said roads and drains need to be fixed and parks need upgrades.

“A lot has been done, certainly at Clemente with the pool and more to come,” she said

of the Roberto Clemente Park in Brentwood. “But there are still other parks in the town that need attention.”

Islip had \$173 million in outstanding debt at the end of 2018, officials said.

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