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EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING
ON THE DRAFT SCOPE OF WORK
FOR
EMPIRE STATION COMPLEX
VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

-----x

July 20, 2020
4:05 P.M.

B E F O R E

CELESTE FRYE,
The Moderator

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A P P E A R A N C E S :

Celeste Frye

Public Works Partners 6

Rachel Shatz

Vice President Planning and Environmental
Review - ESD 12

Holly Leicht

Executive Vice President Real Estate
Development and Planning - ESD 15

Linh Do

Senior Vice President - AKRF 21

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P R O C E E D I N G S

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4

THE MODERATOR: Hi, everyone. And
welcome.

5

6

7

We'll get started in just a
moment. We are taking a few minutes to let people
come from the waiting room.

8

(Off the record.)

9

10

11

THE MODERATOR: Hello, everyone
and welcome to the Empire Station Complex Scoping
meeting. Hopefully you're in the right place.

12

13

14

We're just taking a few moments to
just admit participants from the waiting room.
We'll start in one or two minutes.

15

(Off the record.)

16

17

18

THE MODERATOR: Hi, folks. We're
just continuing to let folks in from the waiting
room to get started in another minute or two.

19

(Off the record.)

20

21

THE MODERATOR: I'll say it one
more time.

22

Hello, everyone.

23

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25

Thank you for joining the Empire
Station Complex Scoping meeting. I hope you're all
in the right place.

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My name is Celeste Frye. We'll be getting start in just one minute. We're just letting people in through the waiting room. We want to give everyone a chance to enter before we begin.

(Off the record.)

THE MODERATOR: All right.

So I'm just letting a few final people in and then we'll begin.

(Off the record.)

THE MODERATOR: All right.

Thank you everyone for joining us today.

Good afternoon and welcome to the public scoping meeting for the proposed Empire Station Complex.

My name is Celeste Frye with Public Works Partners. We have been retained to assist Empire State Development, or ESD, with this virtual scoping meeting and I will be your moderator this afternoon.

Please note that this meeting is being recorded. A link to the full recording of this meeting will be made available on ESD's

1

2 website shortly after the meeting.

3

4 Also, please note that this
5 meeting is scheduled to go from 4:00 until 7:00
6 p.m. and American sign language interpretation is
7 available. We'll give you instructions on how to
8 find the interpreter in just a moment.

8

9 So I'd like to start with just a
10 few notes before we begin the content.

10

11 We are requiring that only
12 presenters share their video on this call because
13 we have a large number of virtual participants.

13

14 So for the best viewing
15 experience, we are recommending that all
16 participants enable the feature on Zoom that allows
17 you to show only the participants with a video.
18 The first two screens that we're about to project
19 provide instruction on how to do that; first, for a
20 laptop or an Android device and then after that for
21 an Apple or iPhone device.

21

22 So, again, if you're just joining
23 us, the instructions on the screen are to show how
24 to hide participants who are not showing their
25 video so that you may see the speakers more easily.

25

And this is now for an Apple or

1

2 Mac Book device.

3

4 And this screen is for those who
5 wish to view the meeting using American Sign
6 Language interpretation. So this -- following
7 these instructions will enable you to pen the ASL
8 interpreter video so that you can see the ASL
9 interpretation throughout the meeting.

9

10 And this screen explains the
11 options that you have for providing comments on the
12 Draft Scope of Work today.

12

13 If you signed up to speak before
14 the meeting during the registration process, we
15 have your name and you will be called individually
16 during the testimony portion of this meeting. So
17 if you've already signed up, you do not need to
18 sign up again to speak again.

18

19 If you did not sign up to speak
20 before the start of the meeting, but you would like
21 to speak, you will identify yourself at any time
22 using the "Raise Hand" function on Zoom.

22

23 Instructions are being shown on your screen right
24 now, and will be shown periodically throughout the
25 meeting.

25

If you're joining today by phone

1

2 or audio only, you may dial *9 to indicate on your
3 keypad to indicate your desire to provide verbal
4 testimony. Participants using the "Raise Hand"
5 function on Zoom or *9 on your phone, will be added
6 to the end of the speaker list. The option to sign
7 up to speak will end 30 minutes before the close of
8 the meeting. So at 6:30 p.m.

9 I will give you a moment to read
10 the instructions before I move on. Again, these
11 instructions will reappear periodically throughout
12 the meeting.

13 (Off the record.)

14 THE MODERATOR: On an additional
15 note, at the bottom of each slide, there is a phone
16 number if you need to call in and there's also an
17 e-mail address if you need technical help during
18 the meeting.

19 You will also have the opportunity
20 to send in your comments via e-mail or standard
21 mail at the addresses provided here, including
22 empirestation@esd.ny.gov. This information is also
23 available on ESD's website and in the Notice of
24 Public Scoping.

25 So, again, you'll see all of those

1

2 screens periodically throughout the meeting if you
3 need any of those addresses or instructions again.

4

5 So before we begin the testimony
6 portion of this meeting to hear your comments, we
7 will hear from Rachel Shatz and Holly Leicht of
8 Empire State Development, or ESD, the lead agency
9 for the proposed project.

9

10 And we'll also hear from Linh Do
11 of AKRF, the lead consultant supporting ESD on the
12 preparation of the project's Environmental Impact
13 Statement, or EIS.

13

14 In addition to Holly and Rachel, a
15 number of ESD representatives are joining us on
16 this Zoom here today, including:

16

Liz Fine, General Counsel;

17

Matthew Gorton, Executive Vice

18

President of Public Affairs;

19

Marion Phillips, Senior Vice

20

President of Community Relations;

21

Richard Dorado, Senior Counsel;

22

Tony Semancik, Special Counsel;

23

Meaghan Caltabiano, Legal Fellow;

24

and,

25

Anabel Frias, Assistant Director

1

2 Community Relations.

3

4 And I would now like to introduce
Rachel Shatz of ESD.

5

MS. SHATZ: Good afternoon.

6

7 On behalf of the New York State
Urban Development Corporation, doing business as
8 Empire State Development, or ESD, we welcome you to
9 today's virtual public scoping session.

10

11 My name is Rachel Shatz, and I am
12 Vice President for Planning and Environmental
Review at ESD.

13

14 The purpose of today's scoping
15 session is to hear your comments on the draft
16 scoping document for the preparation of an
17 Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS, for the
18 proposed Empire Station Complex Project. The EIS
19 is being prepared pursuant to the State
20 Environmental Quality Review Act, or SEQRA, and ESD
is the lead agency.

21

22 Scoping is the beginning of a
23 public process designed to determine the scope of
24 issues to be studied and addressed in the EIS.
25 Comments from involved or interested agencies and
members of the public help ensure that important

1
2 potential impacts are thoroughly examined. The
3 objective is to identify the relevant and key
4 issues of concern, which will then define the scope
5 of the environmental analysis performed for this
6 EIS.

7 This slide provides an overview of
8 the currently anticipated schedule for the
9 environmental review process.

10 ESD first issued a Notice of
11 Public Scoping on July 1, 2020 that was distributed
12 by e-mail and posted on ESD's website, along with
13 the Draft Scope of Work. In addition to the e-mail
14 distribution and posting on the ESD website, the
15 Notice of Public Scoping appeared in the
16 *Environmental Notice Bulletin* and the print edition
17 of the *New York Daily News*.

18 While the meeting record normally
19 remains open for ten days following the scoping
20 meeting, because of the unusual circumstances
21 presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, ESD is
22 extending the comment period to 30 days after this
23 meeting, until August 20th, 2020.

24 The comments received here today,
25 as well as those that are submitted throughout the

1

2 comment period, will be considered and responded to
3 in the final scoping document that will guide the
4 Draft EIS, which will assess the potential for
5 environmental impacts from the proposed Empire
6 Station Complex.

7 The final scoping document will
8 be distributed to the involved and interested
9 agencies, as well as anyone requesting a copy, and
10 will be made available on ESD's website.

11 When ESD determines that the Draft
12 EIS conforms with the Final Scope, it will be
13 released for public review. Following issuance of
14 the Draft EIS, ESD will hold a public hearing to
15 solicit comments on the Draft EIS and Proposed
16 Project.

17 Based on that hearing and other
18 comments received in writing, a Final EIS will be
19 prepared which responds to relevant comments and
20 makes modifications to the EIS as appropriate.
21 Agency actions on the Proposed Project in terms of
22 approval or disapproval cannot be undertaken until
23 that Final EIS has been completed and is available
24 to inform the decision making process.

25 Please note that today's scoping

1

2 session is to hear your comments on the Draft
3 Scope. This is not a Q&A session, and is not a
4 meeting about the details of the proposed project
5 and the design.

6

Before we begin the comment
7 portion of today's session, I would like to
8 introduce Holly Leicht, of ESD, who will provide a
9 brief description of the proposed project.

10

MS. LEICHT: Thank you, Rachel.

11

And good afternoon.

12

My name is Holly Leicht and I am
13 Executive Vice President of Real Estate Development
14 and Planning at ESD.

15

As Rachel mentioned, I will start
16 with a brief description of the proposed project.

17

If you are joining us on your
18 computer or via the Zoom App, you will see the
19 presentation on your screen as I speak. If you are
20 joining by phone only, you may access the
21 presentation on ESD's website following today's
22 meeting. A link to the full recording of this
23 meeting will also be made available on ESD's
24 website.

25

In January 2020, Governor Andrew

1

2 M. Cuomo announced the "Empire Station Complex"
3 project among his State of the State initiatives,
4 establishing the blueprint for an integrated public
5 transportation complex to revitalize New York's
6 Pennsylvania Station, or Penn Station area, and
7 give New York City the world-class intercity
8 transportation hub it deserves.

9 The first step in realizing this
10 vision is the soon-to-be-completed Moynihan Train
11 Hall, which will transform historic Farley Post
12 Office into an iconic, state-of-the-art gateway for
13 the Long Island Rail Road and Amtrak.

14 The relocation of Amtrak's
15 operations to Moynihan provides the opportunity to
16 overhaul existing Penn Station, including opening
17 up its confined concourses and creating bold new
18 entrances, inviting in natural light, improving
19 retail and other user amenities, increasing safety
20 and security, consolidating support functions,
21 rationalizing pedestrian flows, and making it
22 easier for passengers to navigate within the
23 station as well as connect to their destinations
24 beyond.

25 The Railroads are also planning

1
2 the proposed southward expansion of Penn Station
3 into Block 780 and parts of Blocks 754 and 806,
4 shown on this graphic immediately south of the
5 existing Penn Station, to accommodate up to nine
6 additional tracks and five new platforms. Both the
7 renovation and expansion of Penn Station are
8 essential infrastructures for the future of New
9 York, long talked about but finally achievable
10 under the leadership of Governor Cuomo.

11 The MTA will share several options
12 for the renovation of Penn Station with the public
13 at the end of this summer, with the goal of
14 selecting a preferred plan by year end. So, by the
15 time our Proposed Project's scope is finalized, we
16 expect to have more information about how the
17 public improvements we are proposing will be
18 integrated with improvements to Penn Station
19 itself. In addition, engineering studies for the
20 expansion of Penn are expected to be completed
21 early next year.

22 The Proposed Project, a
23 comprehensive redevelopment initiative to create a
24 modern, transit-oriented commercial district
25 centered around Penn Station, is the fourth

1

2 critical component of the Empire Station Complex
3 vision. The Proposed Project would result in new
4 commercial buildings on eight development sites in
5 the Project Area.

6 These new buildings would
7 incorporate new onsite entrances and access ways to
8 Penn Station and public transit. Importantly, such
9 redevelopment would also generate essential revenue
10 for substantial passenger rail and transit
11 improvements at Penn Station and also area subway
12 stations.

13 The Proposed Project would also
14 revitalize the Project Area by introducing
15 much-needed public realm improvements to address
16 pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation and
17 enhance the surrounding streetscape. ESD is
18 working closely with the City of New York to
19 accomplish the Proposed Project's development goals
20 and the implementation of the public realm and
21 public transportation improvements for the area.

22 The Proposed Project would result
23 in approximately 20 million gross square feet of
24 primarily Class A commercial office, retail, and
25 hotel space on eight development sites within the

1

2 Project Area.

3

4 More than 10 million gross square
5 feet of development is already permitted, so the
6 net additional square footage would be fewer than
7 10 million gross square feet. ESD is working with
8 Vornado Realty Trust, the owner of a significant
9 amount of property in the neighborhood surrounding
10 Penn Station and within the Project Area.

11

12 For planning purposes, it is
13 assumed that all components of the Proposed Project
14 would be completed and fully operational by 2038.

15

16 This graphic here shows the
17 illustrative building massings for each development
18 site. The General Project Plan would limit the
19 overall square footage of each building. However,
20 consistent with zoning in other high-density
21 commercial areas of New York City, it would not
22 impose height limits. If constructed, the
23 buildings could be taller and slimmer or shorter
24 and bulkier than in this graphic.

25

26 ESD is collaborating with the MTA,
27 Amtrak and New Jersey Transit on a network of
28 public transportation improvements that would be
29 required as part of the Proposed Project, and as

1

2 mentioned earlier, these would align with the
3 Railroads' plans for improvements to passenger rail
4 facilities at Penn Station as well as the proposed
5 expansion south of Penn.

6

The Proposed Project's
7 improvements range from reconstructed subway
8 entrances and platform widenings, to new stairways
9 and a new below-grade east-west corridor from Penn
10 Station to the Herald Square subway station.

11

The Proposed Project's public
12 realm improvements include public plazas, shared
13 streets, sidewalk widenings, and new bike lanes.

14

The planning, design, and
15 implementation of these public realm improvements
16 are a collaborative effort with the New York City
17 Department of City Planning and the New York City
18 Department of Transportation.

19

The Proposed Project is expected
20 to require discretionary actions and approvals from
21 ESD and others, which collectively comprise the
22 Proposed Actions.

23

These include ESD's adoption and
24 affirmation of a General Project Plan, or GPP, in
25 accordance with the UDC Act, which would allow for

1

2 the override of bulk, density and other provisions
3 of New York City's Zoning Resolution and possibly
4 other local laws, codes, and requirements. Among
5 other things, the GPP would facilitate new
6 development on Sites 1 through 8 and support and
7 accommodate the construction of the proposed
8 renovation and expansion of Penn Station.

9 At this time, a determination has
10 not been made as to which public entity or entities
11 would acquire the property interests needed for the
12 expansion of Penn Station to the south or which
13 entity or entities would construct the expanded
14 station.

15 In addition, the Proposed Project
16 would require various approvals/agreements
17 involving MTA, the City of New York, NJT, and
18 Amtrak.

19 With that overview, I will now
20 hand the presentation over to Linh Do from AKRF,
21 the lead consultant supporting ESD in the
22 preparation of the project's EIS.

23 MS. DO: Thank you, Holly.

24 Good afternoon.

25 My name is Linh Do, and I'm a

1

2 Senior Vice President at AKRF and I'm serving as
3 the Project Director for ESD's consultant team.

4

Today's meeting is an opportunity
5 to receive comments from the public on the Draft
6 Scope of Work for this Draft Environmental Impact
7 Statement.

8

The scoping document is a road map
9 for the EIS. In addition to providing an overview
10 of the project, it identifies the areas to be
11 analyzed, the methodologies or approach to be
12 applied, and if relevant, the study area that will
13 be considered.

14

The Scope is first issued as a
15 draft, subject to public review and comment. A
16 final scope of work is then issued, reflecting
17 changes or elaboration, as necessary based on your
18 input.

19

That Final Scope will guide us in
20 the preparation the Draft EIS.

21

I'm going to provide a brief
22 summary of the contents of the Draft Scope.

23

There's a lot more detail in the actual document
24 and I invite you to review the full document for
25 more information.

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Presented here are the areas of analysis that we will cover in the Draft EIS. In addition to these analysis areas, the EIS will include:

A Project Description that will provide details of the proposed development program;

The necessary approvals; and,
The purpose and need for the project.

We will also include an Analytical Framework for the EIS technical analyses, which, among other things, will identify the analysis years and project phasing.

The Proposed Project is assumed to be constructed over approximately 16 years. For analysis purposes, the EIS will assess an interim analysis year of 2028, described as Phase 1. And the final analysis year of 2038, Phase 2.

The exact schedule of the Proposed Project cannot be predicted with certainty, but the use of these analysis years will allow the DEIS to disclose the Project's environmental impacts and identify any appropriate environmental mitigation.

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The EIS will provide impact studies for all 18 areas shown on the slide. All analyses will account for predicted changes in background conditions and consider how the project would affect those future conditions. The one exception is construction, which considers impacts that could occur during the period of construction, prior to completion of the project.

The DEIS will include a description of proposed mitigation measures, which are feasible and practicable measures that could avoid or minimize significant adverse impacts that are identified in the DEIS.

The DEIS will also consider a range of reasonable development options, or "alternatives," to determine whether those alternatives could avoid or reduce project-related significant adverse impacts while still achieving the stated goals and objectives as set forth by ESD for the proposed Empire Station Complex.

In the following slides I will highlight some of the important analysis areas we will be considering.

Land Use, Zoning, and Public

1

2 Policy considers the effects of the proposed
3 actions in terms of land use compatibility on the
4 surrounding neighborhood and trends in zoning and
5 public policy.

6 The Project Area is in proximity
7 to a number of publicly accessible plazas and
8 parks, such as Herald Square and Greeley Square
9 Park, and historic resources with sunlight-
10 dependent features, such as the stained-glass
11 windows of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Ninth
12 Avenue and West 28th Street.

13 As such, the EIS will address the
14 extent of project-generated incremental shadows and
15 whether those incremental shadows could adversely
16 affect these resources.

17 Historic and Cultural Resources
18 will assess potential effects on designated
19 properties or properties eligible for designation
20 within a 400-foot study area. The Draft Scope
21 provides a preliminary list of these properties.

22 Consultation with the New York
23 State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic
24 Preservation, as well as New York City's Landmarks
25 Preservation Commission will be undertaken as part

1

2 of the historic and cultural resources analysis.

3

4 Urban Design and Visual Resources
5 will focus on the changes that could negatively
6 affect a pedestrians' experience of the area. The
7 analysis will also describe measures intended to
8 improve the pedestrian experience as well as assess
9 the presence of the new buildings on the Manhattan
10 midtown skyline.

11

12 A detailed transportation impact
13 analysis will assess the Proposed Project's
14 anticipated effects on the surrounding roadways,
15 transit services, and pedestrian facilities for the
16 Phase 1 and 2 analysis years.

17

18 Due to the current COVID-19
19 conditions, data collected at this time would not
20 reflect typical transportation conditions.
21 Therefore, the analysis will be based on previously
22 collected data and, in consultation with the New
23 York City Department of Transportation, will be
24 adjusted as necessary to develop the existing
25 baseline traffic volumes.

26

27 As shown on this graphic, the DEIS
28 will address approximately 100 intersections within
29 the study area's street network. Additionally, the

1

2 analysis will include a number of pedestrian
3 analysis elements such as corners, crosswalks and
4 sidewalks.

5

The Draft Scope also describes the
6 potential peak traffic analysis hours that will be
7 studied, including the weekday AM, midday and PM
8 peak periods.

9

The EIS will describe a conceptual
10 construction schedule, work hours, logistics, and
11 estimates of onsite construction activities.
12 Potential lane closures and safety and security
13 measures will also be described.

14

Importantly, the EIS will assess
15 potential construction-related impacts on vehicular
16 and pedestrian circulation, particularly because
17 Penn Station will remain operational while the
18 expanded Penn Station facility is being
19 constructed.

20

The chapter will also assess other
21 environmental concerns such as air quality,
22 hazardous materials, and noise and vibrations.
23 Measures to minimize or avoid these construction
24 impacts will be identified.

25

As described before, where

1

2 significant adverse impacts may result, we will
3 identify potential mitigation measures and/or
4 alternatives that avoid or minimize those impacts.

5

6 And finally, shown here are the
7 e-mail and standard mail addresses for providing
8 comments on the Draft Scope, and a reminder that
9 the close of the comment period will be 5 p.m. on
10 August 20, 2020.

11

12 Thank you for your time, and we
13 look forward to hearing your comments on the Draft
14 Scope.

15

16 I'd like to now hand this back to
17 Celeste.

18

19 THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Linh.

20

21 Before we begin the testimony
22 portion of this scoping meeting, I will once again
23 share instructions for those who wish to view the
24 meeting with American Sign Language interpretation.

25

26 We're also showing again the
27 instructions to hide your non-video participants on
28 a computer or on Apple drives.

29

30 (Off the record.)

31

32 THE MODERATOR: As I mentioned at
33 the beginning of the meeting, if you signed up to

34

1

2 speak before the meeting during the registration
3 process, we have your name and you will be called
4 in the order that you registered.

5 If you did not sign up to speak
6 before the start of the meeting, but would like to
7 request to give testimony now, please identify
8 yourself using the "Raise Hand" function on Zoom.
9 Instructions for this are being shown on your
10 screen now.

11 If you are joining this call by
12 phone only, you may dial *9 on your keypad to
13 indicate your desire to provide testimony.
14 Participants using the "Raise Hand" function on
15 Zoom or *9 on your phone, will be added to the end
16 of the speaker list. The option to sign up to speak
17 will end 30 minutes before the close of the
18 meeting. So at 6:30 p.m.

19 Each speaker will be allotted
20 three minutes to assure that everyone gets a chance
21 to provide their thoughts here tonight. There will
22 be a countdown clock visible and we will give short
23 warnings before the three minutes are up.

24 I'll begin by calling the name of
25 those who have registered to speak, or the first

1

2 and last 3 digits of your phone number if you are
3 using the telephone dial-in option and not the Zoom
4 App.

5

Elected officials, Community Board
6 District Managers or Chairs, or representatives of
7 a government agency will be provided the courtesy
8 of speaking first.

9

Periodically, it will show up on
10 your screen, a list of the next 5 speakers so that
11 you can prepare for your turn to speak.

12

When your name, or the first and
13 last 3 digits of your phone number is called, you
14 will be asked to unmute yourself and we will make
15 sure you are ready before starting the time clock.

16

You can scroll or swipe to see the
17 time clock on your screen to remind you of the
18 length of time left for your testimony.

19

Additionally, a chat message will
20 appear when you have a few seconds remaining. When
21 three minutes have passed, your audio will be muted
22 and you'll be invited to send any remaining
23 comments to ESD's mailing or e-mail address.

24

When you begin speaking, please
25 state your name and your affiliation, if you have

1

2 an affiliation, for the record.

3

4 Just a reminder, this meeting is
5 being recorded. Also, this is a scoping meeting
6 for the Empire Station Complex. We encourage all
7 speakers to focus their comments on the Draft Scope
8 of Work for this project.

8

9 We also ask that speakers exercise
10 civil conduct during their testimony. Speakers who
11 use inappropriate language will be muted and
12 cautioned before being allowed to continue.

12

13 A final reminder, is that this is
14 not a question and answer session. This time is
15 for testimony and comments only.

15

16 So our first five speakers this
17 afternoon will be:

17

18 Robert Jackson;

18

19 Brad Hoylman;

19

20 Matt Green;

20

21 Christine Berthet; and,

21

22 Betty Mackintosh.

22

23 So Robert Jackson, if you could
24 please unmute your microphone and let me know when
25 you're ready to speak.

25

MS. GARCIA: This is actually

1

2 Joanna Garcia, the Chief of Staff to Senator
3 Jackson. And he's in session up in Albany so he's
4 not able to make it on. And we're here just to
5 listen to everyone's testimony.

6 THE MODERATOR: Okay. So would
7 you like to make comments on Senator Jackson's
8 behalf?

9 MS. GARCIA: Not at this moment.

10 THE MODERATOR: Okay.

11 Thank you very much.

12 So our next speaker will be Brad
13 Hoylman.

14 Brad Hoylman, would you -- if you
15 can unmute your microphone and let me know when
16 you're ready to speak.

17 (No response.)

18 THE MODERATOR: Brad Hoylman or a
19 representative of Brad Hoylman's office, if you are
20 with us, please unmute yourself.

21 (No response.)

22 THE MODERATOR: Okay.

23 Brad Hoylman or a representative,
24 we can't hear you at this time. So we're going to
25 go on to the next speaker. But if you -- if you'd

1

2 like to speak, please indicate it by using the
3 raise hand function on Zoom.

4

Our next speaker will be Matt
5 Green.

6

(No response.)

7

THE MODERATOR: Matt Green, I'll
8 give you a moment to get ready to speak.

9

(No response.)

10

THE MODERATOR: Matt Green, if
11 you can hear me, please unmute your microphone and
12 indicate if you're ready to speak.

13

(No response.)

14

THE MODERATOR: Okay.

15

Matt Green or a representative,
16 we're going to move on to the next speaker and if
17 you would like to speak, please indicate by using
18 the raise hand function on Zoom.

19

Our next speaker will be Christine
20 Berthet and I see we have you on video already.

21

So if you let me know when you're
22 ready to speak, we'll start the time clock.

23

MS. BERTHET: Oh, I am unmuted.
24 Can you hear me?

25

THE MODERATOR: Yes, we can hear

1

2 you.

3

MS. BERTHET: Thank you.

4

I'm ready to start.

5

So my name is Christine Berthet.

6

I'm the Co-Chair of Community Board 4,

7

Transportation Committee.

8

The vast majority of commuters

9

would come to the station by transit or walk to

10

Penn Station. Road capacity and safety to

11

facilitate pedestrian access and transit should be

12

the top priority, with micro mobility a close

13

second.

14

The study area must be expanded to

15

account for all intersection and sidewalks affected

16

within half-a-mile.

17

To facilitate safe pedestrian and

18

commuters' travel, the scope should include shared

19

streets of both West 31st and West 33rd Street and

20

bus ways on both 8th and 9th Avenues. And, also,

21

mid block crossings on all the avenue and streets

22

for the blocks surrounding the station and, in

23

particular, the mid block raised pedestrian

24

crossing on 9th Avenue in front of the mall

25

entrance to link it to midtown west.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

The demand for micro mobility is exploding. The completion of the 9th Avenue bike lane is a prerequisite. Parking lanes and facilities are critical to provide significant parking -- bike parking, bike share and charging stations. A bike share depot should be included in the plan to service all of midtown.

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

The cumulative effects of the new Port Authority Bus Terminal ridership, which is plus 40 percent and the enlarged Penn Station ridership, which is also 40 percent, should be studied, especially on the MTA E line, which operates at maximum capacity. It's also neglecting lane paths the 8th through 9th Avenue sidewalks with pedestrians routinely walking fast.

17

18

We ask that you evaluate the creation of walk lanes on both these avenues.

19

20

21

22

The Madison Square Garden events bring large TV and tractor trailer loads at peak hours. It all needs to be taken into account from the transportation and traffic study.

23

24

25

And finally, an interim and permanent replacement to the displaced, long distance bus facility on the southwest corner of

1

2 8th Avenue and 31st Street must be provided.

3

Thank you.

4

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

5

Our next speaker will be Betty

6

Mackintosh.

7

Will Betty please unmute yourself

8

and indicate when you are ready to speak.

9

Betty Mackintosh.

10

MS. MACKINTOSH: Okay. Can you

11

hear me?

12

THE MODERATOR: Yes, we can hear

13

you.

14

(Overlapping conversation.)

15

MS. MACKINTOSH: The video --

16

THE MODERATOR: Sure. Okay.

17

You may begin.

18

MS. MACKINTOSH: Okay.

19

Good afternoon.

20

I am Betty Mackintosh, Co-Chair of

21

the Chelsea Land Use Committee of Community Board

22

4.

23

I'm going to speak about zoning

24

and (Zoom inaudible).

25

Most of the project area is

1

2 located in Hudson Yards Special District.

3

4 The Draft Scoping document states
5 that the project would override both density and
6 potentially other requirements of the New York City
7 Zoning Resolution.

8

9 We ask that a revised scope
10 include a description of existing zoning with the
11 zoning map. Specific details about the proposed
12 override, contrasted with the existing zoning.

13

14 It would be useful if the building
15 heights shown in figure 3 would be in terms of
16 number of stories for the average reader to
17 understand that.

18

19 Alternatives. This Draft Scope
20 mentions only one alternative, a reduced density
21 alternative. This should be clarified with
22 specific details; FARs and type and size of uses.

23

24 We ask that ESD include in the
25 scope the following alternatives and explain their
viability.

26

27 1. An alternative with decreased
28 FAR, which has an FAR more consistent with the FARs
29 of the adjacent special districts, Midtown East,
30 Special Garment Center and Hudson Yards District B.

1

2

Communities facilities requirement

3

would be essential.

4

2. An alternative with the

5

relocation of Madison Square Garden. A number of

6

creative proposals, including the critically

7

acclaimed adaptive reuse proposal by Vishaan Jeff

8

Grabarti (phonetic). I've highlighted the

9

advantages of cleaning up the space above Penn

10

Station.

11

3. An alternative with a

12

residential building onsite: One, West 30th, 31st

13

Street and Eighth Avenue. A hotel is an

14

inappropriate use on site 1 because residential

15

uses are adjacent to the site. Height limits

16

should be part of this alternative.

17

Affordable housing, a minimum of

18

30 percent of market rate units is a must in any

19

new residential development.

20

Thank you for the opportunity to

21

comment on the Draft Scope.

22

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very

23

much for your testimony.

24

So we have our next group of five

25

speakers just about -- that you have already seen

1

2 on your list. But the representative from Brad
3 Hoylman's office, Senator Hoylman's office has been
4 able to unmute himself this time.

5 Matt Tighe, you may begin when
6 you're ready.

7 MR. TIGHE: Thanks.

8 Good evening.

9 My name is Matt Tighe. I'm
10 Director of Community Affairs for Assemblymember
11 Richard Gottfried.

12 All comments are a summary of the
13 written testimony to be submitted by Assemblymember
14 Gottfried and State Senator Brad Hoylman, shortly.

15 Our districts, which cover
16 portions of the neighborhood in and around Penn
17 Station and the proposed expansion have seen
18 enormous residential and commercial growth over the
19 last two decades.

20 The increase in scale and density
21 on Manhattan's West Side as a result of rezonings
22 and development, has led to a dramatic increase in
23 the number of people who live and work around Penn
24 Station and who rely on this transit hub.

25 The priority of the Draft Scope of

1

2 Work needs to create a transit hub for the City and
3 surrounding areas that drastically reduces
4 greenhouse gas emission and encourages multi-modal
5 use of public transit.

6 The current proposal lacks a
7 commitment to commercial and residential tenants
8 that will be displaced as a result of this project
9 and a commitment to increased community facilities
10 and public space and affordable housing.

11 The Empire Station Project is an
12 opportunity to reimagine transportation and using
13 it as a way to address a myriad of interconnected
14 societal issues, such as homelessness, affordable
15 housing and access to public space.

16 What follows are key areas we
17 believe require further study. Many of these ideas
18 are expanded upon in the testimony submitted by
19 Manhattan Community Boards 4 and 5.

20 We urge ESD to thoroughly review
21 them as the communities most impacted by Penn
22 Station and its operations CB4 and CB5 have
23 provided detailed comments that deserve the highest
24 consideration.

25 ESD must incorporate greatly

1

2 increased, mixed-use affordable housing into the
3 plan, particularly at sites 1 and 4, but should
4 also consider other sites located in both CB4 and
5 CB 5.

6 The Draft Scope discusses ESD
7 overrides for existing zoning and local law. The
8 scope should include a description of the existing
9 zoning with the proposed overrides. The scope
10 should also discuss approximate building height in
11 the context of number of stories, besides FAR, so
12 that the public can better understand what is being
13 proposed.

14 For a project proposing a 40
15 percent increase in density and a 40 percent
16 increase in commuters, the study area is
17 insufficient to fully understand the impacts and
18 increases in an already dense environment.

19 The primary study area should be
20 the quarter mile radius currently proposed as the
21 secondary area, while the secondary area should be
22 a half-mile radius.

23 The secondary area also needs to
24 consider the impacts of the Hudson Yards rezoning
25 and replacement of the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

1

2

3

4

5

6

A study of the need for community facilities with expanded secondary study area should be conducted to determine what public amenities are necessary to support the inevitable influx of more people.

7

8

9

10

The open space analysis should be conducted for both residential and commercial needs. The open space proposed in site 2, is insufficient to meet this future growth.

11

12

13

14

Our intent for the Empire Station Project is to see a multi-modal transit hub that's environmentally sound and a sustainable plan and on that leads the way.

15

16

THE MODERATOR: So my apologies, Matt.

17

18

19

We -- we have you for the full three minutes. I will -- I meant to give you a warning but my --

20

21

22

23

Thank you very much.

I think that we will let you finish if you have a final brief statement that you want to make, Matt.

24

25

MR. TIGHE: That was my last sentence. So I just got it in.

1

2

THE MODERATOR: Okay.

3

Thank you very much for your

4

testimony.

5

Our next speaker will be Layla

6

Law-Gisiko.

7

Layla Law-Gisiko.

8

(No response)

9

THE MODERATOR: Layla Law Gisiko,

10 if you -- there you are. If you can unmute

11 yourself, you may begin when you're ready.

12

MS. LAW-GISIKO: Thank you very

13

much.

14

Thank you for the opportunity to

15

give my comments.

16

My name is Layla Law-Gisiko and

17

I'm the Chair of the Land Use Housing and Zoning

18

Committee of Manhattan Community Board 5.

19

The proposed language action

20 introduced by the Empire State Development, would

21 become the densest development in New York City and

22

would cause the most massive demolition of urban

23

average in the history of CB5.

24

The land use project is only a

25

small portion of a larger master plan to replace

1

2 Penn Station. While we believe Penn Station
3 urgently needs a full modernization, the master
4 plan should not be segmented.

5

The current proposal does not
6 address vital parts of the plan, which has train
7 transit, train hub upgrades, track increase,
8 overall capacity increase.

9

Segmentation is contrary to good
10 land use practices and we urge ESD to update the
11 Scope of Work into the full master plan. This
12 proposal can only be evaluated holistically.

13

CB5 requests the Scope of Work be
14 altered to include the relocation of Madison Square
15 Garden. Madison Square Garden sits atop the train
16 station and it will keep any future development and
17 any future growth.

18

There is consensus from all
19 experts that a similar location is a condition to
20 Penn Station's viability. The project is the
21 perfect opportunity.

22

Madison Square Garden must be
23 moved.

24

Penn Station is the largest train
25 hub in the country. Its role is vital to the

1

2 region and, therefore, to the whole country. The
3 station is owned by Amtrak, a federal entity. Penn
4 Station should be priority federal funding to
5 perform this long, overdue modernization.

6

We demand that the Scope be
7 revised to reflect a substantial increase in
8 federal funding and to demonstrate reduction in
9 density.

10

The proposal would require
11 demolition of a large swath of urban fabric. This
12 proposal should examine the historic buildings,
13 regardless of their status with OPC and to alter
14 its footprint to incorporate and preserve our
15 history's fabric.

16

We used to have a glorious Penn
17 Station. We are in this mess because we -- because
18 it was carelessly demolished. Let's not repeat
19 mistakes from the past.

20

This full report speaks to
21 evaluation and retention of our historic buildings.
22 The proposal would also indenture our official
23 resources. Of particular concern is the Empire
24 State Building, it is unacceptable to consider it a
25 development that blocks off the City's crown jewel.

1

2 New corridors must be protected.

3

4 Any project of that magnitude must
5 be presented in conjunction with reasonable
6 alternatives. We believe an alternative proposal
7 should be essential affordable housing. Another
8 alternative should explore the opening -- density
9 served by those lines using Penn Station and New
10 Jersey and on Long Island to spread the word of
11 impact.

12

13 Finally, the proposal should be --
14 the development of a community facility, whether
15 a -

16

17 THE MODERATOR: Fifteen second
18 warning. My apologies.

19

20 MS. LAW GISIKO: -- such
21 facilities should be included in the scope of work.

22

23 While we want to emphasize
24 response to Community Board 5 has a resolution that
25 further details our concerns. These concerns
include pedestrian safety, direct and indirect
residential and business displacement and energy
efficiency.

26

27 The need for a broader study area,
28 the need for --

1

2

3

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very
much for your testimony.

4

5

And we will move on to our next
speaker, who is Jeffrey LeFrancois.

6

7

And Jeffrey, you can -- are you
able to unmute yourself. Yes.

8

MR. LE FRANCOIS: Yes.

9

THE MODERATOR: You may begin.

10

MR. LE FRANCOIS: Thank you.

11

Good afternoon.

12

13

My name is Jeffrey LeFrancois and
I'm the First Vice Chair of Manhattan Community

14

Board 4.

15

16

Today's comments come from members
of our Land Use and Transportation Committees and a
formal letter will be sent with more detail
recommendations.

17

18

Manhattan Community Board 4
welcomed the idea of a new and expanded and
revitalized Penn Station but we find the project
follows now a dated development model for a project
with a projected completion of 2035.

19

20

There is a Robert Moses-like
approach with extensive displacement and cars and

21

1

2 transportation planning, which occurs throughout
3 the proposal.

4

5 It should be replaced with a
6 pedestrian and urban plan narrative. The study
7 should focus on how best to bring a world-class
8 transit center to the area that greatly improves
9 mobility, access and daily life for those who work
10 and live in the area, as well as travelers and
11 commuters.

12

13 The parameters of the scope are
14 inadequate and fall short of a comprehensive plan
15 given its small study area. Disregards for
16 community facilities that are being eliminated
17 under the with action plan. And the lack of
18 analysis on the local residential areas.

19

20 It also has the potential to
21 adversely affect existing building and funding
22 mechanism for Hudson Yards and the Garment
23 District, given the GPP's override of local zoning.

24

25 Six key concerns of Manhattan
Community Board include:

26

27 The relocation of Madison Square
28 Garden and through running trains must be added to
29 the build.

1

2

3

4

Expanded primary and secondary study area, given the 40 percent increase that's needed for density.

5

6

Need for FAR consistent with adjacent special zoning district.

7

8

Residential development with affordable housing on at least site 1.

9

10

And investment in homeless services and other community facilities.

11

12

13

14

The need to prioritize the entire development from a pedestrian, commuter and micro mobility point of view, rather than car and private building centric planning.

15

16

17

If the goal is to expand and improve Penn Station, the aforementioned changes must be considered as a part of this scope.

18

19

20

21

22

23

If this is a veiled giveaway to developers to get a somewhat improved Penn Station surrounded by glass and towers then this document chose the status quo and it will be another lost opportunity to thrust New York's transportation center into the 21st century.

24

25

This project can be an economic development engine for the immediate area and can

1

2 serve as a catalyst for the entire region as it
3 truly is a multi-modal transit center.

4

5

 Please let's not let that go to
waste.

6

 Thank you.

7

8

 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
your testimony.

9

10

 Our next speaker will be Paul
Devlin.

11

12

13

 Paul Devlin, if you -- I see that
you are ready to speak. You may begin when you're
ready.

14

 MR. DEVLIN: All right.

15

16

 I'm Paul Devlin, Co-Chair of the
Chelsea Land Use Committee of Community Board 4.

17

18

19

 I want to highlight three
important areas raised in our community for which
the Draft Scope falls significantly short.

20

21

22

23

24

25

 First is the declaration that no
trigger is meant for a community facility analysis.
And those of us in Chelsea don't simply consider
the 20 million square feet of proposed office
space, but we take into consideration users of
those offices.

1

2

3

4

5

Those buildings will be full of people who will require emergency response teams, medical services, child care services and educational services.

6

7

8

9

Those of us who live here know that the immediate surrounding area is in need of an urgent care facility, school seats and homeless and mental health services.

10

11

Clearly, a community facilities analysis is necessary.

12

13

14

15

Second, the Scope does not sufficiently address the socioeconomic impact of this proposal. It will, in fact, be both direct and indirect residential and business displacement.

16

17

18

19

For the directly displaced residents, the Scope must identify how many of these existing units are rent stabilized or under other affordable housing programs.

20

21

22

23

24

There is mention of 630 residential units in this proposal as an alternative scheme. But the Scope should include those 630 units in all analyses, not just alternative analysis.

25

The indirect displacement of

1

2 residents affects thousands of people who live
3 within a one-quarter mile radius of the proposed
4 project area. The current scope states that new
5 retail will be geared towards new commercial
6 tenants and thus not just displaced local
7 businesses.

8 This assumption is based on the
9 whole formula for retail consumption. And the
10 Scope must include forecasting for retail
11 consumption usage into 2040.

12 Third, is the projection of
13 historical resources. Given, as Layla mentioned,
14 that the initiation of New York City's Landmark
15 Preservation Commission was driven by the
16 demolition of the previous Penn Station, there is a
17 great deal of concern for protecting the historic
18 buildings in this area.

19 The proposal calls for razing
20 existing hotels to build new hotels. Razing hotels
21 that once held passageways below 7th Avenue,
22 connecting to Penn Station. The former Gimbles
23 store already has high ceilings and wide column
24 facing, which the proposal describes as a benefit
25 of new construction.

1

2

3

4

5

This scope should analyze adaptive reuse for historical structures within the front proposed project area rather than complete demolition.

6

Thanks for your time.

7

8

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your testimony.

9

10

Our next speaker will be Dale Corvino.

11

12

Dale Corvino, if you can unmute yourself.

13

MR. CORVINO: Can you hear me?

14

15

THE MODERATOR: Yes, we can hear you now.

16

17

18

MR. CORVINO: By the way, Celeste, the person from Brad Hoylman's office is Maia Berlow.

19

THE MODERATOR: Okay.

20

Thank you.

21

MR. CORVINO: All right.

22

Hello, everyone.

23

24

25

I'm Dale Corvino. I'm speaking as the Co-Chair of the Transportation Planning Committee of Community Board 4 and as a resident of

1

2 West 34th Street.

3

4 I want to address a number of
5 points that have been raised. I appreciate this
6 opportunity.

7

8 On the subject of equitable
9 practices, as it's outlined, there are no efforts
10 to include minority and women open business
11 enterprises as developers in construction as
12 regional operators or in other project related
13 capacity beyond the mandated minimum requirements.
14 The State should do better.

15

16 Towards this end of meaningful
17 participation for MWBEs, the proposal review
18 process should assure roles for many qualified
19 developers instead of skewing the project towards
20 one or two mega developers.

21

22 On methodology, the study should
23 compensate for the deficiency of the CEQR Manual.
24 The formula for vehicles were designed in the '70s
25 and there is consensus that they overstate
26 vehicular demand.

27

28 Even with the 2014 updates, it
29 does not properly consider travel demand for
30 cyclists, scooters, for-hire vehicles and delivery

1

2 and contractor trips. We have seen an enormous
3 growth in our district in these modes in recent
4 years.

5

Other speakers have spoke to this
6 but we need anticipate the implementation of
7 congestion pricing and its impacts on traffic loads
8 and on other transit modes.

9

The Port Authority of New York and
10 New Jersey is in the process of reimagining the
11 outdated bus terminal at 42nd Street. An effort
12 must be made to coordinate the design and
13 development of these two major transit hubs in our
14 district.

15

CB4 is on record as advocating for
16 a long distance bus terminal on the site of the
17 Javits marshaling yard. Its development would go a
18 long way in alleviating congestion in our district,
19 providing transit resilience during these massive
20 projects and creating a truly multi-modal transit
21 district.

22

Finally, there is a consensus of
23 transportation engineers advocating for through
24 running operations at Penn Station, which would
25 reduce or eliminate the need for the southern

1

2 expansion. The scheme relies on the Gateway Tunnel
3 Project, which has faced political setbacks.

4

Non-paired, through running (Zoom
5 inaudible) as proposed by groups like Rethink NYC,
6 would run LIRR and New Jersey Transit trains
7 through Penn Station to new termini at Secaucus and
8 Sunnyside. This alternative --

9

THE MODERATOR: Just a 15 second
10 warning.

11

MR. CORVINO: I'm on my last
12 sentence.

13

This alternative must be fully
14 examined.

15

Thank you very much.

16

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
17 your testimony.

18

And our next speaker will be Petra
19 Messick.

20

After which we're going to add in
21 Maia Berlow.

22

So Petra Messick, if you're ready
23 to begin, please unmute yourself.

24

MS. MESSICK: Good afternoon.

25

Thank you for the opportunity to

1

2 speak today.

3

4 My name is Petra Messick and I'm
5 Director of Planning of the Gateway Program for
6 Amtrak. And I'm delivering comments on behalf of
7 Amtrak today.

8

9 Amtrak has reviewed the Empire
10 Station Complex Draft Scope of Work and we are
11 pleased to support the goals of the General Project
12 Plan, including expansion of track and platform
13 capacity at New York's Penn Station and creation of
14 an integrated public transportation complex at the
15 center of a revitalized business district.

16

17 The expansion of Penn Station with
18 additional tracks and platforms is an integral
19 element of the Gateway Program to increase trans
20 Hudson rail capacity on Amtrak's northeast
21 corridor.

22

23 Expanding the footprint of Penn
24 Station in a way that connects to the planned new
25 Hudson River Tunnel, along with other investments
26 in New Jersey, will better connect Manhattan's
27 central business district with the fastest growing
28 commuter market in the region, New Jersey.

29

30 Building this project now will

1

2 benefit the region's economic recovery in the short
3 term by creating jobs and in the long term by
4 connecting New York City's employers with regional
5 workforce and vice-versa.

6

In addition to that broad goal of
7 increasing rail capacity in the heart of the
8 northeast corridor, Amtrak supports the key
9 elements of the plan, including:

10

Addressing the current conditions
11 in Penn Station;

12

Improving passenger, rail and
13 transit facilities; and,

14

Improving pedestrian circulation
15 access and safety.

16

We look forward to partnering with
17 ESD, as well as our railroad partners, MTA and New
18 Jersey Transit and the City of New York on this
19 redevelopment initiative to create a modern,
20 transit-oriented commercial district, centered
21 around Penn Station.

22

Alongside our railroad partners,
23 we continue to coordinate with ESD in planning for
24 future infrastructure improvements develops in
25 support of the expansion at Penn Station.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

Both the near term renovation and the long term expansion of Penn Station will help ensure the economic future of New York. We are grateful of the leadership of Governor Cuomo in jump starting this effort. It has been the subject of discussion for many years.

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

We look forward to ongoing and robust dialogue with all of our stakeholders and partners to develop a deeper understanding of community needs and desires in this process so that this expanded station can continue to serve our passengers, New York City residents, the region's commuters and passengers from around the country for generations to come.

16

Thank you very much.

17

18

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your testimony.

19

20

21

So at this time before we move on to the next five speakers, we're going to ask Maia Berlow to speak.

22

23

Maia Berlow, if you are -- if you can hear this, please join us. Unmute yourself.

24

MS. BERLOW: Thank you.

25

(Zoom inaudible.)

1

2

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very

3

much.

4

So then our next set of speakers

5

will come up just a moment. So our next set of

6

speakers, I'll read all five names first, will be:

7

Neville Perkins;

8

Hope Knight;

9

Bradley Brashears;

10

Joseph Quinton; and,

11

Daniel McFee.

12

So first on that list -- my

13

apologies -- first on that list will be Neville

14

Perkins.

15

Neville Perkins, if you can unmute

16

yourself, you may begin.

17

(No response.)

18

THE MODERATOR: Neville Perkins.

19

(No response.)

20

THE MODERATOR: We at this point

21

can't hear you but if you are able to unmute

22

yourself, you may begin.

23

(No response.)

24

THE MODERATOR: Neville Perkins.

25

(No response.)

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THE MODERATOR: We will move on to the next speaker for now. If you wish to try again later, please use the raise hand function and we'll add you to the speaker list. Otherwise, please feel free to submit your comments via e-mail or standard mail to the addresses that will appear on the screen periodically.

So the next speaker on our list will be Hope Knight.

Hope Knight, if you can turn on your video and unmute yourself.

We can hear you.

MS. KNIGHT: Good afternoon.

My name is Hope Knight and I'm President and CEO of the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation.

And I'm here today to speak to the economic development aspects of the Draft Scope.

I believe this project will bring long overdue improvements to Penn Station and Midtown, which will create enormous benefits for the community I serve, Jamaica, Queens.

My organization works to advance responsible development that will revitalize

1

2 southeast Queens and strengthen the region. As a
3 part of that work, we also support projects
4 throughout New York that will bring benefits to
5 Jamaica.

6

Midtown and Jamaica are linked.
7 Jamaica Station and Penn Station are two hubs of
8 the Long Island Railroad. Traveling between the
9 two is a 20 minute, one seat ride. These linkages
10 will not only strengthen LIRR connections like the
11 East Side Access Project once it is completed.

12

Because of the close connection,
13 improving Penn Station and building our surrounding
14 transit oriented commercial district is a
15 tremendous opportunity for Jamaica. Jamaica is
16 lucky to be an incredibly rich transit hub, served
17 not only by the LIRR but by numerous subway and bus
18 lines and the air train to JFK.

19

Investments in New York's transit
20 system only help Jamaica. In fact, one of GJDC's
21 strategies is to encourage transit oriented
22 development around Jamaica Station.

23

The community is already seeing a
24 surge in development of affordable housing and
25 projects.

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Office space and new hospitality businesses around Penn Station will create more jobs within commuting distance of Jamaica. This means greater career access for Jamaica's current residents. It may also increase demand for housing in Jamaica as Midtown workers searching for convenient and affordable housing look to Queens.

The Empire Station Complex Project also creates an opportunity for the hospitality sector. Jamaica's positioning in connecting JFK Airport to Midtown makes the neighborhood a strategic location.

Additionally, given the economic toll wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic, any responsible effort to create short term construction jobs and other careers in New York is critical to the City's recovery.

I am excited to see a Penn Station that is a great public amenity and strongly urge that the Scope greater emphasize the economic development aspects of the project.

Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your testimony.

1

2

Our next speaker will be Bradley

3

Brashears.

4

Bradley Brashears, if you can

5

please unmute yourself.

6

MR. BRASHEARS: I'm ready.

7

THE MODERATOR: Great. You may

8

begin.

9

MR. BRASHEARS: Hi. Good

10

afternoon.

11

My name is Bradley Brashears and

12

I'm the Planning Manager of the Permanent Citizens

13

Advisor Committee to the MTA, the CAC.

14

Thank you again for this

15

opportunity to speak.

16

While we and 650,000 daily

17

commuters are looking forward to a new and much

18

improved Penn Station, we have questions and

19

concerns on behalf of our riders of New York City

20

Transit, Long Island Railroad and Metro North

21

Railroad.

22

First, after this meeting, there

23

will be a 30-day public comment period, extended

24

from the original 10 days. While that's a good

25

start, we believe there should be a 45-day public

1

2 comment period to allow more time and for more
3 respondents.

4

The comment period also needs to
5 be adequately advertised to ensure maximum
6 participation.

7

Despite these concerns, we believe
8 that overall this format will allow for many and
9 for public involvement and provide a platform to
10 raise questions and concerns like the following:

11

COVID-19, will change the way
12 people travel and commute and should be considered
13 in the planning for the complex. Factors like
14 telecommuting and staggered working hours be
15 considered in the development of and operating
16 procedures for the complex.

17

Are ridership projections being
18 reevaluated?

19

With nine additional tracks and
20 five new platforms, would the four carriers,
21 Amtrak, Long Island Railroad, New Jersey Transit
22 and Metro North, get dedicated tracks or would they
23 all be sharing? Who gets priority and how would
24 this be affected by Metro North's (Zoom inaudible)
25 and access this project?

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Even though Moynihan Train Hall would be primarily utilized for Amtrak, platforms will not be extended west from their current positions. This means potentially long walks underground for customers. Will platform extensions be considered?

Value capture will fund the additional tracks to the south of Penn Station. Once the agreements are executed for the expansion and improvement, what funding mechanisms will be used for ongoing maintenance of the complex?

What happens if eminent domain does not go through?

What plans are there for signage of customers using the complex?

And will Penn Station expansion be delayed if the Hudson River and East River Tunnels are not repaired in a timely manner?

These and so many other questions are important. Therefore, we urge you to conduct a more robust public comment period to adequately hear from groups like ours, commuters and those affected by the development of the Empire Station Complex.

1

2

Thank you.

3

4

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
your testimony.

5

6

7

Our next speaker will be Jeremy
Colangelo-Bryan, who is speaking in lieu of Joseph
Fuente.

8

9

Jeremy Colagnelo-Bryan, if you can
begin speaking.

10

11

MR. COLANGELO-BRYAN: Can you
hear me now?

12

THE MODERATOR: Yes.

13

14

MR. COLANGELO-BRYAN: Great.
Thanks very much.

15

16

17

18

Energy is pleased to express its
support for the environmental assessment being
pursued by Empire State through the Draft Scope of
Work for the Empire Station Complex.

19

20

21

22

And I will say, we also appreciate
the technical coordination that has occurred among
Amtrak, ESD, the MTA and NJT in recent months to
prepare for this -- this analysis.

23

24

25

As you know, and New York Penn is
the highest ridership station on the NJT rail
system with about 95,000 boarding customers on a

1

2 typical weekday in 2019.

3

4 For decades there has been steady
5 and significant growth in NJT rail ridership to
6 Penn Station, New York and we do anticipate that to
7 continue, COVID-19 notwithstanding, looking into
8 the future.

8

9 We have seen annual growth rates
10 of about one to two percent over the past decades,
11 which followed NJT's completion of several rail
12 projects in New Jersey that expanded direct rail
13 access to New York and we expect those growth rates
14 to continue.

14

15 Indeed, our future projections
16 show a strong demand and indicate NJ Transit rail
17 ridership to New York could more than double over
18 the next 25 years if infrastructure is built to
19 support that level of demand.

19

20 And as I mentioned NJT rail
21 ridership has continued to increase despite the
22 various, well-documented challenges associated with
23 the rail operations at New York Penn Station.
24 Acknowledging these issues, NJ Transit, in
25 partnership with Amtrak has recently committed to
work together to identify and develop a series of

1

2 station improvements that will enhance the customer
3 experience in the near and median term.

4

5 In addition to changes to the
6 passenger environment above the track level,
7 additional station capacity was needed in midtown
8 Manhattan so that NJ Transit could meet the
9 projected customer volumes.

9

10 NJ Transit has, for the past two
11 decades, supported to advance comprehensive efforts
12 to develop Penn Station capacity and is pleased
13 that the need for such capacity is a component of
14 this analysis.

14

15 We do pledge to work with you to
16 continue to articulate our projected needs and the
17 resulting infrastructure requirements.

17

18 We look forward to additional
19 coordination and cooperation with Amtrak,
20 yourselves, the MTA and various other parties in
21 our shared pursuit of New York Penn improvements
22 and the expansion of rail station capacity in
23 midtown Manhattan.

23

24 And that concludes my remarks.

24

25 Thank you.

25

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for

1

2 your testimony.

3

4 McFee.

5

(No response.)

6

7 THE MODERATOR: Daniel McFee, if
8 you can unmute yourself, you may begin.

9

(No response.)

10

11 THE MODERATOR: Do we have Daniel
12 McFee on the call?

13

(No response.)

14

15 THE MODERATOR: Daniel McFee,
16 please let me know if you're ready.

17

(No response.)

18

19 THE MODERATOR: Okay. Daniel
20 McFee, we'll move on to the next speaker for now.
21 If you wish to try again, please use the raise hand
22 function and we'll add you to the speaker list.
23 Otherwise, please feel free to e-mail or mail your
24 comments to the addresses that show periodically on
25 your screen.

26

27 So we'll move on to the next group
28 of five speakers. I'll read all five names so that
29 you can get ready and then we'll begin with the
30 first one.

1

2

Our next five speakers will be:

3

Carlo Scissura;

4

Gary LaBarbera;

5

Richard Gilligan;

6

John Barelli, Jr., and,

7

Julia Campanelli.

8

First of those will be Carlo

9

Scissura.

10

Hi. You are not muted so you may

11

begin when you're ready.

12

MR. SCISSURA: Great. I'm ready.

13

Good afternoon, everyone.

14

And thank you to the team at ESD

15

for putting this together.

16

We are clearly living through some

17

trying times in our City, our State and our nation.

18

And as the City and the State continue to map out

19

its recovery, the construction industry clearly is

20

a critical industry moving forward.

21

In 2019 it was a key driver of

22

employment throughout the New York Metropolitan

23

area, accounting for over \$60 billion in economic

24

activity.

25

To bring New York back better and

1

2 reimagine our infrastructure and challenges of the
3 21st century, clearly the Empire Station Complex
4 plan is at the top of our agenda.

5

6 Thanks to Governor Cuomo's
7 leadership, the plan is being fast tracked to help
8 with the recovery, to create jobs and -- I'm sorry,
9 am I on?

10

11 THE MODERATOR: Yeah, we can still
12 hear you.

13

14 MR. SCISSURA: I just got a notice
15 saying that the host needed me. Okay.

16

17 The plan is being fast tracked to
18 help the recovery and obviously it couldn't come at
19 a more opportune time. COVID-19 has exposed the
20 need for smart development, flexible transportation
21 systems that commuter feel safe and secure. This
22 would bring much needed flexibility to Penn Station
23 and it would open up an enormous amount of benefits
24 to riders and the community, including peaks in
25 congestion, the hell travel experience and more
26 navigable spaces inside and outside.

27

28 We've heard about Penn Station for
29 decades. We know it's cramped. It's crowded. It
30 has the decaying public spaces. It is not a place

1

2 where New Yorkers should arrive, whether we live
3 here, whether we work here or whether it's people
4 visiting our City. And it's been a symbolic
5 testament to government inertia and inaction but
6 that has changed. Now it is changed because of the
7 leadership of Governor Cuomo and everyone involved
8 in this project.

9

We believe that it is a
10 transformation of the surrounding area into a
11 modern central business district that will help pay
12 for the public improvements. Now the critical
13 public transit connections we are very excited
14 about and, of course, the Penn Station renovation.

15

There's great momentum on the way.
16 Obviously, the entire west side is transforming.
17 The Moynihan Train Hall will open later this year.

18

And I do want to just say thank
19 you to Michael Evans, for his legacy in making sure
20 that that project moves forward.

21

And I think the exciting thing is
22 that Empire Station Complex plan will turn the Penn
23 district into a world-class transit oriented
24 development district that New York deserves.

25

And we are excited to support it.

1

2 The New York Building Congress supports the Empire
3 Station Project, the Empire Station Complex --

4 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
5 your time.

6 MR. SCISSURA: -- will jump start
7 the economy.

8 Thank you.

9 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
10 your testimony.

11 We'll move on to the next speaker
12 who will be Gary LaBarbera.

13 Gary LaBarbera, you are on.

14 MR. LA BARBERA: One second. I'm
15 muted.

16 THE MODERATOR: No, now we can
17 hear you. You may begin when you're ready.

18 MR. LA BARBERA: You can hear me?
19 Okay.

20 THE MODERATOR: Yes, if you'll
21 state your name and your affiliation for the
22 recording.

23 MR. LA BARBERA: Sure.

24 Yes, okay.

25 My name is Gary LaBarbera. I am

1

2 the President of the New York City Building and
3 Construction Trades Council, as well as a TAC
4 member.

5

6 First of all, I want to thank all
7 of you who have put together this scoping meeting
8 and I compliment on the way it's being conducted.

9

10 As a TAC member, as well as
11 President of the New York City Building and
12 Construction Trades Council, and on behalf of the
13 Council, I am very pleased to support the ESD
14 Scoping document as designed.

15

16 My colleague, Carlos Scissura, who
17 just spoke, really illustrated all of the positive
18 aspects of this project. I don't want to take time
19 and be redundant but let me say that this is a
20 project that has been discussed for decades. This
21 is a project that will bring a new vibrance and
22 economic development to the community.

23

24 This is a project that the
25 ridership needs desperately of the MTA. Our
26 office, my office is located in this area right on
27 31st Street. We see it every day, in particular,
28 pre-COVID, how congested this area is. When we
29 have a more viable and sustainable infrastructure

1

2 that supports public transportation, it will
3 alleviate much of the vehicle traffic in the area.

4

All of the new construction
5 projects in terms of the commercial buildings will
6 bring business and create opportunities for local
7 small businesses.

8

This is a project that is
9 critically important to the vibrance and the future
10 of New York City and we are very pleased to support
11 it and we'll continue to support it and are looking
12 forward to working with all the partners involved
13 to build the best project in New York City.

14

Thank you very much.

15

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
16 your testimony.

17

Our next speaker will be Richard
18 Gilligan.

19

Richard Gilligan, if you can
20 unmute yourself.

21

MR. GILLIGAN: Can you hear me?

22

THE MODERATOR: Yes, we can hear
23 you. You can begin when you're ready.

24

MR. GILLIGAN: My name is Richard
25 Gilligan. I'm a business agent or Plumbers Local

1

2 Union No. 1 in New York City.

3

Good afternoon.

4

Thank you for giving me the chance
5 to testify today.

6

As a life-long New Yorker and
7 someone who has used mass transit for the last 35
8 years of my working life, I think I can speak on
9 the necessity of improving Penn Station. All who
10 use this system know it's crowded and plagued with
11 delays due to infrastructure, breakdowns, signals,
12 switches and the like.

13

The system is in dire need of
14 upgrades. Even with the upgrades, there are only
15 so many tracks, which also contributes to delays.
16 The system needs the project to bring us into the
17 future.

18

With all of the building going on,
19 it's adding more and more people to the system
20 every day and adding tracks will help to improve
21 people in and out of the City.

22

With reliable service comes the
23 idea commuters will use the system rather than
24 drive into the City, something being pushed today.

25

In addition to the commuters

1

2 benefiting, this project will create thousands of
3 good paying construction jobs and give workers the
4 chance to be able to earn a fair wage, medical
5 benefits and it gives the apprentices the chance to
6 join the middle class and not just have a job but a
7 career in the building trades.

8 Plumbers Local Union No. 1 is
9 support of the project and I appreciate the chance
10 to speak here this afternoon.

11 THE MODERATOR: Thank you very
12 much for your testimony.

13 Our next speaker will be John
14 Barelli, Jr.

15 (No response.)

16 THE MODERATOR: John Barelli,
17 Jr., please let me know if you're ready to speak.

18 (No response.)

19 THE MODERATOR: Do we have John
20 Barelli on the call?

21 (No response.)

22 THE MODERATOR: Okay. John
23 Barelli, Jr. We'll move on to the next speaker for
24 now. If you wish to try again later, please use
25 the raise hand function and we'll add you to the

1

2 speaker list again. Otherwise, please feel free to
3 e-mail or mail your comments to the e-mail that
4 will appear on the screen periodically.

5

6 And the next speaker on our list
7 is Julia Campanelli. But I believe that Julia
8 Campanelli is not present.

8

9 And so we're going to move on the
10 next group of speakers. I'll read all the names
11 first. And I will also let you know that at 5:30,
12 we'll be taking a short ten-minute break as those
13 of you can see, our harding working ASL
14 interpreter, a well as a stenographer and everyone
15 needs a moment to stretch legs.

15

16 So we'll begin with our next group
17 but at 5:30, I'll make another announcement that
18 we'll take a break.

18

19 So our next group of speakers will
20 be:

20

Brian Fritsch;

21

Felicia Park-Rogers;

22

Cassandra Carrillo;

23

Robert Pale; and,

24

Sally Gellert.

25

So Brian Fritsch, if you can

1

2 unmute yourself, you may begin when you're ready.

3

Hold on. You are muted right now.

4

See if on your screen -- there you go.

5

MR. FRITSCH: Sorry about that.

6

I'm Brian Fritsch, manager of

7

Advocacy Campaigns for Regional Plan Association.

8

Thank you for the opportunity to

9

provide testimony today.

10

We strongly believe that a well

11

functioning Penn Station, which acts like the heart

12

of our region's transportation system is crucial

13

for a healthy, equitable and prosperous regional

14

economy.

15

Over the long term, we will need

16

more capacity at Penn Station, especially as we

17

recover from the Corona Virus and continue to

18

grapple with climate change.

19

For many years RPA has supported

20

the overall goal of this effort to add the capacity

21

at Penn, unify the transit complex and plan for the

22

development of the district to take advantage of

23

the growth and provide support for public

24

investment.

25

That's why, while we are pleased

1

2 to see the Draft Scope for the Empire Station
3 Complex, the lack of detail provided on key parts
4 of the plan, including renovations to Penn Station,
5 the configuration of Penn South and the public
6 realm improvement makes it impossible for us to
7 fully assess the plan.

8 Having a clearer picture of the
9 proposed public spaces, both in and surrounding the
10 station is particularly important as we hope to
11 avoid the problems plaguing the existing station
12 and instead use the funding to construct a modern,
13 free running station that is fully integrated into
14 a unified station complex.

15 Essential safety improvement must
16 include better access for riders with disabilities,
17 combine station signage, improve wayfinding, better
18 vertical circulation and widening concourses with
19 better connections to the subways and street.

20 In short, what does the public get
21 in terms of public space and transit improvement
22 from this proposal?

23 Moreover, we are concerned about
24 the narrow boundaries of the proposed district make
25 it very difficult, if not impossible, to consider

1

2 all of the potential options that make a truly
3 comprehensive district planning process to
4 evaluate.

5

6 At the very least, the boundaries
7 should include Harold and Greenley Squares, all of
8 34th Street from 6th to 8th Avenue and the entirety
9 of the blocks containing parts of Penn Station
10 South.

11

12 While we agree that the
13 extraordinary transit capacity and connectivity
14 provided by Penn and the subway system make this
15 area uniquely suited for dense development and an
16 appropriate area for future growth, bringing over
17 200,000 additional riders and pedestrians to an
18 already crowded station and neighborhood once
19 Gateway and the Penn access projects are fully
20 completed, will require transit and public space
21 improvements far beyond the current boundaries of
22 the proposed project space and should be included
23 in the project's process.

24

25 We also urge ESD and the project
26 partners to engage the public in a robust urban
27 design strategy and consider creating a great
28 public amenity of the existing Penn Station by

1

2 carefully considering removing the Hulu Theater or
3 moving Madison Square Garden to a new location to
4 allow for both a world-class facility and improved
5 pedestrian flows throughout the complex.

6 One -- one last point, you know,
7 we truly believe public discussions like this are
8 crucial to reaching a more positive outcome as such
9 until the questions concerned in this testimony are
10 addressed, we cannot be supportive of how the
11 project is advancing.

12 THE MODERATOR: Great.

13 Thank you for your testimony.

14 Our next speaker will be
15 Felicia -- excuse me just a moment, I want to make
16 sure I got it right. Felicia Park-Rogers.

17 THE MODERATOR: Felicia
18 Park-Rodgers, I see you're unmuted, you may begin
19 when you're ready.

20 MS. PARK-ROGERS: My name is
21 Felicia Park-Rogers. I am the Director of Regional
22 Infrastructure Projects for Tristate Transportation
23 Campaign.

24 On behalf of TSTC, I would like to
25 voice our support for the mission of the Empire

1

2 Station Complex. This Scoping document points us
3 in the direction of reimagining the street scape
4 and attracting businesses, residents and visitors
5 with integrated transit solutions.

6

7 It is an excellent start toward
8 realizing the potential of this district, which is
9 underutilized and dotted with low rise building and
10 random parking lots.

11

12 As a tenant in the Penn Station
13 district for decades, we at TSTC are keenly aware
14 of the shortcomings in the area and its potential.
15 We believe, however, that it is vitally important
16 that each component of the plan work in complement
17 with the other.

18

19 We are troubled about releasing
20 and finalizing this Scope of Work before the master
21 plan is in place. Having a thoughtful and
22 carefully constructed vision of how the below
23 ground and above ground pieces of this puzzle fit
24 together are even more crucial, given that our City
25 and State have been thrust into the midst of a
26 global pandemic.

27

28 One of the most impactful aspects
29 of the pandemic is how it may change work commuting

1

2 and office patterns long into the future. This
3 plan should reflect an emerging and changed reality
4 without veering into costly and risky
5 overdevelopment.

6

7

Some concerns that arise from this
scoping plan are:

8

9

10

11

1. We would like to see the
public space be more robust. In particular, we
would like it to better connect with transit
planning from the master plan;

12

13

14

15

16

17

2. The plan is missing surface
transit improvements, such as a convergent of 34th
Street into a crosstown bus way and the addition of
a 32nd Street pedestrian way between 7th and 6th
Avenues to better connect pedestrians to Herald
Square and the many transit options there.

18

19

20

While it is good that there is a
underground connection, above ground pedestrian
routes are equally, if not more important.

21

22

23

And additionally, we believe that
there should be traffic calming measures on 7th
Avenue.

24

25

Thirdly, with block 8 or 9 cut in
half, we are concerned that this will preclude the

1

2 possibility of the future move of Madison Square
3 Garden, which would make significant improvements
4 for regional transit possible at its current
5 location.

6

We have some questions.

7

8 Does this plan make future through
9 running rail service possible?

9

10 Will new building foundations
11 create a barrier to that?

11

12 We already know that Amtrak will
13 not support a proposal with a perm terminal.

13

14 What has the coordination been
15 with the City and the Department of Transportation?

15

16 And can large amounts of block 780
17 be repurposed and redesigned without being torn
18 down in virtually its entirety?

18

19 Some of these buildings are
20 historically relevant and to scale with existing
21 neighborhood while also providing density
22 possibility for multi-purpose usage

22

23 What evidence is there supporting
24 an increase to 20 million square feet commercial
25 office?

25

How does this support the

1

2 expansion of platforms in Penn Station?

3

4 Can we know this without the
5 master plan being in place?

6

7 And lastly, do the stairway
8 improvements include any improvements in
9 accessibility for the disabled or those with
10 physical limitations with additional elevators or
11 escalators?

12

13 Thank you for your time and your
14 consideration.

15

16 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
17 your perfectly timed testimony.

18

19 Our next speaker will be Cassandra
20 Carrillo.

21

22 I believe I saw you earlier. So
23 if you can unmute yourself, you may begin when you
24 are ready.

25

MS. CARRILLO: Good evening.

26

27 And thank you for the opportunity
28 to speak this afternoon.

29

30 My name is Cassie Carrillo. And
31 I'm a representative from SEIU 32 BJ.

32

33 I'm here to talk about the
34 opportunities that the Empire Station Complex will

1

2 provide to our City and create good jobs.

3

4 32 BJ is the largest property
5 services union in the country. The union is
6 comprised of more than 175,000 cleaners, security
7 officers, floor persons, airport workers and
8 building maintenance service workers across 11
9 states.

9

10 New York represents more than
11 85,000 workers in New York City, including over 100
12 members who work at Penn Station.

12

13 32 BJ supports responsible
14 development of the Empire Station Complex that
15 helps create good jobs and raise standards for
16 working people.

16

17 The Empire Station Complex will
18 generate hundreds of new jobs, including more than
19 600 estimated building service jobs.

19

20 We are pleased that Vornado Realty
21 Trust, the owner of a significant amount of
22 property in the neighborhood surrounding Penn
23 Station, has made a commitment to ensure building
24 service workers earn the prevailing wage.

24

25 These jobs could be life changing
for New Yorkers. For instance, a cleaner earning

1

2 the prevailing wage earns \$27.25 per hour. This is
3 before factoring in the additional \$13.33 per hour
4 benefit rate that goes to cover benefits like full
5 family health care, a secure pension, training and
6 legal benefits.

7

8 We also support this project
9 because of the substantial improvement to public
10 transportation that our members rely on.

11

12 The Empire Station Complex will
13 generate revenue for transit improvements at Penn
14 Station and nearby Grand Central Station, leading
15 to improved commutes.

16

17 The project will also alleviate
18 over crowding and transfer abilities at Penn
19 Station. The project will continue to contribute
20 to economic growth in New York City and the region
21 with new high density commercial projects that have
22 access to public transit. This provides an
23 opportunity for good jobs that pay family
24 sustaining wages and give workers significant
25 benefits.

26

27 We look forward to working
28 collaboratively with the public, private and
29 community stakeholders throughout this process.

1

2

Thank you.

3

4

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
your testimony.

5

6

Our next speaker will be Robert
Pale.

7

8

Robert Pale, if you are present,
could you please flag or unmute yourself.

9

(No response.)

10

THE MODERATOR: Robert Pale.

11

(No response.)

12

13

THE MODERATOR: Do we have
Robert Pale?

14

(No response.)

15

16

THE MODERATOR: Oh, I believe --
we may have Ryan Felmet, who is speaking on behalf
of Robert Pale.

17

18

Hold on. We need you to unmute
yourself. Hold on one moment, Mr. Felmet.

19

20

Can we have someone from our
team --

21

22

MR. PALE: I don't know why I'm
showing up as Ryan Felmet. I'm Robert Pale.

23

24

THE MODERATOR: Oh, great.

25

You may begin when you're ready.

1

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MR. PALE: Okay.

3

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Thanks very much for the opportunity to comment.

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I can't support the project in its current form. While it includes some good aspects, such as additional stairwells to subways, additional entrances to the Penn Station Complex and a general commitment to why they made certain passageways, including the Gimbles passageway, which will help us by simplifying the connection to PATH, it does not include the central concourse and it does not include Amtrak's entrance that comes out to the Madison Square Garden taxi waiting.

The worst aspect of this plan is that it includes the expansion of Penn Station into a block of New York City, an expansion that was not needed. It is not true that Penn Station's track capacity is being used to its full potential. We know this from a 2014 report that Amtrak itself put out. And it found that converting trains that turn around in Penn Station into through running trains to keep going in the same direction, would raise capacity of each track from three to four trains per hour, which is today's value to five per hour.

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It notes that the limiting factor in capacity is passenger egress from the platforms. And it does not include the stairwells that Moynihan has already delivered and will deliver by next year. And for that reason it probably underestimates but it's possible with (Zoom inaudible).

So if we're prepared to spend \$8 billion on Penn South, we should be prepared to look at implementing improving -- not the least reason for which because we can almost certainly do it for less.

You can re-equip all of New Jersey Transit and Long Island Railroad entirely with new electrical multiple units that can use third rail wire and run through effortlessly from Long Island to Mid Jersey for somewhere in the neighborhood of \$5 billion.

And then if it just achieves the same yield per dollar in terms of tunnel lane the MTA achieved with its tunnel under Second Avenue, the remaining \$3 billion will be able to build the new tunnels to New Jersey and the new one-mile tunnel to Grand Central Terminal from the lower

1

2 tracks of Penn Station.

3

4 Let's talk about what that would
5 enable us to do --

6

7 THE MODERATOR: Just a brief, ten
8 second warning, sir.

9

10 MR. PALE: Sure.

11

12 Amtrak Gateway should deliver a
13 number of trains. The capacity will be increased
14 if the -- if those trains can also run through to
15 Grand Central and then to upstate New York rather
16 than having to turn back around, wasting --

17

18 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
19 your time.

20

21 If you have additional testimony
22 that you would like to share, please -- please feel
23 free to submit via e-mail or standard mail to the
24 addresses that are coming up.

25

26 We're going to have -- our next
27 speakers is Sally Gellert. If you are present,
28 we'll have to speak and then after that, we're
29 going to ten minute -- a short ten-minute break.

30

31 So Sally Gellert.

32

33 Do we have you on the call?

34

35 (No response.)

1

2

THE MODERATOR: Sally Gellert,

3

please let me know if you're ready.

4

(No response.)

5

THE MODERATOR: No. So we're

6

going to move on to our break for now.

7

Sally Gellert, if you wish to try

8

again later, please use the raise hand function and

9

we'll add you to the speaker list. Otherwise, you

10

may e-mail your comments to the e-mail address that

11

will appear.

12

So we'll now be taking a short

13

ten-minute recess. We will reconvene at 5:49 p.m.

14

for our next set of speakers.

15

If you have any immediate

16

questions or concerns, you may e-mail to our e-mail

17

address at the bottom of your screen,

18

help@publicworkspartners.com.

19

20

(At 5:39 p.m., the hearing was

21

temporarily recessed.)

22

(At 5:49 p.m., the hearing was

23

reconvened)

24

25

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon,

1

2 everyone.

3

4 And welcome back to the Empire
5 Station Complex Public Scoping Meeting.

6

7 We just have had a ten-minute
8 recess and we are now preparing to resume the
9 testimony with our next group of speakers.

10

11 If you stepped away and are
12 rejoining us, I'll just remind you that -- excuse
13 me, we ask that you hide all non-video participants
14 so you will have the easiest time seeing only
15 myself, the ASL interpreter as needed and the time
16 keeper and the person actually giving the
17 testimony.

18

19 Also, if you signed up to speak
20 during the registration process, we have your name
21 on our speaker's list and it will be called in the
22 order in which it was received. If you did not
23 sign up to speak during the initial registration
24 and you would like to speak, please use the raise
25 hand function on the Zoom. Instructions are
26 showing on your screen right now.

27

28 And if you call in by phone only,
29 you may dial *9 on your keypad to -- excuse me, to
30 indicate your desire to speak.

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So I see we have a number of people who have rejoined us. I'm going to bring back the list of our next group of speakers.

But before that, we did have a few speakers prior to the break who were not -- were not there at the time when their name was called. We are working on compiling a list and we'll call those names back out again.

In the meantime, our next group of speakers -- I'll read all five names and then we'll invite the first speaker to begin. So our next five speakers will be:

Alexander Bruno;

Edward McWilliams;

Michael O'Toole;

Denis Kilduff; and,

Anthony Falleo.

So Alexander Bruno, please unmute yourself. I'll give you a moment to get ready to speak.

MR. BRUNO: Okay. Can you hear me?

THE MODERATOR: Yes, we can. You can begin when you're ready.

1

2

MR. BRUNO: Good evening.

3

4

And thank you everybody for this opportunity to speak.

5

6

7

8

First off, I'd like to say my name is Alex Bruno. I am with Local 6A Cement Concrete Laborers of New York. I am also a long-time commuter of the LIRR.

9

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14

As we all know, this needs improvement. I feel where the improvements will come is underground. I feel that, you know, between transportation and, also, transient walkways through and underneath, will alleviate a lot of the problems around that area.

15

16

17

18

We all understand congestion. We all understand things get old and they begin to break down and this is needed now. Not yesterday, not tomorrow but it's needed now.

19

20

21

22

23

I've spent a lot of nights sleeping at Penn Station because of train delays, accidents or what have you. I've experienced stabbings, robberies, all sorts of things through my years of commuting on the LIRR.

24

25

But I don't want to sound like a computer here and ramble off a lot of statistics

1

2 and facts but I will state the obvious. This
3 project needs to go away -- I mean go forward and I
4 would like to show 6A support for the Empire
5 Station Complex.

6 Thank you everybody and good
7 evening.

8 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
9 your testimony.

10 Give me one moment -- our next
11 speaker will be Edward McWilliams.

12 Edward McWilliams.

13 Please take a moment to get ready
14 to speak.

15 MR. MC WILLIAMS: Okay. Can you
16 hear me now?

17 THE MODERATOR: Yes. You may
18 begin when you're ready.

19 MR. MC WILLIAMS: I'm ready now.

20 Thank you very much, Celeste for
21 bringing everybody here together.

22 I would like to commend Governor
23 Cuomo, the Empire State Development Corporation,
24 Vornado Realty Trust and the leadership of all the
25 transportation agencies in New York City, people

1

2 from Community Board 4, Community Board 5, all the
3 stakeholders who have an interest in the
4 redevelopment of the Penn Station area.

5 My name's Ed McWilliams. I'm with
6 the New York City District Council of Carpenters.
7 We have about 20,000 members. We also represent
8 900 employers here in New York City, many who live
9 and work here in New York City -- many more who
10 travel through Penn Station every day to and from
11 work.

12 All right.

13 It's not to redevelop all of Penn
14 Station district. Again, we're in strong support
15 of the Empire Station Complex Project.

16 An as-of-right development where
17 developers are building one building at a time
18 would never achieve, or could never deliver to the
19 future of New York City, the transportation
20 infrastructure that we need going forward.

21 Modern cities rely on clean,
22 modern and healthy transportation infrastructure to
23 maintain -- have a high capacity for people moving
24 in and out seamlessly, not relying on vehicles for
25 transportation but coming in and out of the City on

1

2 good, clean transportation infrastructure.

3

4 We know that Vornado Realty Trust
5 has a tremendous reputation for supporting
6 stakeholders in all their developments and they
7 build the highest quality developments on New York
8 City. They're very, very good to work with. I
9 think we're lucky to be working with them, with the
10 Empire State Development on this project.

11

12 We'll follow up but this is really
13 the economic engine of the future.

14

15 Carlo Scissura spoke about it.
16 Hope Knight spoke about it earlier, to move people
17 through from Jamaica and Penn Station.

18

19 We need this project. We need it
20 to go forward. We're in very, very strong support
21 and we look forward to working with you and all the
22 stakeholders to build the best possible project in
23 New York City for all of us for decades to come.

24

25 Thank you.

26

27 THE MODERATOR: Thank you very
28 much for your testimony.

29

30 Our next speaker is Michael
31 O'Toole.

32

33 (No response.)

1

2

THE MODERATOR: Michael O'Toole.

3

We haven't seen you as being present on the call.

4

If someone is here to speak under

5

Michael O'Toole or if you joined via phone, please

6

let us know.

7

(No response.)

8

THE MODERATOR: Michael O'Toole

9

or anyone who -- I believe we have had someone

10

raise their hand. Okay.

11

All right.

12

We don't have Michael O'Toole on.

13

So we are going to -- we'll move

14

on to the next speaker for now. If you wish to try

15

again later, please use the raise hand function and

16

we'll add you to the list for speaking or you can

17

feel free to e-mail or send your comments to the

18

addresses on the screen.

19

Our next speaker will be Denis

20

Kilduff.

21

Unmute yourself, please.

22

All right.

23

MR. KILDUFF: Okay.

24

My name is Denis Kilduff. I'm a

25

member of Local 1 Elevator Constructors. I'm the

1

2 business agent for the Local.

3

I'm here to speak on behalf of
4 this project, Local 1, the Elevator Constructors of
5 New York and New Jersey.

6

We are in favor of this program --
7 this project. I'm sorry.

8

We feel that this project would be
9 a great asset to the City of New York and the area
10 where it's going to be built.

11

Some of the couple of key things
12 that we think that are good for the project, this
13 project will increase the transit system for the
14 area. We have a lot of our members live in -- on
15 the Island and in New Jersey and they commute
16 through Penn Station. This will be a great asset
17 to them, this transformation of both the Penn
18 Station and the addition of Moynihan Station.

19

It will increase the traffic and
20 train capacities. And on a personal note from
21 myself, as a big Ranger fan, I use the New Jersey
22 Transit to get back and forth to Ranger games. And
23 this would be great for me to get to the games.

24

How would this project benefit the
25 community? A lot of talk about what's in the sort

1

2 of community. The community is going to get a less
3 pedestrian congestion with the addition of
4 underground corridors for people to get to
5 different parts of the area with the -- when they
6 get off the trains at Penn Station.

7 There will be bike lanes. There
8 will be a plaza -- it will be set up in the south
9 end of the Penn Station, which it's going to be a
10 drawing area for the people that live in the
11 community. The residents in the area will be
12 getting much needed -- this will be getting a much
13 needed facelift that's needed for a very long time.

14 The pedestrian traffic will be
15 eased through wider sidewalks and the underground
16 corridors, like I said before. The corridors will
17 also be used to take pedestrian traffic off the
18 street. It will keep the area free and so the
19 community can get around.

20 As far as the businesses in the
21 area, adding more office space and hotel will
22 increase the business area, which is much needed in
23 that area. It'll help -- it'll help the, the
24 residents with jobs. The jobs that are there, the
25 construction jobs that will be going on and the

1

2 permanent jobs that will be there when this project
3 is finally completed.

4

Again, as a member of Local 1, we
5 are in full support of this project going forward.
6 We will do everything we can to make this project a
7 very successful project. And we wish that this
8 thing continues to move forward.

9

And thank you for your time.

10

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very
11 much for your testimony.

12

Our next speaker is Anthony
13 Falleo.

14

Anthony Falleo. There you are.

15

MR. FALLEO: Hi, Celeste.

16

Thank you.

17

THE MODERATOR: You may start when
18 you're ready.

19

MR. FALLEO: Okay.

20

Thank you for the opportunity for
21 me to relay the opinion of the 30,000 members of
22 Local 3 IBEW.

23

My name is Anthony Falleo and I am
24 a business representative of the Local 3 IBEW.

25

Just a brief background. As a

1

2 30-year plus member of the construction division
3 for Local 3, I was fortunate enough to work on a
4 number of transportation expansion projects,
5 including the original LaGuardia Airport expansion
6 back in the late '80s, early '90s.

7 I've also worked on numerous
8 terminal expansions at both LaGuardia and Kennedy
9 Airport, as well as the Air Train project. So I
10 know firsthand the importance of transportation
11 projects both to the community, to the building
12 trades as a whole and to the greater New York.
13 It's all positive.

14 I want -- I'm also responsible for
15 all MTA construction for all Local 3 contractors
16 and our members and I'm extremely proud to
17 represent the men and women that call the Penn
18 Station and the Moynihan Train Station currently
19 under construction. I'm very proud to represent
20 them.

21 So as a whole, as a union, our
22 members, as well as our contractors, we support
23 this project as well as Governor Cuomo's commitment
24 to bring New York City into the 21st century with a
25 much needed upgrade.

1

2 So, again, thank you, Celeste for
3 the opportunity to represent the men and women of
4 Local 3 tonight at this meeting.

5 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
6 your testimony.

7 Our next group of speakers -- I'll
8 read all five speakers and then we'll start with
9 the -- with the first one.

10 So our next group of five speakers
11 will be:

12 John Napisa;

13 Tony LaRosa;

14 July -- or Julie Yang;

15 Samuel Turvey; and,

16 Jeffery File.

17 So first on that list will be John
18 Napisa.

19 MR. NAPISA: Hello.

20 THE MODERATOR: Hi. We can hear
21 you.

22 MR. NAPISA: Hi.

23 Good afternoon.

24 I am John Napisa of the
25 Association for a Better New York, a non-profit

1

2 organization dedicated to the renewal of New York
3 City's people, businesses and communities.

4

5 Given the many challenges we face
6 today, it was important that we prioritize a
7 concrete actionable plans that can aid in New York
8 City's recovery into a more equitable place.

8

9 One area we can focus our
10 immediate efforts on is operating our public system
11 and reinvesting in our central businesses to build
12 our economy and prepare for the future of work to
13 ensure New Yorkers feel safe interacting with our
14 City.

14

15 Governor Cuomo's Empire Station
16 Complex plan achieves all of these goals. There
17 was a visionary plan when he announced it at our
18 luncheon earlier this year and it remains a
19 comprehensive, innovative plan with even more
20 urgency now.

20

21 Reinvesting in the Penn Station
22 district will not only help our regional economy
23 recover from the pandemic's economic hit but it is
24 also a necessary step to modernize the western
25 hemisphere's busiest transit hub.

25

Anyone who has been to Penn

1

2 Station during rush hours knows how overcrowded and
3 cramped it becomes. In a post COVID world, having
4 minimal pedestrian congestion is going to be of the
5 utmost importance.

6 The Empire Station Complex plan
7 addresses that issue with increased track and
8 terminal capacity. The Governor's plan will also
9 bring much needed short term and long term benefits
10 to New York.

11 In the short term, this project
12 will generate thousands of jobs and millions of
13 dollars in City and State tax revenue.

14 In an unprecedented discussion,
15 like that one we're at the very beginning of, we
16 cannot understate the importance of private
17 communities. We must turn to proven avenues of a
18 recovery, like the construction and development
19 industry to get -- to help New York get back on its
20 track.

21 In the long term, the plan will
22 not only create a better, modern Penn district but
23 will significantly improve the surrounding
24 neighborhood through public realm and
25 transportation equivalents.

1

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7

The district has seen nearly no new development in more than 30 years, which has left the existing realm and commercial space undesirable to tech, media and professional services firms that make up the bulk of today's office demand.

8

9

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12

The Empire Station Complex plan will operate in both of these areas being more attractive to companies to invest in our City and stimulate our economy for the foreseeable future.

13

14

15

16

This plan will realize the potential of the state-of-the-art transit oriented commercial district while supporting New York's -- sustain work recovery from our current moment of crisis.

17

Thank you.

18

19

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your testimony.

20

21

So our next speaker will be Tony LaRosa.

22

23

24

Tony LaRosa, if you are here or if someone -- if you're here or under a different log in, please let us know.

25

(No response.)

1

2

THE MODERATOR: Tony LaRosa.

3

(No response.)

4

THE MODERATOR: Okay. Tom

5

LaRosa, we're going to move on to the next speaker

6

for now. If you'd like to try again later, please

7

use the raise hand function on Zoom or dial *9 on

8

your phone. You can also e-mail or mail your

9

comments.

10

So with that, our next speaker

11

will be July Yang.

12

And I see you. So if you'd like

13

to just unmute yourself, you may begin when you're

14

ready.

15

MS. YANG: Can you hear me?

16

THE MODERATOR: Yes. You can

17

begin.

18

MS. YANG: Thank you for the

19

opportunity to speak today.

20

My name is July Yang. I'm a

21

member of Community Board 5, as well and a resident

22

of West 29th Street, site 8 and block 780 is one

23

block north of where I reside today.

24

I would like to note that this is

25

a very exciting project. And we all agree that

1

2 Penn Station is long overdue for an overhaul of the
3 infrastructure upgrades and track capacity.

4

And so I implore the
5 administration and the lead agencies for pushing
6 this project forward, despite the fact that the
7 City and the State are still recovering from COVID
8 related challenges.

9

I would like to make three points
10 today in relation to the project.

11

First, when it comes to
12 large-scale public projects, there is usually a
13 mishmash between the benefits generated and the at
14 risk effects felt. For residents of Community
15 Board 5 and Community Board 4, we do not utilize
16 Penn Station for our daily commute. However, when
17 it comes to demolitions and constructions, we will
18 feel all of it in the next 18 years.

19

So I challenge the administration
20 and the lead agencies in thinking outside the box,
21 thinking outside of the regular realm of doing
22 things.

23

Is there a way for the surrounding
24 communities to participate in the benefits
25 generated from this wonderful and exciting project?

1

2

Is there a way for the surrounding communities to buy into the growth of the future?

3

4

Number two, I am not sure 40

5

percent track capacity extension is sufficient.

6

The Draft of Scope notes that adding a pass through

7

and our track, New Jersey Transit and LIRR's

8

riderships have increased about 26 percent. With a

9

2038 project completion date, I request and urge

10

that ESDC see to further disclose and clarify the

11

projections used to determine the 40 percent

12

capacity of ridership.

13

Finally, we need project

14

accountability over time. The lead agencies, and

15

especially ESDC, must do everything possible to

16

maintain project information over time through a

17

track team and retaining talents who will be

18

working on this 18-year project.

19

Thank you for the opportunity.

20

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for

21

your testimony.

22

The next speaker will be Samuel

23

Turvey.

24

Samuel Turvey, I see you. We just

25

need you to unmute yourself.

1

2

Yep.

3

4

MR. TURVEY: Thank you for the
time.

5

6

7

My name is Turvey and I'm a
Chairperson at Rethink NYC, which some of you know
of and I've heard us referenced before.

8

9

10

11

We are a group that is advocating
a number of proposals for the region, which center
around Pennsylvania Station and this project so
they would be critical to that.

12

13

14

15

16

I'd like to say that there's no
question that there will be large construction
needs and a large project. There will be plenty of
economic opportunities, regardless of what course
is chosen.

17

18

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22

23

But we think the proposal that I'm
about to describe is superior both aesthetically,
environmentally, from an economic backdrop and
really represents a once in a century opportunity,
not just to improve that neighborhood or that
business district but, frankly, the whole region
and our competitiveness as a City.

24

25

Our principal clients are -- we
believe the station should be a through running

1
2 station. It's not something we invented but
3 something others have advocated on this call and
4 before us. We believe that if you no longer had
5 trains come into this station and leave -- or come
6 into the station and sit in train yards but instead
7 have them run to expanded regional transit hubs,
8 nearby transit hubs, Secaucus, Sunnyside, Port
9 Morris in the Bronx, revitalized certain abandoned
10 railways where you don't have to spend any money
11 for condemnation, you could expand the region's
12 core and really attack the congestion that is so
13 much of a problem for the entire livability of this
14 region.

15 In addition to that, Jamaica
16 Station, a through running station, as someone
17 indicated earlier, you have track capacity. In
18 fact, you have track capacity that lets you put
19 widened platforms and have double escalators come
20 down to the tracks and really attack some of the
21 vertical circulation problems that you would have
22 in New York City.

23 What would this do for the region?
24 It would increase the viability of
25 Newark, Patterson, New Jersey, Jamaica, Queens,

1

2 Lake Success on Long Island. It would improve the
3 economic vitality of this region from the inches
4 above the track level to within 50 to 75 miles of
5 the metropolitan area, not something to shake a
6 stick at.

7 Secondly, with this most strategic
8 site is deserving of a world-class train station.
9 And it had one of the great architectural buildings
10 in the world there and we believe you could rebuild
11 the original Penn Station there. Now I know some
12 of you may think, how could you possibly say that?
13 That is done in other cities in Europe all the
14 time. We even have a somewhat relevant example
15 at our own Bronx Community College where they
16 rebuilt -- or built anew, a library to complement
17 the existing Stanford White Campus that is up
18 there. But you should look that up. Google that.
19 It's quite beautiful, 2012 building.

20 What would it mean for us?

21 You can easily take the
22 architecture of the original Penn Station and
23 replicate the kind of experience that you get in
24 Grand Central, Washington, D.C. Union Station,
25 Danvers (phonetic) Union Station, Philadelphia's

1

2 30th Street Station. And you by doing so,
3 guarantee that anybody who walks through that
4 building will receive a spiritual jolt that would
5 be the envy of any religion.

6 And there's much more to what we
7 have to say. We submitted a proposal today and
8 we'll be submitting more by the 20th.

9 So I know I'm out of time.

10 But thank you.

11 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
12 your testimony.

13 And, yes, feel free to submit
14 additional thoughts via e-mail or mail.

15 So our next speaker will be
16 Jeffery File.

17 Jeffery File, please let me know
18 when you're ready?

19 (No response.)

20 THE MODERATOR: Okay. Do we have
21 a Jeffery File on the call?

22 (No response.)

23 THE MODERATOR: No. File, we
24 will move on to the next speaker for now. If you
25 wish to try again to speak later, please use the

1

2 raise hand function on your screen and we'll add
3 you to the speaker list again or you may submit
4 your testimony via e-mail or mail.

5 So at this time before we go to
6 the next list of speakers, I want to take a brief
7 moment to just read some names of folks were -- who
8 were on the speaker list before the break and were
9 not present. When I read your -- if you hear your
10 name read or if you are visiting on behalf of
11 someone who -- whose name I read, please raise your
12 hand and let us know that you'd like to -- if you'd
13 like to speak again.

14 So briefly before we go on to
15 Joseph Clift, I'm going to read a short list of
16 names of folks who were -- who were not -- who
17 didn't respond when we called you before. So if
18 you hear your name read, please raise your hand and
19 indicate -- if you'd like to speak.

20 Neville Perkins;

21 Daniel McFee;

22 Julia Campanelli;

23 Sally Gellert;

24 Matt Green;

25 John Barelli, Jr.;

1

2

Michael O'Toole; and,

3

Tony LaRosa.

4

5

Anyone whose name I just called,
if you heard this and you'd like to speak, please
use the raise hand function on Zoom or dial *9 on
your phone if you're joining us by telephone only.

8

9

We'll be adding anyone who raises
to the end of our speaker list.

10

(No response.)

11

12

THE MODERATOR: So we're going to
move on with our next group now.

13

14

15

16

17

So I believe Sally Gellert, who
was to speak a little earlier has just raised her
hand. So Sally Gellert, if you'd like to go ahead
and speak, then we'll -- then we'll move on to the
next group.

18

MS. GELLERT: Thank you so much.

19

20

21

Today just got totally out of
control so my apologies. I will be sending written
comments in more detail.

22

23

24

25

My concern is that this project
looks like a lot of fundraising for a transit
project that we don't know the details of and we
really, you know, we need to look deeply at exactly

1

2 what problem we're trying to solve and whether this
3 problem actually solves it.

4

So let me just leave it there for
5 now and send you more by writing.

6

Thank you.

7

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for our
8 testimony.

9

And so now we'll go back the next
10 set of speakers who had signed up. I'll read the
11 full list first and then we'll move on to Joseph
12 Clift.

13

So Joseph Clift;

14

John Jovic;

15

Maria Diaz;

16

Joseph Lapinski; and,

17

Barrie Smith.

18

So Joseph Clift, I believe I saw
19 you before.

20

Yes. There you are. If you can
21 unmute yourself, you can start when you're ready.

22

Oops, try again.

23

MR. CLIFT: Good afternoon.

24

My name is Joe Clift. I'm a past
25 director of Planning and Strategic Planning for the

1

2 Long Island Railroad.

3

4 Today I'm speaking as an regional
5 railroad advocate, focused on improving transit and
6 mobility affordability. In this case, getting the
7 Jersey Transit riders more convenient and expanded
8 access to and from the Manhattan CBD at a taxpayer
9 affordable price.

9

10 In summary, the proposed Empire
11 Station Complex project is an absolutely terrible
12 idea for riders and to taxpayers. The proposed
13 expansion of the New York Penn Station South on the
14 block 780 and portions of adjoining blocks, widely
15 known as Penn South, actually reduces rider
16 mobility and appears to be an architect driven
17 concept aimed at maximizing office square footage
18 and getting the project on the front page of
19 *Architectural Digest*.

19

20 It fails miserably to improve
21 transit and rider mobility.

21

22 I have three specific comments on
23 the proposed Scope of Work.

23

24 First, the failure of the Proposed
25 Scope of Work to state that the traffic demands
factors analysis while the proposed Penn South

1

2 alternative will be based on ridership, pedestrian
3 and vehicular levels, resulting from a full Gateway
4 built, makes the proposed Scope of Work align by
5 omission process.

6 The huge pedestrian congestion
7 problem is resulting from the Penn South location,
8 the new platform or tracks a block further away
9 from all subway lines, which will be accessible
10 solely through the existing Penn Station, will be
11 hidden from the public scrutiny. This is a fatal
12 flaw in the proposed Scope of Work.

13 Second, the failure of the
14 Proposed Scope to include a full traffic demand
15 factors analysis of any true alternative to the
16 Proposed Penn South Alternative, specifically
17 building a track connection between New York Penn
18 and Grand Central Terminal so that New Jersey
19 Transit riders are taken by rail directly to
20 Midtown East - this Midtown East to Fifth Avenue,
21 never having to go through Penn Station at all,
22 make it an incomplete environmental analysis.

23 This is the second fatal flaw in
24 the Proposed Scope of Work.

25 Third, the scope must, but fails,

1

2 to include the formation of a regional citizens
3 liaison committee, such as was formed for the ARC
4 and Bridge Capacity Enhancement Projects. Its
5 absence means the project will be conducted out of
6 view of the public.

7

8

A third fatal flaw in the Proposed
Scope of Work.

9

Set up an RCLC, please.

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

In closing, I want to emphasize
that any Penn South alternative, including the one
presented today, dooms the Jersey Transit riders, I
repeat, dooms the Jersey Transit riders. The only
growing peak hour of commuter ridership in the
tri-state region, a permanent second-class mobility
status when they are compared to Metro North and
the Long Island Railroad riders with their current
and they return access to Midtown East by Grand
Central Terminal.

20

21

This project, as proposed is bad,
bad, bad.

22

Thank you for listening.

23

24

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
your testimony.

25

So our next speaker will be John

1

2 Jovic.

3

4 to get ready.

5

6 me?

7

THE MODERATOR: Yes, we can.

8

9 afternoon, everyone.

10

11 My name is John Jovic. I am the
12 business manager of the Union First Insulators,
13 Local 12.

14

15 I just want to say my wife's a

16 daily rider of the Long Island Railroad and I,

17 myself, also have offices in Queens for when I do

18 go into the City, I do take the Long Island

19 Railroad.

20

21 And Penn Station drastically needs

22 this upgrade. It's a very outdated and it's a very

23

24 tight space and with the current world we live in,

25

we need to create larger open spaces.

26

27

28

1

2 Square Garden, which was recently renovated in the
3 past few years and this is one of the world's most
4 famous arenas for sports and all types of
5 entertainment.

6 How can we not have an up-to-date
7 public transportation hub leading to it?

8 And above ground, the new
9 buildings would really transform the area.

10 I believe it would attract more
11 business to the area around Madison Square Garden
12 and it would be a great boost to the area's
13 economy.

14 Local 12 supports this project and
15 I would like to thank everyone for their time.

16 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
17 your testimony.

18 So at this time -- the time is
19 currently 6:23 p.m. I'd like to remind everyone
20 that the -- the list -- the speakers' list will
21 close at 6:30. And so if you are -- if you're
22 participating in the meeting and you would like to
23 speak, please make sure that you sign up by 6:30
24 p.m. And that can be done use the raise hand
25 function on Zoom or dialing *9 on your keypad if

1

2 you're joining us by phone.

3

4 And so with that, I'll go to our
5 next speaker, Maria Diaz.

6

7 Maria Diaz. I'll give you a
8 moment.

9

(No response.)

10

11 THE MODERATOR: Do we have Maria
12 Diaz on the -- joining us by phone or Zoom?

13

(No response.)

14

15 THE MODERATOR: Okay. Maria
16 Diaz, we'll move on to the next speaker for now.
17 If you wish to try again later, please use the
18 raise hand function or dial *9 on your phone and
19 we'll add you to the speaker list again.
20 Otherwise you may send your comments in.

21

22 So our next speaker is Joseph
23 Lapinski.

24

25 MR. LAPINSKI: Are you there?

26

27 THE MODERATOR: Yes.

28

29 MR. LAPINSKI: Hi. How you
30 doing?

31

32 My name is Joe Lapinski. I'm also
33 from Mobil 12 Heat and Cross Insulation.

34

35 I'd like to start off that I'm 100

1

2 percent in favor of this project.

3

4 New York City is the most famous
5 city in the country, if not the world. They
6 shouldn't have to deal with an overcrowded and
7 outdated hub. It deserves and needs a project of
8 this magnitude in line with the neighboring Hudson
9 Yards.

9

10 It will revitalize the area and
11 make subway travel more efficient and enjoyable.
12 It will create a tremendous amount of good paying
13 construction jobs and permanent jobs to local
14 residents.

14

15 This is a project that will
16 benefit many generations to come. Let's get it
17 done.

17

18 Thank you for your time.

18

19 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
20 your testimony.

20

21 And our next speaker will be
22 Barrie Smith.

22

23 Barrie Smith, I believe I saw you
24 just a moment ago. If you turn video back on and
25 unmute yourself -- there you are.

25

MR. SMITH: Can you hear me?

1

2

THE MODERATOR: Yes, we can. Go

3

ahead.

4

MR. SMITH: How you doing?

5

Good afternoon.

6

My name is Barrie Smith. I'm the

7

business agent for Local 79 and I'm president of

8

100 Black Construction Workers.

9

Good afternoon, everybody.

10

Local 79, we support this because

11

our members deserve this free, diversified and we

12

know that dealing with the COVID-19 and dealing

13

with the economic issues that we're dealing with in

14

New York City, that this project will be very good

15

because it will put a lot our workers to work.

16

So we definitely support this. I

17

have my 100 Black Construction Workers Executive

18

Board and they're on board because a lot of this

19

stuff that's being said is redundantly over and

20

over.

21

At Local 79 we definitely support

22

this project. And I'll let the rest of my

23

Executive Board speak. Okay.

24

Thank you.

25

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for

1

2 your testimony.

3

4 So we have another group of five
5 speakers who are signed up to speak. I'll read all
6 five names and then we will start with the first
7 one.

7

So we have:

8

Michette Dennis;

9

Arie Espinal;

10

Jim Katzenberger;

11

Michael Prohaska; and,

12

Brook Jackson.

13

So we'll begin with Michette

14

Dennis.

15

16 While Michette Dennis is getting
17 ready, I'll just remind everyone it's 6:27. At
18 6:30 the speaker list will close. So if you'd like
19 to speak, please raise your hand or dial *9 by
20 6:30.

20

So Michette Dennis, please let me

21

know if you're ready.

22

(No response.)

23

THE MODERATOR: Okay. Michette

24

Dennis.

25

(No response.)

1

2

THE MODERATOR: Okay. We'll move

3

on to the next speaker --

4

MS. DENNIS: (Zoom inaudible).

5

THE MODERATOR: I heard you but I

6

think there might be some -- some interference. If

7

you're using both your phone and your laptop --

8

MS. DENNIS: I'm sorry. Can you

9

hear me now?

10

THE MODERATOR: Yes.

11

MS. DENNIS: Okay. I was

12

listening to you via phone.

13

But to get on to my testimony, I

14

thank everybody for listening and being here today

15

this evening.

16

Once again, my name is Michette

17

Dennis. I'm a unionized construction worker for

18

the past 14 years for our Local 79. And I'm the

19

vice president of 100 Black Construction Workers.

20

The scope of the project is good.

21

It's long overdue and the plan has sensible density

22

for the above-ground redevelopment and fixes issues

23

with in Penn Station. And that's why I recognize

24

as a problematic -- it's been problematic for

25

decades.

1

2

3

4

5

My only concern is, will this project be built union? Everyone knows the quality of construction built by trained union workers is the best that's done anywhere in New York.

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

The building is better. The work is safer. Fair wages and benefits are paid and unlike those in non-union industries, we are protected by Workers Comp, Unemployment Insurance and I am sure that the work on those stations and platforms and tracks will be identified as public work and prevailing wages will apply.

13

14

15

But I'm worried about the buildings that will go up above Empire Station.

16

17

18

19

20

I imagine that the land will be owned by the State and the whole thing is being done to facilitate the redevelopment and improvement of Penn Station, a public facility. So you would think that the prevailing wages laws will apply -- or should apply.

21

22

23

24

25

But increasingly over the last ten years, I've seen more and more similarly big projects, give the awards to the non-union contractors who simply don't pay the wages and the benefits but are really being punished for breaking

1

2 the wage laws.

3

4 In closing, this is a good
5 project. It's good for the City and they should
6 move forward with only -- but only if every part of
7 it is built by union, 100 percent union workforce.

7

Thank you.

8

9 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
10 your testimony.

10

11 Our next speaker will be Arie
12 Espinal.

12

(No response.)

13

THE MODERATOR: Arie Espinal?

14

(No response.)

15

THE MODERATOR: Arie Espinal?

16

(No response.)

17

18 THE MODERATOR: Do we have you on
19 the call?

19

(No response.)

20

THE MODERATOR: No. Okay.

21

22 Again, we'll move on to the next
23 speaker for now. If you want to try again later,
24 please use the raise hand function or dial *9 or
25 you may submit your testimony by e-mail.

25

So the next speaker on our list

1

2 is:

3

Jim Katzenberger.

4

5 Oh, while we're waiting for Jim
6 Katzenberger, I will just briefly note the -- it is
7 now 6:31. If you have raised your hand or gotten
8 on the speaker list, you will be given the time to
9 speak even if it takes past the 7:00 formal closing
10 time.

11

12 However, we will not be able to
13 add any additional speakers at this point as the
14 time has passed 6:30.

15

16 So do we have Jim Katzenberger on
17 the call?

18

(No response.)

19

20 THE MODERATOR: Okay. So Jim
21 Katzenberger, we're going to move on to the next
22 speaker for now.

23

Our next speaker will be:

24

Michael Prohaska.

25

(No response.)

26

THE MODERATOR: Michael Prohaska.

27

28 I'll give you a moment to get
29 ready. Unmute yourself and start your video.

30

(No response.)

1

2 THE MODERATOR: Do we have a
3 Michael Prohaska on the call?

4 (No response.)

5 THE MODERATOR: No. Okay.

6 So we'll move on to the next
7 speaker. If you wish to try again later, please
8 feel free to use the raise -- no, wait. I actually
9 think that if you are not present at this point
10 then I'm not sure if we can still add you. But
11 I'll check on that while our next speaker is
12 speaking.

13 So our next speaker will be:

14 Brook Jackson. Do we have Brook
15 Jackson on the call?

16 (No response.)

17 THE MODERATOR: Brook Jackson.

18 (No response.)

19 THE MODERATOR: Okay. So we're
20 going to move on to the next speaker for now.
21 We'll have a list of additional speakers. I just
22 am briefly going to follow up if -- if someone
23 could let me know. I'm speaking to my own team
24 now. If someone could just let me know if someone
25 joins who is on the list, if they'll still be able

1

2 to speak.

3

4 I'm looking into that and I'll get
back to everyone.

5

6 So our next group of speakers will
be:

7

Rasul Heatley;

8

Casian Attenis;

9

Leonard Resto;

10

Ryan Felmet; and,

11

Wayne Moten.

12

So first on that list will be

13 Rasul Heatley.

14

Do we have Rasul Heatley on the

15

call?

16

MR. HEATLEY: Yes. Can you hear

17

me?

18

THE MODERATOR: Yes, we can.

19

And you can start whenever you're

20

ready.

21

MR. HEATLEY: Okay. My name is

22

Rasul Heatley from Local 79.

23

And I also wanted to piggyback the

24

idea of building union in any type around the

25

neighborhood. I see from time to time the

1

2 construction's been built and don't have the
3 language of apprentice written in it for the
4 duration of phase one -- phase two.

5

6 How do we find out that there's
7 going to be apprentice language all through these
8 neighborhoods so we can also, you know, be a part
9 of business opportunities and listen better.

9

Thank you.

10

11 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
12 your testimony.

12

13 And so the next speaker on our
14 list is Casian Attenis.

14

(No response.)

15

16 THE MODERATOR: Casian Attenis.

16

(No response.)

17

18 THE MODERATOR: Excuse me.

18

Please let us know when you're ready.

19

(No response.)

20

21 THE MODERATOR: Do we have a

21

Casian Attenis?

22

(No response.)

23

24 THE MODERATOR: Okay. We're going

24

to move on to the next speaker for now.

25

And if anyone is not -- does not

1

2 get the chance to speak, of course, you may submit
3 your testimony and your comments through e-mail or
4 standard mail to the addresses that are shown on
5 your screen periodically.

6

So our next speaker will be
7 Leonard Resto.

8

Okay. If you can unmute yourself,
9 you'll be able to begin.

10

MR. RESTO: Good evening.

11

Thank you for the opportunity to
12 speak.

13

My name is Len Resto. And I am
14 president of the New Jersey Association of Railroad
15 Passengers, a railroad advocacy group in New
16 Jersey.

17

We were briefed on the plan last
18 Friday by members of the Cassara and Vornado teams.

19

As the project was described to
20 us, it is intended to fund -- what will ultimately
21 become the proposed Penn Station South.

22

It is clear that the Scope of Work
23 was seriously divorced from what the operational
24 plan would be for Penn Station. Therefore, we
25 cannot render an opinion until we know what will

1

2 happen underground, which ultimately is what
3 matters to the daily rider.

4

5 We agree with Rethink New York's
6 concept of foregoing Penn Station entirely and
7 focus on widening platforms to allow for egress on
8 one side and ingress on the other, through running
9 and other enhancements that would be operational in
10 nature to allow the station to actually work.

11

12 The Draft Scope of Work seems to
13 entail the purchase of real estate parcels and/or
14 the exercise of eminent domain. It appears to crowd
15 out existing long-term merchants in the area in
16 favor of a more upscale experience.

17

18 It also affects the lives of
19 residents in the area, which could be displaced
20 from their homes. We cannot opine on the fairness
21 of such. Suffice to say that it appears to have
22 taken an approach such as PATH did with the World
23 Trade Center complex. They decided to build a \$4.2
24 billion shopping mall complex as you make your way
25 to trains that would get you back and forth every
26 day.

27

28 As we indicated at the Friday
29 briefing, riders are willing to put up with

1

2 unpleasing aesthetics if only their trains ran on
3 time, left from predictable track assignments and
4 were clean.

5 The escalator and stair
6 enhancements proposed by the Draft Scope of Work
7 strike us lipstick on a pig and continues the
8 underground dysfunction that happens daily. It is
9 distressing that the ESDC currently sees this
10 project as a commercial enterprise rather than as a
11 significant call to put in its most important
12 component, transit. Until and unless we know what
13 the Vornado/Cassaro proposal will ultimately fund,
14 we oppose the proposed Draft Scope of Work as
15 presently drafted.

16 Thank you for allowing me to speak
17 and have a good evening.

18 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
19 your testimony.

20 So our next speaker will be Ryan
21 Felmet.

22 (No response.)

23 THE MODERATOR: I believe that
24 Ryan Felmet actually spoke with someone -- someone
25 spoke on his behalf earlier.

1

2

So do we have a Ryan Felmet on the

3

call?

4

(No response.)

5

THE MODERATOR: Okay. We're

6

going to move on to the next speaker and let us

7

know if you've been missed.

8

Our next speaker will be Wayne

9

Moten.

10

MR. MOTEN: Good afternoon.

11

Can you hear me?

12

THE MODERATOR: Yes, we can. You

13

can begin when you're ready.

14

MR. MOTEN: Okay.

15

Once again, good afternoon.

16

My name is Wayne Moten. I'm a

17

member of Black of the BCW, executive board.

18

My main concern is the density of

19

New York City. As you know, Manhattan is a

20

precious island but it doesn't have much space. So

21

we must continue to build upward.

22

Now this rezoning project that's

23

going on is something the train and we don't need

24

extra lanes for commutes and all that but it's not

25

talking about adding (Zoom inaudible) into the

1

2 City.

3

4 We don't have any more land that
5 we can build on. (Zoom inaudible).

6

7 THE MODERATOR: Wait. Mr. Moten.
8 I'm sorry to interrupt but you faded out a little
9 bit there. If you could just repeat maybe the last
10 sentence or so so it would be easier for the
11 stenographer and interpreter, we can get your
12 statement recorded.

13

14 MR. MOTEN: Sure. I'll repeat it
15 again.

16

17 I said, with all the innovations
18 we have in construction today, we can achieve large
19 scale buildings with half the space that used to be
20 taken up, which should be considered. And the
21 issue of keeping New York skyline the same.

22

23 So most of the designs of these
24 new buildings that we're coming up with today, will
25 not surpass what the height is of the Empire State
26 Building.

27

28 So those are my concerns because
29 as we all know, the issue with homeless and low
30 income apartments and all that, we'll have to solve
31 one day or another. But we do not have space to

1

2 build out, like I said. So those are my concerns.

3

Thank you.

4

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for

5

your testimony.

6

So we now have our next group o

7

five speakers. I'll read the list and then we'll

8

come back to the first speaker.

9

So our next group of five speakers

10

will be:

11

Raymond Minieri;

12

Max Wycisk;

13

Andrew R.;

14

George Ikalis; and

15

Lisa Daglian.

16

So we will begin with Raymond

17

Minieri.

18

(No response.)

19

THE MODERATOR: If you can let me

20

know when you're ready.

21

(No response.)

22

THE MODERATOR: Do we have

23

Raymond Minieri on the call?

24

(No response.)

25

THE MODERATOR: Raymond Minieri,

1

2 we're going to move on to the next speaker but you
3 can feel free to submit your testimony via e-mail
4 or mail if you're not able to speak now.

5

6 Our next speaker will be Max
7 Wycisk.

8

9 Okay. You can just unmute
10 yourself and then you can begin when you're ready.

11

12 MR. WYCISK: Great.

13

14 Thank you very much.

15

16 My name is Max Wycisk and I'm
17 speaking on behalf of the 34th Street Partnership.
18 We are an business improvement district covering
19 much of the area we're looking at here tonight.

20

21 Our statement is as follows.

22

23 The 34th Street Partnership is the
24 business improvement district encompassing New York
25 City's three public spaces and landmark
26 attractions.

27

28 It is our job to enhance the
29 districts through creative programs and activation
30 spaces to attract leading retail and businesses and
31 maintain its vibrancy and health and safety.

32

33 The Governor's Empire Station
34 Complex plan aims to transform the Penn district in

1

2 a way that hasn't been done for decades. By
3 upgrading our mass transit system which leads to an
4 injection and new stimulation and make necessary
5 upgrades to improve pedestrian flow and street
6 traffic both above and below ground by providing
7 shopping from private development to build more
8 sustainable new office buildings to attract the
9 most leading companies and talent.

10 We need this plan more now than
11 ever. It was not all aware that Corona Virus
12 pandemic has given us an unprecedented challenge in
13 reviving our economy and getting people back to
14 work, maintaining our health and safety and
15 possibly planning for the City's future.

16 The third point, if we want to
17 continue leading the world, you need to consider
18 what would help us maintain this advantage.

19 The Governor has rightfully
20 prioritized and fast tracked the key, large-scale
21 infrastructure project that will immediately create
22 hundreds of well-paying construction jobs, upgrade
23 some of the City's busiest transit stations with
24 better entry and exit points and wider station
25 platforms and make the district more appealing to

1

2 companies and employees who want easy access to
3 public transportation.

4

5 Importantly, this plan also
6 includes public realm and above-ground improvements
7 that will benefit all New Yorkers. This includes
8 widening the sidewalks and subway entrances to
9 alleviate overcrowding and making the streetscape
10 more accessible and easier to navigate.

11

12 There have already been major
13 improvements around the district, including the
14 long anticipated Moynihan Train Hall, which we
15 look to this new project as a great public/private
16 partnership that New Yorkers can be proud of and
17 highly sought after office and retail space.

18

19 The Empire Station Complex plan
20 has the ability to replicate this model,
21 accommodate the density needed for a bustling
22 transportation hub and offer even more enhancements
23 and benefits to New Yorkers.

24

25 The only way we're going to
26 achieve full recovery until we have a vaccine is by
27 working together. We need the public and private
28 sectors, transit agencies, non-profits and
29 community organizations to think creative and

1

2 collaboratively on solutions. The Empire Station
3 Complex is one of them.

4

Thank you.

5

6 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
your testimony.

7

Our next speaker will be Andrew R.

8

MR. ANDREW R.: Hello.

9

Can everyone hear me?

10

11 THE MODERATOR: Yes, we can hear
you. You may begin when you're ready.

12

MR. ANDREW R.: Hi.

13

All right.

14

Thank you.

15

Good evening.

16

17 My name is Andrew and I'm a member
18 of the general public who's very concerned about
19 the climate change and public health implications
20 that today's proposed development in its current
state will have.

21

22 A little background on me before I
23 go further. I'm a cellular researcher that
24 specializes in how urbanization and climate change
25 impact organisms on a cellular and protozoal
level.

1

2

3

4

I've been published multiple times in peer review scientific journals and I have more publications pending.

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

Several studies around the world, but particularly in China and London, have demonstrated that in buildings of 21 stories, or 210 feet, energy use and greenhouse gas emissions increase exponentially. This increase in turn warms our City by trapping energy in the atmosphere, worsens our air quality to the trapping of particulate matter and exacerbates the urban heat island effect.

14

15

16

17

18

19

The urban heat island effect can be defined as the propensity of cities to trap heat and grow considerably warmer than the surrounding natural environment. According to the EPA, locales within urban heat islands can get up to ten degrees fahrenheit warmer than surrounding areas.

20

21

22

23

24

25

While it may just sound like a mere inconvenience to live in a warmer city, this temperature change has a massive impact on rising asthma, cardio vascular and infectious disease rates. That's according to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

1

2

3

4

5

6

Height limits of 210 feet are needed for the developments that we are discussing today. LEED certification for buildings is insufficient as the Bank of America building in Manhattan demonstrated.

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

For those of you who don't know, the Bank of America building in Manhattan was touted as an environmentally sound development but was then shown to be one of the worst polluters in the City due to the type of and amount of computers and machines that workers were using in their offices.

14

15

16

17

18

New York has shown strong leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and Governor Cuomo has even been recognized for his leadership nationally, such as in Savannah, Georgia today.

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

While we have done an admirable job of handling this particular pandemic, we now need to lead by example regarding how our future infrastructure can support public health and combat climate change. The time for such leadership, particularly in the form of a 210-foot height cap, is now.

1

2 Thank you for listening to me

3 today.

4 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for

5 your testimony.

6 Our next speaker will be George

7 Kapsalis.

8 (No response)

9 THE MODERATOR: Do we have George

10 Kapsalis on the phone or in the meeting?

11 (No response.)

12 THE MODERATOR: Nope.

13 George Kapsalis, we are going to

14 move on to the next speaker now. You're free to

15 e-mail your comments or mail them to the addresses

16 on the slides we're showing.

17 So our next speaker will be Lisa

18 Daglian.

19 (No response.)

20 THE MODERATOR: Lisa Daglian, do

21 we have you on the call?

22 (No response.)

23 THE MODERATOR: Okay. Lisa

24 Daglian, we're going to move on to the next speaker

25 for now. You can feel free to e-mail your

1

2 testimony to the addresses listed below.

3

4 So we have our next group of
5 speakers. I'll read the list and then we'll start
6 with the first speaker on the list.

6

7

8 So our next group of speakers will
9 be:

8

10 Wendy Machaver;

9

11 Vishaan Chakrabarti;

10

12 I think Brook Jackson may have
13 already spoken.

12

14 Leah James; and,

13

15 The phone number that begins with
16 347 and ends with 060.

15

17 So we'll begin with Wendy
18 Machaver.

17

19 Wendy, if you can just unmute
20 yourself, you'll be able to begin speaking.

19

21 Okay. I can't show you but are
22 you -- you're not muted.

21

23 Wendy Machaver, if you're
24 speaking, we're unable to hear you. Can you try it
25 again to mute and unmute yourself or make sure that
26 you have your microphone turned on on your
27 computer.

1

2

MS. MACHAVER: Are you able to

3

hear me now?

4

THE MODERATOR: Yes. No -- yes,

5

we can hear you.

6

MS. MACHAVER: Oh. I can't hear

7

all of you but I will proceed.

8

Thank you so much for your

9

thoughtful summary of the phased development of the

10

Penn Station area.

11

Revitalization is -- is crucial.

12

The slides show very tall buildings and we

13

understand that the up zoning will be the highest

14

in Manhattan with an FAR of 33.

15

Keep in mind that for decades New

16

Yorkers have been given the false promise that

17

taller real estate construction would provided

18

upgraded transportation, affordable housing, lower

19

homeless rates, new centers for schools, permanent

20

housing and the like.

21

As the economic devastation of the

22

pandemic becomes increasingly apparent, these false

23

promises are again surfacing whether in the context

24

of up zoning, as of right manipulation or unbridled

25

variances.

1

2

3 Meanwhile, affordable housing
4 units are destroyed and not replaced. Neighborhood
5 amenities are not built. Permanent jobs are not
6 created but burdens on our City services; our fire
7 fighters, our peace keepers, hospital beds and
8 infrastructure increase at an escalating cost to
9 working and middle class voters.

9

10 Further, unreasonable developers
11 rush to out do each other in building height,
12 creates an untenable increase in climate change
13 pollution and exacerbation of our heat island
14 index, as demonstrated in data driven studies.

14

15 We are an environmentally
16 vulnerable coastal City facing a post pandemic
17 economy with profound changes in physical space
18 demands.

18

19 New York City tall buildings cause
20 67 to 75 percent of our climate change pollution
21 and that's not counting the impact of these over
22 tall towers that are proposed.

22

23 Data from building studies shows
24 and exponential rise in climate change, gas
25 emissions above the 20th floor. Flooding and
26 asthma are only two of the ill effects that we

1

2 already see.

3

4 Climate change pollution
5 disproportionately affects black New Yorkers. The
6 time for an absolute, 210 foot height cap is now.

7

8 Robust revitalization of the
9 transit hub is consistent with responsible
10 development. We look forward to the Empire State
11 Development Corporation's folding of these factors
12 into what will be a vital part of our City and
13 national hub.

14

15 Thank you for the opportunity to
16 provide testimony.

17

18 THE MODERATOR: And thank you for
19 your testimony.

20

21 Our next speaker will be Vishaan
22 Chakrabarti.

23

24 MR. CHAKRABARTI: Hello.

25

Can you all hear me?

26

27 THE MODERATOR: Yes, we can and
28 you can feel free to speak.

29

30 MR. CHAKRABARTI: Oh, so Shawn
31 couldn't make this meeting so I'm speaking on his
32 behalf.

33

34 So what she wrote is, I'm

1

2 submitting this testimony as a private citizen long
3 concerned with the fate of Pennsylvania Station and
4 its surrounding communities.

5

As a practicing architect and
6 scholar and former NYC Planning official, I'm a
7 long-time advocate of transit oriented density,
8 which is contingent on working mass transportation.

9

For too long New York City has
10 emphasized the density over the transit. The
11 private over the public. By aligning the
12 infrastructure built by our predecessors a century
13 ago, infrastructure that is now strained well
14 beyond it's original design capacity, is no longer
15 in a state of good repair.

16

Therefore, the proposal to put an
17 intense new density around existing Penn Station
18 even with the addition of Moynihan Station without
19 a plan to fix the main station is clearly putting
20 the cart before the horse.

21

In order for one square inch of
22 the new density to be approved in the Penn Station
23 area, a number of conditions must be met, including
24 the following:

25

There must be a clear, robust

1

2 and publicly approved plan to reimagine the main
3 train station, which will continue to handle the
4 vast majority of Penn's users even after Moynihan
5 opens.

6 The original plan was a massive
7 building intended to handle 120,000 passengers per
8 day. The current subterranean (Zoom inaudible)
9 that replaced the old station today handles over
10 650,000 passengers per day, a number that will only
11 increase over time with the proposed addition of
12 Gateway, Penn South, Metro North and additional New
13 Jersey Transit riders.

14 Number two, any plan to fix Penn
15 Station must address the unacceptable safety and
16 congestion issues presented by the present station.
17 The amount of public circulation space must be
18 multiplied seven fold. It must be unencumbered by
19 retail, gaudy signage or other commercial uses.

20 Naturally wide, high ceilings and
21 a sense of orientation as one alights from a train
22 is paramount to create safer emergency egress, as
23 well as proper wayfinding for daily users.

24 The taxi/ride share queuing that
25 besieges the area must be addressed. The streets

1

2 around the station should be pedestrianized where
3 possible in order to alleviate severe congestion at
4 the sidewalks.

5 Number three, the COVID-19 crisis
6 represents a severe threat to long-term health of
7 the New York office market for certain types of
8 employees and employers. Until a vaccine is
9 ultimately developed, the attraction of remote
10 working, particularly those with horrific daily
11 commutes through the bowels of Penn Station will
12 remain a win for both commuters wishing to work
13 from home and their employers who want to save
14 money on office space.

15 The government cannot address the
16 stiff competition New York faces from remote work
17 by having a "build it and they will come" attitude.

18 Commutes in the future must be
19 safer, faster and safer and less congested. New
20 York has to regain its competitive edge.

21 Without a plan for improved
22 commutes by putting new hubs and tunnels and a
23 reimagined Penn Station, the funding which should
24 be funded at the federal level. Simply building
25 new office space is a futile exercise.

1

2 THE MODERATOR: I'm sorry. You're
3 actually out of time.

4 Please feel free to submit the
5 testimony in writing with additional pieces.

6 So the next speaker is Brook
7 Jackson, who was called earlier. So our next
8 speaker will be Leah James.

9 Leah James. I see you. You can
10 just unmute yourself. You can begin.

11 MS. JAMES: Good evening,
12 everyone.

13 Thank you, Empire State
14 consultants for this opportunity to understand this
15 project.

16 My name is Leah James. I am a
17 lead organizer at Affordable Economic Development
18 here in the Bronx, Northwest Bronx Community Clergy
19 Coalition but this evening I'm also representing as
20 a community liaison for 100 Black Construction
21 Workers.

22 And I have a history with Empire
23 State because I oversee as a community liaison for
24 the redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory.

25 These things that I just want to

1

2 say and for you to consider. I mean for every
3 project, State project, City redevelopment project,
4 what is the environmental and health impact, air
5 quality?

6 And just looking at the example of
7 the Second Avenue train system, it happened with
8 the Q train on 96th Street. That was already
9 demonstrating to those communities over there,
10 especially the residential buildings on the health
11 impact and we don't want to go down that road
12 again.

13 Will there also be an opportunity
14 to have a community advisory board?

15 And also where's the opportunity
16 to commuters traveling impact assessment. Because
17 every train, 3, 2, train goes to Penn Station and
18 looking at the outer boroughs that will be
19 affected.

20 Also, will there be an opportunity
21 to have diverse local hiring? Union.

22 And community opportunities and
23 bidding process and MWBEs.

24 And, also, who will be
25 manufacturing the trains? Will they be sourced in

1

2 New York State? And, also, looking at opportunity
3 for that.

4

Also, will there also be
5 opportunities for communities' residents to get
6 into the land process of community land process
7 opportunities with these residential buildings?
8 Because we don't need no more because we're already
9 congested but that's in the plan.

10

Will we be able to have community
11 space and green space?

12

And will there be weatherization
13 opportunities as far as energy efficiency?

14

Also, and last, the City has
15 really struggled providing commercial tenants
16 displacement protections. How would Empire State
17 support that as well?

18

New York City Redevelopment
19 Project, briefly we had not shown growth and real
20 economic inclusiveness. And I think that just
21 looking at how we trying to shape and build economy
22 back, these are the opportunities and not relying
23 on City Planning to give the ideas on how this City
24 should be shaped on a community level.

25

You heard from Community Board

1

2 members here this evening. You heard from folks
3 that also live in the area and now you hearing from
4 folks, including myself, that is from the outer
5 boroughs that will be impacted by this
6 redevelopment project.

7 And, again, and I represent as a
8 community that has over 100 Black Construction. So
9 I'm really looking at seeing whether this local
10 hiring thing is as diverse as it needs to be,
11 especially at the state of this country being in
12 right now looking at racial injustice.

13 And that's what I'm saying.

14 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
15 that testimony.

16 Our next speaker will be the
17 person with the telephone number that begins with
18 347 and ends with 060.

19 (No response.)

20 THE MODERATOR: So telephone
21 number 347 and then ends with 060. If you're still
22 with us, please let us know.

23 (No response.)

24 THE MODERATOR: So telephone
25 number 347 and then ended 060, we are going to move

1

2 on to the next speaker for now. You can feel free
3 to submit your comments by e-mail or standard mail
4 and we may also have other opportunities.

5

So our final three speakers are:

6

Joseph Azaparti;

7

Rodney Cook; and,

8

Local 28.

9

And so we'll begin with Joseph

10 Azaparti.

11

(No response.)

12

THE MODERATOR: Please let us know

13

when you're ready.

14

(No response.)

15

THE MODERATOR: Do we have Joseph

16

Azaparti on the call?

17

(No response.)

18

THE MODERATOR: Okay. Joseph

19

Azaparti, we're going to move on to the next

20

speaker for now. You can feel free to submit your

21

comments by e-mail or mail.

22

Next speaker will be Rodney Cook.

23

Hello. I think we can hear you.

24

You can start when you're ready.

25

MR. COOK: Hi.

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Thank you.

I'm Rodney Cook. I'm the CEO of National Monument Foundation and I appreciate the opportunity to talk to you in New York. We're Atlanta based. We're a Georgia foundation and yet we've done a number of things in New York, including a museum on the Hudson River, which Governor Cuomo's late father, the former Governor commended when we opened it.

The plans that everyone is discussing are really important to the whole country and having lived in New York for almost ten years at a time, I've used Penn Station almost daily and it's a desperate need -- the City and the State has.

What I would compel you to do though is to think a little bit bigger. I know that there is a group there, and I believe it's headed by Richard Cameron and then some are based out of Washington, to take the former site of Penn Station where Madison Square Garden currently resides and -- and improve the station by putting it back.

The original complex was one of

1
2 the most efficient entities ever built on the
3 entire planet. And it was yours. And it truly,
4 not only belonged to New York but it belonged to
5 the whole nation. And the time has really come for
6 you to embrace that idea because, as I understand
7 it, the drawing still exists in the New York
8 Historical Society and just upgrading it to some
9 degree would be an astonishing feat for your City
10 and for the world.

11 And I would encourage you to do so
12 and look at some of those arguments that are being
13 made up there that we are following down here.

14 And I appreciate the opportunity
15 to be able to talk and I look forward -- I hope to
16 be involved in some capacity if we might be of
17 help.

18 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
19 your testimony.

20 So I believe -- yes, we have one
21 final speaker who is signed up and then after that
22 we will read again the list of speakers who had
23 signed up and were not able to speak at their turn
24 to see if anyone remains who would like to speak at
25 this point.

1

2

3

Local 28. If you can unmute yourself, you can begin.

4

MR. MINIERI: Can you hear me?

5

6

THE MODERATOR: Yes, we can. You can start when you're ready.

7

8

MR. MINIERI: Okay. I tried to do it before but it wouldn't work.

9

10

I'm Ray Minieri. I'm a business representative for Local 28 Sheetmetal Workers.

11

12

I appreciate you giving me this time to speak.

13

14

15

16

17

18

I've also been riding the Long Island Railroad to work for over 35 years and I can tell you first hand that Penn Station needs to be upgraded. It's a mess getting into Penn Station and the mobs of people trying to get up the stairwell. We need more stairways desperately.

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

I think this project's going to bring a lot of good things to the community. Everything needs to be updated. I mean, I've had a chance to travel to other places and just to see the transportation places in other parts of the world and in other parts of the country, to look at Penn Station, New York, we're supposed to be one of

1

2 the biggest cities and it's a disgrace that we
3 haven't done a project like this sooner.

4

5 So, you know, the chronic
6 congestion needs to be addressed. The widening of
7 stairways and I think, you know, all the negative
8 things that I heard today can be addressed and I
9 think I'm in favor of this project. I think we
10 should move ahead with it.

10

And I appreciate your time.

11

Thank you.

12

13 THE MODERATOR: Thank you for
14 your testimony.

14

15 So that was our last registered
16 speaker.

16

17 I'm now going to read the list of
18 speakers who had registered or requested to speak
19 and were not able to speak when their time came.
20 If you hear your name on this list, please feel
21 free to raise your hand using the raise hand
22 function on Zoom or if you're -- if you joined us
23 by phone, you can dial *9 as is on the slide in
24 front of you, the instructions for using the raise
25 hand function.

25

And so anyone whose name I read,

1

2 if you would still like a chance to give testimony,

3 please raise your hand or dial *9.

4

Neville Perkins;

5

Daniel McFee;

6

Julia Campanelli;

7

Matt Green;

8

John Baralli, Jr.;

9

Michael O'Toole;

10

Tony LaRosa;

11

Jeffery File;

12

Maria Diaz;

13

Aria Espinel;

14

Michael Tosca;

15

The telephone number that begins

16

with 347 and ends with 060;

17

Brook Jackson;

18

Casian Attenis;

19

Ryan Felmet;

20

George Kapalis;

21

Lisa Daglian; and,

22

Joseph Azaparti.

23

(No response)

24

THE MODERATOR: Okay. I believe

25

that we did not receive any additional requests to

1

2 speak out of that group.

3

4 And so with that, I will say thank
5 you very much to everyone who has spoken today, who
6 everyone who has listened and participated in this
7 meeting.

8

9 This was an exciting opportunity
10 to garner public comment on its Draft Scope even
11 during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

12

13 And at this time, I'll turn it
14 back over to Holly Leicht or Rachel Shatz from ESD.

15

16 MS. LEICHT: Thank you everyone
17 for joining us this afternoon and evening.

18

19 Feel free to provide any comments
20 on the Scope of Work. We're accepting them through
21 e-mail or if you'd rather submit them by mail, the
22 address information is on the screen.

23

24 You can also visit our website,
25 which is also on the screen for additional project
26 information.

27

28 Thank you.

29

30 THE MODERATOR: Thank you
31 everyone.

32

33 And have an excellent night.

34

35 Just a final reminder, this

1

2 information is available on ESD's website at:
3 esd.ny.gov/empire-station-complex, if anyone's
4 listening on the phone.

5 And comments will be accepted
6 until 5:00 p.m. on August 20th, 2020.

7 And with that, we will begin to
8 close the meeting and we thank everyone for
9 attending this evening.

10 (At 7:10 p.m., the proceedings
11 were concluded.)

12

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STATE OF NEW YORK)
SS.
COUNTY OF NEW YORK)

I, MARC RUSSO, a Shorthand
(Stenotype) Reporter and Notary Public within and
for the State of New York, do hereby certify that
the foregoing pages 1 through 168, taken at the
time and place aforesaid, is a true and correct
transcription of the Zoom videoconference.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have
hereunto set my name this 29th day of July, 2020.

Marc Russo

MARC RUSSO

Concordance

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