

A. INTRODUCTION

In January 2020, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced the “Empire Station Complex” project among his State of the State initiatives, establishing the proposed blueprint for an integrated public transportation complex to revitalize New York’s Pennsylvania Station (Penn Station) area and give New York City the world-class intercity transportation hub it deserves. The first step in realizing this vision is Moynihan Train Hall, which opened on January 1, 2021, and breathed new life into the historic James A. Farley Post Office (Farley Building), transforming it into an iconic, state-of-the-art infrastructure gateway for the National Railroad Passenger Corporation d/b/a Amtrak (Amtrak) and the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR). The other components of the Governor’s vision include a reconstructed and expanded Penn Station, currently being planned by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) in conjunction with Amtrak and New Jersey Transit (NJT), which would, among other things, modernize the facility and significantly increase its track and platform capacity.

The relocation of Amtrak’s operations to Moynihan Train Hall provides the opportunity to overhaul Penn Station, including opening up its confined concourses and creating bold new entrances, inviting in natural light, improving retail and other user amenities, increasing safety and security, consolidating support functions, rationalizing pedestrian flows, and making it easier for passengers to navigate within the station as well as connect to their destinations beyond. The railroads are also undertaking planning for an expansion of Penn Station potentially to the south into Block 780 and parts of Blocks 754 and 806 to accommodate up to nine additional tracks and five new platforms. Both the reconstruction and expansion of Penn Station are essential infrastructure projects for the future of New York, long talked about but finally achievable under the leadership of Governor Cuomo.

The New York State Urban Development Corporation d/b/a Empire State Development (ESD), is considering the adoption and affirmation of a General Project Plan for the Proposed Project, a comprehensive redevelopment initiative to create a revitalized, transit-oriented commercial district centered around Penn Station, which is critical to fulfilling the Empire Station Complex vision. The Proposed Project would address substandard and insanitary conditions in the Project Area (as defined below) by facilitating redevelopment to create a cohesive, transit-oriented commercial district and would introduce much-needed public transportation and public realm improvements in the area. Specifically, the Proposed Project would result in the development of ten new buildings on eight development sites in the Project Area. The Proposed Project’s new developments would incorporate new onsite entrances and access ways to Penn Station and public transit. It would revitalize the Project Area by introducing public realm improvements to address pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation and enhance the surrounding streetscape.

The Proposed Project would also support the reconstruction and expansion of Penn Station, which would be accomplished through separate but related projects that would be undertaken by one or more of the involved railroads (MTA, Amtrak, and/or NJT). Commercial development facilitated

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by the Proposed Project would generate essential revenue for substantial improvements at Penn Station, subway stations, and other transit facilities in the Project Area—as well as the proposed expansion of Penn Station. The Proposed Project would accommodate the potential expansion of Penn Station into the blocks south of the existing station to allow for the creation of new, below-grade tracks and platforms, significantly increasing the station’s capacity. The additional rail infrastructure, if located on these blocks, would be built beneath three of the proposed development sites, and the Proposed Project’s General Project Plan (GPP) would require that the commercial development accommodate the station’s proposed expansion at these sites and beneath adjoining streets. The design, construction, and operation of an expanded Penn Station would be assumed by one or more of the involved public transportation entities: MTA, Amtrak, and/or NJT. The specific assignment of responsibilities for those tasks is the subject of ongoing collaboration and planning among MTA, Amtrak, and NJT.

The area of the Proposed Project is generally bounded by Sixth and Ninth Avenues to the east and west, and by West 30th and West 34th Streets to the south and north in Midtown Manhattan, Community Districts 4 and 5 (the Project Area). The Project Area includes all or portions of nine Manhattan tax blocks—Blocks 754, 755, 780, 781, 783, 806, 807, 808, and 809—that encompass Penn Station, Madison Square Garden (MSG), Moynihan Train Hall (see **Figure 1-1**), and surrounding blocks. However, the Proposed Project would not include any new commercial buildings at the existing Penn Station, MSG, or Moynihan Train Hall. As shown in **Figure 1-2**, the Project Area is centrally located in Manhattan, near Hudson Yards and the Midtown Central Business District, proximate to passenger rail service at Penn Station and subway service at three major stations, with unmatched connections to other portions of New York City and the region.

Despite its outstanding transit access, the Penn Station area today is characterized by outmoded building stock, a disjointed and uncoordinated public realm, overburdened transit infrastructure, and stagnant development activity. The Proposed Project would address these conditions by establishing a cohesive development framework and an integrated approach to the public realm. Commercial redevelopment under the Proposed Project would capitalize on the Project Area’s transit-rich location, transform the area to a premier commercial office district, provide for public transportation and public realm improvements essential for a dynamic business district, and complement other transformative initiatives that have reshaped the Far West Side and Midtown over the past 20 years. Furthermore, the Proposed Project would reflect a public commitment to the area commensurate with the essential infrastructure investments already complete (Moynihan Train Hall, East End Gateway) and planned for the future (the reconstruction and expansion of Penn Station). The Proposed Project would also promote the economic recovery of New York City and the region in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic by supporting economic activity associated with the growth of Midtown and investments in regional rail and transit infrastructure.

Overall, the Proposed Project is a critical component of the Governor’s vision for the Empire Station Complex, as it would create a vibrant commercial district that would benefit Penn Station, complement long-term development initiatives and reinforce the major infrastructure investments in the reconstruction and expansion of Penn Station, and support the City’s goal of encouraging high-density development around a world-class transportation hub.

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

In overview, the Proposed Project includes:

- **Creation of a revitalized, transit-oriented commercial district to benefit Penn Station and revitalize the surrounding area.** The Proposed Project would result in approximately

20 million gross square feet (gsf) of primarily Class A commercial office, retail, and hotel space on eight development sites within the Project Area (see **Figure 1-1**).

- **Improvements to area subway stations and transit connections with Penn Station.** ESD, through the GPP and in collaboration with MTA, would require the completion of transit improvements at each development site in connection with new building construction. It is anticipated that transit improvements would be implemented at the following subway stations: 34th Street–Penn Station (Eighth Avenue A/C/E Subway Lines), 34th Street–Penn Station (Seventh Avenue 1/2/3 Subway Lines), and 34th Street–Herald Square (Sixth Avenue B/D/F/M/N/Q/R/W Subway Lines and Port Authority Trans-Hudson [PATH] train service). Additional public transportation improvements under consideration include creating a below-grade east–west corridor between the 34th Street–Penn (1/2/3 Subway Lines) and 34th Street–Herald Square subway stations, new station entrances, new stairways, widening existing stairways and platforms, consideration of below-grade north–south circulation east of Seventh Avenue, and other improvement measures.
- **Implementation of public realm improvements.** ESD, through the GPP, would require the completion of public realm improvements in the Project Area in connection with the proposed developments. Improvements under consideration include widening sidewalks adjoining the Proposed Project buildings and creating new plaza spaces in the Project Area.

In addition, the Proposed Project would support separate but related projects to improve and expand Penn Station. These projects would be undertaken separately by one or more of the involved railroads (MTA, Amtrak, and/or NJT) and would be subject to their own environmental reviews and approvals, as appropriate. Specifically, the Proposed Project would:

- **Support reconstruction of the existing Penn Station.** Revenue from the Proposed Project’s new development would contribute towards funding for substantial improvements to the existing Penn Station as identified through a Penn Station Master Plan under development by MTA, Amtrak, and NJT.
- **Support the expansion of Penn Station.** The Proposed Project would support the planned expansion of Penn Station by (i) providing a potential source of funding for the proposed expansion and improvement of Penn Station and (ii) facilitating, through ESD’s proposed GPP for the Empire Station Complex, transit-oriented development above the below-grade expansion of tracks and platforms south of the existing Penn Station. Such an expansion of Penn Station would increase the overall station capacity for train operations and passenger flow. The expanded facility would incorporate eight or nine tracks (depending on final configuration) to substantially increase Penn Station’s existing track and platform capacity. Subject to ongoing collaboration and planning among the involved public transportation providers (MTA, Amtrak, and NJT) and any required federal approvals and federal environmental reviews, the expansion of Penn Station would occupy the below-grade levels of Block 780 and portions of Blocks 754 and 806 (and areas beneath adjoining streets), if this location is selected as the approved location for the station’s expansion. The Proposed Project would be designed and constructed to accommodate rail infrastructure for the proposed station expansion.

Section C, “Project Description,” provides a more detailed description of the multiple elements of the Proposed Project.

To allow for the implementation of the Proposed Project, ESD is proposing to seek its Directors’ approval of a GPP that would, among other things, authorize ESD to override provisions of the New York City Zoning Resolution and other local laws, as applicable, in accordance with the New

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York State Urban Development Corporation Act (the UDC Act). At this time, a determination has not been made as to whether the property acquisitions needed for the Penn Station expansion (consisting of Block 780 and portions of Block 754 and Block 806) would be undertaken, in whole or in part, by ESD or by another entity, such as MTA or Amtrak. Decisions about property acquisition, including which public entity or entities would be responsible for those property acquisitions, would be made only in the event that the Penn Station expansion site is selected as the locally preferred alternative for that project and that alternative is selected as a result of the ongoing federal approval process, as the planning and design of the Proposed Project develops, and ESD's collaboration with the involved railroads continues. The acquisition of property would be by negotiated purchase with the property owners and/or through the exercise of eminent domain. In addition, ESD and the City of New York would cooperate as contemplated by the UDC Act in connection with the construction of the public realm improvements located within City-owned mapped streets. Such improvements would be subject to the approval of the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT). Affirmation of the proposed GPP for the Empire Station Complex, the actions that may be taken to acquire the property interests as necessary to facilitate the Proposed Project, and other actions authorized by the UDC Act in furtherance of the Proposed Project are collectively referred to as the "Proposed Actions."

ESD is working closely with the City of New York to accomplish the Proposed Project's development goals and the implementation of public realm and public transportation improvements for the area. The planning, design, and implementation of public realm improvements are a collaborative effort of ESD with the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) and DOT. ESD is collaborating with MTA, Amtrak, and NJT with respect to the proposed expansion of Penn Station and implementation of public transportation improvements. To facilitate implementation of the Proposed Project, ESD is also working with Vornado Realty Trust (Vornado), the owner of a significant number of properties in the Project Area that contain connections (or potential future connections) to Penn Station and the subway and transit infrastructure in the Penn Station area.

The Proposed Actions require discretionary approvals subject to environmental review under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and its implementing regulations. Pursuant to SEQRA, ESD is the SEQRA lead agency for the Proposed Project.

B. BACKGROUND

Penn Station is the main intercity railroad station and a major commuter railroad station in New York City. Connections are available within Penn Station to Newark International Airport (via Amtrak and NJT service), John F. Kennedy International Airport (via LIRR and MTA New York City Transit [NYCT] subway service), and to LaGuardia Airport via NYCT subway to bus transfers. Penn Station provides connections to NYCT's Seventh Avenue Line station, serving the 1, 2, and 3 trains; and the Eighth Avenue Line station, serving the A, C, and E trains. These subway stations, and the Herald Square Subway Station and 33rd Street PATH Station located one block to the east of Penn Station at Sixth Avenue, are among the most heavily used subway stations in the City. With nearly 600,000 rail and subway trips per day, Penn Station is the busiest passenger transportation hub in North America, and offers unmatched connectivity between intercity rail service, commuter rail service, and local subway service. The station is located entirely underground between Seventh and Eighth Avenues and West 31st and West 33rd Streets.

The original Penn Station was built by the Pennsylvania Railroad and opened in 1910. It was a classic Beaux-Arts style building designed by the famed architecture firm of McKim, Mead, & White and featured an ornate marble and granite station house above ground covering the entire

double superblock from West 31st to West 33rd Streets and Seventh to Eighth Avenues. The station was considered a masterpiece of the Beaux-Arts style and one of the great architectural works of New York City. The station was part of the Pennsylvania Railroad's New York Improvement and Tunnel Extension, which also included the tunnels and track connections extending from Weehawken, New Jersey, beneath the Hudson River, Manhattan, and the East River to Long Island City, Queens. Once completed, this massive engineering project enabled direct rail access to New York City from points south for the first time.

Passenger volumes began to decline after World War II—a time when America was investing in automobiles, highways, and suburban infrastructure rather than rail and subways. In the 1950s, the declining Pennsylvania Railroad sold the air rights to the property and reduced the size of the railroad station. In 1963, the above-ground train station was demolished. Over the next nine years, the below-grade concourses and waiting areas were reconstructed, creating the Penn Station that commuters and visitors use today, while MSG and the high-rise office buildings at 1 Penn Plaza and 2 Penn Plaza, between West 31st and West 34th Streets and Seventh and Eighth Avenues, were constructed. The current station has three underground levels: concourses on the upper two levels and train platforms on the lowest. The two levels of concourses were original to the 1910 station but were extensively modified during the construction of MSG into the cramped, poorly organized, and substandard corridors that exist today.

At the time Penn Station was demolished and replaced in the 1960s, the facility was designed to serve approximately 200,000 rail trips per day. Today, Penn Station is owned by Amtrak, a federally chartered corporation created under federal law. Penn Station is located on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, a vital passenger rail link over which Amtrak provides rail service from New York City to Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and intermediate points, with connections to Amtrak's national intercity commuter rail network. Penn Station currently serves more than double the number of rail trips that it was designed for in the 1960s. MTA Metro-North Railroad (Metro-North) service to Penn Station is projected to begin after 2023 when MTA completes the East Side Access Project, which will free up track capacity at Penn Station by providing direct LIRR service to Grand Central Terminal.¹

LIRR's services are operated in the lower concourse level of the station, which LIRR leases from Amtrak and operates under a joint facilities agreement. Although it is now confined to the lower level of Penn Station, LIRR's portion of the station alone is the second-busiest rail station in the nation, second only to Grand Central Terminal. Based on 2019 data, LIRR provides over 237,000 daily trips on more than 450 daily trains within its platforms, concourses, and exits. Similarly, NJT's portion of Penn Station serves approximately 187,000 daily trips. LIRR and NJT customers also make heavy use of the adjacent NYCT subway stations to complete their journeys to and from workplaces or other destinations. Approximately one-half of commuting daily customers enter or leave the railroad station via the busy Seventh Avenue or Eighth Avenue subway stations, which accommodate 177,000 and 174,700 weekday trips, respectively.

¹ MTA is a New York State public authority and public benefit corporation that manages and develops commuter transportation serving New York City and a New York metropolitan transportation district that also embraces the counties of Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, Putnam, Rockland, Orange, and Dutchess. MTA oversees various subsidiary and affiliated operating entities, which together with MTA, are managed by the same chairperson and board. These include, among others: NYCT, which operates subway service in New York City; LIRR, which operates commuter rail service between Long Island and New York City; and Metro-North, which operates rail service into Grand Central Terminal from points north of the City.

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In the last decade, the number of average weekday Penn Station riders on Amtrak, LIRR, and NJT has grown by 26 percent and subway ridership on the Seventh and Eighth Avenue lines has increased by 34 percent. Although they operate at capacity today, Amtrak, MTA (LIRR and Metro-North), and NJT ridership is expected to increase.²

Despite its status as the busiest rail and transit hub in the nation, commercial office development around Penn Station has been limited by an overburdened transit infrastructure, aging building stock, and poor pedestrian circulation. Even with these challenges, the Project Area presents a significant opportunity for sustainable growth in New York City, thanks to its unparalleled rail and transit access.

Over the past two decades, the public and private sectors have embarked on transformative transit and land development proposals at Penn Station, the Far West Side, and East Midtown to improve transit infrastructure and sustain Manhattan as the nation's center of commerce and business. The Empire Station Complex presents a unique opportunity to reconstruct and expand Penn Station and reinvigorate the area that surrounds it.

PENN STATION OPERATIONS

Penn Station has a total of 11 platforms and 21 platform tracks, shared by Amtrak, LIRR, and NJT. The platform tracks are connected to a network of tracks to the east and west. On the west, Amtrak and NJT trains enter and leave the station using the two tracks of the existing North River Tunnel; Amtrak trains from the Empire Line serving Albany and points north also connect into Penn Station on the west.

The blocks west of Penn Station are occupied by approach tracks that provide access to and from the station. These tracks are used for cross-Hudson rail service to the station for Amtrak's Northeast Corridor Line, NJT lines, and LIRR's rail connections to MTA's John D. Caemmerer West Side Yard, which is bounded by Tenth Avenue, Twelfth Avenue, West 30th Street, and West 33rd Street, and is used by LIRR for midday train storage and light maintenance. Tracks east of the station proceed eastward to the four-track East River Tunnels, which provide a continuing connection for Amtrak's Northeast Corridor Line to New England, and for LIRR's rail lines to Queens and Long Island. The East River Tunnels also provide access to Sunnyside Yard in Queens, a large Amtrak train storage and maintenance yard that is also used for midday train storage by NJT.

Over the past several years, the three railroads have performed extensive operations analyses and implemented infrastructure improvements that have allowed the railroads to increase service frequency. Today, the three railroads use the full capacity of the tracks and platforms in Penn Station during the peak hours of travel.

Penn Station has two levels of passenger space above the tracks and platforms. The main passenger hall, Amtrak ticketing and waiting area, and NJT concourse are located on the upper passenger level. The upper level also provides connections to street level. The lower passenger level consists of LIRR's concourse in the station, with connections to the Seventh and Eighth Avenue subway lines and NJT passenger access to its platforms. Several connecting concourses lead from LIRR's

² The statistics cited in this section are based on recent data prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has changed short-term ridership patterns. It is reasonable to expect that as the pandemic subsides such ridership patterns will resume.

main passenger space to provide access to the track space below. The Penn Station Service Building is located at 236-248 West 31st Street, directly across from Penn Station. This building was constructed in 1908 and originally supplied electricity to the electric locomotives going in and out of Penn Station. The Penn Station Service Building houses mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems that serve Penn Station, including steam piping and chiller units, as well as systems that service tracks, including switches and compressors, which control train movements beyond Penn Station. The electricity that powers the tunnel ventilation system originates in the Service Building. This powers Amtrak infrastructure that extends from Long Island to New Jersey.

MOYNIHAN TRAIN HALL

The need for improvements to Penn Station has been recognized almost since the original station building was demolished in 1963. In the past two decades, a number of highly visible improvements have been made. Most notable among these is the new Moynihan Train Hall recently completed at the Farley Building, which has brought a monumental above-ground passenger space back to Penn Station.

On January 1, 2021, the new Moynihan Train Hall opened in the landmark Farley Building, across Eighth Avenue from Penn Station as part of ESD's Moynihan Station Civic and Land Use Improvement Project. This building was constructed around the time of the original Penn Station, and its architecture is evocative of the now-demolished 1910 station building. Since many of Penn Station's existing tracks and platforms are located directly below the Farley Building, the location of the Farley Building and its related below-grade improvements (including the expanded West End Concourse and ramps that connect the Farley Building to Penn Station and can be accessed at-grade from the west side of Eighth Avenue) offered a unique opportunity to create a new above-ground train hall serving Amtrak and LIRR passengers. Now complete, Moynihan Train Hall serves as the primary boarding and ticketing facility for Amtrak and an additional facility for LIRR. The train hall has a monumental, sky-lit passenger space with state-of-the-art wayfinding, information displays, and other visitor amenities. The Moynihan Train Hall expands Penn Station's passenger concourse space by 50 percent, and the shift of Amtrak's daytime passenger services to the new Moynihan Train Hall now opens space for other uses in the existing Penn Station.

Despite this improvement, the majority of train cars and passengers arriving at Penn Station will land beneath the unreconstructed part of the station east of Eighth Avenue and will continue to navigate the substandard corridors and egress through those areas to exit the station.

OTHER PENN STATION IMPROVEMENTS

In addition to the Moynihan Train Hall, MTA, Amtrak, and NJT are currently completing other improvements at Penn Station. These include LIRR's newly completed East End Gateway, which creates a new entrance to LIRR's Penn Station concourse at West 33rd Street west of Seventh Avenue, and the currently under construction LIRR Concourse project, which will create wider reconstructed passenger concourses to improve access, egress, and circulation, and relieve overcrowding. NJT is conducting preliminary design work for the Central Concourse Extension, a proposed corridor to provide additional access to Tracks 1 through 12. In addition, Amtrak is undertaking an ongoing series of repairs and upgrades to tracks and switches at Penn Station, collectively referred to as the Penn Station Infrastructure Renewal Project.

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PENN STATION ACT

The New York Pennsylvania Station Public Safety Improvements Act (Penn Station Act), adopted in 2018 as Part MMM of Chapter 59 of the Laws of 2018 (enacted into law by the New York State Legislature), identified the rehabilitation of Penn Station and its connectivity to the surrounding areas as “a pressing public safety and transportation issue and is a major objective for the State to resolve and should be made a top priority.” In particular, the Penn Station Act stated that the rehabilitation of Penn Station would require “improvements to access and egress and to the surrounding areas to position such areas to accommodate and attract passengers and evolving technological and business and commercial needs and practices” and directed ESD and other governmental, community and business entities to collaborate on solutions. The Proposed Project would help to achieve the goals of the Penn Station Act.

PENN STATION MASTER PLAN

As discussed in more detail below, Penn Station suffers from a number of design and operational deficiencies. To create a framework for addressing these problems, MTA, Amtrak, and NJT are preparing a Master Plan for Penn Station, which includes a number of separate, but complementary projects, including the reconstruction of the existing station, the new Moynihan Train Hall, and the proposed Penn Station expansion. The planning process for the Penn Station Master Plan is expected to continue under the leadership of the involved railroads. The Penn Station Master Plan will provide for the integration of the different station components functionally, operationally, and architecturally to produce a cohesive station complex that will improve circulation and connections to the surrounding district. Key goals of the Penn Station Master Plan include:

- Increasing station capacity and accommodating increased train service;
- Integrating the components of the Empire Station Complex, including the new Moynihan Train Hall and the proposed expansion of Penn Station;
- Integrating the Empire Station Complex with the surrounding area;
- Rationalizing station functions and systems;
- Improving pedestrian circulation;
- Improving safety and security; and
- Increasing revenue generation to support the station.

The Proposed Project would support the implementation of the Penn Station Master Plan by facilitating the expansion of Penn Station, improving connectivity, and generating revenue from the new development to be applied towards the implementation of the plan.

REGIONAL RAIL INITIATIVES

Several rail improvement projects are currently planned that will change rail operations at Penn Station in the future. These include capital projects planned or proposed by LIRR, Metro-North, Amtrak, and NJT. These improvement projects are separate and independent from the Proposed Project.

LIRR EAST SIDE ACCESS

MTA is currently constructing the East Side Access Project, which will allow LIRR service to Grand Central Terminal in East Midtown. The project includes a new passenger terminal beneath

Grand Central's existing passenger spaces as well as new tunnels, track connections, and rail storage and support spaces. When this project is complete, LIRR will serve both Penn Station and Grand Central Terminal. In combination with other LIRR initiatives, including the Main Line expansion (a new third track on the LIRR Main Line and new double track on Ronkonkoma Branch), this will allow LIRR to provide substantially more service across Long Island for its customers. With the introduction of service to Grand Central Terminal, LIRR will reduce its train frequency at Penn Station, freeing capacity for other rail movements there.

METRO-NORTH PENN STATION ACCESS

MTA is in planning to bring Metro-North service to Penn Station, taking advantage of train capacity freed by the East Side Access Project. The Penn Station Access Project would create a new connection for Metro-North's New Haven Line service, making use of Amtrak's Hell Gate line (on its Northeast Corridor route) through the Bronx, Queens, and Penn Station. This project would create four new Metro-North stations in the East Bronx in areas not well-served by rail transit today.

GATEWAY PROGRAM

The Gateway Program proposes a comprehensive program of phased rail infrastructure improvements to increase track, tunnel, bridge, and station capacity, eventually creating four mainline tracks between Newark, New Jersey and Penn Station, that will allow the doubling of passenger trains (including Amtrak and NJT service) on the Northeast Corridor between Newark, New Jersey and Penn Station. While the specific details of most of the capacity-enhancing elements are still under development, these improvements include a new two-track Hudson River tunnel to supplement the existing North River Tunnel, an upgraded replacement bridge over the Hackensack River in New Jersey (Portal North Bridge), the addition of a new, two-track bridge over the Hackensack River (Portal South Bridge), and the proposed Penn Station expansion. In addition, for NJT to increase rail service to Penn Station, new rail infrastructure and a new rail storage yard in New Jersey are needed. A connection at Secaucus Station would provide direct rail service to New York for a number of rail lines that currently terminate at Hoboken Terminal. All of these capacity improvements are necessary to significantly increase Amtrak and NJT rail service to Penn Station.

In addition to capacity expansion, the Gateway Program also includes preservation projects to update and modernize existing infrastructure and make repairs to infrastructure elements that are damaged due to age or events, such as Superstorm Sandy.

HUDSON TUNNEL PROJECT

One key component of the Gateway Program, the Hudson Tunnel Project, has independent utility as a resiliency project.³ The Hudson Tunnel Project will create a new two-track tunnel under the Hudson River for Amtrak and NJT service on the Northeast Corridor and will rehabilitate the existing North River Tunnel, which was severely damaged during Superstorm Sandy. Having the new tunnel in place will allow Amtrak and NJT to divert train service from the existing tunnel so that it can be repaired. The new tracks will connect to Penn Station immediately south of the

³ U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration and NJT. *Hudson Tunnel Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation*. Hudson County, NJ and New York County, NY. June 2017. Available at <http://www.hudsonunnelproject.com/deis.html>

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connections from the existing North River Tunnel and Amtrak's Empire Line service, and will require modifications to the approach track geometry and switches.

EAST RIVER TUNNELS REHABILITATION

Amtrak is planning the rehabilitation of the East River Tunnels that were damaged during Superstorm Sandy. The rehabilitation will occur one tube at a time to minimize disruption to rail service, but closure of one tube will nonetheless require service changes for Amtrak, LIRR, and NJT.

PLANNING CONTEXT

In New York City, planning initiatives often link high-density development with transit and public realm improvements. Notable examples of this approach include the Hudson Yards Rezoning and No. 7 Subway Line Extension and the Greater East Midtown Rezoning, which have facilitated high-density development coupled with investment in transit improvements and the public realm.

HUDSON YARDS REZONING AND NO. 7 SUBWAY LINE EXTENSION

Planning for Hudson Yards, an area of Manhattan bounded by West 42nd/West 43rd Streets, Seventh/Eighth Avenues, West 28th/West 30th Streets, and Hudson River Park, began in 2001. Since that time, the City of New York, MTA, and the State of New York have collaborated on planning initiatives to create a development program to transform Hudson Yards into a new mixed-use district accommodating job growth and new housing for New York City's growing population.

The heart of the Special Hudson Yards District is the John D. Caemmerer West Side Yard, spanning the superblocks between West 30th and West 33rd Streets and Tenth and Twelfth Avenues. The rezoning allowed the rail yard to be decked over with a new platform to allow for construction of new buildings. Bisected by Eleventh Avenue, the sites over the Caemmerer Rail Yard are known as the Eastern Rail Yard site and Western Rail Yard site.

As rezoned, the Special Hudson Yards District has the capacity for approximately 26 million square feet (sf) of new office development, 20,000 units of housing, 2 million sf of retail, and 3 million sf of hotel space. To support the new neighborhood, MTA extended the No. 7 subway line from 42nd Street-Times Square to a new terminal station in Hudson Yards at 34th Street and Eleventh Avenue. Since the adoption of the rezoning in 2005, several developments have been constructed and more are underway—most notably the development on the Eastern Rail Yard site, which opened in 2019 with almost 12 million sf of development in four office buildings, two residential buildings, a shopping mall, an arts center called the Shed, and an art installation known as the Vessel. It is anticipated that the Western Rail Yard site will be developed with up to 6.4 million sf of mixed-used development, providing residential and commercial uses (retail and office or hotel space), a new public school, and publicly accessible open space overlooking the High Line.

GREATER EAST MIDTOWN REZONING

In 2017, the City of New York approved the Greater East Midtown Rezoning. The rezoning will facilitate new, modern office buildings needed to spur jobs and keep New York a global capital of commerce. The plan ties that growth directly to improvements in the district's public transit and public space network, so as new buildings are developed, major investments in infrastructure like

subway stations and public plazas will also be implemented. The rezoning affected 78 blocks between Third and Madison Avenues and East 39th and East 57th Streets.

The zoning changes will enable the development of new Class A commercial buildings, cementing East Midtown’s position as a world-class business district that offers modern amenities and a range of office types. Buildings would be able to achieve higher densities provided the developments support enhancements to the area’s public realm by providing transit improvements and/or purchasing unused floor area from the district’s landmarks. The zoning framework is expected to generate 6.8 million sf of new commercial office space, along with an additional 6.6 million sf that will be upgraded into Class A office space. In “Transit Improvement Zones” near transit hubs, new buildings may include additional floor area when they undertake or pay for major subway station improvements.

C. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The primary purpose of the Proposed Project is to transform a substandard and insanitary area in and around Penn Station into a revitalized, modern transit-oriented commercial district. The Proposed Project would generate revenue to help fund improvements to Penn Station and support economic growth in New York City and the region by providing substantial new high-density commercial development proximate to Penn Station and public transportation and public realm improvements to the area. In addition, the Proposed Project would support the reconstruction and expansion of Penn Station.

The following section describes the challenges facing the Penn Station area and Penn Station itself and provides more detail on the goals and objectives of the Proposed Project.

THE PENN STATION AREA

Despite its adjacency to the busiest transit hub in North America, commercial office development in the vicinity of Penn Station has been limited by overburdened and degraded transit infrastructure, aging building stock, and poor pedestrian circulation. The last major building in the Project Area (1 Penn Plaza) was constructed almost 50 years ago (1970–1972). Aside from the recent ESD-led transformation of the underutilized Farley Building into the Moynihan Train Hall and new commercial development, the neighborhood immediately surrounding Penn Station is characterized by outmoded office buildings, low quality retail offerings, congested sidewalks, and limited publicly accessible open space. Yet the Project Area provides a significant opportunity for sustainable growth in New York City due to its unmatched access to the region’s rail and transit network with the potential for future development to incorporate sustainable, resilient, and energy-efficient infrastructure.

The Project Area is one of the most transit-rich areas in the City, but the public realm, both above- and below-grade, is substandard and deters redevelopment. The subway stations that serve Penn Station along Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Avenues are among the busiest subway stations in the City (the 3rd, 6th and 7th busiest in 2019).⁴ Entrances are often difficult to locate, with small, inconspicuous entryways. Below-grade, subway infrastructure is overburdened with narrow stairs and corridors, crowded platforms, and poor accessibility. Above-grade, public realm spaces,

⁴ <https://new.mta.info/agency/new-york-city-transit/subway-bus-facts-2019>

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including sidewalks and pedestrian circulation spaces, are overcrowded and poorly organized, and sidewalk widths are too narrow to accommodate the high volume of pedestrians in the area.

PENN STATION

Penn Station is located at the center of the Project Area. The combination of the low-cost construction redesign in the 1960s, inadequate investment in the station over time, and a steady rise in ridership has strained the station's infrastructure and systems and degraded the user experience. Almost 60 years after the demolition and underground reconstruction of Penn Station, the facility is substandard, poorly configured, and in dire need of major investment to maintain operations, renew its infrastructure, improve its revenue stream, and re-establish itself as the premier rail transportation center in the region. A substantially improved Penn Station, along with the Moynihan Train Hall across Eighth Avenue, would catalyze the economic revival of the surrounding area.

Nearly 600,000 trips are navigated through Penn Station's narrow underground corridors (more than three times the number of daily trips in the 1960s), which are devoid of natural light, consistent wayfinding, or sufficient waiting areas.

MTA, in collaboration with Amtrak and NJT, is conducting a comprehensive study of the existing conditions at Penn Station as part of the Penn Station Master Plan. The Penn Station Master Plan's preliminary findings indicate that commuters experience congested platforms and concourse levels, poor pedestrian accessibility (entrance and egress points are particularly difficult for persons with mobility issues to navigate), a lack of sufficient passenger waiting and overflow space, and a lack of sufficient public restroom facilities. The overall customer experience is universally perceived as very poor, particularly on the lower level, due to low ceiling heights, narrow corridors and concourses, poor lighting, and outdated and inadequate wayfinding and passenger information systems.

Furthermore, robust growth in ridership into Penn Station is projected in the future as rail service is expanded and the population in the LIRR, NJT, Amtrak, and Metro-North service areas continues to grow. Penn Station train operations are currently at or near capacity, constrained by the number of tracks and platforms in the station and by the condition and capacity of the North (Hudson) River and East River Tunnels that serve it. Ridership through Penn Station, though impacted in the short term by the COVID-19 pandemic, is projected to continue to increase as service is expanded and the population in the LIRR, NJT, Amtrak, and Metro-North service areas continues to grow. Responding to this growing need, Amtrak, NJT, MTA, and New York State are planning and implementing extensive investments to alleviate these constraints, expand service, and extend existing service to new locations.

Although recent initiatives like the new Moynihan Train Hall and West End Concourse beneath the Farley Building have improved the passenger experience in parts of Penn Station, the station still operates well beyond its capacity in terms of both trains and passengers and remains overcrowded and confusing for passengers. Frequent train delays, unclear wayfinding, and aesthetically uninviting concourse levels are synonymous with Penn Station, and frustrate thousands of commuters every day. In the future, without any expansion to the station itself, overcrowding will continue to worsen as the number of commuters grows.

To address these issues, on January 8, 2020, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced an initiative to create a new commercial transit district (the Proposed Project) and reconstruct and expand Penn

Station. The Empire Station Complex would build upon the recent improvements to Penn Station, and facilitate the transformation of the Project Area to a revitalized commercial transit district.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and associated objectives for the Proposed Project are as follows:

- Goal 1: Revitalize the area surrounding Penn Station with new, sustainable, high-density commercial development
 - Provide a substantial amount of new commercial development to create a cohesive, transit-oriented district that will capitalize on the Project Area’s central Manhattan location proximate to passenger rail service at Penn Station and three major subway stations;
 - Eliminate substandard and insanitary conditions in the Project Area;
 - Foster and support economic growth and tax revenue through the creation of jobs and economic activity during construction, and through the provision of new commercial office space to accommodate New York City’s long-term growth targeting the modern needs of commercial tenants (i.e., generous column spacing, large ceiling heights and upgraded mechanical systems); and
 - Maximize incorporation of sustainable design practices to achieve environmentally superior performance in the new buildings.
- Goal 2: Improve passenger rail and transit facilities and pedestrian circulation, access, and safety
 - Implement transit improvements at the 34th Street–Penn Station–Eighth Avenue [A/C/E], 34th Street–Penn Station–Seventh Avenue [1/2/3], and 34th Street–Herald Square–Sixth Avenue [B/D/F/M/N/Q/R/W/PATH] subway stations to better accommodate passenger volumes in these stations, and offer coherent wayfinding and a safer passenger experience;
 - Create a below-grade east–west corridor connecting the 34th Street–Herald Square and the 34th Street–Penn Station–Seventh Avenue subway stations;
 - Facilitate public realm improvements in the Project Area, including widened sidewalks, creation of shared streets, and installation of protected bike lanes; and
 - Create publicly accessible passive open space to serve residents, workers, and visitors in the area.
- Goal 3: Support improvements to address substandard conditions in Penn Station
 - Maximize revenue generated by the new development to fund, in part, improvements to Penn Station by MTA, Amtrak, and NJT; and
 - Utilize the adjacency of certain development sites to expand Penn Station ingress and egress and increase identifiable entrances.
- Goal 4: Support and accommodate future capacity increases at Penn Station
 - Maximize revenue generated by the new development to fund, in part, the potential expansion of Penn Station into Block 780 (and portions of Blocks 754 and 806) to accommodate new, below-grade tracks and platforms, to be designed, constructed and operated per arrangements among MTA, Amtrak, and NJT. Such expansion is anticipated to significantly increase the station’s overall track and platform capacity.
 - Accommodate the potential southward expansion of Penn Station in the design and construction of the development sites on the blocks comprising the proposed expansion.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The Proposed Project is a comprehensive redevelopment initiative to create a revitalized, modern transit-oriented commercial district centered around Penn Station. It would address substandard and insanitary conditions in the Project Area by introducing much-needed public transportation and public realm improvements to the area and facilitating high-density redevelopment of nearby parcels to create a cohesive, transit-oriented commercial district. The primary components of the Proposed Project are described in more detail below. The following section also describes the reconstruction and potential expansion of Penn Station, which would be supported and accommodated by the Proposed Project.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

The Proposed Actions would facilitate redevelopment on the blocks surrounding Penn Station within the Project Area, setting the stage to transform a poorly planned and under-developed area with outmoded buildings and an inhospitable public realm into a cohesive commercial district incorporating sustainability measures. The GPP would facilitate the construction of approximately 20 million gsf of new Class A commercial office space, retail, and hotel space on eight development sites within the Project Area. The new developments would provide new entrances and connections for both Penn Station and the subway system, further increasing transit access for the area. The new development would generate funds to support improvements to and expansion of Penn Station and its interconnected pedestrian passageways and subway stations.

Sites 1 through 8 would be developed in accordance with design guidelines referenced in the GPP. The development sites are shown in **Figure 1-1**. The GPP would override use, bulk, density, and other requirements of the New York City Zoning Resolution. ESD would prepare Design Guidelines for the Proposed Project, which would specify the parameters for permitted development in lieu of zoning. The proposed developments are described below.

- Site 1: a 64,189-sf site at 403-415 Eighth Avenue, between West 30th and West 31st Streets (Block 754, Lots 34-41, 44, 51, and 63). Site 1 would be redeveloped with two buildings containing approximately 1.3 million gsf of floor area, including approximately 750,000 gsf of office use, ground-floor retail, and an approximately 560-room hotel, replacing the existing lower-density mix of office, retail, hotel, residential, community facility, and parking uses.
- Site 2: a 158,000-sf site that occupies the full block bounded by West 30th and West 31st Streets and Seventh and Eighth Avenues (Block 780, all lots). Site 2 would be redeveloped with two buildings containing a total of approximately 6.3 million gsf of office space with ground-floor retail and a new public plaza in the center of the block.
- Site 3: a 44,436-sf site at 363-371 Seventh Avenue between West 30th and West 31st Streets (Block 806, Lots 1, 3, 6, 9, 69, and 76). Site 3 would be redeveloped with an approximately 1.8-million-gsf building with office and ground-floor retail uses, replacing the existing mix of predominantly hotel and commercial office uses.
- Site 4: a 34,807-sf site on the east side of Eighth Avenue between West 33rd and West 34th Streets (Block 783, Lot 1 and part of Lot 70). Site 4 would be developed with an approximately 1.1-million-gsf mixed-use building (office, hotel, and ground-floor retail).
- Site 5: 45,425-sf site on the west side of Seventh Avenue between West 33rd and West 34th Streets (Block 783, Lots 34, 48, and part of Lot 70). Site 5 is expected to be developed with a 1.9-million-gsf building with office and ground-floor retail uses. Adjacent to Site 5, the Plaza 33 open space is expected to be enhanced and improved with new public amenities.

- Site 6: a 54,313-sf site at 435 Seventh Avenue between West 33rd and West 34th Streets (Block 809, Lots 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 16, 17, 69, 73, 80, and 82). Site 6 would be redeveloped with an approximately 2.1-million-gsf office and retail building with accessory parking, replacing existing lower-density retail, mixed-use commercial and residential buildings, and office uses.
- Site 7: a 79,000-sf site on the east side of Seventh Avenue between West 32nd and West 33rd Streets (Block 808, Lot 7501). The building on Site 7 would contain approximately 2.6 million gsf of office, retail, and accessory parking uses.
- Site 8: a 79,000-sf site on the west side of Sixth Avenue between West 32nd and West 33rd Streets (Block 808, Lot 40). Site 8 would be redeveloped with a 2.6-million-gsf building with office, retail, and accessory parking, replacing the existing office and Manhattan Mall retail uses..

Potential illustrative building heights for each site are provided in **Table 1-1**. Illustrative building massings for each development site are shown in **Figures 1-3** and **1-4**. The new buildings would have maximum base heights specified in the Design Guidelines. The GPP would limit the overall floor area of each building. However, consistent with zoning in other high-density commercial areas of New York City, it would not impose height limits, except for on the midblock portion of Site 1, where a 400-foot height limit would be imposed. If constructed, the buildings could be taller and slimmer or shorter and bulkier than shown in **Figures 1-3** and **1-4**. Several factors have been taken into consideration to determine the development program and inform the illustrative depictions of the buildings, including the size of the development sites, the floorplate size necessary to accommodate modern office developments, the amount of floor area necessary to achieve high-density commercial buildings that also provide space for on-site transit and public realm improvements, and the floor-to-ceiling heights sought by tenants of Class A office buildings.

Table 1-1
Proposed Project Development Program (With Action Condition)

Site	Lot Area	Illustrative Heights (in feet)	Total GSF	Total Commercial GSF	Office GSF	Retail GSF	Hotel (Rooms)	Garage GSF	Parking Spaces	Non-Program Area*
1**	64,189	748 (Eighth Ave) 235 (Midblock)	1,283,460	1,039,602	751,999	6,000	563	0	0	243,857
2	158,000	1,052 (Seventh Ave) 1,300 (Eighth Ave)	6,292,118	5,096,615	5,060,615	36,000	0	0	0	1,195,503
3	44,436	936	1,769,598	1,433,375	1,421,375	12,000	0	0	0	336,224
4	34,807	664	1,100,000	866,000	289,160	100,000	734	25,000	100	209,000
5	45,425	1,018	1,900,000	1,539,000	1,418,436	120,564	0	0	0	361,000
6	54,313	1,130	2,100,000	1,676,000	1,554,500	121,500	0	25,000	100	399,000
7	79,000	1,270	2,600,000	2,081,000	1,879,000	202,000	0	25,000	100	494,000
8	79,000	975	2,600,000	2,081,000	1,875,000	206,000	0	25,000	100	494,000
Total	559,170	--	19,645,176	15,812,592	14,250,085	804,064	1,297	100,000	400	3,732,583

Notes:

* Non-program area includes space for building mechanicals, circulation space associated with transit improvements on the ground and sublevels, back-of-house areas (e.g., hallways and corridors to the building core), certain building core space, and lobby and loading space on the ground and sublevels.

** Site 1 (Block 754) may be developed with an alternate no-hotel commercial development program comprised of approximately 1,013,000 gsf office and 16,000 gsf retail. For this site, the program identified in the table above represents the more conservative scenario for the EIS analyses.

As noted above, an objective of the Proposed Project is to incorporate sustainable design practices to achieve environmentally superior performance in the new buildings. The development on Sites

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1, 2, and 3 would meet this objective as energy efficient measures and sustainable design elements would be required criteria in the request for proposals (RFP) for these sites. Sites 4 through 8 would be among the first new buildings to be designed and constructed after the passage of Local Law 97 of 2019, which places carbon intensity limits on most buildings larger than 25,000 sf, and those limits become more stringent over time.

The proposed development program with the Proposed Project (the With Action condition) is summarized in **Table 1-1**.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

Public Transportation Improvements

The Proposed Project would include public transportation improvements consisting of improvements to passenger rail facilities at Penn Station and transit facilities at area subway stations. ESD, through the GPP and in collaboration with MTA, would require the completion of certain public transportation improvements as part of certain new building construction in the Project Area. It is anticipated that transit improvements would be implemented at the 34th Street–Penn Station–Eighth Avenue [A/C/E], 34th Street–Penn Station–Seventh Avenue [1/2/3], and 34th Street–Herald Square–Sixth Avenue [B/D/F/M/N/Q/R/W/PATH] subway stations. The proposed public transportation improvements under consideration are shown in **Figures 1-5** and **1-6** and summarized below:⁵

- Sites 1, 2, and 3 (Block 780 and portions of Blocks 754 and 806) – New Penn Station connections with publicly accessible in-building connections on Seventh and Eighth Avenues.
- Site 4 – New Penn Station entrance at the corner of Eighth Avenue and West 33rd Street incorporating a new West 33rd Street subway entrance; new West 34th Street subway entrance; and widening of the uptown local C/E platform between West 33rd and West 34th Streets. These improvements would be made to the 34th Street–Penn Station (Eighth Avenue) Subway Station.
- Site 5 – New Penn Station entrance on West 34th Street; new West 34th Street subway entrance (possibly incorporated in the new Penn Station entrance); new West 33rd Street subway entrance; and widen the downtown local No. 1 platform between West 33rd and West 34th Streets. These improvements would be made to the 34th Street–Penn Station–Seventh Avenue Subway Station.
- Site 6 – Widen the uptown local No. 1 platform between West 33rd and West 34th Streets; new West 33rd Street subway entrance and new West 34th Street subway entrance. These improvements would be made to the 34th Street–Penn Station (Seventh Avenue) Subway Station.
- Site 7 – Widen the uptown local No. 1 platform between West 32nd and West 33rd Streets; new West 32nd Street subway entrance just east of Seventh Avenue; new West 33rd Street subway entrance just east of Seventh Avenue and add a new ADA-compliant elevator adjacent to this entrance, and add new express No. 2/3 platform stairs at the south end of the station.

⁵ The Final Scope of Work identified widening the downtown local No. 1 stairs to Penn Station Level A as a joint transit improvement under consideration for the 34th Street–Penn Station–Seventh Avenue Subway Station. This improvement has been removed from the list presented in this DEIS because it would be undertaken separately as part of the proposed reconstruction of Penn Station.

These improvements would be made to the 34th Street–Penn Station (Seventh Avenue) Subway Station.

- Site 8 – Construct new street level stairs at West 32nd and West 33rd Streets and Sixth Avenue, plus additional escalators and/or other vertical circulation elements as needed in consultation with MTA and NYCT; reconstruct two mezzanine stairs connecting the N/Q/R/W and B/D/F/M; and reconfigure the fare control area at the B/D/F/M mezzanine level; and replace the PATH-related elevator in the new building on Site 8. These improvements would be made to the 34th Street–Herald Square Subway Station.
- Establish an east–west underground corridor connecting the 34th Street–Herald Square and the 34th Street–Penn Station–Seventh Avenue Subway Stations and providing access to Sites 7 and 8.

In addition, a potential north–south below-grade concourse east of Seventh Avenue (between approximately West 30th Street and West 34th Street), one or two new crossings below Seventh Avenue to connect Penn Station to the potential new north–south concourse, and an underground passage from the potential expansion of Penn Station to Moynihan Train Hall are under consideration subject to additional analysis for engineering and financial feasibility. The proposed public transportation improvements described above are under consideration, and new or different improvements may be identified as additional planning, design, and transportation analyses are undertaken during the EIS process.

Public Realm Improvements

ESD, through the GPP, would require the implementation of above-grade public realm improvements in the Project Area in connection with the proposed developments. The above-grade public realm improvements include sidewalk widenings, new passive open space, enhancements to existing open space, the potential creation of shared streets, the potential installation of protected and standard bike lanes, and potentially a publicly accessible sky concourse above Plaza 33 with access through the lobbies of the 1 and 2 Penn Plaza office buildings. The public realm improvements are shown in **Figure 1-7**.

Sidewalk Widenings

Sidewalks would be widened on the sites adjoining the City-owned mapped streets at the locations listed below and shown in **Figure 1-7**. The widenings would be accomplished by setting the new buildings back from the property line.

- The entire north side of West 30th Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, and portions of the north side of West 30th Street, between Eighth and Ninth Avenues and Sixth and Seventh Avenues;
- The entire south side of West 31st Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, and portions of the south side of West 31st Street, between Eighth and Ninth Avenues and Sixth and Seventh Avenues;
- Both sides of West 33rd Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues (all of the south side and western portion of the north side);
- Both sides of Eighth Avenue between West 30th and West 31st Streets, and the east side of Eighth Avenue between West 33rd and West 34th Streets;
- Both sides of Seventh Avenue between West 30th and West 31st Streets, both sides of Seventh Avenue between West 33rd and West 34th Streets, and the east side of Seventh Avenue between West 32nd and West 33rd Streets; and

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- West side of Sixth Avenue between West 32nd and West 33rd Streets.

Open Space

The Proposed Project would introduce a new through-block open space on Site 2 between West 30th and West 31st Streets. The proposed open space would be a public plaza constructed in connection with the commercial buildings on Site 2. The plaza would be approximately 30,800 sf (0.71 acres) and would provide a variety of hard- and soft-scape features to support passive recreation and provide a midblock pedestrian connection between West 30th and West 31st Streets. Although a detailed design for the proposed plaza has not yet been developed, the plaza is expected to include a variety of seating typologies and a mix of paved and planted areas. The plaza would include planting beds (surface and/or raised) with ground cover, flower beds, shrubs or lawn. In addition, the plaza is expected to include access and egress points to the expanded Penn Station. The proposed public plaza on Site 2 would provide new open space amenities directly above a modernized and expanded Penn Station, and would serve the new commercial district surrounding Penn Station and the surrounding neighborhoods. The new public plaza would provide passive open space for residents, workers, and visitors to the area.

Plaza 33 is an existing public plaza on West 33rd Street west of Seventh Avenue that is currently closed for construction of the LIRR Concourse project. With the Proposed Project, Plaza 33 would be substantially improved with trees, planters, moveable seating, and new paving. These improvements to Plaza 33 would provide an enhanced environment for passive recreation, programming, and pedestrian circulation. With the Proposed Project, the improvements to the plaza would be integrated with other public realm improvements in the vicinity of Plaza 33 such as the wider sidewalk along the west of Seventh Avenue and the potential shared street on West 33rd Street that would extend to Ninth Avenue. The improvements are intended to create an inviting open space amenity with a clear hierarchy and organization of space that carefully balances the pedestrian circulation and passive recreation functions of the plaza.

Shared Streets

The Proposed Project envisions the future provision of “shared streets” to relieve sidewalk crowding, and provide space for functional elements such as seating, plantings, and furniture. A “shared street” is a roadway designed for slow travel speeds where pedestrians and cyclists share the right-of-way with slow-moving vehicles. Shared Streets are designed to accommodate high pedestrian volumes and low traffic volumes and speeds.

Shared street corridors are contemplated along West 32nd Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, and West 33rd Street, between Sixth and Ninth Avenues. These street segments would potentially be converted to shared streets, which would enhance the pedestrian experience and provide an opportunity for passive recreation for residents, workers, and visitors to the area. Access to all buildings and businesses would be maintained, allowing for servicing, loading, and deliveries.

Shared streets could be developed through a variety of means, either temporary (e.g., roadway painting, moveable planters and street furniture) or permanent (e.g., a rebuilt street with the roadway flush from building line to building line, rather than with a typical curb line grade separation). Development of shared streets within City-owned mapped streets would require approval by DOT.

Shared streets feature design elements to distinguish areas intended solely for pedestrians and the shared road. They typically include the installation of a tactile warning surface between the pedestrian-only areas and the shared road to guide people with visual impairments. Gutters or

drainage inlets to handle stormwater are commonly located between the pedestrian-only zone and the shared road to define the spaces and manage stormwater runoff. Pedestrian areas are programmed with furniture such as seating and planters, and bike infrastructures such as bike racks and bike-share stations. Considerations are typically made to create a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists. For example, a common strategy is to place bike arrows on the pavement to remind drivers that they are sharing the road with cyclists.

Bicycle Lanes

The Proposed Project would allow for the installation of protected bicycle lanes along Seventh and Eighth Avenues and a standard bicycle lane along West 31st Street within the Project Area, subject to DOT approval. Along Seventh Avenue, the existing bicycle lane, which currently terminates at West 30th Street, is expected to be extended north by DOT. On Eighth Avenue, a bicycle lane already exists and would be maintained. The Proposed Project would allow for the enhancement of bicycle lane infrastructure within the Project Area along these two corridors. As part of the development of Sites 1, 2, and 3, the Proposed Project would accommodate bicycle lanes between Sixth and Ninth Avenues along West 31st Street. DOT may consider extending these bicycle lanes along West 31st Street beyond the Project Area.

PENN STATION RECONSTRUCTION AND EXPANSION

The Proposed Project would generate financial support for the potential expansion of Penn Station, and would be designed and constructed to accommodate an integrated below-grade expansion of tracks and platforms south of the existing Penn Station. The design, construction, and operation of an expanded Penn Station would be assumed by one or more of the involved public transportation entities: MTA, Amtrak, and/or NJT. The expansion would substantially increase the station's platform capacity—addressing critical infrastructure constraints at Penn Station. The proposed expansion of Penn Station would alleviate the limitations on train operations within Penn Station and would be integrated with Penn Station, including Moynihan Train Hall, to create the Empire Station Complex (see **Figures 1-5** and **1-6**). Subject to federal approvals, the expansion of Penn Station would encompass Block 780 immediately to the south (bounded by Seventh and Eighth Avenues and West 30th and West 31st Streets), the western portion of Block 806 on the east side of Seventh Avenue, and the eastern portion of Block 754 on the west side of Eighth Avenue. Development of an expanded Penn Station could require the removal of all buildings currently existing on these blocks within the Project Area. The expanded station would add eight or nine new tracks and five new platforms—the exact number and configuration will be determined by service operations and engineering studies currently in progress. The new tracks and platforms are expected to primarily serve NJT, whose rail operations are currently the most constrained of the three railroads using Penn Station. NJT also anticipates the highest rate of service growth in mid- and long-term projections. The addition of these tracks would free up capacity on existing tracks in Penn Station.

The platforms and stairways in the proposed expansion of Penn Station would be considerably wider than the existing platforms and stairways in Penn Station, allowing for ample passenger circulation to avoid potential crowding. The track spacing would accommodate the structure and foundations required to support high-density development over an expanded Penn Station.

The potential expansion of Penn Station would likely include a mezzanine level to connect passengers to Level A (the lower level) of the existing Penn Station under West 31st Street and could house mechanical and electrical systems and back-of-house space. Entrances to an expanded Penn Station would be integrated into the proposed developments on Sites 1, 2, and 3. In addition, a

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new service building for the existing Penn Station and its expansion is assumed to be completed on Site 2.

The proposed expansion of Penn Station is assumed to be constructed by 2028. The full capacity of the expansion would not be realized until the new two-track Hudson River tunnel and Gateway Program are fully operational. The Hudson River tunnel project and all elements of the Gateway Program except the proposed expansion of Penn Station are separate and independent projects from the Proposed Project. The proposed expansion of Penn Station is the only element of the Gateway Program that could potentially receive funding generated by the Empire Station Complex—all other components of the Gateway Program would be funded by other sources.

In addition to accommodating an expanded Penn Station, the Proposed Project would support the reconstruction of the existing Penn Station. Specifically, development under the Proposed Project would generate revenue that would contribute towards funding for substantial improvements to Penn Station as identified through the Penn Station Master Plan. As noted above, improvements under the Penn Station Master Plan would address the functionality, operations, capacity, and safety of the current station and integrate the three primary locations that would comprise the Empire Station Complex into a single, well-functioning, multi-modal complex. As noted above, the implementation of the Penn Station Master Plan is a separate but related project to the Proposed Project, and it would be undertaken separately by one or more of the involved railroads (MTA, Amtrak, and/or NJT).

Project Financing

Project financing is not part of the EIS scope; however, the discussion below is intended to provide context and background. The Proposed Project is complex, with multiple components and construction occurring over many years. In addition, the proposal involves various state and federal entities, such as ESD, MTA, NJT, and Amtrak, as well as private developers. The expanded station will require additional sources of financing, including federal and state funding, to cover the cost of construction. Financing of the station expansion would likely require various partnership structures and federal and state appropriations that are currently unknown. ESD and its partners are exploring multiple funding options, including Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs), sale of development rights, the sale of bonds, grants, and/or other mechanisms that could be utilized to finance and support the Proposed Project. In addition, the development of the commercial buildings, and the site-specific public realm and transportation improvements, would be privately funded with developer equity and private financing, but various value-capture structures to potentially offset some of the cost of the improvements are being explored.

REQUIRED APPROVALS

The Proposed Project requires discretionary approvals by ESD and the railroads. ESD's actions related to the GPP are subject to SEQRA. In the likely event that a Penn Station expansion project would be contingent on some level of federal funding, or other federal approvals, those actions will be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act. At this time, a determination has not been made as to which public entity or entities would procure the property interests needed for the proposed expansion of Penn Station, or which entity or entities would construct the expanded station. Property acquisitions by Amtrak would be governed by applicable federal law, while property acquisitions by ESD, MTA, or NJT would be governed by applicable state laws, including (if undertaken by ESD or MTA), the New York Eminent Domain Procedure Law. All of the required actions and approvals for the Proposed Project are fully described in Chapter 2, "Analytical Framework." *