



July 25, 2022

To: U.S. Representative Jerrold Nadler
U.S. Representative Carolyn Maloney
State Senator Brad Hoylman
State Senator Robert Jackson
State Senator Liz Krueger
Assembly Member Richard Gottfried
Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine
Councilmember Erik Bottcher

Dear Elected Officials:

Over the course of nearly two years, we have met to discuss the future of Penn Station and the surrounding neighborhood. Through over 100 public meetings, both individually and in the context of the Community Advisory Committee Working Group (“CACWG”), you have offered valuable insight – and, at times, criticism that was pointed and often fair – to help shape the General Project Plan for the Penn Station Area Civic and Land Use Improvement Project (the “GPP”). We and Governor Hochul appreciate those contributions. Through vigorous public dialogue, significant projects can be adapted to better meet the needs and priorities of the New Yorkers we are collectively privileged to serve. The evolution of the GPP is but one example.

We write now to memorialize additional commitments that Empire State Development (“ESD”) and the State of New York are making in response to comments you have shared concerning the GPP. As you know, these commitments build upon those that the Governor made in November to revise the GPP, including:

- A commuter-first Penn Station with a single level, double height train hall that doubles passenger circulation space;
- A reduction in commercial density coupled with the addition of required permanently affordable housing units;
- Up to 8 acres of public open space, inclusive of a 30,000 square foot public plaza that would itself be comparable in size to Rockefeller Plaza, and more pedestrian-friendly streetscapes.

The commitments contained in this letter build upon these to help ensure that New Yorkers get what they deserve and have not had in our city’s modern history: a commuter-first Penn Station worthy of New York and a comprehensive neighborhood plan for the surrounding area.

Housing

Governor Hochul believes that just as the commercial growth of our city is essential to its future, and the development of new modern office towers proximate to the world’s best transit will contribute to our future economic health and sustainability goals, New Yorkers at all income levels deserve quality, safe housing. The value of mixed use, live-work neighborhoods has been demonstrated repeatedly in

the modern history of New York City, from the evolution of Downtown Brooklyn to the revival of Lower Manhattan in the decades following September 11th. The COVID-19 pandemic has further demonstrated that homes and places of work should coexist in our business districts as we continue to “write the script” on the future of remote and flexible work arrangements.

In recognition of these facts:

- ESD amended the GPP to require 460 units of permanently affordable housing, up from 163 in the November revision, including 108 new supportive units. In total, out of up to 1,800 units of new housing in the project area, up to 648 will be rent restricted and/or offer supportive services.
- In addition, ESD will issue a Request for Proposals for the redevelopment of the Bayview Correctional Facility, located at 550 W 20th Street in Manhattan Community District 4, requiring no fewer than 60 supportive housing units be provided on that site.
- Together, we are committing to up to 708 new affordable and supportive housing units as part of the Governor’s broader vision for the Penn Station area and surrounding neighborhoods.

Social Services

We have all seen the rise in the number of New Yorkers experiencing street homelessness in recent years. Economic strains have resulted in unacceptable levels of inequality in our society and have combined with the disparate stresses caused by the pandemic to harm some of our most vulnerable citizens. We see too many of our fellow New Yorkers suffering from the distinct syndromes of mental illness and substance addiction. Some of the symptoms of these underlying social syndromes are observable on our streets and public spaces, including in Penn Station and the immediately surrounding area. We must extend a helping hand and offer focused, professional care to New Yorkers experiencing homelessness in and around Penn Station.

The State therefore will invest in social services for individuals experiencing homelessness in the Penn area and:

- Dedicate a “Safe Options Support” (SOS) team, assigned to Penn Station and the surrounding area for a minimum 5-year contract;
- Dedicate an additional outreach team that will engage individuals who need treatment for substance use disorders;
- Work with the operator of the existing homeless drop-in center to relocate it to an expanded space in or near the project area if the Penn expansion goes forward on its current location, as well as facilitate its return to a new, larger space within one of the GPP’s development sites, if desired; and
- Work with the railroads and area private property owners to explore the feasibility of an additional homeless drop-in center in or near Penn Station.

Public Realm

Open space is a crucial and scarce resource in our modern urban tapestry, and our understanding of the best use of our streetscapes has evolved materially and for the better in recent decades. No longer do we think of city streets as places to be ceded to cars and other motor vehicles, and increasingly we are reclaiming these spaces for pedestrians and cyclists. With that in mind, the GPP contemplates significant additions of public space, both above and below grade, in the area surrounding Penn

Station. Included within this are new and improved public plazas, wider sidewalks, “shared streets” and more bike lanes that would return public space to the people of New York City.

The best urban planning efforts are collaborative in nature. As you know, Governor Hochul formed the Penn Station Public Realm Task Force earlier this summer. This group, comprised of elected officials, community stakeholders, representatives of government agencies, property owners, and civic organizations, will meet for the first time in August to begin crafting a thoughtful concept plan for the public realm surrounding Penn Station.

Some of the most successful recent planning efforts in New York City have been implemented by shared City and State governance entities to streamline coordination and execution. It is for that reason that many of you advocated for the creation of such a governance entity to oversee aspects of the Penn Station GPP.

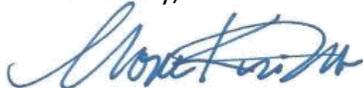
ESD will therefore:

- Dedicate an initial \$50M from early project revenues to support implementation of the first projects identified in the Public Realm Task Force’s concept plan; and
- Act upon the agreement between Governor Hochul and New York City Mayor Eric Adams to incorporate a joint city-state development corporation that will oversee public realm improvements in coordination with ESD and the Public Realm Task Force.

The time is now to fix Penn Station and revitalize the surrounding neighborhood. With a receptive federal government and a relatively short window of time between other major infrastructure projects affecting Penn Station, we cannot wait. We must act decisively to right the wrongs of the past and chart a better future for the Penn area.

We are deeply grateful for your guidance and advocacy, which have helped to improve the GPP. We look forward to continuing to work together for the benefit of the City, State and region.

Sincerely,



Hope Knight
President and CEO, Empire State Development
Commissioner, NYS Dept of Economic Development



James Katz
Deputy Secretary to the Governor for
Economic Development and Workforce