
THE NEW YORK
LANDMARKS
CONSERVANCY

July 11, 2022

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12222

Dear Governor Hochul:

The New York Landmarks Conservancy asks you to pause the plan for Penn Station. Stop Empire State Development from approving the real estate deal for the Penn Station area on July 21. Please answer the numerous questions the plan has raised.

We support an improved Penn Station. But there are too many unanswered questions.

Our main concern is the State's desire to level vibrant blocks around the Station for giant new towers while ignoring City zoning and land use procedures. The State's retreat to urban renewal is as upsetting as it is unnecessary. The area is full of businesses, residents, social service centers, and several historic buildings eligible for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

New York Post and Daily News Editorials have criticized the plan. A Crain's Op-Ed by former Port Authority Executive Director Chris Ward calls this "a massive real estate play in search of a transit project." There is no transportation plan.

The City's Independent Budget Office (IBO) and the Citizens Budget Commission have raised serious questions about the proposed financing. The IBO determined there were too few details to even assess the plan. What is the State deal with the developer who would build the new towers? What happens if the towers are not all built or do not produce the expected revenue? Why isn't the State bonding the cost of Station improvements? The EDC had no answers at a recent State Senate hearing held to give the public another chance to air their concerns.

What exactly would the public get for the \$7 billion price tag the State puts on improvements? How much of that will go to pay Madison Square Garden to build on a former taxiway? Does the State assume that Madison Square Garden will remain in place? Renewal of the Garden's special permit is up for a City Council vote next year. At the last renewal, the Council said told the Garden to use the time to plan a move. What greater improvements could be made without the Garden in place?

Architectural critics Paul Goldberger, Justin Davidson and Michael Kimmelman have all questioned the plan. Chris Ward asked the most basic question of all: "Is this the city we will want to live in?" Several thousands of New Yorkers have already answered "no."

We urge you to respect them, answer the questions, and pause the plan.

Sincerely,



Peg Breen
President

CC: Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney