

**Subject:** Daily News Ed Board: Bear market for Penn plan: Big troubles for Gov. Hochul and Vornado's Midtown redevelopment

[Daily News Ed Board: Bear market for Penn plan: Big troubles for Gov. Hochul and Vornado's Midtown redevelopment](#)

By Ed Board

Steve Roth, CEO of Vornado Realty Trust, was telling the truth on his company's earnings call Tuesday when he said that Gov. Hochul's plan for a forest of new supertall towers around Penn Station, which she inherited from Gov. Cuomo, isn't happening anytime soon: "The headwinds and the current environment are not at all conducive to ground-up development."

Hochul is banking on those speculative towers to underwrite New York's 25% share of the \$7 billion to upgrade Penn and \$13 billion for Amtrak's unneeded pipedream of a Penn annex south of 31st St., never mind that New Jersey hasn't put up its quarter share on either project and Uncle Sam is nowhere on its supposed other half.

When he was pressed about the proposal's centerpiece, PENN15, set to rise where the old Hotel Pennsylvania stood, Roth said, "I'm going to duck the question," sticking to "my prepared remarks that the current environment makes ground-up development very difficult, and I meant it." He added, "in terms of changing uses and what have you — that's not something we're going to get into now." Translation: Don't count on PENN 15.

Roth has to tell the truth. The Securities and Exchange Commission looks unkindly on any other type of pronouncements regarding publicly traded stock.

Asked on NY1 about disappearing funding, Hochul said: "we have other sources of financing for Penn Station." What are they? She then exposed the fallacy of the whole enterprise: "The smartest place for commercial development for the next 20 years — this is a 20-year vision — has to be around" Penn Station. Yet she insists the revamp "is going to start now." How can that be if the money won't flow until Roth builds, which he may not do for decades?

If Hochul — or her opponent Lee Zeldin, should he win next week — doesn't pull the emergency brakes, a couple of lawsuits against the state for breaking the law may do it. We're all for renovating Penn, and we're all for rezoning the neighborhood. But for Pete's sake, do it right.