

MOYNIHAN STATION

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE SCOPING DOCUMENT

TESTIMONY OF FELICE FARBER, DIRECTOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

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Good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of the development of Moynihan Station. My name is Felice Farber and I am the Director of External Affairs for the General Contractors Association and a member of the Friends of Moynihan Station. For nearly 100 year years, the GCA has been the trade association representing the heavy construction industry that builds New York City's infrastructure.

Between 1910 and 1964 a monument to great travel existed on 31st to 33rd streets and from 7th to 8th Avenues. It was the largest building ever erected for rail travel. In 1964 Penn Station was demolished to make way for a new sports arena and entertainment complex.

Currently, Penn Station is the busiest train station in North America. It is a cramped gateway to New York City for more than half a million commuters, travelers and tourists every day. As Maura Moynihan likes to point out, the existing Penn Station is a "pit" to which thousands of travelers are treated to daily. At rush hour Penn station is at capacity and passenger circulation is challenging at best. When The Trans Hudson Express Tunnel comes on line, the surrounding area will become even more congested with pedestrian volumes on the sidewalks at overwhelming levels.

We have the opportunity now to create a grand train station that all New Yorkers deserve. In the place of a grand transit hall, the air rights were sold, the train center moved underground, and an unattractive sports complex was built. Let us learn from the lessons of the past and move forward with a project that recognizes the economic vitality that a grand civic project can bring to a neighborhood. The merging of this project into both Moynihan West (the development of the Farley post office) and Moynihan East (the improvement to the existing Penn Station) optimizes the benefits of this project by creating a

grand train hall at Farley and opening up the existing underground maze at Penn Station.

As this project moves forward there are several guiding principles that must be utilized when finalizing the details of this project.

- **Put the Public Interest First:** First and foremost this project is about creating a grand train hall. Retail and a sports arena can be accommodated tastefully within this context without overwhelming the public spaces. Moving Madison Square garden to the West allows for the opportunity to open up the existing Penn Station and improve passenger circulation. A sports arena, vibrant retail and a train hall can co-exist in the redesigned Farley building. As the project moves forward, it is essential that the additional modes are tastefully incorporated into the Farley Building and do not overwhelm the train hall. Grand Central Station should be used as a model for tastefully incorporating retail space and advertising into a transit hub.
- **Create a Great New Train Station:** The new Moynihan Station should be a grand work of civic architecture that is both beautiful and functional as a transportation hub – with large public spaces, natural light and dramatically improved public circulation and safety features. With half a million people using the existing Penn Station daily – in some cases up to 1,000 people every 90 seconds – improved public circulation both within the facility and in the surrounding street network, is essential and will help to develop the far west side. The destruction of the original Penn Station placed the central transit hub underground in a basement space. Let us learn from prior mistakes, and ensure that this project restores historic grandeur to this station.
- **Protect the Historic Farley Post Office Building:** Given the significant cost for the project, and questions about the availability of public resources, it is critical that the Farley building be rehabilitated in a way that qualifies the project for federal historic preservation tax credits.
- **Build a Great Moynihan Station District:** Significant development rights will be made available as part of this project and concurrently as part of the Hudson Yards development. The Moynihan redevelopment district should knit together Midtown with the Far West Side, be a global model for climate-friendly development, and respect the scale of its

surroundings. Public circulation in the surrounding street network must be a consideration in development plans.

It is time for New York to demonstrate that it can again build grand public works projects and that it can build the kind of infrastructure that will allow the City to remain the financial capital of the world. Moynihan Station is one of the most significant infrastructure projects underway in the City. It is time to build it, and build it well.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment today.