

**Statement of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the Metropolitan  
Transportation Authority at the Scoping Meetings on the Expanded  
Moynihan/Penn Station Redevelopment Project**

**December 6, 2007**

Good Afternoon. I am William Henderson, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA. The PCAC serves as the umbrella organization for three commuter councils: the Long Island Rail Road Commuter's Council, the Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council and the New York City Transit Riders Councils. The PCAC was established in 1977, and its constituent Councils were legislatively mandated in 1981 to represent the interests of riders.

We have followed this project with interest through its many twists and turns, from early concepts, to the agreement for the predecessor of the Moynihan Station Development Corporation to acquire the Farley Complex in 2002, to the present expanded project. While we were skeptical about the benefits of earlier and more limited versions of this project for the users of transit and commuter rail services, we believe that the expanded project will substantially benefit the riders whom we represent. The movement of Madison Square Garden westward allows us to literally raise the roof from the dark and difficult to navigate Penn Station and open the commuting experience to light and air, resulting in an improved experience for the 550,000 riders who use the Station daily.

We believe that this project represents a one-time opportunity to create a grand and functional new transportation center to replace the current Penn Station. As representatives of the users of MTA public transportation services, our primary interest in this project is for it to provide a highly functional transportation facility. Consequently, we are pleased to see the emphasis on increasing the public space available to users of transportation services. Additional space is a fundamental need, as Penn Station is already operating above its capacity, even without considering the impacts of future growth in ridership on the Station.

Raw space alone is not enough, however; for this project to truly improve the commuting experience the additional space created must be wisely used. For this reason, we are gratified to see the attention that has been given to access, circulation, and wayfinding in the Notice of Public Scoping. We are pleased to see the emphasis on increased access and egress points and on direct access to

station facilities at corners defined by street intersections. We also note with approval the attention paid to creating inviting central spaces and concourses and establishing functional connectivity between the elements of the station, subways, and the streets around it.

We would note that the transportation system is not static, and that the array of transportation services that exists today may change considerably before this project is completed. Several examples that come to mind are proposals to bring Metro-North Railroad service to Penn Station and to implement service running from the northern suburbs of the City through to New Jersey. For this reason, an emphasis on flexibility and interoperability is a key to the design of the public transportation elements of this project.

We also appreciate the attention that has been paid in the Notice of Public Scoping to bringing the Station more closely into compliance with National Fire Protection Association Standard 130, which provides for minimum levels of transit and rail passenger safety. We have long been concerned with the safety of passengers in the current Penn Station facility and urge that Moynihan Station adhere to national life safety standards to the greatest extent practicable. The crowding and unsafe conditions, in some cases necessitating closure of parts of Penn Station, that occur when there is a major service disruption illustrate the need for this focus on passenger safety.

One caution that we would express, however, is that throughout the period of development of the project, Penn Station will remain a critical transportation link for hundreds of thousands of residents, workers, and visitors daily. The utmost care must be taken to maintain safe and convenient access to existing transportation facilities while a better future is being built. Close coordination with the public transportation providers serving Penn Station will be necessary.

We would have preferred to have a preliminary project design to comment upon at this meeting, but we look forward to participating in the planning process for this facility, and we particularly look forward to the day when riders can take advantage of a beautiful and functional transportation facility worthy to serve as the gateway to our City and region. We thank you for the opportunity to comment upon this vitally important project.