



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

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Building a Great Moynihan Station and a Great Moynihan District
Testimony at Scoping Session for Moynihan Station EIS
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Since first taking office as Manhattan Borough President, I have held that Moynihan Station is the most critical transportation and economic development investment we can make in our City's future. This project will transform Penn Station into the magnificent gateway our City deserves, it will create new jobs and tax revenue, and it will provide the transportation infrastructure upgrade that our region so desperately needs. I wrote in the *Daily News* in August 2006 that we could not afford to miss this great opportunity, but in the closing days of the Pataki Administration many feared the project had lost critical momentum. The fact that we are here today poised to take a critical step forward on an even bigger and better station is a testament to the importance of the project, to the persistence of dedicated advocates such as Maura Moynihan and the Friends of Moynihan Station, and to the leadership of the Governor and Mayor. We need to build it well, and we need to build it now, and I am increasingly confident we will do both.

Today in New York, we move big projects forward by involving community leaders and stakeholders early on, and giving them a real role in the planning process. I know ESDC and the City will work to do this, through the project's Community Advisory Committee, on which I serve. We must take the comments and input of the community seriously, and involve them meaningfully in the formulation of solutions, so that this project can advance. Towards that end, I would like to make three suggestions that should be studied in the EIS that could resolve some community concerns.

First, the State and City should explore the possibility of transforming West 33rd Street, from Broadway to the Hudson River, into a great pedestrian way that would create a seamless connection from Midtown to the new station, continuing west to the West Side Rail Yards. This could be accomplished by reclaiming two curbside lanes to allow widened sidewalks, new bike lanes, and public open space, and exploring areas and times of day in which vehicular access could be restricted. As community leaders will tell you, this area is in desperate need of relief from crushing pedestrian congestion, and is starved for open space. To enable the new development envisioned in this plan, we need more space for pedestrians to move freely, and we

need to reinforce transit connections that utilize alternate modes of transport. During rush hours, 33rd Street could become a walkway and bikeway for commuters traveling to and from the new station, as well as a thriving, active retail corridor that welcomes pedestrians through the open air rather than through underground passages. During the day and on weekends, it could be a lively thoroughfare for New Yorkers to get from Midtown to the West Side Rail Yards, and to the Hudson River waterfront beyond. This would be a pedestrian-friendly, environmentally sustainable way to anchor the area's development and provide a strong spine along which the Midtown business district can grow. And it would build upon community planning concepts articulated in plans such as the Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association plan for the West Side. This concept, which could reduce anticipated impacts on pedestrian congestion and open space, should be studied as alternative in the EIS.

Second, the EIS should study the impact of adding an additional finding to the proposed special permit and certification process for transferring development rights. The additional finding should require the Planning Commission to find that appropriate steps have been taken to ensure that the local infrastructure is sufficient to support the transferred development. This finding should be tailored to meet the environmental impacts that the EIS anticipates the project will cause. Much of the contemplated development was approved as part of the Hudson Yards rezoning, but its proposed location could cause some new issues that should be addressed as applications to transfer floor area are reviewed and approved.

Third, the EIS should consider the impact of prioritizing commercial over residential use in the floor area transferred throughout the area. This would help ensure that development in this area will take advantage of the prime Central Business District infrastructure, create as many new jobs as possible, and address community concerns that the area has insufficient residential amenities, such as schools and day care, to support a large residential infusion.

I encourage ESDC and the City to expand the scope of this EIS to include these three concepts as alternatives to the proposed action, so that they become viable options in the planning of the station and the surrounding area. There are, of course, many other questions and issues regarding the plan, and I know ESDC and the City will listen seriously to the thoughtful suggestions and comments by Community Boards 4 and 5 and the Community Advisory Committee. In particular, I urge ESDC to work closely with the Community Boards to develop a workable plan to mitigate construction impacts, and investigate the suggestions made by the Regional Plan Association. More specific details, renderings, and financial information regarding the proposed station should be made available for public comment as soon as possible. As a member of Friends of Moynihan Station, I also strongly urge that the Friends' principles are closely adhered to in the planning of the station, including the need to retain the Farley building's historic character and ensure that the public, rather than private interests, is the dominant presence in this great new station.

In closing, let me commend and congratulate Governor Spitzer and Mayor Bloomberg for advancing this critical project, and pledge my support for doing everything I can to ensure that we build an iconic new gateway at this site that is worthy of the greatest city in the world.