



# PCAC

PERMANENT CITIZENS  
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## **PCAC Testimony to the Empire State Development Corporation on Penn Station December 8, 2021**

Good evening! I'm Lisa Daglian, Executive Director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC). Thank you for holding this public meeting and for taking riders' comments and concerns into account.

A more inviting and user-friendly Penn Station is good for riders and good for the region, and we're glad that Governor Hochul has moved improvements to the top of the list. Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North commuters deserve a world class train hall – including West-of-Hudson riders who now come in via NJTransit and the new riders from the Bronx and beyond who will soon come in when Penn Access is complete. Riders can't wait until 2035 or beyond to see improvements in this major hub: additional tracks will allow for more and better transit access into the region.

As more people return to offices, their first choice should be to ride transit. Reinvigorating our region's economy means drawing people to New York and giving them a first class first glimpse of what we have to offer. Ensuring commuters have a welcoming and safe space to land – with plenty of amenities while they're waiting for their trains – will help get them back onboard. They, along with subway riders who stream into and out of Penn Station, will benefit from the new entrances and pedestrian spaces. However, we do have concerns about tying these improvements to a GPP. We are strong supporters of transit-oriented development, but it is a stretch to call significant new construction of a new neighborhood in already dense urban fabric a TOD. Rather, it is to put it simply, just more development.

Penn Station and indeed the entire region's transit network and its infrastructure will benefit from the billions of federal dollars that will come to us through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, through the Federal Rail Administration and Federal Transit Administration, along with dedicated Northeast Corridor funding, among the mechanisms. The issue is not whether we want to see improvements to Penn Station, the issue is how to fund those improvements. Given the generous potential for federal funding, we advocate seeking those alternate funding sources and not tying up this important transit project in myriad controversial components that could postpone the Penn Station improvements riders deserve at the risk of development that may not, in fact be necessary to tie to it.