

West Side Elected Officials and Community Demand Port Authority Engage in Transparent and Public Process for Bus Terminal Replacement

Congressman Jerrold Nadler, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, State Senator Brad Hoylman, Assembly Members Richard Gottfried and Linda Rosenthal, Councilmember Corey Johnson, and Manhattan Community Board 4 continue their demand for greater transparency, comprehensive planning and coordination, as well as public input as part of the Port Authority's 2015 Midtown Bus Master Plan

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NEW YORK, NY -- Today, New York elected officials and Manhattan Community Board 4, all of whom represent the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of Manhattan, issued the following joint statement regarding today's meeting of the Port Authority with Bus Terminal (PABT) Design + Deliverability Competition finalists:

“We will not be attending today's ‘stakeholder meeting,’ which is not structured to elicit a real community planning discussion, will not provide transparency about the proposals, and is not a substitute for a publicly-driven process.

“The meeting was convened with little notice, and the [guidelines](#) issued by the Port Authority for today's meeting outline an extremely restricted framework for community engagement with finalists, clearly demonstrating that while the Port Authority has said it is open to community input, the Board has not addressed our concerns.

“It is far past time for the Port Authority to end its fundamentally flawed Design + Deliverability Competition. As we have said repeatedly, the Port Authority must restart with a process that solicits public input regarding all development alternatives, including due consideration of an integrated transportation system and existing and future infrastructure assets.”

Below is a copy of the letter sent by West Side elected officials and Community Board 4 to the Port Authority earlier today:



UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT
NEW YORK STATE SENATE
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 4

August 10, 2016

John J. Degnan
Chairman
The Port Authority of NY & NJ
4 World Trade Center
150 Greenwich Street
New York, NY 10007

Steven M. Cohen
Vice Chairman
The Port Authority of NY & NJ
4 World Trade Center
150 Greenwich Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chairman Degnan and Vice Chairman Cohen:

We are writing in response to your August 8, 2016 letter and the invitation to attend a meeting with representatives of the five finalist teams participating in the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's Bus Terminal International Design + Deliverability Competition (the Competition). We again unequivocally reiterate our call for the Port Authority to immediately terminate the Competition. Given the agency's refusal to change course and seek input and examine all possibilities prior to seeking designs, we are not willing to give an aura of legitimacy to this prejudicial process, including participating in the Wednesday, August 10 meeting with design finalists. We demand the Port Authority halt the Competition and restart this process as it should have been: by seeking out and fully examining all terminal replacement alternatives and how each fits into the area's larger transportation network for the long-term future.

Again, the Competition is flawed for the following reasons:

- The Competition is based on assumptions and utilizes selection criteria that have not been subject to public review;
- There has been no study of the potential for an integrated transportation system that

considers existing and future infrastructure assets, including the Gateway Project, the Lincoln Tunnel, the NJ Turnpike, the East Side Access Project, the new Moynihan Station, the new Penn Station, and the expanded Javits Center, among others;

- The results of the Port Authority-commissioned trans-Hudson Commuting Capacity Study have never been released. This study, which examined available strategies for meeting and managing the anticipated increases in trans-Hudson commuter demand over the next 30 years, is an invaluable resource for assessing proposals for a new PABT;
- The Competition eliminates alternative development proposals for a new PABT without due or public consideration of their merits;
- An environmental impact statement that examines the impacts of a new PABT and of other available alternatives has not yet been published. No analysis of air quality concerns has been done in what is an United States Environmental Protection Agency non-attainment area. This would seem to violate the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Air Act, and New York State's Environmental Quality Review Act. Environmental impacts should be studied before designs, as the results of such studies could impact criteria upon which a design is based and ultimately selected;
- Potential eligible historic resources on or adjacent to land that would be used on various options have not been analyzed as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which must include consultation with the NY State Historic Preservation Office;
- The issue of whether and how property for the new PABT will be acquired remains unresolved. We unequivocally oppose the use of eminent domain and any acquisition of residential or commercial property that displaces tenants without their consent and compensation for the project.

You have acknowledged that the process to date has lacked consultation with community members and elected officials. But it is not enough to simply acknowledge this omission and continue forward with the Competition. We cannot participate in a fundamentally flawed process that is premised on a set of policy decisions that were made without real input from local stakeholders, without answers to the above outstanding legal and logistical questions, and that were not evaluated against all alternatives.

We are not suggesting that the current Bus Terminal should stay as is, or that a replacement Terminal should not be built at least in part in Manhattan. However, many foundational questions remain unanswered about what will be involved in rebuilding the Terminal—both in the interim accommodations and final results.

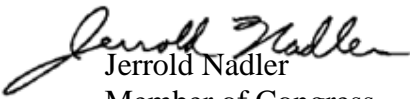
The Port Authority must suspend the Competition, and restart with a process that solicits public input regarding all development alternatives, including due consideration of an integrated transportation system and existing and future infrastructure assets. We urge the Port Authority to work with elected officials and local communities on both sides of the Hudson to develop a publicly-driven process to examine all possible alternatives prior to soliciting concept designs. To that end, we request to meet with you to begin a conversation regarding what that planning process entails.

If the Competition moves forward as currently structured, we will have no choice but to oppose


any design concept selected through this flawed process, especially as it seeks the necessary federal, state and city approvals.

We look forward to meeting with you to create a robust public process that can address these questions and the needs of all of the stakeholders before any designs for a new Terminal are evaluated.

Sincerely,




Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress




Gale A. Brewer
Manhattan Borough President



Brad Hoylman
NYS Senator



Richard N. Gottfried
NYS Assemblymember



Linda B. Rosenthal
NYS Assemblymember



Corey Johnson
NYC Councilmember



Delores Rubin
Chair, Manhattan Community Board 4

cc:

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor Christopher Christie
Mayor Bill de Blasio
Executive Director Pat Foye
Port Authority of NY & NJ Board of Commissioners

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