



Manhattan Community Board 4



**Joint Statement by Manhattan Community Boards Four and Five**

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**Hit Pause on “Empire Station Complex”**

*State should engage in community planning, should include Penn Station improvements and expansion*

It is time for a better Penn Station. New York City deserves a world class, intermodal transportation center. Our communities are eager to improve Penn Station and we want to do it right.

Unfortunately, the plan introduced by the Empire State Development Corporation at the height of the pandemic has nothing to do with Penn Station or infrastructure. Rather, it is a real estate development packaged as a “transportation” project.

Our State budget should not be earmarked for non-existent projects and we call for the removal of \$1.3 billion from the FY2022 State budget until the Penn Station plan is ready.

The “Empire Station Complex” plan calls for developing ten buildings on eight sites in a one-block radius of Penn Station. It excludes Penn Station reconstruction and expansion, ignores Madison Square Garden, but provides millions of square feet of development in an already dense neighborhood.

The State came to this conclusion with zero community input.

The “Complex” would cause a myriad of adverse impacts: from sidewalk overcrowding, shadows, and the demolition of entire city blocks to the obstruction of views of the Empire State Building. The state treats these issues as if they are a ripple in the midst of a tsunami of development. They are fully aware of all the impacts, yet they propose no mitigation.

Our community deserves better, and the local community boards should be a part of the planning process, not an afterthought.

Penn Station is of national importance, and it directly affects us – the people who live here. That is why we are calling for the Governor to genuinely engage the community, elected officials, and other essential project stakeholders to create a new comprehensive plan together for the future of Penn Station and the broader district.