

**EMPIRE STATION
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP**

DATE/TIME: May 4, 2021 / 4:00pm EST
WEEK #: 2

SUBJECT: Regional Transit Context
MEETING LEADER: RPA & MTA (with NJT & Amtrak)

The following minutes prepared by Empire State Development are a summary of the meeting and are intended to capture only the main points made in the meeting. Discrepancies should be reported to Gabriella Green at Empire State Development **within three (3) calendar days** of distribution of this document.

PARTICIPANTS:

NAME	ORGANIZATION / AGENCY	NAME	ORGANIZATION / AGENCY
Robert Atterbury	U.S. Congressman Jerrold Nadler	Gary LaBarbera	Building & Construction Trades Council of NY
Betsy Schmid	U.S. Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney	Santos Rodriguez	Building & Construction Trades Council of NY
Johanna Garcia	NYS Senator Robert Jackson	Basha Gerhards	Real Estate Board of New York
Dario Quinsac	NYS Senator Robert Jackson	Jessica Walker	Manhattan Chamber of Commerce
Maia Berlow	NYS Senator Brad Hoylman	Tom Wright	Regional Plan Association
Jacob Priley	NYS Senator Brad Hoylman	Ellis Calvin	Regional Plan Association
Wendi Paster	NYS Assemblyman Richard Gottfried	Brian Fritsch	Regional Plan Association
Matt Tighe	NYS Assemblyman Richard Gottfried	Chris Jones	Regional Plan Association
Lizette Chaparro	Manhattan Borough President's Office	Rachel Weinberger [PLEASE CONFIRM]	Regional Plan Association
Matt Green	NYC Councilman Corey Johnson	Felicia Park-Rogers	Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Laurie Hardjowirogo	NYC Councilman Corey Johnson	Tokumbo	New School
Louis Bailey	WE ACT for Environmental Justice	Shobowale	
Dan Biederman	34th Street Partnership	Marilyn Taylor	University of Pennsylvania
Kevin Finnegan	Labor lawyer, formerly 1199	Larry Lennon	MTA
Denis Johnston	32BJ	Peter Matusewitch	MTA
Marrissa Williams	32BJ	Robert Paley	MTA
Brook Jackson	Partnership for New York City	Mike Shiffer	MTA
Elizabeth Goldstein	The Municipal Art Society of NY	Petra Messick	Amtrak
Christine Berthet	Community Board 4	Ryan Morson	Amtrak
Lowell Kern	Community Board 4	Sharon Tepper	Amtrak
Paul Devlin	Community Board 4	Josh Krauss	NYCEDC
Jeffrey LeFrancois	Community Board 4	Jennifer Sta. Ines	NYC DOT
Vikki Barbero	Community Board 5	Edith Hsu-Chen	NYC Dept of Planning
Layla Law-Gisiko	Community Board 5	Jeremy Colangelo-Bryan	NJ Transit
EJ Kalafarski	Community Board 5	Joseph Quinty	NJ Transit
Clayton Smith	Community Board 5	Judy Kessler	Vornado
Hope Knight	Greater Jamaica Development Corporation	Audrey Wilson	Vornado
Alfred Cerullo	Grand Central Partnership	Carl Weisbrod	Vornado (consultant)
Eugene Sinigalliano	Resident Representative	Tom Rousakis	Ernst & Young
		Matthew Tester	Ernst & Young

NAME	ORGANIZATION / AGENCY	NAME	ORGANIZATION / AGENCY
Toby Snyder	FX Collaborative		
Amy Shell	FX Collaborative		
Deniz Onder	FX Collaborative		
Holly Leicht	ESD		
Gabriella Green	ESD		
Marion Phillips	ESD		
Angel Santana	ESD		
Anabel Frias	ESD		
Rachel Shatz	ESD		
Terence Cho	ESD		
Phil Maguire	ESD		

Location: Zoom

Item #	Description / Discussion
1.	<p><u>INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AND HOUSEKEEPING</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction by Marion Phillips, Senior VP of Community Relations at ESD, who reminded all attendees to list his/her full name and affiliation in the Zoom Participant List • Marion also reminded CACWG members who do not wish to have their email shared with the rest of the CACWG to contact Angel Santana before the next CACWG meeting, as Angel will share a directory of CACWG member names, organizations and email addresses on Huddle next Tuesday. • Update from Gabriella Green, CACWG Facilitator, that CACWG materials will be housed on Huddle and can be accessed by all CACWG members • Gabriella also stated that ESD and other CACWG presenters will make every effort to share presentation materials in advance of CACWG meetings, but this may not always be possible since a lot of work goes into each presentation on a tight timeline.
2.	<p><u>RPA PRESENTATION: “PROJECTING FUTURE DEMAND AT EMPIRE STATION COMPLEX”</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tom Wright, President and CEO of RPA, presented RPA’s research and analysis of recent historical regional transit trends and high and low projections and implications for future demand. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Presentation reflects RPA’s estimates and work product and was not vetted with railroads in advance. • RPA firmly believes that the region will need significant growth in transit service in the future to achieve key goals, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Health, safety and accessibility ➤ Remaining competitive at a regional and national level ➤ Reducing economic inequity, particularly through the provision of low-cost transportation options ➤ Increasing resilience against climate change and rising sea levels ➤ Providing job and other economic development opportunities to all populations ➤ Long-term regional growth and thinking on a centennial basis
3.	<p><u>RPA PRESENTATION: PRE-COVID COMMUTING PATTERNS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of housing and access to transit services are main determiners of how people commute and travel. Areas such as NYC boroughs, Westchester, Morris, Essex, and Fairfield counties are well served by subway and/or commuter rail and therefore see large use of rail service, but areas such as Staten Island and northern New Jersey are very reliant on buses and driving. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Based on these trends, the RPA does not believe many people will switch from rail to bus travel or vice versa as a result of either the Penn expansion or the new Port Authority Bus Terminal project.

Item #	Description / Discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 1990-2010, NYC gained roughly 100,000 jobs and saw the largest increase of commuters coming from New Jersey as a result of investment in expanding NJT service and increase in housing development in New Jersey. From 2010-2015, NYC gained roughly 1 million jobs and saw large increases of commuters from New Jersey, Long Island and Hudson Valley. From 2015-2016, most commuters to Manhattan CBD came from NYC boroughs, northern New Jersey and Long Island.
4. <u>RPA PRESENTATION: 2017 REGIONAL GROWTH ASSUMPTIONS</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on 1990-2015 trends, RPA projected much lower regional job and population growth for the 25-year period after 2015, due to low housing production and insufficient capacity in regional transit infrastructure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RPA believes low growth will limit progress toward social equity and other regional goals, as growth is necessary to achieve the financial resources needed for systemic improvements in housing, economic opportunity, and transportation. If, however, we produce sufficient new housing and transportation infrastructure to meet demand, RPA projects that job and population growth would increase to levels comparable to that seen between 1990-2015. If we are able to achieve our full potential growth, RPA predicts that roughly 100,000 and 150,000 more commuters would be coming in from Long Island and New Jersey respectively, and 50,000 and 15,000 from Hudson Valley and Connecticut respectively.
5. <u>RPA PRESENTATION: PRE-COVID FORECAST OF DEMAND AT EMPIRE STATION COMPLEX</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to COVID, daily ridership of Penn Station commuters was roughly 450,000 passengers (this does not include subway ridership), more than double what Penn was built to handle. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This ridership volume is not sustainable with in current Penn Station. Moynihan Station (2020) and East Side Access (2022) will alleviate some demand on Penn Station, but RPA predicts use of Penn Station will rebound and surpass past levels of use due to preexisting latent demand. RPA believes that Penn Station will continue to see robust growth in its use with completion of Penn Access via Metro North (2025) and Gateway (2032). By 2040, RPA believes that Penn Station will see well over 600,000 daily commuters, and we need to plan now for this growth.
6. <u>RPA PRESENTATION: WHAT'S CHANGED IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NYC's job growth has been stronger than RPA expected, adding nearly 500,000 jobs from 2015-2019 (to 4.6M), however, transit ridership leveled off as crowding increased and service declined. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy growth depends on housing and public transportation keeping pace with job growth – San Francisco/Bay Area is an example of what happens when job growth outpaces housing growth – not sustainable. But there is hope for the NYC region: Moynihan opened; congestion pricing was approved; construction advanced for East Side Access; Gateway is moving forward; and plans have been generated for the Port Authority Bus Terminal, Penn Access and Penn Station expansion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Today, MTA, NJ Transit and Amtrak have strong capital plans. Big question is how COVID will change assumptions about long-term growth, future of work and migration.
7. <u>RPA PRESENTATION: IMPACTS OF COVID</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RPA has projections for high and low ranges over next 50 years (2070) for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job growth

Item #	Description / Discussion
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- Average hours and average share of office workers working from home
- Housing and residential patterns in terms of growth and location
- Impact of post-COVID telecommuting is often over blown:
 - Only about 36% of jobs in region are telecommutable, with majority of those being in higher-paying industries.
 - 7% of those workers already worked from home pre-COVID.
- Job growth and labor disruption trends could generate over 3 million commuters per day in high range scenario or 2 million in low range scenario.
- Additional considerations for a system that meets shifting demands:
 - Work From Home patterns will not be evenly distributed across the workday or week.
 - Non-work trips, which are more than 75% of all trips, are likely to grow as more people work from home.
 - Some work and non-work trips will shift to shoulders and non-peak hours, but it's not clear how much.
 - People are likely to shift back to transit once confidence in safety is restored and auto congestion reaches prior levels.
- RPA predicts enormous demand for Empire Station Complex/Penn Station, ranging from 560,000 to 1 million daily commuters – we should be planning now for 1 million daily commuters by 2070.

8. RPA PRESENTATION: OTHER PROJECTS

- Congestion Pricing
 - Currently, drivers are incentivized to take alternate routes to avoid tolls, increasing traffic congestion and worsening air quality.
 - RPA recommends i) varying fee by level of congestion and by vehicle size; ii) implementing two way charges; iii) applying consistent rationale for toll credits; iv) keeping current for-hire vehicle and taxi surcharge and exempting them from congestion fee; and v) limiting exemptions to those already specified by the legislature.
- Port Authority Bus Terminal (PABT)
 - PABT plan relies on building a new a staging facility to the southwest to use while expanding the main terminal.
 - RPA does not believe new PABT will impact demand for commuter rail because they serve different geographies. This squares with the Port Authority's and NJT's projections.

9. MTA PRESENTATION: EAST SIDE ACCESS (ESA)

- Introduction of ESA project by Mike Shiffer, Senior VP of Regional Planning at MTA
 - Will provide direct LIRR service to Grand Central and up to 162,000 trips per day between Manhattan and Queens and Long Island.
 - New 8-track terminal is being constructed below Grand Central – will provide resiliency and enable the East River Tunnels that were damaged in Sandy to be repaired.
 - ESA will open up slots at Penn Station for Metro-North New Haven Line Penn access.
- Expected completion: End of 2022.

10. MTA PRESENTATION: METRO NORTH PENN STATION ACCESS (PENN ACCESS)

- In addition to providing direct access to Penn Station on Metro North, Penn Access will introduce four new stations in the Bronx on the New Haven line.
- Penn Access will provide:
 - 30,000 trips per day between Bronx and Manhattan and Bronx and Westchester and Connecticut
 - Improved resiliency in the event of service disruptions

- Possible expanded service at Grand Central for Harlem and Hudson Lines
- Expected completion: TBD

11. MTA AND NJT PRESENTATION: SERVICE FROM THE WEST

- Combined with the Gateway project & Secaucus Loop, Penn Station will allow for greater capacity and a one-seat ride to Manhattan from NJ & NY communities West of the Hudson.
- Expanded Penn Station may provide the opportunity to extend certain Metro-North Hudson Line trains to Penn Station.
- Currently planning supportive infrastructure in both NY & NJ to support future service.
- Intent is to maximize capacity to multiple markets and communities served by all railroads.
- Introduction by Jeremy Colangelo-Bryan, Chief Planner at NJ Transit – Jeremy spoke about NJT’s ongoing work to understand how NJT can support future increased transit demands and future connections made by current and upcoming rail projects, including an analysis of storage needs, track improvements and track connection configurations.
 - NJT’s objective is to improve service to existing communities, introduce rail service to new communities and serve the population that commutes from NYC to NJ.
- Petra Messick, Director of Planning, Gateway Program at Amtrak, will speak next week (CACWG Meeting #3) on Gateway.

12. Q&A AND COMMENTS

- Christine Berthet
 - How many new tracks will be needed for Penn Station Access?
 - New tracks will be built on the Hellgate line to serve the four new stations in the Bronx so that new Metro North service will not impede Amtrak service.
 - In some portions of the rail line, a 4-track mainline will be installed, while in other parts a 2- or 3-track mainline will be installed.
 - There are no new tracks planned at Penn Station itself for Penn Access; the new Metro North trains will be accommodated by slots vacated by LIRR trains shifting to ESA.
- Louis Bailey
 - Will ESA open on time in 2022?
 - End of 2022 is MTA’s goal for the opening of ESA.
- Lowell Kern
 - Is there a possibility of opening a Metro North stop in Long Island City?
 - When Metro North trains pass through Long Island City, they do so through the East River tunnels, making it extremely unlikely they could create a stop in that area.
 - Can the 7 train be extended to New Jersey?
 - 7 train service to New Jersey was studied in the past but is not in current plans.
 - RPA indicated those studies showed that a 7 train extension would not provide sufficient benefits relative to cost, unlike Gateway, East Side Access, Penn Expansion and Penn Station Access.
 - I understand that 7 train tunnels extend to 25th street. Are there plans to extend 7 train down the west side?
 - The extension is just a tail track, which enables disabled trains to be taken out of service without impacting the entire line. There are no plans to extend the 7 downtown.
- Paul Devlin
 - Has there been any analysis of how commuters coming into PABT and Penn Station travel to their final destination? I would guess that most walk from PABT and Penn Station to their destination
 - NJT estimates that about half of its ridership to PABT and Penn Station transfer to the subway, and the other half walk to their final destination.

- NJT, in partnership with MTA, is always looking to encourage opportunities for walking if it will avoid strain on the subways.
- NJT notes that the bus system operates differently in mornings and afternoons - in the morning, there is an exclusive bus lane, but not in the afternoon, so some riders take the bus in the morning and train in the afternoon, where rail service is available.
- Christine Berthet
 - Can we get the incremental increases and decreases in numbers of riders that will occur as a result of each project discussed? For example, by how much will ridership decrease at Penn Station with the completion of ESA or increase as a result of Penn Access?
 - These numbers will be made available as follow-up.
 - We are going to have an enormous amount of passengers filling the streets. I think it is critical to have information on the increase in pedestrians and plan for it in the design and engineering of the project elements such as corridors and entranceways.
 - Peter Matusewitch of the MTA indicated that these increases have been accounted for in the ESD GPP analysis; Christine asked for them to be broken down by project (e.g., ESA, Penn Access, Gateway, PABT).
 - Tom Wright provided the caveat that RPA's projections were not vetted with the railroads in advance of the meeting and may differ slightly, but he feels comfortable saying ridership will increase to at least 750,000 at Penn Station by 2070.
- Layla Law-Gisiko
 - Can you discuss through-running at Penn Station?
 - MTA stated that none of the current rail projects preclude the possibility for through-running in the future.
 - Through-running will be discussed in detail at CACWG Meeting #4 (May 18).
 - Amtrak clarified that there is a distinction between through-running at existing Penn Station and the opportunity for future through-running from the Penn Expansion.
 - There is already a good deal of through-running that takes place at Penn Station, including the majority of peak-hour trains and Amtrak trains.
 - NJT and LIRR trains operate on a "drop and go" basis where the trains go to a yard after they drop off passengers - this is the fastest operational model; linking different services (e.g., NJT – Amtrak or LIRR – Amtrak) could actually slow down service.
 - If service incompatibility and other physical constraints of Penn (eg, platform size) did not exist, it may be possible to gain a small number of trains per hour with through-running at existing Penn Station; however, as shown in the demand projections of ridership from the west, close to double the current rail capacity is needed, and this physically cannot be accomplished with through-running at existing Penn.
 - The platforms and tracks would be built at Penn Expansion to accommodate possible future through-running to the East.
 - NJT further clarified that there are significant physical challenges that would prevent additional through-running from existing Penn – for example, the Sixth Avenue subway was built after the Penn tracks and block train access eastward.
- Dario Quinsac
 - Would the fare be the same on Metro North going to Penn Station and Grand Central and on NJT for Penn Station and Port Authority?
 - MTA stated that it believed fares would be the same for all Manhattan destinations but would need to confirm.
 - NJT cannot confirm that fares will be the same for traveling to and from Penn Station and Port Authority but stated that fares are comparable.
 - Generally, NJT has seen that people will pay a little more for a direct ride.
- Jeffrey LeFrancois

Item # Description / Discussion

- With current Penn Station capacity at 200,000 people and ridership at 400,000 pre-COVID, will all of the planned rail projects even meet the transit demands for the City of New York?
 - RPA stated that the integrated Empire Station Complex, including the southward expansion, is an essential start.
- How do we create a successful transportation hub without moving MSG since the logistical needs of MSG hinder Penn's operations?
 - Tom Wright said he is not familiar with the operational demands of MSG but believes that the masterplan options developed for Penn would go a long way towards creating a world-class transportation hub even with MSG in place.
 - MSG will be discussed at CACWG Meeting #4 (May 18).
- Felicia Park-Rogers
 - How will Penn Expansion help NJT service when Penn Expansion will be a stub-end terminal and may result in NJT losing its current through-running service?
 - NJT sees Penn Expansion as an accretive measure that will add to its existing service at Penn and help meet future demand.
 - Can we see the data or assumptions on the analysis of through-running in advance of Week 4?
 - The presenters will make every effort to upload materials to Huddle in advance of the meeting.
- Christine Berthet
 - Where do you geographically see the growth in jobs in Manhattan?
 - NJT stated that it sees commuters traveling north and east in Manhattan from Penn Station and PABT, but the patterns are fairly dispersed and may change with increased development on the west side of Manhattan.
 - NJT analyzes projects with the customer's entire trip in mind including use of subway, walking or other modes of transportation.
 - Have you considered extending NJT lines to Grand Central?
 - NJT has analyzed the Grand Central option in the past and found that it did not increase capacity as much as other growth options such as Penn Expansion.
 - RPA stated that Penn Expansion and Gateway may include connections to the east in a future phase with the addition of new East River tunnels, which they believe will be necessary down the road.

13. CONCLUSION

Reminder by Marion Phillips to CACWG members to communicate feedback to Steering Committee members.