

## Penn problem 3: Too many of the details are being hidden from the public

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Taking office last Aug. 24, Gov. Hochul said: “In a new era of transparency, one of my hallmarks of my administration, but to me, it’s very simple. We’ll focus on open ethical governing that New Yorkers will trust.”



Too many secrets. (Don Pollard)

On Oct. 19, she elaborated, “New Yorkers should be informed about the work government does for them every day, but we have to make it easier for them to get that information. Transparency comes in many forms and there are many opportunities for us to establish that we will be the most transparent administration in the history of the state of New York.”

Her Penn Station financing plan (which is 93% of Gov. Cuomo’s plan), while failing to produce anywhere near the promised billions to fix Penn, is maddeningly opaque. The city Independent Budget Office couldn’t even crunch any public numbers, because there are none.

By law, Hochul’s Empire State Development Corp. has a community advisory committee, but it does everything in secret, keeping out the community. The agendas, the presentations, the discussions, all of it is sealed. While

the public is excluded, the developer that will benefit greatly is represented. We hear there's another secret meeting this week. To remedy this, the Legislature has **unanimously passed a bill** making all such committees fully open. Hochul must sign it pronto or be overridden.

In March, we asked ESD for their agreement with Amtrak covering uses of Penn and the new Moynihan Train Hall, even filing a legally enforceable Freedom of Information Law request. Amtrak is claiming that the whole 600-page document must remain confidential due to a "trade secret" exemption.

What trade secrets does Amtrak have? How to keep Penn Station a horrible pit? Who are their competitors? It's a government-owned monopoly. Is there an invisible railroad that runs faster trains with cheaper ticket prices on the same tracks?

But it all fits, as Amtrak's request for proposals for an unneeded \$12 billion Penn annex is undisclosed, too.

Since sunlight is the best disinfectant, a plan hidden from the public smells rotten.