



Metropolitan Transportation Authority

State of New York

June 22, 2026

Mr. Andy Byford
Special Advisor to the Board
Amtrak
1 Pennsylvania Plaza
New York, NY 1-119

Re: Penn Station Transformation

Dear Andy:

I have your letter dated today – the handling of which unfortunately belies the protestations of good faith it contains. The letter was sent to me this morning at 7:31 am – *after* press articles detailing its leaked contents had already been published. News flash: that's not partnership, that's just gamesmanship.

There's no point rebutting all the blah-blah about the Memorandum of Agreement you are insisting the MTA sign as a precondition of participation in the project. The MTA's Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) and the MTA's subways carry two-thirds of the daily users of Penn Station. Even more important, the LIRR has a pre-paid lease running for another 160 years (through 2186) that gives us approval rights for any construction within or affecting the northern half of the station. As the lease states, "Amtrak shall have no right to make, or to cause or permit to be made, physical alterations in or to the LIRR Premises without LIRR's consent" and even alterations outside our space may not "unduly burden train operations" or "affect the structural integrity" of our leasehold.

Given that reality, it makes sense for Amtrak to simply share information with MTA/LIRR and solicit our feedback. Instead, you have insisted on a "collaboration agreement" that would constrain our ability to communicate with our riders and other stakeholders, and which explicitly put "potential modifications" to our lease on the table, among other unnecessary and unacceptable terms. Not interested.

We all know that Penn Station needs work. That's why the MTA on its own rebuilt the 33rd Street Concourse – on time and under budget – the completion of which has prompted a dramatic surge in LIRR customer satisfaction, from roughly 50% up to better than 80%. And that's why we spent years working with Amtrak and NJT on a consensus design to reconstruct the rest of the station. When the Trump Administration announced it was taking over the reconstruction project, we were cautiously optimistic, despite the typically gratuitous (and fact-free) snipes USDOT and Amtrak took at the MTA while doing so.

But the process since then has been simply bizarre. It raises questions that are far more interesting than competing blow-by-blows about an interagency document. For example:

- How much is it going to cost? Your chosen development team has been touting a version of this project for years, but no one has ever seen a real professional cost estimate.
- Where is the money coming from? I have never seen a project go this far without any accounting of how it is being paid for. The State of New York paid for 63% of the cost of building Amtrak a new home across 8th Avenue at Moynihan Train Hall and backstopped the loan to cover most of the remaining cost. (Amtrak's share: 7%.) NYS made those commitments expecting that the federal government would in turn support and defer to the commuter railroads on a plan to improve existing Penn. And Governor Hochul has been clear that the State of New York is not paying for this Amtrak-controlled redesign.
- Whatever the cost, how much money will Jim Dolan and MSG get for the purchase of MSG's Infosys Theater to enable the construction of a second major train hall on 8th Avenue? Previous news reports suggested Dolan's price was \$500 million, not to mention untold hundreds of millions – or even billions – for the demolition of the Infosys Theater and the reconstruction of all of Madison Square Garden's mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems. Has an agreement already been reached? What other benefits, if any, will MSG and Dolan receive in the newly reconfigured space?
- How did this private developer, ultimately controlled by a foreign private equity firm, get chosen? The entire selection process has been kept under wraps up to now. Did their executives' close ties to the Trump Administration influence the course of the procurement?
- What was the President's involvement? You have repeatedly said that your “trump card is the Trump card” in shaping the project, although precisely what that is meant to imply seems to shift from audience to audience. The President reportedly met with bidders and with Jim Dolan during the procurement process and appeared with Dolan (and USDOT Secretary Duffy) during the NBA Finals. Did those discussions further taint Amtrak's secret developer selection process? What exactly was discussed in those encounters?
- What is the phasing plan? Our collaborative Penn Reconstruction design process, when it was cut off in 2025, was starting to tackle the challenging questions of how to rebuild Penn Station without unduly inconveniencing riders. What, if any, progress has Amtrak made since then?
- What is going to happen if, like so many other “Infrastructure Week” announcements of the Trump era, interest fades and nothing comes of it?

Perhaps there are good answers to all these questions. Perhaps we are faced with only the appearance of impropriety. But in the current environment, it can hardly be surprising that we have chosen to proceed cautiously.

Bottom line: we are of course open to engaging with Amtrak, but without conditions. Our duty is to protect the interests of hundreds of thousands of MTA riders at Penn Station – and those of New York State taxpayers, who Amtrak and your chosen developer keep mentioning as potential funders. We will not compromise our rights to do so.

Very truly yours,



Janno Lieber

cc: Jamie Torres-Springer