



Penn Station Working Advisory Group

Meeting Summary

November 18, 2025

Overview

This document provides a summary of the sixth Penn Station Working Advisory Group (SWAG) meeting on Tuesday, November 18th at the Amtrak Executive Conference Center at Moynihan Train Hall. The presentation consisted of a project overview for the Penn Station Transformation project and an update on the Master Developer procurement process.

Meeting Agenda

- Penn Station Transformation Project Update
- Group Activity: Prioritizing Project Design Objectives
- Master Developer Procurement Process
- Upcoming Milestones
- Discussion

Presentation Summary

An Amtrak representative opened the meeting by providing a safety briefing, welcoming attendees, and presenting the agenda.

Developments Since Last Meeting

Amtrak then provided an overview of key developments since the last SWAG meeting, including the following:

New “One Project” Approach & Leadership

The U.S. Department of Transportation has formally designated Amtrak as the lead agency to lead the New York Penn Station Transformation Project (“Penn Station Transformation” or the “Project”), bringing previously separate initiatives, New York Penn Station Capacity Expansion and New York Penn Station Reconstruction under a single, unified project structure. In May 2025, Andy Byford was appointed as Special Advisor to the Amtrak Board to lead this work. Amtrak emphasized that the effort would build on previous planning efforts rather than restart all planning efforts from scratch, with the goal of advancing toward construction initiation by the end of 2027.

Initial \$43M Federal Grant and Specialized Advisors

Amtrak received an initial \$43 million federal grant to bring on specialized advisors, begin the competitive process for selecting a Master Developer to enter into a public-private partnership (P3) for the Project and initiate related project development work. Three advisors have already been hired:

- **Legal:** Hunton Andrews Kurth
- **Financial:** KPMG
- **Environmental:** AKRF

A fourth procurement is underway for a P3 project management and construction management team, with selection expected in early December 2025.

Stakeholder Collaboration

Amtrak is coordinating closely with the Federal Railroad Administration, Federal Transit Administration, NJ TRANSIT, and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, who will all play a role in project development.

Engagement is ongoing with a wide range of stakeholders, including local elected officials, neighborhood businesses and residents, and regional and industry advocacy groups. Amtrak emphasized the consensus among all stakeholders that Penn Station must be comprehensively transformed and that maintaining the status quo is not an option.

Penn Station Transformation Goals

Amtrak then outlined the core goals guiding the Penn Station Transformation project:

1. Renovate and modernize the station
2. Increase concourse capacity and access
3. Enable safer and more efficient station operations
4. Accommodate passenger service growth
5. Deliver a world-class experience for users

Project Base Scope

The Project Base Scope outlines the minimum desired improvements that all proposals must address to achieve a modernized Penn Station. They include the following:

1. **Renovate or replace all unrenovated station entrances** to create a more visible, accessible, and consistent station identity.
2. **Construct a single-level passenger concourse**, which builds on prior planning work, eliminates the current bi-level layout, and would improve wayfinding and congestion.
3. **Design purpose-built operational spaces** to improve and increase the efficiency of staff work areas and consolidate decentralized station management functions in areas better segregated from public areas.
4. **Modernize trainshed infrastructure**, including addressing state-of-good-repair needs and improving ventilation, lighting, and other trainshed elements
5. **Renovate the interior of the Penn Station Service Building** and maximize its utility in supporting the station and Project goals. The structure is currently underutilized and is the last surviving piece of the original McKim, Mead & White station.

Project Scope & Commercial Development Innovation

In order to create space to receive the best ideas from the private sector for improving the station and financing the Project, Amtrak is encouraging proposers to bring forward imaginative ideas for station improvements and commercial development beyond the Base Scope. Proposals that include elements beyond the Base Scope will need to demonstrate the feasibility, benefits, and costs of those additional elements.

Project Schedule

Amtrak outlined the Project schedule that reflects its commitment to construction initiation by the end of 2027. The Project is on schedule to date, with key milestones including:

- **August 2025:** Advance notice issued for the Master Developer solicitation.
- **Fall 2025:** Industry engagement sessions held, including 14 one-on-one meetings with prospective bidders.
- **October 2025:** Release of the Master Developer solicitation.
- **May 2026:** Selection of the Master Developer with input from NJ TRANSIT and MTA. Amtrak's Board will make the final decision regarding contract approval. After approval, Amtrak will coordinate with the White House given the anticipated significant federal investment in the Project.
- **Summer 2026 to end of 2027:** Preliminary design work and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) activities.
- **End of 2027:** Target for construction initiation.

FRA Service Optimization Study

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) began a Service Optimization Study in October 2025, with Penn Station-focused findings expected in spring 2026 and full study completion in approximately 2 years.

The study will examine how to accommodate future passenger growth and improve operational efficiency at Penn Station and across the tri-state regional rail network. The study is expected to evaluate opportunities to maximize the use of existing station track and platform capacity, including potential scenarios that include longer-term service pattern changes. Amtrak also emphasized its intention to work closely with the FRA and the selected Master Developer to evaluate potential incorporation of any relevant study findings into the Project's design.

Project Funding and Financing

Amtrak stated that the Project has received an initial \$43 million federal grant to bring on specialized advisors, begin the competitive process for selecting a Master Developer to enter into a P3, and initiate related project development work. Amtrak emphasized that this funding is only a starting point and that significant additional federal investment will be needed and is expected to advance future phases.

Amtrak also noted that the Project will require a balanced capital structure that draws on both public funding and private sector contributions and reiterated that it will not advance a plan that is not financially achievable. The Master Developer is expected to contribute funding and arrange additional financing. Amtrak is evaluating a range of potential financial tools and structures and remains open to creative funding and financing strategies as the Project advances.

Master Developer Procurement Process

This portion of the meeting outlined the two-phase process for selecting a Master Developer. The first phase, a Request for Letters of Interest (RFLOI) period, will identify organizations with the requisite experience and qualifications capable of delivering the project. Following a solicitation released on October 30, Letters of Interest are due in early December. A technical evaluation committee will review the submissions using submittal requirements, a pass-fail checklist, and weighted criteria that include technical factors (70 points) and financial factors (30 points). The committee expects to shortlist about four qualified proposers. NJ TRANSIT and the

Metropolitan Transportation Authority have been invited to participate alongside Amtrak on the technical evaluation committee.

The second phase is the Request for Proposals (RFP) period, which is, at present, expected to begin in late December for the shortlisted firms. These firms will have opportunities to meet with Amtrak to confirm alignment with project goals. Proposals will be due in April 2026. The technical evaluation committee will select a Preferred Proposer at the end of May, after which the Amtrak Board will need to approve issuance of a contract award. After that point, a public announcement is expected in June 2026. Preliminary design and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) activities will begin shortly after the contract award.

Group Activity

SWAG members participated in a group exercise to review the draft design objectives associated with each Project goal. Each table was asked to discuss and rank the objectives in order of criticality and importance, then report out one top objective per goal along with any broader reflections. The activity was designed to help Amtrak gauge how stakeholders prioritize competing objectives and to inform potential developers on the most important objectives to focus on in their proposals.

Major takeaways of the exercise include:

- Participants emphasized that a station that works reliably and intuitively for all users, including those with disabilities will naturally result in strong design outcomes. They supported the view that form should follow function but cautioned against treating these two elements as unrelated to each other. They reflected on the value of creating a station environment that is both efficient and inspiring.
- Participants underscored the importance of seamless interconnectivity, both within the station and across the surrounding public realm and identified seamless transfers as a top consideration.
- Participants expressed that accessibility must be addressed in an expansive manner beyond minimum compliance. This included interest in elements such as quiet rooms and design strategies that respond to cognitive, sensory, and physical needs. Amtrak reiterated its commitment to advancing accessibility and noted its goal of making Penn Station an exemplar of inclusive design.
- Participants also included upgrades that would increase concourse capacity and simplify the station's layout as priorities. A clearer, more intuitive layout can advance several project objectives at once, particularly those related to usability and customer experience. They also placed significant emphasis on vertical circulation, noting that congestion and platform-level movement influence many other goals.
- On station operations, the group emphasized existing challenges related to commercial loading and service activity around the station, pointing to impacts on retailers and Madison Square Garden operations.
- Participants elevated the need for a neat, orderly, and well-managed construction process, which they considered essential to maintaining daily operations and neighborhood conditions. They shared their reluctance to endure pro-longed construction in and around the station.

Questions Summary

Questions and answers have been slightly edited for clarity and length.

Q: At what point will proposals be shared with the public?

A: Amtrak plans to follow a standard competitive procurement process, which requires that proposals remain confidential to ensure a fair and impartial selection by the technical evaluation committee. The Project team does expect to publicly release information at the time of contract award, explain the procurement process and rationale for selection, and work closely with Amtrak Procurement to ensure full compliance with procurement regulations and practices. Amtrak emphasized its commitment to transparency while adhering to procurement rules and noted recent outreach to Reinvent Albany and other stakeholders, in which Amtrak has explained that the procurement process is being conducted robustly and “by the book”.

Q: Will earlier planning work completed by the MTA and others be shared with bidders, or will they receive only Amtrak-developed materials?

A: Amtrak will provide documents pertaining to the station and previous improvement efforts to shortlisted proposers as reference materials to assist in their proposal development, but Amtrak expects bidders to submit a range of design concepts and does not plan to prescribe a single approach or concept that bidders must follow, including with respect to the future of Madison Square Garden. Amtrak’s goal is to encourage innovation while still making use of relevant prior work. Where earlier planning has produced clear conclusions, such as the consensus to move towards a single-level public concourse, Amtrak will incorporate those elements so that bidders do not revisit settled issues.

Q: How will capacity considerations be addressed in the procurement process?

A: Amtrak has informed potential bidders of the FRA’s Service Optimization Study, which has been structured in two parts. The first part will prioritize evaluating potential changes to the station’s trainshed infrastructure to preserve and improve service capacity by Spring 2026. Amtrak will work closely with the FRA and Master Developer to evaluate potential incorporation of proposed changes into the Project’s design as appropriate during the design period that will ensue after the Master Developer is selected.

Q: How does recent news about federal funding for the Gateway Program affect this project?

A: The Project team continues to communicate with their colleagues in the federal government and at the Gateway Development Commission to stay coordinated regarding the Hudson Tunnel Project and other adjacent projects. The Penn Station Transformation remains a critical project to complete independent of adjacent projects and its schedule is not dependent on the progress of adjacent projects.

Q: How will the SWAG participate as the project moves forward?

A: The role of the SWAG will remain the same as originally envisioned. Amtrak plans to continue convening the

group on an approximately quarterly basis as there is new information to share and input to be gathered. The Project team will follow up after the holidays with an update on the next expected meeting for the group in 2026.

Attendance

Station Working Advisory Group

- Eugene Sinigalliano, 251 West 30th Street Residential Tenants Association
- Dan Biederman, 34th Street Partnership
- Jesse Lazar, AIA New York | Center for Architecture
- Carol Lopez, Amtrak Accessibility Representative
- Emma Pfoman, Association for a Better New York (ABNY)
- Gary Labarbera, Building & Construction Trades Council of Greater New York
- Gabriella Green, Empire State Development
- Michelle Prophet, Empire State Passengers Association
- Ramona Burns, Federal Railroad Administration
- Lyle Leitelt, Federal Railroad Administration
- Derek Piper, Federal Railroad Administration
- Rebecca Reyes-Alicea, Federal Railroad Administration
- James Goveia, Federal Transit Administration
- Jeff Roux, Federal Transit Administration
- Chris Boylan, General Contractors Association of New York
- Gerard Bringmann, LIRR Commuter Council
- Paul Macchia, Madison Square Garden
- Christine Berthet, Manhattan Community Board 4
- Dave Sigman, Manhattan Community Board 5
- Randy Glucksman, Metro-North Railroad Commuter Council
- Howard Levine, MTA Accessibility Representative
- Keri Butler, Municipal Art Society of New York
- Frank Clarke, New York Building Congress
- Joshua Kraus, New York City Economic Development Corporation
- Ed Hoff, NJ TRANSIT Accessibility Representative
- Jacob Golden, NY State Assemblymember Tony Simone
- Assemblymember Tony Simone, New York State Assembly District 75
- Matthew Tighe, Office of New York State Assemblymember Tony Simone
- Josh Simoneau, NYC Department of City Planning
- Edith Hsu-Chen, NYC Department of City Planning
- David Breen, New York City Department of Transportation
- Andrew Albert, NYC Transit Riders Council
- Carl Wilson, Office of Councilmember Erik Bottcher
- Madeleine McGrory, Office of Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine
- Dana Adelman, Office of New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy
- Jessica O'Connor, Office of New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy
- Portia Henry, Office of New York Governor Kathy Hochul
- Julia Kerson, Office of New York Governor Kathy Hochul
- Ben Platt, Office of New York State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal

- Sarra Hale-Stern, Office of New York State Senator Liz Krueger
- Joe Raguzin, Office of the Rockland County Executive
- Craig Lader, Office of the Westchester County Executive
- Steve Barton, Office of U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer
- Joe Sgroi, Office of U.S. Senator Cory Booker
- Jacinta Chen, Office of U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
- Brook Jackson, Partnership for New York City
- Brian Fritsch, Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC)
- Todd Goldman, Port Authority of New York & New Jersey
- Jim Mathews, Rail Passengers Association
- Tom Wright, Regional Plan Association
- Samuel Turvey, Rethink Penn Station
- Sarah Kaufman, Rudin Center for Transportation Policy and Management
- Andrew Sandweiss, U.S. Department of Transportation
- Judy Kessler, Vornado Realty Trust

Project Team

- Julie Cowing, AKRF
- Jason Abrams, Amtrak
- Sara Appleton, Amtrak
- Andy Byford, Amtrak
- Kate Cunningham, Amtrak
- Ryan Morson, Amtrak
- Craig Schulz, Amtrak
- Wei Yu, Amtrak
- Cailean Kok, NJ TRANSIT
- Joe Quinty, NJ TRANSIT
- Kate Ward, NJ TRANSIT
- Jordan Cosby, Public Works Partners
- Jake Markey, Public Works Partners