

# West Side Electeds Letter to Port Authority Calls for Termination of PABT 2015 Master Plan Competition

*Congressman Jerrold Nadler, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, State Senator Brad Hoylman, Assemblymember Richard Gottfried, Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal, and NYC Councilmember Corey Johnson demand greater transparency, comprehensive planning and coordination, as well as public input as part of the Port Authority's 2015 Midtown Bus Master Plan.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, July 21, 2016**

CONTACT: Noah Gardy (Hoylman), 212-633-8052

New York, NY -- Today, elected officials representing the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of Manhattan called for the immediate termination of the Port Authority Bus Terminal (PABT) Design + Deliverability Competition that is part of its 2015 Midtown Bus Master Plan. In a letter addressed to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Port Authority of NY & NJ, Congressman Jerrold Nadler (NY-10), Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer, NY State Senator Brad Hoylman, NY State Assemblymember Richard N. Gottfried, NY State Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal, and NYC Councilmember Corey Johnson raised several concerns with the project to replace the PABT, including the lack of transparency and any meaningful local consultation. The letter asks for an immediate halt to the Competition until a full public examination can be conducted.

Below is the full text of the joint letter sent to the Port Authority regarding the PABT 2015 Master Plan Competition:



UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT  
NEW YORK STATE SENATE  
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY  
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

July 21, 2016

John J. Degnan  
Chairman  
The Port Authority of NY & NJ  
4 World Trade Center

Steven M. Cohen  
Vice Chairman  
The Port Authority of NY & NJ  
4 World Trade Center

150 Greenwich Street  
New York, NY 10007

150 Greenwich Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chairman Degnan and Vice Chairman Cohen:

As elected officials who represent the Hell's Kitchen community directly affected by the Port Authority Bus Terminal (PABT) 2015 Midtown Bus Master Plan (Master Plan), we are writing to request that the Port Authority terminate the Port Authority Bus Terminal International Design + Deliverability Competition (the Competition).

We believe that proceeding with the Competition is premature at this time for the following reasons:

- None of the elected officials who represent the community, nor the City of New York, nor the local community board, nor other stakeholders have been consulted on the creation of the Master Plan or the Competition;
- It is outrageous that the Port Authority – an entity already far removed from local accountability – would use the pretense of a panel of outside “experts” to select and justify any option under the Master Plan;
- The Competition is based on assumptions and utilizes selection criteria that have been made with little transparency and public engagement;
- There has been no study of the potential for an integrated transportation system that considers existing and future infrastructure assets, including the Gateway Project, Lincoln Tunnel, NJ Turnpike, the East Side Access Project, the new Moynihan Station, the new Penn Station, the expanded Javits Center, among others;
- While the Port Authority has commissioned a trans-Hudson Commuting Capacity Study of available strategies for meeting and managing the anticipated increases in trans-Hudson commuter demand over the next 30 years, the results of such a study have never been released;
- The Competition eliminates alternative development proposals for a new PABT without due or public consideration of their merits;
- An environmental impact statement that examines the impacts of a new PABT and of other available alternatives has not yet been published. No analysis of air quality concerns has been done in what is an EPA non-attainment area. This would seem to violate the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Air Act, and New York State's Environmental Quality Review Act;
- Potential eligible historic resources have not been analyzed as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which must include consultation with the NY State Historic Preservation Office.
- The issue of whether and how property for the new PABT will be acquired is unresolved. We unequivocally oppose the use of eminent domain or any acquisition of residential or commercial property for the project.

Several of the options in the Competition would require the acquisition of numerous community assets, including hundreds of apartments, many of which are rent-regulated; nearly 30 small businesses; buildings dating back to 1879; a historic church with over one hundred congregants; a food pantry that serves over 800 people each month; and a Head Start program serving 40 families.

Any plan to use these sites for bus facilities would be contrary to existing zoning. The Special Hudson Yards District, which is zoned residential, was created after years of input from Manhattan Community Board 4, local elected officials, residents and other stakeholders to protect against demolition. Converting this neighborhood to commercial use, as possibly envisioned in the Master Plan, would upend a long-existing residential community.

The destruction of valued housing and businesses in the area would be deemed "necessary" only if the Port Authority chose options that include selling existing PABT space to private developers, thus requiring moving PABT operations into space now occupied by these homes and businesses.

As you well know, the PABT is the largest bus terminal in the nation and one of the busiest bus terminals in the world. On a typical weekday, the PABT accommodates approximately 220,000 passenger trips and more than 7,000 bus movements, a number that is projected to increase considerably in the future.

Any project to replace the PABT on the Far West Side of Manhattan is an extremely complicated, time-intensive effort requiring an enormous public investment and the consideration of a multitude of transportation, pedestrian, zoning, environmental and quality of life issues in a dense residential neighborhood. It is therefore crucial that this project be premised on comprehensive planning, public input, a transparent process and coordination among city, state and federal levels of government.

It would be a grave disservice, not only to our constituents, but to all the people of New York and New Jersey, to proceed with the Competition for a new PABT before a thorough and public examination is conducted of all of the outstanding issues and all of the available alternatives regarding a new bus terminal. We demand that the Port Authority immediately terminate the Competition.

We wish to meet with you as soon as possible to discuss this important matter. Kindly contact our offices with your response. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



Gale A. Brewer  
Manhattan Borough President



Brad Hoylman  
NYS Senator



Richard N. Gottfried  
NYS Assemblymember



Linda B. Rosenthal  
NYS Assemblymember



Corey Johnson  
NYC Councilmember

cc:

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo

Governor Christopher Christie

Mayor Bill de Blasio

Executive Director Pat Foye

Manhattan Community Board 4

Port Authority of NY & NJ Board of Commissioners

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