

RITCHIE TORRES

THE BRONX

June 23, 2022

Chairman Leroy Comrie and Ranking Member Mario Mattera
Chairwoman Liz Kruger and Ranking Member Thomas O'Mara
Chairman Luis Sepúlveda and Ranking Member Andrew Lanza
Assembly Hearing Room, 250 Broadway, 19th Floor
New York NY, 10007

Dear Chairs Comrie, Kruger, Sepúlveda, and Ranking Members Mattera, O'Mara and Lanza:

As travel rebounds and our economy recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, commuters across New York are desperate for a transit hub that meets modern travel demands. On behalf of my constituents in the South Bronx, I ask that you urgently commence work on the reconstruction of Penn Station to revitalize the station and the surrounding neighborhood to deliver a 21st Century Penn Station.

Penn Station is an outdated train station that was meant to service 200,000 travelers. Before the pandemic, the station serviced over 600,000 daily commuters, more than three times the amount of commuters it was intended to service.¹ Due to severe congestion, commuters from across the region face delays, crowds, and a confusing layout that diminish their travel experience, which results in widespread inconveniences and reduces the region's economic activity.

It is paramount to build a Penn Station that meets current travel patterns, accommodates future projections, and brings the transit hub into the modern era. The MTA's upcoming Penn Station Access project will open four new MTA stations in the Bronx through a one-seat train via Metro-North Railroad directly into Penn Station. This will, finally, alleviate the transportation desert in the Bronx by granting tens of thousands of Bronx residents increased access to Penn Station. My constituents will be afforded greater access to jobs, educational opportunities, health care services, and recreational activities through Midtown Manhattan.

In addition to existing congestion issues, Penn Station's current layout is insufficient to meet the access needs that Gateway will require. We owe it to not only Penn Station's current commuters but also its future ones to fix Penn Station. Furthermore, we must do so now while we are presented with a window of opportunity between the opening of Grand Central Madison later this year, and the opening of Metro-North Service in 2028 or sooner.

In the last decade, New York has undergone massive infrastructure upgrades by bringing airports, subways, and commuter rail into the 21st century. Yet, Penn Station, the busiest passenger rail station in the country, remains woefully outdated. I am of the belief that it is imperative to immediately begin transforming Penn Station into a modern transit hub that will efficiently service hundreds of thousands of commuters every day for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Ritchie Torres
Congressman
New York's 15th Congressional District

CC: Janno Lieber and Hope Knight

¹ "The Case for Penn South", *Regional Plan Association*, <https://rpa.org/work/reports/the-case-for-penn-south>