

February, 2022

Re: Penn Station Development Project

Dear Governor Hochul,

The Murray Hill Neighborhood Association vigorously promotes our community as well as our architectural and cultural history. We believe that honoring and protecting its rich history is essential to the heart and soul of our neighborhood. That is why we feel so strongly about the impact the proposed Vornado plan will have on our community.

We also know that, through its OneNYC Strategy, New York City is deeply committed to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the all-important goal on sustainable cities with its emphasis on affordable housing and transportation, green public spaces, and protection of cultural and natural heritage.

We understand and support the need for transit and public realm improvements, but not at the expense of destroying neighborhoods and communities. The loss of West 30th St. - a community of music stores and rehearsal studios where musicians get together to work, produce and teach music would be tragic. Where can this community relocate? We believe in development — but intelligent development that adds to the community — not development that destroys people's lives and work.

The tragedy of demolishing the original Penn Station should have taught us a lesson. NYC needs and deserves a great new train station, but The Vornado plan for Penn Station and the area is objectionable on many counts. Besides destroying the neighborhood, there are many important, historic buildings that would be demolished. Penn Station should be a new, rebuilt, above-ground station that addresses our transit needs and restores the neighborhood to its former glory.

The Vornado plan calls for another Hudson Yards — undistinguished glass and steel structures that are super tall, block the sun, and have no soul. This is not Dubai. We don't need more commercial space, especially when we have so much empty and unused office space now.

A great example of restoration and repurposing is the former *Lord & Taylor* building on Fifth Ave. and 38th St. It was recently renovated for another use. If the Hotel Pennsylvania, one of the threatened structures, was converted into low income housing, this historic building wouldn't need to be torn down and it would serve a much needed purpose.

We have many objections to the Vornado plan: The cost, the questionable income generated from the super tall towers, the displacement of people, community and business, and the destruction of important historic buildings.

We urge you to look at this plan again. Demolishing areas of New York City doesn't make it better. We don't want or need another Hudson Yards. Let's improve what needs to be fixed while maintaining the city's unique character. That is what makes New York the greatest city in the world.

Thank you for your consideration.

The Murray Hill Neighborhood Association
Preservation & Design Committee