

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ReThinkNYC

Governor and Transit Officials Leave Two False Subterranean Non Choices for Penn Station Basement Makeover

The Public Should be Given Real Choices at Penn Station Which Should Include Relocating Madison Square Garden for the Fifth Time in Its History: Six Alternate Manhattan Locations Described



ReThinkNYC cited 3 potential MSG relocation sites in its submission to NYS in August of last year and added the Hudson Yards site above in December. Two additional sites proffered by others are analyzed (6 total) in our attachment

“Resolving issues at Penn Station by leaving one of the largest impediments to station design and operations in place, Madison Square Garden, shows what may prove to be a tragic lack of courage and creativity to genuinely solve Penn Station in a way that makes it a 21st Century transit station” claims ReThinkNYC Chairperson Sam Turvey. Turvey continued *“ We have an opportunity to reverse the madness of demolishing the original Penn Station and replacing it*

with Madison Square Garden by reversing this early '60's folly and return the site to a modernized version of what it was."

ReThinkNYC Architectural lead Richard Cameron stated: *"The new station, modeled closely to the McKim, Mead and White original, should be converted to a modernized track operation plan, through running, and modifications to the original station design should be made for increasing capacity and new technologies. We can have the best of old and new at Penn Station and our proposals will increase the quality of life and brand locally and for the entire region at a steep multiple of what the proposed Empire Station Complex could provide".* Cameron added *"A new and improved Madison Square Garden, rather than an impediment to progress as it is today, can continue its legacy at a fifth location and fully meet current arena design standards."*

Penn Station, the largest transit hub in the Western Hemisphere with 650,000 commuters and expected to exceed 800,000 in the future, will never function properly while Madison Square Garden sits on top of it. Rather, Madison Square Garden should move to any number of alternate Manhattan locations. A fitting above ground station on a par with virtually every other major city station on the Northeast Corridor should be built (e.g. Union Station, WDC, Baltimore Penn Station and Philadelphia's 30th Street Station). None of these Northeast Corridor Stations consign their passengers to the basement.

At ReThinkNYC, under our plan we believe a modernized version of the original Penn Station should be built and should accommodate projected capacity, circulation needs and new technologies. As we have said before rebuilds of this magnitude happen all the time in Europe and can and should happen here. Pre-Covid Polling shows many if not most of the public agree with us yet the present proposals leave Madison Square Garden where a great Station and public space once stood.

Where could Madison Square Garden move so that such a space could be created? We answer this question sixfold with specific sites where the Garden could be moved. Each of the sites, 4 cited by ReThinkNYC and 2 by others, have their own pluses and minuses as we indicate in the linked analysis. Ultimately many stakeholders, most especially the impacted communities will need to be given the opportunity for meaningful input. However, each of the six locations we cite is superior to the present false choice of choosing between one story or two in the basement of Madison Square Garden.

At the request of Manhattan elected officials the Empire Station Complex is being paused to hopefully come up with an improved and comprehensive plan for Penn Station. We believe one component of such a plan is, if it is to have any credibility, to identify a viable site to relocate Madison Square Garden, extend Madison Square Gardens use permit only for so long as it will take to relocate (which expires in 2023 and end their tax abatement if they are unwilling to move to a more appropriate Manhattan location).

For details of the ReThinkNYC regional plan, [click here to see our complete proposal.](#)

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