

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING
AND FRANCHISES

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Tuesday, July 18, 2023
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HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Kevin C. Riley, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Shaun Abreu
- Erik D. Bottcher
- Gale A. Brewer
- David M. Carr
- Kamillah Hanks
- Farah N. Louis
- Francisco P. Moya
- Keith Powers
- Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
- Lynn C. Schulman

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Edith Hsu-Chen
Executive Director
Department of City Planning

Erik Botsford
Manhattan Director
Department of City Planning

Stephen Johnson
Senior Lead for Special Projects
Department of City Planning

Rich Constable
Executive Vice President
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Madison Square Garden

Elise Wagner of Kramer Levin
Land Use Counsel to Madison Square Garden

Joel Fisher
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Senior Vice President
Arena Operations
Madison Square Garden

Cawsie Jijina of Severud
Structural Engineer
Madison Square Garden

Mark Levine
Manhattan Borough President

Brad Hoylman-Sigal
New York State Senator

Tony Simone
New York State Assemblymember District 75

Layla Law-Gisiko
Community Board 5 member

Steve Schirripa
Advisory Board Member
Garden of Dreams Foundation

Adam Graves
New York Rangers Former Member

Maura Abington[ph] reading statement of
Alexandros Washburn
Executive Director
Grand Penn Community Alliance

Jeannie Kwon
Vice President
Major Stations Capital Delivery Program
Amtrak

Sara Appleton
Assistant Director
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Peter Matusewitch
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Peter Cipriano
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ASTM North America

Vishaan Chakrabarti
Architect
ASTM North America

Luke Bridle
Director of Transportation
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Liam Blank
Chair, Transp. and Infrast. Committee
City Club of New York

Eugene Sinigalliano
Member
Penn Station Advisory Working Group
Empire State Development

Pamela Wolf
Community Board Member

Tom Devaney reading statement of
Elizabeth Goldstein
President
Municipal Art Society of New York

David Holowka
Architect, Resident of Chelsea

Joanne Dunbar
Resident of New York City

Anthony Donahue
Resident of The Bronx

Aaron Sanders
Public Policy Director
Association For A Better New York

Jessica Walker
President, Manhattan Chamber of Commerce

Kate Cunningham
Director of Government Affairs
New York Building Congress

Bria Donohue
Government Affairs Manager
AIA New York

Kevin Hooshangi
Owner, American Whiskey Restaurant

Andrew Cronson
Student, Columbia University

Steve Marshall
Resident, 30th Street

Lynn Ellsworth
Resident, New York City

Sam Turbie
Rethink New York City

Adam Braunstein
Resident, New York City

John Mudd
Midtown South Community Council

Karim Ahmed
Architect, Resident of New York City

Bill Colgan
Stagehand at Madison Square Garden

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning and welcome to
3 today's New York City Council hearing for the
4 Committee on Zoning and Franchises. At this time
5 please silence all electronic devices. Chair Riley,
6 we are ready to begin.

7 [GAVEL]

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Good morning everyone and
9 welcome to a meeting of the Subcommittee of Zoning
10 and Franchises. I am Councilmember Kevin Riley,
11 Chair of the Subcommittee. This morning I'm joined
12 remotely by Chair Salamanca, Councilmember Moya, in
13 the chambers by Chair Louis, Councilmember Bottcher,
14 Councilmember Schulman, and Councilmember Carr.
15 Today we will hold a public hearing for two proposals
16 in Manhattan. Before we begin, I recognize the
17 Subcommittee Counsel to review the hearing
18 procedures.

19 COUNSEL: Thank you Chair Riley. I am Angelina
20 Martinez Rubio, Counsel to the Subcommittee. And I
21 just will ask you to bear with me because I have a
22 few lengthy announcements, since we expect a few of
23 you to testify today.

24 This meeting is being held in hybrid format.
25 Members of the public who wish to testify might

2 testify in person or via Zoom. Members of the public
3 wishing to testify remotely may register by visiting
4 the New York City Council Website at
5 www.council.nyc.gov/landuse to sign up, or for those
6 of you here in chambers, please see one of the
7 Sergeant at Arms to prepare and submit a speaker
8 card, and please if you're speaking on one of the
9 panels, even if you're just doing Q&A, please make
10 sure you fill out a speaker card as well.

11 Members of the public may also view a livestream
12 broadcast of this meeting of the Council's website.

13 When you're called to testify before the
14 subcommittee, if you are joining us remotely you will
15 remain muted until recognized by the chair or I to
16 speak. When the chair or I recognizes you, your
17 microphone will be unmuted. Please take a moment to
18 check your device and confirm that your mic is on
19 before you begin speaking.

20 We will limit public testimony to two minutes per
21 witness. If you have additional testimony you would
22 like the subcommittee to consider, if you have
23 written testimony you would like to submit instead of
24 appearing here before the subcommittee, please e-mail
25 it to LandUseTestimony@council.nyc.gov. Please

2 indicate the LU number and/or project name in the
3 subject line of your e-mail.

4 We request that witnesses joining us remotely
5 remain in the meeting until excused by the Chair as
6 council members may have questions for you.

7 Finally, there will be pauses over the course of
8 this hybrid meeting for various technical reasons and
9 so we ask that you please be patient as we provide
10 everyone a chance to give testimony. Chair Riley
11 will now continue with today's agenda items.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Counsel. I will
13 now open the public hearing on LU 245 related to the
14 arena text amendment proposal in Councilmember
15 Bottcher's district in Manhattan. This application
16 seeks a zoning text amendment to the existing zoning
17 resolution Section 74-41, which allows arena use by
18 special permit approval from the City Planning
19 Commission.

20 In conjunction with this application, we will be
21 jointly holding a public hearing on LUs 246 relating
22 to the Madison Square Garden special permit, also in
23 Councilmember Bottchers district. This application
24 seeks a zoning special permit pursuant to the
25 proposed amended Section 74-41 to allow an arena with

2 a maximum capacity of 22,000 seats within the
3 existing 10-story building. For anyone wishing to
4 testify on these items remotely, if you have not
5 already done so you must register online, and you may
6 do that now by visiting the Council's website at
7 council.nyc.gov/landuse. And once again for anyone
8 with us here in person, please see one of the
9 sergeant's to prepare and submit a speaker's card.
10 We have a lot of speakers signed up for this hearing.
11 So I would like to ask that you be patient, as
12 council staff is working hard to make sure you all
13 have a chance to speak.

14 If you will prefer to submit written testimony,
15 you can always do so by emailing us at
16 LandUseTestimony@council.nyc.gov. I would now like
17 to allow Councilmember Bottcher to give his opening
18 statement.

19 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you, Chair Riley.
20 October 28, 1963, is one of the most consequential
21 days in our city's history. It is the day that crews
22 began the demolition of Pennsylvania Station, the
23 architectural wonder that McKim, Mead & White
24 designed with inspiration from the Acropolis, Roman
25 baths, and St Peter's Basilica. It was a transit

2 palace, from its grand waiting halls, to its iconic
3 glass ceiling, supported by elegant steel bracing and
4 granite columns.

5 Nearly as shocking as the demolition of McKim,
6 Mead, and White's Penn Station is what replaced it: a
7 subterranean, drab, undignified, confusing maze of
8 passageways. Cathedral-like ceilings were replaced
9 by ceilings as low as six feet eight inches. Natural
10 sunlight was replaced by fluorescent light. As Yale
11 Professor Vincent Scully Jr. said memorably, "One
12 entered the city like a god, one scuttles in now like
13 a rat."

14 In 1963, Penn Station was buried beneath an
15 office tower, Two Penn Plaza, and a 22,000 seat
16 arena, which would be the fourth home of Madison
17 Square Garden. New York City Law requires arenas
18 with more than 2,500 seats to get special permits to
19 operate, and MSG received such a permit in 1963 that
20 included a 50-year time limit. In 2013 the City
21 Council granted a 10-year special permit, and this
22 year, MSG is seeking a permanent, special permit.
23 Over the past decades, MSG has become part of New
24 York City's DNA, the scene of some of the most iconic
25 events in sports and entertainment history, and a

2 maker of memories for millions of New Yorkers and
3 visitors from around the world. MSG also,
4 unfortunately, sits crouched atop Penn Station,
5 seemingly holding us back from building a train
6 station befitting the greatest city on earth. At
7 today's hearing, we'll hear from many witnesses, and
8 explore many important questions. If the special
9 permit is not renewed, where would The Garden go?
10 How much would that cost? Is a great station even
11 possible with MSG remaining in place? Would through-
12 running be possible with MSG in place? What kind of
13 process will there be to make these decisions? How
14 do the arena's operations currently impact Penn
15 Station?

16 History's eyes are on us. The decisions that we
17 make now will have tremendous consequences for future
18 generations of New Yorkers. Either we will have a
19 great train station that's worthy of the greatest
20 city in the world, or we will continue to condemn
21 over 600,000 people a day to an undignified
22 subterranean experience. As challenging as it will
23 be to get this right, I am excited about this
24 opportunity, and I feel hopeful about the future of
25 Penn Station for the first time in a long time. I

2 believe we do have it within our power to make
3 transformational change and create a public
4 transportation hub that would make McKim, Mead &
5 White proud. And we need to act now. The Council is
6 not going to kick the can down the road for another
7 10 years. We can not hold back Penn Station any
8 longer. We must deliver a new Penn Station for New
9 Yorkers, and we must do it now. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Councilmember
11 Bottcher. Council, can you please call the first
12 panel for this item?

13 COUNSEL: Will do Chair. But before I do, I just
14 want to make a quick announcement about the run of
15 show for today. So I just want to note that first we
16 will take testimony from the Administration on the
17 zoning text amendment, and we will do a Q&A session
18 with the administration. And then we will hear from
19 Madison Square Garden representatives on the special
20 permit application, and do a Q&A session with Madison
21 Square Garden before we take join public testimony.

22 So if we could just have the members of the
23 Administration join us up here. So the panel for the
24 administration consists of Edith Hsu-Chen, Erik
25 Botsford, and Stephen Johnson.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Counsel, please administer
3 the affirmation.

4 COUNSEL: If the applicants can please raise your
5 right hand and answer the following question: Do you
6 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
7 nothing but the truth and your testimony before the
8 Subcommittee and in your answer to all councilmember
9 questions?

10 ALL: I do.

11 COUNSEL: And can you guys just make sure your
12 mic is on before you speak? All right. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. For the viewing
14 public, if you need assessable version of this
15 presentation, please send the e-mail request to
16 LandUseTestimony@council.nyc.gov. And now the
17 applicant team may begin. Panelists, before you
18 begin, I would just like to ask you to please restate
19 your name and organization for the record. You may
20 begin.

21 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: Yes. Hello. Edith Hsu-Chen,
22 Department of City Planning. Good morning Chair
23 Riley, Chair Salamanca, and distinguished members of
24 the Subcommittee. I am Edith Hsu-Chen, Executive
25 Director of the Department of City Planning. I'm

2 joined by my colleagues, Erik Botsford, Manhattan
3 Director at City Planning, and Stephen Johnson,
4 Senior Lead for Special Projects. We are here to
5 speak in support of the department's text amendment
6 to a zoning special permit that allows an arena of
7 more than--

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I'm sorry, Edith. Do you
9 have papers that you want to give us real quick?
10 Sergeant?

11 MR. JOHNSON: These are copies of the
12 presentation.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Sorry, Edith.

14 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: No problem, of course. We're
15 also here to speak in favor of a 10-year special
16 permit for Madison Square Garden.

17 The block where Madison Square Garden sits is one
18 of the most important in the city. It is home to the
19 arena as well as Penn Station, the nation's busiest
20 transit hub. These two entities have been co-located
21 for 60 years, a center of gravity for commuters,
22 workers, tourists, sports and music fans, and for all
23 kinds of events. I'm sure everyone in this room is a
24 many-time visitor to this block, whether for a
25 regular commute, or a special blockbuster event.

1 This is a location of great civic importance.
2
3 And here we have an opportunity to do better for all
4 members of the public. Madison Square Garden should
5 provide a world-class environment and high-quality
6 amenities to New Yorkers both inside and outside its
7 walls. And the arena should be a good partner to
8 Penn Station to best serve its hundreds of thousands
9 of travelers every day, including many people whose
10 destination is The Garden. That's why we proposed
11 new requirements to the arena special permit to
12 ensure a high-achieving public realm, a better and
13 safer unloading plan, and consistency and
14 compatibility with Penn Station.

15 We are pleased with the progress we made on these
16 goals with Madison Square Garden. Through the public
17 process, MSG has committed to creating a much more
18 welcoming public space around the building that will
19 include seeding, planting, paving, art walls,
20 lighting, and major new entrance canopies. Madison
21 Square Garden has also agreed to move their truck
22 loading operations off 33rd street and to clear the
23 areas around public entrances to the station and The
24 Garden itself. To ensure MSG's loading operations
25 have minimal impact on pedestrians and busy

1 sidewalks, the arena will also work with the city's
2 Department of Transportation on a transportation
3 management plan.

4
5 Finally, and very importantly, MSG has committed
6 to collaborate with the rail agencies, the MTA,
7 Amtrak, and New Jersey Transit on their plan for
8 reconstruction of Penn Station. A new and improved
9 Penn Station is hugely important for the city, and
10 this is coming alongside the massive Gateway Project,
11 the most impactful economic driver for the region.

12 Because of these binding commitments, all of
13 which came through the public review process, we
14 believe a special permit term of 10 years is
15 appropriate. This contrasts with the special permit
16 that was issued a decade ago in 2013, which had no
17 such commitments for public space, loading, and a
18 more harmonious relationship with Penn Station.

19 My colleague Steven Johnson will now go through a
20 brief presentation, providing more details on the
21 special permit, the text amendment, and Madison
22 Square Garden's commitments. Thank you for your time
23 and we look forward to your questions.

24

25

2 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Edith. Thank you Chair
3 Riley, Chair Salamanca, and distinguished members of
4 this subcommittee.

5 Can we go to the next slide, please?

6 As you're all well-aware, this is an incredibly
7 complex site in history that began with the
8 demolition of the above-grade portion of Penn
9 Station. And now 60 years later, MSG is the busiest
10 Arena in the country and it sits atop the busiest
11 station transit hub in the nation. So I will be
12 talking about two actions here. The first is the
13 Department of City Planning's text amendment to the
14 special permit findings. And the second is the MSG
15 special permit that includes those new findings. But
16 to be clear, while these are separate actions, I will
17 be presenting them together.

18 So in order to build an arena of more than 2500
19 seats (MSG has 22,000 seats), they needed a special
20 permit, and the CPC approved a special permit in 1963
21 with a term limit of 50 years. In 1989, MSG came
22 back to the City Planning Commission for minor
23 modifications for-- to the special permit for
24 improvements to the internal operations and
25 improvements for the arena. And then in 2013, of

2 course, the City Planning Commission and City Council
3 approved a new special permit for MSG with a term of
4 10 years. Now I want to take you through a few
5 existing conditions slides.

6 Next slide please.

7 So first, to give you some context of the
8 environment, we have this aerial image that shows MSG
9 and the Two Penn commercial office building, which is
10 on a single zoning lot, and the two buildings are
11 connected by a Pedestrian Bridge, which crosses over
12 the midblock driveway, which is also a former
13 taxiway. The taxiway has been closed since 9/11, and
14 MSG uses the north side of the former taxiway for
15 loading operations. And as you can see on the image
16 where it says taxiway on the north side, there's
17 three or four MSG trucks in the loading area. MSG
18 also uses the streets around the arena for loading
19 when necessary and for staging. That includes 33rd,
20 31st, and Eighth Avenue, and sites further west by
21 the rail yards.

22 Next slide please.

23 So these next few images will highlight the
24 public realm around the arena and some of the issues
25 with these open areas. So these are images of the

2 Eighth Avenue frontage. It's a blank wall frontage,
3 and this is between 31st and 33rd Street, and you can
4 see air vents and grates on the ground, and the high
5 security bollards on the sidewalk. The ventilation
6 obviously is necessary for the Penn Station
7 ventilation operations. This area is an opportunity
8 to do something related to the civic-- a civic
9 gesture for the city related to Penn Station, and to
10 highlight the Civic importance of the site, and
11 includes some sort of engaging public realm, activate
12 the space, and make a positive impact on the public
13 realm.

14 Next slide, please.

15 So the image on the left is the corner of 33rd
16 and Eighth Avenue. 33rd Street is the access point
17 for the trucks for MSG to get into their mid-block
18 loading area. This corner on Eighth and 33rd and the
19 31st street corner both have Penn Station entrances.
20 And as you can see from the image on the left, if
21 you're standing right at the intersection, then you
22 cannot see a sign that says Penn Station. It's a
23 very-- the signage is not adequate or notable to
24 somebody who's walking down the street. So we
25 believe this is an excellent opportunity, and an

2 appropriate location to have a notable civic
3 entrance. And you can see also on the photo on the
4 right, this photo was taken during an event at MSG,
5 and you can see how they have office trailers,
6 rentable office trailers on the site, portable
7 toilets on the city streets (those are not public
8 toilets, those are for the people who are using those
9 yellow trailers). So all of these elements add up to
10 a public realm that is severely lacking in amenities
11 and restrictive of pedestrian movements.

12 Next slide please.

13 So moving on to the MSG loading operations: The
14 left image shows the loading area with Two Penn on
15 the left and MSG on the right, and the-- between the
16 two is the pedestrian bridge that I referenced
17 earlier in the presentation. This is also the main
18 entrance into the arena. I think MSG has said that
19 70% of users to the arena, or patrons, come through
20 Seventh Avenue and pass over that pedestrian bridge.

21 Now below that is the mid-block driveway, the
22 former taxiway that was closed after 9/11. There is
23 pedestrian access still at this site. It's up
24 against the Two Penn building. You can see a person
25 walking on the sidewalk there. One of the

2 unfortunate design elements of the complex is that
3 the pedestrian bridge has a nine-foot height limit,
4 so trucks cannot pass underneath it, so trucks
5 arriving to load or unload at MSG would not be able
6 to drive in on 33rd and exit on 31st Street. So
7 trucks have to maneuver into that loading area on the
8 left where those people are standing, and then back
9 out the enormous semi trailer trucks onto 33rd
10 street, and exit on 33rd Street. Now the photo on
11 the right is the main arena truck entrance. Similar
12 to the height limit on the ped bridge, this truck
13 entrance has a 12.5 foot clearance into the internal
14 loading area. This height limit was practically
15 outdated from day one for the arena. As soon as it
16 was completed, or shortly thereafter, the height
17 limits of trucks were increased to 13.5 feet, making
18 the arena unable to have semi trailer trucks enter
19 into the loading area. So they all load outside in
20 the open area, and the smaller trucks are able to
21 access that area. So the off street MSG loading area
22 is able to accommodate about six trucks on site.
23 Trucks pull into the open area, and those forklifts
24 that you see in the right image come out and load and
25 unload from those trucks. Now if there's an event

2 with a large number of trucks, more than six trucks
3 (some of these larger events have two dozen trucks,
4 like for Drake and Roger Waters) they park around the
5 arena on the city streets. And then also if they
6 have sporting events or TV events, they have
7 satellite trucks that station often in the public
8 right of way.

9 Next slide, please.

10 So when MSG came back to the department seeking a
11 new special permit, we reviewed the existing findings
12 and found them to be outdated. And the purpose of
13 the special permit is to determine any potential
14 planning impacts of the large arena of that size on
15 the thousands of people moving in and around the
16 arena and in the surrounding area. However, the
17 existing findings seem to focus only on one
18 particular type of transportation, and that's
19 automobiles. That's how cars come to the arena, how
20 they drive around the arena, and where they have
21 access to the parking. Now MSG does not have any
22 accessory parking spaces, they don't have a public
23 parking garage, and most of their patrons come by
24 public transit. So in order to update the findings,
25 and incorporate some new important provisions, the

2 department proposed a zoning text amendment, and the
3 findings are generally focused on three broad areas
4 that are outlined on this slide. So the first area
5 is public spaces, open areas, and the civic
6 importance of the site. The second is loading
7 operations. And finally the last one is the
8 importance of Penn Station as a gateway access point
9 into New York City, and how MSG Arena is
10 appropriately consistent and compatible with transit
11 facilities. So as part of the loading operations
12 (the fourth finding up there) they submitted a-- MSG
13 submitted a loading operations plan that was
14 subsequently reviewed by the Department of
15 Transportation as well as the rail agencies, and they
16 made recommendations to the commission. So the fifth
17 finding on the slide is related to the arena and Penn
18 Station, and how the arena will be consistent and
19 compatible with any proposed future transit
20 improvements, and that they have a harmonious
21 relationship.

22 Next slide please.

23 So now I'm going to take you through the public
24 realm and loading improvements that the City Planning
25 Commission has approved. So the applicants' original

public realm plan was mainly a paving plan with distinctive pavers and pigmented concrete treatments. They also added nine planter benches to some of the open areas and some bike parking. But during the public review process, the ULURP process, the department continued working with the applicant team discussing design concepts, strategies, and possible other public realm improvements. So late in the ULURP process, the Commission received a series of public-realm commitment letters from the applicant team, some about a week before the vote, and these commitments are outlined on the slide here along with the original proposed public realm improvements. So MSG has agreed to taking a holistic design approach, a unified and consistent design approach to the area around the arena, and that includes with signage for MSG and for the station, including notable entrances into Penn Station. This will highlight the Civic importance of Penn Station. This also includes treatments to the Eighth Avenue blank wall, as well as additional seating and landscaping, improved lighting, and decluttering of the area.

Next slide please.

2 So I just wanted to highlight two or three of the
3 public realm improvements. So this is an
4 illustration of the 31st street and midblock driveway
5 corner, and what the applicant is proposing. They
6 originally proposed two planter benches but the
7 agreed to add a third. And I think this really
8 highlights how this now could be a significant public
9 amenity, having social seating with people facing
10 each other, the trees and the landscaping which is
11 not on site currently. This has a southern exposure,
12 so we think that it'll be great for the trees and the
13 landscaping. And this gives the area a real New York
14 City pops feeling to it.

15 Next slide please.

16 So that additional third planter is a concrete
17 example of what MSG is committed to. These next
18 couple of slides will be more focused on conceptual
19 level commitments that they've agreed to. So the
20 applicant has proposed a design concept on the 3D
21 lenticular wall treatment on the Eighth Avenue blank
22 frontage. This particular concept has different
23 views depending on where you're standing, where
24 you're sitting, and where you are in relationship to
25 the artwork. So this will not have any advertising

2 signage, no accessory signage, but will be related to
3 the city, and celebrating the city, and the Civic
4 importance of the site, and will be a notable public
5 realm feature at the site.

6 Next slide please.

7 So the applicant is also committed to providing a
8 unified design scheme, including signage and
9 canopies. So they have retained a graphic design
10 firm and they have a preliminary design concept to
11 allocate this space to Amtrak and a Penn Station
12 sign. This will create a bolder, more obvious
13 entrance independence station, both at the Eighth
14 Avenue corners, and this shows a large glass canopy
15 and identifiable signage at the site.

16 Next slide, please.

17 So additionally, MSG has agreed to public realm
18 improvements related to the pedestrian-accessible
19 portions of the midblock driveway, the removal of
20 metal barriers, the movable metal barriers that line
21 everything around the site, and working with DOT and
22 the state to improve sidewalk extensions and curb
23 extensions.

24 Next slide please.

1 So moving on to the loading operations. In MSG's
2 filed application, they proposed no improvements to
3 their loading operations, and that was in response to
4 the department's new finding related to loading. And
5 as we have seen, the loading area for the arena has
6 issues. So MSG has agreed to keep 33rd Street free
7 of truck staging. 33rd Street has been their
8 preferred staging area for trucks because they can
9 shoot right into the off-street open loading area
10 they have, but this is a great example of how loading
11 impacts the public realm. So by agreeing to keep
12 trucks off staging and parking on 33rd Street, this
13 public space is immediately improved at this
14 location. And thinking to the future, this sidewalk
15 could be eventually extended out, the bollards
16 extended out and redesigned, and we could have a
17 shared street at this location. So as part of the
18 new findings, the applicant included a loading
19 operations plan in their application which outlined
20 their existing conditions. The Department of
21 Transportation reviewed the plan and subsequently
22 recommended a TMP or Transportation Management Plan.
23 And MSG has agreed to prepare and obtain approval of
24 a TMP, which will be working in consultation with DOT
25

2 and City Planning, and reflect DOT freight policies.
3 They have already-- MSG has already engaged the firm
4 to look at off site loading and parking areas. The
5 TMP will focus on these things outlined on the slide
6 -- the different bullets, off-street parking, managed
7 access, restricted hours of operation -- and MSG is
8 also committed to their own fleet of executive
9 vehicles and forklifts to zero emissions within three
10 years. So as part of these MSG commitments to the
11 loading here and the previous few slides with the
12 public realm, the app-- if this application is
13 ultimately approved, MSG is required to return within
14 six months of approval to submit two things to the
15 City Planning Commission: and that's the
16 Transportation Management Plan and the public realm
17 design drawings to the chair of the CPC. This will
18 ensure that MSG follows through on their agreed-upon
19 commitments.

20 Next slide please.

21 So the final new finding is related to the
22 consistency and compatibility of the arena with Penn
23 Station and future transit improvements. MSG has
24 agreed to work with the rail agencies and to
25 collaborate on these improvements to Penn Station.

1 The future improvements do not yet have design plans,
2 but there's a general understanding of what these
3 improvements could look like and where they would be
4 located. And you've probably seen a few of these
5 illustrations, we have one up here on the slide that
6 shows the proposed midblock train hall that the rail
7 agencies are proposing on the loading area of the
8 midblock driveway. So any changes to the CPC
9 approved site plan that are under the purview of the
10 commission require that MSG returns and gets CPC
11 approval of a special permit modification. So the
12 rail agencies are currently working on a design for
13 much-needed improvements to Penn that includes below-
14 grade areas that they control as well as areas above
15 grade, including areas that MSG controls. So when
16 the rail agencies have reached a benchmark of 30%
17 design development (which is a standard by the
18 industry), MSG must return to the Commission for
19 review and approval of their modified special permit.
20 This proposal would include a set of drawings and
21 details, and an implementation schedule. The
22 commission would then review the improvements and
23 determine whether the arena is still consistent and
24 compatible.
25

2 And finally, to wrap up regarding the special
3 permit term, the Commission approved a 10-year term.
4 The purpose of the term is to allow for a reappraisal
5 of whether the use continues to meet the relevant
6 findings and conditions. The site has a very
7 complicated history and future. But currently,
8 billions of dollars of transportation improvements
9 are moving forward with Gateway, along the northeast
10 corridor, with new Hudson tunnels that lead into Penn
11 Station, and MSG and Penn Station are both very
12 important uses to the city, economically important,
13 and we believe this is an important opportunity to
14 make substantial improvements at Penn Station, and
15 the 10-year term is appropriate.

16 And that wraps up my presentation and we'd be
17 happy to answer any questions.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much. I have a
19 few questions, and then I want to turn over to
20 Councilmember Bottcher. But before I begin, we have
21 been joined by Councilmember Abreu and Councilmember
22 Brewer.

23 Can you please describe the priority issues that
24 this text amendment is intended to remedy or address?

2 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: I'll take that. Thank you
3 Chair. Yes, our priority issues are very evident in
4 that we wrote them into the text that allows the
5 special permit. As Stephen mentioned earlier, the
6 original text was written in the early 60s where the
7 priorities were about moving folks in private
8 vehicles and getting them to private parking spaces.
9 We needed to modernize the requirements of this
10 special permit. So we included new findings, new
11 requirements, that dealt with public realm, getting a
12 better public realm and pedestrian circulation, you
13 know, worthy of the civic importance of this
14 location, making sure that the loading operations for
15 MSG, you know, made sense, and were safe and good for
16 the area. And we also wrote in a new requirement,
17 new finding, that the arena be consistent and
18 compatible with the rail station. Those were our
19 priorities that we put into the text amendment.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Edith. And you
21 spoke about commitments in 2013. Could you please
22 describe to me, because you stated that now MSG is
23 trying to work more with transportation in the city.
24 Can you explain to me what commitments were agreed
25 upon in 2013? For the record?

2 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: Sure, of course. Frankly, in
3 2013 there were none of these amenities put into the
4 special permit. None were required, frankly, and
5 none were approved as part of a special permit. You
6 know, there was not a design for public space. There
7 was no loading plan. You know, I think the most
8 memorable--

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Were there any commitments?
10 Were there any commitments.

11 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: The-- The most memorable is
12 of course, that there was a 10-year time limit on
13 that special permit.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. The CPC reports
15 are not very specific about the need for a clear sign
16 above the Eighth Avenue entrance that tells the
17 public how to access Penn Station. The existing
18 station entrances are hard to find and unwelcoming.
19 Does DCP have any specific recommendation for
20 improving this condition?

21 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: Yes. During the public
22 review process with Madison Square Garden and as our
23 text amendment moved through the process as well, we
24 made it very clear that it was very important to get
25 clarified signage and clarified markers for the

2 entrances, at Eighth Avenue in particular, but really
3 throughout the throughout the site. And MSG was
4 responsive and came back with a proposal to introduce
5 the glass canopies at the Eighth Avenue entrances
6 that Mark Penn Station. In fact, that is an
7 important commitment that that we-- that we look to
8 and was included in our approval of the special
9 permit.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Similarly MSGs
11 Eighth Avenue war is blank and unwelcoming. The CPC
12 report requires a graphic treatment to improve this
13 condition, but does not provide specifics. As the
14 planning agency of the city, does DCP recommend a
15 specific type of graphic treatment here, and why?

16 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: Uh, at the Department of City
17 Planning and the CPC, we do not specify the content
18 of the art wall. However, we are very pleased that
19 MSG has committed to content that is celebratory of
20 New York City and perhaps even of this particular
21 location. You know, the MSG panel will be up soon.
22 So you should ask the question to the next panel as
23 well. But I do want to clari-- stress that no
24 advertising is allowed as part of these walls. These
25 are-- These walls-- The treatment of the walls is

2 for art expression, and again, of a celebratory
3 nature of New York City.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Taking a step
5 back, it is unusual for these types of details not to
6 have been settled by the time a special permit
7 application comes to the Council. Why is this case
8 here?

9 I would first off point out that this this is not
10 unusual for city planning approval. Sometimes a
11 design or a traffic management plan does come after
12 the ULURP approval. And we have a number of cases
13 such as at the American Copper Building, East River
14 Realities building, where the plaza was-- came-- the
15 design came after the ULURP preapproval, Astor Place,
16 the Machi[ph] Building. Again, that design came
17 after the approval. Western rail yards: When the
18 public spaces are designed for that very large site
19 plan, the developer, the applicant will have to
20 submit designs to the City Planning chair at that
21 time. So-- Oh, and we also have a traffic
22 management plan for Pier 17 and the seaport that also
23 came at a later date.

24 So this is-- this is not unusual. It has-- It
25 has certainly happened in the past. I beg your

2 pardon. I-- You had another part of the question,
3 and I've...

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: No. I just want to know why
5 is this-- this case here? But you stated that this
6 usually happens?

7 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: Well, I would like to say one
8 thing: At a time of the public hearing, the CPC, the
9 City Planning Commission public hearing, we at the
10 Department, we believe that there was not enough
11 presented by Madison Square Garden in terms of the
12 public realm plan or a loading plan. But from the
13 time of the CPC hearing to its vote, there really was
14 a sprint finish, and a successful sprint finish, and
15 Madison Square Garden was responsive to the requests,
16 and frankly to the requirements of the findings in
17 the in the text.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Would you agree
19 that the arena benefits from its placement on top of
20 the country's busiest train station in terms of
21 access to the arena?

22 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: Absolutely no question. We
23 are a transit-oriented city. And we at the
24 Department and the Commission, we support transit-
25 oriented development. We certainly want to move

2 people across the city using public transit. It is
3 the greenest, most efficient, most social way. It's
4 a great way to move people throughout the city. We
5 especially think for a large use, such as an arena,
6 where we have 22,000 spectators attending, mass-- its
7 colocation at a transit facility is-- is hugely
8 beneficial all around: To the arena, to the city,
9 and to the area.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: And what percentage of event
11 goers access to arena through the station or
12 connected subways?

13 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: Uh, specific numbers MSG can
14 provide. But throughout the public process, MSG and--
15 - we have been using numbers about 50 to 60 percent
16 of MSGs visitors arrive by public transit.

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: 50 percent?

18 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: 50 to 60-- 50 to 61 is the
19 number that was submitted in the application.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. And one last question
21 before I pass the Counselor Bottcher. A concern was,
22 I believe, the loading dock. You said that it was
23 unable to go from 31st Street to 33rd, I believe you
24 said?

25 MR. JOHNSON: 33rd to 31st.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: 33rd to 31st.

3 MR. JOHNSON: Or vice versa. Either way, you
4 can't go.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Do you have a recommendation
6 on how MSG could actually address this? Because it's
7 kind of concerning that a huge tractor-- 18 wheeler
8 is going to be backing in on a very busy street. So
9 is there any recommendations on how they could
10 address this issue?

11 MR. JOHNSON: I think our recommendation focuses
12 on what can be done through the TMP, the
13 Transportation Management Plan. MSG has stated
14 repeatedly how raising the pedestrian bridge a few
15 feet is difficult to do. And I'm sure you will hear
16 that later today. There are plans that have been
17 visioned moving trucks into the arena, or
18 reconfiguring the midblock, but for the special
19 permit application and the text amendment now, we're
20 focusing on getting trucks off the right of way of
21 city streets and working on a Transportation
22 Management Plan with the Department of Transportation
23 to address truck loading issues.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. I'm going to
25 yield my time. Councilmember Bottcher?

2 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you. When the
3 special permit was last approved in 2013, a major
4 focus of that approval was moving Madison Square
5 Garden. At the time, the City Planning Chair, Amanda
6 Burton, said that the best possible outcome would be
7 a relocated Madison Square Garden. This time, the
8 City Planning Commission's reports do not really
9 include those recommendations. It's not emphasized.
10 Why is that?

11 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: The City Planning Commission
12 was looking at the application before, which is for
13 an arena at this location. The special permit, as
14 CPC approved, does not preclude moving of MSG to
15 another location, should there be an identified site,
16 should there be, you know, all the movement necessary
17 to-- to relocate. But the-- the application before
18 the City Planning Commission was about an arena at
19 this particular location. And we think it was-- we
20 thought it's very, very important to improve the
21 requirements and the findings of the special permit
22 so that the arena could, you know, be, you know,
23 could-- could be more high-achieving in its public
24 realm and loading, and in terms of its harmonious

2 relationship with Penn Station at the later
3 reconstruction.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: Can you clarify how the
5 public realm improvements in your presentation relate
6 to a redesign of Penn Station? I think most people
7 who see the presentation might think these are nice,
8 but they could be described as like tweaks, when
9 something far more transformational is needed? Do
10 you really think that they go far enough in
11 addressing the need for long-term solution here?

12 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: Let me start off by saying:
13 We at the Department-- We are very excited for a far
14 more transformational Penn Station and public realm
15 around Penn Station and MSG. I know there have been--
16 - there have been very exciting renderings, you know,
17 out in the public. And again, we're very excited for
18 much needed improvements to Penn Station.

19 When the rail agencies develop a design for the
20 new station, and in particular, when the design is at
21 30% completion-- when the design at 30% completion,
22 MSG will have to come back to the commission to
23 demonstrate that the arena is indeed consistent and
24 compatible with the rail station.

1 The current public realm improvements that you
2 see now, and the current loading, they-- they are
3 important. We believe it's really important to get
4 improvements now. It may be a couple years before we
5 see a plan from the rail agencies. It may be more
6 than a couple of years. We don't know right now how
7 much time it will be. But we think it's really
8 important that we see some improvements to the public
9 space and to the loading plan immediately, as soon as
10 possible.
11

12 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: How did city planning
13 select the benchmark of 30% design development? Why
14 30%?

15 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: 30% design is an industry
16 standard. It is a very well noted marker in the
17 development of a design, and it's-- it's usually also
18 reflected in contractual agreements. In consultation
19 with other city agencies, in particular DDC, we felt
20 very comfortable that 30% design was the appropriate
21 marker for the rail agencies to advance a-- their
22 design for reconstruction to MSG, and to, frankly--
23 and to the department, so that the compatibility and
24 consistency finding can be re-examined again.
25

2 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: In 2013 the permit was
3 extended by 10 years. Nothing's happened. Not much
4 has happened at all. You're recommending 10 years.
5 What's the rationale for the 10-year term?

6 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: Well, to start, the
7 applicant, Madison Square Garden has met the findings
8 that we put forward in the text. So that is-- You
9 know, that is the gating. That's-- That's the first
10 hurdle. Does MSG make the findings-- excuse me-- Can
11 the City Planning Commission make the findings that
12 MSG has met these requirements? And the answer to
13 that is yes.

14 Next, when we're looking at a term, when we're
15 thinking about a term, as my colleague mentioned, you
16 know, 10 years does give time to make sure that the
17 obligations are being met. There will be
18 improvements that have to be built and constructed.
19 There will also be-- That also allows for time for
20 the rail agencies to develop a plan for the new rail
21 station, and that 30% design will then come back to
22 the City Planning Commission in terms of reviewing
23 Madison Square Garden arena use, vis-a-vis the
24 consistency and compatibility.

2 There are a number of other projects, as we all
3 know, hugely important projects, you know, Gateway.
4 So-- So all of this together, led us to 10 years as
5 an appropriate term for this special permit.

6 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: I'm going to yield to my
7 colleagues for questions.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Councilmember
9 Bottcher. We've been joined remotely by
10 Councilmember Hanks. Is there any Councilmembers who
11 have any questions for this panel? Okay.
12 Councilmember Brewer.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much. In
14 the New York Post (I don't usually mention the New
15 York Post), Robert Yarrow had an editorial, as I'm
16 sure you saw, saying four years. He has great
17 presence, former head of RPA and an author. So my
18 question is: I won't be here in 10 years. I look at
19 the panel. I don't think any of us are going to be.
20 Maybe Edith will still be there. I don't know about
21 anybody else. It's too much time. And so I guess my
22 question is: What-- From your perspective, you said
23 in 20-- I was here in 2013. I voted, I guess, for 10
24 years. My question is: You said that there wasn't
25 anything sort of in that special permit that MSG had

2 to do? Is that sort of what you're saying? But I
3 was-- can't imagine that Corey Johnson or the rest of
4 the committee said, "You can just have 10 years, you
5 don't have to do anything." According to Robert
6 Yarrow, there were certain commitments that were not
7 made.

8 So I want to know: Were there any commitments
9 between 2013 and 2023, from your perspective, that
10 were not made by MSG? And then second, why would we
11 not try to do four years or something less? Because
12 we can be here to know what is it that is in this
13 plan? Or is not? And I guess I would say if in four
14 years everything is accomplished, then okay, maybe we
15 can do as we often do, and you can have more time.
16 But to me 10 years is too much time.

17 So the first question is: Was there anything in
18 2013 to 2023 that The Garden was supposed to do and
19 didn't, or MSG? And then second: Why not four
20 years?

21 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: In 2013, the special permit
22 was really underachieving. The text, the zoning
23 text. It really focused on private vehicles, and
24 parking, and movement through residential districts
25 of those vehicles. It did not have-- The special

2 permit text itself did not have the much more high-
3 achieving regulations that we have proposed as part
4 of this special permit text.

5 So while there was lots of discussion about
6 moving MSG, it was not a requirement, it could not
7 have been a requirement of the special permit, given
8 it's really limited, limited scope, and limited
9 requirements. So here, we're at a new-- new era
10 where we do have more high-achieving requirements for
11 the text. So we've talked about that at length.

12 Councilmember, you asked about the term. Why 10
13 years? So again, I would like to just stress that it
14 does allow for implementation of these requirements.
15 It also allows for an appraisal of the arena vis-a-
16 vis the 30% design drawings when the rail agency is
17 ready for that, and it also allows for appraisal of,
18 you know, really big moves in the area, you know,
19 such as Gateway.

20 So we think 10 years is a good amount of time, an
21 adequate amount of time for this special permit.

22 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay. So two things. So
23 you're saying that even though it was pedestrian
24 unfriendly, supposedly, and car related and all that,
25 was there anything in that (and I should know this,

2 because I voted for the friggin' thing), is there
3 anything in that that MSG did not live up to? That's
4 number one. And then second: Would you still--
5 would you consider (I know you've already voted for
6 this, but we're going to have to vote too) four
7 years, and then more, if you are, as I would say, on
8 good behavior, MSG. So the first question was: Did
9 they live up to, even if it wasn't a good list, did
10 they live up to what they were supposed to when we
11 voted in 2013?

12 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: My assessment would be yes,
13 because the-- there were very little requirements
14 within the special permit. There had been
15 discussions of introducing bench seating and some
16 planters. Those were-- Those were not included as
17 part of the final approval.

18 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay. Robert Yarrow said
19 they did not. That's what I'm asking. And then
20 finally, you're not interested in four years, plus
21 more if-- if good behavior.

22 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: The City Planning Commission
23 has weighed in, and their determination was 10 years.

24 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: All right, thank you.
25 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Councilmember
3 Brewer. I think that was similar to a question I was
4 asking you, Edith, if there were any commitments in
5 2013, and did MSG fall through with those
6 commitments? So it looks like they were-- there
7 weren't a lot of commitments, but the commitments
8 that were there, it looked like MSG followed through
9 with them. Is that correct to say?

10 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: They-- They have been in
11 compliance with the special permit that was issued in
12 2013.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Thank you. There
14 being no more questions for this panel, this panel is
15 excused. I'm going to call up the next panel, which
16 is MSG, but we're going to take a quick pause. Okay?

17 DIRECTOR HSU-CHEN: Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

19 [4 minutes' silence]

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: All right, can I-- can
21 everyone please take their seats? Can everyone
22 please take their seats?

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS #2: Can everybody take a seat
24 please? We're getting ready to continue. Everybody
25 take a seat.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Before we begin again, we
3 have been joined by Manhattan Borough President Mark
4 Levine and also Assemblymember Tony Simone. Counsel,
5 can you please introduce the next panel?

6 COUNSEL: Yes. And Elise, I might need your
7 help, just in case I'm missing any names. But even
8 if you have people that are here for Q&A, we want to
9 swear them in. So the names I have is Elise Wagner,
10 Rich Constable, Joel Fisher, Bobby Castronovo, Cawsie
11 Jijina, and Christopher Shim? Is that correct?

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Counsel, please administer
13 the affirmation.

14 COUNSEL: So if you could all raise your right
15 hand and answer the following question: Do you
16 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
17 nothing but the truth and your testimony before the
18 Subcommittee and in your answers to all Councilmember
19 questions?

20 ALL: Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Again for the
22 viewing public. If you need assessable version of
23 this presentation, please send an e-mail request to
24 LandUseTestimony@council.nyc.gov. And now the
25 applicant team may begin. Panelists, as you begin,

I'll just ask that you please restate your name and organization for the record. You may begin.

MR. CONSTABLE: My name is Rich Constable and I lead Government Affairs and Social Impact for Madison Square Garden. I'd like to thank Chair Riley and the Subcommittee members for having us here today.

We are here to respectfully request that our application for a special permit be granted in perpetuity. Madison Square Garden is at the center of New York's cultural life and serves as a significant driver of the city's economy, contributing more than \$2 billion in economic impact to the city every year. This includes over 12,000 direct and indirect New York City jobs.

Next slide.

MSG also employs thousands of union workers representing 14 labor unions including 32BJ, District Council of Carpenters, and IBEW Local 3. In fact, over two thirds of the full time jobs at The Garden are union jobs. These are the people who make it possible for MSG to hold concerts, games, and other events for over 4 million guests annually. Further, MSG supports an entire ecosystem of businesses around

the arena and throughout the city that depend on our events for their own success.

Next slide.

But MSG is more than just a driver of economic activity. We are also deeply committed to our community. The centerpiece of our philanthropy is The Garden of Dreams Foundation, which provides life-changing opportunities for more than 400,000 local kids and their families, and has contributed \$75 million for capital grants, scholarships, tickets, and other mentoring programs.

Next slide.

Throughout the special permit process, we have been committed to working collaboratively with all key stakeholders towards a shared goal of improving Penn Station and the surrounding area. And I'm proud to say that the application before you today clearly reflects that collaboration. For example, we listened to city planning and made significant commitments to create a welcoming and vastly improved public area surrounding The Garden. This includes two new glass canopies that will add important visibility to Penn Station's entrances, additional planters and seating and artistic treatments to

1 beautify the Eighth Avenue facade. Taken together,
2 these commitments would add a level of grandeur to a
3 civic space as important as Penn Station, and benefit
4 commuters, guests, and pedestrians alike.

5 Additionally, we have worked with city planning on
6 commitments that would improve our truck loading
7 operations, including moving trucks off 33rd Street,
8 hiring flaggers to ensure safe truck travel to our
9 loading area, and to make our operations more
10 efficient, and developing a detailed Transportation
11 Management Plan with the Department of
12 Transportation. Because these efforts are important
13 to both the community and MSG, we've already started
14 moving forward on a number of these commitments, and
15 as we've continuously said, MSG is committed to
16 working closely with the rail agencies to ensure The
17 Garden remains compatible with any future
18 improvements to Penn Station. As you know, The
19 Garden and Penn Station have successfully operated on
20 the same site for more than 60 years and we look
21 forward to continuing our work together in the
22 station's next chapter. Finally, I'd like to address
23 the term of our special permit. Contrary to some
24 arguments, a longer-term special permit would
25

2 expedite, not hinder, any Penn Station improvement
3 project. A long-term special permit would provide
4 certainty to the rail agencies that after spending \$7
5 billion plus in public funding to renovate Penn
6 Station, a future ULURP process would not undermine
7 that work. The Garden is a key part of the
8 Governor's, the Mayor's and the rail agency's shared
9 long-term vision for Penn Station, and it's
10 appropriate to secure that vision with a long-term
11 special permit. I will now turn it over to Elise
12 Wagner from Kramer Levin to formally present our
13 application.

14 MS. WAGNER: Thank you Rich. I'm Elise Wagner
15 from Kramer Levin, Land Use Counsel to Madison Square
16 Garden.

17 COUNSEL: I don't think your mic is on.

18 MS. WAGNER: Oh thank you. Elise Wagner, Kramer
19 Levin, Land Use Counsel to Madison Square Garden.

20 This is an application for a special permit in
21 perpetuity for the continued operation of the Madison
22 Square Garden Arena.

23 Next.

24 The arena is located on a superblock that also
25 contains the Two Penn office building and above-and-

1 below-grade Penn Station facilities. This slide
2 shows the complex but well organized pedestrian and
3 vehicular circulation on the block. As shown by the
4 purple arrows, the main entrance to the arena where
5 70% of guests arrive for a typical event, is at the
6 eastern end of MSG at the second level. Pedestrians
7 arriving from Seventh Avenue can access the entrance
8 by to breezeways that run through Two Penn and lead
9 to the Chase Square Pedestrian Bridge, which spans
10 the midblock driveway.
11

12 Next.

13 MSG is surrounded by at grade open areas. The
14 open areas consist of designated pedestrian
15 accessible areas, shown in gray, and exterior loading
16 areas for the arena, Two Penn, and Penn Station,
17 shown in white.

18 Next.

19 This drawing shows the arena facilities in gray.
20 Those are the areas that are subject to the special
21 permit. The other uses on the site, including the
22 theater, the Amtrak rotunda and Penn Station, and Two
23 Penn loading facilities above grade, and Penn Station
24 below grade are not subject to the special permit and
25 are shown in white.

2 Next.

3 As Rich mentioned, MSG has made a number of
4 commitments that will significantly enhance the
5 public realm around the arena.

6 Next.

7 These include decorative pavers, 10 planter
8 benches, weather-protected bicycle parking, new
9 planter boxes, and a number of additional design
10 concepts based on working closely with the Department
11 of City Planning. These include--

12 Next.

13 --large glass canopies with internally
14 illuminated signs for the Penn Station entrances at
15 31st and 33rd streets and Eighth Avenue,--

16 Next.

17 --a unified design language for MSG and Penn
18 Station signage,--

19 Next.

20 --a modified design for the open area at the
21 southeast corner of the site, incorporating a total
22 of three large planter benches in a social seating
23 configuration--

24 Next.

25

2 --a graphic art installation for the building's
3 Eighth Avenue wall to enliven the space for
4 pedestrians on both sides of Eighth Avenue. We are
5 moving forward quickly to develop these proposals.

6 Next.

7 MSG has made significant commitments to improve
8 its truck loading operations, reflecting important
9 input from city planning and DOT. As one of the
10 busiest arenas in the world, MSG could not operate
11 without carefully orchestrated loading operations.

12 Next.

13 The arena's internal loading facilities are
14 challenged by low vertical clearances and other
15 structural conditions that cannot be practicably
16 modified. MSG has developed a complex set of loading
17 protocols that allow it to operate with minimal
18 impacts on vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

19 Next.

20 The onsite loading area can accommodate up to
21 seven semi trucks for concerts and special events.
22 For events requiring more than seven semi truck, MSG
23 uses the adjacent streets for load-in, load-out, or
24 for staging.

25 Next.

2 These are photographs of trucks within the on
3 site loading area,--

4 Next.

5 --and another photo showing the forklifts that
6 bring equipment up into the arena. MSG obtains
7 permits in advance from the Mayor's Office of Film,
8 Theater, and Broadcasting to allow loading and
9 staging activities in the adjacent streets. In
10 collaboration with city planning and DOT, MSG has
11 committed to a number of changes. MSG will eliminate
12 the parking or staging of trucks along 33rd Street
13 between Seventh and Eighth Avenue, use flaggers or
14 security personnel to walk trucks along 33rd Street,
15 and work with DOT to prepare a Traffic Management
16 Plan for MSGs loading operations. The Traffic
17 Management Plan may include restrictions on hours for
18 commercial vehicular traffic, identification of an
19 offsite location for truck staging, designated
20 loading for security checks, and increased reliance
21 on zero emissions vehicles.

22 Next.

23 MSG's special permit application is being
24 reviewed along with the text amendment proposed by
25 city planning.

2 Next.

3 And then next.

4 The text amendment requires the arena to meet a
5 number of new findings, including that the arena is
6 appropriately consistent and compatible with adjacent
7 transit facilities. As Rich said, MSG has cooperated
8 and will continue to cooperate with the rail agencies
9 in redeveloping Penn Station. The City Planning
10 Commission's resolution establishes a process whereby
11 MSG would return to the commission when the rail
12 agencies have advanced a Penn Station plan to 30%
13 design development.

14 I will now turn things back to Rich.

15 MR. CONSTABLE: So I'd just like to-- I'd just
16 like to quickly introduce the members of the team:
17 Joel Fisher EVP, Bobby Castronovo, who runs The
18 Garden on a daily basis, and behind me we have our
19 consultant, Cawsie Jijina, Structural Engineer from
20 Severud. With that we'd be happy to take any
21 questions.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Before I begin my
23 question, we've been joined by Majority Leader Keith
24 Powers. I'm going to ask a few questions and then
25

2 again turn it over to Councilmember Bottcher, and
3 then the remainder of our Committee.

4 How many events a year does the arena have?

5 MR. FISHER: We have approximately 250 events per
6 year.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: What is the capacity of the
8 arena?

9 MR. FISHER: Depending upon the type of event up
10 to 20 or 22,000.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: How many days of the year is
12 their arena sold out?

13 MR. FISHER: Ohh. Most of those events-- I would
14 say at least 60% of those events are sold out.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: How many tickets on average
16 are sold in total over one year?

17 MR. FISHER: Phew. For just the arena?

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah.

19 MR. FISHER: I'd-- I'd rather not speculate on
20 that.

21 MR. FISHER: Yeah, let's-- we'll-- we'll put it
22 in writing what the answer is.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Can you put in writing submit
24 it to the Council?

25 MR. FISHER: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much.

3 MR. FISHER: Yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Where do all these people
5 come from? Just within the city or a larger region
6 of participants in these events?

7 MR. FISHER: The larger region. The Tri-State
8 Area, mostly

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: What percentage of event-
10 goers access the arena through Penn Station and the
11 connected subways?

12 MS. WAGNER: Um, as the Department of City
13 Planning noted, we stated in our application that
14 about 50 to 61 percent of the guests to Madison
15 Square Garden come by public transit.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: How did you get that data?

17 MS. WAGNER: From VHB, the traffic engineer and
18 environmental consulting firm that was retained by
19 The Garden and prepared our environmental materials.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Which Penn
21 Station entrances and exits to event goers use?

22 MR. FISHER: They are really using all of them,
23 Eighth Avenue, Seventh Avenue, every-- every entrance
24 that you can get out of Penn Station, they're using
25 all of them.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: At an average show, how many
3 event goers make use of each state entrance?

4 MR. FISHER: I think we'll need to get back to
5 you exactly in writing on that answer.

6 MS. WAGNER: But-- But as we've said, about 70
7 percent of patrons come from Seventh Avenue.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: From Seventh Avenue?

9 MS. WAGNER: From Seventh Avenue through the Two
10 Penn breezeways, and into The Gard-- over the Chase
11 Square Pedestrian Bridge and into The Garden.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. What time of the days
13 do event goers use this entrance and exit on Penn
14 Station?

15 MR. FISHER: Typically, it's around 6:00. Most
16 of our events start at 7 or 7:30. So it's around
17 6:00. There are a number of events that we have
18 during the day. So depending upon the time of event,
19 our doors are usually about an hour to an hour and a
20 half prior to the event that they'll--

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Let's-- Let's get specific.
22 So I know you guys are having a huge concert at the
23 end of this month. It's the Drake concert.

24 MR. FISHER: That's correct.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: And looking online, I think
3 they are the Barclay Center now, there's a lot of
4 people lining up to get in the concert. So typically
5 -- you say at 6 p.m. -- do you guys typically get a
6 line outside for a big concert like this prior to 6
7 p.m.?

8 MR. FISHER: Not typically. I mean, there's a
9 lot of times when people are lining up hoping the
10 tickets open up for the show. But people that-- that
11 actually have tickets are coming right around when
12 they're-- when our doors open, or a little bit after.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. And you're able to
14 expedite them in rather quickly?

15 MR. FISHER: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay.

17 MR. FISHER: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: The loading report you
19 submitted as part of your application explains the
20 loading challenges that you have. Why does MSG want
21 to keep operating such a large arena in one of the
22 busiest sections of the country's busiest cities and
23 on top of the nation's busiest train station?

24

25

2 MR. CASTRONOVO: My name is Bobby Castronovo,
3 General Manager of Madison Square Garden. We've
4 developed over a number of years and efficient
5 operational process to load all events within to our
6 venue. So although we do sit atop a transit
7 facility, we have figured out a way to process and
8 operate efficiently while minimizing vehicular and
9 pedestrian traffic, and maintaining safety at all
10 times.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I asked City Planning about
12 the low vertical clearance and that seems to be a big
13 issue. Why wasn't this included in your proposal
14 into addressing this since loading has been a huge
15 issue within the community for so many years?

16 MR. CONSTABLE: I think for this question, we'll
17 have our Structural Engineer, Cawsie Jijina, answer.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Just state your name for the
19 record.

20 MR. JIJINA: Cawsie Jijina, principal at Severud
21 Associates Structural Engineers.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Counsel, do we have to swear
23 him in before he answers?

24 COUNESL: He was sworn in as part of the panel.

25 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Thank you. Go ahead.

1 MR. JIJINA: So the-- the bridge between Two Penn
2 and The Garden is not just a bridge. Since it used
3 to be a taxiway, it's a column-free structure. The
4 roof level of the bridge is really the main
5 structural supporting element. The other level that
6 is below that where people walk is actually suspended
7 from the roof level. But the roof level also
8 supports all the ice making equipment and the air
9 conditioning and dehumidification equipment that is
10 needed to run the ice rink. It also supports the six
11 columns-- so there are four stair towers. But in
12 between the two stair towers that face Penn Station--
13 Two Penn, there's a concourse level. That concourse
14 has six columns that support it beyond the perimeter
15 of the arena. And those six columns are supported by
16 the roof structure of that bridge.

17 If I need to raise that bridge, I need to
18 essentially remove all the mechanical equipment that
19 supports the dehumidification, the air conditioning,
20 and the ice rink. I need to essentially dismantle or
21 shore the concourse levels 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 for
22 all the six columns, but I cannot shore, because the
23 taxiway is sitting over Penn Station. So my shoring
24

2 towers have to go all the way down to track level.

3 So I am sort of stuck where I am.

4 That's the reason why it's really difficult to do
5 anything. You can always have a solution, but
6 there's there are solutions that are just not
7 practical sometimes.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Do you agree that
9 being so close Two Penn Station helps event goers
10 access their arena?

11 MR. FISHER: Absolutely. I think as Edith from
12 City Planning said: I think it is the best location
13 for an arena, and for the fans and the guests that
14 come. It makes it really easy for everybody to get
15 there and creates a lot less vehicular traffic around
16 the area or anywhere in the city. So I think it's
17 the best location that any arena in the world could
18 possibly be.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. To address the public
20 realm, I want to talk a little bit about their
21 improvements. The CPC reports clearly state that you
22 did not fully engage with DCP until very late in the
23 application process. Given that you're asking
24 permission to bring over 20,000 people on most of the
25 days of the years to one of the busiest locations in

2 the city, public realm improvements are critical to
3 your application. Applications of this size spend
4 months, if not years, thinking about the public
5 realm. And here is MSG present that half-baked plan
6 that CPC could only improve by imposing conditions in
7 its reports. Why did MSG not engage with the city
8 earlier in this process?

9 MR. CONSTABLE: So as a City Planning team made
10 clear, we've been engaged with them for the better
11 part of a year. We've been in close partnership,
12 discussing a number of issues and concerns over the--
13 again, the better part of the year. And we're glad
14 to say that we (and again as cosigned by City
15 Planning) have made a number of commitments that
16 dramatically improve both the public realm as well as
17 loading.

18 One of the things that Edith Hsu-Chen said, and I
19 wrote this down as a quote is that "it's not unusual
20 that things come together late in the process."
21 Right? That's-- That's a quote from her as she did a
22 recitation of a number of other projects throughout
23 the city that happened later-- later-- later along.
24 But to be clear, we want to be cooperative. We have
25 been cooperative. We will continue to be cooperative

2 and collaborative with-- and by the way, not just
3 with the City and City Planning but with all involved
4 stakeholders.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. I'm going to ask one
6 more question, and then I'm going to do a second
7 round. I'm going to allow Councilmember Bottcher to
8 go. Beyond what CPC has imposed, what else can you
9 do to improve the public space around the arena and
10 actually take into account the thousands of people
11 your event brings in on nearly a daily basis?

12 MR. FISHER: Well, I think that we're going to
13 continue to work with not only City Planning, but
14 with all the other stakeholders. And we are open to
15 any suggestions at all from City Council, and we are
16 willing to do anything that we do-- we all believe
17 will be best for the area. We also have to take into
18 account obviously the flow of people, because
19 there's-- there's a lot of people, whether it's our
20 events or Penn Station. So you have to be-- you have
21 to create a good balance, which we feel that we have.
22 But we are open to any suggestions at all to work
23 together, collaboratively, with everybody involved,
24 to make it as great a public realm as it can possibly
25 be.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. I'm going to come back
3 for a second round. Councilmember Bottcher.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: It's commonly known that
5 in the past, MSG has shown openness to moving The
6 Garden. During the Spitzer Administration, there
7 were discussions about moving it on top of Moynihan--
8 now Moynihan Train Hall. Can you tell us about what
9 other options have been considered by MSG over the
10 years?

11 MR. FISHER: So, yes, you're absolutely correct.
12 We worked for a good two years on architectural plans
13 to move to the Moynihan Station. Unfortunately, not
14 due to us, but due to other factors, that didn't
15 happen. We would have loved if that happened. We
16 felt that that was also right on top of the
17 transportation hub, so we were very happy about that.

18 You know, I-- I want to clear up a misconception
19 about previous comments that I made about moving
20 across the street: That we have no plans to move,
21 and we are not interested in moving. We don't own
22 the land across from Seventh Avenue. And even
23 discussing The Garden anywhere else, it just should--
24 should be a nonstarter, since it's estimated that any
25 plan to relocate The Garden would cost approximately

2 \$8.5 billion in public funding. And we believe a sum
3 like that is better spent on New York's many other
4 priorities. I think that the rail agencies, the
5 Governor, the Borough Presidents, City Planning, have
6 all proposed plans improving Penn Station, but all
7 have been based on MSG remaining in its current
8 location.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: The statement you're
10 referring to is a statement that you made at
11 Community Board 5, when you were asked about the
12 potential of moving MSG east of Seventh Avenue to the
13 block where the Pennsylvania Hotel once stood. And
14 you said that, "Well, that would probably satisfy us.
15 But ultimately, who's going to pay for that? Where's
16 the money? That plan hasn't come to us, but that
17 would satisfy us being right on top of a
18 transportation hub." So essentially, what you're
19 saying is you'd be open to it, if a plan was
20 presented to you.

21 MR. FISHER: No, I'm-- Again, we're very happy
22 where we are now, and we don't plan on moving, and
23 there is no plan. So I just-- I think it's unfair
24 for me or anybody to comment on a hypothetical.

2 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: What about the plan that
3 was pitched to you by Related for the Western Rail
4 Yards? Could you tell us a little bit about what
5 that proposal entailed?

6 MR. FISHER: That was a very quick one meeting
7 where they talked about it. They talked about a
8 casino over there along with The Garden. It-- It--
9 We've stated earlier that we feel (and Edith stated
10 also) that having an arena of our nature on top or
11 very close to a transportation hub is extremely
12 important, is important to the city, is important to
13 all our guests and all our fans. And that-- that
14 proposal just never went anywhere or any further
15 discussions other than one very quick meeting about
16 an idea that just never took shape, and isn't, quite
17 honestly, near a transportation hub that would be
18 good for all our fans and guests.

19 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: So you rejected it
20 immediately and didn't give it any con--

21 MR. FISHER: It wasn't a matter of rejection or
22 not. It was just, as I said, a very quick
23 discussion, and a thought that related, brought to us
24 that, out of courtesy. And as Richard said, we'll--
25 we're going to cooperate with everybody to listen,

2 and if there's anything that makes sense, we would
3 always listen and cooperate.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: How much does Madison
5 Square Garden pay annually in property taxes for this
6 arena?

7 MR. CONSTABLE: As you know, back in 1982, the
8 legislature passed a bill that, in essence, says so
9 long as the New York Knicks and Rangers play their
10 home games at MSG, they don't have to pay-- we don't
11 have to pay property taxes.

12 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: Do you think it's fair,
13 that such a profitable enterprise should not pay
14 property taxes to the people of New York?

15 MR. CONSTABLE: So, Councilmember, very
16 respectfully, we're here today to discuss the Land
17 Use-- a land use process, the special permit. As
18 I've stated, and immediately answering the question,
19 this-- what you're referencing is a state legislative
20 action that is not before this body, and so
21 respectfully, we going to decline from commenting any
22 further.

23 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: You can decline from
24 commenting on it. But the people who are here want
25 to know, because we've heard so many constituents

2 reaching out about MSGs tax exemption, not abatement,
3 exemption. So if you could just answer how much
4 annually is that exemption for?

5 MR. CONSTABLE: So again, that's not before this
6 body. But if we're going to talk about governmental
7 subsidies: Every single arena, every single stadium
8 in New York State-- and the city that houses a
9 professional team get hundreds and hundreds of
10 millions of dollars in governmental subsidies. We're
11 no different.

12 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: Do any of those arenas
13 sit on top of the-- one of the largest transportation
14 hubs in the country?

15 MR. CONSTABLE: We're the only one in midtown
16 Manhattan above Penn Station. But again, very
17 respectfully, that discussion is not appropriate for
18 this Land Use meeting.

19 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: I'd like to get a better
20 understanding of what your coordination with the
21 railroads means. How-- If your permit is extended
22 any length of time, how would you coordinate with the
23 railroads on any future plans?

24 MR. CONSTABLE: So, just coordination is simply
25 having conversations with them, having them walk the

2 property with our engineers, with our architects, to
3 make sure from a structural standpoint, certain
4 things that can and can't be done. This has-- has to
5 be over, you know, weeks, months, details, drawings,
6 and so on and so forth.

7 So we stand, and the rail agencies know this, and
8 we've had a number of conversations with them over
9 the last year or so. We stand at the ready to meet
10 with them and discuss with them. We have
11 conversations planned in the next few weeks. We've
12 had conversations over the over the last few months.
13 So that's what collaboration and cooperation means to
14 us.

15 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: The changes that-- The
16 improvements that City Planning has put in its
17 report. Do you believe-- Do you really believe that
18 those changes in the presentation are sufficient for
19 Madison Square Garden to get a permanent, special
20 permit?

21 MR. CONSTABLE: Do you want to answer that?

22 MS. WAGNER: Thank you. Certainly. Madison
23 Square Garden proposed a number of improvements
24 initially. And through cooperation and collaboration
25 with City Planning, additional improvements were

1 proposed. And I would suggest specifically, the
2 civic importance of Penn Station is captured by the
3 new proposed Penn Station canopies with the large
4 internally illuminated signs. And it was earlier
5 mentioned that sometimes people have trouble finding
6 the entrances to Penn Station. Well, this will
7 create a real beacon for people who are looking for
8 Penn Station and create a clear distinction between
9 entrances to The Garden and Penn Station. The
10 canopies will be substantially larger than the
11 existing entrance structures, and will extend over
12 significantly larger portions of the public spaces,
13 bringing visual prominence to the entrances, and
14 reinforcing the relationship between the public realm
15 and Penn Station. Similarly, the proposed 3D
16 lenticular art wall on Eighth Avenue will create a
17 more attractive and dynamic public facing frontage
18 and greater visual interest for pedestrians that
19 celebrates New York City and the community.
20

21 And more generally, the Civic importance of Penn
22 Station is captured by the quality of design and
23 materials of the decorative pavers, planter benches,
24 and other proposed amenities within the public space.
25

2 I would mention that the architect of all these
3 changes is Sidney Nielsen, a very well-regarded
4 landscape architect who worked both on-- who's worked
5 for Vornado on Two Penn, who worked on Moynihan
6 Station, has worked for Amtrak. She's out of the
7 country today, otherwise she would have been here to
8 testify. But-- But she's-- was an important part of
9 working with City Planning and The Garden to-- to
10 create these really-- these upgrades to the area
11 surrounding The Garden.

12 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: Do you really believe
13 though that these changes (canopy here, a sign there,
14 a wall mural) are sufficient to-- for MSG to get a
15 permanent, special permit? Do you think for the
16 person who uses Penn Station, who's underground with
17 no natural light, with six-foot-eight ceilings, are
18 these improvements persuasive to them, do you think?

19 MS. WAGNER: Absolutely. This is a permit for an
20 arena. The arena needs to satisfy the special permit
21 findings. As city planning said, those findings
22 relate to-- the old findings related to
23 transportation, but the newer findings related to
24 public space, loading and compatibility with the rail
25 agencies. City planning determined in its-- in its

2 report that the arena is today compatible with
3 Madison Square Garden, and at such time as the rail
4 agencies come forward with a plan that is 30%
5 developed, we will come back, and there will be
6 determination of compatibility in the future.

7 So I would suggest Absolutely, yes, the findings
8 have been made, and therefore MSG should get a
9 perpetual special-- special permit.

10 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: What do you think of the
11 MTA's proposals for Penn Station, what they've put
12 out there? What role do you see yourself playing in
13 that? How do you react to their renderings that they
14 put out?

15 MR. FISHER: So I think in answer to that
16 question, it's a little early, because as they've
17 said, they don't have any established plans. We've
18 seen great pictures that look great. And we are-- we
19 have met with them. Many times, I have a lot of
20 respect for Jaimie Torres-Springer and his staff. We
21 have a good relationship, I believe. And we will
22 continue to work with them not only when they come to
23 the 30% drawings, but throughout the entire process.
24 As Rich just mentioned, we're trying to set up a
25 meeting right now with them, so we can give them

2 input about the arena that will help them develop
3 their plans. So-- But it's just too early, because
4 as-- as it's been stated many times, they don't have
5 those plans yet. They are working on it. And we
6 know that. And we will help in every way possible
7 to-- to ensure that those plans-- Our goal as a
8 company is to see the greatest Penn Station you can
9 possibly imagine, along with a great arena that can
10 operate efficiently as we do now.

11 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: What do you think of
12 ASTM's proposal for Penn Station? And what role do
13 you see yourself playing in that?

14 MR. FISHER: It's the same answer. We'll work
15 with them, and we've said we'll cooperate with any
16 group that has a plan. I think that ASTM has taken
17 us-- taken us up on our offer, which was really both--
18 - to both the MTA and the rail agencies as well as
19 ASTM to avoid any conflict of interest, that we
20 offered up the use of our-- our consultants, Cawsie
21 Jijina, who's here, and people from ME, which is an
22 engineering firm, to use them because they-- actually
23 Severud actually built The Garden back in 1963, that
24 company and they-- they know our building better than
25 any consultants or engineers in the world.

2 So we offer that up, and we continue to offer
3 that up. ASTM, in answer to your question, did take
4 advantage of that. So we don't have-- we don't-- we
5 ultimately don't make that decision. So we don't
6 have a horse in the race on that one, other than we
7 will cooperate with everybody.

8 I will say, though, that based on the work that
9 we've seen that ASTM has done, their plans are a lot
10 further along, a lot further along.

11 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: You're probably going to
12 say that this doesn't relate to the special permit.
13 But the constituents of mine who are here, they want
14 to know: Is Madison Square Garden still using facial
15 recognition technology to ban attorneys involved in
16 litigation against them from entering the arena?

17 MR. CONSTABLE: So you're prescient, because
18 that's exactly what we're going to say. It's-- It's
19 not, you know, something that's before this Land Use
20 Committee. What we will say is that we abide by all
21 state, federal, and local laws when it comes to our
22 use of facial recognition technology, that facial
23 recognition is a tool that's deployed by the
24 retailers, other sporting arenas around both the city
25

2 and the world, and our use is in full compliance with
3 any existing laws.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: I'm going to interpret
5 that as a "yes." I'm going to turn it over to my
6 colleagues.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Councilmember
8 Bottcher. I'm going to ask my second round of
9 questions before I turn it over to my colleagues to
10 ask theirs. I want to talk about loading again. The
11 public realm around the arena is terrible, but on top
12 of that pedestrians have to navigate around your
13 trucks on 33rd Street, 31st Street, and Eighth
14 Avenue, and the sidewalk itself. A property owner
15 cannot simply take over the surrounding streets for
16 their personal benefits, yet this is what MSG is
17 doing. Is it correct that you propose no changes to
18 your current loading plans in your application?

19 MR. CASTRONOVO: No, Chair. That is not correct.
20 But if you allow me a minute to clarify, there are a
21 number of changes that we have proposed in
22 collaboration with City Planning, and DOT. We are
23 committed to a number of additional measures that
24 will facilitate the concept of converting 33rd street
25 to a shared street, and to ensure that the loading

2 operations continue without unduly affecting vehicles
3 or pedestrians. MSG will eliminate the parking or
4 staging of trucks along 33rd Street between Seventh
5 and Eighth Avenues. We will use flaggers and venue
6 security personnel to walk each truck down 33rd
7 Street from Eighth Avenue and into the MSG loading
8 area to ensure no conflicts with pedestrians. We
9 will work with DOT, as mentioned earlier by City
10 Planning, to prepare a Traffic Management Plan for
11 MSG's loading operations. The Traffic Management
12 Plan will include conducting a study of available
13 offsite parking locations for trucks in close
14 proximity to the arena (research of available
15 locations has already begun), restrictions on hours
16 for commercial vehicular traffic, designated
17 locations for security trucks, and increased reliance
18 on zero emissions vehicles.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. This sounds
20 amazing. But in your original application, did you
21 include any of this?

22 MR. CASTRONOVO: Through further discussion with
23 city planning and continued talks, these are areas
24 that we agreed it would benefit the community while
25

2 also allowing us to maintain our efficient
3 operations.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: This is why it's important
5 always to begin from the beginning with the
6 community. So thank you for these new improvements
7 that you're going to have at this location.

8 Is it correct that you currently are using the
9 taxiway for loading and parking your equipment?

10 MR. CASTRONOVO: That is incorrect sir. We use
11 the 10 Penn loading area. We do not use the taxiway.
12 It's actually blocked off as a pedestrian walkway
13 between Penn Station and the Two Penn building.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: The approved plans indicate
15 that the areas around the arena and significant
16 sections of the taxiway are designated pedestrian
17 accessible open areas. What are you doing to ensure
18 the taxiway is open and inviting to the public?
19 Because it seems your loading operations have just
20 taken over the taxiway even though you just said that
21 it hasn't.

22 MS. WAGNER: So just to clarify, maybe we could
23 put up slide six, if that's still possible?

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Can we put up back slide six?
25

2 MS. WAGNER: That-- That one. Yeah. So, as has
3 previously been mentioned, this private driveway is
4 called the taxiway, because before 9/11, it was used
5 for taxis. And then it was closed for, I believe, by
6 the NYPD for security reasons.

7 So the northern end of that private driveway,
8 where you can see the green arrow, that's the
9 entrance into the internal MSG loading area, but
10 outside of that is an area that has always been used
11 by MSG for loading. So the western side of what
12 people refer to as the taxiway is-- has always been
13 used by loading and is designated that way on the
14 city planning, approved plans from-- from 10 years
15 ago and in the past.

16 Similarly, if you look at the south end of the
17 taxiway (and just to be clear, it's the area east of
18 Madison Square Garden, of the circular building). So
19 if you look at the south end, that-- there are two
20 arrows, one on the west, one on the east. The one on
21 the west is the Amtrak loading area, and the one on
22 the east is the Two Penn loading area. So that area
23 has always been designated as loading for those two
24 facilities. In addition, the middle portion has
25 always been used for ingress and egress from-- for

2 patrons and-- and others from Seventh Avenue leading
3 across the pedestrian bridge. Um, I'm sorry. The
4 pedestrian bridge is above. But at the lower level,
5 there is an ability for people to move back and forth
6 from Two Penn to Penn Station, and that's-- you can
7 see the-- the arrows there in purple, which is-- is
8 the pedestrians. And that area in the middle has
9 always been used for pedestrians to move back and
10 forth. So there really is a misconception that
11 Madison Square Garden has taken over the taxiway.
12 That's just simply not true.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Is it correct that the CPC in
14 its approval has prevented you from parking semi
15 trucks on 33rd Street, a shared street intended for
16 people, not trucks?

17 MR. CASTRONOVO: So working collaboratively with
18 city planning, we have offered to not park trucks on
19 33rd Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenue. This
20 will make it easier to convert this space into a
21 shared street in the future. And this is an example
22 of our collaboration that is not just true during the
23 special permit process, but continually, as we are at
24 the ready to work together now and in the future.
25 And we always welcome suggestions to improve our

2 operations. We continually look for ways to optimize
3 our loading, including minimizing interference with
4 surrounding street traffic, and most importantly,
5 pedestrians.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Again, why are you not
7 actively proposing ways to improve in a meaningful
8 way your loading operations?

9 MR. CASTRONOVO: I think we have taken steps to
10 improve the loading operations. You know, it's not a
11 problem that is unique to Madison Square Garden.
12 It's-- It's a function of hosting events at a venue
13 in a dense urban environment. Barclay Center is no
14 different as a comparable sports entertainment venue
15 within New York City. I know and can speak from
16 experience, having served as vice president of events
17 there for five years. It's a very similar structure
18 in terms of staging nearby trucks around the venue
19 for easy access in and out of the loading zone to
20 keep things on schedule.

21 Many other city businesses aside from arenas also
22 required trucks to park at times in the streets. You
23 know, that said we remain committed to optimizing our
24 loading for MSG and the community. We have developed
25 again that best in class loading operation over the

2 years and we continually look to maximize the
3 efficiency of our operation. The goal is always to
4 accommodate as many trucks in our compound as
5 possible to get as many as possible off the streets.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Totally understood. And we--
7 we totally understand Barclays. But Barclays is not
8 located in the middle of the busiest city in the
9 nation. So I'm still trying to understand why is it
10 okay for semi trucks to take over a public street?
11 Eighth Avenue provides critical access. 31st Street
12 provides critical access to the Lincoln Tunnel.
13 Eighth Avenue is also a critical link between the new
14 Moynihan Station on the west side of the avenue and
15 Penn Station on the east side. No other business in
16 Midtown is allowed to take over surrounding public
17 streets. Why should we allow your business to have
18 such a negative impact on the neighborhoods and the
19 city's largest street system?

20 MS. WAGNER: As Bobby said, MSG does not take
21 over the streets it-- 90 times-- 90 days a year, it
22 does load-ins and load-outs. During those time
23 periods, it-- and those load-ins are for-- not for
24 the Knicks and Rangers. The Knicks and majors don't
25 require all these trucks. It's only for special

2 events such as concerts. And the average number of
3 trucks for those concerts is about 10. Some of them
4 have very few. If they have six or seven trucks,
5 they can fit into the loading area, and there are no
6 trucks on the street. So during certain-- Prior to
7 certain events, there are some trucks on the street.
8 But it is done in an extremely organized way. Bobby
9 can explain in more detail with-- with, you know,
10 telephone-- telephone communication between Bobby's
11 people and the trucks. So they only come in when
12 they know there's a space for them, and they pull out
13 in a very organized way.

14 The other way-- thing I would say is that 33rd
15 Street has been under construction for the last year
16 or so, for the-- by the MTA for the LIRR passageway.
17 And MSG has modified its loading, so it really uses
18 33rd Street in a much less intensive way. And as
19 you've heard, they've now-- they've now proposed to
20 no longer use 33rd Street for parking and staging of
21 vehicles because there is a plan to-- that DOT may
22 wish to use 33rd Street as a shared street. And
23 that's something that MSG would be happy to cooperate
24 with in the future.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: How many times a year do you
3 obtain a special permit for these events?

4 MR. CASTRONOVO: Every time we have a concert, we
5 obtain permits for staging, if required. If a show
6 is small enough to fit all the trucks within our
7 confines, it's not necessary.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: So how many times, estimate,
9 do you think, roughly. Because you did say about 90
10 times a year.

11 MR. CASTRONOVO: 90 times, load-ins and load-
12 outs, I would say approximately 65 times we apply for
13 permits.

14 MR. CASTRONOVO: 65 times? Okay, one more
15 question before I turn it to my colleagues. Given
16 what we just discussed, what will be the goals and
17 outcomes of the Transportation Management Plan that
18 CPC has to impose on you, and that you have to now
19 develop with DOT?

20 MR. CASTRONOVO: Yeah. As mentioned, we would
21 conduct a study of available offsite parking
22 locations for trucks in close proximity to the arena.
23 And we've already began looking at those locations to
24 find something that it's available nearby and can
25 facilitate our operational needs. We would work on

2 restrictions on hours for commercial vehicular
3 traffic. As is, we do try to park, load and unload
4 trucks during off-peak hours, where traffic is at a
5 minimum. We would designate locations for security
6 checks, and we would increase reliance on zero
7 emissions vehicles.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. I would now like
9 to allow my colleagues to ask questions. We're going
10 to start with the Majority Leader Powers followed by
11 Councilmember Brewer and then Councilmember Abreu.
12 Majority Leader Powers?

13 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Thank you. Thanks to
14 the Chair. I have to run shortly, but I wanted to
15 take an opportunity, since my district is nearby and
16 I'm a frequent user of the both the Penn Station and
17 the arena.

18 What is the special permit for that we're here
19 for today? With the-- What is the purpose of the
20 special permit?

21 MS. WAGNER: Any special permit in the city of
22 New York, the special permit uses are uses that are--

23 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: No. I'm saying what is
24 the special permit here that we're talking about?

2 MS. WAGNER: Oh. It's a special permit for an
3 arena in excess of 2500 seats.

4 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: So, if-- if without the
5 special permit, MSG will exist as a arena that holds
6 something like 2500 people. Is that right to say?

7 MS. WAGNER: It would be up to the owners of
8 Madison Square Garden. They own the property. So
9 they could use it as an arena for less than 2500
10 seats. They can let it sit vacant. They can they
11 can do whatever they want as the as the owners of the
12 property.

13 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Right. And the-- what
14 would be the cost of-- I think you guys cited a
15 number earlier, but what is the cost of relocating,
16 if you wanted to move The Garden?

17 MR. CONSTABLE: Yeah. According to the EDC [MS.
18 CONSTABLE: ESD]. ESD, sorry. This isn't our
19 number, it's theirs. It's approximately \$8.5
20 billion.

21 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: \$8.5.

22 MR. CONSTABLE: Of public monies. Yeah. \$8.5
23 billion.

24 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Of public money.

25 MR. CONSTABLE: Of public monies, yes.

2 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Including-- and then
3 there might be private capital, if-- with-- it
4 depends on what the arrangement was? Okay. And
5 where are the current suggestions to move?

6 MS. WAGNER: There-- There is no specific
7 location. And in fact, it would be quite challenging
8 to move Madison Square Garden, because if you think
9 about it, it's now between Seventh and Eighth, 31st
10 and 33rd. So you need a two block area, and there
11 aren't very many vacant two block areas proximate to
12 transit, which is an important requirement for The
13 Garden.

14 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Yeah. How many people
15 take the subway? I mean, what is the percentage of
16 people that drive versus--

17 MS. WAGNER: 50 to 60 percent.

18 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Take the subway?

19 MS. WAGNER: Take public transportation, yes.

20 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: And the others... drive?
21 Walk?

22 MS. WAGNER: Drive, walk, ride their bicycles,
23 whatever.

24 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Okay. And what is that
25 number relative to like, MetLife Stadium?

2 MS. WAGNER: I don't know. We can try to find
3 out. But I imagine it's much higher.

4 MR. CONSTABLE: It would north of 90 percent if
5 we are talking about MetLife. The overwhelming
6 majority of folks that go there--

7 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Drive.

8 MR. CONSTABLE: Yeah. Get there by car. Through
9 the chair, we can get you the exact percent.

10 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: And what is-- The last
11 few special permits, what have been the lengths of
12 those?

13 MS. WAGNER: Of-- For Madison Square Garden?

14 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Mm-hmm.

15 MS. WAGNER: The first one was for 50 years, and
16 the current one is 10 years.

17 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Fifty?

18 MS. WAGNER: Five-zero was the first one.

19 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: And then 10.

20 MS. WAGNER: Correct.

21 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Okay. But I defer to my
22 colleague, Councilmember Bottcher, a lot. I will say
23 on behalf of-- I'm a Knicks fan, a Rangers fan, a
24 subway rider, and a Penn Station frequent user. I do
25 think there is wisdom to having it close to transit.

2 Which is why Barclays is on top of every single
3 transit line and the LIRR there. And I think that
4 folks who use The Garden, and you know, I think
5 appreciate the fact that they don't have to get into
6 a car like they do other stadiums to be able to go
7 use it. It is-- Takes you a day and a half to get to
8 MetLife Stadium. It takes up entire day. It takes
9 you 30 minutes if you're from City Hall to Penn
10 Station, maybe even less than that. So I think
11 there's a lot of wisdom in trying to keep it near
12 public transportation. But I do-- I will say that I
13 think a lot of the discussions here today about how
14 to improve that area, which is desperately in need of
15 both public realm improvements and safety
16 improvements, it does feel like obligation
17 responsibility of a major stakeholder there. And
18 that should certainly be part of the conversation.
19 But I think if-- as a lifelong suffering Knicks fan,
20 and partial Rangers fan, and frequent user of The
21 Garden, I think it's wise to have it near transit,
22 and I think it belongs where it is. But I do think
23 there's a lot of work to be done to make sure that
24 that area is well taken care of. So with that, I'll
25 give it back to the Chair.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Majority Leader.
3 Councilmember Brewer?

4 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Thank you very much. I'm
5 going to follow up, as I did with City Planning. I
6 was here in 2013. I can't remember exactly what I
7 voted for, I'll be honest with you, on this topic.
8 But my question is: In the last 10 years, under your
9 analysis, what was it that you were supposed to have
10 done (maybe you did it all). Edith seemed to think
11 that you had focused and done. But I wanted to know
12 from you. Number one. And then second-- My second
13 question, of course, is I do go with Bob Yarrow, as
14 he wrote in the New York Post, thinking that four
15 years and then more, if appropriate, would be the way
16 that I would have suggested this Council goals. But
17 first, of course, the 10 years, what have you
18 accomplished? Or do you think that there wasn't
19 anything to accomplish in that 10 year period that
20 was necessary.

21 MS. WAGNER: So I'll start by saying that I was
22 here 10 years ago, as was Joel Fisher, and we were
23 involved in the process at that time. First of all,
24 in connection with the special permit, Madison Square
25 Garden did take on certain improvements, including a

2 repaving of the area. There was quite a bit of
3 signage and wayfinding signage. And at the time,
4 Madison Square Garden did propose some seeding and
5 planting but that was taken out at the City Council.
6 So in addition to that, there have been improvements
7 that were made over the last 10 years. And I'll turn
8 it over to Joel to respond to that.

9 MR. FISHER: Well, I'm going to-- I'll talk
10 about one area and then I'll talk about-- turn it
11 over to Bobby with regards to our loading.

12 So in addition to what we were acquired to do,
13 which we did every single thing that we were asked to
14 do and required to do as part of the process in being
15 granted the 10-year permit, we also put lighting on
16 the building. It cost us a lot of money, over \$10
17 million to put up this lighting, to beautify the
18 area, and to celebrate not only the events we have,
19 but public events that take place or-- or historic
20 events that take place in the city.

21 In addition to that, although not required are
22 part of the city permit, we added a lot of loading
23 improvements, which I'll turn over to Bobby to talk
24 about specifically.

2 MR. CASTRONOVO: As examples over the last 10
3 years since the last special permit, we've
4 reconfigured our loading area, taking out a curb
5 within our truck loading zone, allowing us to get an
6 additional truck off the street and within the
7 confines of our property. We've worked closely with
8 Amtrak and Vornado to utilize the 31st Street
9 exterior loading dock for unloading, and loading, and
10 parking broadcast trucks, again with the goal in mind
11 to take additional trucks off the street and within
12 our property. We scheduled dtime vendor deliveries
13 for accepting other goods and services like food and
14 beverage, working around our event loadings and
15 prioritizing them in order to make it an efficient
16 operation and cut down on vehicular traffic around
17 the building.

18 We've added additional union employees to our
19 staffing calls, with an emphasis on increased loaders
20 and forklift drivers to speed up the operation while
21 always maintaining safety. This allows for improved
22 efficiency and moving trucks in and out of the
23 neighborhood much quicker. We've added pedestrian
24 traffic managers to all truck staging areas to assist
25 with pedestrian traffic flow, and added a fixed

2 building security position within the taxiway for
3 pedestrian safety between the midblock Penn Station
4 entrance and Two Penn.

5 All of this is in addition to our existing
6 loading best practices, which includes but is not
7 limited to scheduling load-ins and load-outs at off-
8 peak hours, minimizing the impact on pedestrian and
9 vehicular traffic, allowing for quick loading and
10 departures of trucks in and around MSG. For example,
11 the majority of our loadouts happen overnight once
12 the show concludes, and activity is at a relative
13 minimum around the venue.

14 For every show, we work closely with the touring
15 production team to minimize vehicular traffic and
16 ensure pedestrian safety during our load-in
17 operations.

18 All of that taken together these practices ensure
19 we continue to successfully load in and load out out
20 of the world's most busy arena while minimizing our
21 impact and continuing to make safety and security of
22 pedestrians our priority.

23 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: All right. Well, thank
24 you. I mean, I don't go to as many games as my
25 colleagues, Councilmember Powers. But I will say,

2 you know, despite all of this, the area needs a lot
3 of improvements. I think you will agree to that. So
4 it does seem to me that the City Council, and I'll
5 speak for myself, didn't ask for enough. If we just
6 talked about repaving and the wayfinding, and perhaps
7 you've done some other things along the way.

8 I must admit, I think that as you heard me say
9 earlier, I think four years with more time if it's
10 appropriate is where this Council should go. Could
11 you live with that?

12 MR. CONSTABLE: No. So--

13 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: If you have to, but you
14 don't want to.

15 MR. CONSTABLE: [chuckles] You asked the
16 question.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Yeah.

18 MR. CONSTABLE: So-- So again, we've asked for a
19 long term special permit. And as I mentioned in my
20 prepared remarks, it's in everyone's best interest
21 since the Mayor, the Governor, the Manhattan Borough
22 President, City Planning have an expectation that MSG
23 is not going anywhere, and there's going to be an
24 infusion of billions and billions of dollars to get

2 the grand vision of Penn Station that most New
3 Yorkers believe that we deserve.

4 So therefore, it's-- it would not be logical to
5 for the MTA, for Amtrak, for New Jersey Transit, for
6 the Governor to put in seven-plus billion dollars,
7 and then as you mentioned, in 10 years, or a shorter
8 period of time, a different City Council body comes
9 in says, "I think MSG needs to go," wasting,
10 obviously, all this money.

11 So certainty is in everyone's best interest, not
12 just ours.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay. I mean, I hear you.
14 I think that it's good to hold people accountable at
15 the same time. And even though you feel like you
16 have been accountable for the last 10 years, there's
17 a difference of opinion on that. Just so you know.

18 MR. CONSTABLE: Well, respectfully City Planning
19 said that the commitments we made 10 years ago--

20 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Right. I'm going to check
21 with Amanda Burton and see what she says.

22 MR. CONSTABLE: Okay. All right. Well, that's--
23 - The current head of City Planning believes that we
24 met our obligations. And as Bobby and I just want to
25 make sure this didn't get lost: He went through a

2 list of things that we did in the last decade to get
3 trucks off the street and be more pedestrian friendly
4 that no one asked us to do, that we did on our own.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Okay. I appreciate it.
6 We all do things we're not asked to do. Thank you
7 very much.

8 MR. CONSTABLE: Okay.

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Councilmember
10 Brewer. Councilmember Abreu?

11 COUNCILMEMBER ABREU: Thank you Chair. I just
12 wanted to just reiterate Councilmember Bottcher's
13 point about tax exemptions. I do think it is
14 actually a very relevant point, because it means
15 there are more resources for MSG to free up in order
16 to secure a special permit through improvements. Is
17 it fair to say that, by having this property tax
18 exemption, there's more resources you can free up to
19 do the improvements that we're calling for?

20 MR. CONSTABLE: Here-- here's what I'm going--
21 it's fair to say, and as I mentioned in my previous
22 remarks: MSG being here is \$2 billion in economic
23 impact to New York City, \$2 billion. So the city
24 leaders and the state leaders back in 1982, actually
25 did a smart thing, because they didn't want the

2 Knicks and the Rangers to move to New Jersey, like
3 the Giants and the Jets, or move to California, like
4 the Dodgers and the Giants.

5 So had they not structured the arrangement to
6 ensure that the then-owners of Madison Square Garden
7 did not pack up and leave, that \$2 billion that the
8 city now generates would not be there. So it was
9 actually a smart move.

10 COUNCILMEMBER ABREU: Yeah. And I'm not speaking
11 about whether the investment was the right thing or
12 not. It is more of-- My narrow question is:
13 Because there's a property tax exemption, does that
14 free up more resources in order for you to make
15 improvements, in order to secure the city special
16 permit?

17 MR. CONSTABLE: Yeah, I'm not going to get into
18 the-- the finances of it.

19 COUNCILMEMBER ABREU: I think the answer is yes.
20 And I would also like to mention that you did mention
21 different levels of government. The Council does
22 have the final say, right? And so I really encourage
23 you to continue working with your local
24 Councilmember, Eric Bottcher, and his constituents
25 who are here. There a lot of improvements, I'm sure

2 that will be subject to negotiations in the coming
3 weeks. And I think the improvements are very
4 necessary in order for there to be a viable permit
5 here.

6 MR. CONSTABLE: Yeah. So I just want to make
7 sure that this is clear: We have-- I have personally
8 nothing but respect for Councilmember Bottcher. He
9 is fantastic. He does a lot of great things for us,
10 as well as the broader community. We will work with
11 the community. We will work with the Councilmember.
12 We will work with the entirety of the Council. As
13 City Planning made clear, we're a good partner,
14 right? Maybe we came together at the end, but we
15 made a number of commitments that City Planning is--
16 according to City Planning, forget about us, is happy
17 with. We want to partner with the Councilmember, and
18 we suspect that, you know, we'll reach similar-- a
19 similar result.

20 COUNCILMEMBER ABREU: Thank you so much.

21 MR. CONSTABLE: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Councilmember
23 Abreu. There being no more questions for this panel.
24 Before excusing this panel, I would like to make
25 clear that MSG wants to continue being right in the

2 middle of the busiest city in the nation, and take
3 advantage of its access to Penn Station, that MSG has
4 to offset the very real transportation and public
5 realm challenges of bringing more than 20,000 people
6 per event to its arena and the hundreds of trucks
7 it's events annually requires. MSG needs to
8 demonstrate to this committee its ability and
9 willingness to address how it's affecting our city
10 and the local community and Penn Station.

11 There being no further question this applicant
12 panel is excused. Counsel, are there any members of
13 the public who wish to testify on the arena text
14 amendment, or the Madison Square Garden special
15 permit remotely or in person?

16 COUNSEL: Chair, as I announced at the beginning,
17 we'll take testimony jointly on the text amendment
18 and the special permit. We're going to start with
19 the elected officials that are in the room. We're
20 going to put you in panels. So if you are in the
21 room, and you know, haven't filled out a speaker
22 card, please do so, so that we can put you on panels.
23 There's quite a few of you online. So bear with me
24 just for a second while I make a quick announcement
25 for the testimony.

2 So for members of the public, just again, know
3 that you'll be called in panels of four or five. If
4 you sign up, make sure that you stand by when you
5 hear your name being called and be prepared to speak
6 when the Chair says that you may begin.

7 Please also note that once all panelists in your
8 group have completed their testimony if you're
9 remotely, you will be removed from the meeting as the
10 group, and the next group of speakers will be
11 introduced. Once removed, participants may continue
12 to view the livestream broadcast of this hearing on
13 the Council website.

14 We will now hear from the first panel, like I
15 said, elected officials, and Chair Riley will mention
16 the names of the first panel.

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: So good afternoon again. The
18 first panel will consist of Manhattan Borough
19 President Mark Levine, State Senator Brad Hoylman,
20 Assemblymember Tony Simone, and a Community Board
21 member Layla Law-Gisiko. Can we start first with man
22 Borough President Mark Levine.

23 BOROUGH PRESIDENT LEVINE: Thank you Chair Riley.
24 Hello, friends. Great to see every one of you. The
25 view is very nice from here. You should try it

2 sometime. Chair Riley, Councilmember Bottcher, we're
3 very fortunate to have leaders of your talent on this
4 issue. Grateful for all you're doing.

5 I believe that after half a century of angst and
6 suffering at Penn Station, we at last have the chance
7 to build a truly great rail hub there. I don't think
8 this opportunity will last forever. I think we have
9 a window to act right now. The special permit gives
10 us leverage to ensure that MSG accommodates changes
11 in rail operations there, and there are other factors
12 that we can't count on in the future. We need strong
13 federal partners to pull this off. We have President
14 Biden. We have Leader Schumer for 18 months. We
15 don't know whether they're going to be in those roles
16 after that, as painful as that is to consider. I'm
17 excited that the MTA is bringing Metro-North service
18 into Penn Station. If we don't get the renovation
19 done by then, what's already an extremely complicated
20 project will become even more complicated.

21 So for these reasons, because I want this done
22 now, I recommended a relatively short five-year
23 renewal of MSGs special permit to ensure that they
24 play ball with the railroads and make the
25 accommodations that we need, and that it happens now.

2 Because under any scenario, we're going to need MSG
3 to give access to some of the key spaces around the
4 arena to do this right.

5 And what does it mean to do it right? Well, for
6 me, it should include a grand new entrance on Eighth
7 Avenue. The population on the West is growing. And
8 already the number of people entering the station
9 from that direction would make it alone the fourth
10 largest rail hub in North America. To do that, to
11 build a grand entrance there, you're going to have to
12 demolish the theater. But that creates other
13 opportunities, like removing pillars on the train
14 platforms below which are obstructing passengers
15 right now and making space to add more stairways and
16 elevators, et cetera. Removing the theater allows
17 you to build a large underground garage to deal with
18 the issue that you, Mr. Chair, were rightly on
19 focusing-- rightly focusing on the fact that trucks
20 are now spilling out into our public space on the
21 streets. We want them underground. And you can do
22 that, if you get rid of the theater.

23 And then I'm very compelled by the idea of
24 building a box around the arena. So that we can have
25 retail and other active uses along a new street wall.

2 And something that's I think under-- underappreciated
3 with that is that you can take Amtrak operation
4 spaces out of the heart of the station where they're
5 preventing passenger flow and move it to the corners
6 of the box. So you can have a totally open, full-
7 width pedestrian concourse, which will be-- bring
8 major improvements for passengers.

9 Very quickly just to wrap up. To do any of this,
10 we're going to need MSG to give up space, be it the
11 taxiway or the theater. And yes, legally, they have
12 to be compensated for that. I don't like the idea of
13 putting any more money in MSGs pocket. To me the--
14 the way to deal with that is not to block great
15 transit upgrades, it's to cancel their tax exemption,
16 which the IBO has calculated has already cost us
17 almost a billion dollars. That is the way to deal
18 with equity on a project like this.

19 So in conclusion, let's go big and bold now.
20 Let's not waste this opportunity. Let's finally
21 build the Great Penn Station New York City deserves
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Borough President.
24 State Senator Brad Hoylman?

2 ASSEMBLYMEMBER SIMONE: Chair, we agreed I would
3 go ahead.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Oh, okay. No problem.
5 Assemblymember Simone, go ahead.

6 ASSEMBLYMEMBER SIMONE: Thank you Chair Riley.
7 Thank you. Nice to see everyone. Eric, Lynn, and
8 Gale. It's nice to be back in this chamber again.
9 I'm Assemblymember Tony Simone from the 75th AD.
10 Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Madison
11 Square Garden's application for a special permit to
12 continue operation at its current location.

13 The following is just a portion of the full
14 testimony submitted by myself jointly with State
15 Senators Liz Krueger, my State Senator also, Brad
16 Hoylman-Sigal. As members of the State Senate and
17 the Assembly whose districts overlap the Penn
18 district, we urge New York City to reject MSGs
19 renewal application. I want to repeat that: Reject
20 MSGs renewal application. On June 2, 2023, the
21 leadership of Amtrak, MTA, and New Jersey Transit
22 concluded the venue is incompatible with Penn
23 Station. Incompatible with Penn Station. The
24 compatibility report issued by the transit agency
25 states that MSG's existing configuration and property

2 boundaries impose severe constraints on the station
3 that impedes safe and efficient movement of
4 passengers and restricts efforts to implement
5 improvements.

6 However, if New York City ultimately decides to
7 issue a renewal of special permit, per Gale's
8 comments, I will one up you, for a maximum of three
9 years, if possible, to be contingent on MSG making
10 all the concessions deemed necessary by all the rail
11 agencies and City of New York to make the arena fully
12 compatible with the planned redesign of Penn Station,
13 because New York City deserves an amazing, fabulous
14 Penn Station.

15 Penn Station is the heart of New York City's
16 transportation hub. As we all know, the busiest rail
17 hub in the Western Hemisphere. The current location
18 is straining under the effects of severe congestion
19 on the rail platforms and transit corridors. Anyone
20 who knows, who's been on the side of Seventh Avenue,
21 it's a hellhole in there still, but improving by day.
22 The low ceiling heights and limited airflow present a
23 safety risk.

24 Just to wrap up, it's essential in our view as
25 public representatives that Penn Station receive a

2 redesign deserving as a world class transit hub. We
3 can only do that by having leverage with MSG. A new
4 special permit must be contingent on MSG making
5 itself fully compatible with Penn Station that puts
6 commuters and our constituents first, not MSG first.
7 Our constituents and commuters first. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Assemblymember.
9 Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal?

10 SENATOR HOYLMAN-SIGAL: Thank you very much, Mr.
11 Chair. Good to see my council colleagues here today.
12 I'm State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal. I represent
13 the west side of Manhattan from Christopher Street
14 running up to West 103rd. I represent part of Penn
15 Station along with Senator Liz Krueger, and of
16 course, my colleagues here at the Assembly and
17 Borough President level.

18 Look, just a couple of points. One is that it's
19 imperative that we keep MSG on a short leash. On a
20 short leash, because we need-- We. The Civic good,
21 needs MSG, to cooperate with the MTA and Amtrak in
22 rebuilding Penn Station.

23 Now, you heard today that MSG is cooperating.
24 But as far as I understand, there hasn't even been a
25 meeting yet set up. So, in my mind, why would we

2 grant them five years, ten years, when we need their
3 cooperation now. We need the shortest amount of time
4 allocated for this special permit renewal to ensure
5 that they are at the table and working with the MTA
6 in rebuilding Penn Station, making certain that we
7 have that taxiway, making certain that we have those
8 entrances at either end of-- of the station.

9 And when somebody tells you who they are, believe
10 them. The series of outrages that the chair and CEO
11 of Madison Square Garden Entertainment have foisted
12 on the public are numerous. We know there's
13 biometric surveillance. We know that the-- MSG hired
14 a private investigator to tail a hardworking member
15 of the State Liquor Authority.

16 So cooperation seems not to be a defining
17 characteristic of the leadership, sadly, of MSG. All
18 the more reason that the special permit needs to be
19 short. We're not trying to run MSG out of business.
20 They say they're not moving. We understand that.
21 But we need their cooperation. We have-- As the City
22 has the leverage, we need to ensure that it's used in
23 a way for the public. Good. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Senator. Ms.
25 Gisiko, you may begin.

1 MS. LAW-GISIKO: Good afternoon, Chair Riley, and
2 members of the Subcommittee. Thank you so much for
3 the opportunity to express our firm stance regarding
4 the issue of MSG and its impact to our community.
5

6 Community Board 5 has thoroughly examined the
7 application and finds that MSG does not meet the
8 findings of article 74-43. Consistent with our
9 position stated in 2013, we strongly believe that the
10 preferred alternative to address the many issues
11 surrounding Penn Station is for the arena to
12 relocate. We reached this conclusion after a
13 thorough examination of the application. CB 5 held a
14 total of four public hearings attended by a
15 cumulative total of 500 people.

16 The City Planning Commission's recommendation to
17 issue a 10-year permit does not fit the pace of
18 negotiation at and around Penn Station. It also
19 ignores this year's safety concerns caused by MSGT
20 users of Penn Station. The station currently does
21 not meet the NFPA 130 requirement because of MSG's
22 presence. And this is according to the compatibility
23 report that was issued by the railroads.
24
25

2 CB 5 believes that the preferred alternative to
3 solve the safety and compatibility issues is to
4 relocate.

5 At this juncture, CB 5 strongly recommends
6 restricting the length of the special permit to a
7 three-year period. While we appreciate the effort of
8 the commission to create new accountability
9 mechanisms, we are concerned that they may not
10 deliver on their intended goals. Instead, a three-
11 year term will create the necessary impetus to create
12 cooperation opportunities with railroads and
13 encourage MSG to seriously consider relocation. We
14 acknowledge that viable sites exist, especially
15 within Community Board 5, and we are absolutely
16 convinced of that, and we want to do everything to
17 actually create these kinds of conversations. So
18 it's imperative that stakeholders engage in a genuine
19 and collaborative effort to find suitable and
20 permanent solution.

21 In the interim, CD 5 recommends several
22 improvements. We emphasize the need for public realm
23 improvements that go beyond what has been proposed.

24 And in conclusion, I will really urge the city
25 Council to not allow for a 10-year permit. We

2 believe that three years is ample and necessary to
3 continue the negotiations. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Just one question
5 before I turn over to Councilmember Bottcher. First,
6 and foremost, thank you to my colleagues for
7 participating in this hearing. It is very important
8 that your community sees you advocating for them as
9 well. To-- For the entire panel, it seems like you
10 guys are in opposition of renewing this permit for 10
11 years, and want to shorten it to three years, due to
12 the lack of trust that you have that MSG will
13 actually comply with these commitments. Is it safe
14 to say I'm correct with that statement?

15 SENATOR HOYLMAN-SIGAL: Well, I would say we just
16 need to, you know, trust but verify, as was one said.
17 And if you give them an inch, as we've seen, they
18 will take a mile. To ensure that they are at the
19 table with Madison Square Garden and-- and Amtrak,
20 and MTA, we need to have the leverage that that the
21 Borough President mentioned. The shortest amount of
22 approval for this special permit, I think would help
23 ensure that.

24 BOROUGH PRESIDENT LEVINE: I'll just add, Mr.
25 Chair, as you well know, City Planning did something

2 that I think is extremely important in their
3 recommendation on the zoning text amendment, which is
4 to insert the provision requiring MSG to come back
5 when 30% of the designs for a new station are done,
6 and confirm that their operation is consistent with
7 reconstruction of the train hall.

8 That's really important. That-- That is the kind
9 of leverage that we need. And it's why this moment,
10 when we have the special permit process is one we
11 cannot let go to waste.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Just a quick
13 statement. I just want to-- I know MSG is still
14 here. I think it's imperative that, you know, you--
15 you contact each of these offices and have them be a
16 part of the process moving forward, and update them
17 moving forward as well. Because it doesn't seem like
18 there has been a lot of transparency with these
19 elected officials here. Councilmember Bottcher?

20 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: I just want to thank my
21 colleagues for being here, and for your partnership
22 on this and so many issues.

23 We'd love to get your-- your brief thoughts on
24 the proposals we have seen from the-- the MTA and

2 from ASTM, who's going to be testifying today, what
3 your thoughts are on-- on those?

4 ASSEMBLYMEMBER SIMONE: Sure if I-- if I may.

5 Look, we have an amazing opportunity to make Penn
6 Station the most beautiful transportation hub in the
7 nation. And there's some great plans. I don't think
8 any of us have publicly endorsed one plan. But the
9 ASTM plan is intriguing. The MTA plan is intriguing.
10 It has to be a plan that the community benefits from,
11 that community-- that puts commuters first. Lots of
12 light. We've all had a lot of these meetings we've
13 heard from the advocates. No eminent domain
14 affecting-- taking-- going after the residents. The
15 residents should stay put. Through running, we have
16 to think big and bold. We're like the greatest city
17 in the world. We should not take what they tell us
18 is the cheaper way, or the easier way, or one plan is
19 too expensive. How many times have you heard that
20 and then the plan that comes out is-- has a million
21 cost overruns and didn't deliver what they said? We
22 need light. We need streetscape. We need to reduce--
23 - to get the trucks off the street. We're all in
24 agreement. I don't want to hear money as an excuse,
25 when we know in the end, having as-- as the Borough

2 President said, and Brad, an Eighth Avenue entrance
3 and a Seventh Avenue entrance that serves our
4 constituents (build it and they will come), and
5 light, and where folks can sit, not just the
6 privileged few, but everyone can want to go to that
7 station, and not have to change. Bureaucratic ego
8 should not get in the way of making our-- have the
9 most efficient transportation hub in the country.

10 SENATOR HOYLMAN-SIGAL: I'll just add that, first
11 Chair Riley, I will say that the team from MSG does
12 reach out a lot with elected officials and they are
13 doing a very good job in communicating with us. So I
14 just want to make sure that that's clear. I have a
15 lot of respect for them. I do think that there is
16 something-- I don't know how to describe it. Maybe a
17 parasitic relationship between MSG and the city of
18 New York. They seem just to take and take and take.
19 We're not just talking about the property tax
20 exemption, which is totaling close to a billion
21 dollars at this point. But they are not cooperating
22 at this juncture, with the MTA, whether it be the
23 ASTM plan or the MTA plan. We're going to need MSG
24 at the table. We have the leverage to do that. So
25 no matter which plan you support, Councilmember

2 Bottcher, I think this is a moment defining our
3 ability to ensure that we have the cooperation. And
4 make no mistake about it. MSG benefits like no other
5 business in the city. Being on top of the busiest
6 train hub in the Western Hemisphere, where most of
7 its riders-- most of its fans have a one seat ride to
8 the arena. That's extraordinary. They need to give
9 back. We can talk about the property tax. But let's
10 talk about the special permit and ensuring that they
11 cooperate as these plans evolve, no matter which one,
12 at the end of the day, we support.

13 BOROUGH PRESIDENT LEVINE: Just-- Just very
14 briefly to add: Either of the plans I've seen would
15 be a massive improvement on the terrible status quo
16 at Penn Station. And I think ultimately, we need an
17 RFP process, an open RFP process that takes in
18 proposals for a great master plan there.

19 What I will say: I'll reiterate that I think we
20 got one shot to go big and bold now. And I don't
21 know if it's going to be a decade or two or more
22 until we have a chance like this again. And so to
23 me, I-- I want to push. I want to push to make this
24 as grand as it can be. And for me that should
25 include both great new entrances mid block, and also

2 a great entrance on Eighth Avenue, and some of the
3 other features that I mentioned.

4 MS. LAW-GISIKO: Yeah, and if I can add very
5 quickly, you know, I think it's really important to
6 understand that the proposal by MTA and ASTM only
7 addresses the concourse level. But the real problem,
8 the real safety issue is actually at the platform
9 level. And the impediment of MSG, onto Madison-- of
10 MSG onto Penn Station, is really where the critical
11 safety issue is. It is really at the platform level.
12 So I think that you know, both plans have merit, and
13 you know, Committee Board 5 is, you know, very eager
14 to work both with the MTA and ASTM to, you know,
15 better understand and come to a plan because we need
16 to rebuild Penn Station. But it is really critical
17 to understand the impact of Madison Square Garden on
18 the platforms, which is why we recommend that Madison
19 Square Garden relocate. Because short of relocation,
20 the-- the columns that support MSG, are going to
21 continue to be an impediment to improving Penn
22 Station, especially as we believe that through
23 running the ability for trains to come directly from
24 New Jersey into Long Island, or out to Westchester is
25 a critical improvement.

2 And you know, when you think about Penn Station,
3 you think about a building, but actually think about
4 Penn Station as a process of moving people through
5 the region. And continuing to-- to use Penn Station
6 as a terminal is a bad idea, we need to actually be
7 able to increase connectivity, to increase capacity,
8 to move more people faster through the region. And
9 this is why it is really critical to understand why
10 MSG is an impediment to the functionality of Penn
11 Station, and why the plan -- whether it is ASTM or
12 the MTA plan -- needs to go beyond that and needs to
13 address the platform issue.

14 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: We are going to hear
15 today from the railroads and others who have said
16 that MSG in and of itself is not an impediment to
17 through-running. You've heard that also?

18 MS. LAW-GISIKO: So, you know, I think that
19 through-running needs to be fully evaluated. I don't
20 know that it has ever been done really in-- in a
21 substantial, robust, and independent fashion. This
22 is something that we've been calling. It is very,
23 very critical to understand, you know, this component
24 of, you know, the transit operations. It involves
25 the region. You know, it's not a New-York-centric

2 issue. And, you know, I mean, we play a very
3 critical role, obviously. But you know, it will have
4 benefits-- benefits, you know, plus for the entire
5 region.

6 So, this is really critical. And, you know, from
7 what we are hearing from independent experts, the
8 columns from MSG, and from Two Penn (you know, there
9 are two major buildings on the superblock) are
10 actually the cause of, you know, a number of
11 constraints at the platform and operational level.

12 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Will those independent
13 experts be testifying to that today?

14 MS. LAW-GISIKO: I believe so, yes.

15 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Who are they?

16 MS. LAW-GISIKO: They would be engineers from
17 Rethink New York.

18 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: And they'll be
19 testifying to that today? Okay. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Councilmember
21 Bottcher. There being no more questions for this
22 panel, this panel is now excused. The next panel we
23 will call up will be Ken Fisher, Adam Graves, and
24 Steve Schirripa.

2 Okay. Yeah. I'm sorry, I didn't call
3 Alexandra's name.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Can you turn on the
5 microphone?

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Can you turn on the mic real
7 quick? Can you turn on the mic real quick?

8 Ken Fisher had to leave, so I was going to read a
9 statement on his behalf. Is that okay?

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: This is Ken Fisher's
11 statement.

12 Yes. He was reading on behalf of Alexandra.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Does she have to-- can
14 she fill out a speaker's card, please?

15 Yeah. Happy to fill out a form.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Okay, while we do
17 that, Steve, you may begin.

18 MR. SCHIRRIPA: Hi, my name is Steve Schirripa,
19 but I'm here and I'm proud to be here to talk about
20 one of my favorite places on earth, Madison Square
21 Garden, the world's most famous arena.

22 I am here to urge you to please renew MSGs
23 operating permit in perpetuity, forever. Not three
24 years. Not five years. Not ten years. Okay? I
25 think a fully operating garden doesn't just benefit

2 the fans. It does so much to support businesses in
3 the area. It delivers more than \$2 billion for the
4 city and state annually. That's real money, money
5 that would vanish without a fully operating MSG.

6 Madison Square Garden is in the heart of the
7 city. It belongs in the heart of the city, because
8 it is the heart of the city. People come to Madison
9 Square Garden from all over the world. It is as much
10 a landmark as any other building or any other
11 landmark in the city. Every kid's dream, every
12 musician, every athlete, is to go to Madison Square
13 Garden, to play at Madison Square Garden. No one
14 says My dream is to play the Nassau Coliseum.
15 Madison Square Garden. Even myself 100 pounds ago, I
16 played at Brooklyn College. December 9, 1978, I
17 played at Madison Square Garden. That day is etched
18 in my mind 45 years later.

19 I am lucky to know firsthand about the wonderful
20 work The Garden does. It's not just a building.
21 It's not just a business. The Garden has done-- It's
22 raised money for undeserved children all around the
23 region through the Garden of Dreams Foundation, which
24 I serve on the advisory board. And if you haven't

2 seen the talent show at Radio City, I'm telling you,
3 you're missing something.

4 Since 2013, I've also been the proud host of
5 Garden of Laughs, and all-star comedy benefit. Three
6 times we've raised more than \$7 million for kids in
7 need. It shows the power of Madison Square Garden,
8 and the impact it can have not just on fans, but on
9 kids who need a helping hand.

10 So let's not limit The Garden's ability to
11 operate at full potential. The Garden is one of our
12 city's most important businesses. It's an iconic
13 venue for the city. All over the world, it does so
14 much for our communities, it should stay right where
15 it is for forever.

16 I'm from Brooklyn, I grew up here. Not everyone
17 talking has. I know what The Garden means to this
18 city. I urge you to approve The Garden's operating
19 permit in perpetuity. I thank you very, very, very
20 much. And if you do, I'll owe you a favor.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Steve. Adam, you
22 may begin.

23 MR. GRAVES: Thank you very much for having me
24 here. My name is Adam Graves. And I was fortunate
25 enough to have the privilege of skating on garden ice

2 for a decade. And I will tell you growing up in
3 Canada, and you talk about New York, and whether it's
4 friends or family, they talk about Madison Square
5 Garden. And the dream of-- as Steve said-- every
6 athlete, performer, you think of the incredible
7 events and things that have taken place at that
8 building in-- not just in sport, whether it's the
9 Knicks, or the Rangers, or concerts, but also as you
10 know, conventions, events to support, things that the
11 entire country are going through. And-- And when you
12 think about the privilege of being on that-- that
13 ice, and what it means to the fans and the families.
14 And I've talked to generations of Ranger fans from--
15 from kids to their-- their parents to their
16 grandparents, where they have memories of-- through
17 the years from-- from their experiences. And when
18 you talk about the positioning of it and taking a
19 subway, or walking to The Garden, and what that means
20 to these families and these people and again, Garden
21 of Dreams is a perfect example that. It was started
22 in 2006. We have 30 partner charitable
23 organizations, 400,000 kids. And it's not just a
24 one-off. This is multiple interactions where the
25 kids come down and experience something that they'll

2 never forget. The Garden creates these capsules that
3 stay with people their entire lives. It is a special
4 place, a place that, even as a Canadian, I consider
5 home, and my home, and The Garden Home is right where
6 it sits right now. And that's where I'd like to see
7 it. [BELL RINGS]

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Adam. Right on
9 time. All right. Marua Abington, you may go. Thank
10 you.

11 MS. AVANTON[PH]: Thank you. My name is Maura
12 Abington. I'm reading statement on behalf of
13 Alexandros Washburn, who is out of the country.

14 "Chair Riley, members of the Council. My name is
15 Alexandros Washburn, and I am testifying on behalf of
16 the Grand Penn Community Alliance, a group which
17 advocates for great public architecture and great
18 civic spaces. Its supporters have no financial stake
19 in this. If the Council grants a full 10-year
20 extension of the special permit, the opportunity for
21 either will be lost.

22 Ten years ago, the council modified the special
23 permit approved by the City Planning Commission from
24 15 to 10 years. Promises were made to the Council
25 and the public that there would be improvements to

2 the streetscape. They were never kept because 10
3 years was enough time for most forget they ever were
4 made. This time we are told it will be different,
5 but we... you won't know until it does, if it does,
6 and we... you know won't be able to do anything about
7 it either way.

8 In the meantime The Garden will get the benefit
9 of being able to operate just as it always has. This
10 is the body the charter intends to keep agencies and
11 applicants accountable.

12 This application is happening against the
13 backdrop of challenge and change. After the Cuomo
14 plan for Penn Station collapsed, new ideas emerged.
15 One was from the rail agencies that use Penn, which
16 told us that MSG on top creates safety hazards that
17 must be addressed, not just promised. Another was
18 for a new Eighth Avenue train hall and disguising The
19 Garden, perhaps better than what's there now, but
20 doing little for the immediate area except creating a
21 new train mall. Then there are the ideas, like ours,
22 which don't accept the premise that The Garden can
23 never move as it has three times before. Imagine a
24 modern Madison Square Garden just nearby, an arena to
25 be proud of, the arena New York deserves, an

2 opportunity for transformational development of a
3 mixed-use equitable neighborhood and opportunity for
4 open space the size of Bryant Park.

5 This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to
6 build a great new train station and public space for
7 New Yorkers and those who visit. Why throw it away?
8 We implore the City Council to limit the special
9 permit to a three to four year term at the most. A
10 ten-year permit will silence the exciting
11 conversations that are occurring right now. And the
12 transformative visions and ideas now being conceived
13 will be stillborn.

14 Let MSG come back to prove to this council that
15 it will live up to its obligations. At the same time
16 create some breathing room allowing for exciting new
17 plants to be conceived fine tuned and debated. The
18 passionate discussions occurring now around Penn
19 Station and Madison Square Garden could yield one of
20 the great public works of our time. Why cut them
21 off?

22 One last note to those who say it's too
23 complicated, or too expensive, or takes too much will
24 to overcome the powerful economic interest, you need
25 go no further than The High Line to see a civic

2 vision that with public support unleashed
3 transformation. Why? Because this Council leant
4 its' weight to the idea. Your leadership made a
5 difference than and it can make a difference now.
6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Do any of my
8 colleagues have questions for this panel? No
9 questions. This panel is excused. Thank you for
10 your testimony.

11 I will now like to call up. James Torres-
12 Springer-- excuse me-- Jamie Torres-Springer, Peter
13 Matusewitch (sorry if I mispronounce your name), Sara
14 Appleton, Jeannie Kwon, Ryan Morrison, and Jack
15 Robins. I probably messed up a lot of your names and
16 I'm so sorry. Please excuse me.

17 Okay, so we're going to begin with Jack Robins.
18 Jack, you may begin.

19 MR. ROBINS: Thank you. Thank you. Good
20 afternoon Chair. I think our-- Amtrak are going to
21 start.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Well actually-- do you guys
23 want to-- all right.

24 MR. ROBINS: We [inaudible][crosstalk].

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: All right. So what we'll do
3 is-- you'll start how you want to. Just restate your
4 name and organization for the record. Alright?

5 COUNSEL: And just-- I know it's like, tight, the
6 setup, but if you guys can all-- whoever's speaking,
7 just speak into the mic so that we can pick you up.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

9 MS. KWON: Understood. Thank you, Chair. Good
10 afternoon, Chair and Councilmembers. My name is
11 Jeannie Kwan, and I'm the Vice President for Major
12 Stations Capital Program Delivery at Amtrak. And
13 thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

14 So as the owner of Penn Station and the Northeast
15 Corridor rail infrastructure that runs through it,
16 Amtrak recognizes that Penn Station isn't merely a
17 station. It is the gateway to New York City, serving
18 an estimated 600,000 passengers daily before the
19 pandemic, making it busier than all three New York
20 airports combined. The station is a testament to the
21 city's interconnectedness and serves as a key transit
22 point for individuals traveling locally, regionally,
23 and nationally, playing a critical part in our
24 economy, infrastructure, and communities.

1 Amtrak's rebound from the pandemic has been
2 robust, and we are now carrying more riders through
3 Penn Station than before the pandemic crisis. So the
4 modernization and expansion of Penn Station: It is a
5 priority for Amtrak. And coupled with investments
6 like the gateway program, this initiative will ensure
7 that our rail network can support our region's
8 population growth and economic prosperity in decades
9 to come, which is why we are collaborating with our
10 railroad partners on a vision to modernize and expand
11 Penn Station that will integrate Moynihan Train Hall
12 and a future Penn expansion into a unified world
13 class complex that provides safe and reliable
14 transportation service.

16 Achieving this vision will necessitate close
17 collaboration with our neighbor, Madison Square
18 Garden, given the arena's location and intricate and
19 complex structure. While it is the city's purview to
20 make decisions concerning The Garden special permit,
21 we are appreciative of the mechanism for
22 collaboration proposed by the City Planning
23 Commission, especially now that we are on a path
24 forward to reach 30% design in the next 12 months.

2 Our relationship with Madison Square Garden has
3 been nurtured over many years of close collaboration.
4 We value our relationship with them and we look
5 forward to the continued partnership. So I'll now
6 turn it over to my colleague, Sarah Appleton, to
7 elaborate on our priorities and desired collaboration
8 with MSG.

9 MS. APPLETON: Thank you, Jeannie. Thank you to
10 the Chair and members of the Subcommittee for the
11 opportunity to speak today. I'm Sara Appleton with
12 Amtrak, and Assistant Director in our Major Stations
13 Capital Delivery Program.

14 Over the past three years, Amtrak and our
15 railroad partners have developed a conceptual master
16 plan to serve as the starting point for the station's
17 reconstruction. Our master plan work identified
18 priorities for that reconstruction, including
19 expanding public circulation space to relieve
20 overcrowding and improve passenger comfort and
21 security; simplifying the station's layout to relieve
22 overcrowding as well, and place it on a single public
23 level with more intuitive wayfinding for our
24 passengers and the public at large; improving station
25 and platform accessibility and egress; modernizing

2 operational spaces and systems to enhance safety and
3 efficiency; and enhancing the stations presence and
4 entrances at street level. We're committed to
5 creating a unified station complex and creating
6 spacious prominent new train halls at street level
7 wherever possible, looking at the station
8 holistically from Seventh Avenue to Eighth Avenue and
9 across Eighth Avenue to Moynihan Train Hall.

10 Our railroads are now collectively beginning what
11 we refer to as our preliminary engineering process,
12 where we will update and refine our master plan
13 concept based on more extensive engineering, public
14 input, and environmental review work. During this
15 process, we'll be open to all ideas that advance our
16 priorities for the station, as governor Hochul
17 recently emphasized.

18 And we'll will be looking to partner with Madison
19 Square Garden, particularly to improve the stations
20 prominence at street level along Eighth Avenue and in
21 the midblock zone, to upgrade loading facilities and
22 practices, relocate structural elements and equipment
23 where necessary, and explore financial partnership
24 where investment can provide mutual benefit to our
25 organizations and our customers.

2 We greatly appreciate Governor Hochul's
3 commitment to advancing this important project, and
4 we're looking forward to collaborating with the MTA,
5 New Jersey Transit, the city, our community
6 stakeholders, and The Garden to create a 21st century
7 station that's worthy of New York City and our
8 broader region. And we'll be happy to answer any
9 additional questions during Q&A session.

10 MR. MATUSEWITCH: Good afternoon, I'm Peter
11 Matusewitch, MTA Senior Vice President and Project
12 Executive for Penn Station Reconstruction. I'm just
13 going to add some more detail regarding the plan for
14 Penn reconstruction that the railroads have spent the
15 last few years developing. As Sara said, we plan to
16 simplify and open up the station's layout to
17 significantly improve safety, circulation and
18 navigation, and reduce crowding.

19 The plan would transform the station by shifting
20 all public circulation, boarding, and public-facing
21 services to the lower level and doubling ceiling
22 heights in all of the public concourses.

23 One centerpiece of this approach is a new train
24 Hall on the east side of the station. A new expanded
25 East concourse below the former MSG taxiway would be

1 complemented at street level by a new atrium and
2 skylight with the new station entrances at 33rd and
3 31st streets that would significantly improve safety
4 in the event of an evacuation. On Eighth Avenue, the
5 master plan envisions expanding the station entrances
6 into the underutilized corner plazas, increasing
7 accessibility and visibility and providing
8 architectural features along Eighth Avenue to enliven
9 what is now a dead zone.

11 We're advancing this plan on an aggressive
12 schedule to complete preliminary design in one year,
13 launch the environmental review process concurrently,
14 and initiate early construction work by the end of
15 next year 2024. This allows us to do the most
16 impactful track-level work before Metro-North Penn
17 Station access brings Metro-North New Haven line
18 trains into the station in 2027.

19 Our plans have and will continue to consider the
20 interaction of our work on our neighbor, Madison
21 Square Garden. We're committed to making sure that
22 any impact on MSGs operations is minimized during
23 construction, just as we did successfully during the
24 recent reconstruction of the Long Island Railroad
25 33rd Street Concourse in the station. Where

1 possible, the Master Plan proposes changes within the
2 station's existing envelope. But given that MSG sits
3 on top of Penn Station, many critical elements
4 require changes to MSG's envelope at street level.

5 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Thanks. Thank you, Chair
6 and Councilmembers. Jamie Torres-Springer, President
7 MTA Construction and Development. As my colleagues
8 have explained, we have a real plan to transform Penn
9 Station, and an urgent deadline to do it now, and we
10 need Madison Square Gardens cooperation to make it
11 happen. As you consider whether, or under what
12 terms, to grant MSG their special permit, I want to
13 lay out what MSG needs to do to become compatible
14 with Penn Station in the plans for its
15 reconstruction, which is one of the permits key
16 findings. We are not asking MSG to move (that's up
17 to the city). We want to work with it to address the
18 constraints that its location creates. Even as our
19 design will continue to progress over the next year,
20 our plans today are sufficiently developed that we
21 know what we need from MSG now to form the basis of
22 an agreement.

23 Let me say exactly what those things are.
24
25

2 First, we're looking for a swap of property
3 interests with MSG. It includes the former midblock
4 taxiway, which you've heard has been closed since
5 9/11, except for the portion that MSG uses for
6 loading, and the corner plazas on 33rd and 31st
7 streets on Eighth Avenue. MSG currently uses
8 portions of these spaces for loading operations,
9 which adversely impacts Penn Station and the
10 surrounding public realm.

11 Second, we can collaborate with MSG now. Now.
12 To develop a relocation plan for certain equipment
13 that we know today must be moved to facilitate pen
14 reconstruction, like HVAC system and a Con Ed vault
15 that is in the railroad space.

16 Third, we believe MSG should contribute toward
17 the cost of aspects of the project that benefit it,
18 like improvements to its loading and entrances. To
19 be clear, any financial contribution we would be
20 seeking from MSG will be proportionate only to the
21 benefits it would receive from new shared
22 infrastructure, not the larger public benefit.

23 And finally, we need MSG to allow the railroads
24 access to undertake specific elements of construction
25 on its property like necessary structural work. For

2 MSG to become compatible, we need to enter into an
3 agreement as outlined. We appreciate that City
4 Planning Commission proposed a mechanism for this
5 collaboration once we reach 30% design. But again,
6 our plan is advanced enough to come to an agreement
7 with MSG now. Only an agreement will enable us to
8 meet our timeline and complete critical work before
9 Metro-North Penn access customers arrive to the
10 station from the Bronx in 2027. We look forward to
11 MSG coming to the table with the railroads and ask
12 the council not extend the permit unless we come back
13 with an agreement that paves the way for a modern
14 Penn Station worthy of New York City.

15 Thank you very much.

16 That's it for our testimony. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. I'm going to ask
18 a few questions before I turn it over to
19 Councilmember Bottcher.

20 Can you help me better understand the timeline
21 for the proposed reconstruction of Penn Station in
22 relation to the anticipated in Metro-North access in
23 2027?

24 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Sure, I'll cover that
25 chair. Thank you for the question. Because it is--

1 it is a really important milestone for us. Peter
2 mentioned we've initiated the design phase which is
3 led by the firm that we've competitively procured and
4 represented by Jack Robins here. We expect to
5 compete-- complete preliminary design in the third
6 quarter of 2024. At the same time, we expect to
7 initiate environmental and historic review processes
8 later this year to run concurrent with the design
9 phase, and we expect to complete it in mid-2025. We
10 plan to initiate early construction activities. An
11 example is relocating utility infrastructure (but
12 we're early on in the design process to know exactly
13 how we package things) by the end of next year and
14 begin construction in earnest in early 2026.

16 This aggressive schedule will help us take
17 advantage of a window of operational flexibility due
18 to, as you noted, Chair, decreased train traffic now
19 that Eastside access has diverted some Long Island
20 railroad trains to Grand Central and before the
21 Metro-North Penn Station Access Project initiates
22 Metro-North New Haven line station into Penn Station
23 and 2027. So that's-- We're working very hard and
24 are all lined as railroads to try to get design,
25 advance-- environmental review advanced so that we

2 can start work and get particularly the disruptive
3 work that requires outages. That's really the
4 currency of the capital agency that I run is we--
5 just-- we, you know, every-- every outage is
6 precious, and so we can get more track outages to get
7 work done between now and 2027. That's why it's
8 critical that we get going now and we get this plan
9 together and design.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Can you speak on
11 the importance of combining the foundation and
12 platform work for the reconstruction of Penn Station
13 with the work needed to complete the Metro-North?

14 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Sure. Actually, may--
15 Peter, would you like to comment on that?

16 MR. MATUSEWITCH: Sure. The idea is to get that
17 platform and foundation work done before 2027, when
18 Metro-North will arrive at Penn Station. So it's the
19 most disruptive work that we need to do, because we
20 need to track outages we need to change service in
21 the station while we do that work,

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: what will be the consequences
23 of not doing the work at the same time?

24 MR. MATUSEWITCH: We can still get it done at the
25 cost of it taking longer, of more service changes,

2 and somewhat greater cost. It can still be done, but
3 we're looking to do this as efficiently as possible.
4 So we want to get that work done before Metro-North
5 arrives.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: What will the MTA know--
7 excuse me. When will the MTA know what foundation
8 and platform work is needed to complete the
9 reconstruction of Penn Station?

10 MR. MATUSEWITCH: Over the course of the next 12
11 months, as we complete preliminary design.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: 12 months. Okay. What if
13 anything about the current stadium use inhibits your
14 ability to accomplish this timeline?

15 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: To accomplish the time--

16 MR. MATUSEWITCH: Do you want me to take this?

17 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Sure. Please.

18 MR. MATUSEWITCH: Okay. The-- The stadium uses
19 are-- do not have that great an impact on our
20 timeline. They have an impact on what we want to do.
21 So we can get it all done in a reasonable timeframe
22 if we reach agreements with Madison Square Garden.
23 This includes the property interest and the taxiway
24 on Eighth Avenue, relocating their Con Ed vault, and
25 negotiating easements through their property for

2 things like air conditioning ducts and electrical
3 conduits. So the timeline is dependent on those
4 agreements, not on the the-- their operations.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: The agreements with MSG.

6 MR. MATUSEWITCH: That's correct.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: How are MSG is present
8 loading activities impacting station users trying to
9 access Penn Station, and separately Moynihan Hall?

10 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Right. So thank you for
11 that question. That will just sort of allow me to
12 back up a little bit and talk about what the problem
13 that we're trying to solve.

14 Today there's a lack of adequate circulation and
15 egress space from Penn Station in the event of a fire
16 or another emergency, in addition to the impacts that
17 it has on the comfort of passengers. Solving this
18 problem requires much larger exits and train halls.
19 The station is properly-sized and more visible train
20 halls and entrances in the mid-block and on Eighth
21 Avenue befitting of the place of civic importance
22 that it is, and able to accommodate the station's
23 growing ridership.

24 The railroad's plan repurpose these underused and
25 lackluster spaces for such train halls and entrances.

2 So, to your point chair: What-- What is the
3 issue with MSGs compatibility? Their loading
4 operations in and around the taxiway, and at Eighth
5 Avenue and 31st Streets are incompatible with the
6 railroads plan for Penn Station reconstruction. In
7 any plan for improvement at Penn Station, the taxiway
8 is needed for a midblock train hall, as Peter
9 described. MSG currently uses portions of the
10 taxiway for its loading operations, because their
11 loading entrances don't have sufficient clearance to
12 accommodate the large trucks that bring equipment to
13 the arena. As a result loading takes place on the
14 taxiway and other unenclosed areas on MSG's property
15 with a small army of forklifts bringing the materials
16 into the arena. This arrangement is not authorized
17 by MSG's 1963 or 2013 special permits, it detracts
18 from the public realm, and is not compatible with the
19 plans for the urgently needed reconstruction of Penn
20 Station. Similarly, MSG uses the corner of Eighth
21 Avenue and 31st Street, which is intended as a
22 pedestrian amenity for loading operations for the
23 theater at MSG. Trucks back up onto the street and
24 through the plaza to load through a door to the
25 theater adjacent to the plaza. Needless to say this

2 interferes with pedestrian access to the station
3 entrance at Eighth Avenue and 31st street and blocks
4 station visibility.

5 So our plan is to reposition those spaces as
6 significant train halls that provide for both
7 passenger comfort, circulation, egress, and
8 particularly addressing safety issues in the event of
9 an emergency. And that is the primary
10 incompatibility that we see with MSG. Our master
11 plan envisions these loading operations that we
12 described would be moved inside new or reconstructed
13 loading facilities.

14 It, by the way, it wouldn't require a change in
15 the elevation of the bridge that was described by
16 MSG's engineers -- that's not true -- to create the
17 midblock train hall, and that would actually increase
18 the number of trucks that can be accommodated off the
19 street, and, of course, as I mentioned, would only be
20 a cost to MSG in relation to the benefit that it
21 receives.

22 So that's what that's the major incompatibility
23 that is related to loading and the use of these
24 underutilized public areas. There are other
25 incompatibilities that Peter described: Equipment

2 that we need to move, you know, work that we need to
3 do in the station and elsewhere. Those are the
4 fundamentals that would enable us to make the arena
5 compatible with the station.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: So it doesn't-- So with what
7 you just stated, Jamie, is the current loading plan
8 that MSG is proposing compatible with the master plan
9 for the reconstruction of Penn Station?

10 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Um, you know, as I think,
11 as the, as the Councilmembers seem to pointed out in
12 earlier testimony, I'm not aware that there's a real
13 loading plan that's been proposed. I'm aware,
14 there's a discussion of a Traffic Management Plan.
15 And, you know, so I-- it sounds like there's some
16 commitments being made to not illegally load off of
17 33rd Street, which is something that MSG does now,
18 and they acknowledge doing. But the, you know, this--
19 - the sort of primary loading takes place at the
20 edges of the taxiway and at the Eighth Avenue and
21 31st Street public plaza corner. I'm not aware of
22 any plan that's been proposed by the applicant to
23 mitigate those circumstances. And again, the-- our
24 plan is to-- in fact, all plans we've seen would
25 mitigate those circumstances by providing a new

2 reconstructed indoor loading area at the edge of the
3 future midblock taxiway-- the future mid block train
4 hall, excuse me.

5 MS. APPLETON: If I might just supplement that
6 for a minute.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Sure.

8 MS. APPLETON: I mean, you know, I think we defer
9 to the city, ultimately, in its assessment, you know,
10 whether the findings have been met. And I certainly
11 echo Jamie's comment that we haven't seen the
12 specifics of a new loading plan, but understand that
13 there would be a TMP pursued.

14 We do want to acknowledge that, you know, we're
15 aware that their living situation is challenging. We
16 appreciate that. But the unfortunate reality of the
17 situation is that, you know, the truck movements are
18 interfering with passenger access. It's a frequent
19 complaint we hear from members of the community, and
20 our customers. It impedes wayfinding, navigation,
21 access, creates dangerous movements around trucks,
22 both along Eighth Avenue and in the taxiway area.

23 And particularly, you know, now Eighth Avenue is
24 a particular challenges, I believe, you know, one of
25 the members of this subcommittee already highlighted

2 with the addition of Moynihan Train Hall. Crossing
3 Eighth Avenue is a really important connection for
4 our customers and important to us as a priority to
5 improve that situation to make sure that the station
6 functions as a single unified complex in the future.

7 So I just, you know, want to highlight those some
8 of those unfortunate circumstances that again, we're
9 looking to rectify, but are existing conditions
10 today.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Does the station along Eighth
12 Avenue impair access to the new station on the west
13 side?

14 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: To-- To Moynihan Train
15 Hall?

16 MS. APPLETON: Would you mind clarifying? Are
17 you referring to Moynihan Train Hall?

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Correct.

19 MS. APPLETON: I think what you're asking is a
20 little bit of what I just alluded to where, yes,
21 truck movements are a challenge. Right around Eighth
22 Avenue, those crosswalks on 31st Street and 33rd
23 Street are a major way station users and members of
24 the public are transiting between the east and west
25 sides of the station, and again, kind of impede us

2 being able to enhance the, you know, connectivity of
3 the complex and unification of it across, you know,
4 our beautiful new train hall at Moynihan.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. On any given day,
6 could you just discuss how many riders come through
7 Penn Station? And what peak hours do you see
8 increased ridership?

9 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Sure, so we-- The pre-COVID
10 total number was 600,000 passengers per day. You
11 know, we likely have seen some diminishment of that
12 at this point because of ridership, although it's
13 bouncing back. We-- We remain confident in
14 projections that have by 2038, if not significantly
15 earlier, 683,000 daily passengers.

16 The couple of things about those passenger flows:
17 As was described earlier, roughly 70% of those
18 passengers come in through the east side of the
19 station, either through the Herald Square subway
20 lines, or the Seventh Avenue-- the 1, 2, and 3,
21 versus 30% on Eighth Avenue. And the vast majority
22 of Long Island Railroad in New Jersey transit riders
23 with additional riders from Amtrak. So that's why
24 our goal sitting here is to make-- you know, and it's
25 been the governor's goal and direction to us to make

2 these improvements as quickly as we can for those--
3 that significant number of riders from the busiest--
4 busiest rail station in North America.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: And the peak hours, do you
6 see increased ridership?

7 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Certainly in the peaks.
8 Yeah. Go ahead, Peter.

9 MR. MATUSEWITCH: Yeah. In the future, we're
10 anticipating that the peak hour ridership will grow
11 by 85% overall. Now, understand that the increase in
12 ridership is what's driving the railroads to consider
13 expanding the station. The-- The peak hours is what
14 you design for, right? So. So for instance,
15 globally, right now, about 60,000 riders in the peak
16 hour. In the future, that's going to roughly double
17 to about 120,000 in the peak hour in the morning.

18 MS. KWON: May I just add to that, Chair, from
19 the Amtrak view?

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, please.

21 MS. KWON: So Amtrak has seen an increase in our
22 ridership, which is the intercity passenger ridership
23 at Penn Station. I totally agree with Jamie here
24 that, you know, we are planning for the future, and
25 we will see greater numbers of ridership there.

2 Also, just in terms of that breakdown of utilization
3 of the station in terms of the location: Eighth
4 Avenue is extremely important to us. We care a lot
5 about Eighth Avenue. We've heard from a number of
6 the community members on Eighth Avenue that that is
7 important. So we do remain focused on looking at
8 Eighth Avenue, particularly in terms of the
9 connectivity and look at treating the complex as a
10 complete whole, and the connectivity with Moynihan
11 train station. So I just wanted to add that as well,
12 despite the fact that the numbers are smaller
13 proportionally, but I think it was, Borough President
14 Levine earlier had said that if you take the numbers
15 just at Eighth Avenue, you basically get the fourth
16 largest train station in the country, so...

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: And when are the peak hours
18 just for the record? What time would that be?

19 MR. MATUSEWITCH: The peak is actually two hours
20 long. The-- What was called the "peak of the peak"
21 is fairly standard. It's about 7:45 to 8:45.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: A.m. or p.m.?

23 MR. MATUSEWITCH: In the morning. It's about
24 7:45 to 8:45. And then the shoulder-- the shoulder
25 is 30 minutes on either side, that are not quite as

2 crowded, but they're quite crowded. So we tend to
3 think of it as that entire two hour window. In the
4 afternoon, the evening, it's roughly 4:45 to 5:45.
5 And again, a 30 minute shoulder hour on each on each
6 side.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Two more
8 questions before I pass the Councilmember Bottcher.
9 What about the entrances on Eighth Avenue? You
10 probably-- You guys probably answered this but I
11 just wanting to access it again, for the record:
12 What about the entrances on Eighth Avenue connecting
13 the arena to Penn Station? Are they adequate? If
14 not what needs to be done to make them more
15 compatible with the stadium use?

16 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Yes. Thank you, Chair. So
17 I want to emphasize a couple things.

18 First, as we've said, we're at masterplan stage.
19 We've agreed collectively that we're continuing to
20 evaluate all options. The key in the master plan at
21 the moment is-- and this will, you know, endure no
22 matter what, is that those entrances at 31st and 33rd
23 Street are where the significant flows of pedestrians
24 come in. And we have what amounts to 16,000 square
25 feet of new train halls in the reconstruction of

2 those two entrances. We cannot do that today without
3 the cooperation of MSG for two reasons: One, they
4 load the Hulu Theater at the corner 31st street and
5 Eighth Avenue in the public plaza that needs to
6 become that grand new entrance that I described. And
7 second, MSG owns the-- the area those public plaza
8 areas. So what we've proposed is an exchange of
9 property interests that would enable us to create
10 public access that would still be public access for
11 MSG, as well as the train station. We would simply
12 improve it on behalf of the public.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Based on what you just said,
14 can you summarize for me what activities and
15 infrastructure associated with the use of MSG's
16 property as an arena is not compatible with the
17 proposed reconstruction of Penn Station based on the
18 master plan MTA has completed?

19 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Certainly. As I described
20 in my testimony, the-- the presence of MSG's
21 activities within the taxiway that is to become the
22 midblock train hall, and their activities within
23 these, these properties on the Eighth Avenue side,
24 the plazas on the Eighth Avenue side, is an
25 incompatibility because it prevents us from improving

2 the station to create public circulation, safety,
3 egress, and so on.

4 There are a set of, you know-- and it's sort of
5 technical, but there's a set of technical assets.

6 For example, there's a Con Ed vault that supplies
7 MSG, with power that is in the railroad's property.

8 So it needs to move into MSGs property. There are a

9 series of other improvements that we need to make,

10 things like working on columns, that we-- you know,

11 we simply need agreement to do. But without those--

12 And then of course, as I say, you know, the-- the big

13 thing is-- is loading. So that, you know, by moving

14 the loading from its current location, we're able to

15 create a enclosed loading area, which allows us to

16 convert the midblock area into a significant

17 passenger hall. And we would need to do that work,

18 and would need that work to be done in concert with

19 MSG. And again, as I've said, what we've-- what

20 we've suggested is that we share those costs, given

21 that there are benefits to MSG involved in that work.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Councilmember

23 Bottcher.

24 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: I am going to ask Amtrak

25 specifically about the anticipated gateway tunnels,

2 and how that will affect the capacity issues of the
3 current station.

4 And I think-- I believe that there's a need to
5 help everyone understand the relationship between
6 this new capacity need that's-- that's here, and
7 that's coming, and the reconstruction of the station,
8 as it relates to Madison Square Garden.

9 So for Amtrak, you are about to begin a process
10 in which you decide how that capacity increase is
11 going to be achieved, and you're going to evaluate
12 different options such as, through-running the Penn
13 South expansion that's been floated, the northern
14 expansion. You're going to look at these options.
15 Can you walk the community through how that process
16 is going to work, how that-- what kind of community
17 outreach you're going to be doing, when it's going to
18 happen, when the decision is going to be made?

19 MS. KWON: Thank you, Councilmember. We'll start
20 off by saying we absolutely agree with you. And we
21 are happy to do that with you and the community in
22 greater detail at-- also outside of this hearing as
23 well. But in terms of the additional capacity that
24 you speak of related to the Gateway improvements as
25 part of the Hudson Tunnel Project, that is the

2 project of Penn expansion, right? And Amtrak is
3 overseeing the preliminary engineering for Penn
4 expansion currently with our partners at New Jersey
5 Transit and also the MTA. So where we are right now,
6 in doing so is we're looking at refining-- developing
7 and also refining what the track alignment would look
8 like before we enter into that National Environmental
9 Policy Act process, you know, that is run by the
10 federal government, that you speak of. And in doing
11 so as you said, it is important to not prejudice the
12 outcome and to look at all of the various options
13 that there are, and in doing so there is a robust
14 public engagement that needs to happen as part of the
15 process, which will-- which we will be following.
16 Sara, would you like to add to that?

17 MS. APPLETON: Sure. I'll add a couple more
18 details, as I know there's a lot of kind of
19 questions, and there's a lot happening in the
20 district. I also thank you for giving us the
21 opportunity to clarify a few things.

22 I just want to reiterate what Jeannie said about
23 our very strong commitment to engaging with the
24 public on both of these projects, both the
25 reconstruction and the expansion. We are going to be

1 convening an advisory group within the community, our
2 three railroads, and there will be more to come on
3 that in the near future. And we understand that
4 there are a lot of questions as it relates to how you
5 can achieve an expansion of service capacity, and
6 there are questions from some community members about
7 the concept of through-running, and is that is that a
8 feasible alternative in order to get us the capacity
9 that will be possible once we construct a new tunnel,
10 since even if we construct a new tunnel, we need a
11 place to put all the additional trains in Manhattan.
12 And right now the current station, in its current
13 footprint, in its current configuration cannot
14 accommodate additional train movements, that will be
15 unlocked.

17 And so you know, we have heard those questions
18 from the community, so we are studying with the MTA
19 New Jersey Transit, the concept of through-running
20 very thoroughly, and evaluating its feasibility as
21 one of the options that we would look at through that
22 environmental review process. We are planning to
23 share much more information with the community on
24 that very soon.

1 But I know a part of the question that you asked
2 here was around how, if at all, does any of this
3 relate to Madison Square Garden? The main, you know,
4 interfaces we need with The Garden really relate to
5 the reconstruction project. There's been some
6 questions about Madison Square Garden column removal
7 at the platform level, and what does that or does
8 that not do for the station? So I just want to
9 clarify, you know, there are more than 1000 columns
10 that drop onto Penn station platforms. Some do
11 support Madison Square Garden, some support the Two
12 Penn building. Some support the Farley Post Office.
13 Some support Moynihan. So it's a very kind of
14 complicated underground environment.

15 If, in some world MSG didn't move, there would--
16 might be an opportunity to remove some of their
17 supportive columns. You would still have other
18 columns that would remain on the platforms. And in
19 order to achieve through-running, one of the
20 challenges and things we have studied is that you
21 would still need to widen the platforms. So even if
22 you remove columns, you know, the platforms don't
23 automatically become wider in order to accommodate
24 the simultaneous boarding and alighting of
25

2 passengers, which is important for doing an all
3 through-running operation.

4 So I said a lot. It's very complicated. I think
5 we're looking forward to getting into this more and
6 are happy to-- to have further dialogue on this
7 topic.

8 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: To achieve through-
9 running, Amtrak's position is that the platforms
10 would need to be wider than they are now?

11 MS. APPLETON: That is our belief shared with MTA
12 and New Jersey Transit. Yes, for safety reasons.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: And conceivably, either
14 now or in the future, if the columns were-- if the
15 platforms were widened as needed, the columns being
16 there would still permit through-running?

17 MS. APPLETON: This is something we'd have to
18 like look at more specifically, if we knew the exact
19 number of columns and their placement and make a
20 determination. But certainly, one of the kind of
21 biggest challenges that would require a change would
22 be just the width. You know, we're not-- It's not
23 unfortunately, a silver bullet to remove the columns.
24 And when you get into talking about widening
25 platforms, that means you have to take platforms out

1 of service, you have to take trains out of service,
2 which has disruptions for travelers up and down the
3 Northeast Corridor. So it's a-- it's a very serious,
4 you know, change that we've been studying in a lot of
5 detail because we know it is a topic of interest to
6 the community.

8 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: There's a number of
9 different plans that have been put forward. The--
10 We've heard from the MTA today. We're going to be
11 hearing from ASTM. I'd like to ask you Amtrak, what
12 your opinion is of these different proposals.

13 MS. KWON: Thank you, obviously, we are part of
14 the team with-- along with the MTA and New Jersey
15 Transit, and advancing the master plan and to into a
16 design and engineering study that will work for the
17 reconstruction of Penn Station. So in terms of the
18 ASTM proposal, we have looked at it ("we" as in--
19 "we" as in Amtrak). We have met with ASTM. We have
20 seen it. We do like what we see so far. We're very
21 intrigued. We would like to see more. It is an
22 impressive team. We will look at it in conjunction
23 with our partners when they are ready to share it.
24 Anything else to add to that, Sara?

2 MS. APPLETON: No. And I think, you know, we
3 just want to pledge, you know, in this audience that,
4 you know, we have heard feedback on certain elements
5 of at least the design that people find intriguing,
6 and our stakeholders find intriguing. And we are
7 committed to being responsive to that feedback that
8 we've heard. And we'll be actively working with our
9 partners, you know, in collaboration altogether as
10 three railroads, to see if there are refinements to
11 our concepts that may make sense and would
12 incorporate the public feedback that we hear.

13 MR. TORRES SPRINGER: Councilmember, if I may,
14 even though you didn't direct the question to me, I
15 just want-- I want to agree with my colleagues but
16 add one thing which is to make sure it's clear: It
17 doesn't matter which plan we're talking about, we
18 need the same things from MSG in order to become
19 compatible with the future Penn Station. There's an
20 additional proposal for a train hall at the midblock
21 on Eighth Avenue. Everyone knows what the MTA's
22 opinion is about that, and that as a use of public
23 funds, but with our colleagues will evaluate. We're
24 open to other ideas. But you know, that-- We should
25 not let that be a distraction. That-- We need the

2 same things from MSG. We need to come to an
3 agreement. We should do that before the special
4 permit is issued, so that the can doesn't get kicked
5 down the road, and we know what those things are, and
6 so I, you know, I just-- I just want to caution
7 against being distracted by sort of other drawings.

8 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: Which leads me into the
9 questions I have for you. I think what a lot of
10 folks in the community want to know is: What comes
11 next? What's the decision making process after this
12 special permit, which we're going to wrap up in the
13 next month and a half? What plans are there for an
14 RFP that can, uh, solicit all the best ideas for a
15 redevelopment of Penn Station?

16 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Yeah, thank you. So we
17 outlined earlier, we have a year of really intensive
18 design to do, and that takes us to what we generally
19 refer to as 30% design. It's a significant
20 milestone. And, you know, in the-- I just want to be
21 clear that in the course of doing that work, there is
22 extensive community engagement and consultation.

23 At the conclusion of that phase, or actually
24 prior to the conclusion of that phase, the railroads
25 will be making some decisions about how to structure

2 the delivery of the project. You know, we have a
3 variety of delivery models available to us.
4 Historically, there's been the kind of the thing that
5 everybody laments because it makes everything take
6 forever and cost too much, you know, you fully design
7 and then bid it out to the lowest bidder and build
8 it. You know, it's hard to imagine we're going to do
9 that. We have a lot of success with design build.
10 We have done AP3, as, you know, the MTA recently, so
11 we'll be looking at delivery models.

12 But the point is that at that stage, there will
13 be a procurement for a contractor, and the contractor
14 has the opportunity to provide, you know, what's
15 something we call ATCs, Alternative Technical
16 Concepts, alternative proposals for financing and for
17 approaches. So there's both a stage now whereas you
18 know, Amtrak has emphasized we're evaluating
19 different alternatives. And then there's a stage as
20 we get into construction of the project, in which
21 there are opportunities for alternatives.

22 Again, I want to emphasize: None of that changes
23 what we need from MSG. And none of that, you know,
24 is to suggest that somehow that can ought to get
25 kicked down the road. We ought to come to an

2 agreement about what we're doing between MSG and the
3 station now. And then all these other things will
4 play themselves out.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: With respect to the RFP,
6 do you envision an RFP for a master developer or a
7 contractor?

8 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Those are effectively the
9 same thing, but we will we will be looking at that
10 and making some decisions about that as time goes by.

11 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you. The there's
12 been a lot of back and forth about Seventh Avenue
13 versus Eighth Avenue. What percentages are you
14 working from about what percentage of folks come--
15 enter through Seventh Avenue versus enter through
16 Eighth Avenue?

17 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: So in the master plan, we
18 created a set of projections based on future
19 transportation patterns. And that's based on growth-
20 - background growth, but growth also to the west of
21 the station. Such that we'll see 70% of passengers
22 on-- around the Seventh Avenue side, Seventh Avenue
23 entrances at street level and then coming from the
24 Herald Square, B-D/F-M, and the 1, 2, and 3 at
25 Seventh Avenue. The other 30% Entering Eighth Avenue

2 at street level, really at 31st and 33rd street is
3 where the flows will come into. But you know, at
4 street level nonetheless. And then the A-C-E. And
5 just also to break that down, it's about Peter, 50/50
6 between street level entry versus subway. So you can
7 say, you know, in that case For example, 15% are
8 coming in street level on Eighth Avenue whereas the
9 other 85% are coming from the subways, Seventh Avenue
10 and the A-C-E.

11 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: In those numbers, do you
12 factor in the passengers on Long-- Long Island
13 Railroad who exit their trains and come up on the
14 western side of the station?

15 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Yes, we do.

16 MR. MATUSEWITCH: Yes, we do.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: And what about folks who
18 are in the station before their train arrives?
19 What's the average amount of time that folks spend in
20 the station when they're waiting for their train?
21 And what I'm getting at here is what you've been
22 hearing about the desire for a grand train hall on
23 Eighth Avenue in addition to a midblock train Hall,
24 and in addition to people entering the station,
25 you've got people who spend time in the station.

2 They might enter from Seventh Avenue, but they've got
3 an hour, or they've got to half an hour. Where do we
4 want them to be? What do we want them to-- What
5 would we want them to experience?

6 MR. MATUSEWITCH: Sure. Let me just respond to
7 that. About 6% of the users of Penn Station
8 currently are Amtrak riders. Amtrak riders tend to
9 arrive at the station quite early. And they're
10 mostly now boarding from Moynihan. And you can see
11 how well Moynahan has been designed to accommodate
12 people who arrive early and spend time there. It
13 reminds me of an airport for instance.

14 The other 90 plus percent of the users of Penn
15 Station are commuters. And commuters are pretty much
16 dedicated to spending as little time in this nation
17 as possible. People time their arrival pretty
18 exactly to when their train is going to arrive. Now,
19 that doesn't mean they don't need amenities or places
20 to wait. But they're typically in the station and
21 waiting 10 minutes or less. And that's the
22 overwhelming majority of the users of Penn Station.

23 This has driven our design, like big concourses,
24 lots of entrances and exits, people want to get in

2 and on their train. They want to get off the train
3 and out as quickly as possible.

4 MR. APPLETON: If I could add to Peter's facts
5 and figures, which are generally correct, you know,
6 of course. I think we just generally want to express
7 appreciation for, I think, what you're getting at,
8 which is, of course, we still want to be designing a
9 place that can serve as a destination. I think we're
10 happy with the feedback we've heard from members of
11 the public that they're interested in going to
12 Moynihan even just to get food, even if they're not
13 traveling. And certainly we would want a
14 reconstruction of Penn similarly to create a really
15 welcoming space, that's well connected to the public
16 realm in the neighborhood. Even if, you know, our
17 passengers, may at least today not be spending more
18 than 15 minutes in the station, maybe they'd want to
19 come earlier and get food. So I just want to express
20 appreciation for I think what you're getting at,

21 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: And at the risk of
22 beginning to annoy your Councilmember, I am just
23 going to say that we can have all those discussions.
24 We're happy to have them, and we have had a good
25 discussion about on this subject. It doesn't impact

2 what we need from MSG. What we need from MSG is that
3 the loading, you know, at-- on the taxiway, adjacent
4 to the taxiway, and on Eighth Avenue, that the other
5 obstacles that are in our way to Penn reconstruction,
6 that the swap of property interests, all that needs
7 to be effectuated, no matter where we come down on
8 this issue, and that is the opportunity that the
9 Council has at this moment.

10 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: I think-- I totally hear
11 what you're saying. And I think what you're hearing
12 is, you know, people are hungry for the opportunity
13 to be part of what happens here. And, you know, this
14 special permit for our community is that opportunity.
15 And we're very anxious to know what that process--
16 and we want to shape that process going forward so
17 that we're part of the decision making.

18 I'm going to yield to my colleagues.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Councilmember
20 Bottcher. Just to follow up real quick. Just to be
21 clear: Are we seeking-- Are you guys seeking money
22 for MSG, for your land, or for both?

23 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: We're not seeking money for
24 the railroad's land from MSG. What we've-- What
25 we've described today is a-- an exchange of property

1 interests. You know, we're aware that the property
2 that is under discussion is disused today. It is--
3 You know, either that or its future use does not in
4 any way conflict with its current use as in the
5 Eighth Avenue entrances. You know, they would still
6 be Eighth Avenue entrances. And then we would be
7 seeking a contribution from MSG not for, you know,
8 public benefits (God forbid, we should request that),
9 but only for those things that are of benefits to
10 MSG, for example, you know, obviously, having
11 reconstructed indoor loading would be a significant
12 benefit for them, having reconstructed Eighth Avenue
13 entrances would be a benefit for them. So there's a
14 few examples like that.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: So the infrastructure
17 improvements are the only contributions that you're
18 seeking from them? No monetary contributions.

19 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: And those contributions
20 only in proportion to a benefit.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay.

22 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: For-- For The Garden.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Councilmember
24 Schulman?

25

2 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: Thank you very much.

3 Actually, Chair, you asked one of my questions. So I
4 only have a couple. You had mentioned during the
5 testimony the timeline for the design process for a
6 new Penn Station. Can you share with us the cost of
7 that design process?

8 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Um, we have a design
9 contract that's been awarded. I can't say I have the
10 number in my head. Maybe we could get back to you
11 with that number.

12 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: Can you please, yeah,
13 get back to us with that. And also, there was some
14 testimony, right? I just want to clarify. So if--
15 I know about the-- the issue about the land, and all
16 of that, and the contribution. If the MTA has
17 something in their designs that they think MSG will
18 benefit from. But MSG is not asking for the benefit
19 does-- do you expect them to contribute towards that
20 a proportionate share?

21 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Well, I think that's a
22 complicated issue, Councilmember. And it comes back
23 to whether MSG is compatible with the station. So
24 certainly, I think MSG would say, and has said today,
25 "We, you know, like to pull our semi trucks up on

2 Eighth Avenue," or, you know, "up onto the, you know,
3 the northern portion of the taxiway to unload them,
4 we're very happy with that situation. It's great."
5 However, that does not enable us to reconstruct Penn
6 Station. So once we make the decision to reconstruct
7 Penn Station, then those improvements for loading are
8 necessary. It happens they also are beneficial to
9 MSG at the same time. So it's reasonable for them to
10 make a contribution to that.

11 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: So along the way,
12 there'll be some kind of decision made as to what the
13 benefits are and everything else, and what it is that
14 you might be asking for moving forward.

15 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Yes.

16 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: Okay. Thank you very
17 much.

18 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Councilmember
20 Schulman. There being no other questions, this panel
21 is excused.

22 MR. TORRES-SPRINGER: Thank you very much, Chair.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you for your time. The
24 next panel that we're going to call up is ASTM, which

2 will be Luke Bridle, Peter Cipriano, and Vishaan-- I
3 cannot pronounce this last name. Excuse me.

4 [background voices]

5 Vishaan Chakrabarti.

6 Thank you. Thanks.

7 You guys may begin. When you when you begin,
8 just state your name and organization for the record.

9 MR. CIPRIANO: Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon.
10 My name is Peter Cipriano, Senior Vice President at
11 ASTM North America, a global developer of
12 transportation infrastructure projects. In a former
13 life I worked at the United States Department of
14 Transportation on rail infrastructure, development,
15 and financing.

16 We're pleased to testify today in support of
17 Madison Square Garden's application, but it is vital
18 that New Yorkers also get a new Penn Station. This
19 is a moment of inflection and reinvention for our
20 great city. Periodically, we endure immense
21 challenges that require creative solutions,
22 innovation, and at its core, change. We have an
23 enormous housing shortage, our CBDs are facing
24 existential crisis, we yearn for a more equitable
25 city across the board, and the climate crisis looms

2 in the background of it all. I, for one do not envy
3 the members of this committee and their
4 responsibilities, but I do applaud you for taking
5 them on.

6 Today, we want to humbly offer you one small
7 idea. While no one thing can solve for all of our
8 challenges, perhaps one thing can spark hope and
9 signal the start of something new in our city. I
10 believe our team has created just such a thing in our
11 proposal for a new Penn Station. We all know the
12 things this city doesn't need more of: billionaire
13 penthouses, empty cash havens for oligarchs, and
14 exclusive spaces that cater to the super rich while
15 struggling New Yorkers shuffle by drawn drapes. New
16 York has enough of those things. Our plan for Penn
17 Station would make a step, however small, to
18 correcting this imbalance and signal a civic gesture
19 for a new age. We have many monuments to our past,
20 but this would be one to our future. The famous
21 quote goes that "where one once centered Penn Station
22 like a god, they now scurry like a rat." Our plan
23 will correct this 60 year old error and restore Penn
24 Station to a place worthy of its deserving citizens.
25 Our plan permits this with MSG in place and can be

2 accomplished quickly. While we cannot present the
3 entire plan today, we're happy to do so at the
4 earliest opportunity. Thank you.

5 MR. CHAKRABARTI: Hello, I'm Vishaan Chakrabarti,
6 architect and longtime advocate for fixing Penn.
7 After decades of advocacy, I am the most optimistic I
8 have ever been about building a great Penn Station
9 because I recently became ASTM's design architect.
10 Our comprehensive plan is bold and achievable because
11 it leaves MSG in place, but does not preclude it from
12 moving someday. It replaces-- It replaces MSGs
13 theater with a civic gateway on Eighth Avenue,
14 creates a luminous midblock train hall, and
15 establishes a unified single level station with high
16 ceilings, fewer columns, full disability access, and
17 a generous public realm free of idling trucks. Our
18 design, which includes substantial MSG contributions,
19 is compatible with both the arena and expanded rail
20 service. We serve everyone including Penn South,
21 NYCHA, and other residents who live west of Eighth
22 Avenue because we have a full-block approach, unlike
23 the MTA scheme, compared to which the New York Times
24 that our plan is clearly superior.

1 The special permit establishes a modest MSG
2 public realm contribution, but provides no definite
3 path to prove MSGs long-term compatibility with the
4 train station when, if ever, a 30% design is done.
5 Our design can be 30% complete within six months,
6 which would allow the public to establish MSG Penn
7 Station compatibility with certainty.
8

9 By contrast, the MTA seeks a multibillion dollar
10 property and capital contribution from MSG through
11 the special permit, which I believe to be an illegal
12 use of the permit as a former DCP Manhattan Director.

13 Absent these MSG contributions, the MTA plan is
14 billions of dollars short and therefore cannot
15 achieve a credible 30% design. Their plan is a path
16 to litigation, stagnation, and an inability to ever
17 hold-- to ever assess MSG compatibility. We request
18 a master developer RFP to be issued soon by an entity
19 like ESTC akin to Moynahan with stakeholder
20 representation from the railroads, the city, and the
21 community. This is the only fair transparent and
22 certain path to complete a 30% design, establish
23 compatibility, and meet the findings and spirit of
24 the special permit. Thank you.

2 MR. BRIDLE: I'm Luke Bridle, Director of
3 Transportation for HOK. We're a global architecture
4 and design firm currently celebrating our 50th year
5 in New York. We designed the new LaGuardia airport
6 terminal B, the largest P3 in aviation history, and
7 are ASTM's collaborating design architects with PAL.

8 The ASTM proposal is consistent and compatible
9 with MSG's arena use, and in dramatic fashion will
10 bring what we all desire and agree on what Penn
11 Station lacks: space, lighten air, and enhanced
12 safety. Recognizing that Penn Station is the
13 nation's busiest regional hub, with multiple transit
14 modes, the ASTM proposal will seamlessly resolve the
15 intersections and interconnections of these modes.

16 Most crucially, the ASTM proposal will be
17 executed with a phasing plan that allows the public
18 to continue to use Penn Station facilities and enjoy
19 MSG programming, much like how HOK developed the
20 phasing to keep LaGuardia Airport in operation during
21 construction.

22 Integral to our proposal is a new truck loading
23 plan that improves street safety and activates
24 pedestrian spaces at one of the city's busiest
25 superblocks by moving the trucks off the street,

1 which is also made possible by removing the Hulu
2 theater.
3

4 Our proposal will be fully ADA compliant and will
5 improve platform egress times by 30%. Thereby
6 clearing all platforms in less than four minutes as
7 required by the National Fire Protection
8 Association's NFPA 130 standard.

9 The reutilization of the area of the theater will
10 enable ASTM to provide all essential elements of
11 clear vision, high quality experience, first class
12 public realm, distinctive architecture, operational
13 excellence, and vibrant retail. These goals can only
14 be accomplished by the removal of the MSG-- the
15 theater at MSG, and the reten-- and the retention of
16 the midblock MSG pedestrian bridge at Chase Square.

17 The ASTM proposal also does not preclude through-
18 running. We are not adding any additional
19 complexities to carry out through-running, and this
20 concept can be achieved with MSG remaining on site.
21 We believe that a competitive master developer RFP is
22 the best way forward for a new Penn Station. Thank
23 you.
24
25

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. I have no
3 questions for this panel. Councilmember Bottcher, do
4 you have any questions?

5 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Yes, thank you. I want
6 to take a step back, and Vishaan, I want to ask you
7 specifically about the concept of moving Madison
8 Square Garden. And, you know, I can't help but note
9 that, like, it's been like 2 hours and 45 minutes, 3
10 hours, and we haven't heard any, like, concrete plans
11 or proposals to move MSG, which is why there's so
12 much discussion of other proposals. But you,
13 Vishaan, were one of the originators of a plan to
14 move MSG across Seventh Avenue. And I remember
15 reading years ago about the press that you really
16 went public with this, and the New York Times wrote
17 about it.

18 And I'd like to know, why did you move from
19 someone who was a chief proponent of moving Madison
20 Square Garden, to part of the team that would propose
21 keeping MSG where it is?

22 MR. CHAKRABARTI: Councilmember, thank you very
23 much for the question. So there's actually-- just
24 for the record, I want to state that there are two
25 aspects to my previous involvement with this: One is

2 I ran the joint venture that proposed moving Madison
3 Square Garden across Eighth Avenue to the back of
4 Moynihan train station back in 2008. That was much
5 more than a discussion. I think, as-- as Joel Fisher
6 from The Garden stated earlier, we were deep two
7 years into drawings, the Spitzer administration
8 collapsed, and then the economy collapsed, and that
9 plan collapsed along with it. In 2000--

10 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: Number 9 ruined it.

11 MR. CHAKRABARTI: Yeah. No comment. In 2016, is
12 when our firm did a pro bono plan with the Ford
13 Foundation, actually, for the New York Times
14 editorial board. And that's the plan that you're
15 talking about, that looked at reusing The Garden
16 superstructure as a new train station, if The Garden
17 were to move across Seventh Avenue.

18 So why the change of heart? So about three
19 months ago, I met this gentleman and force of nature
20 Peter Cipriano, and I was invited to a meeting to see
21 the ASTM concept at HOK, and an extraordinary team
22 had developed, including, as was referred to earlier,
23 The Garden's consulting engineers, who ASTM had
24 separately contracted. And two things immediately
25 became apparent to me (and this was again about three

1 months ago): One was this team had done more due
2 diligence on this site than I think has been done
3 since McKim, Mead, and White. They had thoroughly
4 investigated this idea of taking out the Hulu
5 theater, of the loading dock, of looking at, you
6 know, through-running, taking columns off, the taking
7 the platform's to NFPA 130 in terms of meeting safety
8 standards. No one had done that level of due
9 diligence.
10

11 This theater idea has been around for a long
12 time, as I'm sure you're aware, but no one had ever
13 done that level of due diligence. So that was
14 extraordinarily impressive. The second thing that
15 was clear to me was that this team looked at The
16 Garden not as an adversary, but as a collaborator.
17 And therefore The Garden was in conversation with
18 them, and Amtrak had been in conversation with them.
19 And for someone who's been around Penn Station for 20
20 years, you know that Amtrak and The Garden, own this
21 piece of property, and if they are not collaborating
22 with you, you are not going to get anywhere other
23 than litigation and a morass.

24 And so it seemed to me that if no one from the
25 governor's office, and no one from City Hall was

2 talking to The Garden about moving, and yet The
3 Garden had been talking to these folks for well over
4 a year about the theater move, that it was time to
5 light a candle instead of curse the darkness, and
6 stop-- Because, look, we can talk about The Garden
7 moving however much we like. Until the government--
8 The mistake that was made in 2013, in terms of how we
9 perceive what happened with the special permit, is
10 the Sword of Damocles wasn't over The Garden's had to
11 move. It was over the government's head to propose a
12 double-block site near mass transit. That never
13 happened. And it still isn't happening.

14 And so as far as I'm concerned, as a person who
15 likes to build things and see this improve, and not
16 just draw pretty pictures, it seemed to me that this
17 was the best and most vote most viable and achievable
18 path to fixing Penn Station.

19 But as I said, in my testimony, just to close,
20 our plan does not preclude a garden move someday, if
21 The Garden chooses to move, if the government
22 approaches them with that, we can adaptively reuse
23 our structure to make the station even greater. So I
24 think it's important to understand that trajectory,
25 if you will. So hopefully that helps.

2 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: The plan that you had
3 been behind before involved moving The Garden, east
4 of Seventh Avenue, reclaiming from 31st to 32nd to
5 34th, Sixth to Seventh, and basically like eminent
6 domain as needed, building a new MSG with skyscrapers
7 to finance the whole thing. And that's something
8 that you were pushing for up until like last year?

9 MR. CHAKRABARTI: Well, yes, because again, no
10 one from the government seemed interested in talking
11 about it. No one from the government was saying, "We
12 are going to clear this site for The Garden, or make
13 a deal with them." I don't fully believe the eight-
14 and-a-half-billion-dollar number, but I think it is a
15 number that is in the billions.

16 And that is what-- I find it confounding that
17 people assert, "Well, if you're buying the theater at
18 fair market value, as ASTM is, then somehow that's
19 giving The Garden a give." And yet those same
20 advocates are saying The Garden should move. Well,
21 what do we think would happen in order to get The
22 Garden to move? They own their land. So it would be
23 billions of dollars of public money that no one seems
24 willing or able to put up to get The Garden to move.

2 So as just someone-- I consider myself a utopian
3 pragmatist. And so like I-- I just don't understand
4 why we're talking about something that the government
5 doesn't seem terribly interested in doing.

6 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: How much do you think it
7 would cost, the plan that you were once advocating
8 for? Like, how much would it cost to get MSG moved?

9 MR. CHAKRABARTI: You know, it's-- We had done
10 some cost estimating, Councilmember. It was-- You
11 know, for The Garden, it was like \$2 billion, but
12 there was site acquisition. You know, it could have
13 been \$4 or \$5 billion easily.

14 This was all pre-pandemic. So at that time, the
15 skyscrapers you referenced in the plan were very
16 valuable. And so those were helping to mitigate the
17 cost of the plan. It's not clear that would be true
18 today. So you know, given the extraordinary
19 transformation in our real estate market, it's really
20 hard to hinge on something like that. Residential
21 doesn't provide that same kind of leverage in terms
22 of-- I was Manhattan director when we passed the
23 Hudson Yards TIF. And so that was done mainly off
24 the back of commercial office space. It's very
25 difficult to do it with residential.

2 And so I think it's really important to talk
3 about fixing Penn Station soon. And, again, just
4 bringing it full circle to the special permit. I
5 don't see how you get to a 30% design, which is the
6 compatibility standard that DCP has set in the
7 language as I understand it, without a viable plan
8 that has a viable capital stack. And near as I can
9 tell, the ASTM plan is the only plan that is viable
10 and has a viable capital stack, that has project
11 readiness for federal funding, and does not end up in
12 a massive lawsuit with Madison Square Garden.

13 And so that-- that's [MR. CIPRIANO: [inaudible]]
14 Pardon? And yes, and that we can be ready in six
15 months with 30% design. And so that to me, is the--
16 the link back to the special permit in terms of the
17 central finding that DCP is trying to make beyond
18 these very modest public realm improvements that are
19 in the near term.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: The-- I want to talk
21 about the process, the RFP The process that you're
22 calling for. You're calling for an RFP. You want an
23 opportunity to bid, to put in a bid into a
24 competitive process to be a master developer of the
25 station. Is that right?

2 MR. CIPRIANO: Yes, that's right, Councilmember.
3 Do you want me to elaborate on that?

4 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: Yeah. And how, you
5 know, in your mind, what would that look like? Who
6 would be the arbiter of it? And how long would that
7 take?

8 MR. CIPRIANO: Right.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: Since we talk about
10 wanting to move quickly? How-- These RFPs, they take
11 a long time, no?

12 MR. CIPRIANO: So, as a basis, ESDC is in the
13 habit of doing this exact type of RFP or RFEI. It
14 could have a bunch of names for a master developer.
15 They just did one for the Javits Center last week, I
16 think it was, or two weeks ago. They did an RFEI for
17 Penn Station master developer back in 2016, which was
18 more of kind of a pre-GPP attempt. So that was a
19 little bit more of a real estate deal, but same kind
20 of broad-term RFP.

21 So we think that a document like that could be
22 assembled very quickly. It should be broad in its in
23 its description--

24 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: Like Moynihan station.

2 MR. CIPRIANO: Exactly. Exactly. Yeah. And,
3 and to be clear, Councilmember, there was, I think, a
4 little confusion with the last panel. An RFP for a
5 contractor would be a very, very, very different
6 thing, in fact, an entirely different thing than an
7 RFP for a master developer. They're not one in the
8 same.

9 A master developer for an RFP could go out now.
10 And that's something that we would be able to compete
11 for with our whole concept inclusive of financing.
12 And we already know exactly what we need from MSG to
13 accommodate our plan precisely, and we think that we
14 get all of those things, which means the text
15 amendment could be further-- or the text could be
16 further amended very quickly, for the council's
17 consideration. A contractor RFP is just-- you know,
18 that's just procuring construction to build something
19 else that will get figured years from now.

20 MR. CHAKRABARTI: Councilmember, may I just
21 elaborate on one point? Because you asked-- you
22 brought up Moynihan, and I think it's a critical
23 precedent, because that was a public-private
24 partnership. And what's interesting is MSDC, the
25 Moynihan Station Development Corporation still

2 exists. It's a subsidiary of ESDC. And it had board
3 representation from all the constituent stakeholders,
4 all the railroads, the FRA, the City, the State. I
5 believe there was community representation as well.
6 And it seems to me that that model could easily be
7 resuscitated to do this, and do this quickly. And
8 then every single plan on the table could be
9 evaluated. And then there could be a quick process
10 within the term of the special permit (whatever you
11 decide in terms of the term special permit) where
12 this compatibility question could be assessed beyond
13 these minor public realm improvements. I think
14 that's the critical issue here.

15 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: Do you have a view on
16 the length of this special permit?

17 MR. CIPRIANO: Vishaan may say more, but, you
18 know, from our perspective, we've come up with a plan
19 that we think works very well for a sort of
20 reconfigured garden and a greatly improved Penn
21 Station, because we can have 30% design in six months
22 and come back to CPC in the council with exactly what
23 you'd need to do to further amend the text and let
24 The Garden stay in the long term. You know, that if
25 our plan were to be adopted, the current permit could

2 be for a short term, because we'd be ready to re
3 examine this really soon.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: I ask you about through-
5 running. And, you know, the reason why through-
6 running is so important and it keeps coming up is
7 because the concern is that if you leave MSG where it
8 is, we'll never have through-running. I know you
9 gave a lengthy presentation about-- so you've done
10 some research into through-running. You presented it
11 at Community Board 5. Could you talk about that?

12 MR. BRIDLE: Yeah. So we've taken a look at the
13 existing platform level plan, which is, by and large,
14 a remnant of the original Penn Station. We believe
15 that there's structural modification-- well, the
16 structure that's there now can be incorporated within
17 through-running. It would need additional vertical
18 circulation to the West. It would need some platform
19 modifications to the East. But by and large, we
20 think we can-- we could accommodate it within this
21 plan.

22 I think we also as part of this plan would be
23 rebuilding all of the platform vertical circulation
24 as well. So we feel there's an opportunity to

2 calibrate the location and placement of that relative
3 to the platforms within this plan.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: Do you have the
5 technical drawings and everything to support this?
6 Is it in here?

7 MR. BRIDLE: We--

8 MR. CIPRIANO: No, it's not in there. But we do
9 have them, and we would be happy to brief you, the
10 committee, and anyone else in the council separately
11 on that or any other aspect of our proposal.

12 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: Okay. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Councilmember
14 Bottcher. Real quick, Mr. Vishaan, you did mention
15 in your testimony that you believe it's illegal for
16 the permit that NTA is seeking, and that you feel
17 like it's a pathway to litigation and the inability
18 to hold MSG's feet to the fire? Can you just explain
19 that in more context on why you feel that way?

20 MR. CHAKRABARTI: Sure, Chair. And I should
21 specify that I'm not an attorney. I'm an architect.
22 But I was Manhattan director for almost five years at
23 City Planning. And I don't believe (and I think this
24 is implicit, actually, in what DCP has stated) that
25 I've never seen a situation where you could extract

2 property, the reconstruction of a major bridge over a
3 rail system. You know, it just seems like a drastic
4 overreach.

5 And, you know, I have a tremendous amount of
6 respect for the MTA they have a very difficult job.
7 But I-- I just think that this would end up in
8 litigation. You know, I've been part of ULURPs.
9 Many of us have been part of ULURPs in which, in
10 exchange for FAR, there have been developer
11 contributions (you think one Vanderbilt and so
12 forth). That was raised at the City Planning
13 Commission hearing. Commissioners made the point of
14 saying this was a very, very different matter,
15 because there was no additional FAR being given, and
16 I think your colleague raised the question of, "Well,
17 if MSG does not want these purported benefits that
18 come from these changes, then how can you force them
19 to do it?" That question was raised repeatedly at
20 the City Planning Commission hearing. And I think it
21 just--

22 To me, the big thing is, like you, I care about
23 fixing Penn Station soon. And I don't know how you
24 do that if this thing ends up in litigation. And--
25 And Peter is the is the expert on federal funding.

2 We've heard this thing about, I think, Councilmember-
3 - or excuse me, Borough President Levine brought it
4 up about the fact that we have this short window of
5 time with President Biden and this administration to
6 get this infrastructure money. We are not going to
7 get it if a cloud of litigation hangs over the site.
8 And that's why I think ours is the only way to get to
9 30% quickly, because we have a collaborative way to
10 deal with the issues of The Garden instead of an
11 adversarial way.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. There being no
13 more questions for this panel, this panel is now
14 excused.

15 The next panel I'm going to call up is Pamela
16 Wolf, Eugene Sinigalliano, Elizabeth Goldstein, and
17 Liam Blank.

18 And I'm before any representative from MSG or MTA
19 leaves, I just know you guys have a ton of followup.
20 I didn't get to ask these questions. I just want to
21 make sure that you guys get follow up. For MTA: You
22 have stated that you are ready to reach an agreement
23 with MSG now, but can you clarify whether you will be
24 able to complete the needed track and platform work

2 in 2025 and 2026 if you're not able to reach that
3 agreement?

4 And for MSG, there was conversation about the
5 Hulu Theater. I didn't get to ask a question on the
6 shows or the concert that you guys have there. Can
7 you provide the number of concerts, if there are any
8 special permits that you require for the Hulu Theater
9 as well. So those are just followups for MTA and
10 MSG, and I want you get back to me. Thank you.

11 Ms. Elizabeth Goldstein. Can you please-- You
12 may begin.

13 Okay, I don't think she's here yet. Ms.-- Liam
14 blank. You may begin.

15 Good afternoon Chairperson Riley, Councilmember
16 Bottcher, and distinguished members of the
17 Subcommittee. I am Liam Blank, Chair of the
18 Transportation and Infrastructure Committee at the
19 City Club of New York. I appreciate the opportunity
20 to testify on the pivotal issue of the proposed 10-
21 year extension for Madison Square Garden's special
22 permit.

23 For over a century the City Club has upheld the
24 crucial balance between the needs of residents,
25 businesses, and the political landscape in New York

2 City's urban planning. Today I speak for an
3 organization with a rich history of advocacy for the
4 judicious development of our city's infrastructure,
5 which strongly believes in the potential of Penn
6 Station to play a more significant role in our
7 Tristate Region's vibrancy, functionality, and
8 economic competitiveness.

9 Penn Station, as you know, located beneath
10 Madison Square Garden and accompanying the same block
11 in the heart of Manhattan, served over 600,000
12 commuters and visitors each day before the pandemic.
13 However, its operations and accessibility are
14 compromised due to the constraints of coexisting with
15 MSG.

16 The current setup has resulted in a station that
17 is congested, challenging to navigate, and not in
18 alignment with New York's reputation as a global
19 city. MSG's physical presence and operational
20 demands negatively impact Penn Station's
21 functionality, leading to persistent safety concerns
22 severe crowding during peak hours, and inadequate
23 wayfinding. Furthermore, MSG's design severely
24 inhibits local pedestrian and vehicular traffic
25 during-- around the site. From my personal

2 experience I have seen how trucks loading for MSG
3 events blocked bike lanes, sidewalks, and bus lanes
4 for extended periods, causing significant disruption
5 and safety concerns.

6 Granting a 10-year permit extension will further
7 entrench this dysfunction and remove the urgency for
8 all stakeholders to collaboratively develop a future-
9 proof strategic plan for Penn Station. Such a
10 decision would be a grave error. We strongly dispute
11 the notion that MSG can coexist with a revamped Penn
12 Station. MSG's presence significantly limits New
13 York's potential to plan competitively for the needs
14 and amenities of the 21st century. I'm here today to
15 urge you with all the conviction and urgency this
16 issue warrants to reject the proposed and your
17 special permit extension. Instead, we strongly
18 recommend a shorter term permit of ideally three
19 years or less. This term will maintain necessary
20 pressure on MSG and its partners to develop a
21 concrete relocation plan and a more actionable
22 funding strategy. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Liam. Eugene, you
24 may begin.

2 MR. SINIGALLIANO: My name is Eugene Sinigalliano
3 and I was the only at risk of displacement individual
4 that was actually a member of the Empire State
5 Development's Penn Station Community Advisory Working
6 Group. I have a deep understanding of their Penn
7 Station Project Plan, and I represent hundreds of
8 residents, 400 businesses, and 10,000 employees that
9 will lose their homes, offices and jobs, with
10 multiple city blocks destroyed by this outdated,
11 fatally-flawed plan.

12 One of the worst mistakes in his plan is allowing
13 Madison Square Garden to remain on top of Penn
14 Station, which locks the busiest transit hub in North
15 America below ground in the basement, and handcuffs
16 any truly significant transit improvement. New York
17 deserves a world-class, above ground, through-running
18 station that is the center of a unified regional rail
19 network. Transit experts, architects, engineers,
20 civic organizations, community boards, and most of
21 our elected officials all agree that it would be in
22 the best interest of New York city if Madison Square
23 Garden moved.

24 Moving MSG will be expensive, but it is far less
25 expensive and devastating than condemning two city

1 blocks to be demolished only to build a stub-in,
2 southern-expansion terminal station for New Jersey
3 Transit with no possibility of through-running until
4 2080.
5

6 Removing MSG and all its massive support columns
7 would allow far superior transit planning and
8 implementation including major capacity increases
9 within Penn Station's existing footprint. If MSG is
10 moved, it would definitely negate or diminish the
11 need to destroy the surrounding neighborhood and make
12 Penn construction not only easier, but far less
13 expensive. Additionally, it is unfair that MSG does
14 not pay any property taxes or pay anything to improve
15 the very transit issues that their problems and
16 locations create. Estimated to be a tax loss to New
17 York City of \$43 million a year, this is special
18 interest at its worst, and there's broad consensus
19 among economists and researchers that the government
20 subsidies for these sports stadiums are not an
21 efficient use of scarce public resources. The recent
22 report from the New York City independent budget
23 offices confirms this. Huge-- Big rigs, production
24 trucks--
25

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Eugene, if I could have you
3 wrap it up? Thanks.

4 MR. SINIGALLIANO: Yes sir. Huge-- As you know,
5 they block many-- many of the aspects with production
6 trucks including cables and-- and trucks and loading.
7 But even the just-released compatibility report by
8 the railroad states that MSG is not compatible with
9 Penn Station. Everyone already knows this. We urge
10 for our at-risk community and citizens that the
11 honorable City Council reject Madison Square Garden's
12 special operating permit in perpetuity. Thank you

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Eugene. Next
14 we're going to have Pamela Wolf. Pamela, you may
15 begin.

16 MS. WOLF: First of all, thank you for allowing
17 me to sit in a much more comfortable chair than
18 those. I appreciate it. I am Pamela Wolf, Board
19 Member and former Save Chelsea president. I am not a
20 sports fan, but I have a fond memory of Madison
21 Square Garden. I went to Mike Todd's birthday party
22 for Elizabeth Taylor, and that's a very fond memory.
23 It was not however, in the present Madison Square
24 Garden it was in the one on Eighth Avenue and 50th
25 street. I think I make my point with that.

2 Save Chelsea strongly opposes granting Madison
3 Square Garden a special permit to operate its Arena
4 in perpetuity. We support Community Board 5's
5 recommendation to deny any special permit unless MSG
6 formally agrees to pursue relocation, and unless the
7 length of the permit is restricted to three years.
8 The time is ripe to find an alternative location for
9 MSG. Midtown Manhattan is decompressing at a
10 historical rate.

11 Per the New York Times, this city now has nearly
12 75 million square feet of vacant office space, enough
13 to fill more than 26 Empire State Buildings. The
14 half block formerly occupied by the Hotel
15 Pennsylvania directly across Seventh Avenue from Penn
16 Station is now a field of rubble with no realistic
17 prospect of development. Combined with a half block
18 to its north, it could handily accommodate a new MSG.
19 Penn Station and the hotel Pennsylvania were
20 historically linked by a tunnel under Seventh Avenue.
21 This connection could be restored as an indoor
22 passage between the station and a new MSG, and even
23 allow for creation of covered Penn Station access
24 points to the north and to the east.

2 Plans that would keep MSG above Penn Station will
3 inevitably amount to unacceptable compromises. The
4 two uses are clearly incompatible, as documented in
5 the railroads recently-- recent report.

6 Disagreements between representatives of the
7 railroads and Madison Square Garden in the City
8 Planning Commission's June 7 public hearing made it
9 clear that only a seriously flawed resolution can
10 ever really emerge. Madison Square Garden was built
11 when Penn Station had even fewer users than the
12 200,000 it was built for. The new station now serves
13 over 600,000 A number that is expected to grow
14 significantly. The station's original platforms have
15 been interrupted by countless columns introduced to
16 support MSG, inhibiting not just circulation, but
17 critical emergency egress.

18 It is alarming that the station's egress travel
19 distances exceed current code minimums by over 40%
20 and that its smoke purge capacity is substantially
21 less than required by law. It must be said that this
22 makes Penn Station especially vulnerable to a terror
23 attack. Public officials who allow its unsafe
24 condition to continue must share responsibility for
25 any tragedy that may result.

2 The fortune that would be spent on any solution
3 keeping MSG above Penn Station could far more
4 rewardingly be-- be invested in better separate homes
5 for each. The ripple effect would benefit the entire
6 city and inevitably-- and invaluablely enhance its
7 power to attract visitors and talent. Thank you very
8 much.

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Miss Wolf.

10 Next, we will have Tom Devaney, who will be
11 speaking on behalf of Elizabeth Goldstein, who had to
12 leave. Tom, you may begin.

13 MR. DEVANEY: Thank you, Chair Riley, and
14 Subcommittee members. Thank you Chair Riley and
15 Subcommittee members. Thank you for this opportunity
16 to provide testimony regarding Madison Square
17 Garden's arena special permit application. I hope
18 that you will take the time to review our written
19 testimony which provides greater detail than I will
20 be able to share with you today. The operating
21 permit before you is an opportunity for the city to
22 support the transformation of both Penn Station and
23 Madison Square Garden. We hope that you will provide
24 that strong direction with the appropriate balance of
25 carrots and sticks. The City Council should grant an

1 arena special permit for a maximum of only five
2 years, not in perpetuity as requested by MSG. The
3 special use permit should not be extended beyond five
4 years unless there is objective evidence that the
5 reconfiguration or re-siting of MSG has made
6 significant planning progress at the time of an
7 extension application. This is an opportunity to
8 transform a subpar train station, the nation's
9 busiest, and into a world class one commensurate with
10 its civic importance.

12 If you grant an operating permit to MSG in
13 perpetuity, we will have lost a key lever to ensuring
14 a better future for the Penn district.

15 In recent months, a new approach Two Penn Station
16 and Madison Square Garden has renewed hope for
17 achieving a grand train hall and gracious public
18 space. It shows that we have vastly more expansive
19 options than had been presented to the public for an
20 improved train hall and area circulation. We must
21 not shy away from exploring-- selecting amongst the
22 most innovative options within the real practical
23 constraints at the moment, including the available
24 federal funding.

2 The public use of Penn Station must be paramount
3 to all uses on the block, including Madison Square
4 Garden and Two Penn. Thank you for this opportunity
5 to share comments today.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Councilmember
7 Bottcher?

8 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Tom is it?

9 MR. DEVANEY: Yes.

10 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: From Municipal Art
11 Society, which historically was one of the lead
12 organizations calling for MSG to be moved. When did
13 the municipal Art Society come around to accepting
14 that MSG is staying, and what-- what is it about-- is
15 it the ASTM plan in particular that the MAS likes?
16 If you could walk us through, and explain that.

17 MR. DEVANEY: Well, we-- we did find that the
18 ASTM plan is, given the constraints of keep-- the
19 constraint of keeping MSG in its place, is a very
20 sound design. We're not necessarily wedded to it,
21 per se, but we thought that it was a good alternative
22 given the constraints.

23 We're also being realistic, in that, number one,
24 we felt that regarding the 10 years or the 5 years
25 that-- that 10 years would be too much time, and that

2 the opportunity for the funding is there, and it's
3 incumbent upon the transit agencies to-- to come
4 together and maximize that opportunity for-- for
5 funding.

6 So we're-- we thought that the five years was--
7 was acceptable for-- for the City Council, and the
8 agencies to come to a-- a decision on the future.

9 Now, our position has always been that MSG in a
10 different location allows for a much better design.
11 But we're also being realistic, and that is certainly
12 our-- our hope. But we also are being realistic, and
13 felt that the ASTM plan is a very reasonable design
14 alternative with the constraints given.

15 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: To Eugene, Liam, and
16 Pamela: Do you-- Have you seen-- One thing missing
17 from today (it's been like four hours) is like a
18 fleshed-out plan for moving MSG, with some numbers
19 attached to it, and some details. Have you seen
20 anything like this that could help inform our plans
21 here?

22 MR. DEVANEY: I'm sorry, Councilmember. I
23 missed-- I couldn't hear the first part of it.

24 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: It was more for the--
25 your fellow panelists, about the need to see a plan

2 or proposal with some details about how you would
3 move Madison Square Garden, and where it would go.

4 MR. BLANK: I can't speak for them. But I have
5 not seen-- As someone who has been studying this
6 issue of Madison Square Garden, and also through-
7 running at Penn Station for a number of years now. I
8 have not seen a comprehensive cost benefit analysis
9 of either moving or relocating Madison Square Garden,
10 as well as actually looking at the feasibility of
11 through-running of which there are numerous ways in
12 which it can be achieved, and that's important to
13 point out, because it's often described by the
14 railroads as sort of one monolithic version. And
15 that sort of sets if-- sets it up as an easy, you
16 know, straw man argument. So, we haven't seen
17 anything that we can actually compare it with the
18 Penn expansion proposal, for example. So we look
19 forward to seeing that, hopefully.

20 MR. SINIGALLIANO: I would just say that, yes, it
21 seems that MSG is not particularly interested in
22 trying to find a change, I think they're worried on a
23 number of issues they're worried about: can they find
24 a location that works for them, which they might be
25 able to find, I think they're worried about how much

2 it would cost the move and how much the government
3 would actually put in that plan. But they're also
4 very worried about moving would entail the loss of
5 their permanent tax exemption. And as long as that
6 permanent tax exemption is in place, they're not
7 going to want to move, because they're not going to
8 want to take the chance that they would lose that. I
9 think if the state made a change and, and took away
10 their permanent tax exemption, I think you would find
11 that they would probably be more amenable to actually
12 seriously looking at the case of moving, because it's
13 one of the oldest arenas. And, you know, they're
14 building the new sphere in Las Vegas. I'm sure they
15 would love to have a new spot with a new place. But
16 it's not worth giving up such amazing tax exemption
17 when all the rest of us are paying taxes.

18 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you all.

19 MS. WOLF: I didn't get a chance to--

20 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Oh, you were just-- I
21 should have known.

22 MS. WOLF: That's okay. I waited--

23 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: No. I want to hear from
24 you. Please.

2 MS. WOLF: I think I'm old enough to realize that
3 people don't think in terms of major-- major
4 upheavals like moving MSG would be. It's a lack of
5 imagination. And I think there's not enough public
6 pressure. I think that MSG, maybe, in the back of
7 their minds, they realize that a move is inevitable,
8 as has been the case in the last two moves of MSG.
9 But they're-- they're probably terrified of the
10 prospect.

11 I think that this city and this country deserve
12 to have a world class train facility with through-
13 running, and above-grade, dramatic, imposing
14 structure, and that it would change the face of the
15 city and our economy. It would be a major, major
16 asset for us to have. Somebody had better get brave,
17 and try to see that it happens. Thank you.

18 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. This panels is
20 excused. The last in-person panel that signed up
21 that I'll be calling is Andy Donahue, David Holowka,
22 Matthew Robertson, and Joanne Dunbar. Excuse me if I
23 mispronounce your name. Holowka. Sorry. And if
24 there's anyone in the chambers who wish to testify
25 and did not do so, please see one of the Sergeant At

2 Arms to fill out a speaker's card, and we will make
3 sure that your voice is heard.

4 Okay. First, we'll have David Holowka.

5 David, can you just press the button for the mic,
6 please? Thank you.

7 MR. HOLOWKA: Thank you. Good afternoon. I'm
8 David Haloga, a Chelsea resident. As an architect
9 I've read with great concern the Compatibility Report
10 for Madison Square Garden and Penn Station, prepared
11 by the railroads. Fundamental safety concerns of
12 egress and smoke evacuation or compromised. As
13 Pamela noted, some egress travel distances exceed
14 code minimums by over 40%. To know of these risks
15 and fail to take appropriate action is to assume
16 responsibility for them.

17 The longer a permit Madison Square Garden
18 receives, the longer these emergency conditions will
19 persist. As you make your decision on this permit,
20 it should be foremost in your minds that lives are at
21 stake. Granting Madison Square Garden's request for
22 an arena permit in perpetuity as requested would
23 leave the city with no leverage at all to make Penn
24 Station safe. We've already seen how unresponsive
25 The Garden is to a 10-year permit like the one for

2 which the City Planning Commission just voted. The
3 risk Penn Station poses to human life is far too
4 pressing for anything longer than the three-year
5 permit recommended by CB 5. The station's critical
6 importance to the city and potential as a terror
7 target, leave it unconscionably vulnerable. Driving
8 Madison Square Garden to find a new home, the option
9 that would allow for the safest and most
10 appropriately uplifting and welcoming Penn Station,
11 requires the kind of pressure and urgency a three-
12 year permit would bring to bear.

13 The longer a permit MSG receives, the more its
14 incompatibility with Penn Station is our problem.
15 The shorter the permit, the more it's MSG's problem
16 to solve.

17 Creating a Penn Station worthy to stand as New
18 York's main entrance will require vision, initiative
19 and determination. That kind of big thinking that
20 created world class urban spaces like Rockefeller
21 Center and the High Line. That won't come out of
22 giving Madison Square Garden ever more time to stay
23 where and essentially what it is. The City Planning
24 Commission's vote to support a 10-year permit
25 contingent only on peripheral improvements, and MSG's

2 is hypothetical agreement with 30% design documents
3 for a renovated Penn Station is deeply disappointing.

4 We need a Penn Station commensurate with New
5 York's greatness, not benches, signage, and partially
6 improved truck loading. As we've already seen, 10
7 years might as well be perpetuity when it comes to
8 motivating The Garden's owner. Approving only a
9 three-year permit will show MSG the city means
10 business this time. That's the message they need to
11 hear loud and clear.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Joanne Dunbar.

13 MS. DUNBAR: Hi, I'm Joanne Dunbar. I'm Joanne
14 Dunbar. I'm a long term resident of New York City
15 and taxpayer, and a frequent attendee of events at
16 Madison Square Garden. I'm a big hockey fan and
17 music lover, and from October today I am at MSG
18 probably at least one to two times a week. I wish
19 I'd been there more in June this year, but that was
20 not to be. So when I bought my Ranger season tickets
21 13 years ago, the accessibility of MSG and its
22 proximity to work and home were key factors. Our
23 offices at the time were in Times Square, and then
24 moved to Manhattan West. So it was very easy to get
25 to MSG. More importantly, it was very easy for any

2 of my clients or colleagues that I wanted to go to
3 games with. If they live in any of the outer
4 boroughs, Long Island, Westchester, Connecticut or
5 New Jersey, it was very easy for them to attend a
6 game at MSG.

7 Myself, I'm a resident of New York, I lived in
8 Midtown, and most recently just moved to Park Row
9 across the street, and I take the subway to the games
10 to and from the games all the time. The public
11 transports really important. Often I'll go on my own
12 to meet colleagues or clients. And I have no
13 hesitation as a woman traveling by myself to and from
14 the games.

15 I also don't think we can overlook that Madison
16 Square Garden is one of the most iconic landmarks in
17 New York City. There is so much history there. I
18 have friends, family, and colleagues from around the
19 world that come to New York City. And every one of
20 them without fail has a bucket list item to see
21 something at Madison Square Garden. I tend to get
22 that phone call. I think it's my sparkling
23 personality, but it could be that I have Rangers
24 season tickets. So I hear from all of them.

2 Madison Square Garden is a very special place.
3 And there is nothing more electric than watching a
4 Rangers playoff game at The Garden. I am also a New
5 York City taxpayer. And with all the important
6 issues that we have in our city right now, including
7 housing insecurity, equity and education, managing
8 crime, I truly cannot understand how spending the
9 time, energy, and money on moving MSG could be on
10 anyone's priority list.

11 So from my perspective, MSG is exactly where it
12 should be. And we need to make sure that we can keep
13 those bucket list items coming true at the world's
14 most famous arena. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Matthew Robinson.

16 MR. ROBINSON: Hi, my name is Matthew Robinson.
17 What I've set up on this table is basically a model.
18 This is Madison Square Garden. This is the-- the
19 roadway or the-- the taxiway. This is Two Penn
20 Plaza. This is 31st Street and there's 33rd street
21 and this is where the Hulu theater is. One of the
22 things that everyone said that was part of the
23 railroad, was that the need to get certain components
24 from Madison Square Garden. Okay, I need this, I
25 need this, and I need this. If I can't get those

1 things, I will not be able to do the things that are
2 necessary for there to be a Penn Station.
3

4 So critical of what the railroad has said, but no
5 one has said for Madison Square Garden is that we are
6 willing to strongly consider taking these components
7 and giving it to them swapping it, selling it, or
8 whatever that might be. In addition to it, is in
9 terms of it being three years, five years, ten years,
10 in three years, we will know whether these components
11 can be taken, if they're willing to do it or not.

12 And if they're not willing to do it, it's a moot
13 point. Because these things are critical. Hulu
14 Theater is still is very critical in the components.

15 So without those negotiations happening, and I
16 think it can happen in three years, then you'll know
17 whether they're-- the parties are serious in getting
18 everything done. In addition to it, as ASTM said,
19 you can remove those things, get the-- with these
20 components, you will have a Penn Station that's
21 actually nice. And okay, Madison Square Garden
22 moves, which ASTM said is they can move and then we
23 can integrate the midsection very easily.

24 But without the, what I will say the book ends,
25 there's no point going further. Thank you. Oh, and

2 I advocate that in three years, you'll know whether
3 it's a good deal, and also you'll know if there's the
4 Biden administration, and a whole bunch of other
5 components. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you for your
7 demonstration, Matthew. Anthony, you've got to come
8 with something better next.

9 MR. DONAHUE: Thanks so much for having me. I'm
10 still trying to figure out the water bottle and the
11 cups but I think you did a great job.

12 Thank you so much for having me. My name is
13 Anthony Donahue. I have been going to Madison Square
14 Garden since I was eight years old. I'm 39 now. The
15 first event I ever went to was the Ringling Brothers
16 Barnum and Bailey Circus. I've been a Knicks season
17 ticket holder since 2004. I've been going to Knicks
18 game since 1994. The first Knicks game I ever went
19 to was actually our 16th straight victory versus the
20 Miami Heat, April second 1994.

21 I live in the North Bronx, Co Op city. A hop on
22 the 2 train-- Oh, you from there too?

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: That's my district I
24 represent.

2 MR. DONAHUE: Oh, we got to talk about something
3 after this, by the way.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Oh, yes, we do.

5 MR. DONAHUE: No, because I go running towards
6 city Island and those people on mopeds, they're
7 dangerous.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: All right, we'll talk about
9 it after, all right. Focus on the permit.

10 MR. DONAHUE: Just sayin'. Just sayin'.
11 Alright, so I hop on the 2 train, one shot, get off
12 at Penn Station, go right upstairs. Everybody talks
13 about it's so complicated around Madison Square
14 Garden. It's pretty easy to me. You take-- You know
15 whether it's the 2 train, whether you're coming from
16 Brooklyn, Queens, Long Island, Westchester,
17 Connecticut. To me, it's very easy. You get off the
18 train, you go right upstairs, you go watch hopefully
19 the Knicks or Rangers win, go to a great concert.
20 It's an amazing place. It's um-- I've been lucky
21 enough to go to many arenas around the country to
22 watch the Knicks play. And I'm not just saying this
23 because I love the Knicks and I bleed orange and
24 blue. There's no arena like The Garden. I've been
25 to Staples Center is cool. It's not The Garden.

2 I've been to Chicago, Phoenix, obviously the local
3 ones, Boston, DC, Philly. They don't touch The
4 Garden.

5 Also, The Garden of Dreams does amazing things
6 for so many kids, you know around the world, in the
7 area. My little sister who I recently lost to brain
8 cancer three years ago, they were very big with us,
9 they sent us to a Cher concert. My sister was an old
10 soul. She loved Cher. They gave us a suite. And
11 when she was sick, they always did things for us all
12 the time, things I'll never forget. Anytime I
13 brought her to the games, they were extremely
14 accommodating, especially her last year because she
15 was in a wheelchair so she needed a lot of extra
16 help. So The Garden, The Garden of Dreams, The Great
17 Garden security, ushers, guest services was
18 absolutely incredible.

19 And like I said, I know The Garden moved a few
20 times, way before most of us were probably even born.
21 It belongs in one spot and one spot only. And that's
22 on the corner of 33rd, and Seventh, and Eighth, and
23 31st, and all that. I don't got the cups and bottles
24 like this man over here. But you know what I mean.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Anthony.

3 Councilmember Bottcher, do you have questions for
4 this panel?

5 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHEER: I've also seen Cher at
6 The Garden.

7 MR. DONAHUE: Yeah, we went-- Yeah. My sister,
8 she was 21 when she passed, but she was an old soul,
9 so she liked all those artists, unlike me. You know,
10 I'm more on the--

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I'm sorry-- sorry to hear
12 about your sister passing.

13 MR. DONAHUE: Thank you very much. I appreciate
14 that.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much to this
16 panel for testifying. Anthony, please see one of the
17 sergeant's to give you a full information so I can
18 follow up with you about what you said.

19 MR. DONAHUE: Someone's going to get hurt on
20 those paths, by the way.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah. You said City Island.
22 That's Councilmember Velázquez's district.

23 MR. DONAHUE: Well, it's towards-- I'm in section
24 five. So I go running towards City Island.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. So we'll talk about
3 after, all right?

4 MR. DONAHUE: All right.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: All right. Thank you so
6 much. This panel is now excused. We're going to go
7 to our panel online. The first panel I'm going to
8 call is-- Oh, I'm sorry, Angelina, this is-- you
9 should call.

10 COUNSEL: Oh no, it's fine. So again, we're
11 going to do two minutes per witness. If there's
12 anyone else here in person, just let us know, let one
13 of the sergeant's now and we'll put you on a panel
14 later, but the first panel is Aaron Sanders, Jessica
15 Walker, Kate Cunningham, Bria Donohue, and Kevin
16 Hooshangi. I'm sorry if I'm mispronouncing names.
17 So the first name is Aaron Sanders.

18 Aaron, are you there?

19 MR. SANDERS: Yes, I'm here but I don't have the
20 ability to start my video.

21 COUNSEL: That's okay. You can go ahead. We can
22 hear you.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Aaron, you may begin.

24 MR. SANDERS: Great. Good afternoon Chair Riley,
25 and Subcommittee members. My name is Aaron Sanders

2 and I'm the Public Policy Director at the Association
3 For A Better New York. On behalf of ABNY, I testify
4 before you to express our support of Madison Square
5 Gardens proposal to extend its special permit to
6 continue its operating at its world premiere arena.
7 Madison-- Madison Square Garden has been the
8 preeminent sports, civic, and entertainment Arena in
9 New York City since 1879. MSG is a world renowned
10 venue that sits at the nexus of commercial and
11 tourism activity, attracting upwards of 4 million
12 people annually, and serving as one of New York
13 City's most vital assets.

14 MSG's ability to attract top tier talent and host
15 World Class events makes it a must visit destination
16 for spectators and performers alike. Given the
17 prominent historical significance and its impact on
18 the city's economy, ABNY contends that MSG should be
19 granted a special permit to continue operating at its
20 current location.

21 Additionally, the economic benefits of MSG
22 operating at full capacity are tremendous. Each year
23 MSG employs 12,000 workers and contributes \$2 billion
24 to New York City and State's economy and supports
25 thousands of more jobs outside of the arena's at

2 bars, restaurants and attractions in midtown
3 Manhattan that relies on MSG's crowds to survive.
4 MSG is part of the fabric of New York, and ABNY
5 strongly supports the special permit to allow for the
6 continued operation of the arena.

7 As a strong vibrant New York City, it requires an
8 active and busy Madison Square Garden operating at
9 full capacity. As we continue to recover from the
10 economic devastation of the pandemic, reducing MSG's
11 operating capacity would have a devastating ripple
12 effect on the tourism and hospitality industry and
13 New York City. If MSGs operation permit were
14 eliminated it will cost thousands of jobs. It is
15 imperative that New York City grants MSG a new
16 special permit to continue operating in its current
17 location, and we hope that you will support their
18 proposal. Thank you for your time and consideration.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Aaron. Next will
20 be Jessica Walker. Jessica, if you can hear me, you
21 may begin.

22 MR. WALKER: Thank you Chair Riley. I'm Jessica
23 Walker, I'm the president of the Manhattan Chamber of
24 Commerce. For more than 100 years, we've been
25 focused on advancing the economic vitality of our

2 region by building a strong and thriving climate for
3 the broad business community. And of course that
4 includes small businesses like local storefronts and
5 bodegas, as well as large corporations such as
6 Madison Square Garden.

7 As you know, MSG is currently in the process of
8 renewing its operating permit, which is soon set to
9 expire. Without this permit, the arena would be
10 unable to host events with more than 2500 spectators.
11 And so we think it's time for-- time to renew MSG's
12 operating permit in perpetuity, ensuring the world's
13 most famous arena in the world's greatest city is
14 operating at its full capacity.

15 Without a special permit, Knicks and Rangers
16 games as well as major concerts and a host of other
17 special events would be reduced to a handful of
18 spectators, if they happened at all. We should not
19 be using the viability of their entire business as a
20 bargaining chip in negotiations. Madison Square
21 Garden is responsible for \$2 billion in economic
22 impact to the city and state each year, they have
23 been extremely helpful to the small businesses that
24 are in the adjacent area, helping them to bounce
25 back, bringing in crowds that want to grab a drink or

2 dinner before they attend the show at MSG. And so we
3 really need them to be here as we continue to, to
4 recover from COVID.

5 We need major landmarks like MSG to lead our
6 recovery, and that requires a renewal of their
7 special operating permit. They need the stability,
8 which is also in the best interest of New York. And
9 so now is the time to commit to anchor institutions
10 like MSG that have committed to us and have invested
11 here. We really hope that you will support MSG at
12 this time. And as I said, we-- we urge you to renew
13 The Garden special operating permit in perpetuity.
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Jessica. And
16 Jessica, just for clarification, you said Manhattan
17 Borough of Commerce, correct.

18 MS. WALKER: Manhattan Chamber of Commerce.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Manhattan Chamber of
20 Commerce. Thank you. Next we'll have Kate
21 Cunningham. Kate, if you can hear me, you may begin.

22 MS. CUNNINGHAM: Good afternoon Chair Riley,
23 Councilmember Bottcher, and members of the
24 Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak
25 today. My name is Kate Cunningham. I'm the Director

2 of Government Affairs at the New York Building
3 Congress. We represent over 500 constituent
4 organizations and over 250,000 skilled tradespeople,
5 professionals who design build and own the city's
6 buildings.

7 The Building Congress strongly supports the
8 application to allow the continued operation of the
9 Madison Square Garden Arena through the renewal of
10 their special operating permit. We firmly believe
11 Madison Square Garden is vital to the economic
12 development and cultural vibrancy of New York City,
13 adding over 12,000 jobs the city's economy,
14 attracting over 4 million visitors to midtown
15 Manhattan, and generating more than \$2 billion in
16 economic activity for our city and state. Its
17 strategic location near Penn Station makes it the
18 perfect venue for hosting major concerts, events,
19 Knicks and Ranger games, and other cherished public
20 entertainment throughout the year.

21 We urge you to consider these important economic
22 contributions the arena makes to our city. The
23 permit would allow for events with more than 2500
24 spectators, and any reduction in its operating
25 capacity will not only affect the arena itself, but

2 also have economic consequences for the businesses
3 that operate in its vicinity. A full post-pandemic
4 recovery in New York City requires the success of
5 major institutions like MSG.

6 While we actively support Penn Station
7 revitalization we also firmly believe that The Garden
8 should remain in its current location. Renewing its
9 special permit would ensure its continued operation,
10 allowing it to play a critical role in our city's
11 recovery and future prosperity. The Building
12 Congress recognizes the unique cultural and economic
13 value of MSG, and we urge you to reaffirm your
14 commitment to its ongoing success. Thank you for
15 your time.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Kate. Next will
17 be Bria Donahoe. Bria if you can hear me You may
18 begin.

19 MS. DONOHUE: Thank you Chair Riley and members
20 of the Subcommittee for holding this hearing today.
21 I'm Bria Donohue, Government Affairs Manager at AIA
22 New York. We represent architects and design
23 professionals committed to positively impacting the
24 physical and social qualities of our city. For too
25 long commuters and visitors have-- have suffered from

1 inadequate accessibility, efficiency, and
2 connectivity at Penn Station. Right now there is an
3 opportunity to create a transformative change and
4 design a space that meets the current demands of the
5 largest transit hub in North America. Recognizing
6 the extraordinary significance of MSGs location
7 directly above-- above Penn Station, we believe that
8 the following key principles must be considered in
9 helping to inform the decision making process for MSG
10 special permit: First is the civic importance of the
11 public realm surrounding Penn Station and MSG. The
12 new criteria outlined in the DCP zoning text
13 amendment elevate the primacy of the public realm by
14 ensuring high quality outdoor space, improve--
15 improved pedestrian access, and more specific
16 criteria for MSGs truck loading operations.

17
18 Second is the need for transformation at Penn
19 Station. Despite its fundamental importance as a
20 lynchpin to the city and regional economy. Penn
21 Station has not benefited from a complete
22 reconstruction since 1963. The design outlined in
23 MTA's Penn Master Plan addresses critical life safety
24 deficiencies within the station, improves station
25 circulation, provides ADA accessibility, and enhances

2 user experience through a consolidated concourse
3 featuring high ceilings, extensive daylight, and more
4 visible and generous station entrances oriented to
5 passenger destinations.

6 Third is the interrelationship of MSG and Penn
7 Station. Under the new DCP text amendment, MSG is
8 required to be consistent and compatible with Penn
9 Station, and the transfer property is critical to
10 achieving the vision for the project. AIA New York
11 supports an appropriate limited term extension of MSG
12 special permit tied to DCP's criteria that
13 prioritizes the creation of vibrant public spaces in
14 and around Penn Station and MSG, as well as the real-
15 - realization of a modern-- of a modernized Penn
16 Station, with the civic presence and scale envisioned
17 by the by the MTA and the region's railroads.

18 Now is the time to return the major
19 transportation hub to a design that New Yorkers
20 deserve. Thank you.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Last person on
23 this panel is Kevin Hooshangi. Kevin, if you can
24 hear me, you may begin.

2 Kevin, are you there?

3 MR. HOOSHANGI: Can you guys hear me?

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can hear you. You
5 may begin.

6 MR. HOOSHANGI: Okay. Thank you. To the
7 subcommittee, thank you for your time and I'll be
8 brief. My name is Kevin Hooshangi. I own American
9 Whiskey Restaurant on 30th Street between Seventh and
10 Eighth Avenues. I'm here to speak on behalf of
11 Madison Square Garden keeping the special operating
12 permit in perpetuity.

13 When we opened 10 years ago, the World's Most
14 Famous Arena and the World's Most Famous City was the
15 reason we chose this space on a rundown block needing
16 new businesses to revive. We achieved success in
17 large part to MSG and their adoring following. The
18 COVID-19 pandemic caused us to lose a major part of
19 our neighborhood office business, and sadly it has
20 not returned. Madison Square Garden has helped us
21 tremendously, and often overlooked in all their world
22 class events and charity work is that they truly care
23 about the neighborhood and people with jobs in their
24 neighborhood.

2 We couldn't exist without them in New York City
3 is a better place for them in this location. Thank
4 you for your time.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Kevin. This panel
6 is now excused.

7 The next panel I'll be calling up is Steve
8 Marshall, William Borock, Lynn Ellsworth, Samuel
9 Turvy, and Andrew Cronson.

10 Andrew Cronson, you may begin.

11 MR. CRONSON: Good afternoon. I am unfortunately
12 not able to start my video, I apologize. But I'll
13 begin regardless.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: That's all right, you may
15 begin.

16 MR. CRONSON: Thank you. Good afternoon, and
17 thank you all for the truly the extraordinary
18 opportunity to testify today. My name is Andrew
19 Cronson and I'm a student at Columbia University who
20 commutes daily through Penn Station. I also commuted
21 to NYU, and even had my graduation in the Hulu
22 theater at MSG.

23 I've sadly understood the regrettable transit
24 situation at Penn Station each day, not once but
25 twice daily.

2 I love the enthusiasm that patrons of The Garden
3 have had for their arena. But that is no solace for
4 the 600,000 people who rely on the station below for
5 their livelihood. Placing the discretionary whims of
6 a select few with funds to spare like those we have
7 heard about the public good can be described as New
8 York's biggest shame.

9 Do not believe the hype of promoters that the
10 current situation is tenable or even desirable. The
11 consequence and maintaining the status quo is
12 immeasurable, both for now and for my generation and
13 beyond. No number of Billy Joel concerts, Garden of
14 Dreams, corporate responsibility stunts, token
15 donations to public plazas, through-block atriums, or
16 cosmetic faceless will ameliorate the sobering
17 reality that Madison Square Garden and Penn Station
18 are invariably and permanently incompatible from the
19 perspective of the public.

20 This application for a special parliament in
21 perpetuity must be denied outright without
22 reconsideration, and a temporary extension of just a
23 few years at most be allowed to pave way for this
24 essential and critical relocation, which has already
25 happened four times before this.

2 The fact of the matter is that Madison Square
3 Garden was already given an order to move, and the
4 city council has an obligation to see that through.
5 Like Yankee Stadium, which recently moved, it'll be a
6 win-win for all.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time has expired. Thank you.

8 MR. MARSHALL: Hello?

9 COUNSEL: Can we do next Steve Marshall?

10 MR. MARSHALL: Yes. Hello, can you hear me?

11 COUNSEL: We can hear you go ahead.

12 MR. MARSHALL: Okay, I am a resident of 30th
13 Street, which is a block away from The Garden, and
14 we've been alarmed for the last couple of years with
15 a GPP from the governor who has recently abandoned
16 the plan. But our block is still in the crosshairs
17 of Amtrak, and the MTA, and New Jersey Transit to be
18 destroyed. So they can build some kind of tracks or
19 terminals.

20 Now there's multiple ways to do this project
21 without destroying our block with hundreds of people,
22 thousands of jobs. And as a matter of fact, I played
23 at American whiskey. It's in my building. It's
24 downstairs. Maybe Kevin doesn't know that our
25 building will be destroyed if The Garden stays there

2 and they put the Gateway project through onto our
3 block.

4 The only plan I've heard that's good so far is
5 the ATSN plan which does not destroy our block. The
6 other plan to leave The Garden there destroys our
7 block. So if the Hulu Theater can go and save our
8 block, and surrounding blocks, with-- I've heard all
9 these people talking about how the-- the businesses
10 in the area benefit from The Garden. But all those
11 businesses, the [inaudible] pub and all the
12 businesses, American Whiskey, on our block will be
13 destroyed, not to mention the 150 year old St. John
14 the Baptist churches on our block that feeds the
15 homeless.

16 I don't see The Garden feeding too many homeless.
17 Now, I've also played it The Garden. It was
18 incredible, you know, and you know, the guy talked
19 about every musician wants to play The Garden. Not
20 too many get to play there. But every musician in
21 New York has been on 30th Street either rehearsing or
22 using the music stores there. It's known as music
23 street. When I moved into my building 47 years ago,
24 Tommy Ramone lived downstairs with me. I did sound
25 for the Ramones. It's a major music block that

2 should be landmarked. The 150-year-old, fully-
3 functional, second-oldest Catholic Church should be
4 landmarked and yet they want to destroy it. So
5 whether they moved The Garden or not, I like the ATSN
6 plan. The MTA plan is a leftover from what The
7 Garden came up with that they just cobbled together.
8 The ATSN guys have been working on it for a while,
9 and thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Steve. Next will
11 be Lynn Ellsworth. Lynn, you may begin.

12 MS. ELLSWORTH: Oh, I'm sorry. I timed-- timed
13 this beforehand, thinking I had three minutes. It
14 goes to two and a half. May I continue?

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: No Lynn, you may start right
16 now.

17 MS. ELLSWORTH: I'm sorry. I can't do it. I
18 guess I'll declined to do it. I can't cut it off too
19 much. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Lynn, are you testifying?
21 I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you.

22 MS. ELLSWORTH: Um, I tried to explain that my
23 testimony runs to two minutes and 30 seconds.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: That's fine. That's fine.
25 Just go ahead.

2 MS. ELLSWORTH: All right, thank you. The
3 destruction of Penn Station in the 60s came about
4 through a cosy arrangement between two brothers,
5 James and Irving Felt. One was a real estate
6 developer in the head of City Planning, and the other
7 was a phenom financier. They replaced the station
8 with Madison Square Garden, the tower notice Two
9 Penn, and the underground rat's nest we all know as
10 the train station.

11 It wasn't just an architectural crime though. It
12 was a crime against the public good, whose
13 repercussions we are still contending with.

14 Fast forward to the present and it's deja vu all
15 over again. MSG is now owned by a real estate mogul,
16 Dolan, whose deal with the city has allowed him to
17 avoid-- avoid nearly a billion in property taxes.
18 His neighbor, fellow mogul Roth of Vornado, who owns
19 Two Penn, has also played rough with the public good.
20 Roth has reclad Two Penn to resemble Hudson Yards,
21 demolished the historic Hotel Pennsylvania, and
22 blights the neighborhood to get the state to use
23 eminent domain on his behalf. Although his project
24 is temporarily on hold, it's not officially dead.
25 The state is still pushing a plan to seize an entire

2 block to give Roth the rights to erect ten towers
3 eventually, most of them supertalls.

4 And among the victims of the plan are the
5 Capuchin Monks, the Franciscan Order, who took a vow
6 of poverty and have served the poor out of their
7 church since 1870.

8 The public transit agencies (MTA, Amtrak, and New
9 Jersey Transit) have a big stake in this game,
10 because they entertain hopes for unspecified sums of
11 money from Vornado, they're silent about Two Penn and
12 the mess that Vornado is making, but they are not
13 silent about the mess that is MSG. The report says
14 it's incompatible. It's in the way, as is Two Penn,
15 but the agencies didn't go that far. Moreover,
16 advocates of through-running point out that we need
17 to take out hundreds of columns that support MSG
18 because they limit track improvements needed for
19 through-running. So instead of contending with these
20 realities, our technocrats are bending over backwards
21 coming up with workarounds to please Dolan and Roth.
22 That isn't good. The policy of mogul pleasing limits
23 our ability to transform the busiest train station in
24 the country into a 21st century transit hub.

25 So--

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time expired. Thank you.

3 MS. ELLSWORTH: --there's a huge elephant in the
4 room that nobody will talk about it. (So this is
5 where I'm kind of going slightly over.) If ever
6 there was a good case for using the state's power of
7 eminent domain in a just way, this is it. Don't use
8 eminent domain against the Capuchin Friars. Use it
9 to take Madison Square Garden and Two Penn away from
10 the moguls. It's a crime that our democracy, that
11 ESD will not wield powers of Leviathan for the people
12 instead up or enriching real estate moguls. Eminent
13 domain used the right way at Penn against the
14 mobile's will cut the Gordian knot that has made
15 solving the Penn mess so impossible. It would even
16 change public support for the use of eminent domain,
17 support that was eroded since Kelo v. New London in
18 2005. Thank you very much.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Lynn. Next will be
20 Samuel Turbie. Samuel, you may begin.

21 MR. TURBIE: Thank you. Sam Turbie, Rethink New
22 York City. Amanda Burton, James Dolan, Jane Jacobs,
23 Andy Byford. Why Amanda Burton? You do need to go
24 back and ask her what the 10-year permit was about.
25 Clearly Madison Square Garden was supposed to move,

2 although they may have some of their lawyers put some
3 elastic language in the financial documents. We very
4 much support CB 5's resolution calling for a short
5 three-year permit so that Madison Square Garden has
6 to pay attention to the public. James Dolan: He's
7 gotten a billion dollars in foregone taxes. He was
8 supposed to move The Garden. Instead he put a
9 billion dollars into the current building, and he's
10 put two and a half billion dollars into the sphere in
11 Las Vegas. I ask you, as our city council: Why does
12 Las Vegas get a free arena and we're told that we
13 have to pay for his? This is ridiculous. Las Vegas
14 gets a free arena and we've we frankly get the bum's
15 rush.

16 Jane Jacobs: People ask if Rethink has
17 engineering to support it. We can talk offline about
18 that. We have plenty of prominent engineers that
19 support our plan. But some of us aren't engineers.
20 I'm not. Well, you know what Jane Jacobs wasn't a
21 trained city planner. Should we take her books off
22 the shelves? Or did they contain an abundance of
23 truths? Rethink's plan contain such an abundance of
24 truths, and they were very much influenced by her.

2 Andy Byford. Why do I bring him up? The public
3 knows and trusts him. Let him look at the true
4 running plan. I promise you he's not going to be
5 nickel-and-diming us about engineering. He's going
6 to try to figure out whether there are essential
7 truths there or not. If he tells us it can't happen,
8 we'll listen to him. But I suspect he's going to
9 tell us it can happen. It will be one of the
10 greatest things that ever happened to New York City.
11 And it will be much better if Madison Square Garden
12 moves. Through-running operates much better without
13 The Garden atop it. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Sam. The next
15 person will call up is William Borock. William are
16 you there?

17 It seems like we lost William. William, if you
18 can hear me, please, you could sign on back, or
19 please submit your testimony to
20 LandUseTestimony@nyc.gov.

21 The last panel that I'll be calling remote will
22 be William Colgan, Adam Braunstein, Hector Chevalier,
23 Josiah Darnell, Kareem Ahmed, and John Mudd.

24 So we'll start first with Adam Braunstein. Adam,
25 if you can hear me, please unmute, and you may begin.

2 MR. BRAUNSTEIN: Thank you. Good afternoon, and
3 thank you for allowing me to speak today. The Empire
4 State Building, the Chrysler Building, Statue of
5 Liberty, and Madison Square Garden are the most
6 iconic buildings in the greatest city in the world.
7 Only the Sistine Chapel has a more recognizable
8 ceiling than the world's most famous arena.

9 I work as part of the more than the 20 unions
10 that support MSG alone. For the most part, these
11 folks all take their many modes of transportation
12 that come through Penn Station to get to their
13 destination. For the guests who are coming to the
14 mecca of basketball, as well as boxing, and the home
15 of the most unforgettable live entertainment on the
16 planet, Madison Square Garden could not be better
17 situated to service their guests and employees. We
18 should not be discussing the length of time the
19 permit, but how to best help MSG continue to provide
20 these experiences. Thank you very much for your
21 time.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next person I'll
23 call up as John Mudd. John, you may begin.

24 MR. MUDD: Hi, there. Thanks for having me. My
25 name is John Mudd. I'm with the Midtown South

2 Community Council, and I've lived here and for 36
3 years, and I've been-- our council has been running
4 for as just as long. We can-- We can assume that the
5 developers have-- that corporations in general have a
6 preference in our city, and that's from our
7 healthcare, our housing, our-- any kind of
8 development. We know they have such a hold on this
9 city. That's-- That's not a hyperbolic statement at
10 all.

11 And this favoritism has led us down a very bad
12 path. I mean, it's from our healthcare to our food
13 resources and to our housing. And now this Penn
14 Station has been an ongoing battle. And we have to
15 rethink our city, and we have to put the Penn
16 Station. We have to-- We can't have the community
17 put into a Penn Station, we need a Penn Station
18 that's fit for the community. We have to think about
19 the surrounding area, we have to understand-- and its
20 relationship to the communities around.

21 And Dolan has been crashing out-- Dolan-- this
22 arena is keeping us from really thinking big, and
23 changing our pathway, and changing our future. And--
24 and we're at a point in our lives, that our city is
25 destroying itself, it's eating itself up. And it's

2 cause that the preferences have always gone to our
3 developers. We have to start thinking about the
4 people. And this is your chance, the Committee's
5 chance to start putting things in motion in the right
6 direction. And that's what we're asking for.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, John. Next, we'll
8 have Karim Ahmed. Karim, you may begin.

9 MR. AHMED: Good afternoon. Thank you so much
10 for hosting. I just-- I'm an architect. I worked
11 for Rethink NYC. And I worked on a lot of
12 feasibility studies and [inaudible] studies. And I
13 just wanted to clarify a point earlier that-- it kind
14 of [inaudible], and I will qualify and say
15 [inaudible] renewing the permit. But I did want to
16 just clarify an earlier point: It is possible to
17 have through-running, or to have improved rail
18 operations beneath The Garden, but it is far, far
19 from optimal. Due to the circular layout of The
20 Garden structure, the columns that touchdown into
21 Madison-- into Penn Station are sort of-- have a
22 friction with the rectangular nature which reflects
23 the original station. And that's why you're always
24 going to have limited options in terms of
25 circulation, more complications, more cost, and much

2 a more difficult time improving Penn Station as long
3 as Madison Square Garden is on top of it.

4 I would also add that to the points made earlier,
5 we're robbing Peter to pay Paul in the grand scope of
6 our city, by allowing The Garden to stay where it is.
7 We can find better places for it. We can make it
8 bigger. We can make it better. We can make it just
9 as great an attraction, if not more than it is right
10 now, and still retain the ability to have an
11 [inaudible] transportation in our city. Thanks very
12 much.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Karim. Next, I'm
14 going to call up Josiah Darnell. Josiah, you may
15 begin.

16 MR. DARNELL: Good afternoon.

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Josiah, you may begin.

18 MR. DARNELL: Yes. Can you hear me?

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can hear you.

20 MR. DARNELL: Okay, so, you know, I'm Josiah
21 Darnell. I am currently a part of the Garden
22 [inaudible] and also a production assistant for MSG
23 networks. And I really want to speak to the fact
24 that the proximity of The Garden and where it's at
25 has been nothing but beneficial to me and my

2 experience there. The fact that it's above Penn
3 Station has just been so convenient for me. With me
4 living in Queens, it is really just a bus and a train
5 ride there and I'm at work, I'm at The Garden, and
6 I'm involved and everything else that Garden of
7 Dreams has to offer. Like so many have said before
8 me, that The Garden of Dreams have been so impactful
9 to so many kids and their families. I'm a testament
10 to that. And the fact that I've been able to make so
11 many trips there, as well as my grandmother, as well
12 as my family. They've all been able to see me be a
13 part of those Foundation programs, and they've been
14 able to enjoy everything that The Garden has to
15 offer.

16 So the fact that it's there, it's convenient,
17 it's beneficial, and not to mention the fact that
18 it's just around so many good attractions and it is
19 an attraction itself, you know and I think that they
20 should be granted that that special permit in
21 perpetuity just to continue that way, if they can
22 continue to be as beneficial as they had been and
23 impact everybody that they have been impacted to.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next person I'll
25 call up is William Colgan. William, you may begin.

2 MR. COLGAN: Good afternoon. My name is Bill
3 Colgan, and I'm a stagehand at Madison Square Garden.
4 The Garden is a state-of-the-art arena that rightly
5 deserves the label of the World's Most Famous Arena.
6 In the next two weeks, The Garden will be hosting
7 three Drake, one Billy Joel, and seven Phish
8 concerts. And while that's going on, we will host an
9 NYPD graduation. Please come to The Garden and
10 experience the wonder of the place.

11 MSG sits on top of Penn Station which is an
12 important place. Penn Station is home to the Long
13 Island Railroad, New Jersey Transit, Amtrak, and a
14 host of subway lines. There is no better place to
15 locate an entertainment facility than where MSG is
16 located. Hundreds of thousands of guests have
17 benefited from the mass transit access that The
18 Garden's location provides. In 2024, NYC is going to
19 implement congestion pricing for Midtown and lower
20 Manhattan. What type of message does it send that
21 you want to consider moving MSG from the most
22 accessible mass transit location in New York City to
23 somewhere else? There are many great designs for
24 Penn Station that include The Garden in its current
25 location, please leave The Garden where it is and

2 create a great Penn Station. You can have both,
3 please renew the program. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Bill. I'm going
5 to call up one more panel. So this panel is excused.
6 I'm going to be calling up Bill Borock again and also
7 Hector Chevalier.

8 Bill, Hector, if you can hear me please accept.
9 Okay, we have Bill here. Bill, if you can hear me
10 You may begin.

11 MR. BOROCK: Can you hear me?

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can hear you, Bill.

13 MR. BOROCK: Okay. There are 10 things I want to
14 say. One is the request for permit should not be
15 given. Two: One reason MSG should walk like a
16 couple of hundred steps probably, maybe more, to a
17 location [inaudible], which is mentioned before.
18 What happened is, MSG should stay where it is now, a
19 new MSP could be built, it's built [inaudible] that
20 arena. It doesn't have to be the same arena where
21 Knicks fans are going, because I [inaudible] Knicks
22 fans also. [inaudible] Garden of Dreams. There's no
23 reason why the Graden of Dreams can't continue. No
24 one's going to say stop the charity. Jobs: There'll
25 be more jobs, not less jobs. [inaudible] after 10

2 years, [inaudible], build a new industry, jobs, and
3 you have to empty space there [inaudible], the City
4 and State [inaudible] so there will be more
5 [inaudible], not less [inaudible].

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Bill.

7 MR. BOROCK: Facial recognition should be
8 stopped. Did I mention Garden of Dreams?

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay.

10 MR. BOROCK: And I [inaudible] jobs, et cetera,
11 [inaudible] bnion jobs.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Uh, Bill. I think you're
13 going in and out, so we can barely hear you.

14 MR. BOROCK: All right. Overall, if MSG moves to
15 a location right there [inaudible] Hotel
16 Pennsylvania, world class Penn Station, world class
17 arena, [inaudible].

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you so much. Your time
19 has expired.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Bill. Okay, do--
21 did we get Hector? Yes, we did.

22 COUNSEL: He's there. We unmute him.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Hector, if you can hear me,
24 please begin.

2 Hector, you can unmute yourself and you may
3 begin.

4 Hector, if you can hear me, you may begin.
5 Please unmute yourself. It looks like Hector is
6 having some issues. So we'll just stand at ease.

7 If there's anybody in the chambers who wishes to
8 testify on this special permit, please see one of the
9 Sergeant at Arms. If there is anyone online who
10 wishes to testify, please let us know.

11 Hector, are you there?

12 Okay, it looks like we're having issues with
13 Hector. We're going to stay at ease for a few
14 seconds to see if he has anyone else who wishes to
15 testify.

16 COUNSEL: So, if you're on the Zoom, just go
17 ahead and use the raise hand function so we can
18 identify you if you haven't testified.

19 Hector, we look-- it looks like we're still
20 having trouble unmuting you. So if you just want to
21 e-mail-- e-mail us your testimony, you can do so at
22 LandUseTestimony@council.nyc.gov.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: All right, there being no
24 other members of the public who wish to testify on
25 LUs 245 relating to the arena text amendment, and LU

2 246 relating to the Madison Square Garden special
3 permit, the joint public hearing is now closed and
4 the items are laid over.

5 Before I conclude today's business, I would be
6 remiss if I do not celebrate the departure of
7 somebody who's very special to the Land Use team.

8 As being the chair for the last year and a half.
9 I have the opportunity and the privilege to work next
10 to Angelina, and this is going to be her last hearing
11 with us. So I just wanted to give her a round of
12 applause for all the work that she's been doing. And
13 I also wanted to wish her good luck on her future
14 endeavors.

15 COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair and thanks, everyone.
16 It's been a pleasure to work with everyone on the
17 team behind the scenes. You guys know it's not easy
18 to put these hearings, and you have been a great
19 Chair to work with.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Angelina. That
21 concludes today's business. I would like to thank
22 the members of the public, my colleagues,
23 Subcommittee Counsel, especially Councilmember
24 Bottcher for saying the entire hearing, Land Use and
25 other Council staff, and the Sergeant At Arms for

2 participating in today's meeting. This meeting is
3 hereby adjourned. Thank you

4 [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date 07/31/2023