

# COMMERCIAL OBSERVER

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Port Authority  
Bus Terminal.

MOLLY STROMOSKI/COMMERCIAL OBSERVER

# What should the Port Authority do with the billions allocated for a new bus terminal?

By Terence Cullen and  
Liam La Guerre

**W**hen the biggest bus terminal in the country—which serves more than a quarter million passengers every day—gets \$7 billion to \$10 billion worth of renovation money, it's only natural to daydream about what happens next.

Commercial Observer called a few of the big shots of the business and asked them what they wanted to see.

**William Rudin, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Vice Chairman, Rudin Management, and Chairman, Association for a Better New York**

Mr. Rudin wants to see a new bus terminal that's focused on the needs of travelers for years to come, in terms of both design and purpose. That includes looking at alternative uses, as well as putting the infrastructure in place to accommodate travelers shuffling between New York and New Jersey. In terms of potential uses for the facility, Mr. Rudin backed "whatever creates the most economic return for the Port Authority and deals with the economic reality that a project of this size faces."

**Richard T. Anderson, President, New York City Building Congress**

Mr. Anderson, who leads the pro-construction group, wants to see a mixed-use building that plays into the various needs of Midtown. That's not just transportation, but retail and commercial space, he said. The ideal comparison for Mr. Anderson is Santiago Calatrava's PATH Station at the World Trade Center. "The more imaginative a design it turns out to be, the better," he said. "It should incorporate a creative mixture of uses catering to the great diversity of people who will use and visit the new terminal."

**Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President**

Ms. Brewer said it's still early in the decision process to say what really needs to happen. She said any project has to include the local community board in the process,

which already has concerns about the project's impact on a nearby church and homeless shelter. Ms. Brewer hopes the flow of traffic under the Hudson River can be addressed,



William Rudin

too. "It's a planning process," Ms. Brewer said. "What we really need are a lot of tunnels under the Hudson River."

**Richard LeFrak, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, LeFrak**

Mr. LeFrak has interests on both sides of the Hudson,

so anything that speeds up mass transit between the two states is a benefit. He likened the Jersey City waterfront to the outer boroughs in terms of its importance to the overall vitality of the city. "Any improvement in the interstate modality of transportation is an improvement for

everybody," he said. "It's one metropolitan region, one large economy, that consists of this whole region."

**Theresa Genovese, Principal, CetraRuddy**

"Some competitions are all about generating blue-sky ideas," said Ms. Genovese of CetraRuddy, the world-renowned architecture and design firm, "and that's typical of an international open competition. But this particular challenge [the bus terminal] needs a competition written to respect all the constraints that exist in New York City and with the Port Authority



Theresa Genovese

itself. The latter may require a second stage—when there is a second stage, the proposals submitted tend to be more realistic, and the competition sponsors appear to be going forward with those that make the cut. Or there could be an ideas competition to help the Port Authority write



Gale Brewer

a better RFP. In a second stage, the submitting teams can present more refined ideas, and present them to a group that includes the stakeholders, not just a third-party design jury."

**Lee Skolnick, Principal, Lee H. Skolnick Architecture and Design Partnership**

"I think it needs to be glassy," declared Mr. Skolnick, head of the Lower Manhattan-based architecture and design firm. "Right now it's like a fortress. The way they have the buses going around it, it insulates people from the outside.



Lee Skolnick

A bus station is a civic building and it should engage with the city and its surroundings. And a dark, insulating building also promotes insulated behavior.

It makes people feel removed from the city and vulnerable because things can happen in the dark. It needs to be light and airy." And before getting too wide-eyed, Mr. Skolnick cautioned everyone to be cost-conscious. "In this city, \$10 billion only goes so far. Things are very expensive. I'm sure this will be a union job. No matter what the price tag is at the beginning, it almost always seems to exceed that in the end."

**Barry LePatner, Founder, LePatner & Associates**

One of the key things will be keeping costs down and sticking to a timeline. "The deciding factor for the public is we are going to get the maximum bang for our buck?" said Mr. LePatner. "Clearly, public-private partnerships have a lot to do in the way of assisting in the funding of much-needed infrastructure projects. The best situation should be reviewed by government to make sure that the public is protected... Optimistically, it would be the best if we have a terminal in the next 10 years. That would be nice."



Barry LePatner

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: NICHOLAS HUNT/PATRICKMULLAN.COM; COURTESY LEE H. SKOLNICK ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN PARTNERSHIP; ALEXA HOYER/PATRICKMULLAN.COM; COURTESY CETRARUDDY; ONATHON ZIEGLER/PATRICKMULLAN.COM; BRYAN BEDDER/GETTY IMAGES; J. GRASSI/PATRICKMULLAN.COM