



The unveiling of the new Moynihan Train Hall - by Joe Aquino

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The new Moynihan Train Hall, which connects to Penn Station, should provide a tremendous boost to the retail scene in the lower part of Midtown Manhattan. Retailers in and around the building will see increased traffic from commuters, tourists, and locals who live, work, and play in the surrounding neighborhoods, and this already vibrant part of the city will become even livelier, and more important to the local economy, thanks to this new development.

Moynihan Train Hall—a \$1.6 billion project located between Eighth and Ninth Aves. at 31st to 33rd Sts., in the James A. Farley building (formerly New York City’s main post office)—opened on December 31, 2020. It features elaborate lounges, shops, restaurants, and passageways to Penn Station, a 92-ft.-high skylight, and installations by artists Kehinde Wiley, Stan Douglas and Elmgreen & Dragset. Eating and shopping options at Moynihan include Magnolia Bakery, H&H Bagels, Starbucks, Damselfly Flower, and fancy greeting card seller Lovepop. Look for other retail tenants to come on the scene in the near future.

The new facility will serve Long Island Railroad, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and Amtrak passengers. In addition, Moynihan Train Hall offers easy connections to two of New York City’s primary subway routes: the A/C/E line, which runs beneath Eighth Ave., and the 1/2/3 line beneath Seventh Ave. Commuters can access these lines via the Lower Concourse or aboveground at 33rd St. Local bus connections—headed uptown, downtown, and crosstown—are also available at 34th St.

The Moynihan Train Hall and Penn Station will operate as one Amtrak complex. Amtrak will maintain a presence at Penn Station, but Moynihan Train Hall will be its New York City base. Amtrak customers will use Moynihan Train Hall as their “front door” for boarding trains, and on arriving to New York passengers will have the option to exit at either The Moynihan Train Hall or Penn Station. Connections between those trains and other modes of transportations will probably become faster, more efficient, and pleasanter. The new building has expanded Penn Station’s concourse space by 50%, alleviating the previous congestion issues commuters faced.

The partnership that developed Moynihan Train Hall consists of The Empire State Development Corp., Moynihan Station Development Corp., Amtrak, MTA, LIRR, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the Related Companies, and Vornado Realty Trust. When the original structure opened as a post office in 1913, efficient artificial lighting systems for gigantic buildings were still in

the development process. Thus, the postal workers who sorted the mail needed natural light to see what they were doing. The solution: the spectacular skylight that has remained in place to this day, and which now offers visitors a visual treat worthy of New York City.

The original Penn Station was designed by McKim, Mead & White in 1910. The original Penn Station was demolished and rebuilt in 1965 to incorporate the new Madison Square Garden. Today, Penn Station is the busiest railroad station in the Western Hemisphere, serving more than 600,000 passengers per weekday as of 2019. It is located below Madison Square Garden, near many Midtown Manhattan landmarks, including Hudson Yards, the Highline, Herald Square, the Empire State Building, Koreatown, and Macy's department store.

The Moynihan Train Hall has opened up many opportunities for New York City's business community. Observers of the real estate market foresee high-end retailers taking space there, and in nearby buildings. The resulting increase in foot traffic will make the area more desirable to office and residential developers, and should lead to increased property values and rental rates. This development has combined with current lulls in commercial and residential leasing to create unforeseen and unheard-of opportunities for the business community. Owner/investors, commercial renters, and startup specialists are all likely to find tremendous growth opportunities in and around Moynihan Train Hall.

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