

★ HOCHUL, ADAMS BACK PROPOSAL TO REKINDLE NYC

Pandemic effects still having impact

BY MICHAEL GORMLEY

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ALBANY — Gov. Kathy Hochul and New York City Mayor Eric Adams on Wednesday backed a new plan to revive New York City, which is still mired in recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, to create a more vibrant place to work and play.

The report by a panel of city and business experts recommends 40 initiatives, many of which require city and state action to change laws and regulations. Some of the initiatives remain general goals, such as “active storefronts” and “expand open streets.”

Other recommendations are more specific. One calls for allowing day care centers to be allowed higher than first floors of buildings and another is a “moon-shot goal” of creating 500,000 new housing units over the next decade.

The plan seeks to bring workers back into the city, as well as help those working at home in the outer boroughs and on Long Island to adopt hybrid work routines to take advantage of the

arts, outdoor dining and enticing public spaces.

The plan “is going to create opportunities to change peoples’ lives,” Hochul said at the Association for a Better New York breakfast meeting. “It’s long overdue.”

Hochul and Adams called for updating zoning laws “to increase the supply of supportive housing” in the city that is fair and equitable. She didn’t provide specifics on what that entails.

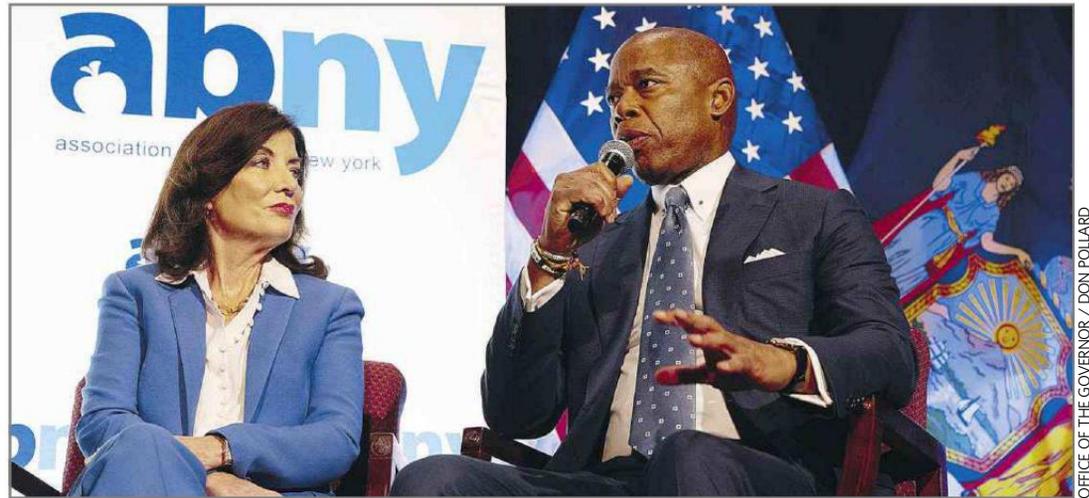
In February, Hochul had proposed an expansion of “accessory dwelling units,” which are additions, renovations or backyard cottages to convert single-dwelling properties. She withdrew the idea for a statewide measure following opposition by Long Island legislators, but said at the time she should hoped to present a revised proposal.

Among the specific plans announced Wednesday:

- “Re-imagine” the commercial districts as vibrant 24-hour destination with affordable housing and nightlife.

- End commutes into Manhattan that can be “painful and dreary.”

- Convert midtown and other central business districts from primarily commercial space to mixed use and change regulations to allow underused office buildings to be used as housing and for other new purposes.



Gov. Kathy Hochul and New York City Mayor Eric Adams proposed a plan to revive New York City.

AIMING TO REVITALIZE NEW YORK CITY

Among the initiatives recommended by a panel of city and business experts to revive New York City are:

- **Allowing day care centers** to be established higher than first floors of buildings.
- **Converting midtown and other central business districts** from primarily commercial space to mixed use and changing regulations to allow underused office buildings for housing and other new purposes.
- **Making midtown and other business districts** “pedestrian-oriented places.”
- **Increasing the supply of housing** for all income levels to help employers attract workers.
- **Decreasing commute time** to midtown and other business districts.

- Make midtown and other business districts “pedestrian-oriented places” under the guidance of a new city position to be called director of public realm.

- Increase the supply of housing for all income levels to help employers attract workers.

- Decrease commute time to business districts. Part of this would be through congestion pricing, which will charge a fee to drive into the most congested parts of Manhattan to encourage use of public transit.

- Encourage employers to make

space for child care centers.

- Create a “world-class network of public space in Midtown.”

- “Re-imagine” waste containers and collection.

- Expand art offerings and provide public space for performances.

- Make transit and housing more accessible for disabled people.

- Modernize libraries to create remote work spaces.

- Expand use and storage of e-bikes.

Hochul and Adams said the

need is urgent for the city to recover from the pandemic. Hochul noted that office space vacancy is high, half of workers haven’t returned to Manhattan on a regular basis and jobs are growing at three times the rate of housing stock. Public safety also must be improved to attract worker and residents back to “the beating heart” of New York state, she said.

Adams said the plan is a challenge, but New Yorkers have risen to challenge before including after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

“I always want you to remember Sept. 12,” he said. “We got up . . . when we got up, America got up.”

One of the most influential state legislators, Assemb. Amy Paulin (D-Scarsdale), called for support of the plan and said it is a “moment in history to reinvent New York.”

“The pandemic and its aftereffects are a golden opportunity to make New York stronger,” Paulin said. “This is our chance to recover in a way that grows our economy, does it sustainably, and helps all communities.”

Plan widens use of cheaper LIRR CityTicket

BY ALFONSO A. CASTILLO

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A proposal to deeply discount all LIRR trips made within New York City could lead to rush hour trains taking in a lot more riders, who would be paying a lot less than those from Long Island, officials said.

Among the initiatives in the “action plan” released by Gov. Kathy Hochul and Mayor Eric Adams on Wednesday was an expansion of the Long Island Rail Road’s CityTicket, which offers a

discounted fare of \$5 for all trips within New York City, including Penn Station, Jamaica, and stops in Queens and Brooklyn.

The program had long been in place on weekends and was expanded this year to include off-peak, weekday hours. The proposal would make CityTickets valid “all day, every day — including during peak travel times.”

According to the proposal, “This new, more affordable peak travel time option will save many riders up to an hour or more compared to long bus and

subway commutes, and it will induce some commuters to switch from traveling by car.”

The CityTicket has been limited to off-peak hours, because that’s when the LIRR tends to have extra capacity. The proposal would invite additional riders onto trains during the busiest hours. And those riders would be paying far less than any from Long Island.

A one-way peak ticket from Penn Station from Valley Stream — within the LIRR’s cheapest fare zone on Long Island — cur-

rently costs \$12.50, and is expected to go up next year. Passengers boarding from Rosedale, just two miles away, would pay 60% less.

And while Long Island passengers would have first dibs on seats during the morning commute, in the evening rush, they’d compete with discounted city riders for seats on trains from Penn Station, Grand Central Madison or Atlantic Terminal.

Kyle Strober, executive director of the Association for a Better Long Island, noted there are

already LIRR passengers “who have stood from Penn Station to Hicksville who ask just where will these Queens commuters stand?”

Gerard Bringmann, chairman of the LIRR Commuter Council, said weekday ridership is around 65% of pre-pandemic levels, “so we definitely have the capacity to do this.”

Officials with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the LIRR’s parent organization, would not comment on the proposal.