



Corridor Vision BQE North and South

Eric Adams, Mayor | Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner

North and South Round 1 Update: Imagining A Vision

December 2022



Imagining A Vision

The New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) received important feedback from the BQE Corridor Vision North and South workshops. Some of the feedback themes include:

- Historical planning efforts undertaken by local communities should help guide this process, though some of those prior plans may require updating based on changes since they were initially envisioned, including BQGreen, Fix the Ditch, the BQE Expert Panel Report, and the Meeker Avenue reimagining. Under The K Bridge Park was cited multiple times as a positive project and process.
- New green space, affordable housing, community facilities, and opportunities to reconnect communities through covered roadways are critical, but require a holistic development approach, centered on equity.
- Thinking comprehensively about modern freight needs, both in the BQE corridor and regionally, is important.
- There is a need for clear maintenance planning for anything newly created, and for clarity around existing jurisdictional and maintenance responsibilities.
- There is a desire for the New York State Department of Transportation to be more actively involved in the BQE Corridor Vision, particularly in BQE North and South.
- NYC DOT should be very transparent about design considerations, and the pros and cons of various design concepts.

Background

NYC DOT is actively engaging communities along the BQE corridor in Brooklyn in a BQE Corridor Vision process. The BQE North and South engagement process will identify potential short and long -term projects for the State-owned sections of the BQE north of Sands Street to the Kosciusko Bridge and south of Atlantic Avenue to the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge, as well as the surrounding neighborhoods. This will proceed concurrently with the BQE Central engagement process, which will identify potential alternatives for the City-owned structure from Atlantic Avenue to Sands Street. New Federal funds, available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act, provide an exciting opportunity to upgrade the BQE for the 21st Century.

BQE Corridor-wide Kick-off

Engagement for the BQE Corridor Vision began with two corridor-wide virtual kickoff meetings, held virtually on September 28, 2022 and October 6, 2022. About 250 members of the public attended these events, and translation services were offered in Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Polish, Arabic, and Yiddish. On October 11, 2022, NYC DOT held a virtual meeting with the Community Visioning Council, comprised of community and civic stakeholders who will help advise on project engagement and serve as ambassadors to their communities. [Learn more about the CVC](http://www.bqevision.com/connect/community-visioning-council) at www.bqevision.com/connect/community-visioning-council.

BQE North & South Engagement Round 1 Context and Summary

Following the Corridor-wide Kick-Off, NYC DOT and the consultant team launched BQE North and South workshops with virtual and in-person meetings. On November 3, 2022, a joint BQE North and South virtual workshop was hosted with about 100 attendees. Translation services were offered in Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, Polish, Spanish, and Yiddish.

An in-person workshop for BQE South was hosted on November 7, 2022 at P.S. 371 Lillian L. Rashkis High School in Sunset Park, with about 20 public attendees. Translation services were offered in Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Spanish.

On November 10, 2022, an in-person workshop for BQE North was held at M.S. 126, John Ericsson Middle School in Greenpoint, with about 40 public attendees. Translation services were offered in Cantonese, Mandarin, Polish, Spanish, and Yiddish.



NYC DOT will announce community partners mid-December. Community partners will lead grassroots engagement, with emphasis in BQE North and South communities, to gather additional stakeholder input before the next public workshop series in March 2023 and subsequently.

BQE North & South Workshops

The November workshops were designed to facilitate an introduction to the BQE Corridor Vision for the BQE North and South, and begin the process of soliciting feedback to help inform concepts.

To provide background on the BQE, workshops included information on the history of the BQE and some of the structures it is made up of, its role in regional freight and transportation, and past plans, concepts, and ongoing projects for the various sections. In order to help inspire the visioning process, the workshops also shared information on transformational projects on other roadways around the world.

Attendees were encouraged to share feedback on those concepts and to pinpoint areas of the BQE North and South sections where they see challenges and opportunities. This was done in facilitated breakout sessions divided by sub-region. For the in-person BQE South meeting, that included the Cobble Hill Trench, Gowanus Expressway Viaduct, Third Avenue Viaduct, and the Bay Ridge Trench. For the in-person BQE North meeting, that included Greenpoint/the Meeker Avenue Viaduct, Williamsburg/the Williamsburg Trench, and the Park Avenue Viaduct around the Navy Yard, Clinton Hill, and Fort Greene.

The [full set of materials](https://bqevision.com/north-south/materials) can be viewed online at <https://bqevision.com/north-south/materials>.



A workshop focused on BQE North was held on November 10, 2022 in Greenpoint.



Workshop attendees were invited to use maps to identify opportunities and issues.

Feedback from Participants

Feedback was gathered through this effort and has been synthesized into several main categories and observations.

BQE North

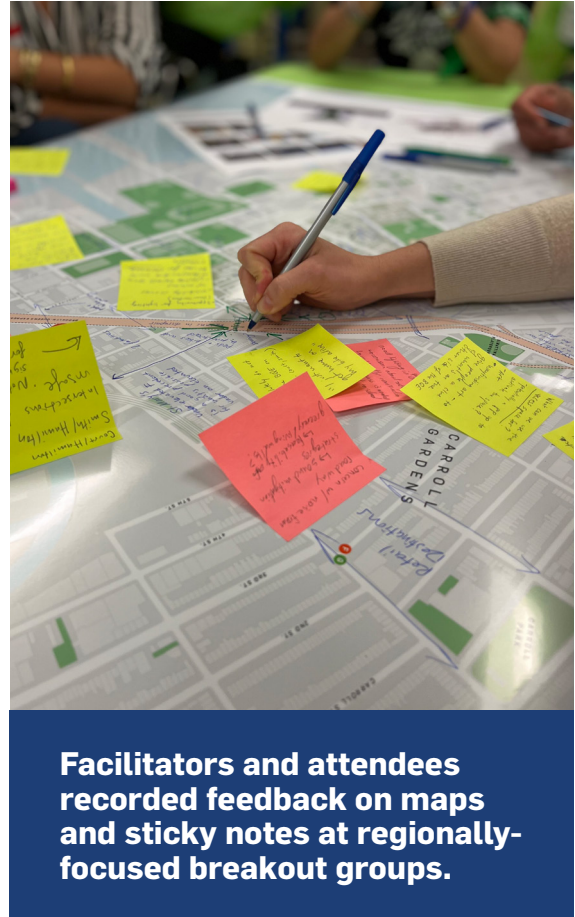
Parks & Open Space

- Look for opportunities for more community space, possibly by combining small parcel open spaces into continuous community spaces for short-term activations (rotating programming including food trucks), and utilizing triangular lots as public plazas.
- Investments in and continuous maintenance of adjacent parks and open spaces are important; to connect communities, it is critical to improve public spaces like Macri Triangle, Jaime Campiz playground, Commodore Barry Park, and other open space near the Brooklyn Navy Yard.
- Make equity, sustainability, and resiliency central to planning for expanding public space along all sections of the Brooklyn BQE corridor, while also ensuring that investments are equitable and accessible to all.

Street Safety, Transportation, and Quality of Life

- Look at ways to improve on/off-ramps and underpasses, especially around Morgan Avenue, McGuinness Boulevard, Flushing Avenue, and Wallabout Street, with emphasis on addressing interactions with pedestrians and cyclists.

- Focus on reducing conflicts and crashes and improving pedestrian and cyclist access, including closing slip lanes, adding signage, adding lane markings, and extending signal timing (especially for people with mobility disabilities), replacing crossable barriers with hardened non-movable barriers, and separating modes.
- Facilitate public transit connections between southeast Greenpoint and northern East Williamsburg and existing subway lines (G, L), potentially including dedicated bus lanes on Manhattan Avenue, introducing small buses (“colectivos”), and establishing a trolley system along Meeker Avenue.
- Look at ways to activate the areas around and under the viaducts and underpasses of the BQE to make them more inviting and accessible, including possible lighting changes and community-focused infrastructure (e-bike charging stations, bike lanes, and last-mile delivery solutions, etc.) and activities (urban farming, etc.).
- Address illegal parking and abandoned vehicles, institute better parking management to make existing parking more available, and have fewer public effects.
- Consider the acres of parking fields in East Williamsburg as opportunities for public spaces.
- Look at ways to mitigate noise and air pollution (and the health effects of these issues).



Facilitators and attendees recorded feedback on maps and sticky notes at regionally-focused breakout groups.

Traffic & Freight

- Look at ways to redesign intersections and reduce speeding and travel lanes on Meeker Avenue, potentially to generate space for dedicated transit service, bike lanes, and extended sidewalks.

- Explore ways to reduce reliance on vehicles in general, but especially trucks (and their effects), including by shifting freight activity to the water, rail, cargo bikes, or other methods such as off-hour delivery programs, and better utilizing existing industrial areas for newer needs (like package delivery staging for cargo bikes).
- Monitor effects of demand-management strategies and other local changes to avoid additional stress on adjacent areas.
- Explore ways to reduce or eliminate diversion of trucks from BQE onto service roads and into residential areas.

Land Use & Development

- Explore the opportunity to incorporate affordable and/or senior housing, community centers, or other community benefits into design, while balancing concerns about equitable development, and the needs of unhoused New Yorkers already utilizing these spaces.
- Look at opportunities to better connect public housing (like Ingersoll Houses and Whitman Houses) to their wider communities and green spaces.
- Explore ways to introduce green infrastructure solutions for stormwater management and to prevent flooding.

BQE South

Parks & Open Space

- Look for new pedestrian connections to and between existing green spaces and the waterfront; and explore combining small parcel open spaces into continuous community spaces for short-term activations (rotating programming, including food trucks), and utilizing triangular lots as public plazas.
- Investments in and continuous maintenance of adjacent parks and open space are important, such as reuniting Van Voorhees Park and improving John Allen Payne Park

Street Safety, Transportation, and Quality of Life

- Look for ways to improve intersections and on/off-ramps with an emphasis on addressing interactions with pedestrians and cyclists, especially around the Battery Tunnel entrance/exit area, along Hamilton Avenue, Atlantic Avenue, 77th Avenue, and 61st Street.

- Focus on reducing conflicts and crashes and improving pedestrian and cyclist access, adding lane markings, extending signal timing (especially for people with mobility disabilities), separating modes, and expand opportunities for public amenities, like more bike parking, in areas such as 4th Avenue and 65th Street in Bay Ridge, 39th Street and 3rd Avenue in Sunset Park, and Hamilton Avenue, West 9th Street, Hicks Street, and Clinton Street in Red Hook and Carroll Gardens.



Participants shared extensive feedback on community opportunities and issues.

- Potential to improve public transit and connectivity among neighborhoods including through new transit systems and busways, particularly for those neighborhoods that have been cut-off or separated from the rest of the borough by the BQE (like Red Hook, the Columbia Street Waterfront District, and parts of Sunset Park).
- Look for ways to reduce noise and air pollution with treatments such as encasing viaducts with a combination of sound and green walls and adding solar panels to cover certain sections of the BQE.
- Look at ways to activate the areas around and under the viaducts and underpasses of the BQE to make them more inviting and accessible, including possible lighting changes.
- Explore changing parking restrictions and fee structures under the viaducts.

Traffic & Freight

- Look at increasing maritime freight, and increase planning for modern freight needs through design, centralization, and policy changes that disincentivize things like same day delivery.
- Explore increasing the length of on-ramps around 65th Street to provide safer merging conditions and reduce backups into adjacent intersections.

- Look at ways to reduce speeding on streets paralleling the BQE, such as Hicks Street and 3rd Avenue, and minimize diversions from the BQE due to congestion.
- Look thoughtfully at 3rd and 4th Avenues, with clearer balancing and separating of the various competing uses.
- Implement weigh-in-motion and other truck enforcement actions quickly.

Land Use & Development

- Explore the opportunity to incorporate affordable and/or senior housing, community centers, or other community benefits into design, while balancing concerns about equitable development.
- Find better ways to balance the industrial and residential needs of many of the BQE-adjacent neighborhoods that accommodate both uses.
- Look for ways to introduce green infrastructure solutions for stormwater management and to prevent flooding.

Lessons Learned

In addition to the above feedback, the first round of BQE workshops and Community Visioning Council meetings provided feedback on ways to improve engagement going forward. There was a strong interest in having more opportunities for facilitated conversations in break-out groups and group conversations. In response to this feedback, NYC DOT and its consultant team moved towards a more facilitated, interactive format for all three of the BQE North & South Round 1 workshops. There was also interest in creating better ways for attendees of virtual workshops to be part of multiple regional break-out groups. In order to better facilitate this, BQE North and BQE South will have separate virtual workshops in Round 2, in addition to their separate in-person workshops. As further rounds of engagement proceed, NYC DOT and its consultant team will continue to fine-tune engagement approaches based on feedback received.

Similarly, in March 2023, the team will hold Round 2 of BQE North & South engagement to begin “Shaping A Vision” for these sections. This will include sharing preliminary conceptual designs for community feedback, and a transparent explanation and discussion of NYC DOT’s choices in moving forward with these concepts. Throughout this process, NYC DOT and its consultants will continue to engage the Community Visioning Council, Community Partners, and focus groups to expand engagement reach.

Upcoming meetings (all meetings are 6:30-8:30pm):

- February 28, 2023: Central Workshop Round 3 (virtual)
- March 2, 2023: Central Workshop Round 3 (in-person)
- March 21, 2023: North Workshop Round 2 (virtual)
- March 23, 2023: South Workshop Round 2 (virtual)
- March 27, 2023: North Workshop Round 2 (in-person)
- March 30, 2023: South Workshop Round 2 (in-person)

The project website www.bqevision.com outlines upcoming meetings, opportunities for engagement, methods to share feedback, and contains project materials.

Note: This document reflects the feedback from the meetings in summary format and is not a full transcription of feedback received.