



## Corridor Vision BQE Central

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Eric Adams, Mayor | Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner

# Central Round 2 Update: Shaping a Vision

January 2023



# Shaping a Vision

The New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) received important feedback from the BQE Central workshops. Some of the main feedback themes include:

- Ongoing desire to see a minimized or non-existent BQE, and clearer planning around sustainability, climate change, accessibility, and public transit; need consideration of a BQE that prioritizes movement of goods and transit, and optimizes for a future with fewer cars
- Requested elaboration on why a long tunnel or full BQE tear-down is not possible, as well as rationale behind the selection of 2 vs. 3 lanes, how it affects design, and how it relates to State and Federal regulations and requirements
- Desire to see concepts applied to the larger BQE context, both within BQE Central and BQE North and South
- Future concept presentations should have greater emphasis on potential roadway changes, rather than presenting a menu of parkland design options - this was shared especially in many of the non-triple cantilever groups
- Provide more information on potential effects on nearby buildings and areas, including focus on reducing and addressing local residential vibrations, and communicating how and where those benefits are strongest

## Background

NYC DOT is actively engaging communities along the BQE corridor in Brooklyn in a BQE Corridor Vision process. The BQE Central engagement process will identify potential alternatives for the City-owned structure from the Atlantic Avenue interchange to the Sands Street interchange. Concurrently, 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 Kosciuszko Bridge and south of Atlantic Avenue to the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge, as well as the surrounding neighborhoods. 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 Central Round 1 Engagement Recap

Engagement for the BQE Corridor Vision began in September 2022. Round 1 of the BQE Central engagement included several workshops, Community Visioning Council (CVC) meetings, and other stakeholder engagement, which helped inform the ideas shown in Round 2 of engagement. BQE Central's Round 1 engagement has been summarized [on the project website](https://bqevision.com/central/materials) or <https://bqevision.com/central/materials>.

## BQE Central Round 2 Engagement Context

A meeting of the BQE Central CVC was held on December 7, 2022. Participants were given a high-level overview of anticipated considerations and formats for the meeting, and feedback helped inform workshop planning.

NYC DOT and the consultant team launched BQE Central Round 2 workshops with an in-person workshop on December 13, 2022 and a virtual meeting on December 15, 2022. The in-person workshop was held at the New York City College of Technology in Brooklyn Heights with approximately 200 members of the public attending, and the virtual meeting had approximately 300 members of the public attending. Translation services were offered in Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Spanish.

Additionally, a BQE Central survey was launched and Community Partners were announced on December 13, 2022. Community Partners are community-based organizations that will lead additional grassroots engagement to gather community input, with emphasis on organizations serving underrepresented communities and those serving constituents whose primary language is not English. The BQE Central survey closed January 15th, 2023 with nearly 1900 responses. It will help inform concept refinement and Round 3 of BQE Central engagement.



Additional information on Community Partners can be viewed at:  
<https://bqevision.com/community-partner>.

## BQE Central Round 2 Workshops

Both workshops included a recap and overview of the overall BQE Corridor Vision process, a summary of feedback received in Round 1 engagement, information on design concept considerations, and a walkthrough of design concepts for feedback. There was an opportunity for facilitated question and answers before moving into regionally-focused breakout groups.

The full set of materials can be viewed online at  
<https://bqevision.com/central/materials>.

At the suggestion of the CVC, workshop attendee demographics were collected voluntarily. A relatively small number of attendees chose to respond to these questions, however, they did reveal some data points (full results in Appendix A):

- The majority of attendees were residents of Brooklyn Heights (~70% for in-person and ~52% for virtual), but the next largest groups were “Other” categories (rather than immediately adjacent neighborhoods like DUMBO or Cobble Hill)



- The virtual workshop provided a much greater spread of diversity across nearly all demographics collected (more attendance from non-white participants, greater spread across age ranges, and more representation from a wider set of neighborhoods)

## Feedback from Participants

Feedback has been synthesized across broad/overall feedback and several geographic subgroups.

### Overall BQE

- Need to center NYC/NYS climate-related goals and elaborate on how the different designs effect noise and air pollution, and account for potential storm surge
- Critical to the overall conversation to explain potential costs, how construction will be funded, and any limitations on funding sources, as well as construction effects, phasing, and timelines
- Need to elaborate on how traffic demand is taken into consideration in the different designs and how it affects other areas beyond BQE Central
- Ongoing desire to see NYSDOT more actively and visibility involved in this planning effort; continue conversations with the MTA to coordinate on infrastructure constraints
- Support for additional safety improvement focus, including around on/off-ramps, and for pedestrians and bicyclists



**Workshop attendees were invited to share feedback on concepts.**

- Greater need for enforcement all along the corridor, including overweight/oversize trucks, illegal overnight truck parking, illegal parking generally (especially on parkland), and speeding

## Dumbo & Manhattan Bridge Parks

- Some concerns expressed about how to program the proposed additional open space
- Explore ways to better connect to NYCHA developments (Farragut Houses)
- Explore using design elements to prevent misuse of green space for things like parking
- Look for ways to increase bike infrastructure capacity to, from, and on the Manhattan Bridge
- Getting bridge-bound BQE traffic off of Jay Street would allow for more and better open space options
- Important to preserve access from the BQE to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, some expressed concerns that potential Sands Street changes would have an effect on this
- Look at and potentially integrate existing proposal/existing community ideas for Bridge Park 3 and Trinity Park

## Brooklyn Bridge & Anchorage Plaza

- Consider ways to open up the arches under Brooklyn Bridge to make them publicly accessible

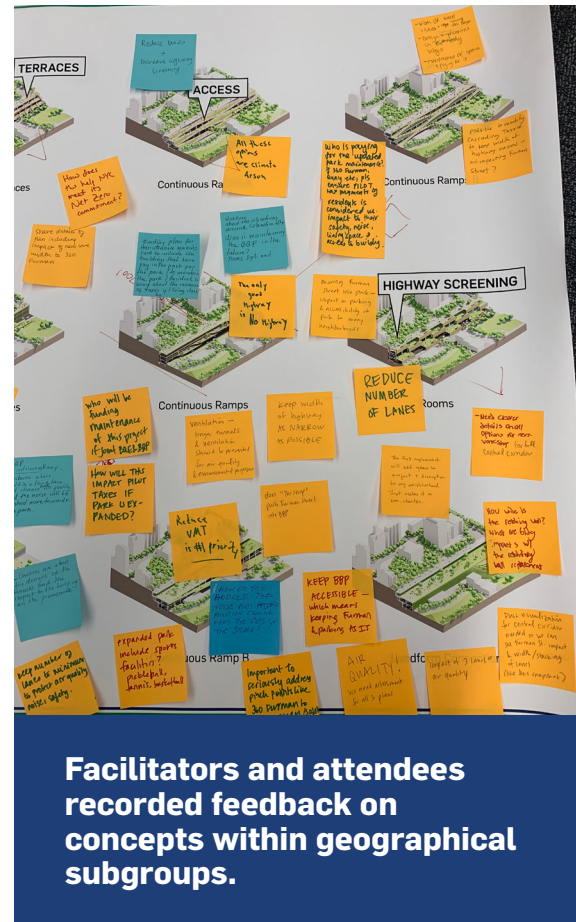


**Facilitators helped attendees record opportunities and issues.**

- Focus on open space/programming that local residents can enjoy rather than tourist attractions
- Look at ways to improve safety and accessibility at crossings, especially for school/student populations
- Accommodate both on/off-ramps and needs of pedestrians and bikes; desire to see more visioning around additional on/off-ramp closures

## Columbia Heights & Adjacent Parks

- Explore ways to minimize the height of the BQE under Columbia Heights bridge
- Desire to keep number of lanes to a minimum/reduce number of lanes
- Many felt increased accessibility and connection from Squibb Park to Brooklyn Bridge Park and the Promenade are good, but there was support for keeping Squibb Park somewhat separate rather than fully integrating it with the Promenade
- Desire to keep any open space activations simple and limited - avoid grand new attractions for visiting tourists



**Facilitators and attendees recorded feedback on concepts within geographical subgroups.**

## Triple Cantilever & Brooklyn Heights Promenade

- Provide more information and focus on air quality improvement, and noise mitigation; provide noise and air pollution assessment in proposed designs; include assessment of air quality in longer tunnel designs and at adjacent buildings Look to maximize climate-friendly approach and align with NYC/NYS climate goals; ensure designs can accommodate climate change related events (storm surge, etc.)
- General support for keeping number of lanes to a minimum/reducing number of lanes and vehicle miles traveled, though there was also concern about lane reductions' effect on traffic and congestion on adjacent local roads
- Desire to reserve lane(s) for public transit, electric vehicles, freight, etc.

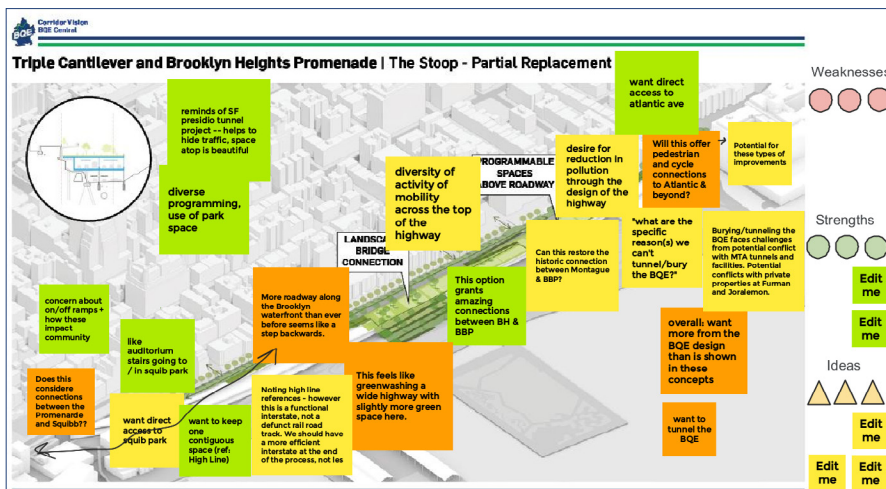
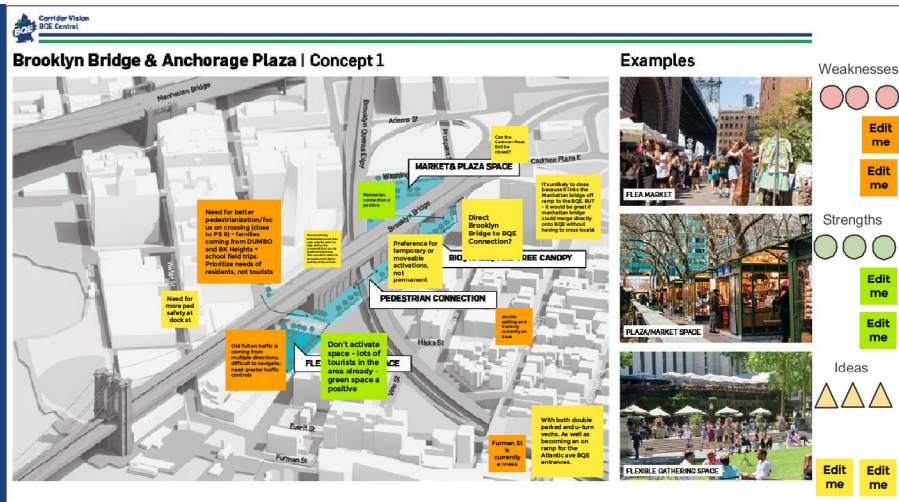




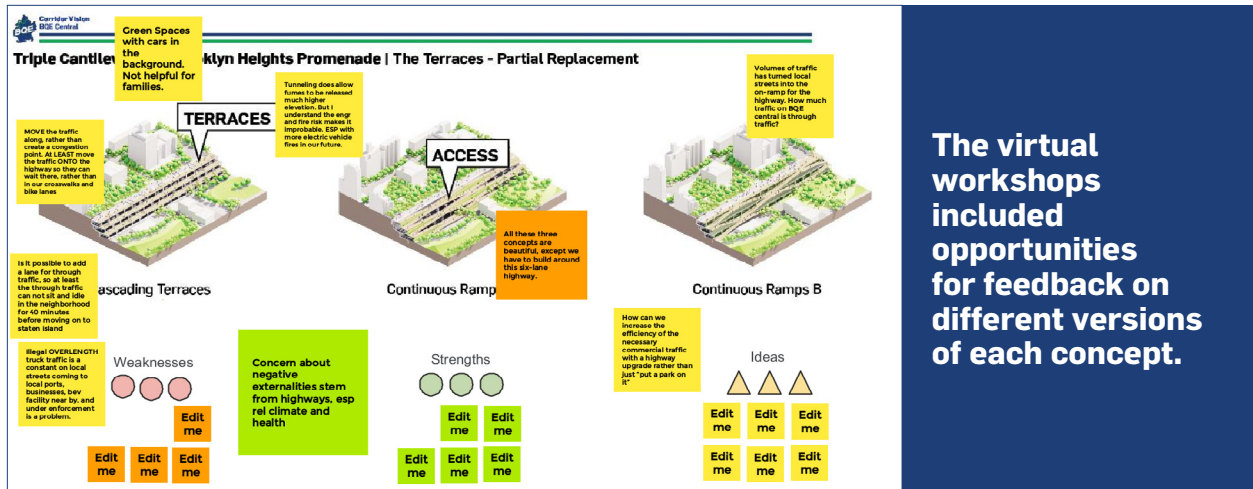


- Focus on safety, particularly at complicated intersections leading to Brooklyn Bridge Park, especially at Atlantic Avenue; look at ways to use design to reduce on/off-ramp speeding
- Explore ways to cover the BQE between Atlantic Ave and Congress Street
- Identify ways to improve pedestrian and bike connectivity along Atlantic Ave and Hicks Street
- Preference for designs that increase usable space within Van Voorhees Park and increase connections to Brooklyn Bridge Park
- Consider repurposing Pier 7 for uses other than distribution to minimize truck traffic, while also recognizing that roadway changes must account for industrial uses coming from the piers, the Brooklyn Navy Yard, etc.
- During construction, consider converting Congress Street into a 2-way street

The interactive exercise enabled participants to use digital stickies to identify issues and opportunities.



Focusing in on specific geographies allowed participants to share their expertise about their communities, industries, and priorities.



**The virtual workshops included opportunities for feedback on different versions of each concept.**

## Lessons Learned

Prior to the workshops, briefings with elected officials and the CVC provided some guidance on improving workshop structure and engagement overall.

First, the CVC requested that demographic data be collected in engagement. In response, voluntary demographic data was collected at both workshops, in addition to through the survey.

Additionally, in response to feedback heard in past engagement rounds, there was a desire for multiple opportunities for facilitated engagement, and an ability to participate in engagement around multiple sections of the BQE Central corridor. Round 2 workshop planning was responsive to these requests.

Lastly, the pre-meetings with elected officials and the CVC made clear that there was significant concern about NYC DOT signaling an intent to consider reverting the triple cantilever into three moving lanes and a shoulder in each direction. In response, NYC DOT sought to clarify that it would pursue the fewest number of lanes in conformance with any applicable Federal and State requirements.

As further rounds of engagement proceed, NYC DOT and its consultant team will continue to fine-tune engagement approaches based on feedback received.

# What's Next

Community Partners began their parallel engagement efforts in January 2023. The BQE Central survey closed 1/15/2023 and results are being evaluated

In January, NYC DOT and its consultant team launched Focus Groups to hone in on specific questions in several different areas with topical experts.

In February 2023, Round 3 of the BQE Central Workshops will begin, where NYC DOT will focus on “Refining The Vision,” informed by previously-shared public feedback. Prior to this, NYC DOT and its consultants will also be convening a full corridor CVC, and the BQE Central CVC to help inform planning of BQE Central Round 3 engagement.

For BQE North and South, NYC DOT launched a survey on January 17, 2023 and it will remain open until February 17, 2023 at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BQENorthSouth>. Similarly, in March 2023, the team will begin Round 2 of BQE North and 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 preliminary conceptual designs. At the same time, NYC DOT is identifying City-led projects responsive to Round 1 and 2 feedback that can be implemented starting in 2023.

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

- February 28, 2023: BQE Central Workshop Round 3
- March 2, 2023: BQE Central Workshop Round 3
- March 21, 2023: BQE South Workshop Round 2
- March 23, 2023: BQE North Workshop Round 2
- March 27, 2023: BQE North Workshop Round 2
- March 30, 2023: BQE South Workshop Round 2

The project website [www.bqevision.com](http://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.

# Appendix

## In-Person Workshop December 13, 2022

### Neighborhood

Neighborhood	Count	Percentage
Boerum Hill	1	2.4%
Brooklyn Heights	29	70.7%
Carroll Gardens	1	2.4%
Cobble Hill	1	2.4%
DUMBO/Vinegar Hill	3	7.3%
Other	6	14.6%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percentage
Latin(x)/Hispanic	1	2.56%
Other	1	2.56%
Black	1	2.56%
Two or more races	1	2.56%
White, Other	1	2.56%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	5.13%
I prefer not to say	7	17.95%
White	25	64.10%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100.00%</b>



### Age

Age	Count	Percentage
18-24	1	2.44%
25-34	4	9.76%
Over 65	5	12.20%
35-44	8	19.51%
35-44	8	19.51%
55-65	11	26.83%
45-54	12	29.27%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Zip Code

Zip Code	Count	Percentage
11238	1	2.27%
11202	1	2.27%
10069	1	2.27%
10001	1	2.27%
11213	1	2.27%
11217	1	2.27%
11231	2	4.55%
11215	4	9.09%
11201	32	72.73%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Affiliation

Affiliation	Count	Percentage
A Better way	1	2.9%
Arts Consultant	1	2.9%
BH Resident	1	2.9%
BHA	2	5.9%
BKReader	1	2.9%
BQET, resident of 360 Furman	1	2.9%
Brooklyn Heights Association	2	5.9%
Cadman Plaza North Board President	1	2.9%
CB8 EST Committee Public Member	1	2.9%
CM Restler	1	2.9%
Community Board 6	1	2.9%
Dumbo Action Committee (DAC)	1	2.9%
Hillside Dog Park	1	2.9%
Journalist	1	2.9%
Neighbor Dumbo	1	2.9%
Partnerships for parks	1	2.9%
Private Citizen	1	2.9%
Resident	12	35.3%
Resident of 360 Furman Street	2	5.9%
Resident of Poplar Street	1	2.9%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Virtual Workshop December 15, 2022

### Neighborhood

Neighborhood	Count	Percentage
Clinton Hill	1	0.48%
Red Hook	4	1.90%
Carroll Gardens	4	1.90%
Fort Greene	4	1.90%
DUMBO/Vinegar Hill	5	2.38%
Downtown Brooklyn	8	3.81%
Boerum Hill	12	5.71%
Cobble Hill	14	6.67%
Other	48	22.86%
Brooklyn Heights	110	52.38%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percentage
Black; White	1	0.48%
Asian/Pacific Islander; White	1	0.48%
Latin(x)/Hispanic; White	1	0.48%
Arab/Middle Eastern	2	0.95%
Two or more races	4	1.90%
Other	5	2.38%
Latin(x)/Hispanic	6	2.86%
Asian/Pacific Islander	9	4.29%
Black	12	5.71%
I prefer not to say	39	18.57%
White	130	61.90%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100.00%</b>



## Age

Age	Count	Percentage
Under 18	1	0.48%
18-24	2	0.95%
25-34	25	11.90%
55-65	37	17.62%
45-54	39	18.57%
35-44	42	20.00%
Over 65	64	30.48%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## BQE Interaction

How you interact with BQE	Count	Percentage
Other (please place in the chat)	3	1%
Advocacy, policy, or other work related to the BQE	3	1%
Work nearby	6	1%
Bike nearby/along	8	2%
To commute to work	65	13%
Live nearby	40	8%
Walk nearby/crossing	167	34%
To commute to social or personal activities	200	41%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Income

Income	Count	Percentage
\$0 to \$20,000	1	0.48%
\$20,000-\$50,000	4	1.90%
\$300,000-\$400,000	8	3.81%
\$200,000-\$300,000	17	8.10%
\$400,000+	24	11.43%
\$150,000-\$200,000	26	12.38%
\$100,000-\$150,000	27	12.86%
\$50,000-\$100,000	35	16.67%
Prefer not to answer	68	32.38%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### BQE Attendance

Attended BQE events in past?	Count	Percentage
Yes - a BQE North or South workshop (virtual or in person)	9	3
Yes - a Corridor-wide Kick-off	12	5
Yes - other / not listed here	15	6
Yes - a BQE Central workshop (virtual or in person)	131	50
No - this is my first time attending a BQE Corridor Vision event	96	37
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>100.0%</b>