



## Corridor Vision BQE North and South

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Eric Adams, Mayor | Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner

# North and South Round 3 Update: Shaping a Vision

December 2023



# Shaping a Vision

The New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) received useful feedback from Round 3 BQE North and South workshops. Some of the main feedback themes included:

- Participants continued to emphasize the importance of improving pedestrian and cyclist safety, noting that design concepts must prioritize safety above everything else.
- Climate change and its impacts remain top of mind for participants, especially how the proposed designs will respond to our changing environment.
- Pedestrian spaces under and around the BQE must feel safe and clean for people to utilize them; designs must address traffic safety for all those using the BQE and spaces around the BQE including pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.
- Concern with noise and air pollution from the BQE and need for lighting and calls for mitigation measures to be implemented in areas where the proposed designs include pedestrian spaces under or adjacent to the BQE. Strong desire to see these improvements implemented before or concurrently with activations, in order to make these spaces more usable.
- Capping of different sections of the BQE was largely supported, with many participants calling for as much capping as possible.
- Microhubs were also received positively, though there were some questions about implementation and ensuring truck volumes do not become too concentrated in those areas.
- Calls to address stormwater runoff from the BQE was a common theme, with participants recommending different mitigation measures such as bioswales, more green spaces, and stormwater basins.
- Concerns that concepts in some regions, particularly Red Hook and Sunset Park, were not as transformative as other region's concepts, or needed further development and explanation.
- Participants continued to support Community Partner participation in the design process and encouraged continued and future participation by these groups.
- A strong interest in seeing continued State involvement, as well as clear jurisdictional and maintenance planning for these spaces.

# Background

NYC DOT is actively engaging communities along the BQE corridor in Brooklyn as part of the BQE Corridor Vision process. The BQE North and South engagement process will develop a vision for potential future improvements to communities surrounding the State-owned sections of the BQE corridor north of Sands Street to the Kosciuszko Bridge and south of Atlantic Avenue to the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge, including potential changes to adjacent streets. BQE North and South will evaluate potential short-term projects to address community concerns, as well as larger-scale, longer-term projects to reconnect communities that have been divided by the structure. Concurrently, the BQE Central engagement process will develop and implement a permanent solution for the City-owned structure from the Atlantic Avenue interchange to the Sands Street interchange. New Federal funds, available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act, provide an exciting opportunity to address long-standing concerns regarding the BQE for the 21st Century.

## BQE North and South Engagement Round 1 and Round 2

Engagement for the BQE Corridor Vision began in September 2022. Round 1 of BQE North and South engagement occurred in November 2022 and included several workshops, Community Visioning Council (CVC) meetings, and other stakeholder engagement, which helped inform the ideas shown in Round 2 of engagement. Round 1 engagement has been summarized in [a previous report](#) which can be found on the project website, along with engagement materials, at [bqevision.com/north-south/materials](https://bqevision.com/north-south/materials).

Engagement for round 2 of the BQE Corridor Vision began in March 2023 and included several workshops, as well as continued participation and engagement with Community Partners. Materials from Round 2 engagement can be found here: [bqevision.com/north-south/materials](https://bqevision.com/north-south/materials).

## Community Partners

Community Partners are community-based organizations that are leading additional grassroots engagement to gather community input, with emphasis on those serving underrepresented communities and those serving constituents whose primary language is not English. Community Partners were announced

in mid-December 2022, and conducted their first round of engagement from January–March 2023, and their second round of engagement from April–August 2023. Their third and final round of engagement began in November 2023 and will conclude in February 2024. Community Partners have held dozens of self-led engagements of different formats over their first round of engagement, with support from NYC DOT and its consultant team. You can learn more about the Community Partners and find summaries of their Round 1 and 2 engagements at [bqevision.com/community-partner](https://bqevision.com/community-partner).

## **BQE North and South Round 3 Engagement Context**

NYC DOT and their consultant team launched BQE North and South Round 3 workshops with an in-person BQE North workshop on October 30th, 2023, at the Swinging Sixties Senior Center in Williamsburg, and an in-person BQE South workshop on November 6th, 2023, at P.S. 24 in Sunset Park. The North in-person workshop was attended by about 35 members of the public, and the South in-person workshop had about 50 public attendees. A BQE North virtual workshop was held on November 2nd, 2023, with about 40 public attendees. A BQE South virtual workshop was held on November 8th, 2023, with about 95 public attendees.

The Community Visioning Council (CVC) had previously requested that demographic data be collected in these engagements, so voluntary survey data was collected at the virtual workshops. The results are included in Appendix B. For both BQE North workshops, translation services were offered in Spanish, Yiddish, and Polish. For both BQE South workshops, translation services were offered in Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin, and Cantonese.

A meeting of the BQE North CVC was held on October 26th, 2023, and the BQE South CVC on November 1st, 2023. CVC participants were given a high-level overview of the expected workshop format, and an overview of the principles guiding the development of the concepts discussed in the Round 3 workshops. Feedback from these meetings helped inform and improve how information was presented at the public workshops. You can learn more about the CVC at [bqevision.com/connect/community-visioning-council](https://bqevision.com/connect/community-visioning-council). Meetings were also held with local elected officials in advance of the R3 workshops.



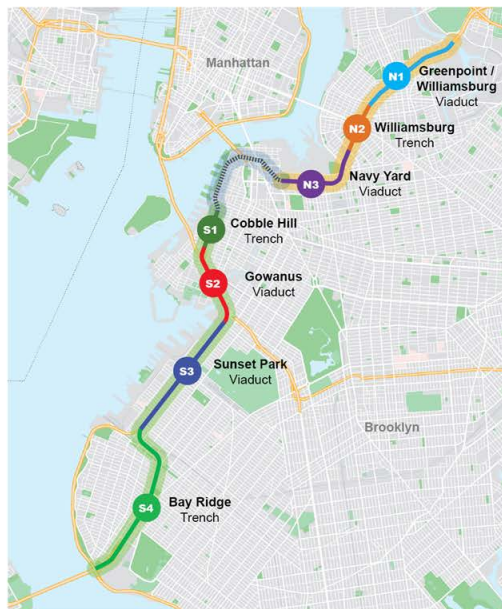
Before moving into facilitated breakout groups, participants listened to a presentation on the concepts, feedback heard so far, and other design considerations. Pictured: BQE South Workshop.

## BQE North and South Workshops

Both sets of workshops included a recap and overview of the overall BQE Corridor Vision process, a summary of feedback received in Round 2 of engagement, information on design considerations, and introduction to the design concepts and toolkits. There was an opportunity for facilitated questions and answers before moving into location-focused breakout groups, as depicted in the visual below.

More information on the concepts presented can be viewed online at [bqevision.com/north-south/materials](http://bqevision.com/north-south/materials).

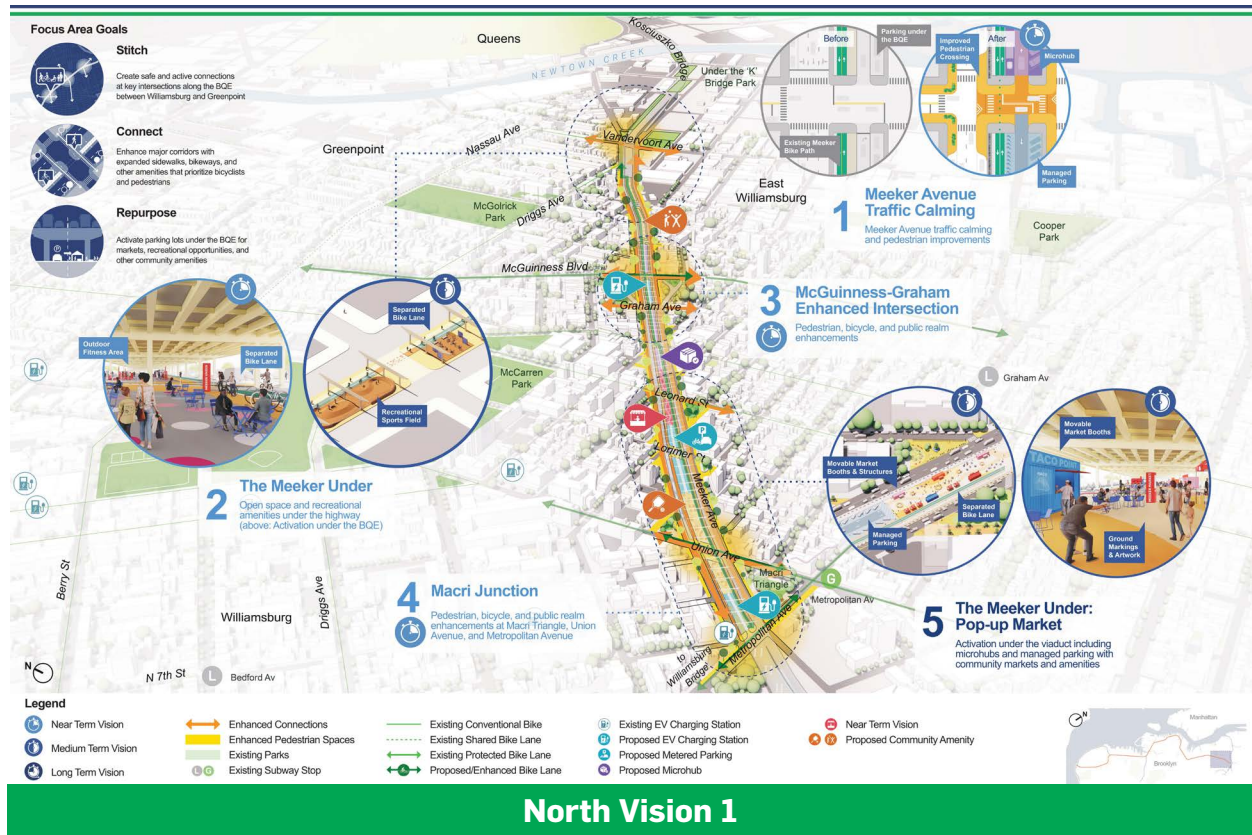
- BQE-North
- BQE-Central (City-Owned)
- BQE-South
- City-Owned
- State-Owned





# Feedback from Participants

Feedback has been synthesized across several geographic subgroups. Granular location-specific feedback has also been shared with the BQE Vision design team. While feedback below is primarily from the public workshops, it is also inclusive of some comments received over email, including some from Business Improvement Districts.



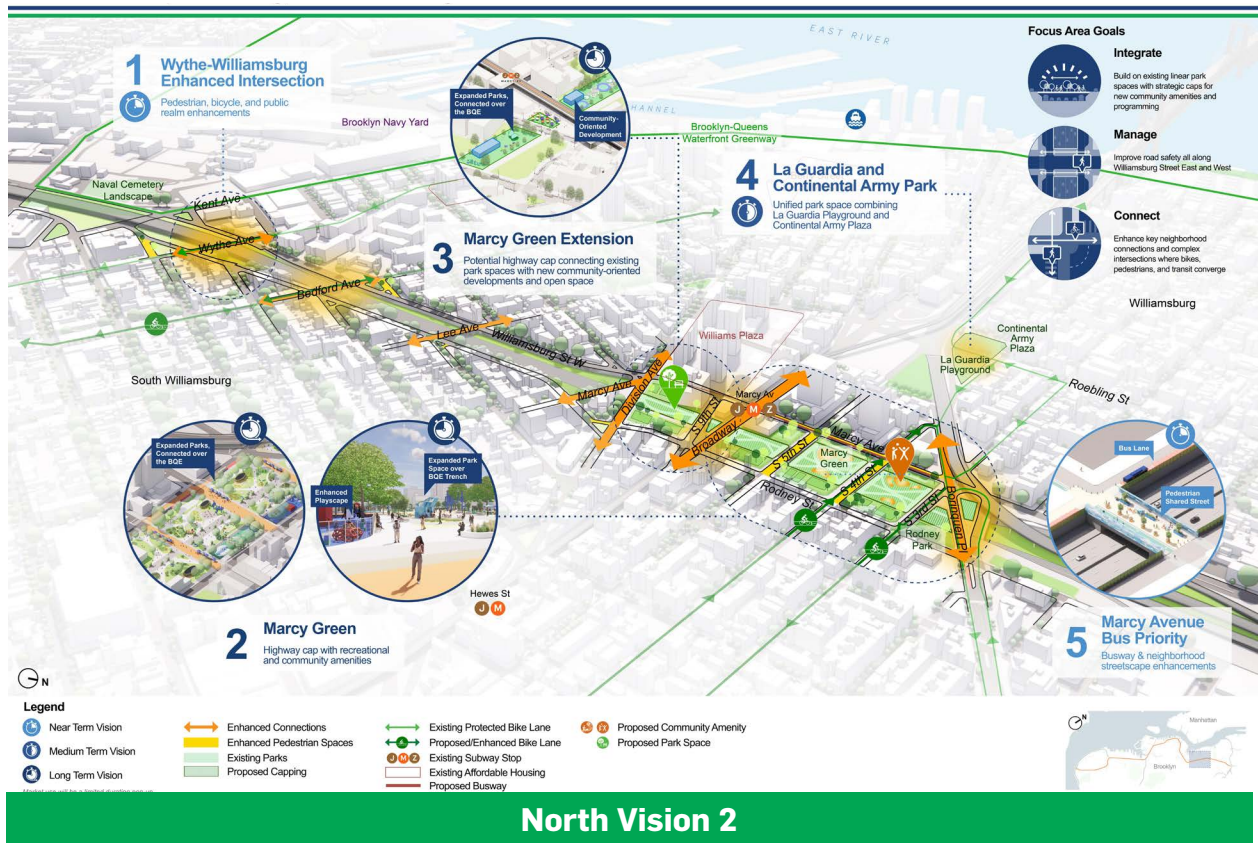
## BQE North 1: Greenpoint Viaduct & Meeker Avenue (Kosciuszko Bridge to Metropolitan Avenue)

- Support for road diets (especially on Meeker Avenue) and improvements to on/off-ramps to calm traffic, enhance safety, and improve pedestrian experience, including improving lighting and safer crossings.
- Look for ways to include more bike infrastructure and bikeshare options to encourage biking and discourage private vehicle use.



Virtual workshops provided an opportunity to provide specific feedback through sticky notes on Jamboards (pictured: Greenpoint Viaduct and Meeker Ave aerial from a BQE North breakout group)

- Explore ways to create a more pedestrian friendly atmosphere including increasing seating options, green spaces, and adding space for recreational activities like pickleball; collaboration with local community organizations could be helpful with this.
- Broad support for microhubs as a particularly good use of space under the elevated highway structure.
- Mixed reception to concepts which require parking reductions, some participants appreciated alternate uses for the space, while others, particularly business and industrial-oriented stakeholders, raised concerns about the need to preserve parking east of Kingsland Avenue.
- Consider additional loading zones to decrease parking congestion of commercial vehicles and parking congestion in general.
- Address stormwater runoff to decrease flooding, which is an issue on this part of the BQE. Some suggestions included strategic plantings like bioswales or rock placements.
- Look for ways to address noise and air pollution in this area.



## BQE North 2: Williamsburg Trench (Metropolitan Avenue to Kent Avenue)

- Support for increased safety measures at intersections and traffic calming measures, including on Wythe Avenue, Marcy Avenue, Broadway, Division Avenue, South 3rd Street, Berry Street, and around Continental Army Plaza.
- Widespread support for capping across the trench. For public uses on the cap some preferred community gardens, youth and culture spaces, and dog parks, while others requested green and flexible open space.
- Look for solutions to address air and noise pollution that seeps into adjacent neighborhoods, both for health and environmental concerns.
- Explore ways to connect LaGuardia Playground and Continental Army Plaza so that it is no longer split by traffic through Roebling St.



Workshop participants used sticky notes, stickers, and pens/markers to share feedback on the concepts (pictured: Williamsburg Trench breakout group, in-person North workshop).



## BQE North 3: Navy Yard Viaduct & Park Avenue (Navy Street to Kent Avenue)

- Support for more permanent and protected bike lanes that are inaccessible to vehicles, especially alongside Park Avenue and Vanderbilt Avenue.

- Consider road diets on local streets along with shortened crossings and expanded pedestrian spaces, and lane reductions on the BQE to calm traffic and improve safety.
- Look for ways to improve wayfinding signage in this area for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Expand access to public restrooms and access to seating.
- Explore solutions to protect pedestrians from noise and air pollution from the BQE.
- Consider introducing activations such as food trucks and vendors and community programming in open spaces around these areas, with emphasis on orienting it toward new immigrant community members.
- Concerns about EV charging or prioritized parking for EVs due to concern about increased traffic and parking congestion.
- Desire to see conscious planning around microhubs to ensure they do not increase truck traffic on Park Avenue.

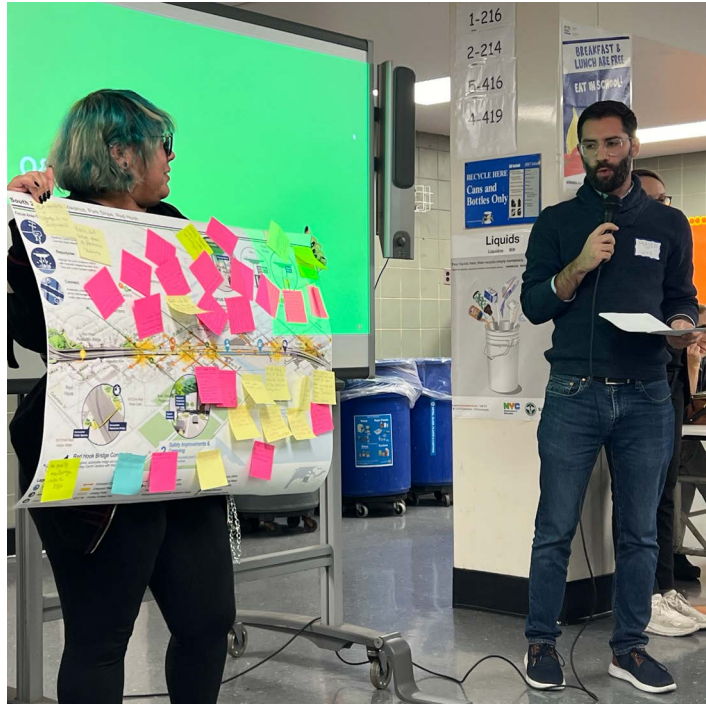


## South Vision 1

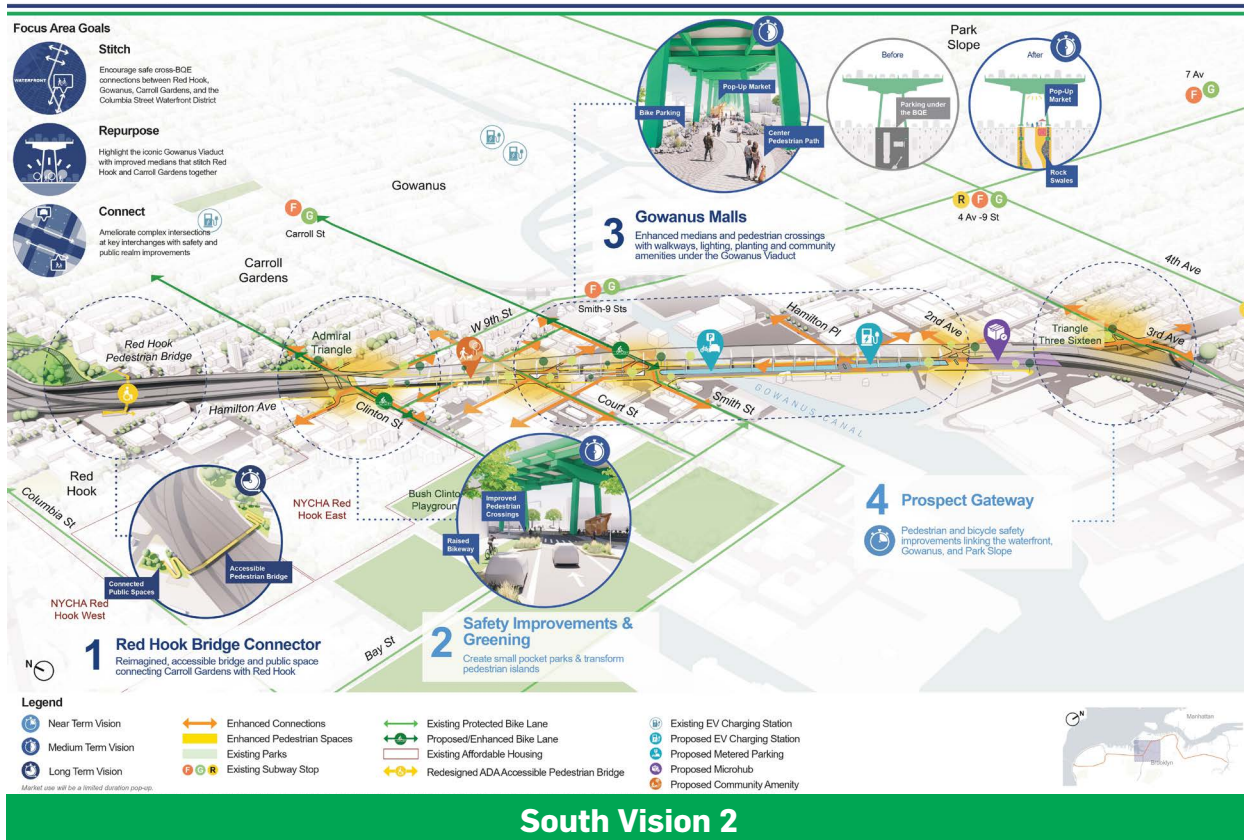


## BQE South 1: Cobble Hill Trench (sunken portion of the BQE running through Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens, and the Columbia Street waterfront)

- Strong support for capping, including the proposed DiMattina Playground and Union & Sackett Streets locations, with a desire for larger capped sections and continued calls for removing the BQE entirely.
- Emphasis on street safety and creating greater visibility for pedestrians and bikers in areas with heavy vehicle traffic; particular safety concerns on Van Brunt Street, Hicks Street, Congress Street, Kane Street, Atlantic Avenue.
- Desire to address recurrent traffic congestion on Hicks Street and other local areas and illegal parking nearby, which makes walking and crossing the street more dangerous due to lack of visibility and space.
- Consider implementing wider and fully protected bike lanes (including existing ones) with durable infrastructure that protect bikers from vehicles; Henry Street was identified as a site.
- Explore opportunities to build new crossings across the trench to connect disconnected neighborhoods.
- Improve air quality and address noise pollution; explore additional landscaping and greenery to address these issues.



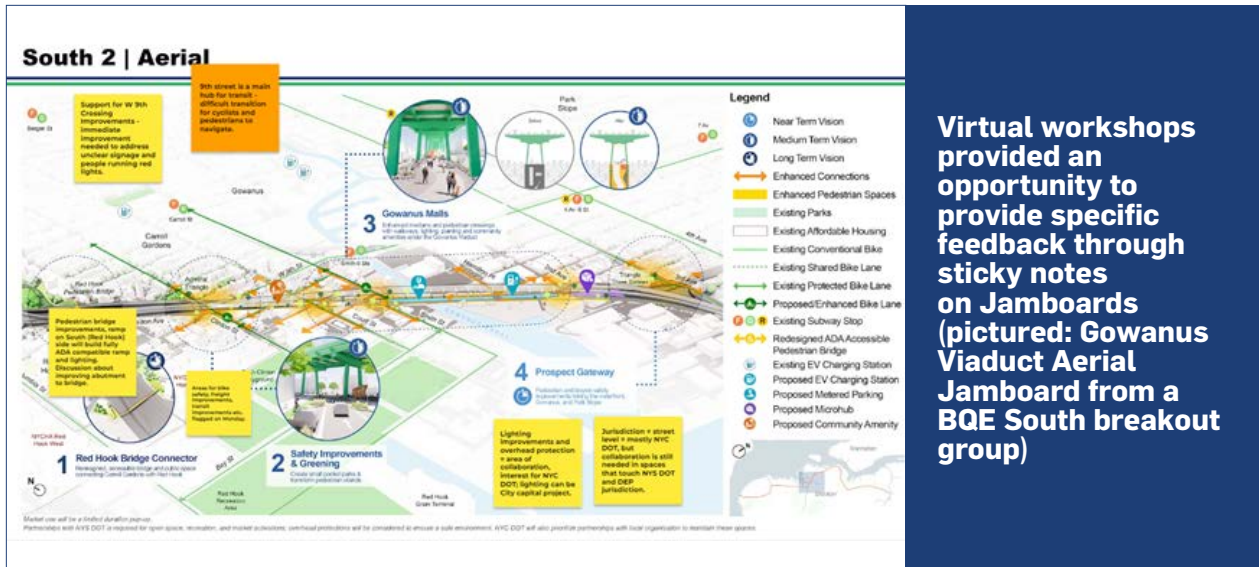
**Participants had an opportunity to report out on their breakout groups before the workshop ended (pictured: BQE South workshop).**



## BQE South 2: Gowanus Viaduct (Red Hook and Gowanus area, above Hamilton Avenue)

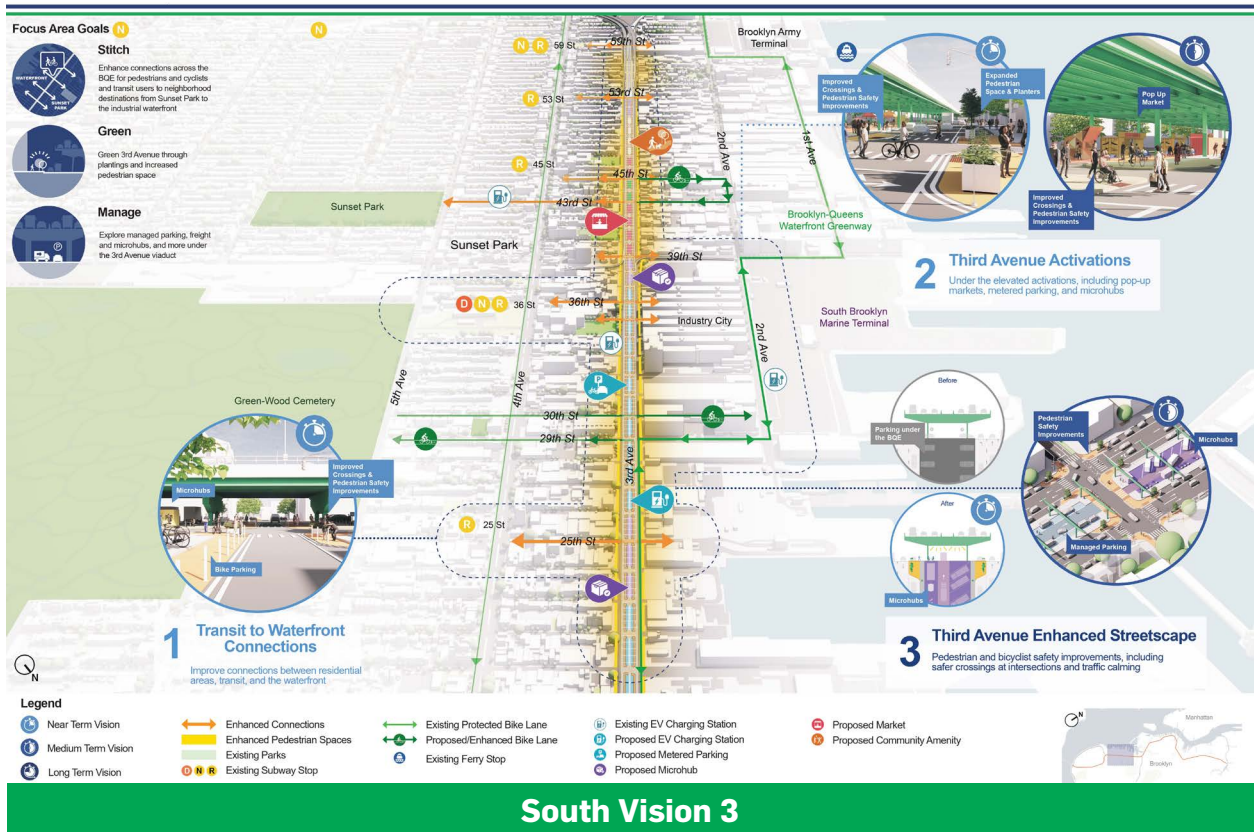
- Focus on improving safety under and near the elevated highway, including added lighting, traffic calming, improved signage, overhead protection, and crossing guards during the day; specific areas of concern included Clinton Street near Admiral Triangle, Hamilton Avenue, Van Brunt Street, Smith Street, and W. 9th Street.
- Look for ways to improve connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists by creating clean and separate spaces; create inviting public space with greenery and local artwork.
- Explore mitigations to protect this area from flooding and improve resiliency.
- Investigate measures to reduce noise and air pollution caused by cars.
- Explore public transportation improvements in this area to increase reliability and frequency of public transit options and improve the bus stops and pathways to and around Smith/9th Street station.





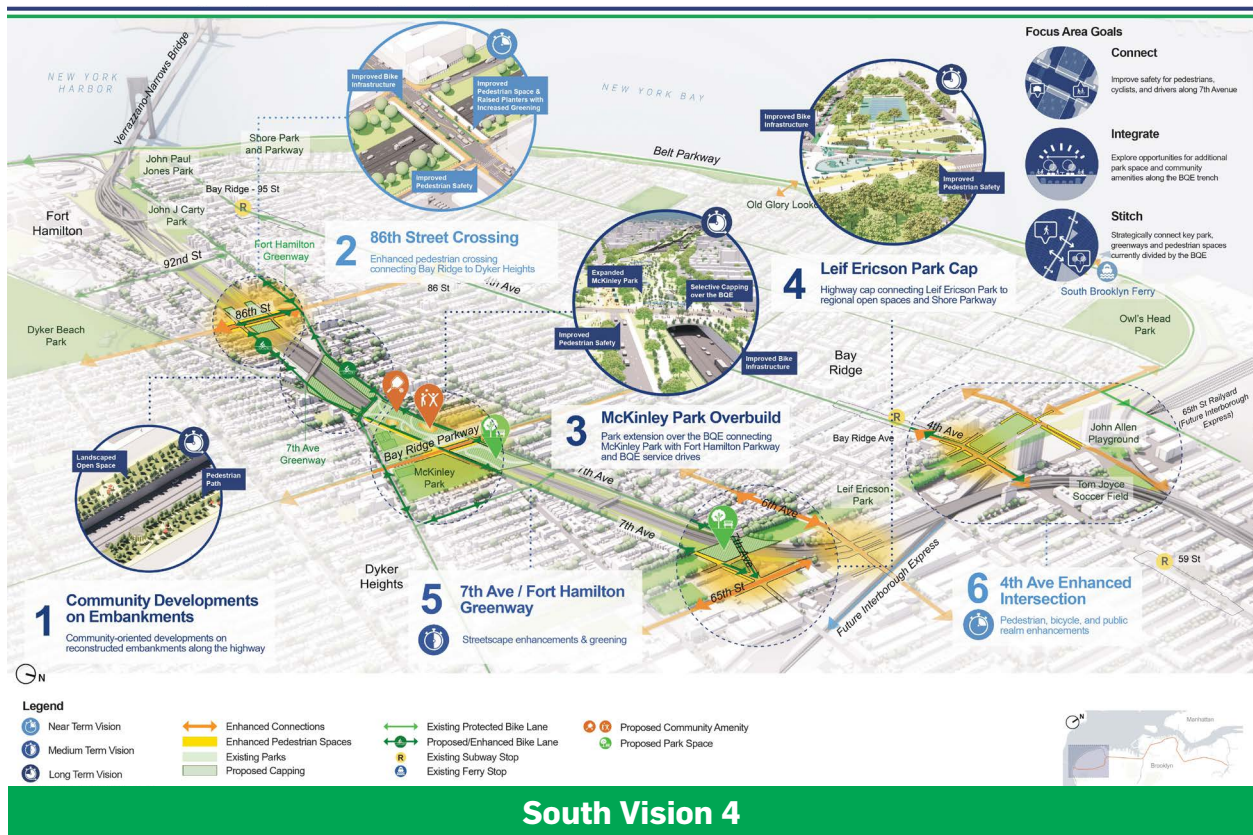
Virtual workshops provided an opportunity to provide specific feedback through sticky notes on Jamboards (pictured: Gowanus Viaduct Aerial Jamboard from a BQE South breakout group)

- Desire to see greater overhead protection in the Gowanus Malls concept, including protection from debris and stormwater runoff.
- Ensure this area is ADA accessible, and there is more signage/wayfinding accessible for people with disabilities.
- Prefer to see community spaces and amenities along sidewalks as opposed to under the viaduct.



## **BQE South 3: Third Avenue Viaduct (elevated section of the BQE in Sunset Park, running along Third Avenue)**

- Desire for cleaned up spaces underneath BQE so that pedestrians feel comfortable spending time there; spaces could *then* be used for community programming, or pop-up markets; concern that activations will not be successful without significant measures to make spaces under the BQE more inviting.
- Desire to reduce the number of parking spaces and replace them with open and green spaces.
- Explore methods of managing flood water, including stormwater basins.
- Strong focus on improving safety and lighting around and under the BQE, with an interest in looking for ways to separate trucks, vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists using permanent materials; consider a bike lane which would run under the BQE.
- Interest in microhubs, with concern that they must be strategically placed and small enough as to not concentrate truck volume; concern about placing them too close to residential areas due to congestion, health, and street safety concerns.
- Explore ways to address air pollution from BQE, including adding air monitors to monitor and track air quality, and measures to reduce or capture pollution.
- Concern that Sunset Park concepts were insufficiently visionary as compared to other regions and needed additional focus, including further exploration of complete removal of the BQE and other interventions to address historic environmental inequities.



## BQE South 4: Bay Ridge Trench (65th Street to the Verrazzano Bridge)

- Strong support for capped areas.
- Explore ways to create improved and safe connectivity between Bay Ridge and Sunset Park for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles; these crossings should feel inviting; specific safety concerns shared at a number of locations including at 92nd Street, 86th Street, 4th Avenue and 7th Avenue.
- Look at traffic calming measures on 7th Avenue, 65th Street, and areas under the BQE which connect Bay Ridge and Sunset Park.
- Address unsafe conditions at pedestrian crossings by improving lighting and wayfinding, and explore expanding the number of crossings to reduce pedestrian bunching and unsafe conditions. This is especially important because of all the schools in the area.



- Find ways to add park and open space for community programming which incorporates local artwork; support for market activations which were noted as having particular significance to some immigrant communities; support for more active space around Leif Ericson Park playground, which was noted as often at capacity.
- Strong interest in efforts to reduce freight traffic, including support for microhubs and off-hours deliveries.

Participants shared feedback in facilitated conversations (pictured: Bay Ridge Trench group).



## What's Next

Community Partners are conducting Round 3 of engagement, which will occur between November 2023 and February 2024. Feedback from Round 3 of BQE North and South engagement will be synthesized and a final report on the BQE Corridor Vision will be issued in 2024.

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

## Appendix A: Survey Results from Virtual Workshops

### November 2, 2023 BQE North Virtual Workshop

#### 1. How do you typically interact with the BQE? (select all that apply)

Row Labels	Count	Percentage
Work nearby	6	8.2%
To commute to work	3	4.1%
Advocacy, policy, or other work related to the BQE	10	13.7%
Bike nearby/along	10	13.7%
To commute to social or personal activities	11	15.1%
Walk nearby/crossing	15	20.5%
Live nearby	18	24.7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

#### 2. Have you attended a BQE Corridor Vision event before? (Select all that apply)

Row Labels	Count	Percentage
Yes - other / not listed here	3	7.7%
Yes - a Corridor-wide Kick-off	9	23.1%
Yes - a BQE North or South workshop (virtual or in person)	14	35.9%
Yes - a BQE Central workshop (virtual or in person)	7	17.9%
No - this is my first time attending a BQE Corridor Vision event	6	15.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**3. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnicity? (select all that apply)**

Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percentage
Other	1	3.0%
Arab/Middle Eastern	0	0%
I prefer not to say	4	12.1%
Black	0	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	3.0%
Latin(x)/Hispanic	8	24.2%
White	19	57.6%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**4. What is your age?**

Age	Count	Percentage
18-24	1	4.5%
25-34	6	27.3%
35-44	7	31.8%
45-54	4	18.2%
55-65	1	4.5%
Over 65	3	13.6%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## November 08, 2023 BQE South Virtual Workshop

### 1. How do you typically interact with the BQE? (select all that apply)

Row Labels	Count	Percentage
Work nearby	11	8.6%
Bike nearby/along	12	9.4%
To commute to work	7	5.5%
Advocacy, policy, or other work related to the BQE	11	8.6%
To commute to social or personal activities	18	14.0%
Walk nearby/crossing	34	26.6%
Live nearby	35	27.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### 2. Have you attended a BQE Corridor Vision event before? (Select all that apply)

Row Labels	Count	Percentage
No - this is my first time attending a BQE Corridor Vision event	22	40%
Yes - a BQE Central workshop (virtual or in person)	10	18.2%
Yes - a BQE North or South workshop (virtual or in person)	15	27.3%
Yes - a Corridor-wide Kick-off	5	9.1%
Yes - other / not listed here	3	5.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**3. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnicity? (select all that apply)**

Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percentage
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	9.1%
Black	1	2.3%
Latin(x)/Hispanic	3	6.8%
White	22	50%
Arab/Middle Eastern	1	2.3%
Two or more races	2	6.8%
I prefer not to say	10	22.7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**4. What is your age?**

Age	Count	Percentage
18-24	3	7.9%
25-34	6	15.8%
35-44	7	18.4%
45-54	11	28.9%
55-65	5	13.2%
Over 65	6	15.8%
Under 18	0	0%
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>100.0%</b>