



September 15, 2022

Dear Governor Hochul & Mayor Adams:

As you have both acknowledged, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to correct one of Robert Moses's most egregious mistakes, the Brooklyn Queens Expressway (BQE). With your support, New York will finally be able to access the necessary federal funding to invest in our city's infrastructure. We are therefore pleased that you have committed to a permanent solution and a robust community engagement process to heal the wounds of this 1950s-era highway. We stand ready to work with you on an "invisible highway" that reconnects our divided communities, combats climate change, and greatly improves public health. We concur with the Chair of the BQE Expert Panel, Carlo Scissura, who recently delivered a powerful [call to action](#) for corridor-wide transformation.

The Coalition for the Transformation of the BQE (BQET) has spent years meeting with designers, transportation experts, elected officials, and our constituents, reviewing and providing feedback on alternative plans and promoting solutions that are both visionary and implementable. Based on this work, the BQET supports the following recommendations for a 21st Century BQE:

- **An "invisible" highway, at- or below-grade, that caps or buries the open-air sections and platforms over the trenches along the entire corridor** – like the "[BQP](#)" design for the BQE's triple cantilever section. Similar plans have been developed for platforming over trenched sections of the BQE in Cobble Hill and in South Williamsburg (see the [BQ Green](#) plan by DLAND Studio), which we support without reservation.
 - Critically, because of their physics, capped-at-grade or below-grade solutions can be *less expensive, quicker, and safer* than rebuilding elevated open-air sections. The resulting community benefits are myriad: re-connecting neighborhoods; creating new space for public and active transit; expanding green space; eliminating toxic noise and air pollution; promoting flood resiliency; and offering the potential to create desperately needed affordable housing. The savings can be passed to other corridor neighborhoods to do the same.
 - Furthermore, emerging direct air capture (DAC) technologies for covered highways can allow for the capture of about 100k tons of CO₂ per mile per year along the corridor, ultimately sequestering or selling millions of tons of CO₂ per year. A capped and buried Sands-to-Atlantic section can capture ~150k tons/year while a platform over the Cobble-Hill-to-Red-Hook trench would yield comparable tonnage. Similar scrubbing technologies can be deployed to manage the balance of tailpipe and particulate matter emissions.
- **A permanent reduction of the corridor from 6 lanes to 4 on the Sands to Atlantic stretch of the BQE, and beyond**, to maintain and extend the traffic safety gains already realized by the current configuration. This reduction will further reduce costs and enable more design and construction options for this and other sections of the BQE.



- **The establishment of a multi-stakeholder, multi-agency governing mechanism or authority** to oversee the design and build of the BQE of the future. This group must include representatives from impacted communities along the corridor – with extra engagement with groups that will be disproportionately impacted during construction.

Simultaneously, we strongly encourage the city and the state to find ways to decrease our reliance on trucks to transport and deliver goods:

- Focus on the last leg of the freight supply chain by incentivizing off-hour deliveries, freight consolidation, and cargo bike deliveries to neighborhoods, while incentivizing the use of safer, cleaner, quieter, smaller vehicles throughout.
- Invest in water and rail as alternatives to truck delivery to reduce congestion and pollution. For example, utilizing the Interborough Express not only to transport people, but to develop this new transportation corridor in conjunction with expanded freight service linked to the proposed Cross Harbor Freight Tunnel. This alternative would help reduce truck traffic on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway.
- Create a regional transportation model to explore pricing models, alternatives to the highway, and steps that should be taken to reduce (or eliminate) the highway altogether.

The BQET is an alliance of neighborhood leaders, community organizations, and large residential buildings, from Cobble Hill to Vinegar Hill, impacted by the BQE. We have represented our communities on this issue since early 2019, advocating for a 21st-century reimagining of the crumbling Triple Cantilever section of the Moses-era BQE, and reviewing a host of creative plans (e.g. tidyupbqe.com, [IPA](#)). While our alliance was born in response to the city's 2018 plans for the Atlantic to Sands section of the highway, we champion a corridor-wide transformation that benefits all affected communities.

A visionary BQE can only happen with federal, state, and city cooperation anchored in an ambitious, equitable, and forward-looking vision. This is not just a question of transportation and engineering but of bringing a new approach to infrastructure and urban development that centers thriving communities, public realm, and a just and sustainable city. Now that the opportunity to access the necessary funding is here, and your administration has committed to a community planning process, we are ready to move quickly as partners in the process. There is no time to waste.

Sincerely,

A Better Way, The Brooklyn Heights Association, The Cobble Hill Association, The Boerum Hill Association, Cadman Towers, Downtown Brooklyn Co-op/Condo Alliance, DUMBO Action Committee, DUMBO Neighborhood Alliance, Fulton Ferry Landing Association, North Heights Neighbors, Vinegar Hill Neighborhood Association, Willowtown Association.