



Corridor Vision Safety, Equity and Resiliency

Eric Adams, Mayor | Ydanis Rodriguez, Commissioner

Community Partners Round 2 Update

October 2023



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 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.

Community Partners Background

As part of the BQE Corridor Vision, NYC DOT has implemented a Community Partner program. Community Partners are community-based organizations that are leading additional grassroots engagement to gather community input, with emphasis on organizations serving underrepresented communities and those serving constituents whose primary language is not English.

Community Partners were announced in mid-December 2022 and began their first round of engagement in January 2023, which concluded in late March 2023. A summary of those Round 1 engagement efforts is available [here](#).

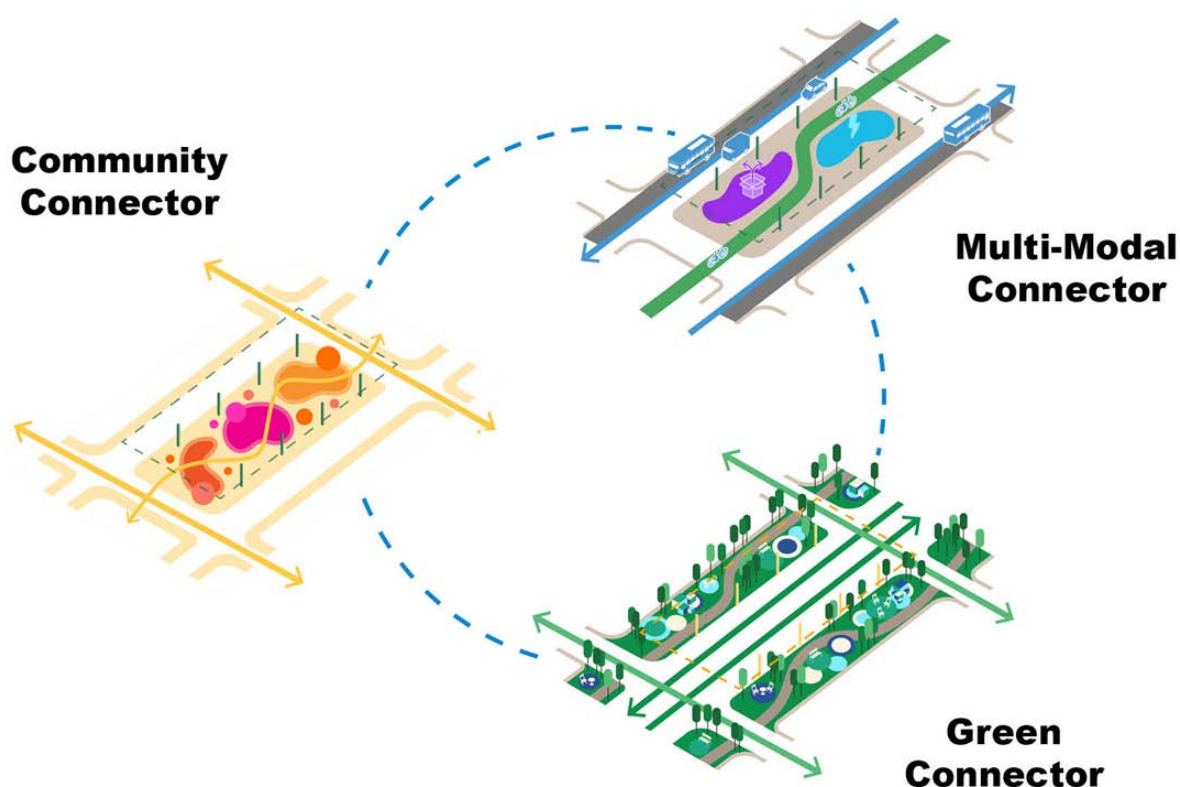
Round 2 of Community Partners engagement began in April 2023 and concluded in August 2023. Community Partners have held dozens of self-led engagements of different formats, with support from NYC DOT and its consultant team.

High-level summaries of self-reported engagement processes and outcomes are included below. Responses have been condensed and edited for clarity, **with particular emphasis on highlighting feedback that differed from or was not as prominently heard in the NYC DOT-led engagement**. More in-depth feedback from the Community Partners has also been shared directly with the design team, to inform further refinement of the BQE Corridor Vision.

BQE North & South Connector Concepts

In the previous round of workshops, NYC DOT and its consultant team focused on the potential for the BQE to serve as infrastructure that connects communities, rather than infrastructure that divides them. With this overarching theme in mind, there were three big ideas illustrated and translated across different geographies along the BQE, which served as baseline material for this round of Community Partner engagement. For more information on Round 2 engagement design ideas, find annotated presentation [here](#).

- The **Community Connector** emphasized improved crossings under and over the BQE to reknit communities safely between key destinations like subways, schools, and parks.
- The **Multi-Modal Connector** looked at the BQE as a critical corridor for moving people and goods and explored how changes in the design of streets and spaces running under the highway could improve the experience of transit riders, cyclists, pedestrians, and drivers.
- The **Green Connector** envisioned the potential to unlock new public spaces and create more green infrastructure under and along the BQE.



Recurring Themes Across Multiple Community Partners

- Emphasis on street and traffic safety, as well as addressing congestion, were prevalent themes across many partners
- Maintenance (including maintenance planning for new investment), lighting, and sanitation were cited as important
- Multi-Modal Connector concepts were largely viewed positively, particularly for their potential to expand transportation accessibility, but there were some concerns about additional traffic mixing and potential safety impacts
- Some communities responded very positively to Community Connector concepts, and there was also some support for Green Connector concepts, however participants emphasized the importance of ensuring these spaces were functionally usable, including through efforts to address noise and pollution concerns
- There were concerns about potential impacts of some investments on congestion and parking availability, particularly among business-oriented stakeholders

Arab American Association of New York (AAANY)



[AAANY](#) demonstrates its commitment to Brooklyn's Arab immigrant, refugee, and Muslim communities through their comprehensive service and advocacy programs. They provide a range of critical support services to over 7,000 participants annually, including women's empowerment and adult literacy programs, immigration legal assistance, mental health and domestic violence support services, civic engagement and community organizing, and youth programming.

- Held engagements in Arabic and English, including 1 in-person and 2 virtual engagements.

AAANY reported that participants:

Overall

- Valued aesthetic improvements and activations of space around the BQE, including pedestrian spaces and opportunities

- Desire greater amenities including benches/seating, and public restrooms
- Support a focus on safety and quality of life improvements

Community Connector

- Youth participants responded particularly positively to Community Connector concepts, highlighting opportunities for classroom/school activities to be conducted outside, and locations for more public events and performances
- Adult participants also welcomed green spaces, pedestrian areas, and public restrooms

Multi-Modal Connector

- Liked protected bike lanes and infrastructure that supports e-bikes, but raised concerns about vehicles being parked in bike lanes
- Some youth participants expressed concern with electric vehicle charging amenities given the inaccessibility of electric vehicles to low-income communities and concern that production may not be sustainable
- Youth participants expressed skepticism about the efficacy of micro-distribution centers and preferred emphasizing street safety improvements
- Overall, participants responded positively to trees, lighting, slowing down street traffic, and investments in bus, bike, and bike share infrastructure
- Older adult participants also positively viewed the potential for reduced travel times and expanded travel options

Green Connector

- Participants were interested and intrigued by storm water management improvements, particularly improvements that reduce pollution to the river and air; this set of concepts also highlighted greater language barriers in terms of explaining the investments and their benefits due to more limited community familiarity and vocabulary for these types of treatments
- Green and activated pedestrian spaces were viewed positively, but there was concern that car exhaust would impact the usage levels and health/safety of such spaces

Bay Ridge Community Development Center (BRCDC)



The mission of [BRCDC](#) is to promote and provide the highest quality activities and services that will contribute to the physical, emotional and social well-being of the community. BRCDC's vision is to enhance the quality of life and to fill the unmet needs through their services, programs and activities for their community regardless of ethnicity, gender or economic status.

- Held engagements in English, including 1 workshop in partnership with the Fort Hamilton Senior Recreation Center, 3 tabling events, and social media engagement.



Community Partner: Bay Ridge Community Development Center

BRCDC reported that participants prioritized:

Overall

- The area surrounding the BQE should facilitate all-seasons walking, such as a covered walkway that protects from wind and sun as well as an accompanying sitting area
- Beautification of the area surrounding the BQE with trees, murals, and other treatments that would help facilitate walking and commuting alongside the BQE
- Concern about how construction or implementation of concepts could temporarily impact local roads

Community Connector

- Responded positively to seating areas and passive recreation spaces, but desired to see more integration of covering from the sun, wind and rain
- Support features to protect pedestrians on the sidewalk from vehicles

Multi-Modal Connector

- Emphasized providing more space for bikes and spaces that allow commuting over rather than under the highway, such as flyovers (overpass, a high-level road bridge that crosses over a highway interchange or intersection)
- Felt these concepts seemed too focused on promoting electric vehicles
- Had concerns that these ideas would open spaces for moped and smaller vehicles that may create conflict with other vehicular traffic and make driving on/around the BQE more difficult and unsafe

Green Connector

- Viewed these concepts positively, with a desire to see such highway and roadway-adjacent greening all throughout the borough

Brooklyn Chinese-American Association (BCA)



Founded in 1988, [BCA](#) is a community-based not-for-profit human services agency that has over 34 years of successful experience and expertise in providing Asian immigrants with multi-dialectical and culturally sensitive access services, case management and family services. BCA aims to address the needs and concerns of Asian-Americans, as well as act as liaison between the Asian-American community, the government and various private and service organizations in order to promote a congenial relationship among them.

- Held engagements in Cantonese, Mandarin, and English, including five different in-person engagements (hosted one at their senior center), and multilingual digital engagement, including utilizing WeChat and surveying tools

BCA reported that participants prioritized:

Overall

- Viewed safety as the top priority, and activating spaces under and around the BQE as an important component

Community Connector

- Highlighted the importance of safety at key intersections for pedestrians and bicyclists, including shorter pedestrian crossings, more rationalized traffic flow, improved lighting, and security cameras

- Would like more activated open space such as parks, pedestrian spaces, and sitting and landscaped areas
- Supported pairing these concepts with other policy tools, including limiting freight vehicles/trucks to certain hours

Multi-Modal Connector

- Felt these concepts were the best representation of balancing the various needs and desires of different stakeholders
- Encouraged supplemental transit infrastructure – such as metered parking, bike parking, and bus shelters – be placed in alignment with surrounding uses, such as near subway stations
- Supported improved access to subway stations and bus stops and better rationalizing local public transit options

Green Connector

- Appreciated the resiliency, sustainability, and noise/pollution-reducing benefits of adding more green space
- Had concerns that these concepts could take longer to implement and be more complicated in terms of navigating jurisdictional oversights for development and maintenance



**Community
Partner: Brooklyn
Chinese-
American
Association**

Chinese American Planning Council (CPC)



CPC is an over 57-year-old Social Services organization serving over 200,000 New Yorkers across all 51 Council districts. Their mission is to promote the social and economic empowerment of Chinese American, immigrant, and low-income communities through 50 plus programs including Childcare Services, Youth Services, Language Access, Immigration Services, Benefits Supports, Services for communities with different needs, and Older Adult Services.

- Held engagements in Cantonese, Mandarin and English, including 7 listening sessions.

CPC reported that participants prioritized:

Overall

- Focused on practicality and safety, including short-term upgrades like longer signal crossing times, street lighting, and traffic light repairs that would not interfere with traffic lane space
- Expressed a desire for a more pleasant and functional space, but viewed that as potentially being in conflict with safety improvements
- Identified maintenance and sanitation as key and currently lacking; participants were focused on short-term issues caused by a lack of upkeep, such as broken traffic lights, misused bike lanes, and abandoned vehicles, which created some doubts about successful future BQE Corridor Vision project implementation



**Community
Partner: Chinese
American
Planning Council**

Community Connector

- Welcomed the focus on pedestrian safety and lighting
- Shared concerns that application of widened sidewalks on 3rd Avenue would create more traffic; some support for widened sidewalks if that could be done without a road diet
- Suggested increasing the allotted time for crossing signals on 3rd Avenue and upgrading to accessible pedestrian signals, particularly to assist older adults and people with disabilities

Multi-Modal Connector

- Support more parking, including standardized parking underneath the BQE
- Liked the inclusion of protected bike lanes
- Raised concerns about reductions in the number of traffic lanes, via bus priority or other measures, and potential impacts on congestion

Green Connector

- Positively viewed increased greenery and open space improvements, particularly adding street trees, seating, and more recreation spaces, with an eye toward functionality of those spaces
- Had difficulty envisioning themselves using these spaces for recreation and relaxation given concerns about traffic, lack of local businesses, and generally unsanitary conditions along 3rd Avenue

El Puente



El Puente is a community human rights institution that promotes leadership for peace and justice through the engagement of members (youth and adult) in the arts, education, scientific research, wellness and environmental action. Founded in 1982, El Puente currently integrates the diverse activities and community campaigns of El Puente Arts, the El Puente Green Light District (a holistic community sustainability initiative) and the Global Justice Training Institute within its six Youth Leadership Centers, its public high school the El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice, and El Puente-MS 50 Community School in North Brooklyn, and its Latino Climate Action Network in Puerto Rico. El Puente remains at the forefront of community-led movements for self-determination and as such, initiates/impacts social policy locally and nationally.

- Held multiple engagements in English and Spanish, including 3 community conversations focused on stewardship of local land, 1 environmental justice walk, and 1 environmental justice workshop, as well as pop-up engagement.

El Puente reported that participants prioritized:

Overall

- Want greater activation under the BQE and in BQE-adjacent spaces, but a strong feeling that these investments must be paired with significant noise and air pollution mitigation investments, otherwise they will be unusable
- Increases in green infrastructure and green spaces must not lead to increases in rents and speculative development; there should be investments and funding for programming and tenant protections embedded in these investments
- Identified decking as a first step to reclaiming the land over the trench to build up community visions

Community Connector

- Appreciated flipping the script and thinking of the potential of this infrastructure, which has separated and disconnected community for so long; saw this as an opportunity to re-appropriate and reclaim the structure as a canvas/space for reconnection
- Noted that workout equipment and seating in La Guardia Playground near the handball courts have worked well, and supported more plaza-style folding chairs and tables
- Interest in activations in the high-traffic areas and corridors (under BQE connector, around La Guardia ball courts, by Williamsburg Bridge Bus Terminal/ Bus Depot, and Continental Army Plaza) including mutual aid/resource distributions and pop-ups, community fridges, and open air markets/farmers' markets
- Want more intentional and dedicated amenity spaces, particularly around La Guardia Playground, to discourage behaviors like vehicles stopping at intersections to use public restrooms, which can increase congestion and crash concerns
- Shared that Williamsburg Bus Depot feels hostile to pedestrians/the public and support bringing in more amenities such as solar panels, public restrooms, improved protected bus shelters, and greenery

Multi-Modal Connector

- Identified a need for safety measures that address conflicts between truck, vehicular, e-bike, bike, and pedestrian traffic, particularly for the safety of children and older adults
- Support charging stations and hubs to focus on alternative modes of transportation, for both the community as well as goods and services, including e-bike micro-hubs to move away from the proliferation of nearby last-mile delivery facilities
- Feel existing dedicated bike lanes and bike services (like bike share) are generally sufficient in quantity in the area, but would like emphasis on making streets safer for bikers and pedestrians alike
- Shared that Continental Army Plaza feels dangerous for pedestrian and bikers who are often in conflict with the high amount of e-bike and truck traffic (since Roebling Street is a truck route); emphasized reduction of car and truck traffic (especially connecting to or exiting the Williamsburg Bridge) as a method to address some of these conflicts, rather than punitive measures against e-bikers and delivery workers
- Would like consideration of closing transportation sections and reconnecting open spaces of the playground and plaza, such as permanently closing Roebling Street going to the bridge and making that space an extended plaza space with programming, with particular emphasis on local businesses and highlighting Puerto Rican, Dominican, and other local community culture

Green Connector

- Support more greenery, tree cover and gardens, emphasizing native plants and natural habitat restoration
- Strong desire to advance green stormwater retention strategies (in contrast to gray infrastructure), particularly given flood zone proximity and inland flooding issues; support for looking to some existing storm water retention green areas near LaGuardia playground, expanding bioswales and rain gardens,
- Shared positive responses to green walls, particularly at Marcy and Rodney parks and nearby spaces
- Interested in formalized funding for maintenance for any green infrastructure, rather than exclusively relying on community-led maintenance efforts

Evergreen is a membership organization that champions manufacturing, creative production, and industrial service businesses in North Brooklyn and beyond. They connect businesses with resources and opportunities to help create and maintain high quality jobs at all skill levels.

- Held engagements in English focused on local industrial business engagement, including 1 mixer, canvassing of over 100 businesses, 5 phone interviews, and several types of social media and digital engagement.

Evergreen reported that participants:

Overall

- Desire an emphasis on reducing congestion and supporting deliveries, through methods such as dedicated truck lanes
- Support greater outreach to industrial businesses when the city is planning local street projects that may impact congestion or deliveries; many participants shared a feeling that their feedback was sometimes not addressed in projects in the past
- Prioritize safety upgrades at ramps and intersections; Meeker/Morgan exit signal timing needs to be reviewed as it is causing intersection back-ups

Community Connector

- Highlighted lighting, maintenance, and graffiti removal as important considerations and helpful to deter illegal dumping



**Community
Partner:
Evergreen**

- Raised concerns about features that would narrow turns along truck routes, noting that permitted 53ft and oversized trucks utilize many truck route intersections and should be considered in planning so they do not cause traffic jams or other safety concerns

Multi-Modal Connector

- Support parking and planned electric vehicle charging under the BQE
- Would like to see safety upgrades to the ramps by Meeker/McGuinness, Meeker/Morgan, Wythe/Kent and Exits 39-34 by expanding entrances and exits where possible

Green Connector

- Support green infrastructure to reduce stormwater runoff and flooding
- Desire capping trenches to add park space and reduce pollution
- Oppose removing parking under the BQE in the industrial section to expand park infrastructure, as industrial business employees rely on parking in transportation deserts within Industrial Business Zones

Fifth Avenue Committee (FAC)



[FAC](#) is a nationally recognized comprehensive community development corporation based in South Brooklyn. Their mission is to advance economic, social, and racial justice in New York City through integrated, community-centered affordable housing, grassroots organizing, policy advocacy, and transformative education, training, and services that build the power to shape their community's future. To achieve their mission, they develop and manage affordable housing and community facilities, create economic opportunities, and ensure access to economic stability, organize tenants and residents around housing justice and accountable development issues and campaigns, and provide student centered adult education.

- Held engagements in Spanish and English, including 2 walking tours and 3 workshops. The walking tours utilized QR codes linked to feedback forms which also generated survey data from participants.

FAC reported that participants:

Overall

- Interested in seeing their feedback directly connected to the short and long term interventions developed through this BQE South visioning process and DOT's 3rd Avenue corridor study, along with other regional work conducted by the State and City; this includes a closer look at zoning and its impacts on local conditions
- Emphasized an urgent need for pedestrian safety, traffic calming measures, and increased traffic enforcement, including improved and reflective signage, and more speed reducers
- Shared strong support for additional lighting, emergency call buttons, better maintained and wider sidewalks, improved signal timing, bus shelters, increased trash and recycling receptacles, improved sanitation, roadway maintenance, and greater protection from rainwater and the potential of falling debris from the BQE

Community Connector

- Expressed interest in a "Gowanus Gateway," or a community connector to serve as a neighborhood connector between Sunset Park, Gowanus and Red Hook, and shared specific locations where connections could be improved, including 3rd Avenue from 32nd-39th Streets and on blocks between 2nd and 3rd Avenues within this same area
- Suggest utilizing overpass convergence wall spaces (such as around 17th, Prospect Ave, and 16th) for murals, creating plaza markets, and sculpture gardens, especially by integrating these neighborhood's existing and vibrant artist communities (including those tied to manufacturing);



these were particularly significant to participants who primarily spoke Spanish, many of whom felt such activations would be particularly culturally relevant to their communities

Multi-Modal Connector

- Wanted multi-modal connector opportunities explored under the viaduct along 3rd Avenue in Sunset Park in all directions, both underneath the BQE and between 3rd and 2nd Avenues for pedestrians, cyclists, and other users
- Would like solutions to traffic backups at BQE entrances, illegal turns, car honking, traffic convergence, as well as truck traffic turning from 3rd or Prospect Avenues onto Hamilton
- Would like better, safer pedestrian and bicyclist-oriented connections to the concentration of stores east of 3rd Avenue in Sunset Park for those who do not have cars

Green Connector

- Underscored the importance of green infrastructure for climate related concerns and environmental justice, including flood and sound barriers, extreme heat solutions, solar panels, air monitoring stations, and proper stormwater drainage
- Support converting under the viaduct spaces currently filled with refuse and abandoned vehicles into parks and green space, including paved pedestrian and cyclist paths (a Highline-style “lowline”)
- Desire to see more tree cover/shade trees, with potential to reuse containers as planters, as employed at Industry City (which also could help with flood and sound mitigation)
- Green space and infrastructure needs to have a clear plan for maintenance and upkeep
- Support better wayfinding and paths to existing green spaces, such as D’Emic Playground and Bush Terminal Park

Mixteca's mission is to empower the Mexican and Latin-American immigrants of the New York area by providing them access to services that enhance their quality of life and will allow them to reach sustainable social and economic development. They offer a variety of programs and services that respond to the specific needs of immigrant families and aim to build a supportive environment for the growing Mexican and Latin-American immigrant community.

- Held engagements in Spanish, and English, including 7 tabling events (including at a health fair, an immigration and education fair, and workshops designed to connect community members with social service resources), 4 BQE workshops folded into an interactive family crafts program, and 2 information sessions at a transit-equity community talks.

Mixteca reported that participants:

Overall

- Desire to stay involved in the project and have greater ongoing (and multilingual) engagement such as distributing flyers in local areas or designating a specific gathering point where community members can convene to discuss updates
- Support continued visual engagement tools, which help inspire participation and make clear that community feedback can guide the process



**Community
Partner:
Mixteca**

Community Connector

- Support increased public and open spaces, particularly those that would facilitate interactions between community members
- Desire to see implementation of Community Connector concepts on 3rd Avenue, particularly for safety effects

Multi-Modal Connector

- Support street safety improvements, particularly those that improve safety and options for commuting
- Opposed electric vehicle priority lanes, which participants felt could increase traffic, particularly on 3rd Avenue

Green Connector

- Appreciated the variety of green space options presented in the concept, but these spaces must be safely usable, both in terms of traffic safety and public safety
- Support resiliency-oriented investments, which would bring long-term benefits and provide an opportunity for the community to help lead planning efforts

Red Hook Initiative (RHI)



[RHI](#) is a community-based nonprofit in Red Hook. They believe that social change to overcome systemic inequities begins with empowered youth. In partnership with community adults, they nurture young people to be inspired, resilient, and healthy, and to envision themselves as co-creators of their lives, community and society. Since 2002, RHI has worked alongside residents of Red Hook to carry out resident-led solutions to local problems and to confront the impacts of racial inequity and decades of disinvestment on their historically under-resourced community. Their approach serves 6,500 BIPOC residents each year through an interconnected model of youth development, advocacy, and organizing on local issues, and community hiring.

- Held engagements in English, including 1 roundtable workshop.

South 2: Multi-Modal Connector



**Community
Partner:
Red Hook
Initiative**

RHI reported that participants:

Overall

- Support improvements to lighting around the BQE, pedestrian safety, curb extensions, green space, and beautification efforts, but with concern that they may not be functionally usable and/or safe (both in terms of crashes and air quality) given proximity to roadways
- Shared concerns that there were not more direct responses to the ideas RHI's community proposed in Round 1; NYC DOT has engaged with RHI to further understand and address this concern

Community Connector

- Want to see pedestrian crosswalks better coordinated, more green space, more cyclist infrastructure, and additional attention to shade
- Prioritized space for existing Red Hook vendors in any commercial spaces created (like market spaces)
- Want all infrastructure to be accessible, with some accessible-specific spaces incorporated in planning (such as equipment or spaces that have specialized accessible uses)

Multi-Modal Connector

- Desire to see ways to cross the highway on bike (rather than travel underneath it)
- Requested clearer, more prevalent bike lane signage

Green Connector

- Had difficulty understanding the connector's potential implementation in Red Hook
- Support green space, but shared concern about adequate and appropriate maintenance planning

Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation (SBIDC)



SBIDC provides advocacy and services to help businesses in the Sunset Park, Red Hook and Gowanus neighborhoods grow and create employment opportunities for local residents. Since the organization's inception in 1978, SBIDC has been a driving force in the improvement of the Southwest Brooklyn economy by delivering a wide range of free business services to local firms and acting as an advocate for local small businesses, and the overall preservation of the industrial economy. They provide business education courses, technical assistance to entrepreneurs and small business owners, and workforce training and placement services for job seekers throughout Brooklyn.

- Held engagements in English and Mandarin, including 1 local worker-focused street survey in Sunset Park, 1 virtual webinar, 6 one-on-one interviews with industrial business owners and staff, and additional social media engagement.

SBIDC reported that participants:

Overall:

- Expressed greatest interest in multi-modal connector concepts, as they had no desire to stay underneath the BQE for recreational uses shown in the community connector and green connector concepts, due to noise, limited lighting, and cleanliness concerns
- Relayed concerns that increased activation may encourage additional pedestrians in industrial areas, which they felt may exacerbate traffic safety concerns
- Opposed removing parking under the BQE, which is used by workers who drive in and to this Industrial Business Zone; feel parking is already too limited
- Encouraged more waste receptacles and regular cleaning and maintenance of spaces under the BQE

Community Connector

- Support public bathrooms and landscaped areas around the BQE

Multi-Modal Connector

- Expressed strong interest and support for these concepts, including bike lanes, bike share, and bus infrastructure
- Want any bike lane investments to be fully separated protected bike lanes



**Community Partner:
Southwest Brooklyn Industrial
Development Corporation**

Green Connector

- Supported the aesthetic improvements from increased greenery
- Shared some interest in additional seating, likely for short-term seating, as there were many concerns about the space being unusable for longer recreation

St. Nicks Alliance



St. Nicks Alliance seeks to transform the lives of low- and moderate-income people through employment, education, housing, and health care. They do this by delivering impactful services with measurable outcomes to children, adults, and the elderly. As a civic anchor they carry out this mission within the context of building a sustainable community for all people through the arts, environmental advocacy, and urban planning.

- Held engagements in English and Spanish, including a community meeting and tabling at community events.

St. Nicks Alliance reported that participants:

Overall

- Would like greater emphasis on pedestrian safety, especially street lights, traffic lights, and speed and illegal truck enforcement
- Encouraged focus on specific segments of Kingsland Avenue, Morgan Avenue, and Woodpoint Road

Community Connector

- Liked opportunities to connect and activate/engage communities, and that the concept viewed the area more holistically rather than exclusively focusing on highway uses
- Felt there was a greater need for more permanent structures/features

Multi-Modal Connector

- Appreciated the multi-use configurations, and felt they would be well applied under the BQE around Meeker Avenue and Morgan Avenue
- Shared concerns about traffic safety/congestion, air quality, and noise impacts from these treatments

Green Connector

- Saw potential applications for increased open space, such as active parks, around BQE ramps and Meeker Avenue
- Viewed opportunities for more trees around Morgan Avenue and Kingsland Avenue and greater tree cover along side streets connecting to the BQE
- Would like to see larger, more permanent, fully realized capital improvements such as BQGreen, rather than shorter-term or cosmetic green space changes

Transportation Alternatives (TA)



TA reclaims New York City from cars, transforming streets into safe, sustainable, and equitable places to walk, bike, take transit, gather, and thrive. For nearly 50 years, TA has led the movement for safe, equitable streets in New York City. They believe that streets belong to the people of New York City, and they work with New Yorkers in every borough to build a future that rises to the needs of their communities.

- Held engagements in English, including 1 community workshop, which featured a video summary of their Round 1 engagement efforts.

TA reported that participants:

Overall

- Continued to prioritize removing, reducing, and/or burying the BQE
- Support decreasing dependence on personal vehicles and trucks, incentivizing HOV travel, zero-emission vehicles, express bus usage, tolling vehicles by weight and/or crossing the East River in tandem with congestion pricing
- Desired shifting more freight to shipping via maritime options in Navy Yard, Red Hook, Gowanus Canal, and Newtown Creek, and creating a freight shift plan to reduce freight traffic in local neighborhoods
- Would like greater consideration of ways to convert space for affordable housing, in part to help mitigate the potential gentrification impacts of some investments, like capping

Community Connector

- Felt community connectors need to provide specific and targeted reasons to get people to the space, and that they must address lighting, noise, and air quality issues to become practical usable spaces for things like seating and entertainment, though there may be some limited opportunities for active recreation
- Shared more interest in public restrooms, and more permanent activations like shops, services and markets, citing Meeker and Metropolitan Avenues in Williamsburg and Industry City in Sunset Park as potential locations
- Felt these improvements must be paired with paint/rust/netting removal, fresh painting, improved lighting, and landscaping to encourage pedestrian activity



**Community
Partner:
Transportation
Alternatives**

Multi-Modal Connector

- Viewed the multi-modal connector most positively, appreciating the car-free transit investments, with particular emphasis on safety treatments and road diets
- Encouraged better lighting, wayfinding, narrowing crosswalks, redesigning turn lanes, reduction of free parking under the BQE, additional crosswalks, reducing vehicular lanes, and restricting vehicle movement at on/off ramps to increase safety, visibility, and usability
- Fully supported using former vehicular lane space for bus lanes and other bus-supporting infrastructure, with more varied feedback on emergency vehicle use and electric vehicle use
- Would like to see bike parking, e-bike charging, and repair stations along with improved and protected bikeway connections, particularly an extension from Meeker Avenue

Green Connector

- Support improving existing park infrastructure while simultaneously reclaiming car space as greenspace with emphasis on mitigating noise pollution and traffic
- Shared interest in methods to uncover any natural water features to beautify neighborhoods
- Continued support for capping, particularly in portions of Cobble Hill and South Williamsburg, but if infeasible, at a minimum there should be investments in sound/sight barriers, adjusting roadway heights, and building new pedestrian and bus bridges

United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg and North Brooklyn (UJO)



UJO was established in 1966 to meet the social service and advocacy needs of the community. Since then, the UJO is the main social service provider in the area offering services to the poor and needy including enrollment in SNAP, Medicaid and health insurance, senior services, housing, food distributions and many other supports. The UJO also advocates for the community with the government on community planning needs and many other local issues affecting area residents.



Community Partner: United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburg and North Brooklyn

- Held engagements primarily in Yiddish, with some English, including two community dinners that included voluntary survey components and were advertised through local Yiddish publications, social media, and other channels.

UJO reports that participants:

Overall

- Highlighted cleanliness and preventing illegal dumping as a concern
- Had some difficulties understanding the application of community and green connectors in their community, but were interested in the concept of capping for the potential of added green space, and more room for housing and community facilities without impacting lane availability

Community Connector

- Emphasized Community Connector models primarily in the context of connecting different portions and communities of Brooklyn, rather than more immediate nearby areas

Multi-Modal Connector

- Have an interest in improving and preserving traffic flow on the BQE and surrounding streets, particularly the Wallabout-Flushing and the Wythe Avenue exit, where participants highlighted their support for a split traffic light at the divider, and their desire to see a wider roadway
- Shared a number of specific local congestion and traffic planning suggestions
- Would like to see more and safer pedestrian crossing options

Green Connector

- Viewed adding greenery as a positive, including through decking in some locations, but only in ways that would prevent congestion effects or changes to the number of travel lanes

Women's Empowerment Coalition of NYC (WECNYC)



WECNYC
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT
COALITION OF NYC
EDUCATE . EMPOWER . ELEVATE

WECNYC builds power among women from diverse communities through dialogue, education, leadership development and social services.

- Held engagements in English and Arabic, including 1 virtual workshop, 1:1 interview conversations, and 2 discussions in conversational English classes for English-language learners.



Community Partner: Women's Empowerment Coalition of NYC

WECNYC reported that participants:

Overall

- Prioritized street safety and public safety as the most important component of this effort, including addressing traffic injuries and fatalities, and addressing challenges related to homelessness; also raised concerns about significant illegal activity and litter under the BQE
- Would like to see freight traffic limited to off-hours to help address congestion

Community Connector

- Addressing safety concerns, such as through increased lighting, was identified as critical to make these types of spaces usable

Multi-Modal Connector

- Supported bike lanes, as well as expanding roadways and/or the number of lanes on the BQE, which participants felt would lead to reduced congestion

Green Connector

- Supported having more open and green space areas like playgrounds, cafes, bathrooms, sitting areas, gyms, and dog parks to encourage more activity surrounding the BQE
- Viewed green space models as a strong foundation to stimulate greater community connection and street life activation

Yemeni American Merchants Association (YAMA)



YAMA was founded in 2017 as the very first and only Arabic-speaking merchants association in New York City. Over the years they have evolved to serve both Arabic-speaking small business owners and their families by offering a range of social services, educational programs, and advocacy campaigns. Their mission is to educate and elevate Yemeni American merchants and their families through education, civil rights advocacy, business, and social service support.

- Held 1:1 engagements in English and Arabic with business owners in Sunset Park.

YAMA reported that participants:

Overall

- Continued to emphasize sanitation and lighting improvements
- Desired to see longer crossing intervals due to street safety concerns
- Support investments that will draw in more foot traffic, and thereby business to their stores, such as greenery, park infrastructure, benches, water fountains, and public restrooms

Community Connector

- Liked that this connector felt like the most people-friendly concept, bringing foot traffic to their businesses as well as bringing a more friendly aesthetic to the area
- Have concerns that these concepts will eliminate parking and businesses owners will not be able to park or have customer parking, could impact neighborhood affordability, and that there may not be adequate attention given to safety in mixing community connector concepts with roadway traffic

Multi-Modal Connector

- Appreciated infrastructure that serves as potential benefits to businesses and their workers, such as cargo bike parking and hubs for delivery workers
- Had some concerns that these concepts may not have adequate safety considerations, and may lead to greater vehicular and bicyclist interactions, along with questions about parking impacts/reductions and impacts on traffic
- Expressed some interest/support in a bus lane on 3rd Avenue

Green Connector

- Shared concern that there was not enough sidewalk space to utilize for green connectors, but supported these concepts done in combination with one of the other two connector types (i.e. greenery and trees planted alongside the community connector concept)

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

What's Next

Round 3 of BQE North and South workshops will be held in Fall 2023, with Round 3 of Community Partners engagement beginning thereafter and continuing through early 2024. A final BQE Corridor Vision report, shaped by these public workshops and Community Partner engagement and feedback, is expected by Spring 2024.

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 Community Partners in summary format and is not a full transcription of feedback received. Responses have been condensed and edited for clarity, with particular emphasis on highlighting feedback that differed from or was not as prominently heard in the NYC DOT-led engagement.