

**New York City Economic Development Corporation**

**BQX Task Force Hearing**

Seth Myers, Executive Vice President and Director of Project Implementation

May 30, 2019

Good morning Chair Menchaca and members of the BQX Task Force.

My name is Seth Myers and I am an executive vice president and director of project implementation for the New York City Economic Development Corporation, or EDC. I am pleased to testify before you to on the Brooklyn Queens Connector (BQX) streetcar project.

I am joined today by my colleague Wil Fisher, senior project manager on EDC's Government and Community Relations team, and our colleagues at the Department of Transportation, Rebecca Zack, assistant commissioner for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Christopher Hrones, director of strategic transit initiatives.

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New York City is known for its unique and successful combination of mixed-use communities, walkable streets, great public spaces, premiere cultural and educational institutions, and job centers including the Financial District or Midtown Manhattan. Much of its notable success is directly attributed to past investments in transportation – most of which was Manhattan-focused – and helped support the City's evolution over the past century.

New York City also has a long history of embracing innovative transportation technology—from the steam-powered ferry, to elevated trains, to a network of cutting-edge bridges and tunnels and one of the world's most extensive subway systems. These infrastructure innovations continue to be the backbone of the city's economy; they fuel economic growth, connect neighborhoods, and create opportunities where none had existed.

It is indisputable that today's economically thriving New York City would not exist without this vast, multifaceted, and complex mass transit system.

But it is critical to note that there remain serious gaps in connectivity.

While the current bus network helps link gaps in subway service, and other new forms of transit like Citibike and NYC Ferry have been implemented, there is certainly more we can do to invest in transit infrastructure.

This lack of adaptation has serious consequences for the city's continued development and commuting needs.

Manhattan remains the single largest employment hub in the region, yet an increasing number of businesses and residents are opting to set up shop or live in neighborhoods in the other four

boroughs. This presents both an immediate need and unprecedented opportunity to develop new modes of transit that are cost-effective, efficient, and inclusive.

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Every day, EDC works on projects with the goal of making the city fairer today and stronger tomorrow. Aligning economic development with the city's overall mass transportation network is an effective strategy to accomplish this.

That is why we believe in making strategic new investments that reflect the economic realities of today, not 100 years ago.

For over a century, the MTA's subway system has functioned as the lifeblood of the city by ensuring New Yorkers could get from point to point. While our subway was designed to support a Manhattan-centric economy, thriving new residential and economic hubs have developed across the city. And this growth can be acutely seen along the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront. This fast-growing corridor is home to 300,000 jobs and 400,000 residents, including nearly 40,000 New Yorkers living in public housing. As these numbers continue to grow, and as new job centers emerge in the outer boroughs, the City must prepare to accommodate this growth responsibly and equitably.

Recognizing the value of connecting over a dozen waterfront neighborhoods between the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront, the de Blasio Administration has made important investments in transit options that better link these communities to each other and the rest of the city. Just last year EDC completed implementation of the NYC Ferry system to neighborhoods with few transit options. This includes western Astoria, Red Hook and Long Island City. And earlier this month, we launched a new route to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, an emerging job center. Stretching from the Rockaways to the East Bronx, our waterborne transit system has already served close to nine million riders.

Like NYC Ferry, the Brooklyn-Queens Connector is intended to stitch together the gaps left by the subway system, prioritizing connections within and between boroughs outside of Manhattan and improve commuting options for residents.

This proposed, state-of-the-art, zero-emission streetcar will run 11 miles from Astoria through Downtown Brooklyn and ultimately ending in Red Hook. It will connect dozens of diverse neighborhoods to 13 subway routes, over 30 bus lines, 10 ferry landings, and dozens of Citibike stations. For residents along its route, this will be a game-changing mode of transportation.

In addition, the BQX's presence is expected to generate over \$30 billion in economic impact over 40 years—indicating a strong return on investment.

This investment equates to greater neighborhood connectivity and increased integration with the existing public transit system. This will in turn boost access to the many parks, academic institutions, job opportunities, and cultural centers within the evolving corridor. Moreover, the BQX has the potential to reduce average commutes by up to 14 minutes at full build-out. That

means that New Yorkers will spend less time stuck in traffic and tunnels and more time with friends and family.

Since the proposed BQX streetcar was announced in 2016, EDC and the Department of Transportation have been hard at work studying critical elements such as infrastructure feasibility, design, and construction needed to bring it to life. Simultaneously, we have been in continuous conversations with New Yorkers about this new mode of transit; we have had more than 150 engagement touchpoints that yielded indispensable feedback and we look forward to more engagement in the very near future. Our collective work informed a conceptual design report released last summer, which represents approximately five percent of overall project design. The report details engineering and design feasibility, potential impact on communities, cost of construction, and the economic benefits that the BQX stands to deliver.

Following the completion of the study, our current estimate of the project cost is \$2.7 billion. Approximately half of the capital budget, \$1.3 billion, would be generated through a financing strategy called value capture. Value capture is a mechanism that dedicates a portion of the modest increase in property tax revenue brought about by infrastructure investments to pay for those investments. Regarding the additional funding need, the City anticipates pursuing federal funding for the project and we are following all the requisite processes to make this a qualifying and competitive project.

Starting this fall, New Yorkers will continue to have additional opportunities to provide input on the BQX and help further define the project's development. Over the next year, the City, in partnership with our engineering consultant VHB, will complete an environmental review, which will examine impacts and potential mitigations, as well as alternatives to the project such as bus rapid transit. Additionally, the work will further analyze project delivery methods, such as the design-build process, in addition to operations, implementation, and phasing.

While we understand the critical need for investment in the City's current transit system, we also need to prioritize proactive planning for our growing population and future generations of New Yorkers. It is imperative we take action to diversify transit modes today to strengthen the city's economy tomorrow.

Thank you for your attention. My colleagues from DOT will now provide their testimony, after which we are happy to take questions.

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## **Testimony before the New York City Council Regarding the Brooklyn Queens Connector (BQX) May 30, 2019**

Good morning, my name is Carlo Scissura, President and CEO of the New York Building Congress. The Building Congress is a non-partisan coalition of businesses, labor, professional and governmental organizations serving the design, construction and real estate industry. Our association is made up of over 550 organizations comprised of more than 250,000 professionals.

On behalf of the Building Congress, I urge the City Council to help make the Brooklyn Queens Connector a reality. For New York to continue to thrive as a global city, we've got to dream big and put shovels in the ground. I implore this Council to return to a spirit of aspirational planning and building that transformed New York into the city it is today.

With the BQX, New York City is taking a 21st-century approach to infrastructure planning. The city no longer operates on the hub-and-spoke model we've experienced in previous decades. There are very real opportunities in the boroughs outside of Manhattan that should be accessible for all New Yorkers. If you live or work in a part of Queens or Brooklyn that isn't currently adequately served by mass transit, you deserve the same access to jobs and housing as those on the Upper West Side or Midtown.

The current efforts to improve our existing transit are critical, but they do not reflect this principle: all New Yorkers deserve equal service.

The BQX would catalyze new development and retail, all the while being mindful and inclusive of the neighborhoods that have been virtually cut off from opportunity since their inception. The project will also boost the number of available jobs and expand access for many minority and women-owned businesses. We need to grow our city inclusively and the BQX is one of the most promising projects to do just that.

Furthermore, this project will serve as a crucial blueprint for future transit investment by using value capture to fund part of the cost. This financing model is a proven approach to reducing the budget impacts of large-scale infrastructure construction.

We urge you to support this transformative project and welcome the improved transit for all of New York.



**Public Testimony**  
**May 30, 2019**  
**New York City Council Task Force on BQX Hearing**  
**Re: Oversight – Hearing on the BQX**

**Submitted by Roland Lewis, President and CEO**  
**Waterfront Alliance**



Waterfront Alliance is a non-profit civic organization and coalition of more than 1,000 community and recreational groups, educational institutions, businesses, and other stakeholders. Our mission is to inspire and enable resilient, revitalized and accessible coastlines for all communities.

The incredible growth on the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront demands new thinking about infrastructure and connectivity, as well as coastal resiliency. A reliable North-South connection along the waterfront is an important part of ensuring that our waterfront is accessible to all and continues to be a vital source of business activity and well-paying jobs.

**Multimodal transit:** Subways and buses have defined New York City's urban transit for over 60 years with a subway system oriented at getting people into and out of Manhattan. We are long overdue for more multimodal transit. Waterfront Alliance has been an early champion and vocal advocate for NYC Ferry which is helping to diversify transit in areas that truly need it. While there are currently 12 ferry landings distributed along the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront, some of the landings are isolated from the majority of our workers and residents who would otherwise benefit immensely from ferry service. We recognize a multimodal solution in the Brooklyn-Queens Connector, because while our city must maintain the vitality all of its current public transit options, it must also introduce new ones that adequately cater to our most disadvantaged communities.

**Connecting People to Jobs:** Perhaps most important is the potential to connect more New Yorkers to their places of work more efficiently. The Brooklyn Navy Yard, Brooklyn Army Terminal, SBMT and Red Hook Terminals, along with other maritime companies in the vicinity of the BQX, employ more than 1000 individuals. If we plan to grow the ecosystem of waterfront manufacturing, the maritime sector and an offshore wind industry along this corridor, multimodal connectivity will be critical. An investment into offshore wind could be an immediate source of employment in an industry that promises a revolutionary return for the entire New York Harbor. Those currently employed or

looking for employment in these industries should have reasonable transit access to their places of work. Let's not forget that tourism, as well as industry, is a tremendous economic driver. We would love to see more visitors and better access to maritime sights from the historic boats in Red Hook to the Navy Yard Museum in Bay Ridge, as well as the beautiful parks and promenades that are not that easily accessible to the 400,000 people living along the waterfront.

**Coastal Resilience:** Public transit on the waterfront, especially near Red Hook, can experience terrible disruption in the event of a severe storm. The streetcar would present a resilient alternative that can be operational right after flood waters recede and cordons are removed. Leaving hundreds of thousands of people stranded in the wake of unfavorable weather is not a sustainable option for our waterfront residents. We should be quick to embrace a 21st-century option that's designed to withstand nature's extremes.

The BQX represents a chance for us to win on all fronts. Transit can and should do more than funnel people to and from work, especially when we have neighborhoods that would stand to gain the most from a creative, interdisciplinary transit solution like the BQX. The streetcar would allow New Yorkers to take transit into their own hands. We would like to thank the City Council for holding this hearing, and hope that the lessons learned here today will inform a full investment by the City in public transit solutions like the BQX, and those to follow.

Thank you.

## **RPA Testimony to the Task Force on BQX**

**Maulin Mehta, AICP**

*Prepared for the Oversight Hearing on the BQX on May 30, 2019*

Good morning councilmembers and thank you for the opportunity to discuss the BQX project. My name is Maulin Mehta, and I am a Senior Associate at Regional Plan Association.

We are in the midst of a transportation crisis and we need to find the right balance of solutions to address the issue. Our aging infrastructure and increasing capital costs continue to strain our transit system while 40% of New Yorkers cannot walk to a subway station. This has caused an increase in private and for-hire vehicles clogging our streets and polluting our air. These factors have caused us to have some of the slowest bus speeds in the country, and between 2012 and 2017 average weekday bus ridership declined by 250,000 systemwide.

Congestion pricing will address some of these concerns; however, over 50% of job growth over the last 15 years has been in the outer-boroughs. Right now, too many New Yorkers have to take circuitous routes from one borough to the next unless they have access to a car. Commute times for inter-borough travel outside of Manhattan can be over an hour long. Surface transit ideas including light-rail projects like the BQX offer expansion options for neighborhoods that lack transit alternatives.

The BQX project would serve as a key project that will help improve outer borough surface transit. Improvements in bus service are also key to this, and we are pleased to see this being pursued by NYC Transit through the bus network redesign program in its Fast Forward plan. Introducing improved surface transit should also come via implementation of RPA's proposed Triboro Line, which is a current freight train right of way that connects Bay Ridge to Coop City and could serve passenger service. We are also requesting the MTA to study this proposal in its next capital program. Bike share expansion, discounted fares on LIRR lines, and Penn Access for Metro North trains into Penn Station are also a vital element of an enhanced outer borough transit network. The BQX is an important part of these improvements, connecting areas of Brooklyn and Queens that have not had public transit access, helping to spur job growth, and creating a transit system that can accommodate a growing region.

Many of these investments are called for in RPA's Fourth Regional Plan. The full range of proposals can be found at [www.fourthplan.org](http://www.fourthplan.org).

RPA looks forward to seeing what the EIS impact analysis shows and thinking further on how to best meet community transit needs with new modes of transportation and a vision that will create an expanded and connected network for all New Yorkers.

Thank you for your time and as always we stand ready to be a resource as you think through this project.





**New York City Council, Task Force on BQX  
Oversight Hearing - Brooklyn-Queens Connector  
May 30, 2019**

My name is Bryan Lozano and I am the Manager of External Affairs for Tech:NYC. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Tech:NYC is a nonprofit association with the mission of supporting the technology industry in New York through increased engagement between our more than 750 member companies, New York government, and the community at large. Tech:NYC works everyday to foster a dynamic, diverse, and creative ecosystem, ensuring New York is the best place to start and grow a technology company.

Today, New York City's tech ecosystem is stronger than ever and New York has become a global hub of innovation. The New York tech ecosystem now boasts more than 333,000 jobs and 9,000 startups, and tech has a significant impact on our city's economic well-being. As the tech industry continues to grow, companies are regularly looking to establish offices beyond Manhattan's central business district and locate throughout the five boroughs. This pattern of growth limits congestion and crowding, and it helps ensure a greater number of communities benefit from economic growth.

However, our public transportation system does not adequately account for current growth trends and has slowed tech companies' efforts to embrace the outer-boroughs. Going forward, we must ensure our public transportation system accounts for outer-borough development and helps fuel geographically equitable growth.

Brooklyn and Queens are two boroughs that have already seen significant growth. The corridor from Sunset Park to Astoria is already home to more than 500 tech companies, and is projected to have 56 million square feet of office space within the next ten years. Yet, there is no efficient public transportation that spans the entirety of the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront.

Our City must address this lack of transportation by expanding the number of transportation options and the types of transportation options in the corridor. Having multi-modal transportation options—from trains to buses, from bikes to ferries—will be vital to the continued success of the area, and New York City as a whole.

The BQX is one of the transportation options the City should pursue, as it would allow New Yorkers to more easily access jobs and it would help tech companies located in the corridor to attract employees. Just as importantly, the BQX would help connect thousands of New Yorkers, including 44,000 NYCHA residents, to workforce development opportunities and growing tech educational hubs in places like Downtown Brooklyn, which is home to NYU Tandon and CUNY Tech.

It is clear that the growth of the tech sector is key to our city's future. However, this growth and the pattern of growth are not predetermined. The city can and should take steps to ensure the tech sector grows in a diverse and equitable manner. A key step towards achieving this goal would be to build the BQX.

We'd like to thank the City Council once again for holding a hearing on such an important project, and hope that they can commit to creating the BQX in the name of better transit for all New Yorkers.





## Oversight Hearing on the BQX

Testimony before the New York City Council's BQX Task Force

By Paula Crespo, Senior Planner  
May 30, 2019

Good morning Chair Menchaca, Council Members; thank you for creating this opportunity to publicly examine the BQX project. I am Paula Crespo, Senior Planner at the Pratt Center for Community Development, and as an organization working to address socioeconomic inequity in New York City, we place special focus on the ways that public actions can either exacerbate or alleviate that inequity.

“Value capture” is a broad term that refers to a wide range of land use and development tools. In the past year, we launched the Public Value Recovery policy project to examine whether and how these tools can be used to advance social justice and how to distinguish when these tools instead exacerbate inequality. To do that, we have identified criteria for an equity framework, and today we apply some of these criteria to the BQX project.

### **Criterion 1**

*From whom will the public sector recover the economic value created as a result of the BQX?*

Those who own land near the proposed route will see their property values rise as a result of the amenity and in turn will pay higher property taxes that will indirectly finance the BQX. However, the low-income households and many small businesses near the BQX will either be forced to pay for this increased value in the form of higher rents or be displaced.

### **Criterion 2**

*Who will receive the economic value created as a result of the BQX?*

While there may be a diffuse benefit to the public at large, landowners near the route will most directly receive the economic value that the BQX may create because living near a new transit mode will create a greater demand for housing. This will put even more upward pressures on rents while exacerbating the displacement pressure on low-income residents and small businesses. This has been the case with low-income areas near Atlanta’s Beltline, a 22-mile corridor of trails, bike paths, and eventually transit that is funded by value capture.

### **Criterion 3**

*Who bears the financial risks of depending on future tax revenues to fund the BQX upfront?*

As Neil deMause wrote in the Village Voice, “...claims of the BQX paying its own way rely on untenably optimistic assumptions and creative bookkeeping.” EDC’s 2016 study presumes that the BQX will spur an increase in property values but does not quantify how much property values would have risen even if the BQX *weren’t* built. If property values don’t rise significantly

(Over)

more than they would have anyway without the BQX, the City will have to siphon off tax revenues that should have been spent on other things. This means the general public bears the financial risk for a project that has been falsely touted as self-financing. In all likelihood, the BQX will **not** be self-financing – and Council members should not let such claims divert their attention from the project's real financial and opportunity costs .

#### **Criterion 4 and 5**

*Who is involved in governing, and how does this affect the budgeting and decision-making process?*

If the Council approves the BQX, it will fall under the jurisdiction of a special-purpose entity, and you, our elected decision-makers, will have limited oversight. The revenue generated through value capture will be governed by others, and you will not be able to consider other ways of using it that might create more broad-based transportation benefits, or benefits designed to reach people negatively affected by rising housing costs.

#### **More information about an equity framework for evaluating value capture**

More detail about this framework, including how the criteria apply to Atlanta's Beltline project (which has a lot in common with BQX) was published earlier this week in Metropolitiques, available [here](#).<sup>1</sup>

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For more information, contact:

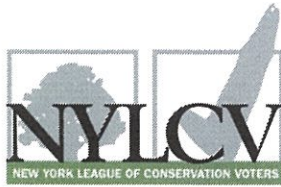
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NOTE: This testimony was prepared by the Pratt Center for Community Development.  
It does not necessarily reflect the official position of Pratt Institute.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.metropolitiques.eu/Reclaim-Value-Capture-for-Equitable-Urban-Development.html>





FOR THE RECORD

**Testimony of Adriana Espinoza, New York City Program Director  
New York League of Conservation Voters**

**BQX Task Force Oversight Hearing  
May 30th, 2019**

Good morning. My name is Adriana Espinoza, and I'm the Director of the New York City Program at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV represents over 30,000 members in New York City and we are committed to advancing a sustainability agenda that will make our people, our neighborhoods, and our economy healthier and more resilient. I would like to thank Chair Menchaca for the opportunity to testify before the BQX Task Force.

NYLCV supports expanding New York City's transportation network to increase mobility and create a more sustainable transportation system, especially where expansion can reduce reliance on cars, improve air quality, and connect New Yorkers living in transit deserts to the places they need to go more efficiently. We embrace new multimodal strategies to bolster the public transportation system in NYC, including support for bike share programs and bike infrastructure, light rail, and ferries.

The BQX represents one such opportunity to expand access, enabling New Yorkers to travel between Brooklyn and Queens more efficiently. Manhattan is no longer the center of gravity in New York City, and new transportation solutions must reflect modern travel patterns and growing economic hubs of the outer boroughs.

The damage to our subways by Superstorm Sandy and the prohibitively high cost of underground expansion make focusing on new transit options above ground a smart investment. The BQX has the potential to connect New Yorkers living on the Brooklyn and Queens waterfront to transportation hubs all over the city-- but only if integrated into the city's existing transportation network.

Light rail projects are also an opportunity to reprioritize street space to get people around more efficiently, and thus could be considered as part of Speaker Johnson's Transportation Master Plan. However, in order to be an effective transportation option, they must be given the right-of-way to be able to operate without getting stuck in traffic, or else be subject to the same inefficiencies as our buses. Transit signal priority and dedicated lanes are already emerging as a way to increase bus reliability, and similar strategies should be implemented as part of the BQX.

Ultimately, New York City needs to invest in innovative transportation options that make the best use of our resources and provide the greatest benefit to our people and our environment. Expanding transportation options to meet the needs of more people, especially those not adequately served by the existing system, is key to building a stronger and more sustainable city. Especially in light of congestion pricing, it is incumbent upon all of us to think about how we can better serve people in New York's most populous boroughs.

To conclude, there are still many questions about this project that need to be answered deliberately and thoughtfully, such as whether fares will integrate with the MTA, who will pay for it, and its effects on the existing communities it will run through. Nonetheless, this project has the potential to be part of a better transit future for New York City. I'd like to thank the BQX Task Force for holding this important oversight hearing. Thank you.



**TESTIMONY FROM THE ASSOCIATION FOR A BETTER NEW YORK  
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL**

May 30, 2019

Good morning. The Association for a Better New York (ABNY) is a 48-year old civic and non-profit organization that promotes the effective cooperation of public and private sectors to improve the quality of life for all New Yorkers. We are a coalition of business, labor, non-profit and political leaders with nearly 300-member organizations focused on exploring and implementing ideas that keep the city moving forward. On behalf of ABNY, thank you for the opportunity to express our support for the construction of the light rail system known as the BQX.

One of the biggest challenges currently facing our city is the functional and dependable operations of our transit system. Our current system struggles with maintaining a state of good repair, yet maintaining an effective and efficient transit system is crucial to the continued success of our city. The few expansions of our rail-based mass transit system require a tremendous amount of resources and result in a substantial amount of disruption. However, every expansion has proven to not only expand service and shorten commutes to residents, workers, and visitors it has relieved pressures on other parts of the system, and brought economic development activity to the expansion area.

This is why it is important to not only support fixing our current system but also to expand it through projects like the BQX that can expand our rail based systems with less resources than underground subways. Additionally, the Brooklyn Queens waterfront is an important place to make a mass transportation route investment. Due to recent rezonings, the movement to reclaim the waterfront over the past few decades, the proximity to employment and amenities, and the natural assets of these communities, the area along the route has already seen significant investment in job growth and residential construction. The variety of land uses allows for mixed commuter transit that can be supported by the route and will encourage more diverse movement than the spoke/hub transit patterns that our current system supports.

Additionally, there is the potential for over 50 million square feet of office space along the route, which is nearly triple the amount of commercial space in Hudson Yards. In addition to encouraging a system that does not contribute to the same strains on our already overburdened infrastructure, by providing the right infrastructure to the area, we would also be investing in the diversification of employment locations, the possibility for more affordable work spaces, and a larger variety of work spaces supporting more diverse types of work.

We encourage the City Council to continue to support expansions to our transit systems with projects like the BQX. Thank you again for allowing us to express our support.



**Testimony of Frank Rafaele  
Owner, COFFEED**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX  
Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

**Thursday, May 30th, 2019, 11am  
Council Chambers, City Hall**

Hi, my name is Frank Rafaele, owner and founder of Coffeed. Coffeed is an artisanal coffee shop that donates 5% of our cafe revenue and 10% of our food revenue to local charitable causes. Our flagship is located in LIC. Currently, LIC is the fastest growing neighborhood in the country and we need to make sure that the transit needs keep up with the ever expanding populous of people living and working there.

Western Queens is also home to the largest NYCHA development in the city, Queensbridge, yet they still go without a reliable transportation network. The fact that NYCHA residents are overwhelmingly supportive of more and better jobs is indicative of the incredible need for better transit, especially for the less fortunate among us. I staff four of my Western Queens locations with residents from underemployed communities, including NYCHA developments. These are some of the people who need the jobs and transportation alternatives the most. These are the communities that need a reliable and equitable transportation option the most.

The BQX will connect 11 NYCHA developments in total along the route to better job opportunities. The BQX has the potential to open up opportunities and create time savings for communities that never thought it possible. The BQX will open up my ability to continue to employ even more people from underemployed communities.

As proposed now the BQX will run a couple of blocks off of two of my locations in Long Island City. One of my locations is directly off of the LIC ferry landing, and I've seen that while the Ferry has helped with some of the lack of transit, it is not enough. We have far more transit demand than we do supply. We watch first hand how the ferries become increasingly overwhelmed with tourists, especially as the weather gets warmer. While the ferry is great the East river line moves around 7,000 people a day moves about people a day in the whole system. The BQX alone would move over 50,000 people per day. Think about that.

Another thing I've seen from the Ferry is what a difference accessibility makes. I see how easy it is for parents with strollers to use. The BQX would also be 100% ADA accessible making commuting easier for our senior citizens, differently abled and parents of young children. It's time we made commuting equally as accessible for everyone. It's time we put transit back into the hands of the people who use it most, New Yorkers.

Finally, I attended an event on March 5th, where Friends of the BQX invited small business owners from cities around the country to Brooklyn, to talk about their experiences with a new streetcar.



We saw many who expressed fear of the unknown, however all were happy with the addition of the streetcar. They spoke about how it increased visibility of their storefronts, brought in more foot traffic, and saw an uptick in revenue generated with the addition of a streetcar.

**Testimony of Matthew Emmi  
Co-Owner, One Button**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX  
Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

**Thursday, May 30th, 2019, 11am  
Council Chambers, City Hall**

Hi my name is Matt Emmi and I am the founder of OneButton. OneButton is a technology design firm with 23 employees located in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

As the son of a urban planner who grew up traveling, and always the early technology adopter I've seen the future of urban transit. Transit is at its most effective is a fluid combination of micro-mobility (citybikes, scooters, etc) with mass transit (ferry, subways, light rail). As new forms of micro-mobility become accessible to more people in more places, the BQX positions itself to be a perfect partner.

Historically the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront was an industrial area with little thought of transit. Now, as one of the most desirable places to live, visit and recreate, the transit infrastructure is incomplete to serve cross-borough commutes and the influx of visitors, residents and commuters. Reliable, equitable, and quality transportation is key to improving quality of life.

We are at the cusp of 10,000 new units being developed in the north Brooklyn waterfront alone. An area that is served only by one major subway line. We need more transit options that will help alleviate this influx of new residents and reduce reliance on car based trips. The BQX has the potential to reduce commute times and provide a zero transfer ride for many people who can now only access the area via multiple connections.

During the proposed L train shutdown, many people suggested, with a shrug, that they would use Uber to offset the disruption from the L train construction. However, daily Uber commuting isn't a solution, it's a discriminatory luxury, that most people can't afford. The BQX will offer a real equitable and environmentally sound solution to our transit shortfalls, and will alleviate the burden on some of our biggest subway lines as the city continues to repair our transit network.

As we move into the future, we must ask ourselves should the city provide for our cars and the associated parking garages, street parking and roadways required? Should we suffer with the pollution, costs, stoplights and unsightliness car based infrastructure requires? Or instead, should the city provide for its people and serve them directly by getting them where they need to go in the most clean, safe and environmentally conscious method possible.

With my first child on the way, I want to live, car-free, without compromise. Vehicles are the least efficient, effective and environmentally sound option in medium-high density urban environment like ours. Because I don't want to leave my kids to the problems of pollution, bike collisions and burdensome, ineffective infrastructure, I will choose to live in a city that serves me, not my car.

## FOR THE RECORD

Alexander Garvin  
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May 27, 2019

New York City Council  
City Hall

Council Members:

I have been asked to trace the history of the BQX Light Rail line from its inception to its adoption by the current City Administration.

The process began in 2005, when Deputy Mayor Doctoroff asked my firm to identify potential sites for housing development with minimal displacement of existing populations. One of the many areas we identified was Astoria. We explained that "the reason that development in western Queens is stagnant is simple: the area is too far from mass transit. Within a quarter-mile of the elevated N and W trains, housing densities are high, but they rapidly drop off as the distance from stations increases. The key to stimulating development in this area is to improve access to mass transit service. Increased transit access would help attract residents to the waterfront area, whether they commute to jobs in Manhattan, Brooklyn, or Queens."

Moreover, "under existing zoning... developing the vacant and underutilized sites, in Astoria alone, would add as many as 32,000 units within ¼ mile of the route." Just the additional real estate taxes from these new apartments could pay for creating a light rail line serving all the communities and job locations between the Triboro and the Verrazano Bridges.

The idea went nowhere until 2014, when Michael Kimmelman of the *NYTimes* contacted me to discuss the wisdom of a light rail line along the Brooklyn Queens waterfront. After discussing it with me, he wrote an article for the *Times*, which referred to my work. Jed Walentas, read the article,

contacted me, and brought in (Gridlock) Sam Schwartz, former NYC commissioner of Transportation, and a number of others to work refining the idea of a new streetcar line along the route that I had proposed nine years earlier.

Jed presented the idea to the current Transportation Commissioner, Polly Trottenberg, who recommended it to Mayor de Blasio. Thereafter, as you know, the BQX became one of the major transportation initiatives of the current Administration.

I believe the BQX is crucial to connecting the thousands of NYCHA tenants who live along the route with job opportunities that otherwise would be difficult for them to reach. More important, the BQX will stimulate construction of thousands of new apartments in Astoria alone. The additional real estate tax payments from just these apartments will more than pay for the entire system.

Please, vote to create the BQX.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alexander Garvin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Alexander Garvin



**Testimony of Nick Defonte  
Owner, Defonte's Sandwich Shop**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX  
Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

**Thursday, May 30th, 2019, 11am  
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Hi, my name is Nick Defonte and I am a lifelong RedHook resident and small business owner. I own and run Defonte's Sandwich shop and practically grew up in the place. My grandfather opened Defonte's in 1922 and we've kept it in the family ever since. We are the epitome of what a neighborhood staple is. I have watched, with a front row seat, how Red Hook has changed over the years. Our family has seen what happens when our city doesn't welcome change, we watched as everyone fled from NY in the 1980's; yet we stayed strong.

Throughout it all, I have watched Red Hook suffer from lack of transportation. We know that Red Hook residents, on average, are 10-25 minutes away from a subway station. That is not okay. The closest subway to Defonte's Sandwich shop is a 16 minute walk away; the closest ferry 11 minutes away. The BQX is proposed to run right by my shop, bringing with it a stop that will put Defonte's within a 5 minute walk from public transportation. In addition, the BQX will bring an estimated 50,000 additional eyes on my business a day. On March 5th, Friends of the BQX had other small business owners from big cities around the country come to Brooklyn to talk to us about how the addition of a streetcar is worth it. They spoke about their fears regarding construction, but also praised the addition of the streetcar for leading to increased foot traffic and revenue. That is a WIN-WIN!

The BQX will also open up new areas for New Yorkers to explore between Brooklyn and Queens that are virtually inaccessible to each other now. It will no longer seclude Red Hook from Queens and creates better, more reliable access to Northern Brooklyn. We deserve a real transportation solution that not only opens up new neighborhoods to Red Hook residents, but that can stand up to the weather as well. Currently, Red Hook is located in a floodplain and we need a form of transportation that is resilient from a hurricane. We saw in Texas after Hurricane Harvey that their light rail

was operational just a day after flood waters receded. If we continue to rely on state run agencies to help us we will be waiting forever. Seven years later, we are still waiting for a flood protection plan post Superstorm Sandy.

Whether it be commuters coming to dine or an employee coming to work, the BQX offers a real solution. The BQX has the ability to help residents of Red Hook work and play outside of just their neighborhood. Every New Yorker should have a chance at a better quality of life and the BQX can do that for the hundreds of thousands of commuters.

**Testimony of Dawn Skeet  
Owner, Jam'it Bistro**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX  
Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

**Thursday, May 30th, 2019, 11am  
Council Chambers, City Hall**

Hi, my name is Dawn Skeete and I own a small restaurant called Jam'it Bistro in Red Hook. We opened just earlier this year, but I have been running a catering company throughout Brooklyn for 14 years. Currently we hire people from Red Hook because we believe in investing in the community in which we serve; Operating a business in Red Hook has become a challenge in the sense that it is difficult for staff to get to work on time. Given the location of Red Hook, it is difficult for community members to navigate the community due to the lack of public transportation. The neighborhood of Red Hook has so much to offer residents of Brooklyn, and visitors.

The nearest train is between 15 to 25 min walk , one can say we all need the exercise, however, when the only option to commute is within a 15 to 20 minutes' walk that creates a burden both on the residents and the employers in the community. That's not okay. As Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams puts it, "There are communities now, in this city -- if we honestly admit, that are really imprisoned to only their communities for the most part.", and we don't want to be a prisoner with in the Red Hook.

The proposed BQX street car would be an added value to all in Red Hook as it will offer an alternative form of and additional transportation. Over the last 10 years we have seen and experienced tremendous growth both in Housing, Jobs and Residents with this growth the need for daily services will increase, public transportation being a top of the list. Yes, there are renovations being done on the trains and buses which services most of the communities within Brooklyn, however, communities like Red Hook has limited public transportation choices.

The BQX will provide a needed relief to commuting in and around Red Hook and New York. The BQX will create more exposure to all the small restaurants and businesses located along the proposed routes of which my restaurant is also located. essentially turning my storefront into a standing advertisement. Friends of the BQX held an event on March 5th called *BQX: "Real Impacts on Local Business"*. Here we saw other small businesses from big cities around the country come to Brooklyn to talk to us about how the addition of a streetcar is worth it. They vocalized about how scary it was at first, but how in the end the final product showed that the addition of the streetcar led to increased foot traffic and revenue; being a win-win for both community members and small business.

The BQX creates new areas for New Yorkers to explore between Brooklyn and Queens that are currently inaccessible without going through Manhattan first. Whether it be a one seat ride for commuters coming to dine or for an employee coming to work, the BQX offers a real solution that brings with it, convenience and time savings. The BQX has the ability to help residents of Red Hook work and play outside of just their neighborhood. Every New Yorker should have a chance at a better quality of life and the BQX could do that for the hundreds of thousands of commuters who already live in these neighborhoods.

Thank you for your time

**Testimony of Jukay Hsu  
Founder & CEO, Pursuit**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
Thursday, May 30th, 2019**

**Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

Hello, my name is Jukay Hsu and I am the Founder & CEO of Pursuit. Pursuit is a social impact organization that creates transformation where it's needed most. Through our four-year intensive program, we train adults with the most need and potential to get their first tech jobs, advance in their careers, and become the next generation of leaders in tech. Our graduates are hired by leading companies like Pinterest, Kickstarter, LinkedIn, BlackRock, and JPMorgan Chase, and increase their average annual salaries from \$18,000 to over \$85,000.

The tech industry is at the forefront of much of the progress in this city. The success of many other industries is contingent on the maintenance and growth of our tech sector. The rate of innovation within tech demands reliable and equitable education, and Pursuit seeks to equip adults with the expertise required to carve out their place in an increasingly competitive job market.

The public transit routes to and from our facility, however, are limited and further constrained by worsening bus and train performance and congestion. As our city grows, hundreds and thousands of New Yorkers bereft of equitable transit are effectively being left behind.

About half of Pursuit's graduates are black or Latino. The other half are women, and almost two-thirds do not have a college degree. We need the BQX to continue empowering these students to achieve their dreams, because they have not been adequately served by existing resources at the community level.

The BQX bridges the gap between our most marginalized neighborhoods and the educational hubs that are designed to cater to their needs. There is also a substantial number of blue-collar workers that could benefit from retraining and workforce development programs, that currently do not have a convenient outlet to refine existing skills as well as learn new ones.



The Tech Triangle is not an isolated phenomenon. The tech sector's rapid expansion is imminent, and where we're located, in the fastest growing neighborhood in the world, it's easy to envision some great changes and opportunities coming to the outer boroughs.

The BQX would not only help students during their time at Pursuit, but after they graduate and are ready to enter the workforce. With the number of tech companies ready to embrace the waterfront, the streetcar would connect students to the job opportunities that they have worked so hard to prepare for.

An investment in the BQX would be an investment in the health of our tech economy, which fuels the livelihood of industries that already call New York City their home. We implore the Council to consider the longevity of this project and the fundamental promise of opportunity that it guarantees for New Yorkers in need.

**Testimony of Frances Brown  
President, Red Hook East Tenants Association**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
Thursday, May 30th, 2019**

**Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

Good Afternoon and thank you members of the Council for holding this hearing and providing us the opportunity to testify on the BQX. My name is Frances Brown and I represent the Red Hook East Houses, a neighborhood completely cut off from the transit grid, served only by buses and none that go to Manhattan. That is why we are in desperate need of new solutions and there have been none better or more realistic than the BQX.

As my residents and I have learned more about the BQX, we've come to imagine what it would be like to avoid long walks to the subway, long waits for the bus and expensive cab rides. What we like is that it would bring us right to Downtown Brooklyn in just 15 minutes without having to walk the mountain of steps at Smith and 9th Street before going underground. Residents at the Red Hook Houses appreciate that we'll be able to easily board the BQX at street level, including those with wheelchairs and strollers, for a quick and convenient ride that we rarely experience on the bus.

We've been dismayed that some on City Council have come out against the BQX before taking the time to speak with us and without proposing any of their own solutions to the transportation problems in Red Hook. The result is NYCHA residents once again feeling forgotten by our representatives. It means NYCHA residents are once again told what is best for us, and what isn't. It's once again saying no to a solution, while having no solutions of your own. We are tired of this and we demand an end to it.

You cannot continue to put the voices of a small few--who are well-off enough that new transportation like this doesn't make a major difference in their lives--over the needs of the many whose lives would be transformed by this solution. Red Hook Houses residents need the opportunities this would provide. From jobs to education, doctors appointments to cultural experiences, new transportation options will benefit all of us.

It remains extremely troubling to us that while our neighborhood continues to change, continues to see prices go up and continues to welcome new, more affluent residents, we have leaders that fight extremely hard to fight change instead of making it work for existing residents.



**STATEMENT -- PAUL SAMULSKI, PRESIDENT,  
NORTH BROOKLYN CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE, INC.  
TO CITY COUNCIL BQX TASK FORCE  
Thursday, May 30, 2019**

Thank you for the opportunity to share our view of the BQX. At the North Brooklyn Chamber, we unite and advocate for the diverse businesses of Williamsburg, Greenpoint and Bushwick, around a goal of improving the neighborhoods' commercial landscape and stimulating the local economy.

For more than ten years we have seen an influx of residents and robust business expansion throughout Williamsburg and Greenpoint. These neighborhoods are experiencing extraordinary new development and growth, much of it along the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront. Of the 58 million square feet of office space that is projected to be built near the waterfront over the coming decade, we expect that a significant percentage will occur in Greenpoint and Williamsburg. Our North Brooklyn communities must be resilient enough to meet the growing demands of businesses, residents and visitors to live, work and travel within the waterfront corridor.

The primary north to south connections between Williamsburg and Greenpoint include the NYC Ferry system, two NYC Transit bus routes and the G subway train. All three of these methods of north/south travel are already overburdened. The North Brooklyn Chamber is highly supportive of additional transit options.

Construction of the BQX will, according to the information we received, serve the needs of hundreds of thousands of workers, visitors and residents. We are told that the streetcar can help broaden economic development and provide access to cultural and neighborhood amenities, schools, health facilities, and parks. We will be watching!

In addition, we support an alternative mode of transportation for those who commute from Long Island City and Astoria to Greenpoint and points south. Currently, the G subway train and several bus routes terminate in Long Island City. Bicyclists and pedestrians regularly cross the Pulaski Bridge and will cross the Kosciuszko Bridge when that project is completed. An attractive feature in the BQX planning is to seriously analyze a pedestrian and bicycle bridge over Newtown Creek, providing another way to travel between Boroughs.

While many details and significant questions about the BQX remain, the North Brooklyn Chamber conditionally supports the project as it's been revealed to us. We eagerly await more information as the deliberative planning work, costs, and other challenges are revealed.

**Testimony of Tucker Reed  
Co-Founder and Principal, Totem**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
Thursday, May 30th, 2019**

**Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

Hi, my name is Tucker Reed and I am the Co-Founder and Principal of Totem. At Totem, our work draws upon the expertise our team has in urban revitalization to promote a vibrant local economy. We've all seen Downtown Brooklyn and Brooklyn as a whole blossom into a world-class destination for culture, the arts, and economic opportunity. In Brooklyn, there are lessons and models that we can export to the rest of the city, in turn ensuring the collective prosperity of our 5 boroughs.

The question of implementing a streetcar line between Brooklyn and Queens has been floating around for quite some time now, but a lot of crucial points tend to get eclipsed by narrow analyses of the proposal. We need to take a step back and look at the bigger picture. We're seeing a new spine of New York along the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront, and the one thing limiting its potential is a lack of transit. Although the BQX will be a boon to commuters in our most underserved neighborhoods, it's by and large an engine for economic growth and development.

One can look to the construction of the East River bridges in the 19th and 20th centuries, and see that opportunities were unlocked for millions of New Yorkers through an East-West connection which helped cement the economic ties between the city's population centers. Our North-South connection has not yet been made, and the BQX would be the comprehensive transit solution required to lay the foundation for job growth, more affordable housing, and office space.

We are seeing unprecedented employment and residential growth in Brooklyn and Queens, which paves the way for a labor force and creative-talent pool that should no longer have to rely on traveling through Manhattan to reach their destinations. The Brooklyn Tech Triangle and Long Island City are driving a lot of this growth, and it's imperative that we make them accessible to our public housing residents living along the proposed BQX route. We can't allow this corridor to be left to market forces.

The waterfront would otherwise be dominated exclusively by luxury housing, and our streetscape would be fraught with cars, taxis, Ubers, and private shuttles. Without the BQX, the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront will be haunted by missed opportunities for job growth and equity for our most neglected neighborhoods. This is a huge project that can lay the groundwork for growth for decades to come, and promise an economic return that would allow the great city of New York to become even greater.



## New York City Council Task Force on BQX Hearing

May 30, 2019

Testimony of Eric McClure, Executive Director, StreetsPAC

In general, enhancements to public transportation are things that we should embrace. New transit lines that enhance connectivity and provide service to areas that have been underserved by existing systems have the potential to improve people's lives.

I'd like to sit here today and welcome the proposed BQX with open arms, but there are a number of reasons for concern.

The cost of building the BQX will be significant, and it's easy to argue that parallel bus service, which would offer equal or superior transit service, could be implemented far more cheaply, and more quickly, as well. Most new streetcar projects built across the country during the past decade, however, have been constructed primarily to enhance economic development, rather than as robust additions to local transit networks. The costs tend to be borne widely, while the benefits accrue much more narrowly.

It's also easy to argue that investments in transit would have much greater return if directed toward improving the city's struggling bus network, building protected bus lanes, speeding up the implementation of signal priority and off-board, all-door boarding, and the like.

Most importantly, there are two essential features critical to the BQX's success, and without ironclad commitments to those features, the project should not proceed.

The first is fare integration with the existing New York City Transit system. If the BQX is to serve as a pathway to economic opportunity for those neighborhoods along the planned route, it must offer seamless and free transfers to and from intersecting subway and bus lines. Requiring people to pay a second fare to connect to other transit options will create a barrier that those most in need won't be able to afford, and will render the BQX a streetcar line serving mostly affluent riders.

The second key element required for the BQX to succeed is 100% dedicated right-of-way along the entirety of the route. Where streetcars have failed, it has been principally due to incursion by drivers into the path of streetcars. We all know far too well New York drivers' propensity to double-park with impunity; to think that somehow that won't happen along a streetcar route is pure folly. Right-of-way cannot be enforced; it must be created and maintained structurally. And without completely dedicated right-of-way, the BQX will be doomed to failure.

We urge the task force to mandate fare integration and exclusive right-of-way if the BQX project is to move forward.

# **INSTITUTE FOR RATIONAL URBAN MOBILITY, INC.**

**George Haikalis**  
President

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**Statement at May 30, 2019 City Council Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn Queens Connector**

**The Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Inc. (IRUM) is a NYC-based non-profit concerned with reducing motor vehicular congestion and improving the livability of dense urban places.**

**IRUM has long supported light rail as an important element of a comprehensive transportation and land use plan for NYC. Light rail provides an attractive alternative to rubber-tired transport modes. It provides a smooth, self-enforcing path and a permanence that reinforces new development.**

**Some 70 years ago the city hosted a five-borough light rail/streetcar/tram network that was the envy of the world. As important as the subway and elevated railway system was, it was the surface street railways that fostered much of the city's early development and filled in the gaps between stations on the rapid transit network.**

**Unfortunately, Robert Moses, the city's "masterbuilder", had a different vision for the city that emphasized the automobile. While NYC could have accommodated both modes, Moses had an almost messianic view that streetcars had to be removed for traffic to move freely. This vision, as we know, failed because a city as dense and crowded as NYC could not accommodate a totally auto-centric surface transportation network. The result has been chaotic.**

**IRUM commends the Mayor for advancing the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront light rail line as a sensible first step in bringing this mode back to the city. Just across the Hudson River, New Jersey has built a similar waterfront light rail line which is quite popular and has served as an important instrument for economic development. IRUM urges the City Council to make a "junket" across the river to see how much of the world is moving toward more sustainable urban rail transit.**

**A long-standing IRUM initiative has been the restoration of a river-to-river light rail line in an auto-free boulevard on 42nd Street in Manhattan. IRUM submitted comments about this proposal at a NY City Council Hearing on a Citywide Ferry system several years ago (statement attached).**

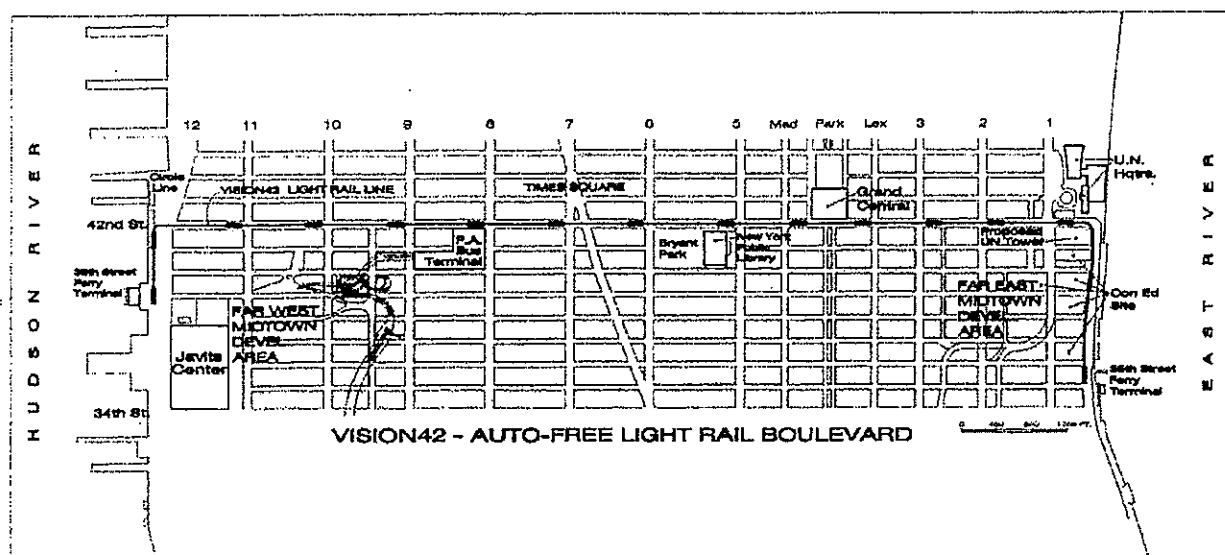
**With plans for congestion pricing forward it is important to advance investments in surface transit (the "carrots") that complement the "stick" of pricing.**

**As a life member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and a fifty-six year resident of NYC I can assure the City Council that the Mayor is following a well-crafted planning effort to advance the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront light rail.**

**George Haikalis President, IRUM**



**Statement at September 21, 2015 NY City Council hearing on Citywide Ferry System**  
George Haikalis, President, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Inc.



The Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Inc. (IRUM) is a NYC-based non-profit concerned with reducing motor vehicular congestion and improving the livability of dense urban places.

IRUM urges the NY City Council to seriously consider including a 42<sup>nd</sup> Street light rail line – river-to-river, ferry dock-to-ferry dock, as an integral part of a plan for a citywide ferry system. A map of this proposal – **vision42** – is shown above.

The Manhattan Central Business District (CBD), by far the nation's largest, is an important economic engine for NYC and the entire the NY-NJ-CT region and is a key generator of public transit trips. Clearly good access to the core of the CBD is an important element in a successful ferry system. The Staten Island Ferry owes its utility to the valuable subway and bus connections at South Ferry.

A crosstown surface light rail on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street would allow passengers using ferries to reach important destinations that are a long walk from the city-owned waterfront ferry terminals at 39<sup>th</sup> Street on the Hudson River, and at 35<sup>th</sup> Street on the East River. While the Hudson River ferry terminal is an imposing new facility, the East River terminal clearly needs a major expansion.

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Street light rail line is estimated to cost a half billion dollars. It will greatly improve access to the many developments that line this renowned thoroughfare, boosting commercial and residential property values in the corridor by an estimated four billion dollars. Capturing a fraction of this gain would pay for the light rail investment, not even counting the enhanced value to a citywide ferry system.

As a second phase, the light rail line could be extending across 34<sup>th</sup> Street, creating a loop that would conveniently distribute ferry riders to much of Midtown.

IRUM urges the City Council to seriously consider this inland connection as an integral part of a citywide ferry system.

**Testimony of Regina Myer  
President, Downtown Brooklyn Partnership**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
Thursday, May 30th, 2019**

**Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

My name is Regina Myer and I'm the President of the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership, a not-for-profit local development corporation that manages three business improvement districts that comprise Downtown Brooklyn. The Partnership's mission is to advance economic development activities in Downtown Brooklyn, and help create a world-class business, cultural, educational, residential, and retail destination.

As NYC's largest central business district outside of Manhattan, Downtown Brooklyn has seen record employment, residential, and industry growth in recent years. However, this growth is impeded by the lack of transit access to the Brooklyn Queens waterfront. Downtown Brooklyn is served by 13 MTA subway lines and countless bus routes, and yet getting to and from Red Hook, Long Island City, Williamsburg, and even the Brooklyn Navy Yard is a challenge – one we must solve if we are to remain competitive.

Over the course of my career, I've seen that most infrastructure projects take a good deal of time, political will, and advocacy to get done. Which is why I'm here to lend my voice in support for the Brooklyn Queens Connector. The BQX would carry 50,000 passengers a day, a capacity currently unmet by most existing transit modes in the city. It would offer a connection not only for the area's 46,000 (and counting) residents, but for Downtown Brooklyn's 45,000 college students, for whom reliable transit is especially important. Likewise, as a burgeoning jobs hub in its own right, Downtown Brooklyn's companies - that need to attract the best talent from across the entire city in order to thrive - are not easily accessible for those living in growing residential areas of Queens and Brooklyn, including the NYCHA developments along the streetcar's route.

Downtown Brooklyn is one of many areas poised for remarkable economic growth in the coming decades. The BQX offers a street-mode alignment that bridges the transit gaps in Brooklyn and Queens in a way we've never seen before. By connecting the "innovation corridor" stretching along the East River waterfront from Brooklyn to Queens, we can support businesses, educational and cultural institutions, attract new investment, and grow our talent pool - not only in Downtown Brooklyn but in every neighborhood along the 11-mile route.

With an increasing abundance of economic activity focused outside Manhattan, it's clear that we need to embrace a new vision for transportation, and this is the place to start. It is incumbent upon the city to support innovative transportation ideas like the BQX, and deliver the transportation infrastructure needed to help our city thrive in the future.



**BROOKLYN**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The  
**Brooklyn**  
Alliance

**BROOKLYN**  
ALLIANCE  
CAPITAL

**Testimony submitted to the New York City Council  
Oversight Hearing on the BQX  
Thursday, May 30, 2019**

Good morning Chair Menchaca and members of the BQX Task Force. I am Samara Karasyk, Chief Policy Officer at the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce. The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce is among the largest and most influential business advocacy organizations in New York, having spent the last hundred years developing and promoting policies that drive economic development and advance its members interests. The Chamber is the voice of Brooklyn's business community, offering the resources, programs, tools and direct support businesses need to continue creating jobs and opportunities in their communities.

We are here today to express our support for the BQX. We endorse this project because the Brooklyn Chamber works to develop and sustain a healthy and robust business environment, which requires an extensive and efficient transportation infrastructure. Our work catalyzes community, workforce and economic development. We are witnessing a surge in business growth along the Brooklyn waterfront - so much so that we have named this area the 'Brooklyn Innovation Coast' because of the large influx of technology, new manufacturing, and creative companies.

These companies are drawn to the region because of the vibrancy of the landscape, diversity of culture, and strong talent pool. But our current transit infrastructure is inadequate for the economy – and jobs - to continue to grow at this pace. Our transit infrastructure was built to move people into Manhattan's Central Business District, not to move them around Brooklyn and the outer boroughs. This transportation deficiency prevents workers in Brooklyn's transit deserts from commuting to good paying jobs along the coast all the way up to Queens and into other parts of Brooklyn.

We are staunch proponents of supporting the growing job sectors that will benefit all our residents. Transportation must be improved for more equitable growth to occur. For this reason, we strongly endorse various forms of new transit – from ferries to Bus Rapid Transit, and expanded subway service to the BQX. We need more and better transit to achieve the waterfront's full potential and give Brooklyn residents equal access to jobs of all levels in manufacturing, creative industries, and technology. The BQX would help underserved commuters in Brooklyn and Queens. It would serve as a model for developing new and reliable transit in other parts of our city to grow job opportunities for all.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.



**Testimony for Task Force on Brooklyn-Queens Connector (BQX) Hearing  
Presented by Brooklyn Greenway Initiative Executive Director Terri Carta  
May 30, 2019**

Brooklyn Greenway Initiative (BGI) is a private nonprofit that has been focused for nearly two decades on the development, establishment, and long-term stewardship of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway – a landscaped protected pedestrian and cyclist route that provides continuous access to and along the waterfront, connects parks and open space, and adds new mobility options for transit-starved residential and business communities.

The vision for BQX complements the Greenway in that it addresses similar needs and offers some of the same benefits. I'm here today on behalf of BGI to ask the Task Force and City agencies working on the BQX project to address the proposed alignment and implementation timeline so that BQX does indeed complement – and doesn't compete with – the full and timely completion of the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway.

BGI has a history of success in community-based visioning and planning, which resulted in a consensus plan for the Greenway and its alignment. In 2009 the City of New York adopted this vision and in 2011 advanced the Greenway by creating an Implementation Plan comprised of 23 distinct capital projects and 6 "future enhancement projects" – such as a pedestrian and cyclist bridge over Newtown Creek, for example, as has also been proposed as part of the BQX plan.

The Greenway's construction and stewardship thus far have been realized through significant financial investments from local, City, State, and Federal entities totaling more than \$220 million. Approximately 18 miles of the full 26-mile planned route are currently in use by an estimated 10,000 cyclists and pedestrians daily, demonstrating public demand for and the immediate benefits afforded by the Greenway. However, it can't fulfil its full potential until remaining gaps are filled and the route is fully connected.

Since 2012, active transportation and cycle commuting throughout the City have grown by more than 55%, and the number of New Yorkers who report riding a bike several times a month grew 26% over the same period. At the same time, more people are living and working along

the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront now than at any other time in the last century, and these numbers are only expected to continue to grow.

It's clear that multiple mobility solutions need to be simultaneously sought – and coordinated – in order to meet the current and future demands of increasing population and population density along the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront corridor. No single solution is a panacea; giving people viable and reliable choices gives people a higher quality of life.

BQX complements BGI's vision for the Greenway to connect a greener, stronger, healthier Brooklyn. And yet, the proposed alignment for BQX seems to overlap the Greenway in a few locations – on Columbia Street between Degraw St and Atlantic Avenue, on Flushing Avenue along the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and Kent Avenue between Clymer and Division. BGI asks that these locations are coordinated to allow the full realization of the Greenway in concert with BQX.

Closing major gaps in the Greenway – in Red Hook, Sunset Park, Coney Island, and DUMBO – can and should be done before BQX breaks ground [in 2024]. Completing the Greenway route can be done within 5 years and is estimated to cost less than 10% of the total proposed BQX budget. The completed Greenway would immediately benefit Brooklyn's 2.65 million residents, over 1.1 million employees, and 15 million visitors from across the City and around the world.

BGI also hopes that coordination of BQX with the Greenway will result in multiple routes of connectivity between Brooklyn and Queens waterfront neighborhoods, including the design, funding, and construction of a pedestrian and cyclist bridge over Newtown Creek on the front end of BQX implementation as an immediate benefit to these communities.

BGI looks forward to continuing to work with the City and other stakeholders to move the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway to completion and fully realize the broad base of benefits it can provide. I thank this Task Force for hearing my testimony today, and the entire City Council for its work on behalf of our City.

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**Fifth Avenue Committee**  
Our Community. Our Future.

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**FOR THE RECORD**

**Testimony before the  
New York City Council BQX Task Force  
May 30, 2019**

Good morning and thank you for holding this hearing on this important new public transit option. My name is Ron Zak and I am the Director of Development and Communications for the Fifth Avenue Committee.

FAC is a 41-year-old, South Brooklyn based nonprofit comprehensive community development corporation and NeighborWorks America member whose mission is to advance economic and social justice by building vibrant, diverse communities where residents have genuine opportunities to achieve their goals as well as the power to shape the community's future. FAC works to transform the lives of over 5,500 low and moderate-income New Yorkers annually so that we can all live and work with dignity and respect while making our community more equitable, sustainable, inclusive and just.

To achieve our mission FAC develops and manages affordable housing and community facilities, creates economic opportunities and ensures access to economic stability, organizes residents and workers, offers student centered adult education, and combats displacement caused by gentrification. In addition to our grassroots neighborhood work, we are actively involved in broader coalitions and campaigns. FAC is a member of the Friends of the Brooklyn Queens Connector group.

Many of the people that FAC serves, the affordable housing that we've built, manage or will be building and the jobs that we place unemployed and underemployed New Yorkers into are along the Brooklyn waterfront. FAC built Red Hook's single largest development of affordable coops – Red Hook Homes –, owns and manages affordable housing along the Columbia Street waterfront, our main office is in Gowanus, and we are a partner in the Gowanus Green project which will bring over 750 units of affordable housing to Gowanus. FAC also provides adult education and literacy services and a range of community services and financial coaching to nearly two thousand people annually, many of them public housing residents who live along the Brooklyn waterfront. FAC's workforce development affiliate runs the NYCHA Resident

Training Academy, has an office at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, connects people to jobs there and trains people with barriers to employment in the growing TV and Film Sector at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. In other words, FAC knows the Brooklyn waterfront well, and that thousands of Red Hook residents walk a mile to get to the closest (non ADA compliant) subway, that many people along the Brooklyn waterfront have ridiculously long commutes to their jobs and schools and have limited access to quality health care all due to the limited public transit options. We know that the lack of access to public transit especially when that lack of access is compounded with woefully limited investment in adult education, workforce training and job placement are significant barriers to economic opportunity and mobility for tens of thousands of low and moderate-income New Yorkers in the communities we serve.

Through our tenant advocacy and organizing, FAC is also keenly aware of the impacts that gentrification and displacement have had on the communities and families we serve. We know that government action or inaction have often been key factors in accelerating gentrification and displacement pressures in many communities across the City. We know that many people fear that the BQX will only add fuel to the fire of gentrification and displacement pressures that already exist in many communities across the city. Those are legitimate concerns that must be addressed as part of advancing the BQX.

But *not* investing in the BQX in communities that deserve public transit and need that investment is not a solution to gentrification and displacement. The value capture mechanism that is being contemplated to fund a portion of the cost of the BQX must be applied surgically to mitigate displacement pressures on low and moderate-income families *and* job generating industrial businesses. The City must institute the Certificate of No Harassment program – which is currently in a pilot phase and only implemented as part of city-sponsored land use actions – in advance of the public approval process for the BQX to protect tenants against possible harassment and ensure that tenant harassment is severely punished.

The BQX literally has the ability to connect tens of thousands of public housing and other residents along the Brooklyn Queens waterfront to opportunity and to improve the quality of life for thousands. FAC believes the BQX is worthy of support and that any negative impacts can be mitigated with a range of public policies and programs. Thank you for your time and consideration.



Toba Potosky  
President  
Brooklyn War Memorial/Cadman Park Conservancy  
646 872-1254

More than twenty years ago – members of the NY City Council approved funds to create *bike lanes* in New York City. That decision took *vision* and *understanding*, that New Yorkers were seeking *alternatives* to buses and subways.

It also took *courage* because allocating taxpayer funds for something as *simple* and as *old-fashioned* as bike lanes, were certain to be criticized by those who lacked the same vision and understanding. The *loudest* people in the room - said it was a waste of taxpayer money. No one rides bicycles anymore. That's what they said.

According to NYC.ORG in 2017 New York averaged 490,000 bike rides per day. Of these rides, 20 percent were commuter trips. Those councilmembers twenty years earlier were right. New York now has over 1200 miles of bike lanes.

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So here we are again... talking about a *simple* and *old-fashioned* idea. Streetcars. **The BQX.** It would be *stranger* if streetcars *weren't* so successful everywhere else. Not only - are they successful around the world - but much closer to home:

The Buffalo Metro Light Rail runs 6.4 miles. They average 16,900 riders per day.  
Hudson-Bergen Light Rail runs 17 miles long. They average 54,434 riders per day.

I look at the BQX from two perspectives: First, it represents jobs and opportunities where they don't exist now. Second, the BQX is cleaner than cars and more efficient and more versatile than our current bus service. It's both wheelchair and stroller accessible.

**No stairs.**

I don't know how many people here today live in Downtown Brooklyn, but I can't wait for the BQX to take me to Wegman's in the Navy Yard and back home again. I hope that someday I will be able ride the BQX to Prospect Park.

I will leave you with this thought. Brooklyn's population is booming and will continue to do so. The MTA is *not* adding new buses or subway lines. And so here we are asking you for the same vision and understanding that councilmembers had when considering that crazy idea of bike lanes... Please support the BQX. Its time has come - once again.

**BQX Hearing Testimony of Alexandria Sica**  
**Executive Director of the Dumbo Improvement District**  
**May 30, 2019**

Hello, my name is Alexandria Sica and I am the Executive Director of the DUMBO Business Improvement District. As you know - DUMBO is a lovely waterfront neighborhood in Brooklyn. We are also the single densist cluster of tech and creative companies in the City – with thousands of startups – including Etsy, Rent the Runway and Quip. We are also visited by hundreds of thousands of tourists each month – thanks to the gorgeous views, city investment in Brooklyn Bridge Park and the amazing buzz for Brooklyn in 2019.

The one problem: the options to reach DUMBO and the emerging employment clusters in Tech Triangle are severely limited. The F train is one of our only options, which means for Queens residents to access DUMBO they have to go through Manhattan. Even if you are willing to cross borough lines – the York Street station is now woefully over crowded, with one entrance that backs up at rush hour in a way that has been a deterrent for many businesses looking to locate their office in our neighborhood. We need more transit options and we need better transit options.

The demand for reliable transit will only intensify as new offices continue to open at the Empire stores and former Jehovah's properties, and three thousand residential units open up in the next two years. In order to service the needs of our workers, residents, current and future local businesses the City needs to make inroads in sustainable transit solutions. A BQX connection to DUMBO would allow for more startups and business hopefuls to expand their reach, eventually culminating in a waterfront-wide network of closely coordinated and robust economic growth.

When I ask about challenges to growing a business in Dumbo, our CEOs are always pointing to the limits of existing transit – and they follow up that sentiment by telling me that the majority of their workforce hails from Brooklyn and Queens.

We would encourage this city to consider a spur to DUMBO. But even the current route would help our businesses and employees, especially at the northern end of our neighborhood. A 12 minute walk to the Etsy offices is a good start. It would be meaningful for thousands of our workforce and our neighbors at the Farragut Houses as well. We don't want folks driving to Dumbo from Red Hook or LIC. We want them hopping on the BQX.

It's clear that the New York City of the past is very different than the New York City of today, which sees an abundance of economic activity outside of Manhattan. It is incumbent upon the city to support innovative transportation ideas like the BQX, which will deliver the transportation infrastructure needed to help our city thrive in the future.

**Testimony of Alexandria Sica  
Executive Director, DUMBO Business Improvement District**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
Thursday, May 30th, 2019**

**Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

Hello, my name is Alexandria Sica and I am the Executive Director of the DUMBO Business Improvement District. DUMBO is also a major tourist destination, with its variety of cultural hotspots, restaurants, and parks at Empire Fulton and the Brooklyn Bridge. Proximity to parks regularly guarantees an improvement in quality of life for millions of New Yorkers. It's time that all New Yorkers had access to green recreational centers.

DUMBO has also been a major economic driver with the rise of the start-up scene. The demand for reliable transit will only intensify as new offices continue to open at the Empire stores and former Jehovah's properties.

The options to reach DUMBO Heights and adjacent, emerging employment clusters in Tech Triangle are severely limited. The F train is one of our only options, which means for Queens residents to access DUMBO they have to go through Manhattan. We need more transit options and we need better transit options.

In order to service the needs of our workers, residents, current and future local businesses the City needs to make inroads in sustainable transit solutions. A BQX connection to DUMBO would allow for more startups and business hopefuls to expand their reach, eventually culminating in a waterfront-wide network of closely coordinated and robust economic growth.

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It's clear that the New York City of the past is very different than the New York City of today, which sees an abundance of economic activity outside of Manhattan. It is incumbent upon the city to support innovative transportation ideas like the BQX, which will deliver the transportation infrastructure needed to help our city thrive in the future.

**Testimony of Darold Burgess  
President, Ingersoll Houses Residents Association**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
Thursday, May 30th, 2019**

**Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

Good afternoon members of the Council and thank you for listening to my testimony today. My name is Darold Burgess and I am President of the Ingersoll Houses Residents Association. I am here to testify in support of the BQX and urge you to support it as well.

For those unfamiliar with the Ingersoll Houses, we are located in an area poorly served by transit, tucked away between DUMBO, Downtown Brooklyn and Fort Greene, near the Brooklyn Navy Yard. For my residents, the BQX would be a lifeline, establishing new connections to opportunities beyond our immediate surroundings.

NYCHA is talked about so much in the news these days but you rarely hear from residents about their conditions and needs. I am here today, standing with my fellow resident leaders, to say clearly: we need the BQX. It is a solution to one of our historic challenges at the Ingersoll Houses, being cut off from transit, even as the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway dissects our neighborhood. The poor planning has led to a stagnant and disconnected area that the BQX would help to rectify, injecting new life into our community.

Our residents are eager to travel in ways that are modern, accessible and can take us to areas surging with opportunity. The city should capitalize on the job growth the waterfront is experiencing by delivering the transit that makes it sustainable and equitable. The city must make sure that opportunities are afforded to communities historically removed from the job growth of Manhattan and the BQX is one of the best ways to do that.

For my residents, the BQX would shave time off of difficult commutes, establishing a 5 minute ride to the Navy Yard, a 15 minute ride to Williamsburg and a half hour ride to Long Island City. Right now, getting to some of these areas can take over an hour when traveling by public transit. The long walks to DeKalb, Jay or York Street subway stations can be especially hard for seniors. If you ask about the bus, let me tell you that I might still be waiting for it if I decided to take that here today. Unlike buses, the BQX promises reliability because it won't get stuck in traffic, it will be quick and easy to board and will have fewer stops.

As you continue to discuss the needs of NYCHA residents, as you continue to examine the transit crisis our city is facing, as you continue to think about how to make job growth equitable to underserved communities, I hope you will see the true value the BQX can provide in all three areas.

This an important moment to work with us. Work with us beyond just thinking about our buildings. Work with us in collaboration, instead of just thinking you have the answers. Work with us to help lift our residents up and fulfill the promise of a better life our city provides. We're ready to work with you.

Thank you.



**Testimony of Claudia Coger  
President, Astoria Houses Residents Association**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
Thursday, May 30th, 2019**

**Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

Hello and thank you members of the City Council for allowing me to testify today. My name Claudia Coger and I am the President of the Astoria Houses Residents Association.

I am here today to testify in support of the Brooklyn Queens Connector, the BQX, because I and many of the residents I represent need better transportation options. The Astoria Houses are the definition of a transit desert, sitting on the far west side of Astoria, fifteen blocks from the closest subway station. For residents who are seniors like myself, if you don't have a car, forget about it: traveling anywhere in the city is a major hassle.

We could really benefit from the BQX as more jobs and opportunities come to the Queens and Brooklyn waterfronts. Historically, NYCHA developments like mine have been cut off from these opportunities, effectively existing on an island, removed from everything else happening in the city. This is true with other developments up and down this corridor. The BQX is a perfect chance to right the wrongs of the past and bring a new, long-term transit solution to communities in need.

My residents and I encourage the council to get behind this important project so we can have an easier time getting to work; to school; to doctors appointments; to just about anywhere. Everyone knows that in New York, time is money, and the time it takes for us to get anywhere is a major drain on our wallets. While we've been pleased with the new ferry service, we need transportation that runs more frequently and with more stops in growing job centers.

I also want to speak on behalf of seniors and others who have a hard time boarding a bus, much less climbing the steps of a subway stop. For us, the BQX would be easy to access, with platform level boarding and no need to go underground. It will be safer, cleaner and a much improved experience for us.

We want to say clearly so that you hear us: we support the BQX and we hope you will too. We're thankful to Mayor de Blasio for putting transportation first for communities in need and we believe this is an investment in communities that historically have not seen the same levels of investment as those in Manhattan.

Thank you for your time and attention.

**Testimony of Thomas Grech  
President & CEO, Queens Chamber of Commerce**

**FOR THE RECORD**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
Thursday, May 30th, 2019**

**Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

Hello, my name is Thomas Grech and I am the President & CEO of the Queens Chamber of Commerce. As the oldest and largest business association in Queens representing over 1000 organizations and over 90,000 Queens based employees, access to reliable and efficient transit options is key to the growth and prosperity of Queens businesses, employers and workers – many of whom are located along the Queens waterfront.

Queens is currently observing the fastest growth out of any neighborhood in the world right here in Long Island City. As a city we have to keep pace with the demands of our working families, local businesses, students, the differently abled and elderly residents.

The borough of Queens used to be more commonly accessed as a place for people go through, and not to. Now that there is substantial development in our residential, commercial, and industrial sectors, all that has changed, and it's harder than ever to get around.

Bridges in and out of Queens are regularly backed up, due to a fundamental lack of transit access and the spoke-hub nature of our Manhattan-centered transit system. Brooklyn residents increasingly will want to work in Queens and Queens residents increasingly will want to work in Brooklyn. They shouldn't have to go through Manhattan to do that.

We have a great opportunity to manifest the promise and excellence of the outer-boroughs in creative transit solutions like the BQX. The streetcar would drastically reduce commute times for hundreds of thousands who otherwise have to go through to Manhattan to reach their respective destinations in either Brooklyn or Queens.

Queens is already home to CitiField, Con Edison and JetBlue, but that doesn't represent the breadth of potential for our local businesses. We need to make sure that our bodegas, halal carts, and mom & pop enterprises have equal footing with the rest of the City as we usher the borough into an exciting new era of prosperity. Our borough boasts the most diverse population in the world, but not the diverse transit solutions that responsibly address the different needs of this great melting pot.

One of the major complaints we received when Amazon announced its creation of HQ2 in Long Island City was that there was no transit infrastructure in place to move employees to and from the location. No one can push the pause button on investment in this city. By the time the next Amazon comes to the outer-boroughs, we need to be prepared with the modern infrastructure necessary to sustain that boon.

The commercial promise that drew the likes of Amazon never left. It's still here, waiting to be accessed, by millions of New Yorkers that cannot wait to embrace all 5 boroughs as their home.

We would like to thank the City Council for holding this hearing, and hope that they can make a responsible commitment with the Mayor's administration to growing our boroughs by building the BQX.

FOR THE RECORD

My name is Matthew LaSorsa. I am the owner of Heights Chateau located at 123 Atlantic Ave. I have been on the Avenue for over 33 years. I am equally a Board Member of the Atlantic Avenue Business Improvement District.

The BID as a Board has taken a position and voted against the proposed BQX. I am here today as a retailer to tell you why.

The life blood of a city's economy is retail and the jobs this business sector creates. The proposed BQX would adversely affect this already fragile balance. I have built my business not only our local community but equally on consumers who come from afar. We are a destination shop always in need of parking. The BQX would eliminate our curbside parking. This city a number of years ago recognized the need for curbside transference of parking and raised the fare on this corridor to what was then the highest charged in Brooklyn. The thought was the higher the fare the more likely cars would shop and then move on to their next destination thus freeing the spot for the following consumer. This has worked well for us. No longer do we have customers, shop owners or local workers parking the whole day. How would our destination customers come to shop without any parking? I suspect many would choose to shop elsewhere.

Secondly, how would we get our deliveries if curbside parking is done away with, a bike lane is added and the ever present traffic congestion worsens? Our life line as vendors is the goods we buy and sell. We work with numerous amounts of companies to bring us the unique products we carry in our stores. These deliveries are brought to us throughout the business day, and the time of delivery can take anywhere from ten minutes to an hour. For larger stores like Sahadi's, Key Food or Trader Joe's receiving time would be much longer. As re-sellers of goods this is a huge problem that will also impact restaurants, bars and clothing stores who equally need the ability to receive the products they use to run their businesses.

Third, good store owners have combated the competition of online shopping by offering great services, such as home delivery. How would I load my truck to do these deliveries without being able to get quick and easy access to my delivery vehicle?

Lastly, the city proposes to raise real estate taxes on all the buildings along the route to help pay for and maintain the project. One of the hidden secrets of commercial space vacancies is the burden high real estate taxes places on commercial tenants. Raising taxes for the project will only exacerbate this already problematic issue. It is time for the city to realize that they have a large role in the high vacancy rates and stop just blaming landlords.

In closing for all of the above reasons with the additional fact that the area already is well served by a bus route, we remain concerned with and against the project.

**Testimony of Bishop Mitchell Taylor**  
**Senior Pastor, Center of Hope International; CEO & Co-Founder, Urban Upbound**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX**  
**Council Chambers, City Hall**  
**Thursday, May 30th, 2019**

**Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

Hello, I am Bishop Mitchell Taylor, Senior Pastor of Center of Hope International and CEO & Co-Founder of Urban Upbound.

For the past 45 years, I have lived in and around Long Island City's Queensbridge Houses, which is the largest public housing development in the country. I have worked extensively with families from Queensbridge, as well as other public housing developments in Northwestern Queens, including Ravenswood, Woodside, Astoria Houses for most of my career.

Urban Upbound helps residents of public housing neighborhoods break the cycle of poverty. We offer integrated, comprehensive services that give the community a hand up, including job training, financial counseling, free tax preparation, and safe and affordable banking products through the Urban Upbound Federal Credit Union.

A crucial part of residents having access to economic opportunities is them being privy to reliable transportation. The reality in northwestern Queens, particularly in Astoria and Ravenswood Houses, is that residents' proximity to reliable mass transit is severely limited, which introduces a barrier to upward mobility. Moreover, the segregated nature of Northwestern Queens makes it difficult for residents to commute to work or school and access healthcare facilities easily, and enjoy the free parks, museums, and events in our city.

While those living in the Upper East side reap the benefits of the Second Avenue Subway line, my neighbors and their children struggle with infrequent and unreliable bus service, often requiring two or three transfers to reach their final destinations.

There is a solution in the BQX. It would provide my community with the reliable, equitable, and affordable transit option that they so desperately need. The average public housing resident spends 300 - 400 hours per year commuting to work or school. To put that into perspective, that is more than a week out of an entire calendar year, which is a ludicrous price to pay for such limited access.



Despite being only 9 miles away, a commute from Astoria to the Brooklyn Navy Yard can take over an hour with our current antiquated mass transit system. The BQX would connect residents to employment hubs like the Navy Yard in a convenient, sensible way.

The streetcar project itself would hire local workers and give contracts to minority and women-owned businesses along the corridor. The city has the potential to foster incredible economic and communal growth before the BQX is even finished being constructed.

Our communities will benefit immensely when our children and grandchildren can easily travel to better educational hubs, from pre-K to higher education and career training.

We literally can't afford to wait for the MTA, which has never made transit deserts like Northwestern Queens a priority. We need to understand that this is equitable, achievable transit, that New York City can do for itself right now.

**Testimony of Beth Cheverie  
NYS LECET**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
Thursday, May 30th, 2019**

**Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

My name is Beth Cheverie and I work for the NYS Laborers LECET labor-management cooperation trust. We represent over 40,000 union members employed by our signatory contractors in the construction industry in New York City and throughout the state. I'm here today to express our support for the BQX Brooklyn-Queens Connector, a state-of-the-art streetcar system being planned by the City of New York.

Our aging transit system does not adequately serve all city residents. The BQX is a solution that will connect underserved neighborhoods from Astoria to Red Hook where many residents live including our members who do not have acceptable access to public transportation.

The BQX has the ability to efficiently move a projected 50,000 daily riders along a single corridor that is integrated into the existing transit system and will ease traffic congestion. The street cars will travel primarily in dedicated lanes separated from vehicle traffic and bikes along the route.

It is anticipated that the BQX will result in 16,000 jobs to building trades members which will strengthen the middle class while providing the City with safe quality construction.

There is no dispute that the current transportation system is inadequate. Moreover, the population along the BQX route is forecast to increase 30% by 2045. Therefore, the BXQ will provide desperately needed transportation now and for decades to come. Thank you for your time.



**Testimony of Sal Sarace**  
**Business Agent & Political for the Sheet Metal Workers Local Union #28**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX**  
**Council Chambers, City Hall**  
**Thursday, May 30th, 2019**

**Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

Good morning and thank you for your time. My name is Sal Starace and I am a member of the Sheet Metal Workers Local 28, a Building Trades Union here in New York City. I grew up in Gravesend, Brooklyn, an area which some would consider the south side of Brooklyn.

As a child I would hear my mom speak about growing up in Carol Gardens, Brooklyn. She talked about 1st place and how much fun it was playing hop scotch and other games with her friends while her parents would sit on the stoop with the neighbors and hang out until the wee hours of the morning. I always wondered why she only told stories about her block, as a young child, so later on in life I asked her why. She told me she had to move out of the area at a young age because of her dad and work. My grandfather was a Police Lieutenant and he worked at One Police Plaza in lower Manhattan. He moved his family out of Carol Gardens because of his commute to work. It would take him 2 hours to get to Manhattan and he felt he was taking too much time away from his family so they moved to Bensonhurst where the commute was easier.

Because of his love for the area, my grandfather used some of the money from the sale of his house to buy a property in Carroll Gardens to keep a piece of the area with his family. After his passing and the passing of my mom, this property has now been handed down to the Grandchildren, me being one of them. 424 Clinton Street has a special place in my heart now. With this Brooklyn-Queens Connector (BQX) we have the opportunity of giving the tenants of my property and other people living in Carol Gardens, Red Hook and other areas along this corridor a chance to stay and raise their children in such a beautiful place. We give them the opportunity to spend more time with their children instead of their commute. These people will have something my mom and her parents didn't, precious time.

This Streetcar is a huge project for our city. With an inclusive, collaborative approach, we can anticipate the creation of 16,000 temporary construction jobs. Our city has committed to building and operated the

BQX with union labor, which is very important for us middle class families. The BQX would help accelerate both commercial and residential growth. It will spur more growth along lengths of the corridor and will create tens of thousands of jobs in construction alone.

I wholeheartedly support this project. It will bring good paying union jobs, it will give families extra time to be with each other, it will keep many people living in these beautiful areas and it would have definitely make my mom and her parents smile. Please build the BQX.





# **BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL OF GREATER NEW YORK**

**GARY LaBARBERA**  
PRESIDENT

AFFILIATED WITH THE  
BUILDING CONSTRUCTION TRADES DEPARTMENT  
OF WASHINGTON D.C.

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL  
OF NEW YORK STATE

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR OF CONGRESS  
OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION

Good afternoon and thank you members of the City Council for holding this hearing today on an important topic that deserves attention. My name is Santos Rodriguez and I am here testifying on behalf of Gary LaBarbera, President of the Building Trades Council of Greater New York, comprising local affiliates of 15 national and international trade unions, representing more than 100,000 hard working men and women living in New York City. I am here to testify in support of the BQX and am thankful to the City for their promise that the construction of this 11-mile light rail line along the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront will be built by union labor.

I'm proud to say that I am a supporter of the BQX and let me tell you three reasons why you should be too: jobs, jobs, and jobs. From the union construction jobs for building the light rail line--which we estimate to be around 16,000--to the jobs that will be created with new housing and office buildings that the light rail will enable; we're talking about thousands and thousands of job opportunities for New Yorkers.

The BQX, as planned, would be one of the largest light rail projects in America. If done correctly, it can spur new and important development projects like affordable housing along the route and can serve as an example that New York City can still do big things. The City should move this project forward to prove that it can build out our transit system in new and intelligent ways and that it can take control of its transit destiny.

Our members are eager and ready to get to work, we really are just waiting on you to get behind this project so we can speed it through the public review process. It would be better for the communities you represent, for our workers and for the City if we can get to yes quickly to avoid the pain and headaches of the will-they, won't-they build public transit and create jobs.

We've unfortunately seen that many of the same organizations that claim to represent working people yell and scream about BQX, giving false reasons for opposing it, like that it's not "guaranteed" to be integrated with the MTA fare system--well of course it will be integrated, it's not guaranteed because it hasn't been built yet. It make sense the City and State integrate it.

This is the single best transit project the City of New York currently has in front of it and it would serve tens of thousands of people, while creating tens of thousands of jobs. Our members and the Building & Construction Trades Council are ready to work with you and the city to fast track this project and get it done so we can all realize its tremendous benefits.

The BQX stands as an opportunity in the City of New York to be ambitious about its future and building the infrastructure that will grow and sustain our economy for the next several decades.

Thanks for your time and attention





**New York City Environmental Justice Alliance testimony  
to the New York City Council Taskforce on BQX  
Oversight Hearing**

March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Good Morning New York City Council Members. My name is Renae Reynolds; I am the transportation planner for the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYC-EJA). I am testifying on behalf of our organization and the members we serve. Founded in 1991, NYC-EJA is a citywide membership network linking grassroots organizations from low-income neighborhoods and communities of color in their struggle for environmental justice, that includes transportation justice.

There is no question that New York City has a transportation equity problem. Lack of access to reliable and affordable public transportation have plagued low-income communities and communities of color, who predominately rely on transit for years. These problems can and must be fixed. However, the solutions must be rooted in true community engagement, informed by those who continue to experience the negative impacts of past top down, siloed decision making.

Transit projects must also make sense in the current context of climate change in a coastal city. Superstorm Sandy wreaked havoc along our coastlines, laying bare the reality of climate change. Just this week golf ball size hail was reported in Staten Island, and flood and tornado warnings were issued. It is unfathomable that in 2019 when extreme weather events are the new reality, that the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and private real estate interests are proposing to build a surface level, fixed rail system along the waterfront. It makes no sense. While EDC's reporting claims that only a small portion of the BQX would be within the 100 year flood plain, it does not take into account that the majority of the route is in fact within the storm surge zone. We don't have to wait 100 years to prove that the BQX is ill conceived, we know it now.

Since the inception of this idea– to bring a gimmicky trolley to an increasingly dense urban street scape– came to our attention 3 years ago, our member organization UPROSE responded with poignant and critical questions for their community in Sunset Park. Why a trolley? When we have multiple train lines. Why a trolley? When we could support the activation and reactivation of public bus lines that have been eliminated.



The answer is that the Brooklyn Queens Connector project is not at all about transportation equity. It is about real estate development. It is a project marketed to vulnerable communities who are understandably in search of better transit, but are unaware that they are being sold snake oil. The price tag for this project has ballooned to nearly \$3 billion dollars even after its route has been shortened. The City cannot continue to throw away vital resources to fulfill the desires of the wealthy luxury developers along our waterfronts at the expense of low-income communities and communities of color and small business at risk of displacement.

The BQX is a solution in search of a problem. It would rely on value capture, a speculative financial scheme to be constructed. It would require the use of overhead contact systems or wires to power it. Along with the possible construction of substations along the 11 mile route, (according to EDC to accommodate 1 megawatt unit per mile). So in addition to the chaos of laying tracks, hanging wires, creating exclusionary trolley-only streets, we would also be forfeiting public land for substations. In the past 3 years how many electric buses could have been servicing communities and closing transit gaps?

This project must be stopped dead in its tracks and we need the City Council to help us put an end to this misadventure. We need our elected officials to support real transit equity, to focus on the future with better bus networks, real bus rapid transit, invest in zero-emissions electric buses in collaboration with our Metropolitan Transportation Authority and send luxury developers and their gimmicks/schemes and flashy renderings packing.

I would like to thank the City Council and the Taskforce on BQX for putting this hearing together and creating a platform for our critical concerns to be addressed, I look forward to a final resolution that supports real transportation equity for our communities.

My name is Balanda Joachim and I am here this morning on behalf of the Southwest Brooklyn Tenant Union to share why we believe the BQX Streetcar will deepen unaffordability, displace rent stabilized tenants, and push out small businesses in our neighborhoods.

FOR THE RECORD

The Southwest Brooklyn Tenants Union (SWBTU) brings together tenants and allies to support the right to housing for all residents in Southwest Brooklyn, primarily Carroll Gardens, Columbia Waterfront, and Red Hook, neighborhoods that will all be directly impacted by the proposed BQX trolley route. SWBTU was formed in response to increasing displacement pressure residents are facing. We work with members by connecting them with legal counseling, emotional support, organizing and direct action, and political education. SWBTU supports individual members fighting to remain in their homes while organizing collectively with allies including elected officials and community based organizations, for broader policy that will ensure the right to housing for ALL residents.

Every week I hear new stories about landlords using construction, buyouts, and other types of harassment to force long time residents out of our neighborhood. We believe that the BQX will contribute to the continued displacement of residents, primarily low income, through its value capture financing model. Value capture, or tax increment financing, rests on the calculus that increased property taxes from increased property values along the route will fund the project's costs. These inflated property taxes however will force landlords to increase rent, causing deepening unaffordability, the deregulation of rent stabilized units, and displacement of small businesses.

We view the BQX as a tool for powerful real estate developers to raise property value that will ultimately lead to the displacement of low income tenants and expedite the already declining numbers of rent stabilized units in our communities. While we invite more transportation options into our neighborhoods, we don't believe it should come at the cost of the displacement of low income tenants and small businesses.

**Testimony of Christopher Torres**  
**Deputy Director, Friends of the Brooklyn Queens Connector**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX**  
**Council Chambers, City Hall**  
**Thursday, May 30th, 2019**

**Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

My name is Christopher Torres and I'm the Deputy Director of Friends of the Brooklyn Queens Connector or the BQX.

I grew up in Southern California where access to quality transportation was always lacking. Having to use public transit was difficult; in fact, part of the reason I chose to move to New York City was because of our expansive, 24-hour public transit system. I've lived here for 15 years now and the frustration from delays, overcrowding, and lack of maintenance remind me of how hard it was to get around growing up.

And I'm not alone in saying that we have to and can do better! If Los Angeles can add a modern, reliable streetcar to its public transit options, this City should be able to do so as well!

That is why I'm excited to be part of an organization working hard to create a new mass transit option to get around Brooklyn and Queens. Over the last 13 years, in New York City and nationwide, I have devoted myself to progressive causes; fighting for others on issues like the New York State Dream Act, raising the minimum wage, and clean and fair elections. And now I'm fighting for something else I believe should be a fundamental right in our City: ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE AND RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION.

I believe in building grassroots power in communities, and that when it comes to the betterment of people's lives we all have a responsibility to do the hard work of finding solutions, even when the fruits of that labor are not immediate. In my experience, difficult problems require sitting down at the table to find common ground and listening to the people for input.

The work that the Friends has done over the last 4 years to educate New Yorkers about the BQX is real and widespread.

That work included knocking on 48,000 doors.

We gathered 7,033 signatures of support through 1-on-1 conversations. Including 1,742 signatures coming specifically from NYCHA residents. These supporters were not just signing their name, they elected to share their letter of support with their neighbors and to be printed in local newspapers.

In total, we have collected sign-ups from 57,221 New Yorkers - including 510 new supporters in the last three weeks leading up to this hearing - who have at one point or another shown interest in engaging with the Friends of the BQX to help make this project a success.

This spring, more than 100 small business owners from along the corridor attended an event we organized focused on how a streetcar would impact business, both during and post construction. Small business owners from other cities joined us and talked about their experiences. They talked about enduring the construction and change that comes with building a streetcar, but the resounding refrain was that access to mass transit is good for business in the long term. More than 25 local businesses signed up to be part of our local business working group.

A poll we conducted of voters who live along the corridor found that nearly 75% support the BQX, including 71% of those who live in public housing. 16% of voters we spoke to were opposed to the BQX.

The Friends outreach team has also done a lot of listening. Overwhelmingly, we hear from residents that movement up and down and around this corridor is unacceptably slow and unreliable. They want the BQX to cost the same as the subway and include a free transfer. They want to make sure it can actually move in NYC traffic and has a dedicated right-of-way.

Among the many obstacles stacked against low-income and working class New Yorkers, a lack of reliable and affordable transportation is one of the most difficult to overcome.

In 2015 the New York Times quoted a study by a Harvard economist who looked at 9 US cities, including New York City. He wrote: "The relationship between transportation and social mobility is stronger than that between mobility and several other factors, like crime, elementary-school test scores or the percentage of two-parent families in a community."

Along the BQX corridor, we are talking about giving 44,000 NYCHA residents better access to the tens-of-thousands of jobs along the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront. And it's not just NYCHA tenants who will benefit from the opportunities the BQX will provide. Over half the residents along our route live in some form of rent protected or affordable housing.

We are talking about an ADA accessible, single-seat ride from Astoria to Downtown Brooklyn and the Navy Yard. And it will have a dedicated right of way that further protects pedestrians and cyclists, something we desperately need as this year's fatalities by car continue to rise.

I understand that the prospect is daunting of building a new mode of mass transit, that will hopefully lead to a broader citywide network. Progress is measured in years. But I also know that this Council understands reliable, accessible transportation is crucial to improving the lives of residents in their districts. I believe that this is the council that can help energize this ambitious project, show leadership when our city needs it most, and make sure we get this historic project right.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

**NYC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TESTIMONY**  
**HEARING BEFORE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL TASKFORCE ON BQX**  
**May 30, 2019**

Good morning Chair Menchaca and members of the BQX Task Force. My name is Christopher Hrones and I am Director of Strategic Transit Initiatives at DOT. I am joined by Assistant Commissioner for Intergovernmental and Community Affairs Rebecca Zack. We are honored to be here on behalf of Commissioner Trottenberg together with our colleagues from EDC to provide testimony and address your questions as they may relate to DOT's supporting role in the BQX project.

DOT has been assisting EDC with the planning and conceptual design of the BQX. We are excited to be part of this project that would on the one hand offer improved mobility and access for thousands of New Yorkers and on the other hand provide additional opportunities to transform our streets, not only prioritizing transit but also making them work better for bicyclists, pedestrians, and other users. With a rapid surface transit investment in this corridor the City would complement many of DOT's key initiatives, including Vision Zero and our recently initiated Better Buses Action Plan.

DOT has been working and will continue to work with EDC on determining how the BQX would fit into and function within a constrained urban street environment. We view the development of a major rapid transit service along this corridor as not only a challenge but an opportunity to re-envision how our streets in these neighborhoods can be transformed into spaces that prioritize transit, pedestrians, and bicycles over automobiles. DOT continues to innovate in our street management approach by implementing new street designs that make walking, biking, and using transit safer and more efficient, and we are currently in the process of implementing a few types of new designs that we would build upon for the BQX. These include shared streets, projects that limit or restrict through traffic such as our pilot Truck and Transit Priority treatment on 14<sup>th</sup> Street, and physically protected transit lanes that we will be piloting this year on up to two miles of bus lanes. The BQX would involve extensive application of these approaches along a densely populated 11-mile corridor.

With the current proposed BQX alignment DOT and EDC would provide direct routing between major destinations and a high level of transit priority while also maintaining the functionality and safety of the streets on which it runs. We have had great success on many corridors around the city with reconfiguring our roadways to provide more space for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit and improve safety for all users. Indeed this is one of the primary ways in which we have been able to reduce serious injuries and fatalities and make progress towards Vision Zero.

And we would integrate many of our key Vision Zero tools that we employ to reduce fatalities and serious injuries into the BQX project. These include sidewalk extensions and medians, as

well as traffic calming through lane reductions and limiting through traffic. New transit stations themselves would decrease crossing distances either by expanding sidewalks or creating accessible median refuges. By replacing general travel lanes with dedicated streetcar lanes we could have a traffic calming effect. Finally, with some of the proposed street designs we would discourage cut-through traffic, resulting in lower traffic volumes and speeds.

Calming traffic also improves bicycle safety. As the project progresses we will develop more detailed bicycle designs that ensure that bicyclists can safely negotiate in-street tracks, as they do in many North American cities and around the world. Although a streetcar would be an unfamiliar mode for many New Yorkers and require adjustment, we believe the project would contribute to the overall safety of our streets.

In addition to cutting edge street design, BQX would require innovative curb management. The BQX serves multiple commercial corridors, which would continue to have goods and passenger loading needs. Building on existing DOT programs, we look forward to continuing to work with the local business community on innovative approaches, such as off-hour deliveries, loading on cross streets, and even bicycle delivery programs.

At DOT we are currently stepping up our efforts to improve bus service in New York City. Our Better Buses Action Plan aims to speed up buses by 25 percent by 2020 and increase reliability. We will accomplish this through various forms of transit priority treatments, dedicated additional enforcement, and by coordinating our efforts with MTA's borough bus network redesigns, which will reconfigure bus routes in an effort to improve service and reverse negative bus ridership trends.

With BQX the City would provide an important addition to surface transit in key sections of Queens and Brooklyn and complement an improved bus network. The BQX would neither merely replace bus routes nor run independently of them. Instead, we are committed in the future to integrating the new service with buses and subways in a way that fully optimizes transit in this part of the City. And fare integration with MTA, including free transfers, will also be an essential component of making the BQX a success.

In conclusion, the BQX is an innovative, forward-looking transportation investment in a key growth corridor that would improve mobility for thousands of New Yorkers. This project would advance DOT's mission to provide for the safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible movement of people and goods in the City of New York and we look forward to continuing to support EDC in this project.

**Testimony of Jessica Schumer  
Executive Director, Friends of the Brooklyn Queens Connector**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
Thursday, May 30th, 2019**

**Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

My name is Jessica Schumer and I'm Executive Director of Friends of the Brooklyn-Queens Connector or BQX. I'm thrilled and thankful that the City Council has chosen to hold this hearing and talk to the entire community about an important project for multiple boroughs and the entire city. I'm excited to be here to speak about it and answer any questions you might have.

The Friends of the BQX is a non-profit that formed four years ago to educate people about the project and help advocate for it. We represent a diverse and broad coalition from transit advocates to public housing residents, to community based organizations, to local business groups.

As a 4th generation Brooklynite, and recent new mom to a baby boy who is the 5th generation in my family to be born in Brooklyn, I'm incredibly excited about what the BQX could mean for Brooklyn, Queens and our whole city.

Every day the Friends group works to engage local communities up and down this corridor and we have found the vast majority of residents, workers and business owners are open to the idea. People want more transit and they want better transit. We have over 56,000 supporters to date. We're proud that they come from all walks of life in our great city. Our Deputy Director Chris Torres will speak more to the work our group has done in the community.

The BQX represents the sort of bold and visionary thinking our city needs if we are going to continue to grow equitably and increase opportunity for all New Yorkers. It is our best chance to expand our mass transit system without going through the MTA, which needs to focus on fixing the system we currently have. It's also a chance to expand mass transit, encourage innovation, and take back our transit destiny, a concept supported by Speaker Johnson in his plan to reform and take control of the MTA.

This project has the potential to connect this corridor and create a new spine of our city, and new, affordable transit for people who need them the most. Too many people are struggling, and in desperate need of affordable transit. There are many areas along the BQX route that aren't well served by transit and suffer from persistent and high underemployment. Residents in Red Hook and Astoria deserve access to opportunity and we know with better transit comes more income mobility. The BQX would not only save people time but would increase the number of good paying jobs or better schools within commuting distance.

There are also places in the 9 neighborhoods that the BQX would run through we are seeing pockets of explosive job and population growth. Downtown Brooklyn, Long Island City, and Williamsburg have mass transit but mostly in the form of subways that go to and from Manhattan. In discussions



with hundreds of residents along the corridor, time and time again people say they want to live and work outside of Manhattan.

If we don't improve mass transit along this corridor the current trend of growing transit inequality along our route will continue. Those who can afford to are taking Ubers, Lyfts and private shuttles along this corridor while those who rely on buses are stuck in slower traffic amid worsening congestion. The BQX would equalize transit with a true dedicated right of way. The BQX will take cars off the road and replace them with reliable, accessible and affordable mass transit.

The BQX would also transform places like the Brooklyn Navy Yard. It's currently home to 10,000 jobs and expects to add an additional 10,000 by 2021, and 10,000 more after that in the coming decades. The Navy Yard has the potential for tremendous job growth but could grow even more and put more of those jobs in reach with better transportation options. A new ferry stop will help, but that ferry runs from Manhattan to the Navy Yard.

Ferries can and should play a role in helping commuters, and their success shows the need for more transit. The BQX can complement other mass transit options like ferries, and can carry over five times the number of commuters served by ferries -- with a lower operating subsidy. In fact, the operating subsidy required for the BQX is similar to that of subways.

One question that we see a lot is -- why a streetcar? I think we can all agree that given the costs, there will be very few new subways added in our lifetimes. In many cases, new or improved bus service is the answer to expanding transit access. But not on this corridor, where ridership is projected to be over 16 million a year, using a fairly conservative ridership model. That would make the BQX the largest streetcar line in the country in terms of ridership. And the BQX would have the ability to carry more passengers than any bus line in the city currently does.

Modern streetcars with a dedicated right-of-way provide many of the benefits of a subway but can be built much more cost effectively. Yes, the capital costs are higher than a bus line, but they support more density and can move faster with true dedicated rights of way that won't be blocked by cars or stopped when we need to do utility work underground. They are fully accessible for those with mobility challenges. They are resilient and green. They are cheaper to operate than most forms of mass transit. And they are a way to reimagine and take back our streets and our curbs for public transit. The BQX can quite literally help pave the way for more complete and safer streets. And we hope to be the first of a broader network of light rail running on our streets.

I know there are still many questions about this project -- I can tell you we at the Friends of the BQX also have questions. So I'm glad the Council, and our entire community, is focusing on this project. We believe community engagement is essential to getting this project right, which is why we have spent years discussing the BQX with residents, and are glad to see the city pursuing a process that engages the community more, through environmental review, ULURP, and other types of outreach.

I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

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**Testimony of Harris Schechtman  
Senior Principal, Sam Schwartz Engineering**

**New York City Council Task Force on BQX  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
Thursday, May 30th, 2019**

**Oversight – Hearing on the BQX – Brooklyn-Queens Connector**

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Harris Schechtman, and I am Senior Principal at Sam Schwartz Engineering, a transportation and planning firm. I was formerly General Manager of Buses and head of Operations Planning and Schedules for NYC Transit Department of Buses. I am here today to testify in support of the Brooklyn Queens Connector, a project that will have a crucial impact on sustaining the ongoing growth the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront has experienced, while allowing it to mature into a thriving corridor for both residential and commercial uses.

Our firm did the original alternatives analysis, feasibility study, and conceptual design for Friends of the BQX. That determined the project was feasible, but could only succeed with the higher capacity that a modern streetcar could provide, based on projected daily ridership higher than any bus route in NYC, and likely the highest daily ridership of any streetcar in the United States.

From the time BQX emerged as a proposed streetcar, critics have questioned why it could not be a BRT (or in NY lingo, an SBS) service. They cite how much cheaper SBS could be, comparing it as a bus route without the infrastructure investments necessary for higher speed and reliability. They ignore history: For some 60 years, NYC Transit ran buses over a similar route, called B61. That route took as long as 90 minutes, averaging 6 mph end-to-end. But that was on paper. In reality, frequent delays led to bunching and service gaps and unbearably slow trips that drove riders away as service became unmanageable. In response, NYC Transit split this into two separate routes about ten years ago. Why repeat the failure of B61 with another bus alternative?

Critics often overlook the fact that even the highest capacity bus that could be used has only about half the passenger capacity of the BQX's proposed modern streetcars. Of course, that means higher bus operating cost, but the bigger problem is that buses would have to run every 1-2 minutes to meet passenger demand. Traffic signal timing, uneven loading, etc., will guarantee that even if buses leave the terminal on time, within a short distance, the bus service will become bunched and irregular on almost every trip. Without the ability to run reliably and smoothly, the service will fail from day-one.

This may all sound too technical, but I can say as a life-long New Yorker who has planned, scheduled, studied, operated and advocated for our NYC bus network for over 50 years that buses cannot be the answer for this robust yet underserved Brooklyn-Queens waterfront corridor. This is not about nostalgia to bring back the trolley. Our firm was a key player in the 8-year-long project that designed and implemented the first five – and very successful – SBS routes to ever operate in NYC. Elsewhere, we have advocated for BRT in lieu of proposed modern streetcars. We support bus solutions where appropriate, but in this corridor, buses won't cut it.

So streetcar is the right choice, but why do we need this route at all? The combination of job, residential, and recreational growth along this corridor is key to NYC's future. Some 40,000 residents of public housing along this route will find well-paying opportunities in the future economy, and a vastly expanded area within NYC that now becomes within reasonable commuting distance. The mixing of their needs with those of residents of new developments is not a bad thing; that multi-use broad spectrum of demands is what makes NYC's transit routes the most used and useful in the country. We cannot tap that potential without this streetcar spine that connects people and jobs with much shorter travel times. Currently, many trips along this corridor actually take less time if one improbably takes the subway into Manhattan and back out. This encourages residents to crowd onto over-capacity subways entering Manhattan instead of attracting them to a faster, more direct route on the streets.

What happens if we don't build BQX? Residents are going to find another way, and as the last five years have shown, that way is often going to be TNC's, or FHV's. We are already seeing the consequences in Manhattan, where increased auto mileage is slowing everyone down to the speed of buses. The newly-enacted congestion pricing program will hopefully bring some relief to midtown, but we need innovation elsewhere to avoid the environmental and travel consequences. The best way to win customers to transit is to provide an attractive, competitive service. The frequency of BQX will mean that residents can likely go to the nearest BQX station and board a streetcar in the same or less time than they would wait for an Uber or Lyft. The signal and lane priorities available only to BQX streetcars will further cement its role. And customers will enjoy that reliability and fixed fare of BQX even when it's raining or snowing. There is no better option on the horizon.

The City's adoption of BQX is a bold, insightful, and strategic move. MTA's capital burden for state-of-good-repair, modernization, and very limited expansion leaves it, as a practical matter, unable to consider BQX, regardless of its merits. The innovative value capture financing proposed for the project is a model widely used by in other countries, and can ensure that, unlike the Second Ave subway, enhanced real estate values can be put toward a public good.

The BQX would reduce personal car usage as well, and offer improved streetscape opportunities, an improved path toward Vision Zero, a cleaner environment, and reinforcement of a future that does not require car ownership.

For these reasons and more, I support BQX as an effective transit strategy for the Brooklyn-Queens waterfront and for the entire City, and hope that I have helped your understanding of that. BQX can stand alone on its transit merits, but more than that, it is an investment in our long-term future, diversifying our growth geographically and capitalizing on and sustaining the attention the waterfront has gained.

Thank you.

Statement of Mitchell L. Moss  
Director, Rudin Center for Transportation  
New York University

Brooklyn-Queens Connector Task Force  
City Council of New York

May 30, 2019

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Task Force for inviting me to speak today. I direct the NYU Rudin Center for Transportation and have been on the faculty of New York University since 1973. Let me also say that I attended the public schools of New York City from kindergarten through high school, and have lived all but 8 of my 70 years in the City of New York.

The New York City subway system was initially built more than 100 years ago and was designed to connect workers who lived in the outer boroughs of Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx with the factories, warehouses, piers, and office buildings of Manhattan. Until the mid-1960's, when the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge opened, Staten Island's only direct transportation link to Manhattan was through the city's ferry system.

As a result, all of the more than 20 subway lines in New York City, except the G train, run to and through the borough of Manhattan.

Today, New York City has more than 4.5 million jobs. And since 2009, the city has added more than 820,000 jobs; total employment in New York City has grown by 22%, according to the State Comptroller. More than 60% of the jobs created in New York City between 2009 and 2018 were located outside of Manhattan. Brooklyn accounted for 25% of all the private sector jobs created in NYC between 2009 and 2018. Queens accounted for 16% of such jobs created in that time period. Most important, Brooklyn had the highest rate of job growth of all five boroughs, 46%, from 2009-2018. Queens accounted for 27% of all new private sector jobs during that time period.

We are witnessing a profound transformation in New York City's economic ecology. Manhattan's share of the city's private sector employment has declined from 64% to 59% between 2009-2018.

The challenge we face now is to connect residents of Brooklyn and Queens to jobs that have been and will be created in those boroughs. The Brooklyn-Queens Connector will help meet that challenge by allowing residents – especially those in neighborhoods such as Red Hook, Long Island City, Clinton Hill and Ft Green gain direct access to jobs at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where is projected to have 20,000 jobs by 2030, in Long Island City and in downtown Brooklyn.

Our research at the NYU Rudin Center has highlighted the role of transit in fostering economic mobility. New Yorkers with access to transit have more choice of employment opportunities and, just as important, easier access to educational institutions where they can gain or strengthen their job skills. Given the large number of colleges and universities in downtown Brooklyn, the Brooklyn-Queens Connector should make it far easier to enroll in programs that provide the skills essential for jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Finally, I want to point out that the Brooklyn-Queens Connector should be considered as a transportation infrastructure that will improve access to jobs and education. The bicycle and scooter are terrific but they are not for everyone. And most New Yorkers cannot afford a taxi, Lyft or Uber to get to and from work everyday. We invest in mass transit because it can serve large numbers of people, regardless of age, gender, race, income, and physical agility.

I want to convey my strong support for the Brooklyn-Queens Connector and will be pleased to respond to your questions and comments.

May 30, 2019

LAURIE MAURER

718-858-0772

lmm@maurerandmaurer.com

My name is Laurie Maurer and I am here to represent the Atlantic Avenue BID. I have lived in Cobble Hill for the past 50 years and own a building on Atlantic Avenue.

But, as probably very very few of you have, I also grew up in Brooklyn and lived with trolleys. I knew first hand how inconvenient they were: hard to get on, frequently stuck in traffic and often had power losses. They were changed to trolley buses, which were definitely more flexible but still had problems. And then came buses, which were (and are) the best solution yet, being completely flexible and now, even non-polluting.

So it is with absolute amazement that I see that a trolley is now being proposed to run through one of the most densely developed areas of Brooklyn. No matter how snazzy the pictures being shown may be, this is still a fixed rail vehicle, completely inflexible and, in my opinion, is a giant step backwards in public transportation. It is not a good idea, whatever its route.

I cannot speak to the specific impact the trolley might have on other neighborhoods, but I can certainly speak about mine.

I cannot believe that anyone has actually stood on the corner of Atlantic Avenue and Court Street. If they had, they would see public buses (61, 63, 57), school buses, even Department of Correction buses. They would see an endless stream of trucks, from small vans ~~to 18~~ and

trucks making deliveries to our local stores to 18 wheelers which use Atlantic Avenue as a through truck route. They would see public and private sanitation vehicles. They would see lots of yellow and green cabs. They would see endless numbers of cars, moving and parked (or trying to park). And, they would see hoards of people crossing Atlantic Avenue, mainly north to south, all day long.

It is absolutely clear that a trolley turning at that corner would greatly effect all of these current uses. As stated in the BOX literature, 70% of the streets to be used by the trolley will be dedicated: no buses, trucks, cars. Court Street probably would have to be one of these. Other streets in the neighborhood? What is supposed to happen to our existing buses? Our delivery trucks?

It is rumored that the trolley will be paid for by a bond issue, which would be eventually repaid by the increased value of the properties along the route and a concomitant increase in their property taxes. Perhaps some properties in Queens being considered for development would benefit by the trolley, but certainly not for those in the already highly valued (and taxed) properties in the historic districts. It is amazing that we would be asked to pay for the negative impact the trolley would have on our neighborhoods.

No one would question the need for significantly upgrading available public transportation from both the Queens areas and Red Hook. But an expensive, inflexible fixed rail system is certainly not the answer. Additional new bus routes, flexible and non-polluting, could and should be the solution.

Thank you.



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chris Hironaka

Address: 55 Wacker St

I represent: NYC DOT

Address: 55 Wacker St

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rebecca Zuck

Address: 55 Wacker St

I represent: NYC DOT

Address: 55 Wacker St

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Adriana Espinoza

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCCV

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

BQX ☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: George Hailalis

Address: One Wash Sq. Vill. #50

I represent: IRUM

Address: Csu

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: May 30

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: David Bragdon

Address: 1 Whitehall St., NYC 10004

I represent: Transit Center

Address: 1 Whitehall St. 17th floor

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. BQX Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/30

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: HARRIS SCHECHTMAN

Address: 322 8th AVE NY NY 10001

I represent: SAM SCHWARTZ ENGINEERING

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dawn Steele

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Sam It Bisko

Address: 367 Columbia Street

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Claudia Gonzalez

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Sofia Gonzalez - Casa Ruben

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 5/30/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ERIC McGUIRE

Address: 423 4th St. BROOKLYN NY 11215

I represent: STREETSPAC

Address: 17 BATTERY PLACE #204 NY NY 10001

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mitchell Moss

Address: 100 BLECKEN ST 29A

I represent: NYU/UNICEF

Address: 391 11th St. Trappala

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: PIERCE LEVIN

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: St. Gabriel - C.S. Rubio

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jessica Fred

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Nick Defonte

Address: 279 Columbia St



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/28/19

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: MATT EMMI

Address: 184 KENT AVE B203

I represent: FRIENDS OF BOX

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/30/19

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Christopher Speranza

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: ABNY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Appearance Card**

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 32X Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5-30-19

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Duvel Williams

Address: 195 Montague St

I represent: TWU Local 100

Address: 195 Montague St

**Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms**

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DAVID YANG

Address: 37-27 86th St Apt 6J Jackson Heights

I represent: Phunit

Address: 47-10 Aukett Place LIC, NY

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 5/30/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Paula Crespo

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Pratt Center for Community

Address: Development

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: W. Fisher  
Seth Myers

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCEDC, Executive Vice President

Address: & Director of Project Implementation

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Will Fisher

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYCEDC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. Q26 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/30/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joseph Colella

Address: 87 27<sup>th</sup> Ave BK, NY 11214

I represent: New York Building Congress

Address: 1040 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, NY NY 10018

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/30/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Greg Walters

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: G-One-Quantum

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Roland Lewis

Address: 26 Stephen Court Brooklyn

I represent: Waterfront Alliance

Address: 217 Water Street, NY NY

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. Box Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bishop Mitchell Taylor

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Urban Upbound

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tom Grech Queer. Clerk

Address: 75-20 Astor Bl.

I represent: Green Clerk

Address: F. Elmhorst

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. BQX Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/30

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Donald Burgess

Address: 5 Fleet Walk 9G

I represent: Ingersoll Houses

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. BQX Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5-30-2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Claudia Coger

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Astoria House Residents Association

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. BQX Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JESSICA SCHUMER

Address: FRIENDS OF THE BQX

I represent: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. BQX Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CHRISTOPHER

Address: FRIENDS OF THE BQX

I represent: DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shabazz Schuck

Address: 1150 Pacific Street

I represent: Tucker Hood

Address: 55 Washington

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: TOBA POTOSKY

Address: 101 CLARK ST.

I represent: BROOKLYN WAR MEMORIAL

Address: 295 Cadman Plaza West

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. BQX Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sal Starace

Address: 500 Greenwich St.

I represent: Sheet Metal Workers Local 28

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Matthew C. LaSorsa

Address: 123 ATLANTIC AVE

I represent: Merchandise - on AVE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Laurie Maurer

Address: 172 Amity St Bklyn

I represent: Atlantic Avenue BID

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bruce Silverglad

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Gleason's Gym

Address: Water St, DUMBO

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alexandra Sica

Address: DUMBO

I represent: DUMBO BID

Address: 20 Jay St

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Regina Myer

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Downtown Brooklyn Partnership

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: RONI ZAK

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: FIFTH AVENUE COMMITTEE

Address: 621 DEGRAW STREET / BKLYN.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/30/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Zachary Weiner

Address: 53 E 11th Ave #2

I represent: Bergin Restaurant

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 05/30/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Balanda Soachim

Address: 201 Columbia St

I represent: Southwest Brooklyn Tenant Union

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bryan Lozano

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Tech: NYC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: May 30, 2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amy Breedlove

Address: 363 Henry St Brooklyn 11201

I represent: Cobble Hill Association

Address: Po Box 375 Brooklyn 11201

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/30/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Terri Carta

Address: 185 #

I represent: Brooklyn Greenway Initiative

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/30/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maulin Mehta

Address: One Whitehall St.

I represent: Regional Plan Association

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/30/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Luis Rivera

Address: 45 Main Street Suite 620

Brooklyn NY  
I represent: NANDINEE PITLOKAN ARCHITECTS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 5/30/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Renee Reynolds

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: The New York City Environmental Justice

Address: Alliance

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. BOX Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/30/19

Name: DAVID ROSKIN (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 302 Bedford Ave Brooklyn

I represent: BABAR

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/30/19

Name: Samara Karasyk (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. BQX Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/30/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Beth Chevere

Address: 300 E 75<sup>th</sup> New York NY 10021

I represent: NYS Laborers LECET Fund

Address: Albany, NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. BQX Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 5/30/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Santos Rodriguez

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYC Building Trades

Address: 71 U23<sup>rd</sup> NY NY 10010

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms