



August 23, 2019

Polly Trottenberg
Commissioner
New York City Department of Transportation
55 Water Street
New York, NY 10041

Re: BQE Scope and Timeline

Dear Commissioner Trottenberg:

We are writing today to learn more about recent developments with the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE) reconstruction project and the BQE Expert Panel. Over the last several months, dozens of advocates, community groups, engineering firms, and elected officials have weighed in on this multi-billion dollar project and offered a wide range of feedback. We greatly appreciate your receptivity to these questions, concerns, and recommendations and are certain that community engagement and planning will dramatically improve the final outcome.

In the lead-up to the release of the BQE Expert Panel's evaluation and report, we are interested to learn more about changes to the project's timeline, scope, and funding as well as the ongoing involvement of state and federal agencies. Specifically, we would greatly appreciate answers to the following questions by September 13, 2019:

1. At the most recent public meeting of the BQE Expert Panel on June 27, 2019, you noted that there had been "timeline slippage." When do you expect to announce a new timeline for the project and, as the BQE continues to deteriorate, are there measures that can be taken to stabilize the triple cantilever and extend its useful life while ensuring the safety of all users?
2. For any project of this scale, there must be full cooperation between the city, state, and federal government. Thus far, what funding or other resources has your department received from the New York State Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, or any other external agencies? What is your strategy in the coming months and years for securing further resources?
3. At the June meeting of the BQE Expert Panel, you mentioned that reconstruction, maintenance, and oversight of the BQE is a challenge due to the fact that portions of the highway are owned by the City and portions are owned by the State. Given that NYC DOT and NYS DOT share jurisdiction over this roadway, why has the City—and not the State—taken the lead on this project and shouldered primary responsibility for design and construction costs? Has NYC DOT requested additional support and resources from NYS DOT? If so, please describe the nature of those requests as well as the State's response.
4. In numerous community presentations, DOT has included a "Unified Van Voorhees Park" as one of its project goals.¹ To advance these efforts, DOT committed to a traffic study of


substandard ramps with the intention of “determin[ing] ramp improvements” and “improving pedestrian connectivity.” Has the study been completed? If so, please provide a copy to our offices. If not, when do you anticipate that it will be finalized? Please also share any design work that has been prepared for the “Unified Van Voorhees Park.”

5. In several community presentations, NYC DOT proposed “Potential Direct Bridge Connections” from the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges to the BQE as well as the *elimination* of several ramps connecting the BQE with the DUMBO neighborhood. Please describe how these plans have advanced. Will DOT and the BQE Expert Panel also be considering the addition of on-ramps from the South-West, Staten Island-bound BQE to the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges?
6. At their last public meeting, members of the BQE Expert Panel stated that they will be “looking at demand management strategies... that could allow capacity reduction from 6 to 4 lanes.”ⁱⁱ Will DOT be involved in analyzing this capacity reduction? Do you believe that four lanes of traffic could be accommodated on a single level along the current Triple Cantilever right-of-way, given various chokepoints under the Brooklyn Bridge, under Columbia Heights, and at other locations?


We would appreciate the chance to meet with DOT and the BQE Panel to discuss these questions and your responses, and will be reaching out to your office to coordinate a meeting date.

Thank you again for your continued engagement and attentiveness on this project. We have no doubt that broad community engagement will create a strong outcome and we look forward to working with you toward that end.


Sincerely,




Scott M. Stringer
New York City Comptroller



Nydia M. Velázquez
Congresswoman




Hakeem Jeffries
Congressman



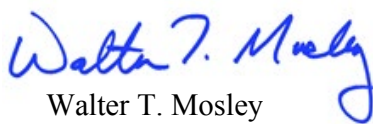
Brian P. Kavanagh
State Senator



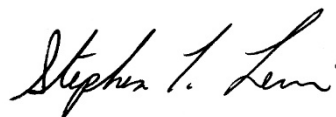
Velmanette Montgomery
State Senator



Jo Anne Simon
Assemblymember



Walter T. Mosley
Assemblymember



Stephen T. Levin
Council Member



Brad Lander
Council Member

c: Marie Therese Dominguez, Commissioner, New York State Department of Transportation
Carlo Scissura, Chair, BQE Panel

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- ⁱⁱ [https://9670f26306f0aa722eb1-bf8a0720b767c6949515361a19a9737f.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/uploads/document/document/129/BQE Panel Update Presentation 6.25 GQdraft .pdf](https://9670f26306f0aa722eb1-bf8a0720b767c6949515361a19a9737f.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/uploads/document/document/129/BQE_Panel_Update_Presentation_6.25_GQdraft_.pdf)