

Factsheet: The Brooklyn Queens Connector (BQX)

New York City has one of the oldest transit systems in the world today at a time when the city has more residents than ever before and its population is only expected to continue to increase. Our transit system is struggling to keep up. Subway delays have doubled in the past five years, and bus ridership has begun to decline as service deteriorates. Meanwhile, fares are going up and there are no immediate proposals in Albany or Washington to provide much-needed increases in funding. New York City can't afford to wait.

We need more public transit as quickly as possible, especially in areas that are seeing tremendous growth despite lacking reliable public transportation options. Many of these areas are clustered along the Brooklyn and Queens waterfront. Tens of thousands of housing units and millions of square feet of office space are planned or currently under construction along this corridor. And the population along the waterfront is forecast to increase 30% by 2045.

The Brooklyn Queens Connector (BQX) is a streetcar [proposed by Mayor de Blasio](#) during his State of the City Address in 2016 that would link 700,000 people along a 14-mile route from Astoria to Sunset Park. It solves transportation shortfalls in the growing North-South corridor along the waterfront in Brooklyn and Queens without competing for funds with other critical transit projects in the city.

The BQX is cost efficient, environmentally friendly, and can be paid for entirely through a tax increment financing mechanism that doesn't require approval or funding from the state or federal government.

Importantly, the BQX represents a chance for New York City to invest in its own infrastructure, create good paying jobs, and grow our economy, while making sure that growth is broad-based and shared. It will especially help those struggling in some of the poorest and most transit-starved areas of our city including the over 40,000 New York City Housing Authority residents who live along the corridor.

- 1. The BQX will help expand opportunity, create good paying jobs, and grow the city's economy, while making sure that growth is broad-based and shared.** The BQX will add [86,000 jobs](#) along the East River waterfront in Brooklyn and Queens by 2045 according to a preliminary economic analysis; which would account for one in four of the new jobs forecast for the area. Much of this growth will be in industries that will enhance the economic competitiveness of New York City, from technology to media to industrial manufacturing. The BQX will also help small businesses up and down the route by providing more and easier access for existing and new customers.
- 2. The BQX will help reduce inequality and fight poverty, improving the lives of tens of thousands of New Yorkers struggling to make ends meet.** Groundbreaking [research](#) from scholars at Harvard and NYU shows that shorter commute times are the strongest factor in predicting families' ability to escape poverty and move up the income ladder. The BQX will substantially reduce commute times for tens of thousands of New Yorkers, especially for the over 40,000 public housing NYCHA residents along its route, and put more good paying jobs in reach. The BQX will also provide greater access to education, job training, and other

essential services, such as health care for those who need them most. And by providing access to transit deserts that aren't currently easily accessible by anything other than private car, taxi, or and other inadequate surface transportation options, the BQX will help increase the supply of affordable housing in areas where it is desperately needed without a major impact to those residents already in affordable housing options. In fact, over half the existing rental housing stock along the corridor is public, rent-stabilized, rent-controlled, or income-restricted.

- 3. The BQX Streetcar is the most effective and cost-efficient solution for the needs of those who live or work along corridor.** A streetcar is the right mode of transit this corridor's size and potential ridership. The Select Bus Service options seen in other parts of the City simply couldn't handle 50,000 riders a day without constant service disruptions and delays, including constant "bunching" of buses like commonly occurs on other routes. And the BQX doesn't compete with other transit projects because it can be built entirely by the city and doesn't need federal or state dollars. Not only is the project affordable and cost effective – especially compared to other recent transit projects in our region – but it is paid for by the increased value it will bring to the corridor, thereby limiting taxpayer exposure.
- 4. The BQX will make our communities safer and more resilient while helping our environment.** The BQX can be built to protect critical infrastructure from extreme weather so that it is resilient and can quickly resume service even after major storms, unlike subways. By taking cars off the street and producing fewer emissions than hybrid buses, it brings other environmental benefits as well. The BQX will make our streets safer by calming traffic and help New York City with its goal of lowering traffic injuries and fatalities. And the BQX will be bike friendly, more easily allowing bicyclists to take their bikes on board than buses or subways. It will also make the city's entire mass transit system more accessible to those New Yorkers who have trouble getting around, from seniors, to those in wheelchairs, to parents with strollers, and others who might not be able to walk long distances to subway or bus stops.
- 5. The BQX is supported by a broad coalition of New Yorkers and is popular with those who live along the route.** Over 100 institutions along the corridor [support the BQX](#) including NYCHA Public Housing tenant associations, community groups, businesses, churches, hospitals, and institutions of higher education. Additional supporters include former MTA Chairs, transit advocates such as Transportation Alternatives and the Regional Plan Association as well as the presidents of several NYCHA tenant associations. And surveys show overwhelming numbers of residents along the corridor want the BQX Streetcar as a transit option.