

**Statement of the Cobble Hill Association on  
DOT's June 15, 2023 Proposals for Zone 5 of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway**

The Cobble Hill Association is disappointed by the New York Department of Transportation's (DOT) presentation to the community on June 15th for Zone 5 of the BQE. Cobble Hill was ready to accept visionary solutions to address the three big issues our community has been raising for over a decade: safer pedestrian streets, traffic reduction on Atlantic Avenue and Hicks Street, and the reunification of our neighborhood and the Waterfront. Instead, DOT presented three "[concepts](#)" that completely disregarded the health and safety of our community, and touted an ability to build structures and expand roads to accommodate cars, while at the same time claiming similar efforts to benefit pedestrians or connect Upper and Lower Van Voorhees were impossible.

The first concept moved the Staten-Island bound off-ramp from Columbia Street to the intersection of Furman Street and Atlantic Avenue, adding another lane of traffic to the already dangerous intersection. DOT conceded this concept did little to reduce traffic while increasing danger to pedestrians. DOT then presented two concepts that proposed placing a **Queens bound BQE on-ramp on Hicks Street and Congress Street** – essentially making Hicks Street an extension of the highway. DOT claimed that this on-ramp would reduce congestion on Atlantic Avenue, thereby allowing safer crossings for pedestrians. There are two major flaws in this rationale:

- (1) At most an on-ramp on Hicks Street reduces congestion caused by cars turning left from Hicks Street onto Atlantic Avenue to access the existing on-ramp. Not only is this not the main source of the congestion (which is westbound traffic on Atlantic Avenue), it would likely exacerbate the problem since a second on-ramp will induce more cars to exit the trench and use Hicks Street to access the BQE. DOT's proposal fails to adequately consider the detrimental impact on air quality and noise pollution that would accompany increased traffic. It also completely disregards that increased traffic on Hicks Street would likely cause innumerable deaths by delaying ambulance access to the NYU Emergency Room at the corner of Atlantic Avenue and Hicks Street.
- (2) For a Hicks Street on-ramp to have any impact on Atlantic Avenue traffic, it would require westbound cars/trucks to reroute through local roads in Cobble Hill and Carroll Gardens in order to reach the new on-ramp at Hicks Street. Our narrow, tree-lined streets are ill-suited to handle the influx of vehicles this second on-ramp would bring. The resulting traffic jams, noise pollution, and air pollution would have a detrimental impact on the well-being and safety of our residents, particularly the elderly, children, and pedestrians who frequent this area to access our local schools, parks, and playgrounds.

In summary, placing an on-ramp on Hicks Street encourages more cars to bypass the trench, does not address the main source of the congestion on Atlantic Avenue, and shifts traffic to local roads. There is only downside, and that downside comes in the form of serious consequences to the health and safety of pedestrians in Cobble Hill and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Thus, the Cobble Hill Association vehemently opposes DOT's proposal to place a BQE on-ramp on Hicks Street. Despite the underwhelming proposals, and justifiable anger from the community, there is still time and opportunity for DOT to incorporate the community feedback into a broader vision for the BQE, while taking significant measures NOW to reduce congestion and improve pedestrian safety. We urge DOT to reconsider this ill-conceived proposal and instead explore alternative solutions that enhance the quality of life for our community, not compromise it.