

April 23, 2019

Dear Mr. Scissura,

Congratulations on your appointment as chair of the Mayor's BQE Expert Panel and thank you for taking on the incredible task and opportunity to find the best path forward for the BQE. We write to you as advocates for Dumbo and Fulton Ferry, neighborhoods that are in many ways defined by the BQE and its connections to our beloved Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges. We are excited by the possibilities and ask that all communities along this alignment be considered as you begin your work.

As you know, Dumbo and Fulton Ferry are home to thousands of families and serve as economic engines for the city. Indeed, more than a thousand innovative companies are based in Dumbo alone and they employ tens of thousands of New Yorkers. Each year, millions of visitors flock to our views, our parks, and our quintessential mix of new and old New York charm. The BQE is so much a part of our landscape that it practically defines our geographic border. Visitors cross beneath it to access the neighborhood. And it runs by the bedroom windows of thousands of residents who live in the Farragut Houses, Dumbo and Fulton Ferry buildings. The BQE reconstruction will significantly impact our neighborhoods and we want to be sure that our voices are heard from the start to the finish of this process.

First and foremost, the final plan selected should include permanent connections between the BQE and the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges. Currently, every hour thousands of vehicles pour off of the bridges and onto Dumbo and Fulton Ferry's streets, not to visit our residents or shop in our stores, but simply to go from bridge to BQE or vice versa, negatively impacting the quality of life and experiences of our residents, workers, and visitors. Therefore, the BQE plan selected should eliminate the use of our streets – including Old Fulton Street, Prospect Street, Jay Street and others – as the route for connecting the bridges to the BQE.

This is not a six-year issue for us. It is about smart urban planning to correct the mistakes of Robert Moses and dramatically improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods and connectivity between Dumbo, Fulton Ferry, Brooklyn Heights, Downtown Brooklyn, and the Navy Yard. Dumbo and Fulton Ferry need a plan that does not explicitly or inadvertently send additional cars into our neighborhoods, such as cars traveling from Furman Street or exiting from the BQE because of intolerable traffic or the added costs of congestion pricing. Moreover, it is our hope that the panel will also explore improving public transit options as a part of your work.

Also, importantly, we hope the final plan reshapes the public realm below, around – and if more ambitious plans advance – potentially atop the BQE from Old Fulton to Sands Street. This includes Old Fulton Street itself, the underpasses along York Street, the staging lot at Washington Street and Prospect Street, all Robert Moses created park spaces (Bridge Park 1, 2 and 3) and the surrounding pockets of public spaces stretching

from Old Fulton to Navy Street. We call your attention to the work of the Brooklyn Strand as an initial guide. It would be transformative to have a well planned and cared for public spaces walking from the Navy Yard to Brooklyn Bridge Park. Think of the quality of life improvement for residents of the Farragut Houses or Dumbo heading south to enjoy the Piers of Brooklyn Bridge Park or crossing the BQE to work in Downtown Brooklyn!

The ambitious plans that have been floated by BIG and others offer many benefits and deserve a full vetting to see if the goal of fixing the BQE can be achieved while also improving our communities as outlined above. Minimizing the impact to the Promenade, creating new parkland, and reclaiming waterfront space from cars would be fantastic outcomes, but we must be sure improvements extend beyond Brooklyn Heights into Fulton Ferry, Dumbo and down to Sands Street.

We look forward to working with your panel as you begin this enormous task.

Sincerely,



Alexandria Sica
DUMBO Improvement District



Melissa Prober
DUMBO Action Committee



William Stein
Fulton Ferry Landing Association

Cc:
Mayor Bill DeBlasio
Polly Trottenberg, NYC DOT Commissioner
NYC Council Speaker Corey Johnson
Councilmember Steve Levin
Eric Adams, Brooklyn Borough President
Scott Stringer, NYC Public Advocate
Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon
State Senator Brian Kavanagh
Representative Nydia Velazquez
Lenue Singletary, Brooklyn Community Board 2