



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

## **Senator Montgomery joins colleagues to submit joint scoping comments on the NYC DOT's Draft Scope of Work on the reconstruction of the BQE from Atlantic Avenue to Sands Street, including the triple cantilever.**

Senator Velmanette Montgomery

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Senator Velmanette Montgomery, Senator Brian Kavanagh, Assemblyman Walter Mosley and Assemblywoman Jo Anne Simon submit joint comments on the Draft Scope of Work (Draft Scope) prepared in connection with the New York City Department of Transportation's (NYCDOT) impending reconstruction of the I-278/Brooklyn Queens Expressway (BQE), from Atlantic Avenue to Sands Street, including the triple cantilevered portion circumnavigating Brooklyn Heights.

The proposed project is constructed at a uniquely economically sensitive and congested section of the Interstate highway system. We applaud NYCDOT's active engagement of the community in the time leading up to the issuance of this Draft Scope. We agree with the agency that the project's impacts will be great; hence we believe that the EIS process must be as thorough, comprehensive, and inclusive of community stakeholders as possible. In recognition of the immense impacts on the community, additional amenities and improvements should be made available to the affected neighborhoods to offset the impacts of the construction. We ask that you engage the communities in connection with this in the coming months.

In the letter, the elected officials outlined their specific concerns about EIS tasks to be performed:

**Socioeconomic Conditions:** As noted above, the study area should be expanded to a perimeter of 1 mile aligning with the street network. The proposed perimeter is simply too small an area to assess the impacts to population, housing and economic activity. Brooklyn Heights—the oldest New York City historic district which includes many of the oldest buildings in the area—is particularly vulnerable, especially those properties closest to the Promenade and the triple cantilever. Economic activity in the area within the arc of the BQE must be included as there is a strong likelihood that economic activity centered in and around the Downtown Brooklyn business district will be affected dramatically by the reconstruction.

**Transportation:** The Draft Scope identifies 108 intersections to be analyzed. These intersections should be considered to be within a secondary study area, as conditions at the identified intersections will have impacts throughout the area. Those impacts are best studied in a comprehensive framework and it is critical for NYCDOT to consider traffic flow for all types of traffic, both current and proposed, including cyclists, pedestrians, and plans for future transportation solutions like the Brooklyn-Queens Connector (BQX). It is also paramount that local streets be protected from diversions of traffic from the BQE. A special focus should be on discouraging vehicles, especially trucks, from using neighborhood streets as a detour route, and appropriate signage and resources to combat that should be considered. With nearly 5 million visitors to Brooklyn Bridge Park annually arriving on foot, the protection of pedestrian access and safety is critical.

**Noise:** We understand that this project will necessitate noisy construction. We call on the NYCDOT to plan construction schedules so as to keep the noise to a minimum, to begin construction no earlier than 8:00 AM and end no later than 8:00 PM, and to limit construction to weekdays.

To read the full letter, download the PDF.

To learn more about the Brooklyn Queens Expressway (BQE) reconstruction project, visit:

<https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/articles/velmanette-montgomery/senator-montgomery-joins-colleagues-urge-governor-cuomo>

<https://thebha.org/news/the-bqe-reconstruction-project/>

<https://thebha.org/issue/bqe-cantilever-reconstruction/>

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/bqe-atlantic-to-sands-jun2016.pdf>

<https://www.brooklynpaper.com/stories/41/10/dtg-cuomo-supports-bqe-design-build-2019-03-09-bk.html>

<http://www.brooklyneagle.com/articles/2017/6/29/rehab-bqe-and-heights-promenade-new-gateways-brooklyn-bridge-park-below>