

The Municipal Art Society of New York



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Contact: Matt Sollars, matt@anatgerstein.com

MUNICIPAL ART SOCIETY STATEMENT ON DOT'S BQE VISION

(New York, NY) – Elizabeth Goldstein, President of the Municipal Art Society of New York, issued the following statement about the new vision for the BQE released by the NYC Department of Transportation:

“The Municipal Art Society of New York applauds the Department of Transportation for highlighting transformational opportunities for the BQE, including capping trenched sections of the expressway, and we encourage this type of visionary thinking to address the harms the highway has caused to communities along the corridor.

DOT has done extensive studies for activating the spaces under our elevated expressways and creating safer and more resilient adjacent streetscapes. While we recognize DOT's approach to engaging local organizations on how to enliven and better utilize these spaces underneath and adjacent to the BQE, we need to acknowledge that these areas remain public health hazards.

As the report states, 150,000 vehicles travel along the BQE daily, and this results in air pollution, which is illustrated in the Department of Health's Community Air Survey, as well as noise pollution, and dirty runoff. MAS has been exploring how major arterials can be reimaged to help alleviate these issues as part of our [Greener Corridors Initiative](#).

The City's work toward installing green infrastructure and reducing local delivery truck traffic will help, but more comprehensive planning is needed to achieve the long-term goals and align the broader BQE vision with other regional projects. For example, the Brooklyn Marine Terminal scope could be increased to dramatically rethink pedestrian circulation and open space networks in the areas adjacent to the BQE.

Furthermore, to achieve a deeper and truly transformational rethinking of the BQE, New York City needs collaboration and commitments from the State, which owns the vast majority of the

BQE. This new approach should include innovative transportation designs that would change the use and impacts of the expressway, the implementation of congestion pricing to improve public transit and alleviate traffic, and increased federal funding to truly transform these divisive corridors into safe and healthy spaces for New Yorkers.”

Elizabeth Goldstein was a member of the City’s panel that issued a report on the future of the BQE in 2020 and published an op-ed in the Daily News in September, 2024, entitled [“Time to think big for fixing the BQE.”](#)

ABOUT MAS

The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS) lifts up the voices of the people in the debates that shape New York’s built environment and leads the way toward a more livable city from sidewalk to skyline. MAS envisions a future in which all New Yorkers share in the richness of city life—where growth is balanced, character endures, and a resilient future is secured. Over more than 130 years of history, our advocacy efforts have led to the creation of the New York City Planning Commission, Public Design Commission, Landmarks Preservation Commission, and the Tribute in Light; the preservation of Grand Central Terminal, the lights of Times Square, and the Garment District; the conservation of more than 50 works of public art; and the founding of such civic organizations as the Public Art Fund, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, P.S. 1, the Historic Districts Council, the Park Avenue Armory Conservancy, and the Waterfront Alliance.