



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

**Testimony of Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams on the
Statewide Transportation Improvement Program for Federal Fiscal Years
October 1, 2016 – September 20, 2020
August 22, 2016**

On behalf of the 2.6 million residents of Brooklyn (Kings County), representing the largest county in the State of New York, I would like to offer my testimony to the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) regarding the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for the Federal fiscal years of October 1, 2016 – September 20, 2020 and urge that the final STIP include \$10 million in funding to conduct an engineering analysis for BQ Green as well as support NYSDOT as the lead agency to convene a multi-agency working group to advance the project.

BQ Green is a community-driven project, developed in partnership with Brooklyn Community Board 1, El Puente, St. Nicks Alliance, Los Sures-Southside, and then-Council Member Diana Reyna, who now serves as the deputy borough president of Brooklyn. Extensive community meetings provided a venue to engage residents in how to make this project a reality. The project itself would extend a concrete platform over the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE) between South Third and South Fifth streets, de-map the current South Fourth Street Bridge, as well as overhaul existing parkland that currently lines the expressway, for another half block. The plan proposed would include an adventure playground, barbecue and picnic areas, baseball diamond, community

center, grassy and wooded spaces, as well as a pool and water play zone.

While many would identify BQ Green as simply a parks project, the project would also enhance connectivity and mobility in a dramatically underserved community in Brooklyn. In fact, BQ Green would also help reduce automobile congestion by implementing traffic-calming measures including neckdowns, in which the street is narrowed at the intersections improving pedestrian and cycling safety; speed cushions, as well as shared streets that would allow for pedestrian and vehicular usage while creating a safer cycling environment. These are important features in a borough where bicycle usage has increased by 34 percent since 2006, according to the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT).

This is a unique opportunity to include BQ Green as part of your transportation improvement program, which will improve community transportation options as well as create sustainable community development.

This project would also work to alleviate the impacts and legacy of the BQE, which sliced through Williamsburg in 1951. Not only would this serve a community that is in desperate need of park space, but this project will also help mitigate the area's high asthma rates that have risen as a result of increased traffic levels. The Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990 require demonstration that transportation plans, programs, and projects conform to the purpose of state air quality implementation and/or maintenance plans to maintain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Parks and increased mobility options such as safe biking and walking infrastructure play an important role in the reduction of air pollution and this project is integral to meeting the goals of the CAAA.

This is NYSDOT and Williamsburg's "Back to the Future" moment. Let us use this STIP as an opportunity to repair the transportation errors of the past by reconnecting our streets and, in the process, our communities, for the future.