



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew Gounardes

Brooklyn Lawmakers Celebrate USDOT's \$5.6M "Reconnecting Communities" Grant Award to Transform the BQE

ANDREW GOUNARDES March 14, 2024

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Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez; Congressman Dan Goldman; State Senators Andrew Gounardes, Kristen Gonzalez, and Julia Salazar; Assemblymembers Jo Anne Simon, Emily Gallagher, Maritza Davila, Robert Carroll, Phara Souffrant Forrest and Marcela Mitaynes; Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso; and Council Members Lincoln Restler, Jennifer Gutiérrez, Shahana Hanif, Alexa Avilés and Justin Brannan released the following statement today in response to the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) award of a \$5.6 million Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods "Neighborhood Access and Equity" Grant to re-envision the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE) North

and South corridors:

“The Brooklyn-Queens Expressway cuts through the heart of our communities, and in its current, crumbling form, is an albatross around the neck of our collective future. This Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation will allow city and state leaders to begin to reimagine the BQE corridor with an opportunity to place climate justice, economic justice and racial justice at the center of our transportation network.

“The \$5.6-million grant will fund **BQE Connects**, a project to identify proposals that improve access and reduce environmental, social, and economic burdens for disadvantaged communities—particularly immigrant communities and communities of color—that live along the BQE’s northern and southern stretches in Brooklyn. The grant will fund the development of criteria to evaluate proposals, complete conceptual design for those proposals, and fund community engagement throughout the project.

“It’s long past time to advance a bold, holistic vision for the entire BQE corridor that transforms it from a polluting ‘asthma alley’ to one that sustainably moves people and goods, increases public space, strengthens our economy, and connects our communities. We’re grateful to the Biden Administration for recognizing our long-standing concerns and awarding New York this grant, and we look forward to partnering across all levels of government to ensure mobility justice and better health outcomes for all who live along the BQE.”

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