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Ways and Means

**Written Testimony of NYS Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon**  
**On the New York City CEQR 25DME018K Draft Scope of Work**  
**May 8, 2026**

I submit the following comments on the Brooklyn Marine Terminal Maritime and Mixed-Use Redevelopment Project Draft Scope of Work (DSOW) for an Environmental Impact Statement. I represent the 52nd Assembly District, which includes the Columbia Street Waterfront District, the neighborhood within which half of the proposed project is sited, and the surrounding areas, including Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens, Boerum Hill, Downtown Brooklyn, Brooklyn Heights, Gowanus, Park Slope, and others.

**Preliminary Statement**

The communities surrounding the BMT currently face significant environmental burdens, including elevated air pollution from vehicular traffic, including from heavy trucks and their proximity to industrial areas, the cruise terminal, and port emissions. It is essential to carefully assess how the redevelopment of this area will impact residents' health and well-being during these substantial changes and thereafter. The DEIS should proactively address: (a) air and water quality impacts from increased traffic; (b) construction; (c) port operations; (d) stormwater runoff; (e) noise from construction and additional traffic; and (f) the potential health and socio-economic effects of gentrification and displacement pressures.

As any first-year law student learns in Property, "all land is unique." The BMT is very much so. Due to its location and geology, the BMT presents a unique opportunity to plan for a maritime future that acknowledges and respects the power of climate change, and a return to productive use of the waterfront, as well as progressively planning for sustainability and resilience in this flood prone environmental justice-impacted area, while also potentially affecting the trajectory of housing affordability and small business retention in this rapidly gentrifying area. It is also a site of many challenges which must be addressed head-on, openly and transparently. Mother Nature will not be fooled, however much we might like. The community's concerns are real and legitimate. They know the area best. Their voices must be heard. Moreover, their perspectives and analyses bring value to the table. Please don't dismiss them. As a local developer of a previously contentious site elsewhere in the district told me two years ago, "we've been working with the neighbors and they have made it a much better project." That could and should happen at the BMT site.

I have been a part of many coalitions throughout Western Brooklyn and participated in numerous rezonings, major transportation projects, Sunset Park's 197A Plan, the Brooklyn Greenway, and Atlantic Yards to name a few. I served on several official land use and transportation related task forces including Downtown Brooklyn Traffic Calming, Hoyt-Schermerhorn, and Gowanus Expressway under former Borough President Howard Golden. These experiences were instructive and

demonstrated how communities can be empowered to participate more robustly. These experiences have also taught me how important it is to demonstrate both planning, engineering and financial feasibility before committing to a plan. The BMT is a tough site to tackle but a tough site should not deter us from addressing development challenges. At Hoyt-Schermerhorn, we took a site that had been deemed impossible to develop given the engineering challenges and created 6.5 acres of low to moderate income housing instead of parking lots. It can be done.

For thirteen months, I participated on the Brooklyn Marine Terminal Task Force, where NYC EDC quickly changed its focus from transforming the BMT into “a harbor of the future” with manufacturing jobs, maritime opportunities, and economic development to a housing project with a port. Instead of focusing on the working waterfront’s potential, EDC minimized it, and led the group to instead focus on maximizing housing on this land regardless of its shallow water table and lack of water, sewer and hygiene infrastructure and proximity to major interstate highway infrastructure.

Studies which would normally inform such a process were foregone in anticipation of their being conducted simultaneously with the environmental review process. Studies and data have yet to be conducted to validate the ability to build sufficient transportation, water sewer, and hygiene in the area. This is counter to the way such a planning process should work. The result is a Draft Scope of Work for an EIS that will be hamstrung by these inadequacies from the start, increasing the likelihood of data manufactured to support the Vision Plan without the federally mandated “hard look” at whether it is feasible and whether adverse environmental impacts outweigh the public’s health or other asserted public benefits.

### **Task 1: Project Description and Analysis Framework:**

#### **Asserted Project Goals (DSOW p.6)**

Project goals morphed to arrive at the eventual Vision Plan as described on p.6 of the DSOW. The DEIS must address a robust analysis of each goal, with particular emphasis on goals 1, 3, 6, and 7 as the Vision Plan does not propose a port that is self-sustainable; “improving” resiliency is woefully inadequate to the task of protecting this flood prone site; the Vision Plan does nothing to address connectivity with the surrounding area because pedestrianization within the site is laudable, but hardly sufficient to connect communities in this transit desert (as stated goal 6 is magical thinking). Indeed, as one member of the Advisory Task Force has characterized it, the site is a functional island. EDC refused to conduct or engage an expert to conduct a detailed financial viability study, let alone minimize risks.

#### **The Study Area:**

The ¼-mile study area is far too cramped. The study area for the DSOW must be expanded to encompass at least the [primary and secondary](#) study areas created by New York City for the [Downtown Brooklyn Traffic Calming Project \(DBTCP\)](#), (see Exhibit A) and extended south to 25th Street. Virtually all of the BMT site is encompassed within the DBTCP study areas. Otherwise the existing communities of Columbia Street Waterfront District, Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn Heights, and Gowanus will be excluded from the assessment of construction, air quality, traffic and transportation, and health impacts even though they are guaranteed to experience them significantly. Moreover, the northern boundary of Community Board 6 is the double yellow line down the middle of Atlantic Avenue; significant impacts will be felt within Community Board 2 and they should be included and engaged

## **Task 2: Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy:**

### **Impacts of the Area's Mega Projects:**

There are multiple mega projects underway around the BMT site. The Long Island Hospital (LICH) redevelopment site, Red Hook Coastal Resiliency Project, the reconstruction of the BQE, the Gowanus rezoning and the Brooklyn Borough Based Jail. Each of these projects will bring an influx of people, cars, trucks, and goods onto our streets, straining our transit system, electric grid, sewage system, and more. All these cumulative impacts will, in turn, affect the BMT redevelopment and vice versa. The DEIS must account for all these projects and their interactions, modeling overlapping schedules, detours, transit speeds, emergency response times, and staging areas.

Nothing exists out of context. Regarding the BQE, the DEIS must account for various concepts which have yet to be selected (stacked highway, tunnel, removal, lane reductions). No settled design, funding, or schedule exists. The DEIS cannot assume a fully functional six-lane BQE for its study period, especially as the BQE Draft Scope of Work and DEIS haven't been issued. We have been informed that it will contain no fewer than 12 alternatives, roughly half of which will model a two-lane roadway. As trucks will need to travel along the BQE and surrounding streets to deliver materials to the BMT site, it is critical that we carefully consider how these vehicles will access the area. Given the current concerns surrounding the BQE's structural capacity, it is unclear whether the roadway can withstand either the construction of the proposed housing or the added volume of multiple additional trucks that the size of this project would call for. This would require close coordination with NYSDOT, NYCDOT, and MTA on BQE reconstruction timelines as a formal related-projects analysis. This is an integral step in the project's ability to be successful.

## **Task 3: Socioeconomic Conditions:**

Redevelopment of the BMT will significantly reshape the surrounding neighborhoods by introducing 6,000 new residential units with 18,000 new residents, likely driving up rents for both apartments and commercial and industrial spaces. This is a rapidly gentrifying area and quite vulnerable to displacement of low- and moderate-income residents. The DEIS should rigorously assess whether the project will accelerate displacement and gentrification, assess the impacts of indirect residential displacement, and identify concrete measures to mitigate these outcomes. There is no map included in the DSOW identifying the parameters of the proposed ½-mile study area. The public should not be left to their imagination as to the area the DSOW believes to be appropriate. I submit that the proposed study area for socio-economic impacts and indirect displacement falls far short of the current realities. No one displaced by the project will be able to find affordable housing within a two-mile radius, let alone a ½-mile radius.

## **Task 4: Community Facilities and services:**

A complete list of community facilities and services within at least a ½ mile radius is needed and an assessment of possible impacts to them reported. With the addition of some 18,000 residents and workers, many such facilities could be overwhelmed by the increased volume, or simply by the impacts to sanitation, utilities, etc.

### **Task 5: Open Space**

The Vision Plan proposes a park at Pier 7 and waterfront public accessible open space. The impacts of that open space, including necessary infrastructure to support it must be clearly outlined and assessed. The traffic and transportation impacts of such amenities must also be clearly assessed and reported.

### **Task 6: Shadows**

The proposed new building heights are unprecedented in this area. The specter of cutting off the existing community from the waterfront because of tall buildings will change the sense of space and become a barrier between the community and its working waterfront. Considerable attention must be paid to the new shadows' impacts on green spaces, animals, the tree line, and people, both in Community Board 6 and Community Board 2.

### **Task 7: Historic and Cultural Resources:**

I am concerned that nowhere in the DSOW, is there a permanent home for PortSide New York and its vessel, the Mary A. Whalen. PortSide is a vibrant and community focused and engaged nonprofit organization that has operated maritime education, community programming, and cultural events at BMT continuously since 2006. It serves as a hub for connecting communities to the waterfront, providing marine education, job training, and cultural programs, while advocating for maritime-focused, working-waterfront development. PortSide is vital to the wellbeing of the community and the waterway. The DEIS must analyze how it can incorporate PortSide and the Mary A. Whelan into the Vision Plan as well as the impacts of the potential displacement of PortSide New York, quantifying the loss of publicly accessible maritime education programming; community event and meeting space; waterfront access programming; and jobs. It must also analyze the neighborhood character impacts of PortSide's possible displacement. I implore the BMTDC to find a way to keep PortSide New York and the Mary A. Whalen at the BMT. There is simply no reason not to.

In addition, the BMT and nearby Brooklyn waterfront has a long history dating from before the founding of our country. The industrial revolution played a prominent role here and its vestiges, including toxicity, should be incorporated in detail.

### **Task 8: Urban Design and Visual Resources**

The study area for this section is far too narrow. The site itself is a ¼-mile long. The DEIS should carefully evaluate how the proposed large-scale buildings will affect key view corridors, waterfront access, and the visual character of surrounding low- and mid-scale neighborhoods. Renderings can be deceiving, and the public would be well served to see three dimensional massing of the proposed buildings contrasted with the current built environment along with the shadow impacts.

The analysis should consider the impacts of changes to street wall continuity, building heights, and massing on the pedestrian experience in the public realm. New buildings must not create or exacerbate a disconnect from the historic working waterfront. The potential for increased shadowing across the community, particularly in Community Boards 6 and 2, requires thorough study. This project has the potential to significantly alter the neighborhood's character and displace low- and moderate-income

residents. The DEIS should also examine how introducing large-scale residential development into a working waterfront and industrial business zone could disrupt existing job-generation.

Our city has too often lacked creativity and vision when designing its public realm. Thus far, the “Vision Plan” regurgitates the sterile tower in the park design that has proven to disconnect rather than connect communities. Put lipstick on this relic of the Robert Moses era urban design approach, and you will still have a pig. We can do so much better. Moreover, focusing on pedestrianization of the areas proposed to be devoted to housing adds nothing to the operant issue: getting on and off the island. The proposed housing severely limits the Blue Highway - one better way to get people and goods off the island.

### **Task 10: Hazardous Materials**

Two summers ago, local communities faced significant quality-of-life and health issues due to odors emanating from the Gowanus Canal cleanup. It took some time for the agency in charge to develop a system that allowed constituents to report odors, and for corrective mitigation actions to take place. I request that a study be conducted to evaluate implementing a similar system to address odor concerns from the site. I also request an expansion of the air quality study area to at least ¼-mile so as to include P.S. 29 and nearby residences, and an expansion of the mobile-source analysis to include the entire transportation study area as recommended.

The BMT and its surrounding areas share a similar industrial history to the Gowanus area, which is currently engaged in a major environmental cleanup that includes Class 2 State Superfund designations, and over 150 brownfield locations. Issues arising during the Gowanus remediation are instructive. Robust studies on the toxins in the environment and proper remediation sequencing, along with mapping of the contaminated sites must be conducted, before any development decisions are made at the BMT. This is even more critical as it relates to the potential housing development and the potential health impacts to future residents.

### **Task 11: Water and Sewer Infrastructure**

A comprehensive, system-wide Wastewater and Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Capacity Analysis is essential. During heavy rainfall, CSO outfalls along the Atlantic Basin, Gowanus Canal, and in some Red Hook streets, discharge untreated sewage into the surrounding waters. Residents frequently report sewage odors along Lorraine Street after rain. Flooding exacerbates the risk by transporting raw sewage into the neighborhood. A thorough, quantitative CSO impact analysis should evaluate frequency and volume under current conditions and with the BMT redevelopment for the preferred and each other alternative, incorporating projections for climate change driven increases in extreme rainfall and sea-level rise through 2050 and 2100. A study must also be conducted to ensure that the redevelopment does not recontaminate the EPA superfund remedy for the Gowanus Canal and/or its many brownfield uplands. This is critically important as the BMT site does not have water and sewer and the Bond-Lorraine water main has a crack in it that has been neglected for years. It is hard to imagine it can withstand further pressure.

The industrial history of the Brooklyn waterfront raises the likelihood of significant toxicity, necessitating substantial environmental clean-up obligations. This must be addressed in a transparent and robust analysis.

Careful attention must be paid to the resiliency needs of this area. Raised sidewalks and a partial flood wall will create a bowl effect in an area with an extremely shallow water table, further harming flood-prone communities, including Red Hook Houses which are particularly vulnerable. There must be close coordination with the Red Hook Coastal Resiliency (RHCR) Project and the resiliency measures to be implemented with the BMT redevelopment. Neither project should negatively impact either the community or heighten the existing substantial flood risks. There should be close interagency coordination among EDC, NYC agencies, and FEMA to ensure that BMT construction activities do not delay RHCR completion milestones.

### **Task 12: Solid Waste and Sanitation Services**

Such services are traditionally by truck. Every effort must be made to limit such services to waterborne wherever possible. In addition, thorough analysis of chemicals used in the provision of said services, including carting is necessary.

### **Task 13: Energy**

There must be a commitment to avoid the use of fossil fuels at the site whether for Port operations, other commercial uses, or residential development. A thorough analysis of renewable energy use at the site must be conducted.

### **Task 14: Transportation**

The vision plan seems to envision the BMT site as an Island unto itself, operating in a closed, self-contained circuit that will host a modern port, housing, open space, and greenways. However, that is a problematic view to hold, since if the BMT is functionally an island, what happens when someone or something needs to get off that island? Where do they go? On to the already over-crowded streets full of large truck traffic coming off the BQE and headed to the last-mile warehouses? Do they use the B61 bus, which is slow and often delayed? Do they walk 15-20 minutes to the closest subway station? Do they call an Uber or Lyft and add to the vehicular congestion? How will the flow of traffic work once one leaves the island? These are all questions I have been asking since the start, and I have yet to get clear answers. They could have been modeled before the Vision Plan was drafted, but were pushed off to the EIS process, raising concerns about confounding variables and tainted results.

As outlined on p. 38, the DSOW is wholly inadequate. How will the transportation analyses be modeled? If the DSOW referenced recent transportation studies, the public would have a better idea of how to evaluate these assertions. Avoiding robust analyses will not lessen the impacts of what is being proposed. The DSOW should be amended to require a much more robust network-level transportation and street management analysis and mitigation package for the BMT and its environs, similar to what was conducted in the DBTCP. It called for an interagency Scope Review Group with equal public representation to conduct a line-by-line review of the transportation scope, agree on a shared network model, and sign off on key interim documents (Modified Draft Scope, Final Scope, Existing Conditions, Methodologies, Trip Generation, No-Build/Build scenarios, and Mitigation), so that the DEIS would reflect a consensus “hard look” at impacts.

As noted above at a minimum, the study area for transportation and displacement should be the primary and secondary study areas from the Downtown Brooklyn Traffic Calming project and extended south to 25th Street. See Exhibit A.

The DSOW discussion on p. 14 outlining “new roadways and redesigned streets” within the site are largely irrelevant to the proposed development’s impacts off-site. This will contribute nothing to improving the transportation situation in the area. Similarly, the discussion of “key improvements” is not viable, but rather a short laundry list of old ideas inadequate to the task that simply cannot work at that location. Wishing cannot make it so, and we need to stop doing it.

The community surrounding the BMT is traffic-burdened, plagued by oversized trucks, stalled cars and buses, dangerous pedestrian crossing conditions, and poor visibility. Additionally, multiple streets surrounding and within walking distance of the BMT lack basic traffic safety measures, including stop signs and traffic signals. Large trucks routinely pathfind through neighborhood streets, too often getting stuck attempting to turn too tight corners, clogging traffic and damaging parked cars in the process. Last November, a 10-year-old was struck by a car while walking home with friends at the intersection of President and Columbia Streets, underscoring the very real safety concerns in this area. Close attention and robust analysis is necessary at least at the following intersections: Hicks Street (from Hamilton to Atlantic Avenue); Henry Street & Kane Street; Henry Street & Atlantic Avenue; Clinton Street & Atlantic Avenue; Court Street & Atlantic Avenue; Summit & Columbia Street; President & Columbia Street; Clinton & Kane Street; Kane & Columbia.

A large influx of roughly 18,000 new residents will be one of the most profound changes for those who currently live and work in the area. Existing subway access is remote at best and the few buses are horribly infrequent and slow moving. Special attention must be paid to the effects that this rapidly growing population would have on an already strained and limited transit system. A comprehensive study must examine how residents will use the B61, B63, and B57 bus routes, which suffer from infrequency and slow speed. Let me also say that I fully support the restoration of the B71 line and have since before I was elected to office. I proposed the route adjustment to end at Pier 6 in 2015. The MTA had been assiduously uninterested in restoring that line, and were it to do so, it would not likely have a beneficial impact on the congestion on the northern end of Columbia Street and western Atlantic Ave.

### **Transportation analyses must include the BQE**

There is no way any federal court would uphold a traffic and transportation analysis of the BMT Vision Plan without including the BQE and its area-wide impacts. Segmenting these parallel transportation projects is prohibited by federal transportation laws. Failure to do so will not only engender litigation but the impacts of that failure will be felt throughout the area west of Prospect Park and North of the Verrazano and south of the Kosciusko Bridge.

### **Task 15: Air Quality**

The BMT redevelopment combines residential, industrial, port, and freight uses adjacent to the BQE and sensitive receptors. Given this context, the air-quality study area should be defined broadly enough to capture both direct and cumulative effects. Moreover, because the site is waterfront-adjacent, wind can transport pollutants beyond 400 feet. This is not speculative. In 2025, concrete dust from the on-

site recycling facility traveled as far as P.S. 29 on Henry Street. Consistent with CEQR's guidance on realistic receptor placement, the study area should extend at least ¼-mile from the site.

To the extent it is anticipated to cover an area smaller than the transportation study area, this would be inconsistent with CEQR Technical Manual Chapter 17 § 311.1 (stating that "the study area for mobile sources is directly related to the project's traffic study area . . . and must include all intersections where congestion and incremental traffic increases are expected"). The neighborhoods surrounding the BMT site are already subject to significant air pollution from the BQE trench and from the trucks on surrounding streets seeking to avoid the BQE trench.

Accordingly, the mobile-source air-quality analysis should:

- Apply the same geographic boundaries as the expanded transportation study area, and
- Include receptors along Columbia Street, Atlantic Avenue, Van Brunt Street, Hamilton Avenue, Hicks Street, Clinton Street, Henry Street, and BQE ramps, as well as nearby sensitive land uses such as residences, schools, and parks.

This approach ensures that the DEIS complies with CEQR's technical requirements and realistically reflects how residents, workers, and open-space users will experience air-quality impacts from the Brooklyn Marine Terminal redevelopment.

It is clear from the DSOW that emissions will be significant and likely exceed screening thresholds, for example, Carbon Monoxide and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>). A methodology memo will be prepared outlining "the procedures and assumptions to be used in carrying out the air quality analyses." This memo must be shared with the public before conducting the analyses so that the public can consult with experts and be assured that the analyses are rigorous, methodologically supportable and will not adversely impact the public's health. (See p. 41)

### **Task 16: Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change**

The project team must ensure full compliance with New York State's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). Currently, the CLCPA mandates that greenhouse gas emissions from state-permitted and state-funded projects align with the statewide 2030 and 2050 emissions reduction targets. Even if that middle date were to be adjusted forward, the law remains, and its need becomes even greater. Since the BMT is a state permitted project, the DEIS must quantify its total greenhouse gas (GHG) contribution and must clearly demonstrate consistency with CLCPA targets, or explicitly acknowledge and address any conflicts.

### **Task 17: Noise**

Residents surrounding the BMT already live with an immense amount of noise from the port, traffic, and large trucks using their roads. The noise from overlapping mega projects surrounding the BMT site (The Long Island Hospital (LICH) redevelopment site, the Red Hook Coastal Resiliency Project, the reconstruction of the BQE and the nearby construction of the Brooklyn House of Detention) must also be taken into account and studied. The assessment should consider the noise-reducing effect of a

landscaped buffer, as suggested in the [City Club Blue Highway Hub Plan](#). Noise monitoring should include Hamilton and Van Brunt, which is also the location of the noisy entrance to the port.

### **Task 18: Public Health**

Cobble Hill is more than 400 feet from the BMT site and as mentioned in the air quality section above, the air quality impacts will be felt by those living much further from the site than the initially proposed DSOW study area. Thus, the study area must be expanded. Public health must be protected. The BQE corridor, which runs parallel next to the BMT, accounts for nearly the highest asthma rates in NYS, closely behind those in the Cross Bronx Expressway corridor. These factors must be taken into consideration and studies must be conducted on how to mitigate and control these public health impacts.

### **Task 20 Construction:**

#### **Vibration Studies:**

The DEIS must extend its vibration studies to all buildings in the surrounding area and not just the historic ones. Many buildings in the area are over 100 years old and many are similarly constructed. They may not be designated as “historic” in any formal sense, but they are nevertheless in significant potential peril from vibrations. Extending the vibration studies will ensure the safety of those living near the BMT while protecting their property from damage beyond their control. For over a year, my constituents in the Columbia Street Waterfront District endured [destructive vibrations](#) from the NYC DOT-managed concrete recycling facility at the BMT. This scenario must not be repeated with the redevelopment of the BMT.

#### **Construction Impacts:**

The need to study, analyze and mitigate construction impacts to the nearby communities is both obvious and of paramount importance. These include, but are not limited to, air and noise pollution and health impacts. The communities within at least a ¼-mile radius of the site should be surveyed for the impacts of the concrete recycling plant as those impacts will recur and be exacerbated by the much larger BMT redevelopment.

Due to the BMT’s size there will be significant construction impacts felt throughout the borough extending far outside of the project site. Construction truck routes, worker trips, staging areas, lane closures, sidewalk disruptions, and detours will affect nearby streets and neighborhoods. Traffic, pedestrian, and roadway capacity impacts must be assessed wherever they might alter patterns or cause diversions. The DEIS should evaluate construction impacts throughout the transportation study area, including diversion effects, lane reductions, parking losses, pedestrian safety, and overlapping construction phases. The analysis should also consider concurrent construction at the overlapping mega projects located close to the site. The analysis should recommend robust mitigation measures to maintain safe and continuous pedestrian and bicycle access during construction. A phased construction plan should be created and publicly shared in advance.

**Build Year of 2038 (p.21):** How is an assumption that everything will go one's way a "conservative analysis as stated in the DSOW? None of the mitigation measures outlined will mitigate the impacts caused by the project, and the Build year of 2038 is aspirational.

### **Task 21: Effects on Disadvantaged Communities**

Effects on disadvantaged communities will be extensive. Disadvantaged communities have been left out of this discussion in connection with the potential environmental impacts on them. Suffice it to say that the CLCPA contains specific protections and benefits to Environmental Justice communities to compensate for the fact that they have borne the brunt of environmental degradation and noxious uses. We need a robust analysis of impacts on EJ communities within the extended traffic calming study area because those impacts can often be far reaching. Impacts will not be limited to areas immediately adjacent to the site.

### **Task 22: Alternatives**

#### **Study Alternatives:**

The Vision Plan failed to deliver any viable alternatives. The EDC only presented a single mixed-use plan that centers on housing and shrinks the port's footprint unnecessarily. The third paragraph on p. 10 of the DSOW under "Future BMT Port Operations with the proposed project" reflects a narrow-mindedness about the Port's viability. Many people in the field believe a viable full port alternative can be economically viable but the conversation has been limited by EDC's own view of the site as primarily for real estate development. We have had an outpouring of interest from community members who have shared their own ideas about what the future of the BMT could be. One long time local organization [PortSide New York](#) has submitted a proposal to create a maritime hub with B-to-B services for tugs and other workboats, on-site job training, and a pipeline to marine careers, while also serving as a community hub to access the working waterfront. This proposal which can work with the Vision Plan or be incorporated into another maritime-focused alternative, must be given serious consideration.. Local waterfront visionary Tom Fox has also publicly presented [his plan](#) to various local elected officials and community members. His ideas have been received with great interest and much approval. Jim Tampakis, who is a member of the original BMT Task Force and sits on the BMTDC, has also [introduced a maritime focused plan](#) that looks to pay for the renovation of the port through an investment in the shipping industry and a leisure food hall. The City Club has also proposed a fully port-focused plan. Each should be included in the final scope of work and DEIS as alternatives to be studied and incorporated in the environmental review.

While I have looked at some of the Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) collected by the EDC, due to my schedule and the ongoing budget negotiations, I have not been able to review them all by going to EDC to review them either or even have them brought to my office. More than two hours is needed for that review. Moreover, I am sure I and others would like an ability to refresh our recollection as to an aspect of one proposal vs another or look at a particular photo again. That is impossible as long as these documents are kept from elected officials when they should be publicly accessible. I have advocated for these proposals to be made public for months and will continue to do so.

After reading through the Prologis RFEI response I was encouraged by the imaginative (while largely infeasible) approach they took to the site. I would very much like to see innovative approaches to the BMT. Though I still believe that we should not build housing in a flood zone or on a pier, it was exciting to see something different and contextual being proposed.

There must be an alternative that fully utilizes and maximizes an industrial and maritime plan, including a robust incorporation of the Blue Highway Action Plan as it is anticipated to evolve. We need to leave “wobble room” for the future as it will evolve in ways none of us can fully anticipate. Living in New York would be a lot easier if previous planners had planned for eventualities beyond their ken at the time. Let’s not recreate failed approaches from the past but open our collective minds to envision a future very different from our present.

### **Blue Highway:**

The BMT has the potential to be a ‘core opportunity site’ as identified in NYC’s [Blue Highways Action Plan](#). The goal of the blue highways is to move goods that arrive to New York and other East Coast ports into and out of the city by water, utilizing New York City’s 520 miles of waterways. They seek to develop a container barge service between BMT and Hunts Point for food delivery to establish permanent microfreight facilities at BMT. These are not aspirations; they are formal City policy commitments under the Blue Highway Action Plan. The DEIS must therefore evaluate whether the plan presented in the DSOW would support, conflict with, or otherwise affect the implementation of these previous public commitments. The Vision Plan’s description of the Blue Highways Action Plan is very narrow and limited. But the Blue Highway is far more than shipping bananas to Hunts Point. Rather it has the potential to remake our transportation networks. The BMT Vision Plan conflicts with the Blue Highways Action Plan and it unduly restricts its impact on the wider metropolitan area.

Over-planning for a land use driven approach on the waterfront when the City has a Blue Highway Action Plan to better take advantage of our waterfront so as to produce more environmentally sound ways of transporting goods and people is counterproductive. Rather, the BMT should incorporate more Blue Highway than less, lest the landlubbers shrink the Blue Highway’s opportunities for growth. And while the Blue Highway plan is referred to in the DSOW as nascent, that is no excuse for overlooking its potential. We do so at our peril.

### **Lessons Learned:**

I am concerned that the initial plans laid out in the DSOW virtually ensure that we repeat mistakes made in connection with other mega projects, such as Atlantic Yards, which was created with a zoning override by Mayor Bloomberg and a fantastic “Garden of Eden” plan proposed by a developer with connections to the powers that were at the time, Governor Pataki and others in City and State government. The developer’s plans sounded terrific. But no one asked, is there a market for this commercial development? (No, there wasn’t.) Is the private housing market already redeveloping housing unobtrusively behind the walls of civil war era buildings? (Yes, it was.) Can affordable housing be built on platforms over a railyard and be monetized so as to be self-sustaining in Brooklyn? (The answer has been demonstrated resoundingly to be “no”).

At Atlantic Yards, there was an utter failure to conduct a feasibility plan and assess whether the math worked. Twenty-two years later it is obvious to all that it never did. The same is true here - does the

math math at the BMT? It's impossible to know in the absence of rigorous, evidence-based analyses. The Vision Plan is built on assumptions that appear to be on a wing and a prayer. The public's money should not be sunk into a proposal lacking evidence of engineering, environmental and financial viability.

Given the above, the DEIS must include a comprehensive and realistic analysis of long-term, phased construction schedules for large-scale projects, including timelines for the area's major infrastructure commitments. There needs to be an in-depth assessment of the risks posed by extended blight, such as vacant lots and prolonged construction, and a full quantification of the impacts on neighborhood character, small businesses, and public health. I also recommend exploring alternative phasing and governance approaches to reduce construction duration and risk for the community. As such, I also remain concerned about the insurability of the various structures proposed in the Vision Plan.

### **Conclusion:**

With the redevelopment of the BMT, there is a major opportunity to positively impact the environment, our roadways, the surrounding communities, and the City as a whole.

We can plan for our city's future.

We can build out the Blue Highway, taking freight traffic off our roadways and removing pollutants from our communities and adding to our energy independence.

We can build out opportunities for good paying middle-class jobs.

We can ensure that the health and safety of our communities are centered.

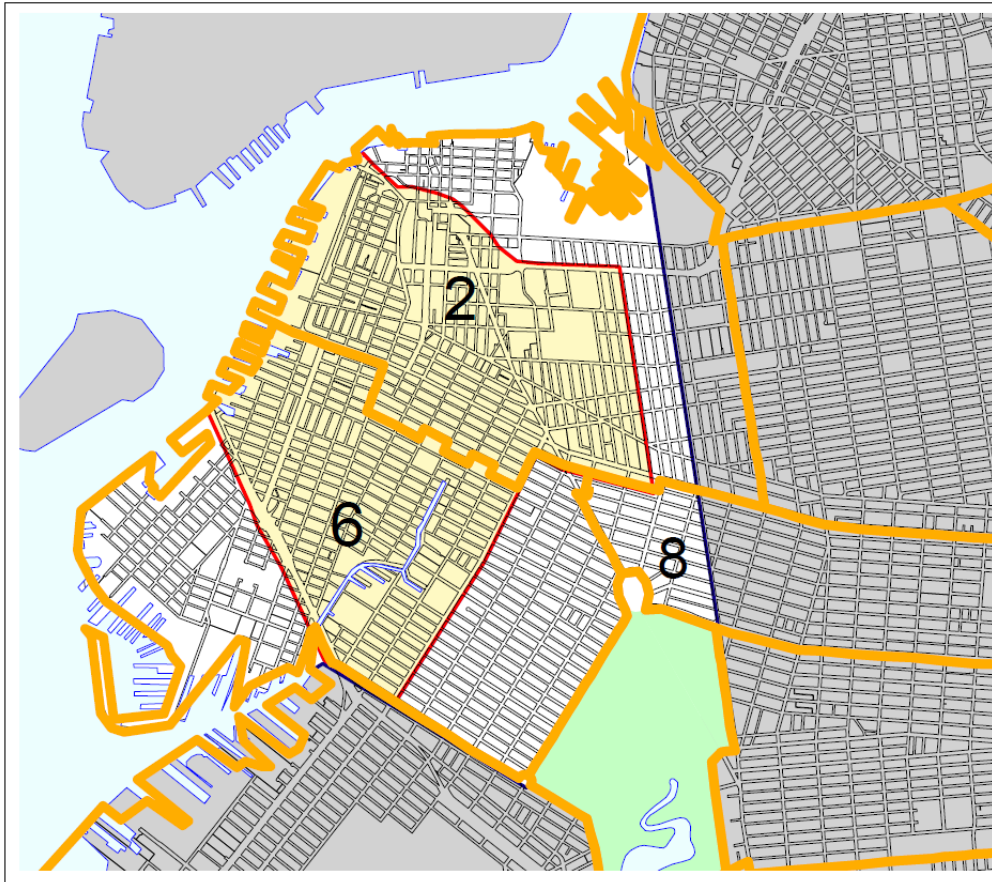
We can understand the project in the context of the surrounding mega projects.

We can center community needs and voices.

Yet the plan, as it stands, falls far short. The plan presented in the DSOW lacks a true understanding of the environment in which it sits. A community isn't created by a developer in a consultant-led workshop, but it can be destroyed by it. Throughout this process, I have seen the strength of these organic relationships come together, organize, and develop alternative proposals for this area.

I urge the Mayor's office to ensure that the plan moving forward centers these community voices and ideas. The feasibility of this project must be ensured by careful consideration of the vulnerable environment in which the BMT sits. We cannot be allowed to repeat the mistakes of past mega projects such as Atlantic Yards, whose public benefits have yet to be delivered after 22 years and counting. The plan must be community-centered with a special focus on preserving our working waterfront for the benefit of future generations of New Yorkers.

**Exhibit A**



Downtown  
Brooklyn  
Traffic  
Calming  
Project



Final Report

**LEGEND**

- Primary Study Area
- Secondary Study Area
- Community Board Boundaries

**Figure E1**

**Study Area**

