



Looking East on Union Street



# Transportation

A key goal of the neighborhood planning study includes addressing transportation issues and looking into opportunities that can enhance safety, mobility, circulation and safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. is an important crossroad due to its connection to local and regional arterials as well as the emerging diversity of land uses. This section presents a series of goals and strategies to develop a safer and more walkable neighborhood, while supporting changes in land use and growth.

Gowanus is well served by public transportation with service from New York City Transit's F and G subway lines on Smith Street and the R train on 4th Avenue. The Atlantic Avenue/Barclays Center and Hoyt-Schermerhorn subway stations are within walking distance of the northern boundaries of the northern portion of the neighborhood, providing access to the 2, 3, 4, 6, N, Q, B, D, A, C and G trains, as well as the Long Island Rail Road.

There are four buses that run north-south along Smith Street, 3rd Avenue, 4th Avenue and 5th Avenue, and one bus that runs east-west along 9th Street. Since the Union Street bus (B71) was eliminated in 2010 due to low ridership, there are no buses running the one mile east-west between 9th Street and Bergen Street.

Connections across the Canal are limited, with only four bridges traversing the waterbody, including two (3rd Street and 9th Street) that allow west bound traffic.

## Goal 1: Improve Neighborhood Mobility, Connectivity, and Transportation Infrastructure

### Improve pedestrian safety and access

- A key element of the City's Vision Zero initiative is pedestrian safety. One way to address safety and mobility concerns in Gowanus is by reducing street user conflicts at problematic locations. This action includes analyzing conditions that lead to crashes and developing treatments and traffic calming measures that make the neighborhood more walkable, especially as it grows.
- The 4th Avenue corridor is one of the city's four Vision Zero Great Streets. The Great Streets program redesigns major corridors to prevent crashes, enhance mobility, increase accessibility and bolster neighborhood vitality. In the case of 4th Avenue, the project will provide pedestrian refuge islands at intersections, shortening pedestrian crossings and improving visibility between pedestrians and motorists. The project incorporates curbside parking, protected bike lanes and beautification of the streetscape by adding space for public art and City Benches and landscaping space along the sidewalk.
- Connections across the Canal are limited, with only three bridges traversing the waterbody. Further exploration of additional connectors across the Canal to facilitate pedestrian (or vehicular) mobility would be considered in the long term, as new bridges require extensive study, funding and regulatory compliance.

### Enhance mobility for roadway users and connectivity

- The Union Street bridge reconstruction is currently in the City's capital plan. The NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) has initiated a navigational impact study that is expected to be completed in 2018 and will be followed by additional public hearings by the United States Coast Guard. DOT is developing a benefit-cost analysis process to evaluate requests for new bridges, both vehicular and pedestrian. Any additional connectors across the Canal would be evaluated through this process.
- The Gowanus area is reliant on trucks for the operation of industrial and commercial uses. Conflicts with truck movement is an issue and has contributed to unsafe conditions and reduced mobility.
  - As a first step, it is important to understand how trucks use the street network, which can inform future safety measures at locations of conflict and allocation of needed loading zones.
  - Second, coordination with relevant City agencies to reduce the impact of truck operations is essential. Gowanus is a good focus area to investigate freight mobility initiatives and loading innovations to be explored in NYC DOT's *Smart Truck Management Plan*, expected in summer 2018.

**“Street lighting is not designed to accomodate the bridge structure, creating dark corners and pathways - this feels unsafe at night.”**

Comment from PlanGowanus.com



Pedestrians crossing 3rd Street on 4th Avenue

- Gowanus offers the potential to build on existing bicycle infrastructure and expand connections to include Nevins and Carroll streets. Currently, there are plans to add protected bike lanes along the 4th Avenue corridor, which serves as an important link to Downtown Brooklyn and Sunset Park.
- Explore opportunities to increase shared-use mobility options such as carshare. DOT is currently conducting an on-street carshare pilot program in 14 neighborhoods across the city. Based on the success of the pilot, DOT will consider expanding the program to additional neighborhoods. More information is available at [www.nycdotcarshare.info](http://www.nycdotcarshare.info).

### Improve access to public transit

- There are four north-south buses (Smith Street, 3rd Avenue, 4th Avenue, 5th Avenue) and only one east-west bus (9th Street). Since the Union Street bus (B71) was eliminated in 2010, there are now no east-west buses between 9th Street and Bergen Street/Atlantic Avenue, a distance of one mile. In an area that used to have low bus ridership, recent development has included a major grocery store at 3rd Avenue and 3rd Street, with no east-west public transportation to connect mobility constrained residents of the major residential areas of Carroll Gardens (and west) and Park Slope (and east) to it. While there is growing support among local advocacy groups for reinstating the B71 bus route with additional service to Lower Manhattan via Red Hook, the City asks that MTA New York City Transit evaluate demand for finding routes to increase east-west connectivity in this area. Recently, the MTA announced Fast Forward, a comprehensive plan that will look at redesigning bus routes citywide. Click the following link to read the plan: [http://www.mta.info/sites/default/files/mtaimgs/fast\\_forward\\_the\\_plan\\_to\\_modernize\\_nyct.pdf](http://www.mta.info/sites/default/files/mtaimgs/fast_forward_the_plan_to_modernize_nyct.pdf).
- Explore streetscape and access improvements at the Union Street R train station entrance due to its location along the 4th Avenue corridor.

“The sidewalks here on 4th Ave. are in bad condition and uneven... it would help to beautify the area (and increase stormwater absorption)...”

Comment from PlanGowanus.com



The R subway station at Union Street and 4th Avenue

## Goal 2: Promote quality public spaces and wayfinding throughout the neighborhood

### Support community gathering spaces that are open to the public

- Incorporate public spaces at waterfront street ends, which can improve the pedestrian experience and expand access to the waterfront, while designing them to withstand the impacts caused by climate change. Street end locations identified include Douglass, Degraw, Sackett, 1st and 2nd streets.
- Properties that redevelop along the Canal are generally required to provide waterfront public access, a feature that can improve access and mobility for pedestrians. Where bridges cross the Canal at Union Street, Carroll Street and 3rd Street, public spaces could be further enhanced.
- DOT has a Plaza Program and encourages proposals for the repurposing of underutilized public spaces. Finding maintenance partners in the Gowanus area is key for the creation of these plazas.
- Community feedback focused on reviving a vacant public space under the subway tracks on 10th Street and 3rd Avenue, known as the Under-the-Tracks Playground. The City is aligned with the community on restoring the Under-the-Tracks Playground and will work with the MTA to explore the potential for the underutilized site.
- DOT and DEP can explore greening streets and corridors by incorporating green infrastructure where appropriate and feasible.

### Incorporate public art, historic interpretation, and improved wayfinding and signage

- Encourage opportunities for the inclusion of public art, murals and cultural programming in the neighborhood's open spaces, while working with the community to identify short-term opportunities for temporary art installations.
- Evaluate the installation of wayfinding signage that is educational and that assists pedestrians to navigate the street network. Wayfinding signage is typically done in conjunction with capital project implementation and via WalkNYC and New York City's standards for pedestrian wayfinding. It uses clear visual language and graphic standards that can be universally understood, encourages walking and transit usage by providing quality multi-modal information, and provides consistent information across a broad range of environments in the city.

**“Calm traffic along 3rd and 4th avenues to reduce speeding and make streets safer for pedestrians.”**

Comment from Gowanus Neighborhood Planning  
Study Kick-Off Event – October 27, 2016



Degraw Street between 3rd and 4th avenues



