

**Brooklyn-Queens
Expressway/Interstate 278 (“BQE”)
from Atlantic Avenue to Nassau
Street Project (BQE Central Project)**

DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Issued: September 30, 2026

Project Overview

The New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) is proposing the rehabilitation of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway/Interstate 278 (“BQE”) from Atlantic Avenue to Nassau Street, in the Borough of Brooklyn (“BQE Central” or the “Project”). The purpose of the Project is to address identified structural deficiencies of BQE Central and maintain the regional connectivity and mobility that the highway provides. The Project involves an approximately 1.5-mile section of the BQE from just north of Atlantic Avenue to Nassau Street. The project limits include the BQE Central roadway, shoulders and offsets, support structures, Furman Street, the Brooklyn Heights Promenade, local street overpasses and underpasses between Atlantic Avenue and Nassau Street, and adjacent New York City-owned property, including parking lots, maintenance and storage areas, and open space. Within the project limits, the BQE parallels the eastern and southern shore of the East River through a densely developed urban area, with a wide range of land uses in proximity to the project limits.

This Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) Engagement Plan (DACEP) follows the requirements of the New York State Environmental Justice (EJ) Siting Law, which amends articles 8 and 70 of the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL), the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR), and the Uniform Procedures Act (UPA), respectively, and requires consideration of DACs.

The Project’s DACs Study Area extends one-half mile from the Project limits in every direction (see **Figure 1**).¹ It is notable that the New York State Climate Justice Working Group (CJWG) identified DACs based on 2010 census geography. The DACs Study Area includes the potentially affected communities within the 26 census tracts that fall wholly or partially within the DACs Study Area boundary: Brooklyn Census Tracts 1, 3.01, 5.01, 5.02, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 21, 23, 29.01, 31, 37, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 63, 67, 69, 185.01, 211 and 543 (see **Table 1**).

Objectives of this Disadvantaged Communities Engagement Plan

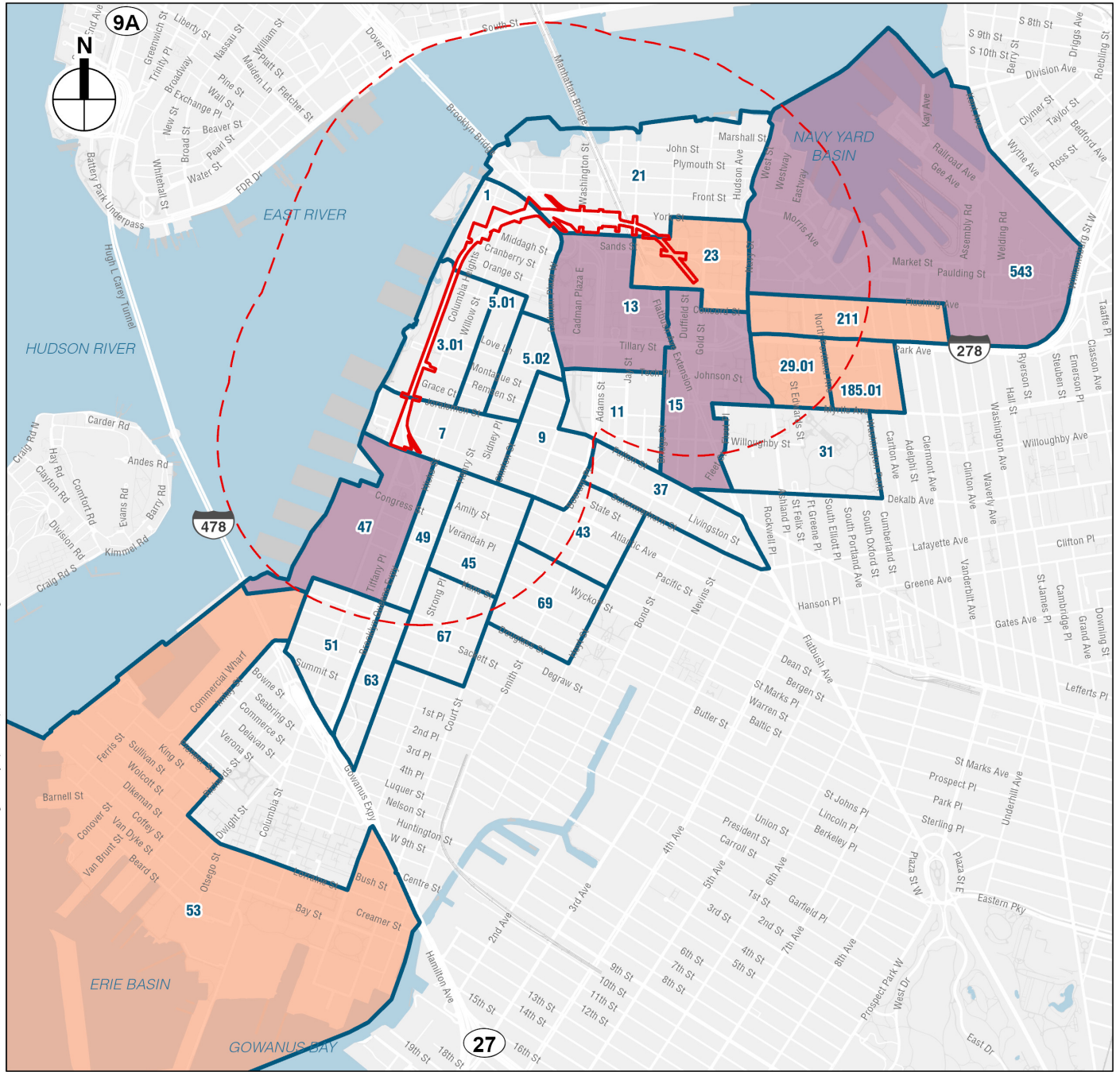
The objective of this plan is to establish a process for soliciting early and frequent feedback from the DACs surrounding the project site; encouraging open discussion of project details and issues of concern from these communities; and providing opportunities for these communities to provide comments and questions related to the Project.

Defining Disadvantaged Communities

Disadvantaged Communities Overview

New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) procedures require consideration of whether a project would result in disproportionate and adverse human health or environmental burdens to DACs. DACs are defined as communities that bear burdens of public health effects, environmental pollution, or impacts of climate change and possess certain socioeconomic criteria or comprise high concentrations of low-income households, as identified by the CJWG pursuant to Section 75-0111 of ECL Article 75. For example, DACs may have high rates of asthma, may include minority or low-income populations, or have a high presence of industrial land uses. For the Project, issues related to disproportionate and adverse human health or environmental burdens on DACs will be addressed in relation to compliance with New York State and New York City analysis requirements, and specifically the requirements of the New York State EJ Siting Law

¹ The ½-mile radius for the DACs Study Area is consistent with other recent NYC DOT projects and is defined to capture the communities and populations that are likely to be most affected by anticipated project impacts, based on NYC DOT’s preliminary understanding at this early stage of the environmental review process. The study area will be refined or expanded as needed once the Draft EIS analysis is underway to include any areas where substantial impacts are identified beyond the initial ½-mile radius.



- Project Limits
- 1/2-mile Perimeter
- 10.01 Census Tract Boundary

Disadvantaged Communities

- Disadvantaged Communities identified as having comparatively higher burdens and vulnerabilities
- Disadvantaged Communities identified as having comparatively lower burdens and vulnerabilities

0 2,000 FEET

(effective January 2025). To address issues related to DACs under CEQR, it is necessary for a project sponsor to provide meaningful engagement and participation opportunities for affected DACs to provide input throughout the project development process.

DACs in the BQE Central Study Area will be identified based on NYSDEC's Disadvantaged Communities Assessment Tool (DACAT). The DACAT is a screening tool that compares three scores—Combined Score, Burden Component Score, and Vulnerability Component Score—for each census tract against non-DAC comparison scenarios, which include statewide urban, statewide rural, and urban/rural for each of the ten regions in the state. The DACAT identifies DACs as having either:

- 1) comparatively higher existing burdens or vulnerabilities and therefore an increased likelihood that a proposed action may have a moderate to large impact on DACs, or
- 2) having comparatively lower existing burdens or vulnerabilities and therefore a decreased likelihood that a proposed action may have a moderate or large impact on DACs.

DACs in the BQE Central Study Area

Table 1 provides information about the DAC burdens and vulnerabilities for each Census Tract in the DACs Study Area.

As shown in **Table 1**, 9 of the 26 census tracts within the DACs Study Area are identified as DACs, including five tracts with comparatively higher existing burdens or vulnerabilities and four tracts with comparatively lower existing burdens or vulnerabilities. These DACs are primarily located in and around Downtown Brooklyn, DUMBO/Vinegar Hill, Fort Greene, the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the Columbia Street Waterfront District, and Red Hook (see **Figure 1**). The predominant existing burdens include air pollution, diesel truck activity, traffic, benzene concentrations, wastewater discharge, proximity to power generation facilities, regulated management plan sites, remediation sites, industrial/manufacturing/mining land uses, projected coastal flooding, extreme heat, and low vegetative land cover. The predominant vulnerabilities include historical redlining, poverty and low-income indicators, unemployment, limited educational attainment, single-parent households, asthma emergency department visits, heart attack hospitalizations, lack of health insurance, disability, older adults, limited internet access, older housing stock, and renter-occupied housing.

Table 1: DACs Study Area Census Tracts

Kings County Census Tract	DACAT Category ¹	DAC Burdens at or above 80th percentile ²	DAC Vulnerabilities at or above 80th percentile ³
Tract: 1	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tract: 3.01	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tract: 5.01	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tract: 5.02	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tract: 7	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tract: 9	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tract: 11	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tract: 13 DACAT Census Tract ID: 36047001300	Lower	Benzene Concentration (Modeled); Particulate Matter (PM _{2.5}); Diesel Trucks; Traffic; Wastewater discharge; Housing vacancy rate; Proximity to power generation facilities; Regulated Management Plan (Chemical) sites	Historical Redlining Score; Percent <100% of Federal Poverty; Asthma ED Visits; Heart attack (MI) hospitalization; Percent w/o Health Insurance; Percent adults age 65+; Premature deaths

Kings County Census Tract	DACAT Category¹	DAC Burdens at or above 80th percentile²	DAC Vulnerabilities at or above 80th percentile³
Tract: 15 DACAT Census Tract ID: 36047001500	Lower	Benzene Concentration (Modeled); Particulate Matter (PM2.5); Diesel Trucks; Traffic; Wastewater discharge; Proximity to power generation facilities; Regulated Management Plan (Chemical) sites	Percent Asian; Historical Redlining Score; Asthma ED Visits; Heart attack (MI) hospitalization; Premature deaths; Percent Renter-Occupied Homes
Tract: 21	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tract: 23 DACAT Census Tract ID: 36047002300	Higher	Benzene Concentration (Modeled); Particulate Matter (PM2.5); Diesel Trucks; Traffic; Wastewater discharge; Proximity to power generation facilities; Regulated Management Plan (Chemical) sites	Percent Black or African American; Historical Redlining Score; Percent Latino/a or Hispanic; Percent Native American or Indigenous; Percent <80% Area Median Income; Percent <100% of Federal Poverty; Percent w/o Bachelor/-Es Degree; Percent Single-Parent Households; Unemployment Rates; Asthma ED Visits; Percent with disabilities; Heart attack (MI) hospitalization; Percent w/o Health Insurance; Premature deaths; Percent w/o Internet (home or Cellular); Home Built Before 1960; Percent Renter-Occupied Homes
Tract: 29.01 DACAT Census Tract ID: 36047002901	Higher	Benzene Concentration (Modeled); Particulate Matter (PM2.5); Diesel Trucks; Traffic; Wastewater discharge; Proximity to power generation facilities; Regulated Management Plan (Chemical) sites	Percent Asian; Percent Black or African American; Historical Redlining Score; Percent Native American or Indigenous; Percent <80% Area Median Income; Percent <100% of Federal Poverty; Percent w/o Bachelor/-Es Degree; Percent Single-Parent Households; Unemployment Rates; Asthma ED Visits; Percent with disabilities; Heart attack (MI) hospitalization; Percent Renter-Occupied Homes
Tract: 31	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tract: 37	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tract: 43	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tract: 45	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tract: 47 DACAT Census Tract ID: 36047004700	Lower	Particulate Matter (PM2.5); Diesel Trucks; Traffic; Wastewater discharge; Flooding in coastal and tidally influenced areas (projected); Extreme heat projections; Low Vegetative Land Cover	Historical Redlining Score
Tract: 49	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tract: 51	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tract: 53 DACAT Census Tract ID: 36047005300	Higher	Particulate Matter (PM2.5); Diesel Trucks; Wastewater Discharge; Industrial/Manufacturing/Mining Land Use (Zoning); Proximity to Remediation Sites; Extreme Heat Projections	Historical Redlining Score; Percent Single-Parent Households
Tract: 63	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tract: 67	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable
Tract: 69	Not a DAC	Not applicable	Not applicable

Kings County Census Tract	DACAT Category¹	DAC Burdens at or above 80th percentile²	DAC Vulnerabilities at or above 80th percentile³
Tract: 185.01 DACAT Census Tract ID: 36047018501	Higher	Benzene Concentration (Modeled); Particulate Matter (PM2.5); Diesel Trucks; Traffic; Wastewater Discharge; Proximity to Power Generation Facilities; Regulated Management Plan (Chemical) sites	Percent Black or African American; Historical Redlining Score; Percent Latino/a or Hispanic; Percent <80% Area Median Income; Percent <100% of Federal Poverty; Percent w/o Bachelor/-Es Degree; Percent Single-Parent Households; Unemployment Rates; Asthma ED Visits; Percent with Disabilities; Heart Attack (MI) Hospitalization; Percent without internet; Home Built Before 1960; Percent Renter-Occupied Homes
Tract: 211 DACAT Census Tract ID: 36047021100	Higher	Benzene Concentration (Modeled); Particulate Matter (PM2.5); Diesel Trucks; Traffic; Wastewater discharge; Industrial/Manufacturing/Mining Land Use (Zoning); Proximity to power generation facilities; Regulated Management Plan (Chemical) sites	Percent Black or African American; Historical Redlining Score; Percent Latino/a or Hispanic; Asthma ED Visits; Percent with disabilities; Heart attack (MI) hospitalization; Percent Renter-Occupied Homes
Tract: 543 DACAT Census Tract ID: 36047054300"	Lower	Benzene Concentration (Modeled); Particulate Matter (PM2.5); Diesel Trucks; Traffic; Wastewater discharge; Proximity to power generation facilities; Regulated Management Plan (Chemical) sites; Proximity to remediation sites; Flooding in coastal and tidally influenced areas (projected)	Not applicable

Notes:

- 1 Comparatively higher or comparatively lower existing burdens or vulnerabilities, as identified by the DACAT.
- 2 The NYS Disadvantaged Communities Criteria Map identifies burdens for each DAC. Environmental burdens at or above the 80th percentile are higher compared with the rest of the census tracts in the state.
- 3 The NYS Disadvantaged Communities Criteria Map identifies population vulnerabilities for each DAC, such as Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) Emergency Department (ED) visits or heart attack/Myocardial infarction (MI) hospitalization, for example.

Sources: NYS Disadvantaged Communities Criteria Map, last accessed August 10, 2026, available at: <https://climate.ny.gov/resources/disadvantaged-communities-criteria/>
 NYSDEC Disadvantaged Community Assessment Tool (DACAT), last accessed August 10, 2026, available at: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7f0ffdde675e4e3788632c1b4cce6c0a>

Public Engagement for DACs

Overview of Engagement Area and Activities

Public information meetings will be sited, scheduled, and planned to provide opportunities for meaningful participation by DACs. Meetings will be scheduled at times that accommodate varying work schedules and will be advertised in local newspapers, and public meeting flyers will be distributed within the DACs. Translation services will be provided for all engagement activities.

Disadvantaged Communities Engagement Plan

This plan is a living document that can be updated as the Project progresses. DACs will be engaged early in the project development process to ensure results of engagement can be incorporated into the Project. The project team will establish a working relationship with various stakeholder and community groups to ensure that key leaders and representatives are kept up to

date and provided with numerous opportunities for input; see further discussion below under “Stakeholder Engagement” and “Engagement of Elected Officials.”

NYC DOT intends for the Project to incorporate specific public outreach best management practices to engage DACs as part of the Project’s DACEP. Examples of best management practices include providing services in community-appropriate languages other than English, use of local media, use of project-specific informational materials, and other measures. After completion of the environmental review for the Project, continued use of best practices during project design and construction would include coordination and/or notification of timing and duration of construction activities, advanced closure notifications, advance notification of temporary access modifications to businesses and services, and measures to maintain pedestrian and bicycle facilities during construction. NYC DOT would also keep the public informed as design progresses, especially of any changes that may require additional environmental analyses.

All in-person meetings will take place in transit-accessible locations, and all meeting materials, whether virtual or in-person, will contain user-friendly terminology, and be translated into other languages, as appropriate. Additionally, the project team will gain greater participation through employing a philosophy of “taking meetings to the community” and engaging busy residents, who may not have time to attend a traditional public meeting, in an environment where they work, live, and recreate. Engaging the public via these types of “pop-up” events will help the project team to reach underserved populations. Additional descriptions of these types of events are noted further in other sections of this DACEP.

DACs Engagement Methodology

NYC DOT, as the Lead Agency, is planning to conduct the activities described in this plan both in-person and virtually. The following measures are designed to provide information about the Project to DAC populations, to provide opportunities for greater participation in outreach events, and to establish increased channels for dialogue between NYC DOT and DAC populations, enabling NYC DOT to learn from DAC populations and for those populations to provide input on the environmental review process.

Required Meetings and Comment Periods

While there will be many opportunities to engage the public throughout the Project, there are milestones in the process that have legally required reviews and comment periods, each with specific notification requirements. For BQE Central, NYC DOT will host scoping meetings shortly after publication of the CEQR notices and Draft Scope of Work, and public hearings on the Draft EIS after it is published. NYC DOT will identify public comment periods for public scoping and the Draft EIS public review. Additionally, meetings will be held as part of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) process.

Scoping Meetings

Public scoping meetings for the Project will be held during the public scoping comment period that follows the publication of the CEQR notices and Draft Scope of Work. The comment period will provide an early opportunity for the public to participate in the project development phase. The scoping process allows agencies and the public to comment on the Project’s overall needs, purpose, and objectives, and helps to determine the range (or scope) of issues to be considered. The public scoping meetings comprise the initial public presentation of the project work plan and schedule, the proposed needs, purpose, and objectives, the range of concepts under consideration, the methods used to measure impacts, and the formulation of potential mitigation strategies.

NYC DOT will publish a written notice of the scoping meetings in appropriate publications, including the City Record, and notify other involved and interested agencies of the meeting not

less than 30 nor more than 45 days prior to holding the public scoping meetings, pursuant to the Rules of Procedure for CEQR (62 RCNY 5-07). In addition to notification of the meetings in the City Record, the meetings will be advertised in local newspapers and with announcements on the Project website and social media accounts. Meeting notifications will provide instructions for requesting special accommodations or requests for translation into languages other than English, including by making a written request through the project website.

One in-person public scoping meeting will be conducted. Sign-language interpreters, stenographers, and interpretation in other languages will be available. A separate virtual scoping meeting will be held to accommodate those not able to attend in-person meetings. The primary purpose of the scoping meetings will be to obtain comments on the needs, purpose, and objectives for the Project, alternatives that will be considered, scope of analysis for the Draft EIS, and other materials presented at the scoping meeting. Following the public scoping comment period, NYC DOT will consider the comments received and publish a Final Scope of Work.

Public Review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Pursuant to CEQR regulations, publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will start the Draft EIS public comment period. This notification will include information about how to provide comments and details of the public hearings. Throughout the public comment period, the public may review and comment on the Draft EIS, which will be made available both on the project website and at repositories near the project limits. The public will have the option of providing comments either in writing and/or at public hearings that will be convened for the purpose of receiving such comments. The comment period must extend for a minimum of 30 calendar days from the publication of the Draft EIS and at least 10 days following the public hearing. All comments received during the public comment period become part of the CEQR record and substantive comments will be summarized and responded to in the Final EIS, as appropriate.

NYC DOT will hold a public hearing no less than 15 days and no more than 60 days after the completion and publication of the Draft EIS. The primary purpose of the public hearing is to obtain public comments on the Draft EIS. The public hearing will include a presentation regarding the Draft EIS and will provide an opportunity for public testimony offered by attendees, transcribed by stenographers. A virtual public hearing will be held to accommodate those not able to attend in-person meetings.

Notification of the public hearings will be published at least 14 calendar days prior in the City Record, placed in newspapers, and posted on the project website, and will note that anyone needing special accommodation or requiring translation into other languages may request these services by making a written request through the website.

Uniform Land Use Review Procedure

Land use review is required under ULURP when public and/or private properties are impacted by a City-sponsored action, when zoning changes are required, or when a project results in changes to the City Map. ULURP public review is designed to allow the public to review land use applications at four levels: Community Board, Borough President/Borough Board, City Planning Commission, and City Council. Public hearings will be conducted during the Community Board review and the City Planning Commission review; the Borough President/Borough Board and City Council may choose to host additional hearings during their respective review periods. These hearings will occur after the Draft EIS public hearing, but most would take place before the Final EIS is issued; if the City Council chooses to host a public hearing, this would occur after publication of the Final EIS.

Stakeholder Engagement

During the environmental review process, NYC DOT will conduct regular, recurring stakeholder outreach, including attending community events and hosting open houses or office hours at

community-based locations. Through this ongoing outreach, NYC DOT will provide project updates, solicit feedback, engage in dialogue, and encourage individuals to participate in the Project's outreach program.

There are key interest groups that have been identified with high proportions of minority members. NYC DOT will engage and inform these organizations throughout the environmental review process to allow for meaningful input. These groups include:

- NYCHA Farragut Tenants Association
- NYCHA Ingersoll Tenants Association
- New York Environmental Justice Alliance (NYEJA)
- United Puerto Rican Organization of Sunset Park (UPROSE)

The list of stakeholder groups will be continually refined and expanded throughout the course of the Project. If other organizations or groups are identified during the environmental review process, NYC DOT will add them to this list. Organizations, groups, and individual stakeholders who wish to be added to the list may do so by requesting to be added at public engagement events, through the project website, or by contacting NYC DOT with the request to be added.

In addition to providing information and opportunities for input, NYC DOT will engage identified stakeholder groups to help foster connections, conduct outreach to DAC populations, and identify additional stakeholders and community organizations that can assist in connecting with and disseminating information about the program to DAC populations.

The stakeholder outreach program will inform the analyses undertaken and documentation produced at each step of the environmental review process. A summary of the program of stakeholder group meetings, including a high-level summary of topics discussed and stakeholder feedback provided to NYC DOT, will be included as an appendix to the DACs analysis in the EIS.

NYC DOT will offer regular opportunities to maintain stakeholder engagement through the activities mentioned above after the environmental review process concludes. In addition to these activities, NYC DOT will explore establishing a community field office for the duration of construction, providing stakeholders and community members with an additional resource for engagement.

Engagement of Elected Officials

NYC DOT has and will continue to engage elected officials to seek their help in connecting with DAC populations. NYC DOT has and will continue to engage New York City Community Boards, City Council Members, Borough and State representatives, members of Congress, and municipal leadership across the DACs Study Area to help foster connections, conduct outreach to DAC populations, and identify additional stakeholders and community organizations that can assist in connecting with and disseminating information about the program to DAC populations.

Project Fact Sheets

NYC DOT will develop project fact sheets in English and other languages spoken by populations in the preliminary DACs Study Area and will provide the fact sheets to community groups and the offices of elected officials in the preliminary DACs Study Area to assist with dissemination of project information to DAC populations. NYC DOT will also post and distribute these fact sheets at community events and community-based locations.

Project Website

NYC DOT will provide a section of the project website at www.nyc.gov/bqe that will be regularly updated with information about public engagement activities, general project information, outreach to DAC populations, and NYC DOT's progress on the DACs analysis. Appropriate existing NYC DOT social media channels will be used only to direct members of the public,

including DAC populations, to the various engagement opportunities as they occur or become available. Social media will not be used to solicit informal or formal comments on the project.

Ensuring Inclusion of People without Internet Access

The following measures will help raise awareness about the Project, public outreach opportunities, and ways to provide input for those without access to the Internet; they will also enhance the overall DAC Engagement Program, providing additional means to engage with those who do have internet access.

- Traditional Media – Project information will be publicized in print, radio, and local access TV outlets that primarily serve minority and low-income populations, or non-English-speaking communities and individuals that depend on such outlets for information. Additionally, print advertising in English and non-English media throughout the DACs Study Area will be conducted.
- All virtual meetings will allow for participation by telephone.
- NYC DOT will distribute information about public meetings at community events and community-based locations.
- Public outreach opportunities will be shared with local schools, libraries, houses of worship, and other institutions to enhance promotion.

Documentation of DAC Engagement

Public and DAC outreach for the Project will be documented in the Final Scope of Work and the EIS, including a list of public meetings hosted or attended by NYC DOT. All public comments will be cataloged and responded to as part of the EIS process.