



BROOKLYN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The
Brooklyn
Alliance

BROOKLYN
ALLIANCE
CAPITAL

**Testimony submitted to the New York City Council
Oversight Hearing on the BQX
Thursday, May 30, 2019**

Good morning Chair Menchaca and members of the BQX Task Force. I am Samara Karasyk, Chief Policy Officer at the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce. The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce is among the largest and most influential business advocacy organizations in New York, having spent the last hundred years developing and promoting policies that drive economic development and advance its members interests. The Chamber is the voice of Brooklyn's business community, offering the resources, programs, tools and direct support businesses need to continue creating jobs and opportunities in their communities.

We are here today to express our support for the BQX. We endorse this project because the Brooklyn Chamber works to develop and sustain a healthy and robust business environment, which requires an extensive and efficient transportation infrastructure. Our work catalyzes community, workforce and economic development. We are witnessing a surge in business growth along the Brooklyn waterfront - so much so that we have named this area the 'Brooklyn Innovation Coast' because of the large influx of technology, new manufacturing, and creative companies.

These companies are drawn to the region because of the vibrancy of the landscape, diversity of culture, and strong talent pool. But our current transit infrastructure is inadequate for the economy – and jobs - to continue to grow at this pace. Our transit infrastructure was built to move people into Manhattan's Central Business District, not to move them around Brooklyn and the outer boroughs. This transportation deficiency prevents workers in Brooklyn's transit deserts from commuting to good paying jobs along the coast all the way up to Queens and into other parts of Brooklyn.

We are staunch proponents of supporting the growing job sectors that will benefit all our residents. Transportation must be improved for more equitable growth to occur. For this reason, we strongly endorse various forms of new transit – from ferries to Bus Rapid Transit, and expanded subway service to the BQX. We need more and better transit to achieve the waterfront's full potential and give Brooklyn residents equal access to jobs of all levels in manufacturing, creative industries, and technology. The BQX would help underserved commuters in Brooklyn and Queens. It would serve as a model for developing new and reliable transit in other parts of our city to grow job opportunities for all.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.