

**ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS PROCESS
LEVEL 1 SCREENING CRITERIA**

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

**REHABILITATION OR RECONSTRUCTION
OF THE BROOKLYN-QUEENS EXPRESSWAY
ATLANTIC AVENUE TO SANDS STREET
KINGS COUNTY**

P.I.N. X730.56

SCREENING PROCESS

New York State Department of Transportation has begun the process of the reconstruction/replacement of Interstate 278 (BQE) between Atlantic Avenue and Sands Street. The first phase (Tier 1) has begun and will establish the project scope and assess as many alternatives as possible. When the Tier 1 EIS is complete (approximately 2012), one or more preferred alternatives will have been selected and the project moves to Tier 2 in which the preferred alternative/s will be analyzed in depth in a second EIS, planned to be completed in 2015. Final design and engineering may take several years so construction will not begin until 2017.

A Stakeholder Advisory Committee has been formed composed of representatives from neighborhood and civic associations, businesses and others. The Brooklyn Heights Association is a member and will keep its membership informed of the progress of the project as well as solicit input at various times.

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The Draft Scoping document is nearing completion; this document is outline for the project, prior to the analysis or selection of any solutions or alternatives. The Draft Scoping Document is located on the NYS DOT website at: <https://www.nysdot.gov/bqedowntownbrooklyn> Organizations, individuals, and elected officials have submitted comments on the draft; and based upon testimony, State DOT has changed the project limits to include the on and offs ramps at Atlantic Avenue – the westbound one being extremely dangerous with accident rate ten times the state average.

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee is also working on evaluating and developing the screening criteria that will be used to judge the various alternatives developed in Tier 1. Following is a list of the criteria proposed by NYS DOT.

Criterion: #1: Engineering Considerations

Measure 1-1: Evaluates whether the alternative can be accomplished from an engineering perspective – can it be built?

Pass: Alternative can be constructed and maintained to achieve stated objectives from an engineering perspective

Fail: Alternative cannot reasonably be constructed and maintained to achieve stated objectives, from an engineering perspective

CRITERION 2: Provide for 24-hour continuous operation

Measure 2-1: This criterion considers whether an alternative would meet federal and State requirements for maintaining the expressway as a means of travel. The FHWA has an obligation to maintain the BQE/I-278 as a 24-hour, “barrier-free” interstate, and could not accept any alternative that would create a long-term barrier to travel. Failure to meet this need is considered a “fatal flaw” and will eliminate an alternative from further consideration.

Pass: No barrier to maintaining traffic through the corridor is created

Fail: Barrier to maintaining traffic through the corridor is created.

CRITERION 3: Address structural deterioration

Measure 3-1: The project would result in an NYSDOT bridge condition, or equivalent, rating of:

Pass: 5 or greater

Fail: under 5

CRITERION 4: Address operation and safety concerns

Measure 4-1: Improve nonstandard vertical clearances to reduce diversion of traffic to local roadways.

- None of the four nonstandard clearances are standardized
- Up to three nonstandard clearances are standardized
- All four nonstandard clearances are standardized

Measure 4-2: Improve operational conditions and traffic safety by widening non-standard traffic lane widths.

- No standard lane widths
- Standard lane widths added for only a portion of the roadway
- Will provide standard lane widths

Measure 4-3: Improve operational conditions and traffic safety by widening non-standard shoulder widths.

- Will not incorporate any standard shoulder widths
- Will partially incorporate standard shoulder widths
- Will fully incorporated standard shoulder widths

Measure 4-4: Improve operational conditions and traffic safety by incorporating standard highway design elements on access ramps.

- Less than half of the nonstandard lengths improved
- More than half of the nonstandard lengths improved or less than half of the non-standard lengths standardized
- More than half of the nonstandard lengths standardized

CRITERION 5: Reduce traffic diversions to local streets

Measure 5-1: Minimize temporary (construction-period) diversion of traffic from the highway to local street system.

- Will not maintain six lanes of traffic (i.e., three lanes in each direction) in weekday daytime during the construction period.
- Will maintain six lanes of traffic (i.e., three lanes in each direction) in weekday daytime through staging and shifting of lanes during the construction period.
- Build entirely new roadway before old is closed, maintaining six lanes of traffic (i.e., three lanes in each direction) during construction on existing roadway.

Measure 5-2: Minimize diversion of traffic from the highway to local street system for vehicles connecting to the East River bridges.

- Will restrict the potential to incorporate improved connections between the BQE and the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges.
- Will not restrict the potential to incorporate improved connections between the BQE and the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges.

CRITERION 6: Minimize adverse environmental effects

Measure 6-1: Avoid **permanent** acquisition of residential property.

- Acquisition of more than 5 residential properties
- Acquisition of 1 to 5 residential properties
- No acquisition of residential properties

Measure 6-2: Avoid acquisition of commercial and industrial business.

- All businesses will be relocated
- Some businesses will be relocated
- No businesses will be relocated

Measure 6-3: Avoid temporary (construction-period) impacts to commercial and industrial businesses.

- All businesses will be disrupted
- Some businesses will be disrupted
- No businesses will be disrupted

Measure 6-4: Avoid impact on public parks and significant historic resources.

- Taking of public park property or significant historic property
- Temporary, construction-period, use of public park property
- No use of public parks and significant historic resources

Measure 6-5: Avoid adverse impacts on noise-sensitive receptors. Relative to existing conditions, the proposed alternative would:

- Increase noise levels at sensitive receptors during the operational phase
- Contribute to similar noise conditions during the operational phase
- Reduce noise levels during the operational phase and minimize construction-related adverse noise impacts

Measure 6-6: Avoid adverse impacts on vibration-sensitive receptors, including residential and historic structures. Relative to existing conditions, the proposed alternative would:

- Increase ground-borne vibrations levels at sensitive receptors during the operational phase
- Contribute to similar vibration conditions during the operational phase
- Reduce ground-borne vibration levels during the operational phase and minimize construction-related adverse vibration impacts

Measure 6-7: Incorporate sustainable design and development elements. Relative to existing conditions, the proposed alternative would:

- Increase GHG emissions due to energy use during the operational phase
- Contribute to similar amounts GHG emissions due to energy use during the operational phase
- Reduce GHG emissions due to energy use during the operational phase and minimize construction-related GHG emissions

Measure 6-8: Avoid environmental impacts related to the duration of the construction period — The construction phase of the project would last:

- 5 years or more

- Between 3 and 5 years
- 3 years or less

GUIDE FOR SCREENING ALTERNATIVES

An alternative will be dropped from further considerations if *either* of the following is true:

1. It receives a “Fail” rating in Criterion 1, 2 or 3.
- OR**
2. If any of the following are true:
 - It receives a score of ○ for 2 of the 4 measures in Criterion 4; or
 - It receives a score of ○ for 1 of the 2 measures in Criterion 5; or
 - It receives a score of ○ for 6 of the 8 measures in Criterion 6.

Alternatives that survive the Level 1 screening evaluation will be advanced to Level 2 screening, where they will undergo further evaluation and further screening.