

## SUNNYSIDE YARD PUBLIC WORKSHOP SUMMARY: TRANSPORTATION

**Date:** May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 | 6-8pm

**Location:** Growing Up Green Charter School | Dutch Kills, Queens

**Attendance:** 25+

This workshop focused on transportation and mobility in, over and around Sunnyside Yard. An opening presentation was led Mike Flynn of Sam Schwartz Engineering and Androniki Lagos of Urbane Development. The presentation opened with an overview of the planning process and progress update to-date, then went on to discuss the current state of transportation in Western Queens, potential improvements that would increase the efficiency and expand capacity of the transportation network, and examples the potential for Sunnyside Yard to shape the future of transportation.

After the presentation, attendees broke into small groups and participated in an activity that considered possible transportation interventions for Sunnyside Yard and the surrounding neighborhoods. Each group was given a set of cards detailing the tradeoffs of each intervention (i.e. cost, time to construct, added capacity), each table discussed the potential intervention options provided as well as any new interventions suggested and were asked to select and rank their top 4 desired interventions. Each table then had a discussion about the pros and cons associated with the proposed interventions. A representative from each group shared a summary of the activity and discussion.

Key Findings from activities and small group discussions:

1. Top rated interventions included a regional rail station, better local bus service, walking and biking improvements, Bus Rapid Transit, and a variety of subway improvements including improved signaling, new subway lines, more frequent subway stops, and subway car redesign. Land use changes, street trolleys, and freight improvements were also ranked.
2. Several teams noted that Sunnyside Yard should be a pedestrian-only zone. Some suggestions to improve the pedestrian experience include: prioritizing pedestrians at every intersection, placing cross-walks mid-block, and creating pedestrian bridges to connect along the north-south axes.
3. Little support for parking on the deck, with one team recommending off-site garages for residents
4. Bus routes connecting the northern and southern edges of the Yard were particularly popular. One team noted bus size should be contingent on the location and route, as some routes are more popular. Some teams recommended making the Rockaway Beach Line a BRT in an effort to reuse existing infrastructure.
5. Subway expansion was also popular, with the following expansions suggested:
  - a. E/F subway stop under Northern Blvd.
  - b. Add an F subway stop at 36<sup>th</sup> Street
  - c. Extend G by joining the 4 and M
  - d. Increase the capacity on the E/M lines
6. Participants seemed keen on a Sunnyside Station with several teams noting the importance of connecting it to all regional train lines, including NJ Transit and Metro North. There was a suggestion that fare structure and/or integration would need to be further explored.
7. Other suggestions include:
  - a. A trolley to connect residents across the Yard
  - b. Greenway with bike lanes across the Yard and surrounding the perimeter of the site
  - c. Universal ticket that can be used for all transit, including regional train lines
  - d. Valet for CitiBike docks, as many are either completely empty or completely full
  - e. Dedicated unloading zones for freight vehicles to ease congestion

# Transportation: Intervention Preferences

New Regional Rail Station	Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)	Biking & Walking Improvements	Better Local Bus Service
			
<p>Cost: \$\$\$\$ Time: [2 icons] Capacity: [3 icons]</p>	<p>Cost: \$\$\$ Time: [2 icons] Capacity: [3 icons]</p>	<p>Cost: \$ Time: [1 icon] Capacity: [3 icons]</p>	<p>Cost: \$\$ Time: [1 icon] Capacity: [1 icon]</p>
<p>•Due to existing tracks, the station would likely be located near Queens Blvd. It could serve Penn Station but not Grand Central</p> <p>•It could give Queens riders more opportunities to take LIRR rather than the subway</p> <p><b>Other Pros/Cons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Regional rail may be more expensive, run with less frequency, and offer less direct service than the subway</li> </ul>	<p>•Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is more reliable and faster than regular bus service. It is also more predictable than regular bus service with level platform boarding</p> <p>•BRT could run between Queens and Manhattan via Northern Blvd. Queens Blvd. or a new corridor in Sunnyside Yard, then go over the Hudson River to Penn Station</p> <p><b>Other Pros/Cons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•BRT could be implemented as every 2 minutes</li> </ul>	<p>•Corridor and intersection redesign can make biking and walking more attractive</p> <p>•Bike mode share for commuting is only 1% in NYC (and Western Queens) – could it be closer to 10%? (In some cities around the world it's as high as 30% or more)</p> <p><b>Other Pros/Cons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Helps reduce traffic crashes, injuries and deaths</li> <li>•Can mean the loss of parking or a vehicle lane</li> <li>•May add to travel time for drivers</li> </ul>	<p>•MTA bus network redesigns could improve bus service (shorter travel times; more reliability and convenience)</p> <p>•Some routes could be upgraded to be faster in the future</p> <p><b>Other Pros/Cons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Wouldn't address most trips between Manhattan and Queens</li> </ul>
<h2>Top 4 Choices from Workshop</h2>			
<h3>1. Leverage Regional Rail opportunities</h3>	<h3>2. Bus Rapid Transit and enhanced local bus service</h3>		
<h3>3. Investment in subways</h3>	<h3>4. Biking and walking improvements</h3>		
			
<p>Cost: \$\$\$\$\$ Time: [3 icons] Capacity: [5 icons]</p>	<p>Cost: \$\$\$\$ Time: [2 icons] Capacity: [3 icons]</p>	<p>Cost: \$\$\$ Time: [2 icons] Capacity: [3 icons]</p>	<p>Cost: \$\$\$\$ Time: [2 icons] Capacity: [5 icons]</p>
<p>•The idea of a new Queens subway is not new</p> <p>•MTA maintained an access route in the 63rd Street (F) tunnel under the East River which can result in a new line and additional subway capacity</p> <p><b>Other Pros/Cons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•A new alignment could relieve other subway lines</li> <li>•It may be possible to use existing rail right-of-way and avoid extensive tunneling</li> <li>•The implementation timeframe is long; no plans currently in motion</li> </ul>	<p>•Adding an additional subway car to the trains adds space – as much as 100+ riders per car</p> <p>•MTA has identified that this could be possible on some lines but not others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 car trains → 11 (EFNW)</li> <li>11 car trains → 12 (7)</li> </ul> <p><b>Other Pros/Cons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Challenge of existing platform lengths and operating policies</li> <li>•Would require a station-by-station assessment of necessary upgrades and completion of planned new train signaling installation</li> </ul>	<p>•Changing the design of subway cars can create more space on trains that are already running</p> <p>•MTA is already investing in trains with wider doors, better seat configurations, and "open gangways" between cars</p> <p><b>Other Pros/Cons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Implementation timeframe depends on gradual turnover/retirement of train cars</li> </ul>	<p>•MTA's Fast Forward plan includes installing modern signals with Communication Based Train Control (CBTC)</p> <p>•This means more trains per hour</p> <p>•1 more train = room for 1,200 - 1,400 people!</p> <p><b>Other Pros/Cons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Implementation timeframe in uncertain</li> <li>•Gains in capacity are limited by chokepoints in the subway system, like places where multiple routes merge</li> </ul>

# Transportation: Intervention Preferences

Level of Support

