

The Insidious Social Impacts of Gentrification

A Newly Proposed Light Rail Line in New York Will Increase Connectivity but Escalate Gentrification

By Malcolm Martin Simpson

Introduction

New York City is unlike any American city. This is more than just hometown pride. New York is unique in its love of mass transit. With the highest rates of public transit use in the country, 55% of all trips taken, one might think that the expansion of the public transit networks are of the city's highest priority. However, the most recent expansion to the high-speed public transit network was originally planned almost one hundred years ago. Over the last century public transit became less of a priority as America fell in love with the automobile and public transit ridership fell. However, in the past few decades ridership has risen substantially, climbing back to the pre-1950's numbers. With ridership back up New York is in a position to begin expanding high-speed public transit networks into underserved areas. However, with all that has changed and all we have learned in the past century, the old Manhattan-centric subway design is out of date and has begun to cause problems for the economic development of the outer boroughs. The ideal of a light rail line or streetcar running parallel along the East River through coastal neighborhoods of Brooklyn and Queens has been gaining momentum over the past 5 years. In 2016, the 'Brooklyn Queens Connector' received a mayoral endorsement and a series of reports on feasibility and alternatives was published. The linear project is championed as increasing connectivity in underserved neighborhoods and guiding development away from a Manhattan-centric paradigm. While the project has made the mayor's office a favorite of development companies, it has also been perceived as the poster child of gentrification. A project like this is sure to have a variety of profound impacts across temporal scales. However, it is imperative to take special care when considering the social impacts on the most vulnerable communities in the affected area.

Methodology

The methodology of this study is based on the tenets of social impact assessment laid out by Vanclay et al. (2015). In terms of the establishment of significance when considering risk, the combination of probability and consequence leads this discussion to focus on impoverished communities at risk of displacement as a result of project induced gentrification. Gentrification does not fit as conveniently into theoretical frameworks on project induced displacement and resettlement (Vanclay et al 2017). However, this does not mean that the gradual displacement and alienation resulting from gentrification is not a social impact of a project (Vanclay et al. 2015). Quite the opposite, both the perceived and real social impacts of gentrification are the focus of this work. While all social impacts are considered, the beneficial impacts are given the strongest focus elsewhere and so this work chooses to focus on the negatives, notably

communities at the strongest risk of gentrification. The assessment uses previous research done by for the City of New York (Austensen et al 2016, Dastrup 2015), which focuses on the most at risk communities. These communities are also chosen because they are clearly delineated and easier to map, interview, and follow up with. The communities referred to are those who live in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments. This is the agency responsible for public housing in New York City. This is not to say NYCHA communities are the only ones at risk of displacement and alienation at the hands of gentrification. However, their status makes them the most at risk and the most researched. While there are numerous stakeholders invested in the proposed project-property developers, new and affluent residents, local business owners, etc.- these groups have been well represented in the planning and intentions of the proposed project. However, the ‘at risk’ communities, in particular the NYCHA communities, in danger of the negative effects of gentrification, are not well represented in impact assessments and planning proposals. For this reason they have received a more focused attention in the following social impact assessment.

The Affected Area

The urban landscape of New York City is intrinsically intertwined and localized impacts have rippling impacts throughout the city. However, the neighborhoods primarily and initially affected by the proposed project are in Brooklyn and Queens along the east river, from Sunset Park in southern Brooklyn up to Astoria, Queens. Brooklyn and Queens are two of the fastest growing and developing boroughs in New York City. Brooklyn boasting 5% increase between 2010 and 2016 with Queens close behind at 4.6%.

They are bested only by the Bronx at 5.1% in the same timeframe (Department of City Planning, 2016). Across these neighborhoods there is considerable variety in economic development. This is a result of, among many things, the Manhattan-centric design of the transit system and the effects of both active and passive transit oriented development.

The Manhattan-centric transit paradigm and the physical constraints that river crossings place on a transit system force stark dichotomy along the coast of the East River. Subway lines

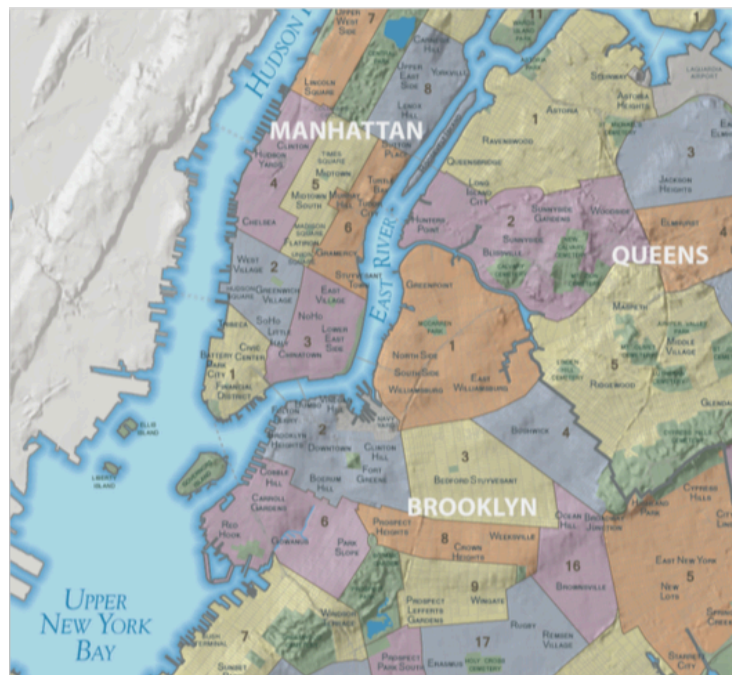


Figure 1 New York City Neighborhood Map. Close up on the neighborhood composition of the affected areas. Source: Close up taken from the Department of City Planning's Neighborhood Map. <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/data-maps/city-neighborhoods.page#nycmap>

are limited by river crossings as they leave the island of Manhattan. They will often share a tunnel or bridge across the river before branching off to service various areas of the outer boroughs. These branches often do not occur until deep in the borough. Imagine a tree branching into the Brooklyn or Queens, but the spaces in between the tree trunks are underserved. While coastal neighborhoods along subway routes can be connected very well, neighborhoods unlucky enough not to feature a subway tunnel or bridge are severely underserved by public transit. As a result, these neighborhoods are often underdeveloped.

Neighborhoods like downtown Brooklyn or Long Island City enjoy the junctions of



Figure 2. Massimo Vignelli's 2012 MTA Subway Map. Source: <http://www.coolhunting.com/design/massimo-vignelli-2012-nyc-subway-signed-poster>

multiple subway lines and their connectivity and ability to adapt to transit delays or closures significantly outmatches neighboring communities. Even Greenpoint and Williamsburg, one of the fastest gentrifying neighborhoods in the city, is dependent on a single subway line, the L line (Stabrowski 2014). The L line river connection to Manhattan was damaged in 2013 and will be closed for at least 18 months for repairs (MTA 2016). With few alternatives and connections, those who have moved to the neighborhood for its appealing access to Midtown, Manhattan will now need to make up to three or four subway transfers to reach the same destination. The

Manhattan-centric transit design has left many neighborhoods completely dependent on a single subway line and others cut out of the system all together. A lack of connectivity can cripple the development of sustainable neighborhoods and job growth.

The Brooklyn and Queens waterfronts were traditionally industrial (Stabrowski 2014). Factories, loading docks, and other heavy industry lined the East River. Today, the economy of New York City has long since moved past industrial production as its primary industry. Instead it is home to corporate headquarters, start-ups, and the industry that once lined the East River is either derelict or being rezoned for mixed use and residential purposes (Stabrowski 2014). Since this shift the Brooklyn and Queens waterfronts have not seen proportional development and much of it has been left behind. Certain well connected areas, like the previously mentioned Long Island City or Downtown Brooklyn, have seen significant local economic booms, while isolated neighboring areas are left out. The City of New York seeks to spread this economic development more equitably throughout the waterfront area by creating a streetcar line parallel to the East River. The project is meant to increase connectivity through areas underserved by public transit, make more areas along the waterfront appealing to economic development, and actively combat issues resulting from a Manhattan-centric transit design (Office of the Mayor 2016). While such a project may do considerable good for many people, there are always winners and losers, and there may be considerable negative impacts on traditionally disenfranchised communities in the area.

Project Details

The proposed Brooklyn Queens Connector (BQX) seeks to add a much needed north-south connection through underserved neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens along the East River. While some specifics of the route are still being debated, initial plans provide a detailed picture of what the streetcar will be. The route will be approximately 16 miles through waterfront communities, from Astoria, Queens down to Sunset Park, Brooklyn. The plan aims for stops every half-mile with connections to 30 different bus routes, 15 subway lines, 6 LIRR lines, 10 ferry landings, and 116 Citi Bike stations (NYCEDC 2016). The immediacy of these connections is uncertain as the specifics of the plan are still being decided upon through the NYCEDC and the DOT alternatives analysis study. The purpose of this study is to minimize impacts and costs while maximizing service area and economic benefit (NYCEDC 2016). Factoring into this decision is the pre existing infrastructure that will need to be moved or replaced, and what of that infrastructure is most in need of replacement anyway. Identifying not only the cost, but also the necessary costs without the project may be a major contributing factor in the ongoing proposals. This pre existing infrastructure is demonstrating itself to be one of the most significant costs associated with construction, but if significant amounts of that infrastructure would be in need of repairs in the next five years or could be replaced with more efficient alternatives, the costs may feel much smaller in perspective.

Most recent cost estimates labeled the project at 2.5 billion dollars; however, additional assessments, design phases, and developments in construction could alter the cost (NYCEDC). The City of New York expects the project to serve as an investment. Planning to capture increased property values and taxes as a result of the project, the city claims the streetcar will pay for itself similarly to the 7-subway extension (Office of the Mayor 2016). Preliminary estimates state the economic impact of the project over the first three decades of operation is 25 billion. The project would provide pivotal transit options to 700,000 people- 400,000 residents and 300,000 employees (HDR Inc. 2016). The project would demand the redesign of multiple roads and the intention of the City of New York is to use the project as an opportunity to redesign the roads to be safer, quieter, and more inviting to pedestrian and bike traffic (NYCEDC 2016). Two additional bridges will need to be constructed for the streetcar and the preliminary proposals describe these bridges as being for pedestrian, bike and streetcar traffic only. The intentions of the project are not only to create an additional transit link but also to add value in other ways through the construction of the project. This is not certain and budgetary constraints may limit what is a noble intention, but the project has considerable potential to increase livability and street safety.

The project also affects approximately 40,000 New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents across 13 developments (HDR Inc. 2016). In addition to this, approximately 56% of the rental stock is public, income restricted, rent controlled, or rent stabilized (NYCEDC 2016). The service area is cushioned to the expected impacts of gentrification but is by no means impervious. The proposed route would connect underdeveloped or developing neighborhoods to 'job hubs' at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, Brooklyn Army Terminal, and Cornell Tech, and the Brooklyn working waterfront (Office of the Mayor, 2016). Additionally it would

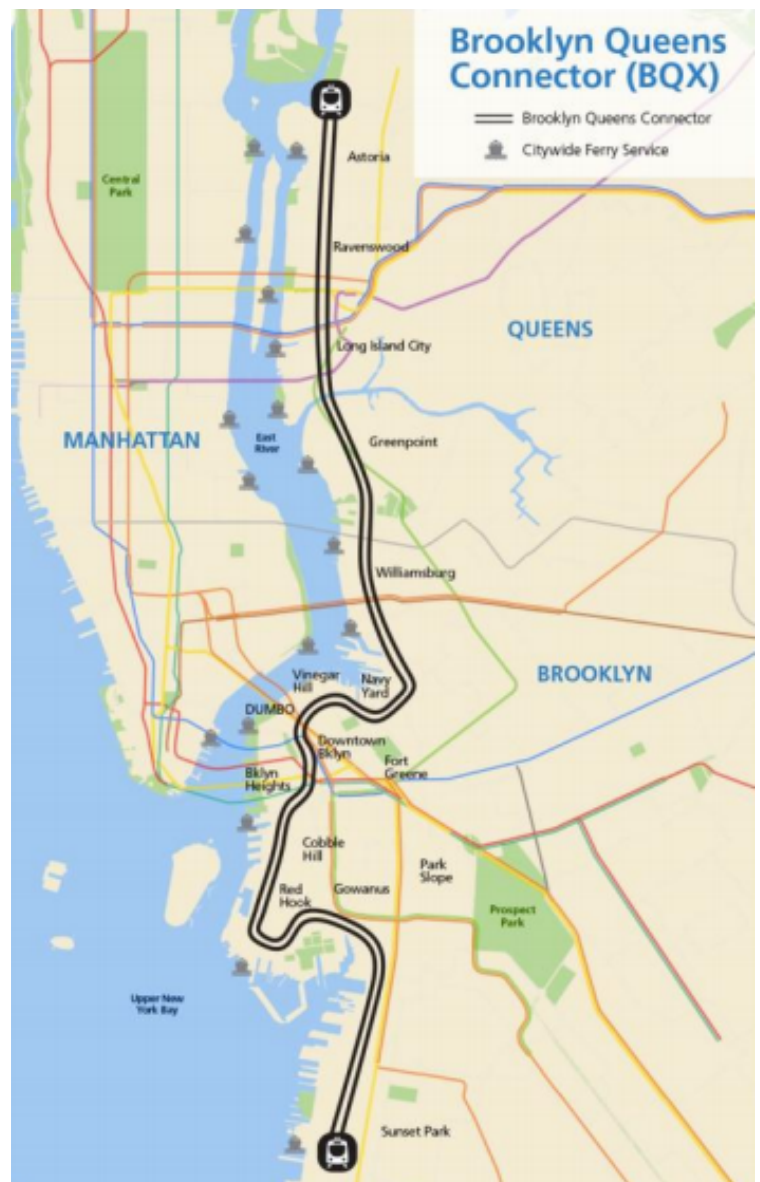


Figure 3. Proposed BQX route with transit connections. Source: NYCEDC 2016 <https://www.nycedc.com/project/brooklyn-queens-connector-bqx>

connect neighborhoods underserved by public transit or highly dependent areas to transit hubs at Long Island City and Downtown Brooklyn.

Critics of the BQX see it is an expensive novelty capable of no more than what would be accomplished by a dedicated bus line, which would be significantly cheaper. In defense of the BQX, the streetcar would be able to carry more people at faster speeds and be less impeded by local traffic. Approximately 70% of the route would be on track separated from automobile traffic. The majority of traffic interaction would be at intersections. At these intersections the BQX would enjoy traffic priority (HDR Inc. 2016, NYCEDC 2016). The BQX would travel at an average of 11.3 mph, which is significantly faster than the averages of bus routes in the area (HDR Inc. 2016). A complimentary bus route does not exist; hence the dire need for a transit line through this corridor. However, bus routes that cross the affected area perpendicularly include the M42 with speed averages between 3.2-6.8 mph depending on route segment and direction. It should be noted the range of averages are taken from the specific segments of the bus route within potential BQX route service areas. The Bx40 has similar speed averages from 4.1 to 4.4 mph. Additionally, bus ridership has been declining citywide. With the starkest reductions in ridership found in Manhattan where the highest degrees of surface congestion are found, the outer boroughs experienced declines in ridership as well, 1% from 2014-2015 and 1.5% from 2015-2016 (compared to a 5% reduction in Manhattan) (NYCDOT 2016). The corridor along the East River is old in comparison to other neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens. The streets are often tight, cramped, and non contiguous. As a result a bus route through the same corridor would be hard pressed to find a route with compatible turns and enough space not to be a nuisance (HDR Inc. 2016). Streetcars blend well with dense urban streetscape and the construction of it would call for a redesign to alleviate tight choke points.

Another advantage of the BQX over a bus alternative is the wheelchair access. With surface level loading, the BQX would be significantly more wheelchair friendly than a bus. The BQX boasts that all 30 stops will be wheelchair accessible, without increasing loading times. Additionally, streetcars are quieter, more efficient, and emit fewer pollutants making them less intrusive to the immediate residents. Finally, the BQX will be a 24-hour service, with streetcars running every 5 minutes during peak hours. 24-hour service is something no bus line in NYC features. While a bus route would be substantially cheaper and faster to implement, a bus route would not bring with it the same kind of advantages and there are doubts as to whether a bus route is possible through the same corridor without similar street redesign (HDR Inc. 2016).

So far the project has gone through an alternatives analysis performed by HDR Inc. for the NYCEDC and DOT as well as preliminary community and stakeholders engagement process to better understand the communities most vested interests in the project. Of the five hundred participants in the BQX community visioning sessions, the two most important topics of concern was the choice of streetcars over alternative modes of transport and increases to connectivity with other modes of transit. These topics represented 22 and 21 percent of the 1400 responses respectively (NYCDEC 2016). Questions pertaining to the specifics of the route and stops

represented 16% with impacts and schedules of construction at 9%. Other concerns involved questions on financing and cost (12%), features included like wheel chair access or bike accommodation (14%), and the resulting economic development (6%). It is no surprise that connectivity and advantages of modal choice, particularly speed, represented the largest shares of interest as public transit connections represent one of the biggest concerns for New Yorkers, especially how that connectivity relates to the cost of living and rent (Wiley 2016). Future assessments on the schedule include a more detailed community engagement session later in 2016 and community approval processes in 2017. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2019 with an estimated opening in 2024 (NYCEDC 2016).

Current Schedule:

February 2016 - Spring 2017	Alternatives Analysis Study
February 2016 - Winter 2016	Initial Engagement of Elected Officials, Community Boards, and Community Stakeholders

Timeline:

2016	Commence Detailed Planning & Community Engagement
2017	Initiate Public Approvals Process
2018	Initiate Design
2019	Contractor/Operator Selection & Groundbreaking
2024	Service Launch

Figure 4. BQX Development Schedule. Source: NYCEDC 2016

Potential Impacts

The potential impacts of the BQX are numerous, and while the beneficial impacts can be obvious, the negative impacts are more insidious. I saw insidious because they are subtle and encroach over a longer period of time, but have devastating impacts to those they affect. First let us begin with the more immediate or first order impacts. Then we will move on to higher order impacts.

The first impact is connectivity. The BQX will connect an underserved corridor of approximately 400,000 residents and 300,000 employees to the transit systems through which they might have easier access to the city and region (HDR Inc. 2016). Connectivity in NYC is highly valued and would make the lives easier not only for those who live and work in the

corridor but also for anyone who uses the system. By increasing connectivity, stress and congestion will be alleviated from other overburdened links in the transit system. However, this increase in connectivity is likely to increase property values and rents (Wiley 2016, Hess & Almeida 2007).

A related impact is the paradigm change in transit system design. New York has experienced a Manhattan-centric transit design for much of its history and as a result corridors in and out of the center are well served, even overused. Trips with origins and destinations outside Manhattan will often need to go through Manhattan and transfer. As a result the existing system is overburdened with trips unnecessarily transferring through Manhattan. This of course contributes to the congestion of the system and to the length and time of the trip. The BQX would be the only north south rail route in the outer boroughs other than the G train. This could significantly decrease certain outer borough trips and increase the appeal of outer borough living and travel (Friends of the BQX 2016). The success of this project could incite future developments of a similar nature.

Origin and Destination	Current Travel Time (min)	BQX Travel Time (min)	Time Saved Per Ride (min)
<i>Halletts Point to Midtown</i>	55	37	18
<i>Astoria to Williamsburg</i>	61	26	35
<i>Queensbridge to Navy Yard</i>	59	27	32
<i>Long Island City to DUMBO</i>	48	33	15
<i>Downtown Brooklyn to Williamsburg</i>	40	26	14
<i>DUMBO to Williamsburg</i>	55	21	34

Figure 5. Estimated time saved on common outer borough trips. Source: Friends of the BQX, 2016

Intrinsically related to the value New Yorkers place on connectivity, the BQX is sure to incite significant development in neighborhoods that have seen a disproportionate absence of it. Reduced public transit times, the improvements to utility lines that will accompany construction, and the enhancements in livability, street calming, and pedestrian and bike infrastructure will all combine to drastically improve the appeal of the neighborhoods served by the BQX. This increase in appeal will translate to both development and increases in prices. The City of New York is counting on this and plans to pay for the BQX by capturing a portion of the resulting increases in property values and taxes. Preliminary economic impact assessments estimate an economic impact in the corridor of 25 billion over the next three decades (HDR Inc. 2016).

Construction is estimated to take five years between 2019 and 2024 when the BQX is scheduled to begin operations. These five years will see none of the benefits of the completed project. For five years there will be no increases in livability or connectivity. Instead the cramped urban spaces will become more cramped and significantly louder. The reconstruction of the

roads, while in the long term may be beneficial, will be seen and felt as an expensive inconvenience. There will be short-term impacts damaging livability, small businesses due to reduced pedestrian space and traffic, and obstructions to traditional forms of connectivity and transit. The inconveniences of such a large and sprawling linear construction project is rarely felt in this densely populated area. New Yorkers are not strangers to construction but it usually takes place high above or far below where they live. When construction is on the street level it is contained and the BQX will need to find innovative ways to mitigate the obstructions its construction will cause.

The BQX will increase through traffic. With a new transit connection, the affected corridor will experience much more through traffic. There is a concern that the novelty and uniqueness of a streetcar running along the East River, enjoying beautiful views of the river and New York City skyline, will contribute not only to gentrification but also to touristification (Austensen et al 2016, Dastrup 2015). Touristification would see a dramatic transformation of the riverfront and parks. These areas will see economic development but also a dramatic change of place that may be cherished and missed by the current residents. Touristification goes hand in hand with a less obvious but perhaps more detrimental social impact.

Gentrification is seemingly inevitable and insidious in its persistence. The BQX mission statement includes passages on the equitable distribution of connectivity and development. However, this well-meaning sentiment could have disastrous effects on people who may not be able to afford to live amongst the development the BQX may bring. Additionally, the redevelopment of the streets and the private development that will follow are sure to have a transformative effect on the neighborhood. This type of transformation can be a good thing and perceived amicably, or it can be felt as the destruction of what may be a familiar and comforting sense of place. The accelerated rate of gentrification in the service area of the BQX is potentially the most significant impact on the BQX corridor and to discuss it we will focus on the most vulnerable communities.

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) is responsible for the public housing developments in NYC. Of the 400,000 people living in the BQX corridor, 40,000 are living in one of 13 NYCHA developments (HDR Inc. 2016, NYCEDC 2016). Unlike other cities and countries that have transitioned towards a mixed-use public housing model, New York still maintains the traditional model of developments exclusively for public housing recipients. These developments were originally built in low-income neighborhoods; however, many of these neighborhoods have changed since they were built. Most NYCHA developments were built between 1950 and 1970 (66%) and since then the city has experienced a substantial transition (Dastrup 2015). As a result, many of the NYCHA developments are in areas considered to be gentrifying or high income (Austensen et al 2016). The



Figure 6. Fruman Center Terminology Description. Source: Dastrup 2015

research and reports on NYCHA developments and their relation to gentrification are done at a particular scale. The NYU Fruman Center annual report and the corresponding gentrification report for the Center for Economic Development, use the terminology NYCHA cores and their surrounding neighborhoods (Austensen et al 2016, Dastrup 2015). A core is an area in which 70% of housing units are NYCHA developments. The analysis identifies three types of neighborhoods; low income neighborhoods in which the average household income remains below the city median between 1990-2010, persistently high income neighborhoods in which average household income is consistently above the citywide median, and gentrifying or increasing neighborhoods in which the average household income was at first below and has since risen above the city median. From these classifications, qualitative and quantitative results have been discussed illuminating the impacts of different degrees of development on NYCHA communities.

In gentrifying neighborhoods of increasing average household incomes, the negative impacts of development begin presenting. While there are improvements to the quality of NYCHA residents' lives, they are affected peripherally (Dastrup 2016). Many NYCHA residents appreciate improvements to amenities in their neighborhoods like new parks, better schools, new or improved amenities and utilities, or in this case transit. However, there is a strong sentiment among NYCHA residents that these improvements have not been invested in for their benefit. These improvements are made for the condo buyers and the new residents. This type of thinking creates a divided social mentality. These perceived differences are reinforced or inspired by physical representations. The new and pristine condo buildings are juxtaposed by NYCHA buildings covered in abandoned scaffolding, reminiscent of a contracted improvement project long abandoned (Dastrup 2015).

The inequalities are deeper than housing stock. Stark differences in income and degrees of education mean that the additional job opportunities brought to the neighborhood by gentrification are not shared with the NYCHA communities. While the average household incomes of NYCHA families in gentrifying and high-income areas is higher than those of NYCHA households in low income areas, the qualitative research does not agree. Qualitative research suggests that the economic advantages of gentrifying and high-income neighborhoods are not shared with NYCHA families and reports call for additional research to explain the unidentified factors contributing to this anomaly (Dastrup 2015, Dastrup 2016, Austensen et al 2016).

Complimenting these inequalities is the difference in history with the place. Gentrifying neighborhoods like Long Island City have very high turn over, with 79% of residents having moved there in the last ten years. Meanwhile, multi generational families, frequently dating back to the original construction, often fill the corresponding NYCHA dwellings. This contributes nicely to the narrative that newcomers have a false sense of pride in having discovered or 'helped make' a neighborhood while NYCHA residents may rightfully take umbrage to such an attitude having lived in that place their entire lives (Dastrup 2015, Dastrup 2016). Lines are drawn

between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and deteriorate social cohesion and a strong sense of community (Keating 2000, Amick & Kviz 1975).

In persistently high income neighborhoods the divisions are far greater. The same study labeled Chelsea as an iconic high-income neighborhood. While Chelsea is in Manhattan and far from the BQX corridor, it demonstrates well a neighborhood in the late or final stages of gentrification. Here the average income in 2008-2012 is just shy of \$130,000 while NYCHA residents average was \$34,000.

The resentment of newcomers has grown into a fear of displacement. The cost of living in the neighborhood shoots up with shops catering to the significantly wealthier average resident. Even with subsidized house, little to no affordable groceries, day care, or commercial shopping makes living in the neighborhood often impossible on a low income. Interviews describe a haunting,

often overwhelming, pressure to leave the area (Dastrup 2015).

Both the inequalities and perceptions between newcomers or gentrifiers and the long-term residents in NYCHA developments divide the community. The BQX is likely, even intended, to accelerate development and gentrification. The negative social impacts of gentrification demand mitigation. It is not the opinion of the author that gentrification can be avoided nor can its negative effects be fully mitigated. However, in the future impact assessments of the BQX and future developments, the City of New York should pay closer attention to the impacts the project will have on escalating gentrification and possible mitigations for those impacts.

Discussion and Recommendations

The insidious impacts of gentrification are not unique to this project and could develop in the same corridor without the project. However, the modal choice of a streetcar both significantly increases speed and connectivity of public transit in the corridor and adds an element of novelty as a unique project in the area. The streetcar would accelerate rates of gentrification and even touristification in the corridor and this is the most significant social impact associated with the BQX.

Other impacts are largely negative in the short term and positive in the long term. Local residents will be subjected to at least five years of construction adding to noise and air pollution as well as traffic congestion and obstruction. These effects will be felt the most by those who live

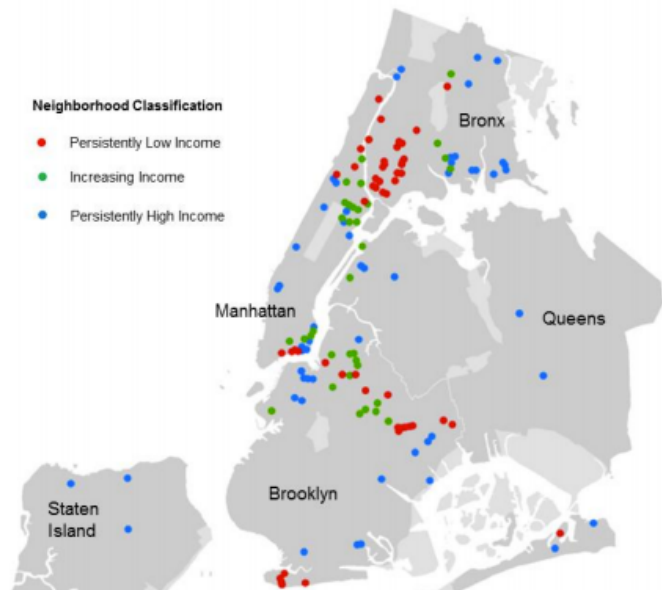


Figure 7. The location and classification of NYCHA development cores in NYC. The impact area along the East River features numerous high income and gentrifying developments, as well as one low income area. Source: Fruman Center, Austensen et al. 2016.

closest to the final route. There are ways to mitigate these effects. One might be to use barriers and filters to minimize air and noise pollutions of constructions sites. Additionally, construction can be staggered in phases to avoid long-term construction, congestion, or obstruction in any one particular area. Mitigation can also take the form of added value. By using the construction of the BQX to improve both underground utilities and street design, the BQX can improve not only connectivity but contribute to the livability of the affected neighborhoods in other ways. By properly educating locals on the improvements towards quieter, cleaner, and safer streets, initial impacts of the BQX can be framed as a worthy investment for the long-term rewards. Public outreach and education can make a huge difference in the perception of initial impacts. This outreach also serves as an opportunity to hear feedback and receive grievances. Both feedback and grievance mechanisms will help minimize impacts if handled properly.

The construction of the BQX offers an important opportunity to repair or enhance underground utilities. It is important the City of New York does not only do so in the interest of developers and newcomers. The ongoing assessments must reach out to vulnerable communities as well to ensure the equity of positive impacts. By beginning and maintaining a dialogue with the more vulnerable communities in the BQX corridor, project managers can hear from those communities what their interests are and find ways to represent those interests. The BQX is likely to accelerate rates of gentrification along the corridor and to bring gentrification to areas where their lack of connectivity had restrained gentrification in the past. The impacts of gentrification are insidious in comparison and can often be difficult to manage or prevent. Mitigating gentrification demands that social impact assessments be much more than a phase in the project but an ongoing and insightful process (Vanclay et al. 2015). Programs must be designed to reach out to vulnerable communities and affluent ones, old-timers and newcomers alike, and begin a dialogue to develop a shared long-term vision for the community. Specifically, vocational and educational programs should be spearheaded by the city to ensure NYCHA and other vulnerable communities are able to equitably benefit from the improvements development and gentrification bring. Additionally, it should be in the consideration of the city to pivot towards mixed-use public housing (Keating 2000, Amick & Kviz 1975). By designing NYCHA developments to be completely public housing, these communities are separated from the neighborhood and the social divisions are deepened.

The BQX represents an important shift in NYC public transit design. Moving away from a Manhattan-centric layout and serving underserved communities is in the best interest of the city and its residents. However, the city intends to invigorate development in underdeveloped neighborhoods with the BQX and hopes to pay for it by capturing expected increases in property values. With such an intention, it is the duty of New York to make significant efforts in community outreach and gentrification mitigation for the care of vulnerable communities in the affected corridor. These efforts can not be limited to the planning phase but must manifest as long term programs and dialogues mediated by the city to manage the more insidious social impacts of gentrification.

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