TO BE
OR NOT
TO BQE

Call for Entries
Fall Fellow Residency
2020
To Be or Not To BQE: A Post-Moses Community Vision

Project Description

Earlier this year, Mayor DeBlasio convened a panel of experts tasked with delivering recommendations on how to repair the deteriorating Brooklyn Queens Expressway. As reported by Curbed, an interesting conclusion was the panel’s call for “a broader vision for the future of the highway,” a comprehensive overhaul of the entirety of the BQE from Staten Island to Queens, “rather than the piecemeal approach that DOT proposed for the triple cantilever section beneath The Promenade”.

That broader vision includes the seeming radical query: What about just tearing the BQE down?

This question is resonating within the current NYC political structure. City Council Speaker Corey Johnson included a call for a “fresh look at the BQE problem” in his State of the City address in March, urging the city to study alternatives to the roadway’s reconstruction “including the removal of the BQE in its entirety.”

Other cities have seen highway deconstruction as a means to redress the challenges of climate change, environmental justice, quality of life and urban development in one fell swoop. San Francisco’s Octavia Boulevard, The Harbor Drive Freeway in Portland, Oregon, Boston’s Big Dig, and Rochester’s Inner Loop are precedents in removal and relocation that produced measurable urban benefit.

Our City could use the same means to redress the displacement and segregation intentionally implemented through the BQE as it was authored by Robert Moses.

What could we do with the land if the BQE just wasn’t there? What could we build instead? Restore the stolen parks, build another Eastern Parkway, refill the blocks along Hicks Street, remove the trench through Williamsburg, reconnect Calvary Cemetery, use the right-of-way for a proper AirTrain to LaGuardia, return 3rd Avenue to Sunset Park, create a new gateway to Brooklyn at the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge?

About the Fellowship

As the theme of the IPA’s 2020 Residency, we ask applicants to research and envision what might replace the BQE along a portion of this anachronistic piece of Moses infrastructure. With support of the IPA, each team will engage the Community Board(s) and reach out to the community stakeholders through which their chosen BQE portion passes.

The final projects will be exhibited publicly and published as a volume of the IPA Residency series. Through research and collaboration with City officials, the Fellows are asked not only to develop their individual project but are encouraged to collaborate with each other. To facilitate the collaboration, the IPA will enable the cohort to:

- Meet weekly with guest lecturers
- Share team meals
- Collectively problem solve

The Residency lasts eight weeks. By providing an intimate setting for our cohort of Fellows with outside practitioners and stakeholders, the IPA provides a rich educational experience. The residency will culminate with a public exhibition of the projects, to be augmented with Fellow presentations, panel discussions, screenings and public forums.
Selection

Selection Criteria: Innovative contribution to discourse on urbanism, environmental justice, racial justice, affordable housing, urban agriculture, ecology, resilient infrastructure, and community engagement.

Preference will be given to cross-disciplinary teams. (We are accepting proposals with a range of experience.)

Application

Requirements

Please email a PDF application to info@the-ipa.org, with the following info, in order: (8.5”x11”, maximum 12 pages, 3 MB).

☐ Name and Contact Info for each team member

☐ Project Title

☐ Project Synopsis: What do you plan on producing during your time with the IPA? (maximum 150 words)

☐ Project Support: How do you see the time with the IPA supporting this endeavor? (maximum 150 words)

☐ Project Statement: (maximum 500 words -- If your project requires funding beyond the small IPA stipend, please indicate where this will come from.)

☐ CV(s): (maximum 2 pages)

☐ Work Sample(s): Email a portfolio of past projects that best illustrates your design sensibility and your commitment to social justice. 10MB max

☐ 2 References for each team member

☐ Ability to commit a minimum of 20 hours/week on your project, including weekly team meals, and bi-weekly public presentations.

Deadline: 5:00 pm EDT, Wednesday July 15, 2020.
Benefits & Expectations

Fellows will be given space to exhibit their work and to foster collaboration. During the residency, we will facilitate connections with local nonprofits and advocacy groups and will bring in experts to critique the Fellows’ work. A small stipend will be provided. Fellows will present their work-in-progress publicly and in a culminating open studio reception.

Fellows receive:

- Recognition as Institute for Public Architecture Fellows.
- Space for exhibition and collaboration for two months.
- Access to community groups, experts in design, architecture, planning and policy.
- Facilitated events and open studio.
- Promotion through IPA’s various media platforms.

Schedule

(Subject to change)

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Note

Materials submitted for the residency selection process become the property of the IPA, and may be retained for exhibition, publication, and promotion purposes. The IPA reserves the right in its retention of ownership of all competition materials to utilize submissions in any exhibition, publication, or promotional endeavor, and without compensation to the entrants. Each competitor will retain full copyright of all materials submitted unless otherwise stated. The IPA will not be held liable for any damages, errors or omissions.

Bibliography

Click here to download the following articles from the IPA website.

City Lab - Here Are the Urban Highways That Deserve to Die
Car Free America - Reconnecting Cities through Urban Highway Removals
New York Magazine Intelligencer - Here’s a Solution for Fixing the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway: Get Rid of It