

New York mayor: Brooklyn should get a streetcar system

Story and photo by [Joseph M. Calisi](#) | February 9, 2016

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The Brooklyn Historic Railway Association laid tracks and placed a Presidents' Conference Committee streetcar in the New York borough for the first time since the 1950s with a Dec. 2002 event. City officials say Brooklyn and Queens should get a new streetcar system. Photo By: Joseph M. Calisi

NEW YORK — City leaders support returning streetcars to Brooklyn.

In his annual State of the City address, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio recently proposed a north-south light rail along the East River spanning the city's two largest boroughs, Brooklyn and Queens, by saying that, "This is about equity and innovation. We are mapping brand new transit that will knit neighborhoods together and open up real opportunities for our people."

The \$2.5 billion, 16-mile dedicated line streetcar system would stretch from Sunset Park north towards Astoria, Queens — an area observers say is underserved by the subway system. Residents would be able to make connections to subway and ferry service into Manhattan from the proposed light rail system. It would be the first dedicated streetcar system in place in the borough since before the Brooklyn Dodgers left for Los Angeles



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in 1957. The baseball team earned its name from the maze of streetcar tracks residents or "trolley dodgers" would have to navigate day-to-day to get around or to see a ball game.

De Blasio proposes to raise the \$2.5 billion system from "tax incremental financing." This is the same idea a previous administration used to finance the subway extension to 34th Street-Hudson Yards.

Bob Diamond, who headed the Brooklyn Historic Railway Association that once actually laid rail and had a Presidents' Conference Committee car on the streets of Red Hook, Brooklyn, in 2002 says, "I think Bill De Blasio's plan is fantastic, all transportation advocates should heartily support it on its merits. I wish that our original Red Streetcar project can be somehow incorporated into the Mayor's new plan. I'm confident our research and hard earned experience can save the City a lot of time and money."

Phil McManus, chairman of the Queens Public Transit Committee would like to see rail service restored on the former Long Island Rockaway Beach Branch, which is the mission of the group.