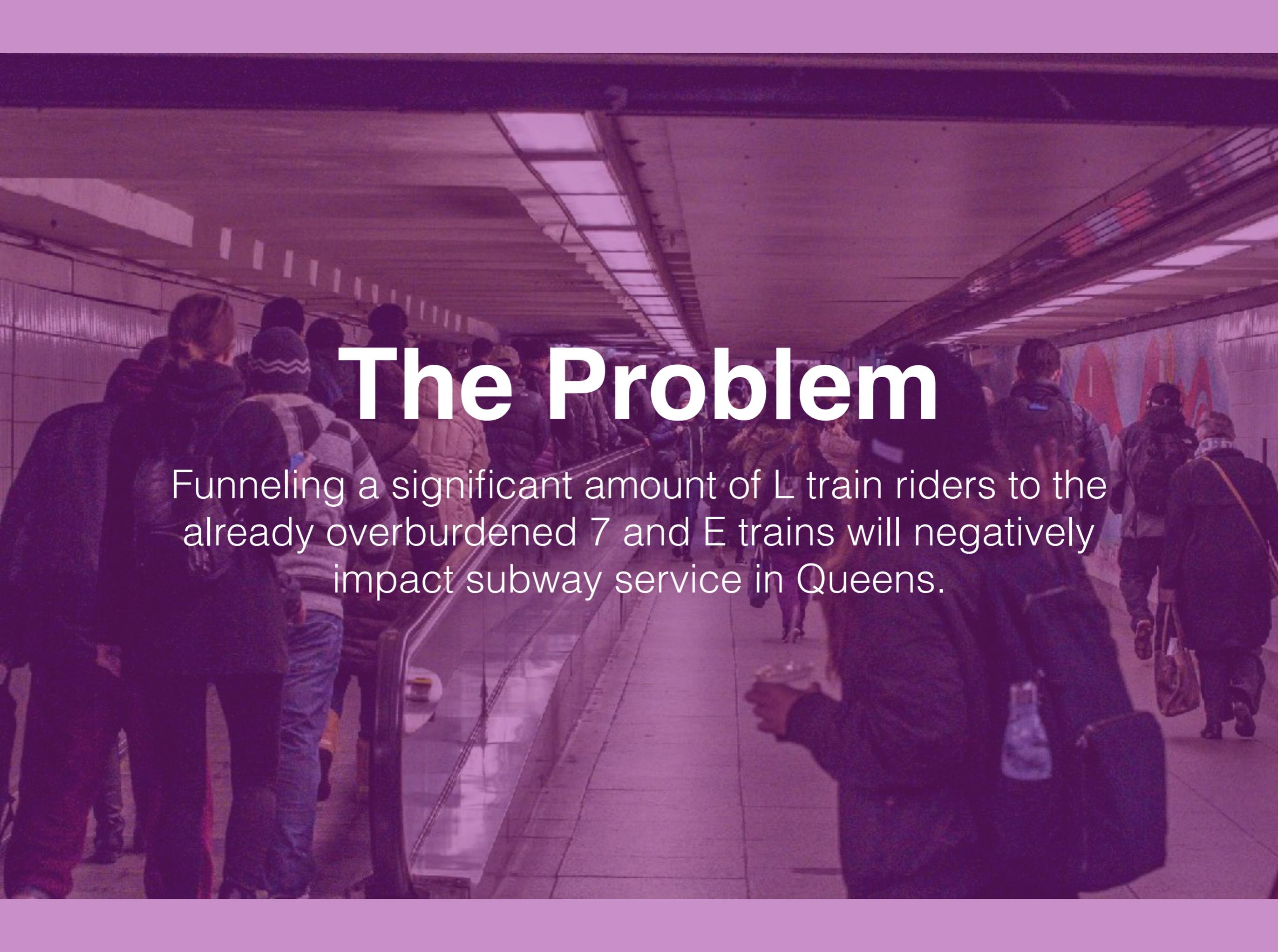




Train Shutdown “Crowd Calming” Options

access
queens

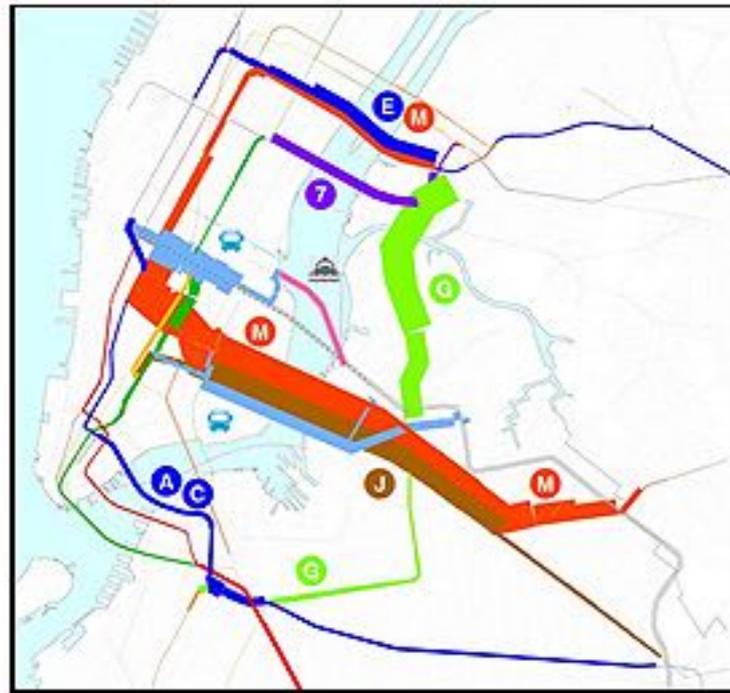


A photograph of a crowded subway platform, likely in Queens, New York. The platform is filled with people, many wearing winter coats and hats, suggesting a cold season. The scene is dimly lit, with overhead lights providing the primary illumination. The perspective is from the platform, looking down the length of the station. The text "The Problem" is overlaid in large, white, bold letters across the center of the image.

The Problem

Funneling a significant amount of L train riders to the already overburdened 7 and E trains will negatively impact subway service in Queens.

The G, E, M, and 7 train will handle rerouted L train commuters



Example of transit demand model outputs, showing potential changes in subway, bus and ferry ridership once the L train tunnel is closed and proposed mitigation is in place.

In 2019, the MTA must close the L train tunnel between Manhattan and Brooklyn. The L train currently carries 225,000 commuters per day between these two boroughs. These commuters will need to find new ways to commute.

According to the MTA's "Transit Demand Model", a significant portion of L train commuters will be funneled north on the G train to Court Square, where they are expected to transfer to the already crowded E, M, and 7 trains in order to reach Manhattan.

One of these routes, the M, has some passenger capacity, though it shares the same narrow platform as the E train. The 7 and E trains are both running at or above capacity and frequently leave passengers behind. Both are also subject to frequent delays which will result in dangerous crowding situations and decreased work productivity and quality of life.

Historic overview of Court Square



George Conrad Collection, NYCSUBWAY.org

Court Square is a combination of three stations that were built separately, at a time when L.I.C. was an industrial area. They were not designed for a large increase in ridership.

The G, E, and M platforms were connected when 1 Court Square (the Citi tower), was constructed in 1989. The G and 7 platforms were connected in 2011.

Aside from connecting hallways, stairs, escalators and the 'people mover' under 1 Court Square, the three stations were not modified with additional street exits.

Present day need for “Crowd Calming” at 23rd St./Ely Ave.

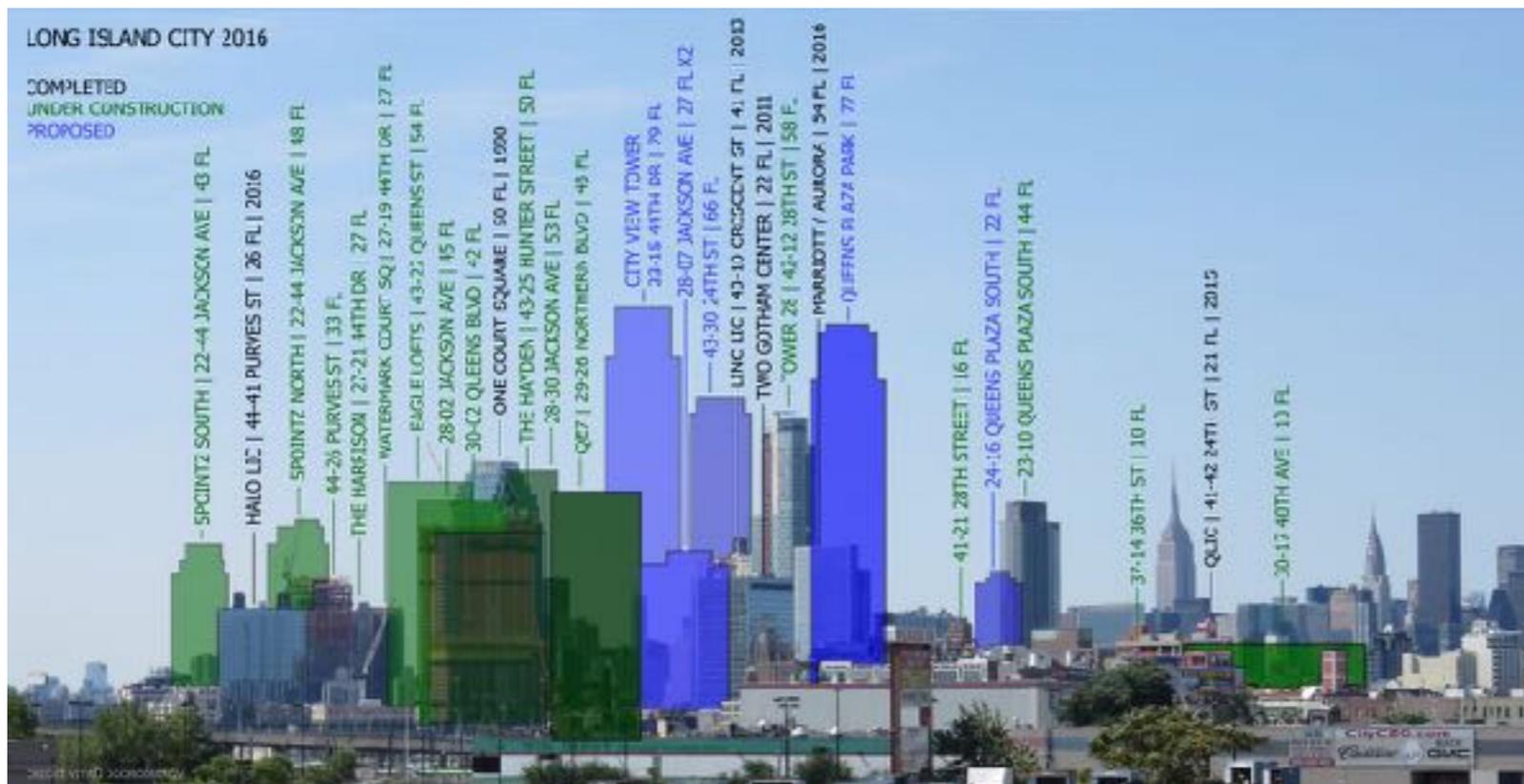


Crowding conditions at the E and M “23rd St. Ely Ave.” platform are presently a problem.

With significant additional L line riders being routed to the G, combined with extensive residential growth in the Court Square area, the platform capacity of this station will be overwhelmed and dangerous.

Part of the solution for L train riders should be additional transit options that avoid the E and M platform entirely. There are a variety of ways this can be achieved.

Explosive residential growth near Court Square before 2019



Vitali Ogorodnikov, NY Yimby

Based solely on buildings which are either already under construction or granted construction permits, there will be up to 11,000 new apartments and 1,080 hotel rooms in Long Island City by the time the L train shutdown takes place. Many of these apartments will be within walking distance of Court Square, dramatically increasing the station's usage.

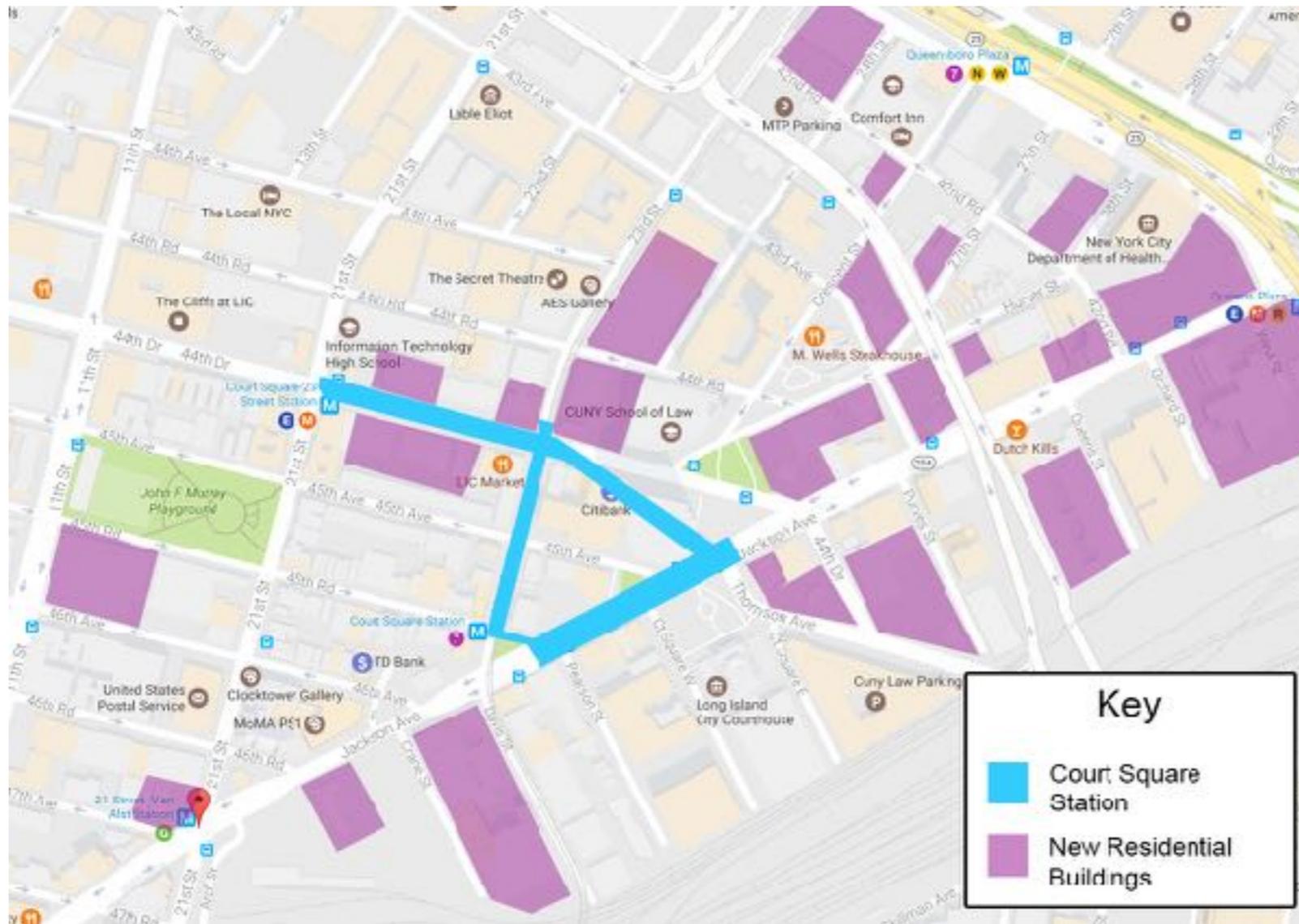
If we presume two residents per apartment, the population of the neighborhood will increase by a minimum of 22,000 residents.

There are currently no new transit options on the table to accommodate these new transit users.

Sources: <http://newyorkyimby.com/2016/09/long-island-city-rises-tracking-2016-development-progress-and-looking-ahead.html>

<http://licpost.com/about-9000-residential-units-to-hit-the-market-in-long-island-city-this-year-according-to-report>

New L.I.C. commuters will increase ridership



Many of these 22,000 residents will live near Court Square. Those who do not live close to Court Square will also rely on the G, E, M, and 7 trains - increasing crowding conditions on these trains regardless. For example, new Hunter Point South residents will rely on the 7 at the Vernon Jackson Avenue station.

Keep in mind that these 22,000 new residents will not be the last. There are many available development sites within L.I.C. None of the older factories and small homes in the neighborhood are protected by zoning laws. Only one street of row houses along 45th Avenue between 21st and 23 Streets presently has protected landmark status.

The population of L.I.C. could potentially double in the years beyond 2019, creating a need for new transit options between Manhattan and Queens.

Numerous bottlenecks throughout the Court Square station



The current station layout creates several bottlenecks, often where a single set of stairs, escalator, or narrow passageway is present. These bottlenecks constrict the flow of passengers transferring within the station.

E M station entrances inadequate to meet new demand



The 23/Ely platform only contains three direct entrances and exits. One located at the rear of the Queens-bound platform and two at the front and rear of the Manhattan-bound platform.

The west exit/entry contains a single set of stairs per platform to a mezzanine, where two stairs lead to the street. The Queens-bound and Manhattan-bound platforms are joined at the mezzanine, though this connection contains steps.

The rear exit/entry consists of a single staircase, with a single HEET, exit, and an emergency exit door. There is only one Metrocard vending machine.

None of these exit/entrance stairs are ADA-compliant.

7 station entrance inadequate to meet current demand

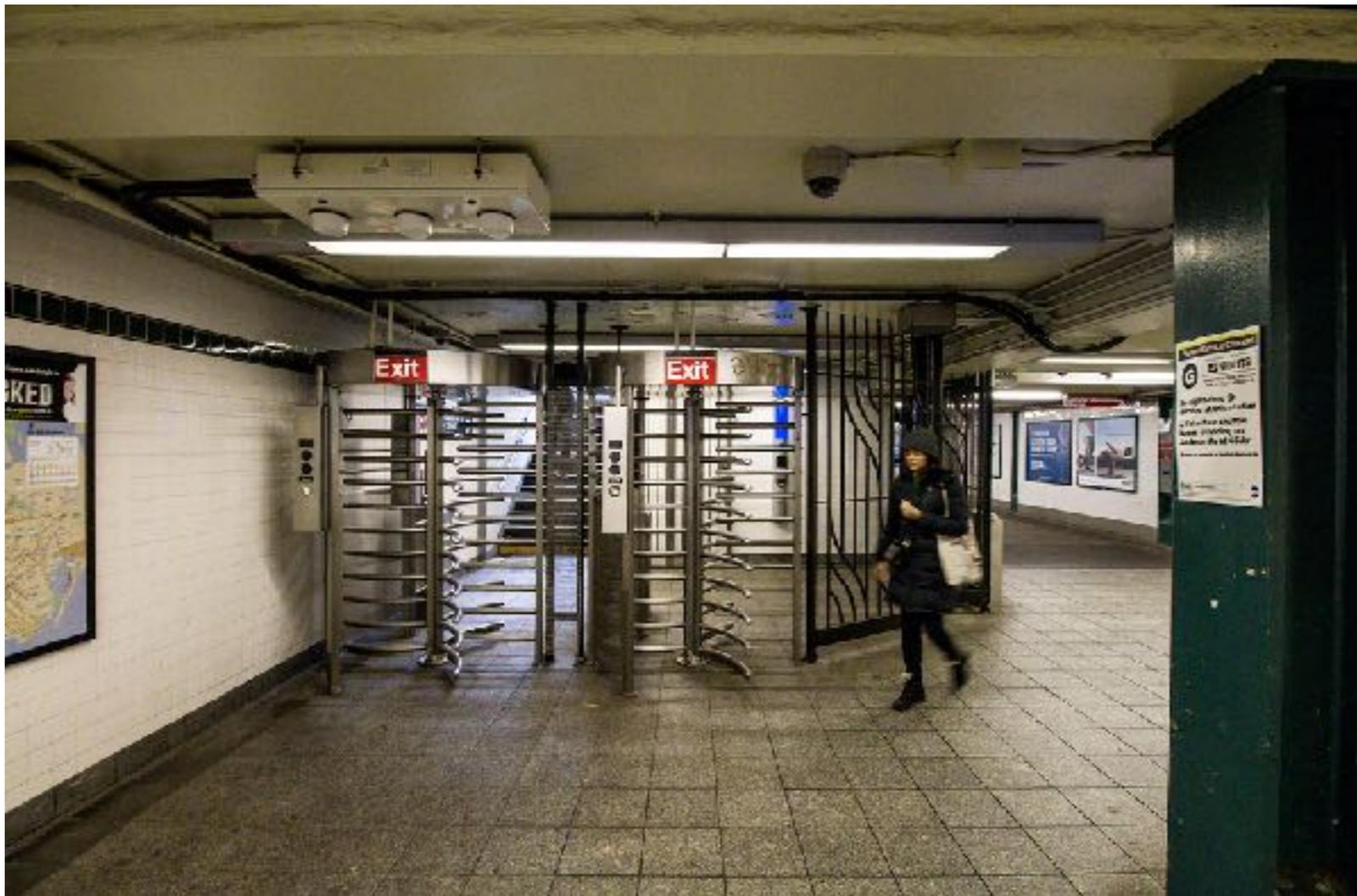


The 7 train station only contains a single-fare control area. This fare control doubles as the station entrance/exit for LIC commuters and transfer corridor for passengers connecting to the G, E, and M trains. Presently, this area becomes extremely crowded at times.

There are only two stairs to the street for LIC commuters to use. These stairs will not meet the needs of the rapidly growing L.I.C. population.

On a positive note, the 7 train platforms are ADA compliant.

No significant improvements planned for these bottlenecks



At present time, the MTA is only planning on one improvement to the Court Square station complex.

Construction will soon begin on re-installing staircases between the G train platform and the mezzanine above. These stairs were removed several years ago.

These stairs will provide no relief to the single staircase and escalator bottlenecks that are required for transferring between trains.

Escalators & people mover in Court Square are often broken



Rodrigo Salazar

Nearly every day, the people mover connecting the G platform to the E & M platforms is broken.

Additionally, the long escalators connecting the G platform to the 7 are often broken as well.

Escalators, elevators, and the people mover are all vital pieces of subway service infrastructure that should be maintained in operating condition insofar as possible. This problem is a present day problem that will only increase in importance when L train riders are redirected to this station.

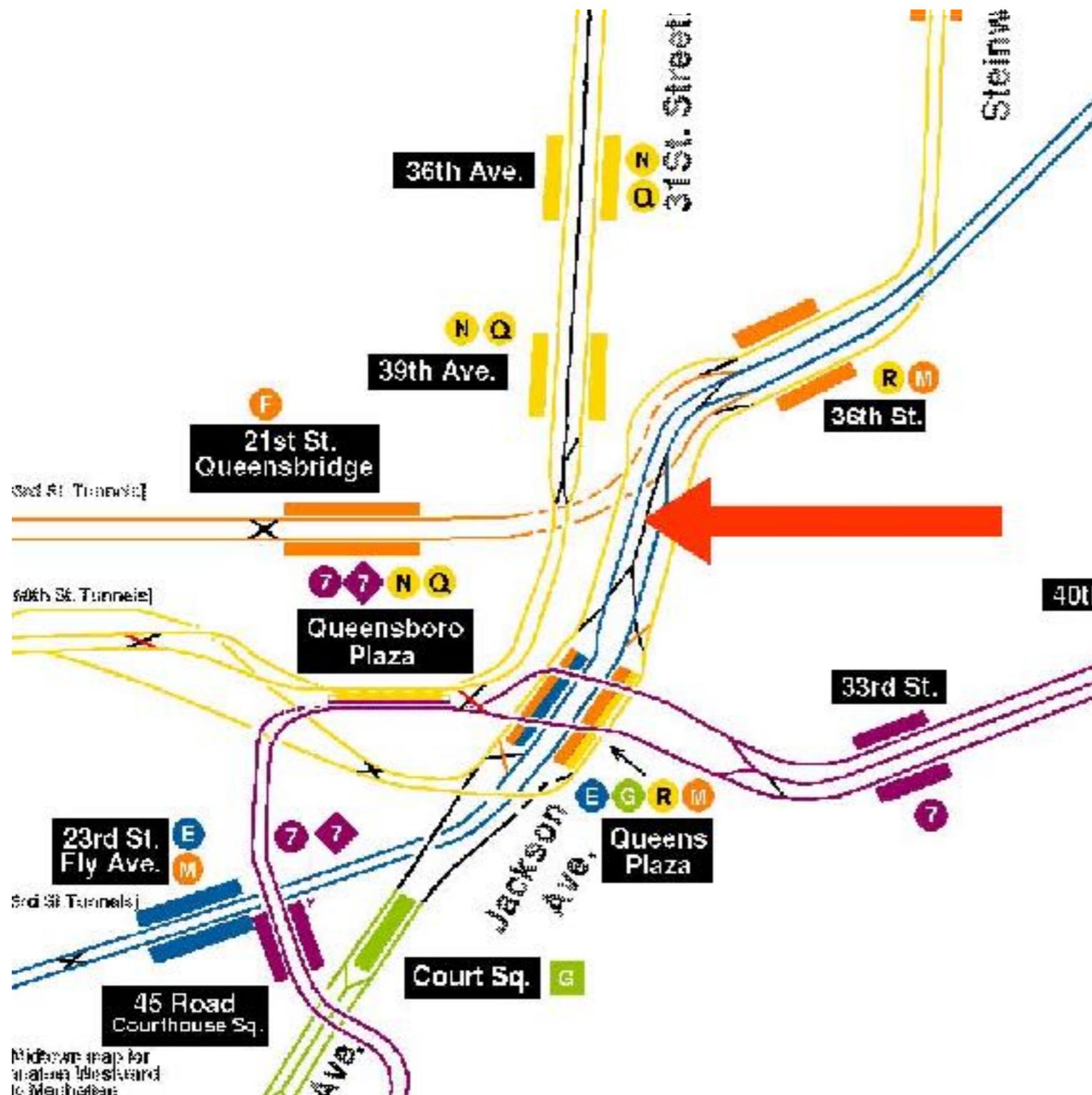


Potential Solutions

Option 1: Extend the further into Queens.

Extending the G train back into Queens along the Queens Blvd line (where it traditionally ran up until 2009) would enable reduced commuter congestion and calm crowding conditions at Court Square. It would allow diverted L train riders an additional seamless transfer to the R train, with the possibility of an above ground walking transfer to the N and W trains.

1a: Extend the **G** to Queens Plaza again



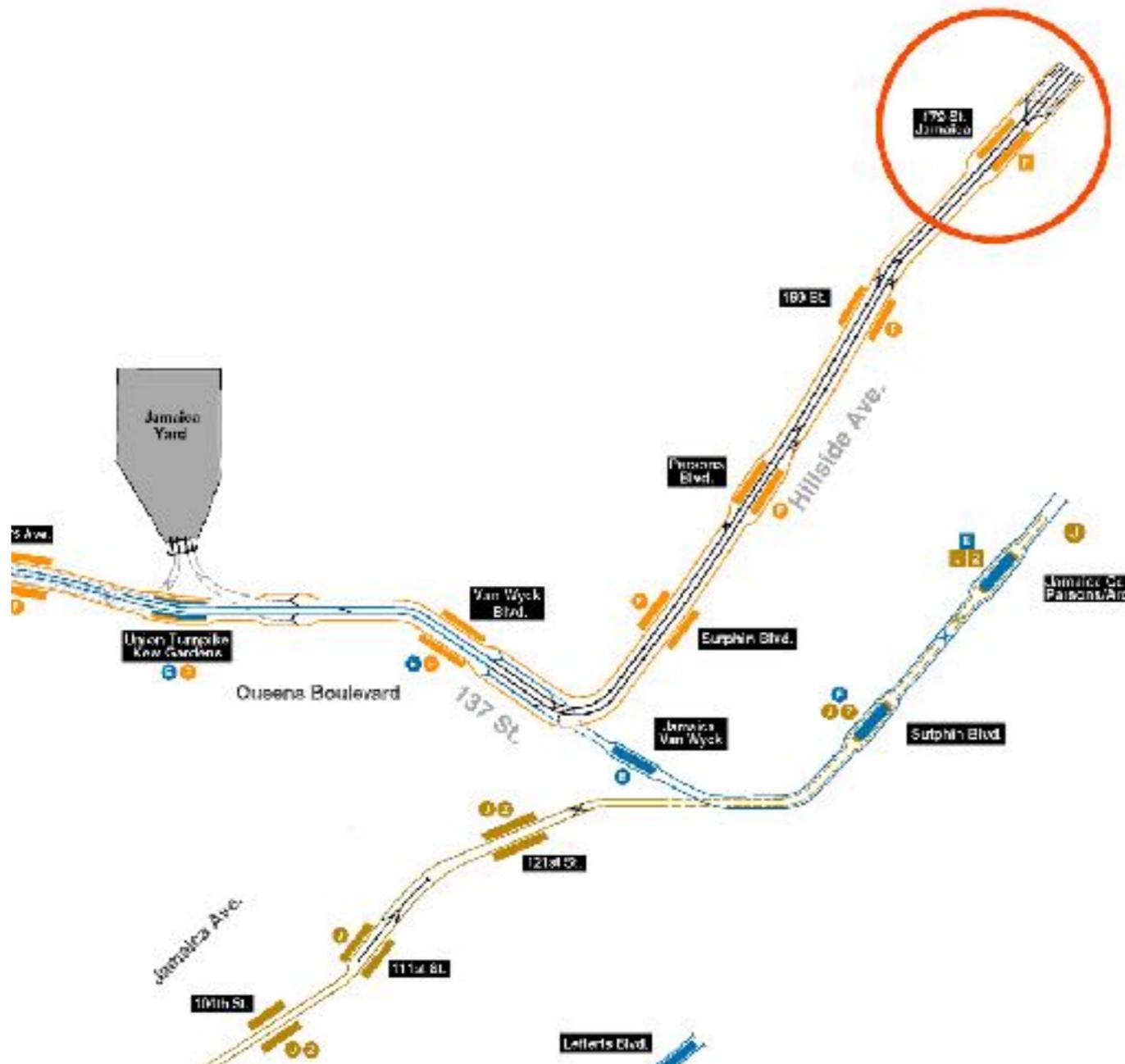
Historical Context: Up until 2001, the G train was turned at Queens Plaza, late nights and weekends.

Use Case: Allows G riders a same-station transfer to the E/M/R trains, and walking transfer to 7/N/W trains at Queensboro Plaza.

Solution: Turn G trains on the existing, operational “D5” track. Extend the G back to Queens Plaza.

Additional Precedent: Special holiday train is turned using track D5 every year. It is also used to store full length R trains during winter storms. Track D5 has a ten car capacity (or eight 75-foot cars), suitable for turning the extended-length G trains that will be operated during the L train shutdown.

1b: Extend the **G** to 71st St. Continental or 179th St.



Historical Context: The 179 Street terminal is often used to turn R trains when necessitated by track work. 179 Street can turn up to 63 trains per hour, significantly higher than its current usage.

During evening hours from 2001 to 2009, The Queens Blvd route hosted E, F, G, R, and V trains (G, R, and V turned at 71st Continental Ave).

The recent permanent extension of the G to Church Avenue complements this service on the opposite end of the route.

Use Case: If it is no longer feasible to turn the G at Queens Plaza.

Solution: Extend one of the Queens Blvd local trains to 179 Street to allow track capacity for turning an additional train at 71st Continental.

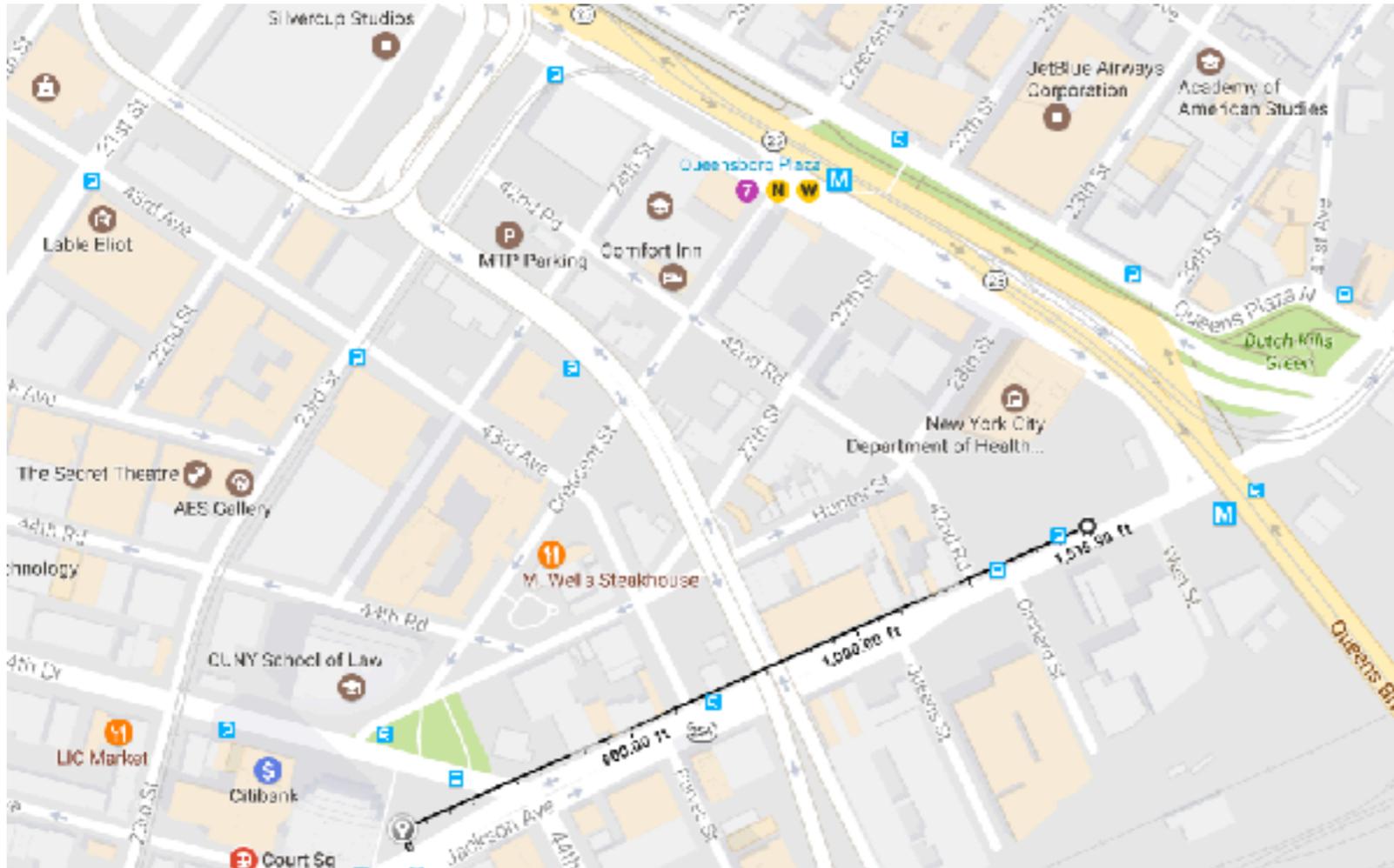
Sources:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamaica%E2%80%93179th_Street_\(IND_Queens_Boulevard_Line\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamaica%E2%80%93179th_Street_(IND_Queens_Boulevard_Line))

Option 2: Free walking transfers

The E and 7 trains are both already at capacity when they reach Court Square. Enabling additional free transfers will provide displaced L train riders with needed transit options. MTA policy is that Metrocard walking transfers are used “only to mitigate changes in service.” The L train shutdown fits this context.

Court Square to Queens Plaza



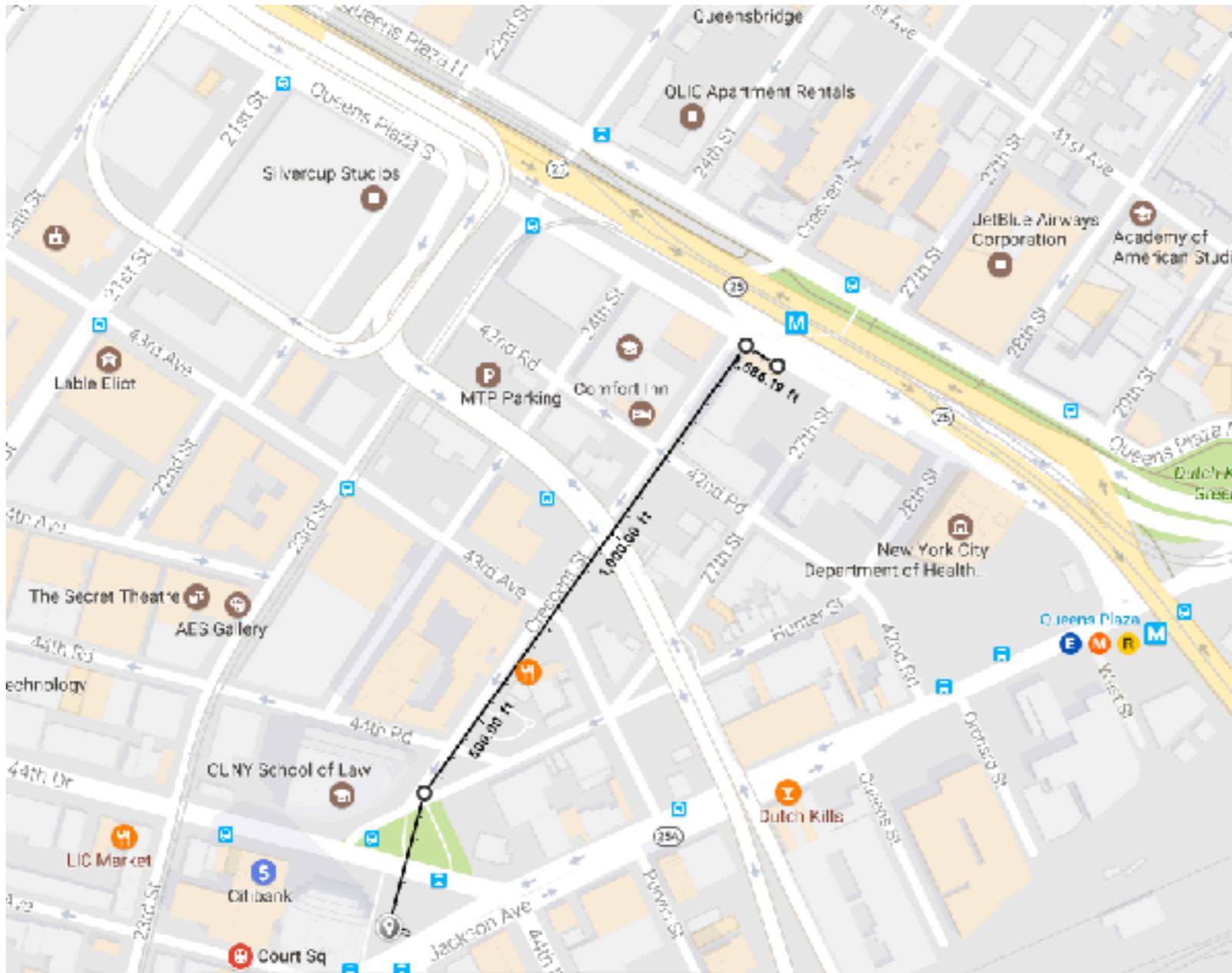
Distance: 1515 feet

Historical Context: Connection was not necessary because the G previously extended past Queens Plaza, to 71st Continental Avenue.

The G was cut back from 71st Street Continental Avenue to Court Square during daytime hours in 2001, and later permanently cut back to Court Square after budget cuts.

Use Case: Enables G riders to access the R train, and avoid crowded Court Square station, assuming the G cannot be extended further into Queens.

Court Square to Queensboro Plaza



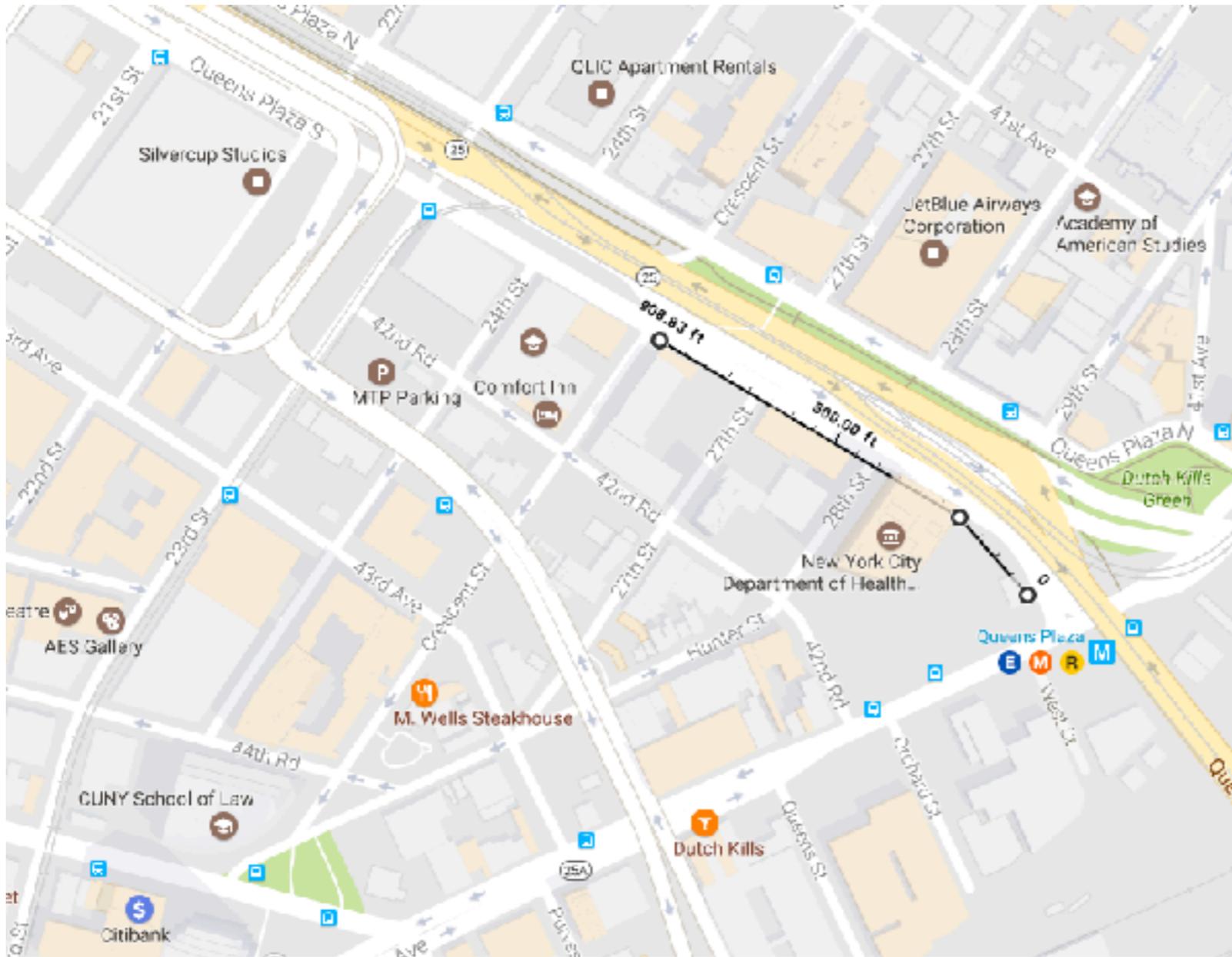
Distance: 1585 feet

Historical Context: Connection was not necessary because the G extended past Queens Plaza to 71st Continental Avenue.

Use Case: Provides G riders with access to the N/W without adding a secondary transfer via the 7 (one stop from Court Square to Queens Plaza).

Solution: Enables G riders to access the N and W trains and avoid crowded Court Square station, assuming the G cannot be extended further into Queens.

Queens Plaza **E** **M** **R** to Queensboro Plaza **7** **7** **N** **W**



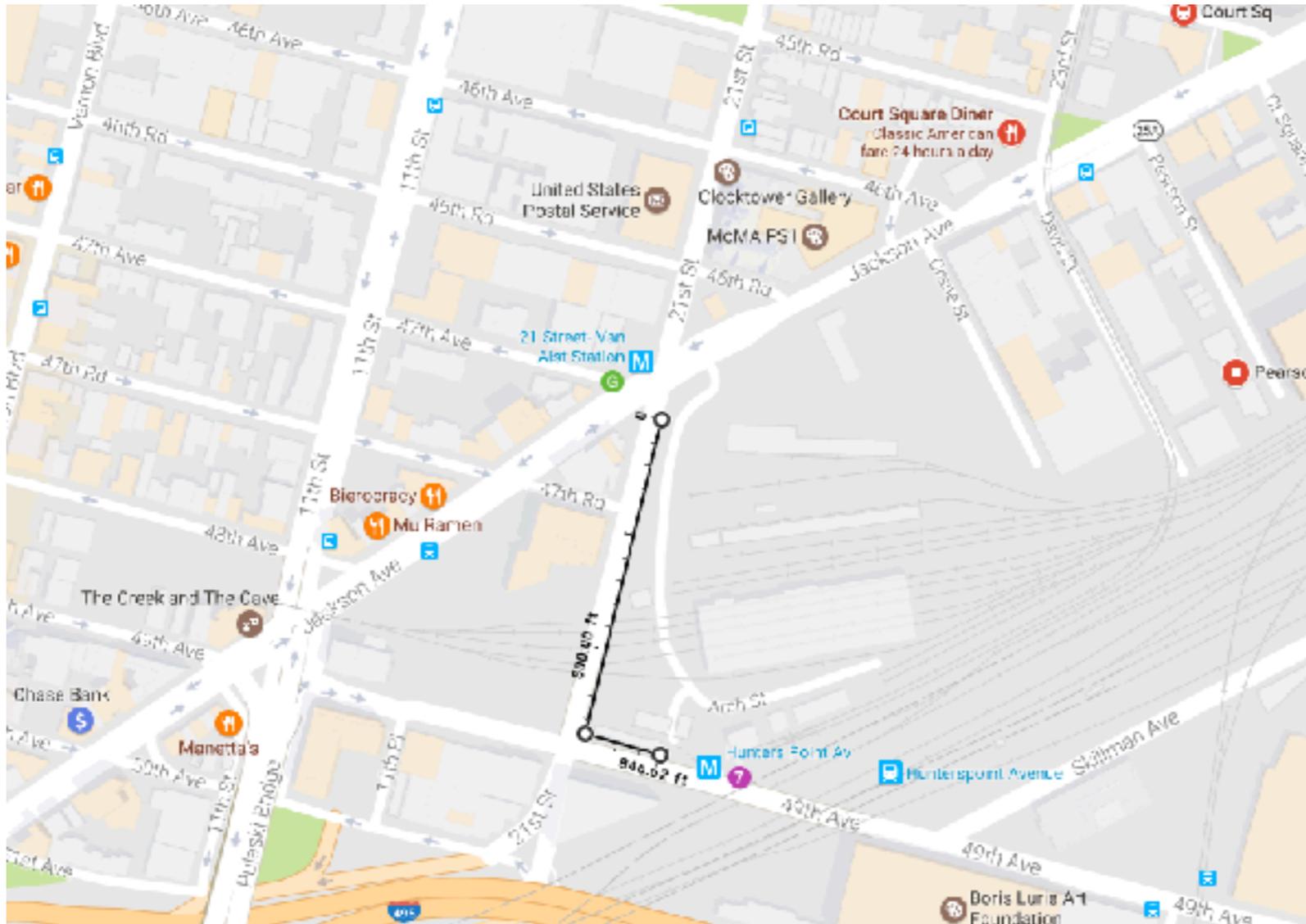
Distance: 900 feet

Historic Context: Free connection was never built here because these routes were previously owned by separate companies (IRT, BMT, IND).

Use Case: If the G were extended to Queens Plaza, it would enable same-station transfers to the E, M, and R trains. It would also enable 7, N, and W riders free transfer to E, M, and R trains, and vice-versa.

A side benefit would be for re-routing passengers during 7 train service disruptions.

21st St. to Hunterspoint Ave.



Distance: 840 feet

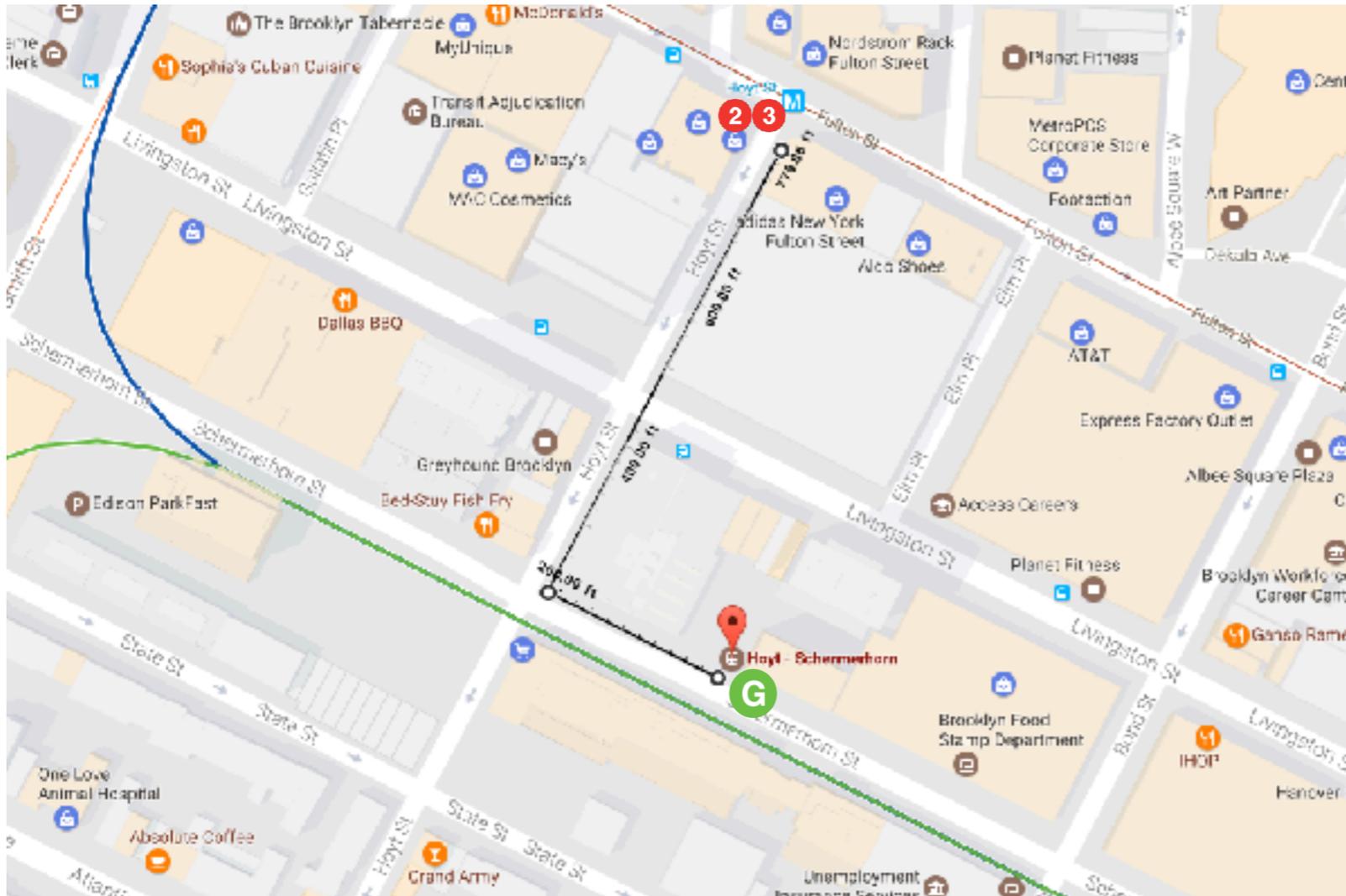
Historic Context: Free connection was never built because these routes were previously owned by separate companies (IND, IRT). The nearby Court Square transfer was created in 1990.

Use Case: Enables G train riders to avoid crowded Court Square station.

Option 3: Additional Brooklyn walking transfers

According to the 2013 G line review, additional transfers in downtown Brooklyn are the most requested new transfer options for this route. This report focuses on a Fulton Street to Atlantic Terminal transfer, ignoring two nearby and potentially more viable options. These options are of comparable distance to existing and planned transfers.

Hoyt-Schermerhorn to Hoyt St.

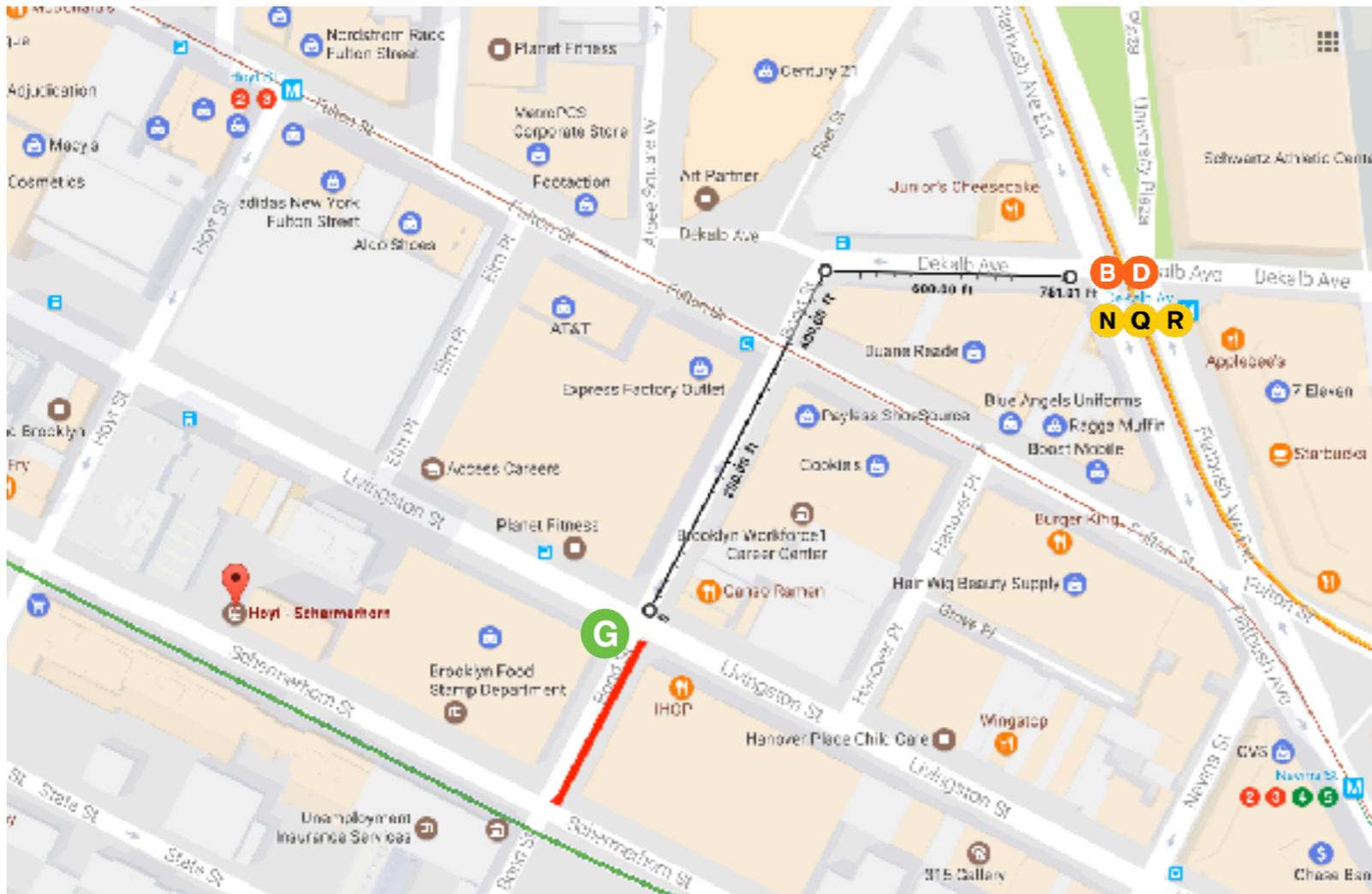


Distance: 775 feet

Historic Context: Free connection was never built because these routes were previously owned by separate companies (IND, IRT).

Use Case: Reduces crowding at Hoyt-Schermerhorn. Enables G and L riders additional free transfers in downtown Brooklyn.

Hoyt-Schermerhorn **G** to Dekalb Ave. **B D N Q R**



Distance: 750+ feet

Historic Context: Free connection was never built here because these routes were previously owned by separate companies (BMT, IND).

Use Case: Enables G and L riders additional free transfer options in downtown Brooklyn.

A free transfer in this neighborhood is one of the most requested free transfers in the city.

Note: May require reopening of closed Schermerhorn-Livingston St. passageway.

Option 4: New bus options

Additional bus routes can be created to provide Ridgewood and Bushwick residents with a direct route to midtown. This will significantly reduce transit time and decrease the need for transfers, while reducing dangerous crowding at Court Square and other transfer points.

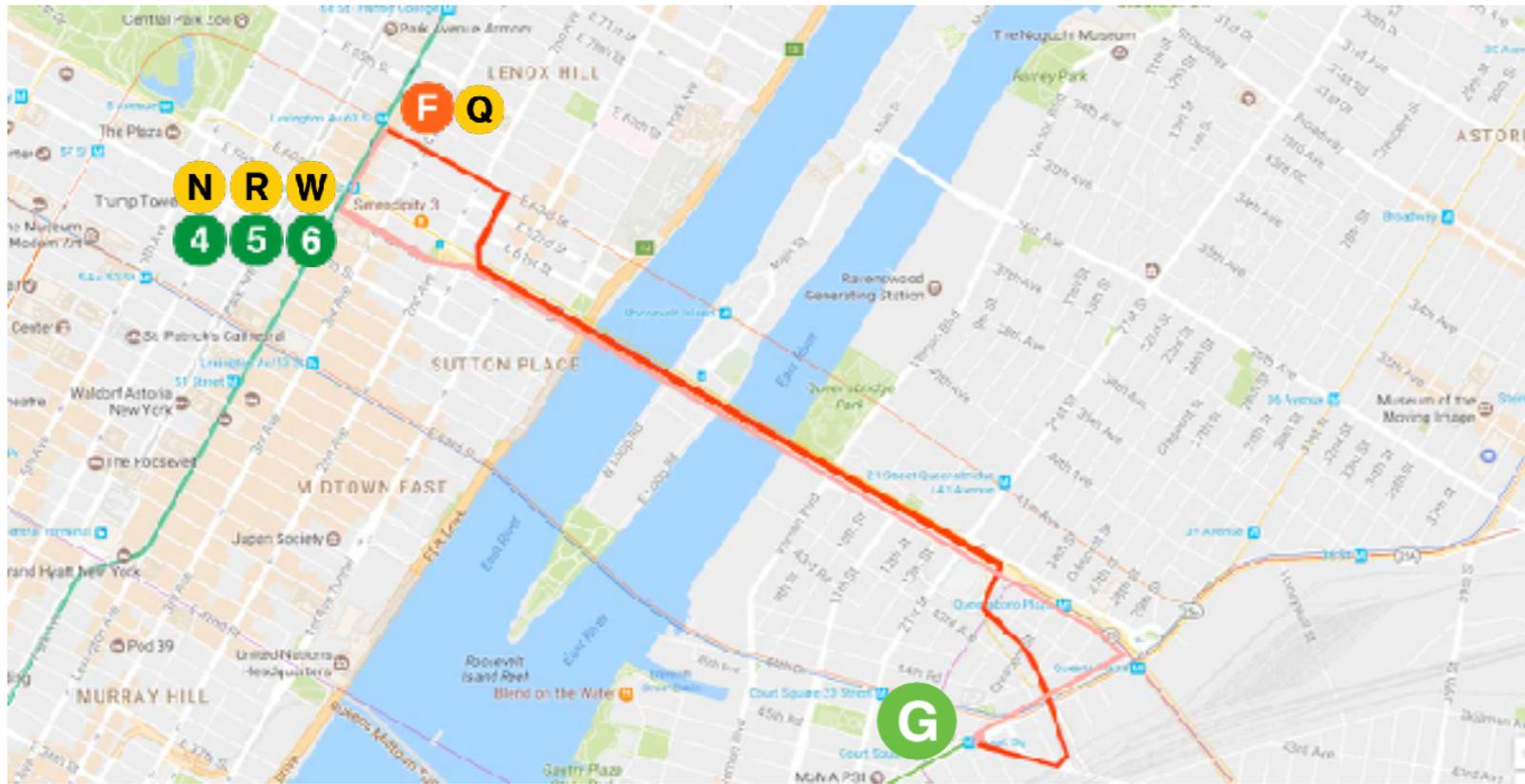
M34 bus extension to 21st St. connection to



Summary: Extend a version of the M34 bus through the Queens Midtown Tunnel to connect G and L riders in L.I.C.

Use Case: Allows G riders to avoid Court Square station crowding, direct connection to central Manhattan and all Manhattan subway routes.

Shuttle bus from Court Square to 63rd St. / Lexington Ave.



Summary: New shuttle bus from L.I.C. to Manhattan.

Use Case: Allows G and L riders to avoid crowded Court Square station crowding, access to F, Q, and 6 lines.

Solution: Shuttle bus operating between Court Square and Upper East Side via the Queensboro Bridge (upper roadway to Manhattan, lower roadway to Queens).

Q39X - regular fare express bus to 34th St. Manhattan



Summary: Create a modified Q39 bus routing which directly connects to Manhattan via the L.I.E. and Queens Midtown Tunnel. This route would follow the existing Q39 route through Ridgewood before diverting onto the L.I.E. This route could also be modified at the south end to connect with the L at Myrtle Avenue or Halsey Streets.

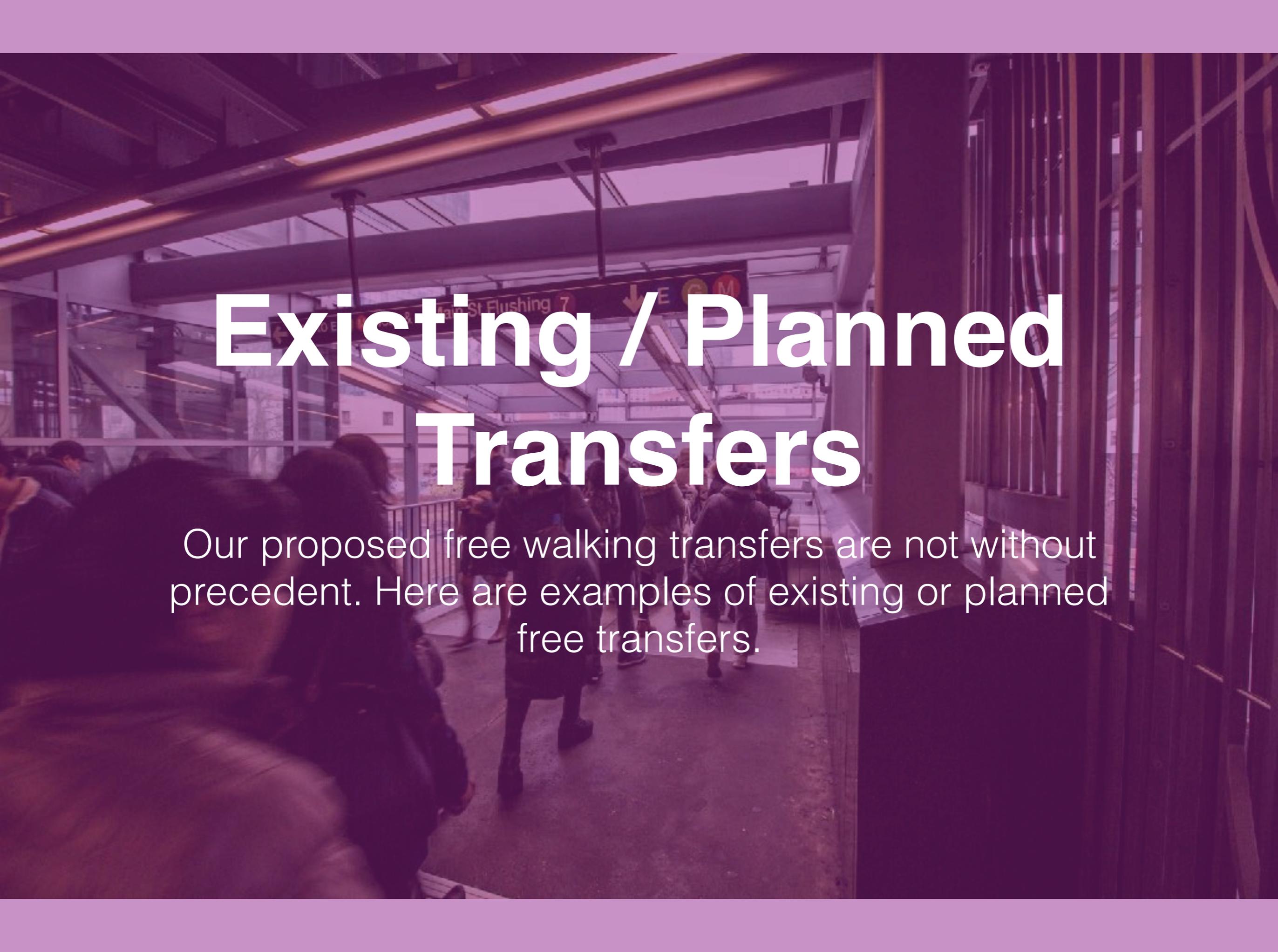
Use Case: Gives L and M riders in direct access to Midtown via 34th Street.

Q67X - regular fare express bus to 34th St. Manhattan



Summary: Create a Modified Q67 bus routing which directly connects to Manhattan via the L.I.E. and Queens Midtown Tunnel. This route would follow the existing Q67 route through Middle Village before diverting onto the L.I.E.

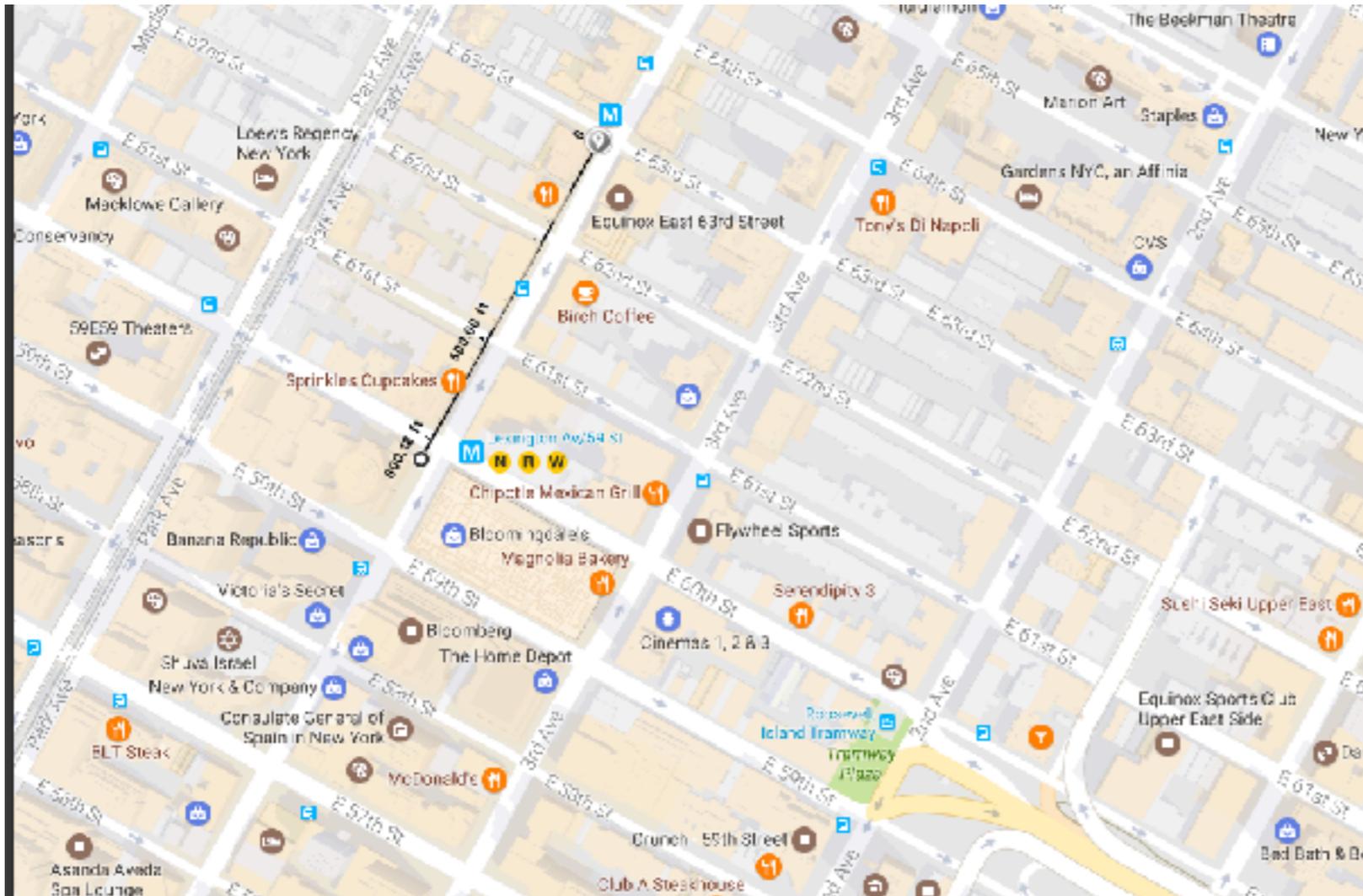
Use Case: Gives L and M riders in direct access to Midtown via 34th Street.



Existing / Planned Transfers

Our proposed free walking transfers are not without precedent. Here are examples of existing or planned free transfers.

59th St. / Lexington Ave. **N R W** to 63rd St. / Lexington Ave. **F Q**



Distance: 790 feet

Open Date: December 16, 2001

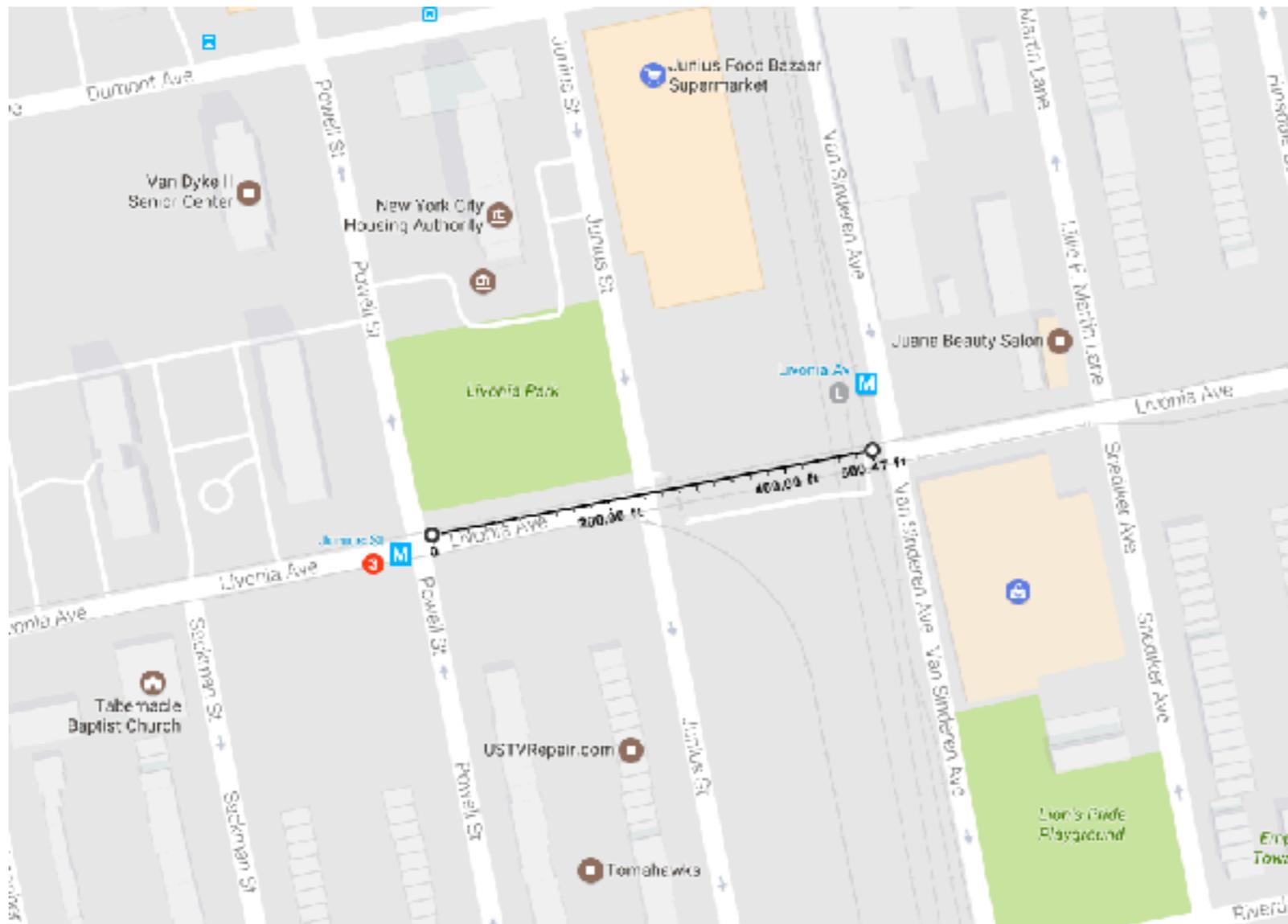
Historical Context: Free transfer for F train riders who previously had a free connection to the 6 at 53rd/Lexington (before F was rerouted).

Use Case: Enables F riders access to the 6, as well as N/R/W routes.

Sources:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lexington_Avenue%E2%80%9363rd_Street_\(63rd_Street_Lines\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lexington_Avenue%E2%80%9363rd_Street_(63rd_Street_Lines))

Livonia Ave. Junius St. connection in Brownsville



Distance: Approximately 500 feet

Open Date: 2019

Historical Context: Free connection was never built here because these routes were previously owned by separate companies (IRT, BMT). Free transfer only being put into place now due to Canarsie Tube (L) shutdown.

Use Case: Enables L riders access to the 3 and vice versa.

Sources:

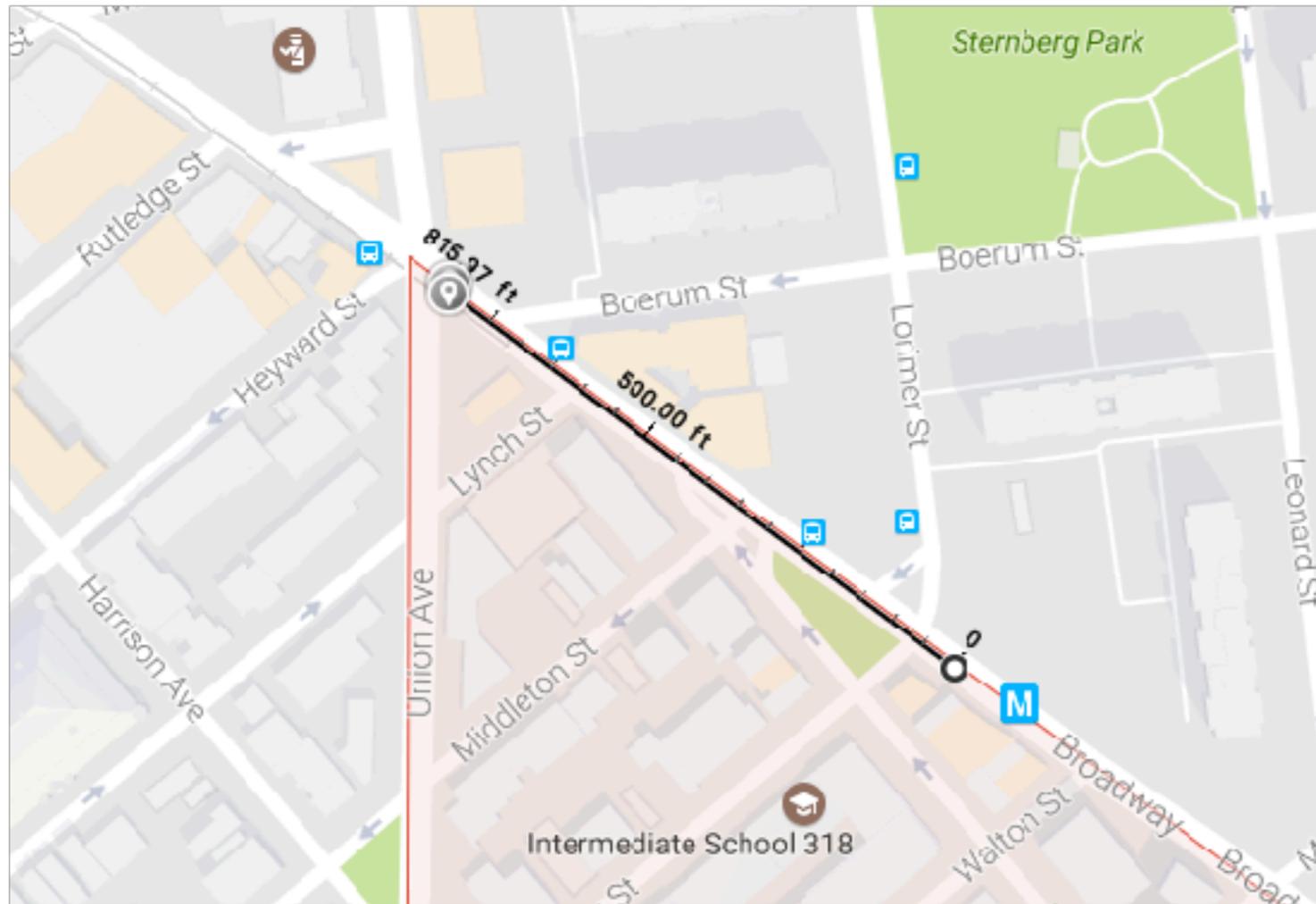
<http://www.brooklyndaily.com/stories/2016/24/mm-brownsville-l-train-free-transfer-2016-06-10-bk.html>

<http://secondavenuesagas.com/2015/11/02/why-the-livonia-junius-transfer-matters/>

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/brooklyn/brooklyn-pol-transfer-east-new-york-subway-stations-article-1.2283534>

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/brooklyn/eric-adams-rally-transfer-no-3-trains-article-1.2527571>

Broadway **G** to Lorimer St. **J** **M**



Distance: 815 feet

Prior Use: Free transfer offered during 1999 Williamsburg Bridge repair work.

Historical Context: Free connection was never built here because these routes were previously owned by separate companies (BMT, IND).

Use Case: Allows G riders access to the J & M trains.

Previous MTA positions against new walking transfers

Counterpoints

We will lose money on revenue from commuters who pay twice to transfer here.

It is unlikely that a significant volume of commuters are voluntarily paying twice to make indirect transfers. If this is happening, it represents an additional burden on commuters. Additional funding sources from the city and state should be provided to cover these costs.

We cannot reprogram the Metrocard terminals

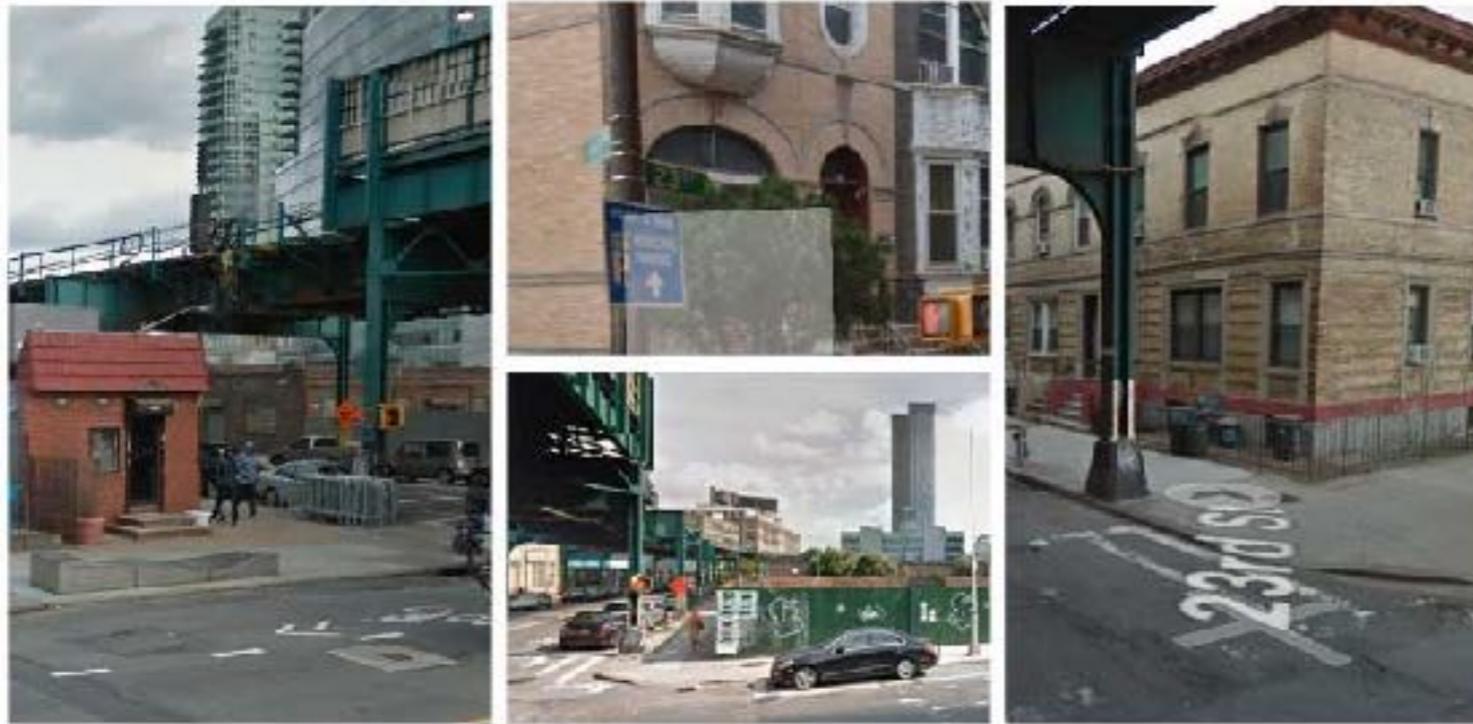
This statement has been proven invalid by the 1999 free transfer at Broadway on the G, and 2001 free transfer at 63rd St. on the F. Updating programming code is inexpensive and will provide L train riders with significant new options.

Conclusion: There is no better time than now to institute free transfers. The Metrocard reprogramming costs are negligible when compared to the cost of commuters being forced to use overcrowded, dangerous existing transfer points.

Addendum: Court Square Station Improvements

Forthcoming real estate development around Court Square could be leveraged for improved transfer points.

Direct **7** to **E** **M** transfer with street exits possible



Presently, all four corners at the intersection of 23rd Street and 44th Drive (at the north end of the 7 platform) are or will be real estate development sites (existing homes to be demolished). This intersection is directly over the E and M platforms and would make for a new ideal direct transfer point between the 7, E, and M platforms with additional street exits.

With 22,000 new people moving to L.I.C. by 2019, this new connection and set of entrances would be ideal for passenger flow and crowd calming.

Thank You.

www.accessqueens.org