

A Tired Brooklyn Transit Hub Is Finally Getting Attention¹

New York City officials aim to transform Broadway Junction from a pass-through to a destination stop with offices, stores, restaurants and other amenities.

Written by WINNIE HU; Photographs by HILARY SWIFT, NOV. 26, 2017

Comments by Phillip W. Weiss

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/26/nyregion/a-tired-brooklyn-transit-hub-finally-getting-attention.html>

The Winnie Hu article ostensibly is about the city giving attention to upgrading the Broadway Junction train station located in East New York, one of the most run down and economically depressed sections of the city. According to the article, the Broadway Junction station is the third busiest station in city. It serves as a transfer hub for six train lines, the A, C, J, Z, M and L. According to the article, the aim of city officials "is to turn the tired station and the surrounding area into a bustling economic center for a swath of Brooklyn that has long struggled with unemployment, poverty and crime." A visit to the Broadway Junction station will confirm the accuracy of the article's description of the station as "tired." The article goes on to report that "The focus on Broadway Junction comes as more people are living in the city than ever before, and once industrial areas have attracted newcomers displaced by rising rents in Manhattan and elsewhere."

According to the article, "In East New York, city officials have rezoned more than 200 blocks for affordable housing and committed more than \$267 million to improve parks and infrastructure and to build a public school. In addition, they have invested over \$16 million in an existing industrial zone in East New York to attract more companies and jobs. They are also planning a new office complex in the area, which will be anchored by the city's Human Resources Administration."

The article makes no mention of the racial composition of the so-called "newcomers."

Based upon this report, it can be reasonably surmised that developers are now closely examining East New York as the next area for massive gentrification. It is highly unlikely that the city of New York would assign even a low priority to upgrading a "tired" facility like the Broadway Junction station, or improve parks and infrastructure and build a public school in the area, without impetus from developers for whom the upgrading of the station and other infrastructure is essential to make the neighborhood more attractive to so-called "newcomers." But what is so pathetic is that while there is almost an unlimited amount of private capital available to construct massive buildings for the wealthiest (and this is not meant to begrudge anyone who happens to be wealthy – good for them!), public facilities, such as mass transit, bridges, roads, parks, and other structures are allowed to deteriorate. It is only when "newcomers" are moving into a depressed area, that the area finally attracts capital, for a price. Marx would explain that capital goes to that place where it can make the most profit as quickly as possible. 200 blocks is equivalent to one-half square mile or 320 acres of real estate.² That is a lot of land slated for rezoning. This can only mean a bonanza for the financial sector which has money to loan and a half-square mile of Brooklyn in which to invest.

Photographs of the Broadway Junction station are posted online at

<https://youtu.be/4bhOwJQadio>

² 320 acres is enough land to build 13 Yankee Stadiums with room to spare.

