



Old Astoria Neighborhood Association (OANA)  
www.OANA-NY.org

**February 10, 2020**

#### Queens Bus Redesign Draft Plan and the Threatened Q103 Route Cancellation

Having studied the draft plan for the MTA's Queens Bus Redesign, OANA has concerns that the proposed plan, eliminating entirely the current Q103 bus service, would negatively affect access to the Astoria/Long Island City waterfront along Vernon Boulevard. We are aware that the proposal being presented is a draft that will be revised via the process of community feedback currently being carried out. However, if stakeholders and local residents remain silent, the proposed cancellation of the Q103 bus route will go ahead as shown in the draft plan currently online.

#### Vernon Boulevard in Context

We are fortunate in Astoria and Long Island City to have the East River waterfront that not only provides residents and visitors with beautiful views but is home to parks and world-class cultural institutions. New residential housing has been built or is in the planning stage on and around Vernon Boulevard, which abuts the Astoria waterfront. Businesses are also being attracted to the waterfront. The proposed cancellation of the Q103 bus, which currently runs north/south along Vernon Boulevard, will affect access for users of parks, cultural institutions, and businesses as well as local residents.

#### Waterfront Attractions Connected by the Q103

[The Noguchi Museum](#) showcases the work of Isamu Noguchi, one of the leading sculptors and designers of the 20th century. The Museum also presents exhibitions of works by other artists and year-round performances, workshops and art programming for families. [Socrates Sculpture Park](#) is a designated New York City public park and cultural anchor in Queens, attracting c. 200,000 visitors annually, with attendance especially heavy on the weekends and during its many free events. [The Welling Court Mural Project](#) is a unique multi-block street art installation of more than 140 murals by artists from New York and around the world, described by NY1 as "[a new Mecca for street art.](#)" (Socrates Sculpture Park, The Noguchi Museum and the Welling Court Mural Project all support OANA's position on the proposed elimination of the Q103). In addition to Socrates Sculpture Park, Rainey Park and Queensbridge Park are also easily accessible via the Q103 bus route, and are heavily used by the local communities.

#### The Astoria Ferry Landing

The installation of the NYC Astoria Ferry landing at Halletts Cove in August 2017 provides easy access to Vernon Boulevard from the other boroughs, allowing visitors from other parts of the city as well as tourists to enjoy the attractions of our neighborhood. Since the Astoria Ferry landing opened,



Old Astoria Neighborhood Association (OANA)  
[www.OANA-NY.org](http://www.OANA-NY.org)

attendance at Astoria's waterfront cultural sites has doubled. For Astoria residents, the Q103 bus currently connects them to the ferry where they can quickly commute to Midtown and Wall Street.

#### A Waterfront Arts District

In addition to our renowned cultural institutions, our district houses many painters, sculptors, muralists, street artists and more. Together they make up the proposed [Astoria Waterfront Arts District \(AWAD\)](#), which is envisaged as New York City's next iconic artistic and cultural phenomenon.

#### The Proposed Alternative to the Q103

Under the current Queens Bus Redesign Draft Plan, the Q103 will be replaced by the [QT69](#), operating between Jackson Heights/82 St-Astoria Blvd and Hunters Point South/54 Ave. The closest bus service will be on 21<sup>st</sup> St, approximately 10/15 minutes' walk from the current route of the Q103 on Vernon Blvd.

#### Accessibility Concerns

Those who use assistive devices or have other accessibility concerns will find the cancelation of the Q103 bus route a genuine hardship, cutting off a service that currently opens up the entire waterfront for them. At a time when the MTA is finally improving accessibility of Astoria's N/W subway stations, the cancelation of the Q103 service would be a move in the opposite direction.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, the Astoria/LIC waterfront is a prime destination for those visiting our parks and cultural attractions and is increasingly attracting new business and residential housing units. OANA asks that the MTA reconsider the current proposed cancellation of bus service on Vernon Boulevard. We urge local residents, visitors and anyone who would be affected by the change to share their [feedback with the MTA here](#).

