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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 28, 2018

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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES CONSTRUCTION OF LOWER
EAST SIDE NYC FERRY DOCK, OPENING SUMMER 2018**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you, Trever, so much. I really – I’ve seen Trever in action and he is really, really active in the community and has contributed so much to this community. Let’s give Trever another round of applause and thank him.

[Applause]

Also a special thanks to a man who made all this happen and runs it every day, the President of the Economic Development Corporation, James Patchett. Thank you so much, James.

[Applause]

So, Trever just made such an important point. Here’s a community in the Lower East Side that for a long time has not had enough ways to get around. You can see over here affordable housing for thousands and thousands of people. Vladeck Houses – we have a big public housing development over here. Vladeck Houses – and we have a lot of other affordable housing, but this neighborhood has been isolated in many ways.

And one of the central ideas of NYC Ferry was to open up opportunity, to connect people to jobs, to connect people to education, to give them a chance to get around their own city in ways they just don’t have right now.

And this is a great example of what we’re doing here on the Lower East Side. By the way, the beauty of NYC Ferry is that we can put this online very, very quickly. This was just an idea a couple of years ago and now it’s spreading all over the city. And James Patchett reminded me as we were coming in that right across the way, the Brooklyn Navy Yard is where the home port for NYC Ferry will be. That’s where all the repairs will be made, all the upkeep, and that will be even more jobs for New Yorkers, and also another great example of bringing back the Navy Yard to some of its original purpose, making this a great maritime city.

So, when we thought about NYC Ferry it was a real simple set of things that set it in motion. Our streets are too congested. Our highways are too congested. Our subways are too crowded. We needed more alternatives. The city is growing. This is a city that will be 8.6 million people by the end of this year. That’s the City Planning Department estimate.

We've got to do something different if we're going to help people get around this city. And where could we turn? Right here to the water. And as you can see, it's not crowded, it's not congested. One of the things I love about our rivers and our harbor, there are no traffic lights, there are no stop signs, there are no traffic jams.

And it's a chance to take advantage of this beautiful asset in this city. And so far, you've heard from people who have taken NYC Ferry – it's been a huge hit, people love it. I want to quote James Patchett. James, one of your most memorable quotes – someone said, one of the journalists asked why was it so popular and he said, you get to be on the water, you can go to all sort of places, it's the same price as a subway fare, and they serve beer.

[Laughter]

So, a great innovation in mass transit. But here's the bottom line, there are so many reasons to like NYC Ferry but again it comes back to the most essential reason. It's to help us create a fairer city.

Our goal for the second term of the administration is to make New York City the fairest big city in America, to make sure that people can live a good life here no matter how much money they make, to make sure there's opportunity that's spread around fairly.

And you can't get opportunity in the modern world if there isn't mass transit. And we have to do a better job and we have to do new and different things and this is an example of it. And here in the Lower East Side is a place that needed it.

So, when you look at the map here of NYC Ferry as it continues to expand, it has many stops but there's one ultimate destination – a fairer city, a city that works better for all New Yorkers.

Now, I have to tell you when we started it was a dream, it was an idea. We really didn't know how people would react. We had projections but it's a very different thing to go from the drawing board to real life. And what happened was a real pleasant surprise. People came in droves.

I am reminded of the line from Field of Dreams – if you build it they will come. So, right now based on last year's numbers we had almost three million riders on NYC Ferry. That was about 800,000 more than was originally projected. That's a really good start.

And we focused on places that had been historically underserved. The Rockaways are a great example and everyone knows, who's covered that, how important it's been to the people of the Rockaways to finally have that permanent ferry service.

Red Hook, Brooklyn – a place that was in many ways isolated, now, so much more connected to the city.

Astoria – and if you've seen where the landing is in Astoria, it's right next to Astoria Houses. Just like here where people would have to go 15 minutes or more just to get to the nearest subway, at Astoria Houses they walk right outside and the ferry is there.

For folks here, they're going to be able to walk right over here and get on a ferry and that's going to cut down their travel time. So, we're really excited about what that means. This NYC Ferry service is coming to the Lower East Side this summer. The work is being done now to have everything ready to build the pier and have everything ready for the ferries to begin.

There'll be two new docks along the East Side here and that is the next big development in the growing system of routes you see here.

We think this new line will serve almost one million New Yorkers a year as people really get connected to it and start using it. We think it's going to have a tremendous ridership. As I said, if you're here or you're in the housing right around us, 15 minute or more walk to the nearest subway. But if you get on a ferry right here, that's about the same amount of time it would take you to be in Midtown on the ferry. So, it's really going to open up options.

If you take it the other way, you go down to Wall Street, you connect to all the other ferry lines.

People in this city understand that if you don't have a way to get around and if everything that you're trying to do takes too much time it just robs you of opportunity, and it certainly robs you of the time you need to spend with your family and take care of everything else in life.

So, we want to constantly make it easier and faster for New Yorkers to get around.

So, that's what's going to happen here. And then I want to preview the next big jump which I'm really excited about will be ferry service for the South Bronx in Soundview. You can see it up at the top of the map there. We'll be having more to say on the exact date but that will also be later on in the summer this year and there's a lot of excitement in the Bronx that that neighborhood, also historically isolated, is going to have this great new option.

So, this is about preparing this city for a new reality, a city that is growing in population but also has to grow in fairness and opportunity in all five boroughs, not just in this one, but in all five boroughs. That's what NYC Ferry is all about.

I just want to say a few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

– sounds the same in Spanish, doesn't it?

[Laughter]

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

And with that I want to turn to someone who believes fundamentally in creating a more fair and just city, and she's been a tremendous community activist here in the Lower East Side. She's done great work on affordable housing and so many other issues of quality-of-life in this community.

And I was very, very happy when the people of this community chose her to represent them in the City Council – Council Member Carlina Rivera.

[Applause]

[...]

Thank you so much, Carlina. And look, I want to say to everyone, Carlina made a really important point that there are a lot of New Yorkers for whom it's absolutely crucial to make sure the transportation available to them is also accessible, New Yorkers with disabilities and a lot of our seniors as well. And this is a city with more and more senior citizens all the time.

So this is another important point about NYC Ferry that all of the boats are fully accessible, all the docks. And it's something that really means for a lot of people – it's going to open up a lot of ways of getting around that we know are not available enough.

We know a lot of our subways, sadly, are not truly accessible for example. NYC Ferry universally is. So, that's going to be something very important to many, many New Yorkers.

Carlina, thank you for your leadership. This is something we want to make sure will be a really powerful contribution to this community. Now, we've got a few months to spread the word and if it's like what we've seen in all the other boroughs and all the other neighborhoods – and I said, if you build it they will come – when you come back here for the day the ferry service opens, you're going to see a lot of people who are really going to enjoy this wonderful new option.

Thank you very much, everybody.

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