



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES NYC FERRY NOW PLANNING FOR 9 MILLION ANNUAL RIDERS, GROWING TO MEET DEMAND

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, everybody, you heard about a genuine New York City success story right there. Let's give another hand to Captain Connie.

[Applause]

And I'm going to state the obvious for all the girls and young women who aspire to occupations that have been deprived – that they've been deprived of, that they've been kept out of, here's another great example of a trailblazer that says, yes you can. *Si se puede*.

Congratulations, Captain Connie.

[Applause]

I want to thank everyone who's here with us, joining in this success. So many people have been a big part of this success, of NYC Ferry. A special thank you to Cameron Clark, Vice President and General Manager of Hornblower. Let's thank everyone at Hornblower for their good work.

[Applause]

Well, I want to put today's announcement in perspective and I want to speak to all of the straphangers and all of the drivers who suffer in this city every day who are on the clogged highways, who are stuck in traffic, who are in a subway that's overcrowded, on a platform where they can barely have enough space waiting for a train – all those New Yorkers every day are struggling, they need new solutions. They need new options. And they feel, I think a lot of them, the same way I felt. How are we not taking full advantage of all that's around us? Our waterways

–

This is the key to a future of New Yorkers being able to get around more easily and being able to have the kind of choices that they deserve for the thing that decides so much of your life, getting from point-A to point-B.

If you don't have access to transportation that works, you don't have access to education, you don't have access to jobs, you certainly don't have the quality of life you deserve.

So, all the folks that are frustrated with their commute each day, here's a new option that's getting stronger all the time, NYC Ferry. And like so many ideas, this started as a dream. We honestly didn't know how it would work out until we tried it.

We all know the famous phrase, if you build it they will come. Well, they have come and they have come and they have come in numbers much greater than we ever could have imagined. People have really taken to NYC Ferry.

And this has a lot to say about what we can do going forward to make this a better city. Today we want to give you an update that honestly surprises all of us. We had no projection for anything like this but the response to NYC Ferry has been overwhelming.

So we thought the most we could possibly see with the existing lines was about 4.5 million riders a year. Now we have a new projection. In just the next few years, that number will double to nine million riders a year – a big success.

Congratulations to all.

[Applause]

And when it comes to NYC Ferry, this makes me think of a simple phrase – we're going to need a bigger boat.

[Laughter]

So, that's exactly what we're here to talk about today – more boats, bigger boats so we can serve a lot more New Yorkers.

We have put in the new executive budget \$300 million in capital funding over the next few years that will allow us to do a number of things. It will allow us to immediately increase service this spring and summer because we saw what happened last summer. Demand was astronomical.

So, we're going to be able to increase service right away and cut wait time in the process. We're going to be doubling the size of our fleet and there's going to be a lot more of the bigger boats that will allow us to get a lot more people where they're going and reduce the wait, reduce the lines.

We also are going to be improving the piers and the docks so that people can get on and off the boats more easily.

All of this is needed because we have a success story here. And what we've seen is people in neighborhoods all over the city that were underserved, talked to people in the Rockaways, talked

to people in Astoria, talked to people in Red Hook, and here in Bay Ridge, places where they didn't have enough options that now are enjoying NYC Ferry.

It's a game-changer for them. So, this has been great so far. We're really looking forward to this summer when we reach a truly underserved neighborhood, Soundview in the Bronx. We think it's going to be crucial not only to helping residents of Soundview get around but also to opening up real economic opportunity in that community.

And for the East Side of Manhattan, particularly the Lower East Side, new options are coming as well.

So, you know the phrase that they say? You can never have too much of a good thing. Well, I disagree. We want to have a lot more of a good thing and that good thing is NYC Ferry.

We want it to reach more and more people. So, that's what we're investing in and the last thing I'll say in English is not only is this about people getting around more easily and having more and more New Yorkers not have to live a life of frustration in that traffic jam or on that crowded subway train, this is also about fairness, reaching a lot of communities that were underserved, getting a lot of people opportunity that didn't have it, and fairness because it's creating job opportunities for a lot of New Yorkers who deserve them.

So, when I think of NYC Ferry, I think of it as a very important part of our goal of making New York City the fairest big city in America.

A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

Now I want to bring forward one of the people who really deserves tremendous credit. He had to build this from scratch with all of his colleagues at EDC and make it work and now make it grow. My great pleasure to introduce the President of the Economic Development Corporation, James Patchett.

[Applause]

President and CEO James Patchett, Economic Development Cooperation: Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. This is a great day. I mean, it's a beautiful day for a ferry ride at least, right.

So, I want to thank the Mayor. I want to thank Captain Connie. It's a really inspirational story. When we heard it the first time and every time I hear it, I think it's pretty awesome and I'm thrilled that she's about to learn to pilot the Rockaway route which is a great next step in her career which is the most challenging route that we have on the system. Just a demonstration of her career trajectory –

And I want to thank the Council Members here to support this and all of the elected officials here from the area who have been huge supporters of the system, and really across the city. And I also, as the Mayor said, I really want to thank my team at EDC who have been fantastic throughout this process. I know it has been a wild ride, literally, and you guys have done an amazing job pulling this together.

So, I just want to add a few more details to what the Mayor identified. So there are two tracks here. What we're planning for this summer and the big picture for the future of the ferry system.

So, first I want to talk about this summer. So, after last summer's crazy ridership, we decided to add more vessels so we ordered three larger vessels, three 350-person boats which will start to come online this summer. So, all three of those 350-passenger vessels will be arriving over the course of the summer.

We're also reducing headways which means the time between ferries to an average of 25 to 35 minutes. When you reduce headways, it means more reliable service because people, if they miss one boat, they can get on another vessel more quickly. It also means that there's more overall service because vessels are coming more frequently.

We're also launching a new express service from Pier 11 to the Rockaways. So that is in addition to the service, we're also adding additional capacity at the Brooklyn Army Terminal.

So that will help us double capacity on the Rockaway route and it will also shorten rush hour trips for our Rockaway passengers, and also on the beautiful days when everyone is going to the beach.

So, Hornblower is also adding staff to places like Pier 11 and Pier 6 in Brooklyn which are our two busiest piers. So, that will help with the line queuing and all the passengers who are always asking questions just wanting to understand exactly what's happening.

And as everyone knows, later in the summer, we'll be launching two new routes, the Soundview route and the Lower East route, which the Mayor referenced.

I do want to set expectations though. On a really crazy beautiful day in the summer when it seems like everyone in the city wants to go to the beach at the exact same time, there's still going to be lines but we are going to be serving a lot more people and we're going to be getting them where they want to go faster.

So, now to talk about the big picture and the future of the system. So we based our initial ridership projections on a 2013 study that EDC concluded. And as the Mayor said we projected about four-and-a-half million – about 4.6 million riders a year.

We've obviously blown those projections out of the water. So that means we need to upsize the fleet in order to serve what is expected to be essentially double the level of ridership we ever projected. So we're doing three key things.

We're essentially doubling the size of the capacity that we can serve. We're exceeding – actually more than doubling the capacity of the service. The exact number of vessels we'll purchase is a little bit up in the air because it will depend on the exact mix of a 150-person vessels versus 350-person vessels.

We're still in negotiations with the shipyards so we don't want to show our hand too much but the bottom line is we're going to be more than doubling the capacity of the city and we're going to be adding a lot more vessels including those larger vessels to serve more passengers during busy times.

We're also going to add more capacity to Pier 11 and the 34th Street Hub. So those are two locations where physical infrastructure, where the vessels come in is actually limiting the number we can have at any given time. So, EDC will be completing capital construction work at those ferry landings so we can bring more vessels in at one time which is one of the biggest constraints on the capacity of the system.

And we're going to need a second home port. We're bringing in more vessels. We need more places to keep those vessels and we're going to make sure that home port is right in New York City so we also add more New York City jobs.

So, it's a lot of work but we believe our passengers deserve it. They love riding the system and we want to provide more opportunities for New Yorkers to ride it. So this means thousands more New Yorkers every day, long-time residents of places like Astoria houses and Red Hook Houses and newcomers to neighborhoods like DUMBO and Williamsburg will have better access to jobs, schools, recreation, and all the opportunity this city has to offer.

So with that thank you and – turn it back to the Mayor.

Mayor: Thank you, James. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

So, we have been really encouraged strongly in this work by a number of members of the City Council. And some of them have been advocates for years and years for this kind of vision. Justin Brannan is one of them and he is never shy. Justin, I've never seen you have a shy moment. You are a strong voice for more and better transportation options for the people of Bay Ridge and all the communities you represent. And your predecessor, Vinny Gentile, before you, was one of the leading voices for expanded ferry service.

So, as I introduce you I want to congratulate you too because your hard work actually paid off. Council Member Justin Brannan.

[Applause]

[...]

Mayor: I resent Justin Brennan for coming up with a better sound bite than we thought of – the blue highway, I am impressed – the blue highway. Before we take questions on this topic, and then we're going to go to other topics after. Let me just thank the folks who make this system work. You see them all hear in their NYC Ferry regalia. All of you are the real heroes because you make this thing run. So let's thank all of you.

[Applause]

Alright, let's take questions on this. Questions on ferries, yes?

Question: [Inaudible] I know you said the exact number [inaudible] can you just give us [inaudible]?

President Patchett: Sure, thank you. So, we currently have 16 vessels in the harbor. We had an original order of 20 vessels, so we are expecting four additional vessels as a part of that original order. They were all originally expected to be 150 person vessels. While we were in the process of receiving the additional vessels for this year we chose to make three of those 350 person vessels. So that's the baseline fleet that you're dealing with; 20 vessels, 17 of which will be 150's, three of which would 350 person vessels. Some of the funding for this, it's included in this funding is to pay for the difference in the cost between those 150 person vessels in the 350 person vessels which will be coming later this summer.

Question: [Inaudible]

President Patchett: That was my baseline. So now I am talk about the future, so the future is – the exact number, I think roughly more than doubled in a capacity at any given time right now at the baseline system of twenty 150 person vessels you could serve about 3,000 people. So we're trying to be able to serve more than 6,000 people in a given hour based on the new order. It might actually be more than that. Where, you know it depends exactly how far our money goes. But our goal is to be able to more than double our capacity at any given time based on our projections. And again the exact number of vessels will depend on the 150 versus 350 negotiation.

Question: [Inaudible]

President Patchett: Sure, we still believe we're spending as our original projection said about \$6.60 subsidy per rider. Based on this expansion we're actually – we're hoping to be right in line with that. But again that still a little bit dependent on the exact schedule and the types of vessels we've procured but we have generally – that's consistent with other types of transit like long haul bus service and Long Island Rail Road, roughly the cost of subsidy for those types of service.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Obviously – excellent question and it is our goal. Obviously we’ve had other fish to fry with the MTA. So we’ve been focusing on some other matters. But the ultimate goal I think the first focus now is getting these last lines up and running for the summer and we already engaged the MTA in a dialogue to see if we can get that combination of rides put together because it would be great for people. So we’re not there yet. It is our goal, it’s something we’re going to work on this year. Yeah?

Question: Mr. Mayor, [inaudible] decision to increase your funding for NYC Ferry impacted other transit decisions, obviously the Citi Bike is not subsidized by the city as many more riders did that. Does this decision factor into whether or not you would subsidize a five borough city-wide expansion?

Mayor: It’s a great question. I would argue that each element of our mass transit planning has to be seen individually. I felt very strongly that the Citi Bike model could work without subsidy and I’m supposed to be the steward of the tax payer’s money. And if it could keep achieving its goals without it, of course that was the optimum reality and I still believe that. When it came to for example select bus service we invest a lot in select bus service, we do that jointly with the MTA, that’s been a success. You know we have 21 more lines coming, and that’s a real big piece of the equation. But when it comes to the ferry system, I look at it in two lights. One, all the people we’re serving right now and it’s been again a huge number and it’s growing rapidly but also what it could mean for the future. Unlike some of the other options, this is something we’re establishing that has tremendous long term possibility. And, you know when you think about the Staten Island Ferry as an example, which is different from NYC Ferry obviously. But the Staten Island Ferry is a single highest ridership levels of any ferry system in America. That had to be built up overtime but now look at what it has achieved. You know there is tremendous potential here. So from my point of view, we were not just doing this for today, we’re doing this for over the horizon, we’re doing this for the future too. So I value that differently because I saw tremendous potential, and I know it would not happen for example just through the private sector. I mean we’ve seen, just – your question is provocative, and actually leads to that other point that needs to be noted. Private sector was out there for quite a while with ferries, and some, you know some impact was seen. But nowhere near the potential, and we knew there had to be a public investment to actually achieve what was possible in one of the greatest coastal cities in the world. Yeah?

Question: [Inaudible] about ferries. I am just sort of curious why you don’t have more [inaudible] policy, [inaudible] –

Mayor: Wait, why we don’t have more what?

Question: None boat related [inaudible] – we keep having these ferry press conferences.

Mayor: Because it’s a brand new thing with tremendous potential that working really well and keeps having milestones that we want to tell people. We want people to know it’s there, so each time there is a new line for example, we want people to know about it. Go ahead, yeah?

Question: What – can you get a little more in to the calculus of where you’re deciding to put these launches, because it is generally where you have a friendly relationship with the local councilmember?

Mayor: No. That’s just not right. We announced – we’ve been literally going point by point around to different places in the ferry system. So I don’t see the pattern you’re talking about.

Question: Two questions –

Mayor: Although I think he’s a hell of a guy.

Question: [Inaudible] ferry service by 2023, [inaudible]

Mayor: Overwhelmingly capital dollars, right.

Question: And you talked to a councilmember about [inaudible] subway [inaudible]

Mayor: Nope, you can say it, but I’ll tell you why I disagree. We have to do both. And the people of New York City already pay the vast majority of the cost of subway service, between their fares, and taxes, and city government direct contributions to the MTA which are much greater than the states by the way, and indirect contributions like proving half a billion dollars in police services. So what I’d like to see a little more of is an actual accounting for who pays for the subway right now. If you look deeper, the people of New York City are paying for it in many different ways and we then went and did a major capital contribution that we did not have to do a few years, we did obviously at the behest of the legislature this new contribution. but the – that’s not the answer to the problems of the MTA. And I would like everyone to start having a serious conversation in this city about that fact, and the State. The answer is a long term funding source, a permanent funding source that would actually allow us to fix the whole God forsaken thing. And that is tens of billions of dollars. That’s not coming out of the City treasury.

That is going to happen, in my view, best option is a millionaire’s tax. It is the one that we saw from the Quinnipiac Poll in April, it is wildly popular. I think about 70 percent support for it. It is now – and for those who believe it wasn’t viable before I present you the reunification of the Democrats in the State Senate and four Republican retirements in the last two weeks in the State Senate. So I am feeling very strongly you’re going to have a very different State Senate – alright, stay away from that. A very different State Senate in November and a millionaire’s tax can be the solution here. It – there’s others on the table too obviously, but I think there’s been this misplaced focus. If we really want to fix the MTA long term let’s get a big, stable funding source to do it.

But the final part of the answer is if we just did that sure the trains would run better but they’d still be really, really crowded and there would still be a lot of underserved neighborhoods like Bay Ridge, Red Hook, the Rockaways, Soundview. We’ve got to do more than one thing to create a 21st century city with multiple mass transit options that are convenient and that work for people.

Follow up?

Question: Yes. Well [inaudible] talk about building ferries for the future –

Mayor: Right.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: It's always a question with any structural expenditure, do we believe it's sustainable. And my view is yes it is, because it is foundational to everything else. You know, a working economy requires good mass transit. And this is a city that – we do a lot better than many cities of mass transit, but we got to keep up. And we also are about to have nine million people which is another big part of this discussion.

If we were planning for a city that wasn't changing you could have one conversation, but we're about to pick up an additional population in the next 10, 20 years about the size of the population of Staten Island. We're going to add that into New York City. And we need more and better options for people to get around.

That will make the economy work. The absence of them will really hurt the economy. So that's where it becomes sustainable in my view. If you sustain a strong economy all other things are possible. Gloria?

Question: You mentioned Staten Island [inaudible] meeting with you –

Mayor: Yes.

Question: - this week. Are you moving towards an agreement or a deal to bring NYC Ferry there as well?

Mayor: So, Borough President Oddo has been very insistent over numerous conversations. He's offered us different configurations on how it could be done. James has talked with him as well. I'm sticking to what I've said all along, once the Lower East Side route and the Soundview route are up and running this summer we will have a good look at the whole system and how it's worked. And we all had to understand how this would work in real life, not on paper, but in real life. That will give us the opportunity to make a decision about the future. That's when I intend to make it. Once those lines are announced – I mean, excuse me, are open we're all going to sit down and make a decision about what's next.

And that's a big decision. And it's not an easy decision. There's a lot of places that would like ferry service. But that's my timeline. When – again, roughly the end of this summer when the new lines are up. Yes?

Question: Just a quick question about when do you expect to have doubled – more than doubled the capacity?

President Patchett: So the funding is over the next five years. And we – which consists our projection is it could be up to nine million by 2023, so over that timeline.

Mayor: Other questions on the ferries? Yes.

Question: How many people do you think will stop riding the subway [inaudible]

Mayor: I don't have a perfect number, and it would actually be a very good thing to study, but I can tell you, and maybe Justin wants to add because of his colorful evocation of life on the R train and on the Gowanus Expressway which I have experienced both quite a bit too as a Brooklynite. I think a lot of people want to. And the more service there is and the more frequent, the more consistent the more they'll take it.

Obviously to the point before, if we can figure out that cross registration with the MTA that will make it more appealing. But even here and now I think a lot of people are turning onto it and think it's a superior option. You want to add? From your own personal [inaudible] experience?

Council Member Justin Brannan: I think it's a big deal to have a permanent ferry. I think in the past we've had stops and starts of ferry service and it was hard for people to incorporate that into their daily commute or routine because they didn't know if someday it was just going to end. So, I think now that it's permanent, it's citywide. I think people are starting to rely on it more.

You know, I know – I hear it anecdotally from folks who say this is a lifesaver for them. If they work on Lower Manhattan or they can transfer to 34th Street is just a better option than taking – you know sitting in traffic on the BQE or riding the R train. And that's – it's a personal choice but the permanency is certainly – is what makes it so popular.

Mayor: Right and I – I'll – very, very good point and I want to add to that. You know when the folks in the Rockaways had temporary service after Sandy, here there was temporary service, I mean one of the things that people constantly said to me was unless we believe in this we're not going to use it.

And folks in the Rockaways have very good reason to be skeptical about the role of government over many decades. What I've heard from a lot of people in the Rockaways is they now know this is really permanent, and they know it is the same cost as the subway fare and that has now allowed them to plan their life and use it much more than they ever could in the past. And that's just beginning. This is just beginning to be felt and I think more and more people are going to turn on to it.

Question: [Inaudible] another comparison to [inaudible] but Citi Bikes and public private [inaudible] published a lot of ridership data –

Mayor: Sure.

Question: Have you had discussions with Hornblower and the EDC about publishing ridership to kind of show that this is a fair, equitable thing [inaudible] graphic data, things like that?

Mayor: Yes I don't know – you'll answer the specifics. I think it's a perfectly smart thing to do, and we're happy to do it. I also want to note though in the Rome wasn't built in a day category, Citi Bike has several years on NYC Ferry in terms of developing. We've seen amazing pick up on it, but that took time. And again I think it's going to be the same with NYC Ferry.

Obviously projections suggest it, but I'm not going to be surprised if we go by these – past these projections because people have to experience something. And obviously there are some people for whom Citi Bike makes all the sense in the world, the ferry might not. But also vice versa. There's a lot of people for whom the ferry makes a lot more sense than Citi Bike. So, as to transparency –

President Patchett: Sure, yes. So yes – we're – I totally hear you. We are planning to produce a regular public report. We've just been very busy getting the system up and running but with – within the next couple of months we'll be producing a regular public report that covers all the topics that you referenced.

Mayor: Yes?

Question: Will something like that look at what something like NYC Ferry is doing to rents in a particular neighborhood. I mean you talk about people wanting to move here because they have this option now. Is there a concern that some service like this could drive up rents – is gentrification [inaudible]

Mayor: I'll start and then Justin may have a view, and James may have a view. From my point of view no is the answer on first blush, and I'll tell you why. A lot of the communities have not had sufficient mass transit options, so I mean I'm not saying your question isn't valid I just want to flip the question. So, you know, if you don't have good enough mass transit and it keeps the rent down, is that a good thing?

You know, I would say no. I would say you need sufficient mass transit for all other things to be possible, including economic development and job creation. And we're very aware, this is – why is the Economic Development Corporation doing this? Because it's also a job creation strategy. So, it's not – it's a perfectly valid question but I would argue the combination of providing transportation in a lot of places that are underserved, the job creation that we think is going to come from it because it does make sense for employers to be near this kind of option, and the fact that we desperately need more mass transit.

I mean, you know, it wasn't long ago the subways were not overcrowded. It wasn't long ago – Marcia and I go back a ways, I'm going to point to you, where they were begging people to get on the subways. And now, you know, you can be on the subway – obviously, famously the L train and you wait three and four trains to go by because you literally can't get on. That's a not a supportable situation. Like you can fix the signals, that will help a lot obviously, but it says we need more options.

So for all those reasons I would say – not that – the question that could rent go up does not compare to those considerations. We have not studied it to the best of my knowledge, we'll keep an eye on it. But I think those other things are more fundamental.

President Patchett: I can just add two points. One is – we can't shy away as a city from making neighborhoods better. I mean, people embrace transit and parks and other things that come to their neighborhoods, and they make their neighborhoods better and their quality of life superior. That's – people are excited when we come and invest in parks. The first question when we build a new park or bring a new trans-system is not is my rent going to go up. It's how can I get on it, how can I use the park?

The second point I would make is one of the biggest economic cost people spend is the amount of time they are commuting – all the signs are blowing over.

[Laughter]

So, one thing we need to work on. Ferry service we got, signs we got to work on.

Okay, so I think – my experience has been that people, passengers are saving up to an hour of commuting time so that is an additional hour of commuting time. So that is an additional hour either at the office, an additional – or an hour less of childcare, or however you want to use that time. That's a really big economic impact in people's life.

And it's impossible to disaggregate the impacts on rent but I think the impact on the lost – the reduced commuting time is so significant an economic impact in people's lives that it far outweighs an impact on rents.

Mayor: Got anything to say, wise man?

Council Member Brannan: I like to refer to the R-Train in Bay Ridge as hipster kryptonite because you have to –

Mayor: Kryptonite?

Council Member Brannan: Yeah, because you have to really, really want to live here to deal with the R-Train. I think that –

[Laughter]

The ferry is just another – I don't think anyone should see it as, I mean speaking for myself, as a substitute or a replacement, it's just another option and it works for some people. It doesn't work for others, you know. But we are finding that people prefer it over sitting on a crowded train or getting on the BQE.

But it's just another alternative just like Citi Bike, just like the subway, just like the buses – it's another way to get around and people are certainly enjoying it.

Mayor: Did you say kryptonite?

Council Member Brannan: Kryptonite.

Mayor: Kryptonite. Hipster kryptonite. You're like a soundbite machine today.

[Laughter]

I'm very impressed. Very impressed. Way back?

Question: Can you take us through the math of how you got the 9 million. The press release says [inaudible] 4.6 but once all six routes were then you had [inaudible]. How do you get to [inaudible]?

President Patchett: Sure, happy to. So, we're almost exactly one year into the ferry service. We have had close to four million riders already. We were projecting 4.6 million riders at a fully operating system which was several years from now, was the original projection. We expect to well-exceed that in this coming year when we will not even have two of the routes up for the full year.

So, just to give you a sense of where we are. So then what we did was we took the baseline growth that we have experienced – I'm sorry the new baseline level of ridership based on the new information and we applied a growth rate based on historical evidence of what the East River Ferry ridership has grown year over year. And that's how we came to ridership estimate.

Obviously it's, you know, we don't know exactly what it's going to be. That's the best data that we have. But based on the – if anything I wouldn't be surprised to see it be higher because level of – we're using this baseline under the assumption that that is actually the baseline but I also expect as related to the question on MTA, as people view this as a more permanent transit option, people will choose to switch and make it a more part of their reliable commute.

So I actually expect the baseline number to grow inherently on top of the natural growth rate.

Question: [Inaudible]

President Patchett: It's about ten percent a year, I think, based on the historical estimates. But again, that's just the data that we have.

Mayor: Let's get – in the vein of technical briefings, let's get the actual numbers out today so everyone can see the progression.

Last call on ferries, go ahead.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor Louder please.

Question: [Inaudible] requires most people two fares, one fare –

Mayor: Right.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Right, we spoke to that before.

Question: [Inaudible] City Council saying that a lot of people can't even afford one fare –

Mayor: Right.

Question: And generally the subway carries more people and it requires a lower level of subsidy. So, how do you justify sinking more and more money into boats while there's a lot of people who can't take the train?

Mayor: Okay, so first let me say sometimes good news is just good news. So, again, I appreciate the native skepticism of everyone in the media but sometimes good news is good news. Adding transportation options for millions of New Yorkers is a good thing and we're going to keep coming out and showing you this progress.

And people appreciate it, they like it, they want to be a part of it. The idea, what you're referring to, the Fair Fare is a really good idea. I believe it's best achieved through a recurrent revenue source which is the millionaire's tax. Again, the City of New York, the people of New York City pay a vast amount of the costs of the subway right now and I think the best way to pay for additional items and the long term needs of the subway is with the millionaire's tax.

We've got to be able to do more than one thing at a time. And look if you think about the alternative which is let's – okay, so you can say, well let's not develop ferry service, let's not have this option for the future.

I think we'll regret that. I think we'll regret it when we're at nine million people. I think we'll regret it as the subways and the highways get more and more crowded. I think we certainly would regret it if God forbid we were ever dealing with emergencies where we needed other ways to get around because this is going to be one of the ways that works even in bad times. And we saw that after Sandy.

So, I'm convinced this is a great investment. We'll certainly be talking to the Council about the Fair Fare but I think the best way to solve that is the millionaire's tax.

Last call on ferries. Okay, let me say to all these good folks, thank you. You don't have to stay because you've been patiently standing but I salute you again. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

Get out while the getting's good.

[Laughter]

Or else I'll make you take the questions for me. Do you want to stick around or you want to –

[...]

Alright we are going to other topics. Yes.

Question: Mr. Mayor, so the [inaudible] bus action plan which relies heavily on the City's cooperation [inaudible].

Mayor: Right.

Question: Have you looked over the plan and [inaudible]?

Mayor: My broad understanding of the plan – I agree with it and we want to see more and better bus options. Obviously, that's why we're investing in 21 new Select Bus Service routes. And we believe that there needs to be enforcement in those lanes.

Now, the bus cameras, the bus lane cameras, are an important part of that too so we want to work to make sure that is all it should be. But NYPD will absolutely – has been and will be playing a central role in that as well. Marcia.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Okay, that's a big question so let me – let me try and break it down simply. More even than housing, Marcia, the number one determinants of segregation are economic injustice and structural racism. And that goes back hundreds of years. That then means people don't have fair incomes, that leads to being able to only afford housing in some places. So all of that then leads us to the schools which is a point I've been trying to make that folks who start the discussion of schools are missing all the root causes, all the foundation.

We got to address all of them and we're trying to. The whole concept of fighting inequality in this city – raising wages, raising benefits – all that is trying to get to the root cause.

The second thing I'd say is to create more diversity in schools, we should not rely on bussing. Bussing did not work and created a lot of division, needless division, and did not even address the underlying concern of parents of all background which was the quality of the schools.

The Equity and Excellence visions says we have to raise up all schools. We have to improve schools across the board with a huge amount of investment and different policies and approaches. I think as we do that, Marcia, you're going to see parental choices start to change.

If you know the school down the block is a great school, you're not going to go look elsewhere but a lot of parents didn't feel they had a good option locally.

I'll also say I have not read the study yet but I want to caution, a parent choosing a school that's not their zone school does not mean they're going to an entirely different demographic community and doesn't mean their kid stays in that school.

So there's a lot of questions we have to play out about that. But the bottom line is we want to diversify our classrooms more and more. We have some great examples that are starting to work – what happened on the Westside of Manhattan, what's happening on the Lower Eastside, so that's districts three and one. These are major new diversification plans that are really working. I look forward to us taking those models all over the city and more and more kids learning in diverse classrooms. I think we can make a big step forward but we can't solve the problem through the schools alone. And if we try and solve the problem without improving the schools we actually will not be getting where we need to be.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: There's several parts. The original plan from last year was a rezoning of the district, not that major of rezoning in terms of boundaries for each zone school. But it did, what I thought was a really smart rezoning that helped create more diverse classrooms and involved a lot of investment in some of the schools that were considered less capable. They got investment, they got new exciting programs that parents wanted. You know they want STEM programs, they want arts and cultures programs. There's a new school was built as part of the mix. So the first part in that district was a sort of multi-faceted how we improve schools, make them all more attractive and change the zones.

The second part is on admissions. That's what has come up more recently, that's new, it's a new piece of the plan and that's about middle school specifically which is a choice. You know, middle school, high school we have choice, elementary school is essentially by zone. That plan is about trying to diversify according to academic level. I think there's a lot of good in that too. And obviously that cuts across all demographic backgrounds if you are talking about academic level. So these things are starting to show a lot of promise and I think they are going to allow us to do a lot all over the city.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Okay hold on, hold on. Too many pieces I apologize. I have got to give you an answer to each one and I want to get some other people in. So I'll answer that one and I'll come back to you on the second one.

On the question of the court decision – we are reviewing it. And we will after doing a review come forward and tell you what the next step is. But I'm not going to project something until we've really thoroughly considered the decision. Okay over here.

Question: [Inaudible] what can you [inaudible] what can you say right now that you [inaudible].

Mayor: When you say fined help me out.

Question: Fined by the daycares – monetary.

Mayor: At the end of the day? Okay. Fixing the subways is going to take in my view a millionaire's tax and it's going to take a lot more accountability at the MTA. And we are fighting for both. The best way to avoid parents being late is to fix the subways. It will take a huge amount of investment over many years. So that's my answer to you. I understand, I used to face it too. I picked of Chiara and Dante from daycare for years and you know it's a race against the clock. But to really solve that problem the MTA has to become more efficient and has to have the resources for the long run. Yes.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Say again?

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: I need to know more about that to be able to comment. I have not been following what she said so I need to hear what she said before I could comment on that.

Question: Just asking a follow up question to what Marcia asked before – you called yourself before the steward of taxpayers' money. For three years you've been fighting this release in the name of transparency of emails between you and someone doing business for the city who didn't work for City Hall. Every court has found the city has erred. What more do you need to review?

Mayor: Well, I understand you have a personal interest in the situation, or your outlet does, and I respect that. I have come back to it time and time again. Every leader has a group of advisors that are informal advisors externally. It's old as time itself. And those folks understood because of legal judgments within the administration that they could communicate in a blunt, straight forward manner and that it was not going to be something that was out in the public. And I think that deserves respect and I think that that legal opinion meant something. Again we have a court decision, we will review the decision and then we will give you an update. Yes.

Question: Mr. Mayor, two questions – one, any, did you happen to talk to Chancellor Carranza after he retweeted that article about the Upper Westside families and all of –

Mayor: Yes, I talked to him yesterday. It was the first time we had a meeting since that. I mean I think he said you know clearly he did not mean to offend anyone but he also believes in social justice and he thinks that's part of his mission so he thinks that the idea of a plan that could in a helpful way diversify classrooms is a good thing. I've also said I understand why any parent might be concerned if they feel like their child might not get into the school they ideally want. I understand. I've been down that road. I get it. Our job is to create diversification of our

classrooms while improving the schools and giving parents multiple good options so they have confidence there's not just one choice. We have got to do all of those things.

Question: The Riders Alliance, many transit advocacy groups, I know the plan right now is when the L is shut down, you are going to have buses running on 14th street at peak period times, however, they say that's not good enough. It's got to be 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as the L train ran 24 hours –

Mayor: Yes, well, we think there's obviously a difference between rush hour and the other times a day. I mean look, I really respect these advocates and their job is to fight for their position but it's a common sense matter that the level of people traveling at rush hour, morning and evening is different than other times of the day. We would like to minimize the disruption on 14th street to the maximum extent possible so this is where we think we hit the balance point. Like everything else in life we are going to go down the road with this plan, if we need to make adjustments, we can make adjustments. Yes.

Question: So there was an incident with four women and [inaudible] in State Government. Melissa Mark-Viverito said that the recent [inaudible] Stephanie Miner said that [inaudible]

Mayor: What I couldn't hear the last part so Melissa said what?

Question: She said that the Nixon effect –

Mayor: I don't know what that is. What is the Nixon effect?

Question: Well, basically they are saying that Cynthia Nixon has been pushing the Governor to the left [inaudible] Stephanie Miner said that she [inaudible] values and experience in the race. Now that's it's been six weeks since she announced. Do you see an [inaudible] with the recent [inaudible]

Mayor: I think I'll just say I can't speak to something that is six weeks old, you know with tremendous authority. I think competition is healthy. It's just a broad view. It makes everyone involved accountable but that's all I can say right now. I mean we have to see things play out and again I will speak about these elections down the road when I'm ready to.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Well, yeah –

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: I'll put it into national context to try and answer your question. This is happening everywhere in the country right now. Progressive Democrats are mounting challenges and holding all Democrats accountable and it is, and we saw it in the 2016 elections, we're seeing it now even more that those challenges cause Democrats to have to be accountable to the values of Democratic voters.

So again, it's hard to say based on six weeks, but do I think that that is happening all over the country and having impact? Yes. Do I think it's having an impact in New York State? Yes. Let's see it play out some more before we can give a more definitive answer. Alright, right here first, I'm sorry.

Question: Mr. Mayor, I have two questions. First, do you have a comment on the charge brought today against the driver of the [inaudible] –

Mayor: Yeah and I want to emphasize first of all I'm not a lawyer and I respect all of the legal complexities. But as a citizen, as a father, I think it was the right thing to do and I said back at the time I could not understand why she wasn't arrested. There's no reason she should have been driving and we need to reform our state laws to stop that from happening again in the future. So it's not going to bring those kids back but at least it shows there's going to be some accountability. Go ahead.

Question: Given the goals of Vision Zero [inaudible]

Mayor: It's an issue I'm going to be talking to my team about, not just that particular company, I don't know the details that you just mentioned, I'm not familiar with them. But with that whole industry, you know, everyone should be held accountable under Vision Zero, so I do want to look at all the tools we have and it's something we'll coming back with an updated policy on. Okay, wait, hold on, way back. Did you, behind, were you ready?

Question: Oh, no. I'm not.

Mayor: You good? Okay, he had his hand up a minute ago. Go ahead.

Question: Can you just touch on the party boat situation –

Mayor: On the what? I'm sorry.

Question: The party boats, the [inaudible] boats that are being removed from Sheepshead Bay and has some residents in Sunset Park might be upset about a couple of the boats being relocated at Brooklyn Army Terminal [inaudible] –

Mayor: I am not familiar with all the details, I can only tell you the general concept which is that where you have a party that comes back at night and it's in a residential area and there is a lot of noise and disruption, we want to find a way to stop that and have a better alternative. And that's what I said last year we would endeavor to do. You got to find the alternative location, you got to make sure it doesn't make the same problem happen somewhere else, but the Sheepshead Bay situation was particularly bad for the surrounding community. So we're going to keep making those adjustments until we get it right, I'm not familiar with the exact locations and logistics, but that's what we're going to try and do. Yeah?

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Yeah, I mean look, I've been – Marcia – I've been surprised that there hasn't been more focus on the meaning of the Equity and Excellence initiative, because it's a fast, well-funded initiative that is going to fundamentally change our schools. So there is the answer in my view to setting the stage for more diverse classrooms that are also high quality. We already have been making these investments for years and we got to go deeper.

But yeah, I believe that we can fundamentally change the rules of our school system and make a lot more of our schools, ultimately all of our schools, ones that parents would be comfortable and proud to send their kids to. I think that is also going to help immensely in creating more diverse learning environments.

Question: Two questions [inaudible] what you do you think of President Trump being nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize [inaudible] –

Mayor: I don't think we have any evidence that he warrants it yet and I think some of the things he has done have been – I would say we have a split reality. Some of the things he has done might result in important steps forward for peace in different parts of the world. Some of the things he has done might result in more conflict. It's just way too early to tell.

Question: Secondly, there is [inaudible] who is suing the FDNY for keeping him [inaudible] firefighter and he quoted your comments about [inaudible] saying basically [inaudible] second chance [inaudible]. You may or may not [inaudible] this case, but I'm also wondering more broadly, do those comments apply to everyone? –

Mayor: Every case is individual. I'm not going to speak to that one because it is a subject of litigation. Every case is individual, there's often more than – look I get you guys have stories to write and you take someone's word for it, but typically there is a lot more to each case. So I believe in giving people second chances but there are some limits. Alright, we're about to wrap up, I'm going to two more. Go ahead.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: I can't give you a rating because I've studied many topics, but NYPD success rates at bus lane clearance is not one of the areas I'm an expert in. NYPD, more and more, is applying a lot of its energy to Vision Zero, to quality-of-life policing, to a lot of other things that they used to not be able to put as much energy into because there was a lot of violent crime. Thank God violent crime, serious crime, continues to go down. Thank God, thank you City Council, we have 2,000 more officers on patrol. So this is a priority to keep those lanes flowing, we're going to do our share. But as to the specifics I just can't comment right now.

Question: [Inaudible] has the City spent on fighting this [Inaudible]

Mayor: I don't know, we can get you that. I don't know. Thanks, everyone.

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