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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS FOR THE LAUNCH OF
THE NEW NYC FERRY LOWER EAST SIDE ROUTE**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: You were not stepped on, it all worked out. Michael, I want to thank you because I know what you've done for Corlears Hook Park, it's been a labor of love. I know a lot of other people in this community who have joined you in making this park really wonderful and I know this ferry stop is going to make the park even greater. Let's thank Michael and everyone who has been part of this.

[Applause]

Alright so this is a big day, the whole effort to create a ferry system in New York City from scratch – three years in the making as of today phase one complete. Six ferry lines open.

[Applause]

It took three years because we literally had to figure out everything. What would the routes be? How do we build the docks? Where do we get the boats? We had to actually find a way to get the boats made for the NYC Ferry system. Then we figured out we needed bigger boats because the ferry system was so popular. Three years in the making but we have gotten there now, six lines fully operational as of today and what we are finding is New Yorkers love the ferry, they love to be out on the water. We've spent our whole life looking at it, it's time to actually get out there and be on it and travel around on it. Now we have the proof of how much New Yorkers love the ferry, 6 million riders so far – 6 million riders.

[Applause]

And we know – look as New Yorkers we know plenty – and Michael your story speaks volumes – we know plenty about the buses, we know plenty about the subways, we know about the challenges they face. We know about how crowded the subways are and the challenges the subway system face. We know the streets are congested, we know we need new ways to get around. We are not going to be the city that we are meant to be if we do not have better options. And that's what led us to NYC Ferry. New Yorkers needed better ways to get around. New Yorkers needed more ways to get around. Also we know that too many neighborhoods have been

cut off from the rest of the city and Michael, your story is a powerful one. Even a neighborhood here in Manhattan can be a place that takes too long to get from the rest of the things you need to do. We weren't taking advantage of the most obvious resource that was staring us in the face and that was our water. The funny thing about the history of this city is our water ways in many ways ended up being a disconnect. Folks felt isolated from each other across the water and there wasn't any sense of how we bring people together. NYC Ferry reverses that, NYC Ferry allows us to connect to each other, connect one neighborhood to another in a way we didn't before. I was just at the opening, a few weeks ago, of the new ferry line in Soundview. I don't think people in Soundview felt very connected to the Upper East Side where Gracie Mansion is or to Wall Street where that line ends up. Now you can make that trip in 30 minutes, 40 minutes. And people are connected in a whole new way. People from this community are going to be connected in a whole new way to the rest of the city.

So to me this is something much bigger. It means that people are not only going to feel those connections, get those opportunities, they are going to save a lot of time. Michael's example is a good one and for a lot of people in this community, to get to a subway, ten minute walk, 20 minute walk just to get to a subway. Now as you heard they can get on this ferry, they can be at Wall Street in seven minutes, they can be in Midtown in less than 20 minutes. That time – what's more precious to a New Yorker than time? Right? We are the busiest people in the world. If we can save time and put it into time with our family and the things we love, that's worth a lot to us. And that's one of the things that's also crucial about the ferry. So when I think about it all together there's so much that we all should be proud of and to everyone who has been a part of it here, I want to thank especially the folks who work at NYC Ferry, you are doing an amazing job.

[Applause]

We are giving people a better way to get around. We are giving them a wonderful experience out on the water. We are reaching a lot of communities that literally were cut off in too many ways – Soundview in the Bronx, Red Hook in Brooklyn, the Rockaways – so many communities that have been yearning for it, in fact decades, for this opportunity. The ferry service in the Bronx is the first since the 1930s just to give you an example of how long we have been waiting. In the end all of these ferry lines crisscross the city. But they have the same destination. Our goal is to be the fairest big city in America, to make sure people have opportunity, to make sure people get to fully live their potential, to make sure they get to experience this great city, and that's what ferry service provides for us. I want to say a few words in Spanish.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish.]

With that I want to turn to the Council member and he represents many thousands of people who are now going to have an easier way to get around. He represents a stop, one stop to the north at Stuyvesant Cove and his constituents today are getting something that is going to improve the quality of their life. My pleasure to introduce Council Member Keith Powers –

[Applause]

[...]

Thank you Councilman. It's a hot day but NYC Ferry is hot too. It is so hot and people love it. And they are taking it and so this leads us to the final point which is this year, 2018, we are going to make decisions about the future of NYC Ferry. The beginning of this first phase literally went beyond our wildest dreams. When we started it was again just an idea. We had to go figure out if it would work. What we found is that it works better than anyone imagined and people like it more than we even knew. Now we have big decisions ahead about other parts of the city and there are a lot of parts of the city that want ferry service. So you are in the lucky first wave, there's a lot of other places that want it as well. We will be making those decisions by the end of the year but what we can say for sure is so far this has been a stunning success. Thanks to everyone who has been a part of it and congratulations to Corlears Park, you've got a ferry. Thank you everyone.

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