



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 3, 2018
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

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

New forecast for 2023 ridership is double past projections, City investing in more and bigger boats to meet demand



NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced that NYC Ferry’s ridership could grow to as many as 9 million annual passengers by 2023, twice as many passengers as initially projected, and that the City will invest in a bigger ferry fleet to meet that demand. The Executive Budget

includes \$300 million in new capital over the next several years for new 350-passenger capacity ferries, improvements to piers and docks, and a second homeport where ferries will be maintained and repaired. The Mayor made the announcement in Bay Ridge, where new ferry service launched last year.

“New Yorkers have spoken. We’re going to need bigger boats,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “We’re gearing up to meet the extraordinary demand for more public transit on our waterways.”

NYC Ferry launched on May 1, 2017. Original projections predicted 4.6 million riders once all six routes are operational and fully rolled-out. However, NYC Ferry carried 3.7 million passengers in its first year, with only four routes operating—and only two of them running for the entire 12 months. Updated projections based on the first year of service now show that demand could reach as high as 9 million riders per year by 2023.

The final two routes of the first phase of ferry service – Soundview and the Lower East Side – are expected to begin operating in late summer 2018. They join the four existing routes: East River, Rockaway, South Brooklyn and Astoria. The City’s Economic Development Corporation will study potential route expansions later this year.

The City is preparing to invest \$300 million in capital over the next five years, including \$35 million in Fiscal Year 2019. Those investments will include:

- Increasing capacity by expanding ferry fleet, nearly doubling its size
- A second homeport facility to house and maintain the expanded fleet, in addition to the first homeport at the Brooklyn Navy Yard nearing completion
- Infrastructure improvements and upgrades to existing NYC Ferry barges and landings to accommodate larger crowds
- Improvements to the City’s two main ferry terminals, Pier 11/Wall Street and E 34th Street, which see the highest traffic on a daily basis. These include wider gangways and new bow-loading locations to increase the number of vessels that can dock simultaneously.

Preparations for a busy spring and summer are in full swing. To meet the expected surge in demand, NYC Ferry will:

- Deploy 3 brand new 350-passenger capacity NYC Ferry boats by later this summer to service the busiest routes.
- Deploy up to 8 charter vessels this summer, each with capacity between 250-500 passengers.
- Beginning Memorial Day Weekend, Governors Island will now be the last stop on the East River and South Brooklyn routes, increasing service to the popular summer destination.
- Increase service frequency with boats arriving every 20-30 minutes on weekdays and weekends on all four routes, compared to 25-60 headways for the same service last summer.

- Launch a new express service on the Rockaway route to and from Pier 11/Wall Street during weekday rush hour and on weekends, doubling capacity during these busiest times.
- Increase service from Brooklyn Army Terminal by 20 percent on the Rockaway route.
- Increase staffing at ferry landings to assist riders with queuing and boarding.

Since its launch one year ago, NYC Ferry has already employed over 250 people and is currently hiring for 75+ new positions, including captains, deckhands, customer service agents, ticketing, operations and more. New Yorkers of all backgrounds and skill levels are welcome to apply. Jobseekers can apply directly at ferry.nyc.

“NYC Ferry’s overwhelming success in its first year of service indicates the need to make smart investments for the future now. This capital investment will support system improvements over the next five years, ultimately enhancing customer experience and strengthening the City’s waterfront infrastructure,” said **NYCEDC President and CEO James Patchett**.

“NYC Ferry is a great success story, and the expansion being announced today – two new routes this year along with more and bigger boats -- is more good news for New Yorkers looking to our beautiful waters to get themselves around,” said **DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg**. “But under Mayor de Blasio’s leadership, it is not only new ferries; we are creating an exciting multi-modal system of transportation options – from Select Bus Service to more bike lanes and expanded bike share – that will help us meet the challenges of getting around a City that has seen unprecedented growth in population, jobs and tourism.”

“I want to commend the Mayor on the financial investment and expansion of NYC ferry system. It is extremely helpful to utilize our waterways to provide dependable transportation options for New Yorkers. The growth of NYC ferries will help to reduce overcrowding on subways and buses, offer reliable transportation to the communities of Bay Ridge and Sunset Park and allow commuters to travel expeditiously throughout the city,” said **Senator Martin J. Golden**.

Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis said, "We always welcome additional transit options in our community and thank the mayor for recognizing the ferry system is a popular means of commuting for so many in Bay Ridge. Its expansion will alleviate overcrowding, improve comfort for daily commuters and attract visitors to our great restaurants and shops."

“Our city’s waterways are a unique resource that provide opportunities to expand the transportation options available to New Yorkers,” said **Council Member Vallone, Chair of the Committee on Economic Development**. “I applaud this investment into our city’s rapidly growing ferry service and will continue to advocate for further expansions to support transportation deserts.”

“Ferries have been successful in connecting New Yorkers to different parts of the city. As our population grows and New Yorkers learn about the convenience of using ferries, we must continue planning for future demand. It is important to continue investing in this greener transportation alternative not only to increase its fleet, but also expand its presence throughout

the five boroughs,” said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, chair of the Council Committee on Transportation.**

“We’ve come a long way since 2013 when I started the ‘Bring Back the Bay Ridge Ferry’ petition. Not only did we get the ferry back last year, but people love it and we need more service. Thankfully, with the Mayor’s announcement today, that’s exactly what we’re going to get!” said **Council Member Justin Brannan.**

“I am glad our city is continuing to invest in our ferry system, especially in advance of the opening of the new stop this summer at Stuyvesant Cove. East Siders can now count on even more reliable service, space on the ferries, and an overall improved transit experience. I thank the Mayor for expanding the NYC Ferry program,” said **Council Member Keith Powers.**

“It has been an incredible year. There has been a tremendous amount of enthusiasm for NYC Ferry service throughout New York Harbor,” said **Cameron Clark, Senior VP for NYC Ferry operated by Hornblower.** “We have helped millions of New Yorkers reach their destinations and with Soundview and Lower East Side routes launching this summer, we’re excited to offer new connections to more neighborhoods. Our crew is thrilled to create amazing experiences for even more riders on NYC Ferry.”

###