

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT JOINTLY WITH  
COMMITTEE ON WATERFRONTS  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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October 19, 2017  
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Chairperson

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Co-Chair

YDANIS A. RODRIGUEZ  
Co-Chair

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JAMES WONG VACCA  
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## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Seth Myers  
Director of Project Implementation at the New  
York City Economic Development Corporation, EDC

James Wong  
Director of Ferries for the New York City  
Economic Development Corporation, EDC

Justice Johnson  
Vice President, Government and Community  
Relations at New York City Economic Development  
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Michael Simas  
Executive Vice President of Partnership for New  
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Roland Lewis  
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Peter Ebright  
Executive Vice President at New York Water Taxi

Lauren Cosgrove  
Senior Coordinator of the National Parks  
Conservation Association

Mark Gjonaj  
Politician of the Democratic Party Who Represents  
District 80 of the State of New York State  
Assembly

Alexandra Silversmith  
Executive Director of the Alliance for Coney  
Island

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Good afternoon

and welcome to the Economic Development Committee of the New York City Council. My name is Dan Garodnick and I have the privilege of Co-Chairing this hearing along with my fellow Council Members Debbie Rose, who is the Chair of the Committee on Waterfronts and Ydannis Rodriguez, the Chair of the Committee on Transportation. I would like to thank both of my Co-Chairs as well as the members of all three committees for coming together to hold this hearing today. New York City boasts one of the most efficient and robust transportation systems in the world. As a city we strive to meet the ongoing public demands on our transportation system, a system that operates at all hours of the day and night to accommodate the city that never sleeps and we always endeavor to do more. Prior to the existence of the many subways, buses, roadways, bridges, tunnels, and tramways that exist in New York, consistent and reliable ferry service was a critical means of connecting the five boroughs. Over time the ferry system fell by the wayside and these newer forms of transportation became the means for most New Yorkers to commute.. to commute to

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destinations across the East River but now thanks to unyielding support from many ferry advocates and the Mayor and many members of the Council we again have a functional citywide ferry system known as NYC Ferry. NYC Ferry launched three routes this summer connecting to landings in Astoria, South Brooklyn and the Rockaways and acquired the existing route offered on the East River Ferry. Two more routes are set to launch next summer including connections to Long Island City and to Soundview. In the future there may be further routes to Canarsie, Coney Island and even LaGuardia Airport. While the launch of NYC Ferry has been widely heralded as a success in expanding the city's transit system, it has not come without... without some significant growing pains mostly as a result of the system's success exceeding ridership expectations. EDC's original estimates for ferry ridership anticipated one million riders by late August when in fact NYC Ferry reached that number in July. As a result, there were many complaints from riders this summer who were forced to wait up to two hours after being denied access to ferries at capacity. Most of the ferries used can accommodate up to 150 passengers but in light of the unanticipated





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boroughs have been around since 2011. Comprehensive  
ferry study... since the 2011 comprehensive ferry study  
which resulted in the development of the East River  
Ferry. The East River Ferry has proven to be a  
success so building off that success Mayor De Blasio  
announced the city ferry study of 2013 to plan for a  
new citywide ferry network. The study found that  
various areas of the city have the potential to  
support new ferry routes while being economically  
efficient with little public subsidy. The plan then  
evolved into the NYC Ferry System with five planned  
new routes in addition to those already in operation.  
The Astoria, South Brooklyn and Rockaway routes began  
operating in 2017 and the Sound, Soundview and Lower  
East Side routes are to begin service in 2018. It is  
expected that 4.6 million rides per year will occur  
when it is fully operational. While I applaud the  
plan to provide new routes to Astoria, South Brooklyn  
and the Rockaways, Soundview and the Lower East Side  
as the member representing parts of Staten Island I  
want to make sure that we're not forgotten as well.  
I'm interested in learning what were the metrics used  
by EDC to determine where the proposed routes would  
be located and why Staten Island has still not yet



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figured into this plan, a five-borough plan that doesn't include five boroughs is sort of an enigma to me. There were talks when the plan was initially announced that there was a possibility of adding a sixth proposed route that would have connected Stapleton, Staten Island and Coney Island with Manhattan at some point in the future. I'd like to see some more definitive talk regarding this proposed route to see it come to fruition at some point in the near future rather than be referenced as an abstract idea and as also a proposal for the South shore of Staten Island to have a ferry. With the rise of ferry ridership, a supplement to the Staten Island ferry makes sense for numerous reasons especially since transportation options from Staten Island to the rest of the city are so limited and increase car traffic all over the island which continues to be a major problem and needs to be mitigated by additional modes of public transportation such as additional ferry sites along the South shore. I certainly hope that we revisit this plan as it relates to equipping this area of the city which has always been stalled with efficient public transportation options. So, far the new ferry routes have the... been receiving good



COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT JOINTLY WITH

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1 Johnson of EDC, James Wong of EDC and Seth Myers of  
2 EDC. So, welcome... [cross-talk]

3  
4 SETH MYERS: Thank you... [cross-talk]

5 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...and whenever  
6 you're ready please proceed.

7 SETH MYERS: Thank you, good afternoon  
8 Chair's Garodnick, Rose, Rodriguez and members of the  
9 Committees on Economic Development, Waterfronts, and  
10 Transportation. My name is Seth Myers and I serve as  
11 the Director of Project Implementation at the New  
12 York City Economic Development Corporation or EDC.  
13 I'm joined by my colleagues James Wong, Vice  
14 President of Ports and Transportation and Justine  
15 Johnson, Vice President in Government and Community  
16 Relations. I'm pleased to testify today about the  
17 positive economic impacts of NYC Ferry and how it is  
18 helping to better connect New Yorkers in the city's  
19 waterfront neighborhoods. In February 2015 Mayor De  
20 Blasio announced the creation of NYC Ferry, the first  
21 major expansion of ferry service in more than a  
22 century. Its goal was and remains to provide an  
23 equitable transportation option for New Yorkers  
24 living in areas that have long been underserved by  
25 existing public transportation. The system will also

1  
2 support housing development, job creation, and  
3 neighborhood growth by connecting job opportunities  
4 and new innovation clusters with existing and  
5 emerging residential communities. Since Mayor De  
6 Blasio's announcement in his 2015 State of the City  
7 Address EDC has been working to bring the system to  
8 life under a very rapid timeline. We're proud of our  
9 role in launching such an ambitious project. We  
10 officially inaugurated ferry service on Monday, May  
11 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017, the culmination of over two years of hard  
12 work including environmental review, selection of the  
13 operator, extensive community engagement, and  
14 construction of the new landings. Today we have four  
15 routes in operation; East River, South Brooklyn,  
16 Rockaway, and Astoria. The Soundview and Lower East  
17 Side routes are expected to launch next summer which  
18 will bring the total number of routes to six. When  
19 fully operational NYC Ferry's fleet will include 20  
20 vessels and will carry an estimated 4.6 million  
21 passengers, passengers annually. We knew that NYC  
22 Ferry would be well used but customer demand has  
23 exceeded even our expectations. Only six months after  
24 NYC Ferry launched the system has seen over two  
25 million riders that's about two months ahead of when

1  
2 we expected to reach that number. Preliminary data  
3 shows that every weekday approximately 7,200 people  
4 ride the East River route, 2,700 people ride the  
5 Astoria route and there are about 2,400 daily trips  
6 on the Rockaway and South Brooklyn routes  
7 respectively. In a recent customer, customer  
8 satisfaction survey scaled from one to ten, 93  
9 percent of riders gave the system a satisfactory  
10 rating of seven or higher but neither the high  
11 ridership nor the high satisfaction rate just  
12 happened, in order to obtain these results EDC  
13 conducted a number of studies and pilot projects over  
14 several years that helped us determine where best to  
15 place landings, routes and service. In 2011 we  
16 completed the comprehensive citywide ferry study  
17 which provided an overview of development potential  
18 for ferry transportation across New York City. The  
19 study analyzed potential routes drawn from over 40  
20 waterfront sites throughout the five boroughs. To  
21 build on that study we launched several ferry  
22 initiatives including the implementation of the pilot  
23 for the East River ferry service in 2011. Following  
24 the success of the East River ferry pilot EDC set out  
25 to complete an expanded citywide ferry study. The

1  
2 goal of the study... the goals of the study were to  
3 identify new ferry service opportunities and to  
4 increase understanding of the economic impacts and  
5 potential of this old but new transportation  
6 resource. The study analyzed the viability of 58  
7 locations throughout the five boroughs for commuter  
8 ferry service, we then estimated the potential  
9 ridership for the 35 most promising locations and  
10 began grouping them into potential route  
11 configurations. The study also looked at the benefits  
12 to users, economic development and how it could  
13 compliment or fill in at least in part for the  
14 existing transit system. I'll summarize the detailed  
15 conclusion of the study by saying in short, it  
16 confirmed that user benefits would justify the  
17 investment required for the system. Moreover, the  
18 expansion of ferry service would fill a critical need  
19 for redundancy in the transportation network, have a  
20 positive impact on real estate values and would  
21 overall generate wider economic benefits for New York  
22 City. Of course, bringing NYC Ferry to life required  
23 public investment and like every form of mass transit  
24 would require a public subsidy to operate. Equity and  
25 accessibility is a fundamental objective of the

1  
2 system highlighted by our fare being in line with  
3 those charged for a ride on the subway. To date EDC  
4 has allocated 59 million of capital cost for ferry  
5 infrastructure, this allocation includes funding for  
6 ten new barges, gangways and other necessary capital  
7 infrastructure, 96 million for vessels including the  
8 purchase and upgrade of existing... for existing boats  
9 from the East River Ferry fleet and 41 million  
10 dollars for the build out of the home port facility  
11 at the Brooklyn Navy Yard for the NYC Ferry fleet. To  
12 bring this system to life we've coordinated with  
13 several sister agencies such as the Department of  
14 Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Small Business  
15 Services and the Mayor's Office of People with  
16 Disabilities among many others. We built  
17 relationships with Federal Regulatory partners such  
18 as the Army Corp of Engineers and the United States  
19 Coast Guard and State partners like the Department of  
20 Environmental Conservation who we worked with for  
21 permits to build ferry landings in a safe and  
22 responsible manner. We completed over 350 briefings  
23 with stakeholders to ensure a successful  
24 implementation of NYC Ferry including federal and  
25 local elected officials, regulatory partners,

1 community boards and civic organizations,

2 recreational voters and both public and private

3 waterfront property owners, these efforts paid off.

4 In addition to meeting a critical transportation need

5 in moving over two million travelers the launch of

6 NYC Ferry has created 262 living wage jobs many of

7 which were sourced through Hire NYC for building,

8 operating and maintaining the system. That's also the

9 result of working hard to build a home port here in

10 New York City at the Brooklyn Navy Yard instead of

11 relying on service that would without that investment

12 in all likelihood remain based outside of the city.

13 While NYC Ferry has enjoyed tremendous success to

14 date it has not been without challenges. On Tuesday,

15 May 2<sup>nd</sup> which was the second day of our operations an

16 oil spill unrelated to NYC Ferry shut down much of

17 the East River causing delays for commuters. This

18 summer two presidential visits in the UN General

19 Assembly also shut down the East River intermittently

20 delaying ferry service. Through the NYC Ferry app,

21 social media and digital displays at landings we were

22 able to communicate unexpected service changes to our

23 customers in the most efficient manner possible and

24 despite those high satisfaction scores I mentioned we



1  
2 know that there's a need for more improvement and  
3 we'll work relentlessly to achieve it. We know things  
4 did not go perfectly this summer, on peak summer days  
5 particularly weekends the demand of riders exceeded  
6 the supply of seats on ferry boats resulting at times  
7 in long lines and waits to get on board. Though we  
8 see this as a testament to NYC Ferry's success and  
9 the latent demand for this transit system we  
10 acknowledge that this problem must be solved and we  
11 set to work immediately to respond to that high  
12 demand deploying additional and spare vessels and  
13 supplemental service and charter additional vessels  
14 throughout the system to better meet this high demand  
15 in increased capacity. We continued to collect data  
16 and monitor the system to inform decisions and have  
17 committed to investing in larger capacity boats which  
18 we expect to have operating in the harbor by next  
19 summer. To conclude we're encouraged by NYC Ferry's  
20 initial success and are fully committed to making  
21 investments to support the system's growth and safe,  
22 safe operation. We're actively addressing issues that  
23 have arisen since the launch and will continue to  
24 survey riders to optimize customer experience as well  
25 as work with the adjacent communities and their

1 leadership, EDC looks forward to continuing to work  
2 with the city, the city council on this  
3 transformative project that has helped New York  
4 reclaim its waterways and empower citizens with  
5 another mode of transportation. Thank you very much  
6 for your time and attention, my colleagues and I are  
7 happy to take any questions that you may have.  
8

9 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Great, thank you  
10 very much. I want to note we have been joined by  
11 Chair Rodriguez, Council Member Johnson and I want to  
12 give Chair Rodriguez an opportunity to, to give a  
13 brief opening and then we're going to get right into  
14 the questions so... thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.  
15

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you  
17 Chair and I'm sorry I couldn't be, be on time. I  
18 would like to thank Chairman Garodnick and Rose for  
19 their collaboration holding this very important  
20 hearing. As Chairman of the Transportation Committee  
21 I am glad we have the opportunity today to examine  
22 one of the newest transportation networks in our  
23 city, the citywide ferry system also known as the New  
24 York City Ferry. As a city of islands, it makes sense  
25 to maximize the use of our city's waterways for  
transportation. Our rivers and harbors played a large



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Hornblower about the NYC Ferry first six months in operation, how the operation has gone and what the vision is for the future. We hope to find out more about plans to deal with capacity issues experienced in the services first few months, plans for expansion in more areas of the city and efforts to better integrate the system with the rest of the city transportation network including a payment system that should allow riders to transfer from busses, trains and bikes to ferry and vice versa. We want to know about costs both operating and capacity and how we can make sure the service is sustainable for the long term. We also need to talk about expansion together with my colleagues I have been requesting the Northern Manhattan Riverdale, Bronx ferry services so that we can provide the services around the island of Manhattan. I already have allocated or gathered support to put five million dollars to start at building a new pier in the area, nothing has started happening with those five million dollars. it is important to continue expanding in other areas. So, I would to... and again thank you the Chairman in hoping that you can answer our questions. Thank you.



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2           SETH MYERS: The, the weekend has seen  
3 generally higher levels on average... [cross-talk]

4           CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Can you give us  
5 those numbers?

6           SETH MYERS: The, the East River has had  
7 an average since this is... I believe since, since  
8 August of around 8,200 per weekend, the Rockaways has  
9 had 3,600, South Brooklyn an average of 4,000 and  
10 Astoria 3,700. It's important to note that these  
11 rolled out in somewhat of a staggered format so this  
12 is... this is an average as of... towards the end of the  
13 summer and should not be seen as reflective of how  
14 it's going to go year-round or on an annual basis.  
15 This is going to skew towards probably a higher  
16 weekend ridership because many of these routes  
17 launched during the summer where you'd expect to see  
18 more discretionary trips.

19           CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay. And you,  
20 you are able to measure the ridership by route, by  
21 day, by season, you have... you have all of that  
22 information broken down, is that accurate?

23           SETH MYERS: That's correct.  
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SETH MYERS: It's 150 people.

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Now that is for how many of the boats is the maximum 150?

SETH MYERS: There are 17 vessels in the... in the kind of future complete fleet that would be at 150 passenger's capacity.

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Are, are there any vessels which have more than 150?

SETH MYERS: We are... we are working to increase the capacity of three vessels which we have ordered but are in very early stages of construction to increase their capacity to carry... to be able to carry 350 passengers and that's in response to the, the enormous success and in high levels of ridership that we've seen this summer, we, we believe that we're going to need to have higher capacity vessels so we, we're making that, that change.

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: The three vessels that would have the capacity for 350 people are they included in the group of 17 or is that something which would get us up to 20 vessels?

SETH MYERS: It's, it's 17 at 150, three being increased to 350 that gets us to the 20-vessel fleet that I mentioned earlier and those three





1  
2 great deal of unscheduled trips. James do you want to  
3 expand on that a little bit?

4 JAMES WONG: Sure... [clears throat] excuse  
5 me... so, with respect... [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: State your name  
7 before you start.

8 JAMES WONG: Sorry, my name is James  
9 Wong, I'm with EDC and with respect to the on-time  
10 performance tracking which you're talking about one  
11 of the things that we wanted to start with as we were  
12 designing NYC Ferry was really focusing on the need  
13 to make sure that we were creating a safe and  
14 efficient operation. So, what we started with was a  
15 good understanding of what we wanted our route  
16 structures to be and the timings to be on each of  
17 these routes but we also gave ourselves flexibility  
18 in the first several months with our operator to  
19 assess when we're... what... when our on-time performance  
20 is good and when we need to make small changes in  
21 order to accommodate additional loading time and  
22 things like that assure, assure ourselves that we  
23 aren't asking captains to drive vessels very quickly  
24 or faster than they should. So, we've been focusing a  
25 lot on managing our schedules lately and so we've

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2 been making small changes throughout the summer on  
3 each time that we've time that we've had to make a  
4 schedule change to help improve our ability to stay  
5 on time.

6 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay, what I hear  
7 you saying and you can correct me if this is not a  
8 fair way of describing it is that you have a way to  
9 measure delays but because of the, the fluidity of  
10 where you've added boats you have not been measuring  
11 delays...

12 SETH MYERS: Where we... [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: That... [cross-  
14 talk]

15 SETH MYERS: Where we both... where we both  
16 added boats and modified our schedule and likely as  
17 we introduced additional service and learned more  
18 about comprehensively operating all these different  
19 lines is part of a system may have to continue to  
20 modify the schedules until we are completely aligned  
21 on both what our customers want as well as what the  
22 infrastructure can support in terms of making sure we  
23 do not create congestion as we have kind of like an  
24 airport we have a limited number of, of runways or in

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1 our case births that the vessels have to go to...

2 [cross-talk

3 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Right, I

4 understand but you're not modifying the, the routes

5 and adding boats every day or every week, you're,

6 you're, you're locking in on a particular schedule to

7 a certain number of boats for, you know at least a

8 couple of weeks or months or whatever before... [cross-

9 talk]

10 SETH MYERS: That's, that's correct...

11 [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...you make

13 changes, is that correct?

14 SETH MYERS: That's correct.

15 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: So, then what is

16 your way of measuring on-time performance during that

17 period of, of time when you are not adding anything

18 or changing routes mid-stream?

19 SETH MYERS: My expectation is that when

20 we reach a steady state we will be able to... we... and

21 we are receiving reports on, on how responsive our

22 service is being but when we reach a steady state

23 where we're no longer modifying our, our route

24 schedules and our, our fleet alignment and assignment

1 to, to different routes we'll... we will... we will be  
2 able to fully and transparently report all of our on-  
3 time percentages to you, it's going to be... [cross-  
4 talk]

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6 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay, well let  
7 me... [cross-talk]

8 SETH MYERS: ...important... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...let me just  
10 suggest... [cross-talk]

11 SETH MYERS: ...our customer... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...to you that  
13 knowing your on-time percentages may aid you in  
14 determining where and when you might want to be  
15 adding routes so I, I, I hear what you're saying but  
16 it also seems like a, a worthwhile measurement to be  
17 doing even as you go. Okay, let me just ask a couple  
18 more before I go to my colleagues which also now  
19 include Council Member's Reynoso and Menchaca. We  
20 have a couple of lines that you're expecting to add  
21 in the summer of 2018, is that correct?

22 SETH MYERS: Yes, sir.

23 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: And this is the  
24 Soundview and Lower East Side line, is that right?

25 SETH MYERS: That's correct.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay, are you...  
3 are you on track?

4 SETH MYERS: Yes sir, we're doing very  
5 well. We... [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Can we... can we  
7 expect to be riding the Soundview and Lower East Side  
8 lines by... I don't know tell me what the date is next  
9 summer that we should be expecting to enjoy these,  
10 these routes?

11 SETH MYERS: We do not have a specific  
12 date for the launch of those, those routes yet, we  
13 are still working through some of the early  
14 permitting stages that will really define how  
15 effectively can work and then we'll be working with  
16 Hornblower and assessing the delivery of the boats to  
17 determine an exact date which we'll look forward to  
18 announcing.

19 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay, so is it...  
20 is it fair for us to expect it'll be done by Labor  
21 Day though, the end of the summer?

22 SETH MYERS: That's how I would define  
23 summer, I don't know the exact date of... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: No, I mean summer  
25 officially ends on the 21<sup>st</sup>... [cross-talk]

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2           SETH MYERS: We, we, we will... [cross-  
3 talk]

4           CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...probably of  
5 September but like Labor Day is... [cross-talk]

6           SETH MYERS: I, I expect we will be  
7 launching, yes, summer of '18.

8           CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay and were  
9 there any... by the way I, I think of a... the... one of  
10 the stops on the Soundview route in Stuyvesant Cove,  
11 you know there's no, no physical work going on there  
12 at this time even in mid to late October of 2017, at  
13 what point, you know would one reasonably expect to  
14 see that work commence to be able to activate a route  
15 by say Labor Day latest... of, of 2018?

16           SETH MYERS: There, there are several  
17 steps that we need to go through in order to get a  
18 landing built and operational, it's going to really  
19 start with our ability to get permits and some of the  
20 permit requirements do limit our times that we can  
21 work... times of the year that we can work due to  
22 what's called a fish moratorium where we're not  
23 allowed to do in water work while fish are breeding  
24 so there may be a several month period from the  
25 spring into the summer where we are actually not

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allowed to do in water work. So, in some places we'll be starting in, in... this winter, driving piles and bringing in barges and that would be in, in advance of that fish moratorium and then in other places we'll have to do it immediately following that moratorium but you should see actual physical signs of construction some, some piles being driven and barges being brought into place, perhaps some upland work on the adjacent landside areas that will connect onto those landings this winter and then by the spring you may see completed... or landings that appear to be complete but then we are required to as we get those, those vessels in the harbor actually test as James mentioned start doing some time trials to make sure our projections around the schedules are accurate and then that all of the different components of the landing operate correctly so that we can make sure we have a, a safe ferry system.

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay and

specifically on, on Stuyvesant Cove you expect... we expect to see that work taking place this summer and preliminary complete by spring, is that accurate?



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SETH MYERS: We, we will... we fully expect to have a Stuyvesant Cove landing that's, that's functional and operational this summer, yes.

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay, but that wasn't... that wasn't actually what I asked, I, I wanted to, to, to know when the work will be taking place... [cross-talk]

SETH MYERS: I don't... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...in order to... [cross-talk]

SETH MYERS: ...have any... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...activate that... I understand... [cross-talk]

SETH MYERS: ...I don't have an... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...the, the spawning of fish... [cross-talk]

SETH MYERS: ...exact date... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...and things like that may happen in the spring and summer but what I heard... what I heard you, you say was that the work will likely commence this winter, it would be... it will look complete by the time when they're environmental concerns by the spring and then there's

2 additional testing to make it fully operational...

3 [cross-talk]

4 SETH MYERS: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

5 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...by the go time,  
6 is that... is that accurate?

7 SETH MYERS: That is... that is correct  
8 across the system for the, the new landings that  
9 we're putting in for 2018, I do not have the specific  
10 schedule in front of me, I'm happy to follow up with  
11 you... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay... [cross-  
13 talk]

14 SETH MYERS: ...around each of the landings  
15 and what... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Yeah, I... [cross-  
17 talk]

18 SETH MYERS: ...when we'll start  
19 construction... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...actually I think  
21 that would be... that would be useful for, for the... all  
22 the folks who have those sorts of stops in their  
23 district. Last question for me for the moment is  
24 you've now had the experience of rolling out Astoria,  
25 South Brooklyn, and Rockaway are there lessons on

1 rollout that you can take from those experience that  
2 you will apply to Soundview and Lower East Side that  
3 may aid the functionality or smooth operations right,  
4 right from the start, are there things that you  
5 learned there that you will apply and what are those  
6 things?  
7

8           SETH MYERS: I, I think we learned a, a  
9 great deal and we're fortunate to be able to respond  
10 quickly working with our operator to them. I think a  
11 great deal of this is about the ability to respond  
12 and respond effectively to capacity. I don't know  
13 James if you want to share any more thoughts about  
14 what we learned?

15           JAMES WONG: Sure, in general I know that  
16 we really benefit from having the time to go through  
17 early testing and making sure to set point on having  
18 landings in place long... before service is actually  
19 starting and having the opportunity to work and see  
20 how each of these landings is operating, what the  
21 small intricacies are with each one. One of the  
22 things we also learned in launch procedures is making  
23 sure that we have plenty of staff on the ground  
24 through our operator, they are very good now at  
25 making sure that there's ample staff on the ground to

1  
2 help customers in their early days, making sure we  
3 have the right kind of support within our own  
4 organizations to make sure that we're paying a lot of  
5 attention during those very first days while we're  
6 really helping to educate communities and in fact  
7 the... working with our commuters who are using the  
8 system.

9 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Alright, thank  
10 you. we've been... also, also been joined by Council  
11 Member Barron and we're going to now go to Chair Rose  
12 for questions followed by Chair Rodrigues for  
13 questions.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you Chair  
15 Garodnick. Hi... [cross-talk]

16 SETH MYERS: Hello... [cross-talk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: ...this is like one  
18 of my favorite subjects, you know having grown up on  
19 Staten Island, an island a major mode of  
20 transportation for most of my growing up years were  
21 ferries, we had five and we live on an island that  
22 is... that has... is a transportation desert and my  
23 colleague, Joe Borelli I'm sure will agree we have  
24 some of the longest commutes to get into Manhattan. I  
25 was really excited to see that the administration



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TRANSPORTATION

the city including a, a great number in, in Staten Island that we looked at extensively, we evaluated the ability to... whether we thought it would be feasible to introduce ferry service based on the levels of ridership that we could estimate and based on the travel time and how competitive the ferry service would be versus other modes and then the cost of that... of that service and if it would be something that we thought we could feasibly and sustainably deliver. There's a... there was a great deal of, of time and attention spent on several of those sites in Staten Island and James do you want to dig into those a little more and some of the details around our findings?

JAMES WONG: Sure, I mean as Seth has

mentioned just on... briefly on process, it is looking at journey to work data, where people live, where they work and, and looking at those travel time savings and I think in general we were looking through the various options both on the North and South shore of Staten Island and ultimately when we... the idea of Stapleton was one that had start... began to surface early on. Now while it's not part of the rollout of these five routes what we are learning a



1  
2 travel distance that makes it challenging to get  
3 there but as James said, you know we've, we've been  
4 committed to launching these current routes and then  
5 after we have launched those taking some of those  
6 lessons learned and doing another round of studies to  
7 evaluate the ability to do any future expansions.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So, density always  
9 seems to be sort of the elephant in the room although  
10 I don't understand whether you look at the number of  
11 people who are employed off of Staten Island in terms  
12 of, of that number that you're working with and so I  
13 guess you've never listened to the traffic report and  
14 heard that the Staten Island expressway was backed up  
15 for hours and it... the commute is very long and so I,  
16 I just want... one of... and you added a sixth system in,  
17 you're, you're going to now do Soundview and  
18 Canarsie.

19 SETH MYERS: We're going to do Sound..  
20 next year we're going to be doing Soundview and the  
21 Lower East Side.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And the Lower East  
23 Side. So, is there some sort of timeline, time frame  
24 that State Island can look forward to us actually  
25 seeing a ferry service being there because we meet



1  
2 the metrics, you, you, you don't deny that we meet  
3 the, the guidelines for ferry service, right?

4           SETH MYERS: We are... we are happy to sit  
5 down and walk back through our analysis, there were...  
6 we... and, and there's no doubt that there's a great  
7 need for transit improvements, I'm, I'm not in a  
8 place where I can tell you that ferries are anything  
9 approaching the single solution to Staten Island's  
10 transit needs or that it would have a great impact on  
11 highway congestion but you know we are... we are  
12 committing to launch the current routes that we have  
13 planned and then embark on a study to evaluate the  
14 expansion of it and the expansion, expansion  
15 potential and we're happy to go... you know speak  
16 further with you about exactly what, what worked and  
17 what did not appear feasible in that study.

18           COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: If I was snarky I  
19 would say, you know since we're not getting a ferry  
20 then the subway line that we were promised we... you  
21 know should look forward to or the tunnel but I won't  
22 be snarky. So, regarding the reduced fare for seniors  
23 and people with disabilities there's only a discount  
24 fare available to them in the form of a 30-day pass,  
25 you know why are the daily discounts for everyday not

1  
2 available, you know in terms of the MTA fares for  
3 seniors and those who are... who have disabilities?

4           SETH MYERS: Thank you for that question,  
5 it's something that's really, really important to us.  
6 One of the, the key values and... you know principles  
7 of, of this ferry was about increasing access and  
8 opportunity and part of the Mayor's implicit  
9 direction from very a very early stage was to make  
10 sure that our, our fares were as low as possible and  
11 in line with what the MTA would charge and, and  
12 that's a significant decrease from the way... under  
13 previously we had been running the East River Ferry  
14 service where fares were as high as six dollars per  
15 ride, part of that was intruding discounts and I'd  
16 like to ask if Justine can speak a little more about  
17 how some of the things... some of the ways that we  
18 structured those, those rates and then what we're  
19 doing now to evaluate them.

20           COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So, is that fare  
21 now a \$1.35 for seniors and people with disabilities  
22 the same as on the subways and the busses.

23           JUSTINE JOHNSON: Currently the fare is  
24 \$2.75 again to your point that you were making  
25

1  
2 earlier the fare is reduced for people with  
3 disabilities... [cross-talk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Could you identify  
5 yourself... [cross-talk]

6 JUSTINE JOHNSON: Yes... [cross-talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: ...please... [cross-  
8 talk]

9 JUSTINE JOHNSON: Justine Johnson from  
10 EDC...

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you.

12 JUSTINE JOHNSON: No problem. So,  
13 essentially the ferries are reduced again on the  
14 monthly passes only for people with disabilities and  
15 seniors. Something that we've heard as part of our  
16 extensive outreach is a lot, lots of feedback and  
17 requests for us to look at the possibility for  
18 another fare adjustment whether that's for single  
19 rides or people with disabilities and as well as  
20 seniors. Something our team is committed is at look...  
21 at looking at the whole fare policy for people with  
22 disabilities and seniors and we're hopefully we'll  
23 get back with you very soon with some of our  
24 findings.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: And, and currently  
3 the application for these discounts are, are only by  
4 paper, they have to be mailed in and, and why is  
5 there not an electronic option, you know this process  
6 seems to take three to five weeks and is it... is it  
7 that you don't have the administrative or operational  
8 capacity to handle, you know these, these  
9 applications or these functions?

10 SETH MYERS: This is something that's  
11 incredibly important to us and we want to make sure  
12 that we are reaching the, the most people who would  
13 be eligible for a discount and making it as an  
14 accessible and open of a process to get there. We've  
15 been working very hard with our operator around their  
16 hardware, their IT needs and other investments that  
17 we can collectively make to allow that process to get  
18 discounted tickets whether it's in the form of a 30-  
19 day pass that is the current discount structure and  
20 expanding it to things like a single ride now. I  
21 don't have an exact date when we think we'll have  
22 that ready but it is something we're actively  
23 pursuing.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay... [cross-talk]



1  
2 lookout to avoid... you know we had an accident where  
3 some kayakers were hit by a ferry so what are you  
4 doing in terms of, of safely in our shared waterways?

5           SETH MYERS: When, when we initially  
6 began our, our effort to implement this system we, we  
7 came up with a list of goals and priorities and I've  
8 mentioned several of them around equity and access  
9 and opportunity. Our number one priority that we  
10 constantly repeat as a reminder to keep it at the top  
11 of that list is safety something we have taken  
12 extremely seriously as well as our operator  
13 Hornblower who has an excellent track record and I'm  
14 proud to say has no incidents to date since we  
15 started New York... New York City Ferry around that.  
16 So, we, we have to work under very tight coast guard  
17 regulations, we follow those extensively, we make  
18 sure that the vessels are equipped properly with  
19 things like cameras and rear facing horns to better  
20 alert human powered craft that might be in the area  
21 and to use things like lookouts as part of the  
22 standard operating procedure on a boat to make sure  
23 that we are being as absolutely safe as possible.  
24 Justine do you want to say some more?

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JUSTINE JOHNSON: Yeah and also, we've definitely had conversations with the recreational boating community. To your point there are lots of recreational boaters, this is a shared harbor and safety is very important for all of us and so part of that we've had quarterly meetings with the recreational boating community, our goal really is to frequent communication with each other so we all know... we're... essentially what the ferry operators are looking at and as well as for those who are on the water what they're experiencing. As part of this outreach which is... again is going to be a collaborative and ongoing conversation, we have definitely used a lot of the feedback that the recreational boaters have provided to us and incorporated that feedback as part of the standard operating procedures. So, for example we heard that, you know a lot of boaters were saying the horns are typically front facing and we are behind the boats a lot of times and we can't always hear that. As part of one of those recommendations that were made we... part of our standard operating procedure we now have rear facing horns so essentially when, you know boaters are in the area they can hear clearly what...





1  
2 tides or something, that is not something that your,  
3 your ferries experience?

4 SETH MYERS: No.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you. Thank  
6 you Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you very  
8 much Chair Rose. I want to note we've been joined by  
9 Council Member's Greenfield, Levin and Gentile now  
10 we're going to go to Chair Rodriguez for questions.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you  
12 Chair. Following, following the safety issue that  
13 Council Member Rose asked, have you had any  
14 particular incidents in the last... since you had  
15 started operating or any report of potential moment  
16 where there has been a situation where crisis can  
17 happen between ferries?

18 SETH MYERS: No, we have not.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: No, do you  
20 feel that you have a good plan in place?

21 SETH MYERS: We do, I mean we've worked  
22 closely with both the operator as well as regulatory  
23 officials in the harbor, primarily the US Coastguard  
24 to make sure that we're operating closely. We have a,  
25 a lot of... a lot of boats coming in both from our

1 fleet and from other private operators at Pier 11 and  
2 we've worked... and, and Pier... at 34<sup>th</sup> Street, we've  
3 worked closely with DOT and those other private  
4 operators to make sure that we can operate safely  
5 around each other and have the right infrastructure  
6 in place to ensure that we're, we're as safe as  
7 possible.  
8

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: What about  
10 from the NYPD role being sure that there's a safety..

11 SETH MYERS: We, we... [cross-talk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: ...at a time  
13 when we have to be prepared for any potential..

14 [cross-talk]

15 SETH MYERS: We... [cross-talk]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: ...act of  
17 terrorism?

18 SETH MYERS: Yeah, we, we frequently  
19 coordinate, we have... we have standing coordination  
20 meetings working with the, the NYPD, their Harbor  
21 Unit and the local precincts that are located in...  
22 where each of our ferry landings are located, Justine  
23 do you want to talk a little more about some of that  
24 coordination?  
25

1  
2 JUSTINE JOHNSON: Yeah, in terms of just  
3 operating and making sure our safety is in place we  
4 have lots of drills that we also do, we work with our  
5 crew and as well as with the operators to ensure that  
6 safety mechanisms are in place. Again, to your point  
7 about, you know in the issues of an emergency we've  
8 also come in handy, we've stepped in... there was a  
9 boat on fire earlier this summer, not an NYC Ferry  
10 boat but we definitely came into play with helping  
11 with the evacuation of that boat. So, we are in  
12 frequent conversations with the harbor operating  
13 community and safety throughout is something that is  
14 very important to that community and frequent  
15 communications.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: How much has  
17 the city invested in dock and, and other  
18 infrastructure for this... [cross-talk]

19 SETH MYERS: Our, our capital budget for  
20 the, the landings is 59 million, that's for the, the  
21 new landings that we put in place for the 2017 and  
22 2018 service.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: What did the...  
24 what did those 59 million dollars allow you to do?  
25



1  
2 point want to focus our efforts on launching the  
3 current routes that we have in place and after we  
4 have completed the 2018 launches we want to revisit  
5 our opportunities for future ferry expansion and look  
6 at the feasible sites like the one in your district  
7 you mentioned that we look forward to evaluating  
8 further.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: But we are not  
10 asking for EDC to put one money.. on dollar, the  
11 125<sup>th</sup>... the 125<sup>th</sup> dock have been built, standing there  
12 for a year waiting for the Columbia expansion what  
13 I'm saying is that I put the money already with the  
14 support of the Speaker, five million dollars there,  
15 so even if there's not any new ferry right now but we  
16 expecting to add 10,000 new apartments in that area  
17 in the next 15 years, why there has been more than  
18 three years five million dollars sitting there and  
19 not even a study been done and when I no asking EDC  
20 to put one cent.

21 SETH MYERS: I, I think we'd like to  
22 understand how a, a ferry dock or terminal there  
23 could fit into a, a larger system for ferries if  
24 that's... [cross-talk]









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2 towards replacement and in doing so we wanted to make  
3 conscious... make, make good investments using public  
4 money and wanted to make sure that we weren't buying  
5 ticketing infrastructure that wouldn't be useful to  
6 us in the future. So, what we decided to do is  
7 actually focus on buying a very flexible kind of  
8 ticketing infrastructure that we are using that we  
9 did speak to MTA about to make sure that something  
10 like this represents the kind of future systems they  
11 might be looking at and in doing so that actually  
12 gives us a lot of flexibility to integrate  
13 technically in the future. So, we're looking forward  
14 to what that... where MTA goes and then being able to  
15 have a system ourselves that is already in place and  
16 that from a technical perspective can be integrated.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: But I'm asking  
18 is EDC... conversation with the MTA with a plan to  
19 build a payment system where New Yorkers or tourists  
20 is able to transfer one payment system from train,  
21 busses, bike to a ferry.

22 SETH MYERS: I think the, the simple  
23 answer is yes, we have been... we have been and will  
24 continue to work with the MTA on how we can integrate  
25 the infrastructure, in this case the ticketing

1 systems that we use and how we can make sure that  
2 whatever we are using and the MTA ends up selecting  
3 that they can talk to each other and work seamlessly  
4 together. That, that is... [cross-talk]

5  
6 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: So, you...

7 [cross-talk]

8 SETH MYERS: ...the goal... that is a goal we  
9 share and I, I hope that we get there.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: So, you will  
11 be fine for a new end?

12 SETH MYERS: I will be... I'm sorry...

13 [cross-talk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: I, I say you  
15 will be fine let's say for someone who pay the  
16 payment in a train during whatever time an hour or  
17 two for someone to transfer... to transfer from that  
18 train to the ferry with the same fare that they paid?

19 SETH MYERS: That, that would be the goal  
20 of fare integration, yes.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Okay, thank  
22 you.

23 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you Chair  
24 Rodriguez, we've been joined by Council Members  
25 Deutsch and Chin. Now we're going to go onto Council

1  
2 Member Vacca who was here early and ready and eager  
3 to talk to you all.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I wouldn't...  
5 [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Council Member  
7 Vacca... [cross-talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I wouldn't have  
9 missed this for the world. I want to ask you what  
10 plans do you have for Throgs Neck, Ferry Point, and  
11 City Island in my district?

12 SETH MYERS: Thank you for that question.  
13 We are, as I've stated earlier we are very focused  
14 right now on launching the routes that we have  
15 currently planned for '17 and '18 and after we launch  
16 those we will embark on a study that will revisit  
17 potential areas where we could expand the ferry  
18 system to.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: So, that, that  
20 means you have no plans?

21 SETH MYERS: No, that... our plan... [cross-  
22 talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: ...because I have...  
24 [cross-talk]

25 SETH MYERS: ...our plan... [cross-talk]

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: ...asked... I have  
3 asked this question for several years, I wanted to  
4 know several years ago when the stop you announced  
5 today first were thought of I said that Throgs Neck  
6 and City Island, and Ferry Point should be included  
7 in the study, I met with all the EDC people, I spoke  
8 to the Mayor, I spoke to all his people and nothing  
9 has been done.

10 SETH MYERS: We, we, we should talk a  
11 little more about what we looked at in 20... in our  
12 2013... [cross-talk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I know what you  
14 looked at, I know what you looked at in 2013, I was  
15 here when the council... by, by that time I was here  
16 eight years. It seems to me that when you come to the  
17 council we listen to the bureaucratic speak but we  
18 are charged with the responsibility of oversight and  
19 when there are members including myself but there are  
20 others who give meaningful input we then... to then  
21 have that input ignored means that we are not part of  
22 a partnership as the... as many people think that we  
23 are, I think that we're part of a partnership when we  
24 partner with you the way you want us to partner with  
25 you and I don't march lockstep with anyone, I want to

1  
2 know when is my neighborhood going to get ferry  
3 service because you cannot sit here and say anything  
4 about the MTA when the fact remains that  
5 neighborhoods that are transit deserts like mine are  
6 ignored, a vast waterfront totally unused and we talk  
7 about the MTA, sure, the MTA's a problem they've been  
8 a problem for years but you in this city can do  
9 something about ferry service, that's in your power,  
10 the MTA maybe not, this is in your power and you have  
11 done nothing for my district and nothing for my  
12 community and that's not acceptable to me and to sit  
13 here and say that we're at the same place we were in  
14 2013 is a load of bologna and it's a waste of our  
15 precious time but it's a waste of my neighborhood's  
16 efforts. I drove here today, I do not drive down to  
17 city hall, I take the train 95 percent of the time  
18 but because I'm running around I took a car. First of  
19 all, for me to get here from Throgs Neck is a car or  
20 a bus to the train and then the train, it is one hour  
21 and a half each way, the car is no better because we  
22 are in parking lots on the FDR Drive and anywhere  
23 else we go in Manhattan. So, when you tell me that  
24 neighborhoods like mine are somewhere in the future I  
25 know that that future is in perpetuity, it's going to

1  
2 be a never situation, it's not acceptable. I want  
3 something done, what do I have to do to get something  
4 done?

5           SETH MYERS: I can commit to you that we  
6 will reevaluate what we looked at previously, update  
7 it and work closely with you so you can be fully  
8 involved in our analysis and understand exactly how  
9 we are reaching the conclusions we're reaching and  
10 let you challenge those conclusions if you disagree  
11 with them. It's something... [cross-talk]

12           COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: But that's  
13 happened already, I've challenged the conclusions,  
14 you've come here today with... just telling us what you  
15 want to tell us and you expect us to tell... you expect  
16 us to tell you that it's a great thing you're doing,  
17 it's not. The Bronx has never had ferry service now  
18 you're giving us one stop, thanks, am I supposed to  
19 say thank you I'm indebted to you? I'm not saying it,  
20 I think it's an outrage and it's insulting to my  
21 community, insulting when all the elected officials,  
22 when the community boards, when we document our case  
23 and we ask for ferry service and you turn a blind... a,  
24 a death ear to us. So, I'm sorry that the EDC... who's  
25 the head of EDC now, I can forget?

1  
2           SETH MYERS: James Patchett is our  
3 President.

4           COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Mr... you're  
5 representing Mr. Patchett?

6           SETH MYERS: Yes.

7           COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Where is he?

8           SETH MYERS: He, he is on paternity  
9 leave.

10          COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: He's on maternity  
11 leave so you're right under Mr. Patchett?

12          SETH MYERS: I... we're... I'm an Executive  
13 Vice President at EDC, I work in the President's  
14 Office so, yes, I'm... [cross-talk]

15          COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Okay... [cross-talk]

16          SETH MYERS: ...I'm his representative here  
17 today.

18          COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Well then you or  
19 he has to take the lead and do something and not give  
20 my community these answers.

21          SETH MYERS: Look, look forward to  
22 working on it... on it with you sincerely, we, we are  
23 happy to have a very collaborative engaging process  
24 around it.

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COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: What has your survey shown... you've, you've done an analysis obviously my district was passed up when you did the analysis, why was Throgs Neck, Ferry Point, City Island why are they not included in this plan, why?

SETH MYERS: I, I'd be more than happy to dig into the... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: No, no, no, you should know now, why were they not included, I'm asking you a question on the stand, you... [cross-talk]

SETH MYERS: I, I... and... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: ...should know why... [cross-talk]

SETH MYERS: ...and, and we're... and we're prepared to answer it for you sir. James do... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Well then, I'm... [cross-talk]

SETH MYERS: ...you want to talk a... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: ...sorry... [cross-talk]

SETH MYERS: ...little more about the... [cross-talk]



1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: ...if you're not  
3 prepared to answer then this is... [cross-talk]

4 SETH MYERS: No, we're completely  
5 prepared to answer.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Excuse me?

7 SETH MYERS: We're, we're prepared to  
8 answer I was just about to... [cross-talk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: You're prepared...  
10 [cross-talk]

11 SETH MYERS: ...ask James to... [cross-talk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: And I want to  
13 know... [cross-talk]

14 SETH MYERS: ...explain in a little more  
15 detail.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Why...

17 JAMES WONG: Sure, so, a couple of the  
18 areas that you've talked about in the Bronx do suffer  
19 from some of the challenging geographies that while  
20 they are near water unfortunately some of them the  
21 actual travel time it takes to get around some of the  
22 peninsulas and challenging navigational geography  
23 does make for an extremely long travel time which is  
24 far in access beyond when you go past Ferry Point  
25 Park and as you've mentioned to us a few times going

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around the bend but in fact when we looked at places like Ferry Point Park which was one of the places that we looked at where adjacent to Soundview where we ultimately ended up one of the things we really focused on was what... and this is the same metric that we used across the city was how many people lived in the immediate areas around it so that we can look at who might actually ride some of these systems. In addition, because we acknowledged that Ferry Point Park is within a golf course area and that people aren't living directly adjacent to it we actually extended in places like that where we expected there to be driving... people who would be driving, people who would be interested in this and still did not find as much ridership demand as we saw in Soundview. So, all these things were taken into account as part of that study and as I said... as Seth has mentioned and as we're really looking forward to in the future is understanding what particularly in some of these neighborhoods where it's not necessarily just a walking market but really understanding how people are interacting with the system. So, for example in Soundview we understand that there may be people who are going to be driving there and we want to know

1  
2 what those dynamics look like. We've been operating  
3 the East River service which is very much a walking  
4 market and want to see how these things are changing  
5 so this is all going to be really helpful information  
6 for us as we look forward to... [cross-talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: But, but... [cross-  
8 talk]

9 JAMES WONG: ...to as far as in the future...  
10 [cross-talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: ...we could have  
12 told you that, in my district you have to have a  
13 facility where people can part their car and get on  
14 the ferry that's the way my district is because we  
15 are mostly one and two family homes and more spread  
16 out, we could have told you that, that's, that's very  
17 well known. What you did before this is that you  
18 established ferry service in neighborhoods that  
19 already have a very good train service so  
20 neighborhoods that have very good train service are  
21 now getting ferry service so... those neighborhoods are  
22 going to have rents through the roof now, everybody  
23 is going to want to move there and then we talk about  
24 affordable housing and gentrification well now we  
25 know what's going on but neighborhoods like mine

1  
2 where it's a challenge we're ignored. The city is  
3 supposed to meet the challenges, the Bronx is ground  
4 zero for inequity, that word that I hear all the  
5 time, my district's ground zero for inequity and this  
6 is yet another example of inequity, if there's a  
7 challenging situation you should address and you  
8 should meet it that's what we expect of city  
9 government. So, I'll end it, I know the Chair's  
10 wanting me to relinquish the microphone but this is  
11 just unacceptable to me and if you want to come forth  
12 with a plan I'm, I'm here but as of today I see  
13 nothing, not that I expected to see anything but you  
14 saying that there's... that we're nowhere, we at the  
15 same place we were in 2013 is a very poor indicator  
16 of where this agency is with ferry service and this  
17 plan is not good news for the Bronx or for my  
18 district.

19 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you Council  
20 Member Vacca, I want to note we've been joined by  
21 Council Member Van Bramer, I will now go to Council  
22 Member Constantinides.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Good  
24 afternoon. So, about 2,700 riders every day on the  
25 Astoria stop... Astoria route, where does that fit on

1  
2 sort of the projection model for that particular  
3 route, are we ahead of where we want to be, are we  
4 behind, where, where... how are we doing on this route?

5           SETH MYERS: James do you want to talk a  
6 little bit... [cross-talk]

7           JAMES WONG: Sure, systemwide we are as  
8 we had mentioned reaching our ridership projections  
9 earlier than we thought as Seth had mentioned where  
10 we've hit our two million mark about two months ahead  
11 and that does include some of the ridership that's  
12 just come on from Astoria. I don't have the exact  
13 projection to... on... at the route level with me but  
14 we'd be happy to go through that with you. I know  
15 anecdotally that we've been seeing a lot of happy  
16 people coming through the Astoria route...

17           COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: As have  
18 I, I'm just trying to get... I mean you know I can sort  
19 of take anecdotes and say yes, I think it's going  
20 great, I personally think it's going great but I  
21 would really like to drill down, you know by stop, by  
22 route and see where we are so we have data.

23           SETH MYERS: We're, we're eager to see  
24 that as well and I think transportation planning  
25 experts would probably caution about taking the



1 officials and community boards, we have had office  
2 hours before so essentially Hornblower has set up an  
3 office hours type of open door where people can come  
4 in and speak to the operator and find out more  
5 information. So, I'm happy to work with you and if  
6 you have any other locations throughout the community  
7 that you think we should be doing outreach we will  
8 follow up.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: And how  
11 close are we working with Citi Bike and DOT now that,  
12 that... you know Citi Bike has come into Astoria as  
13 well about a month... [cross-talk]

14 JUSTINE JOHNSON: Yeah... [cross-talk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: ...after,  
16 you know the ferry has how, how are we linking the...  
17 [cross-talk]

18 JUSTINE JOHNSON: Right... [cross-talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: ...two of  
20 them to sort of make sure we link those two  
21 transportation options?

22 JUSTINE JOHNSON: Great and I'll pass it  
23 over to James to give you an update.

24 JAMES WONG: Sure, we worked closely with  
25 DOT and Citi Bike in advance to the expansion to





1  
2 want to reiterate that publicly that we really need  
3 to kind of get this done before the kayak season next  
4 year.

5           SETH MYERS: Well we completely share  
6 your sense of, of priority on the issue, we've done a  
7 lot of work and thank you for your leadership and  
8 assistance in, in getting us to... in, in, involved in  
9 this issue and, and working with the... those people  
10 powered or human powered boaters, you know with, with  
11 our efforts, with the efforts of our operator and  
12 with collaboration with the Parks Department we've  
13 done a lot to try to engage and increase awareness of  
14 it, it's something that we look forward to  
15 continuing.

16           COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINDES: And I  
17 looked at, you know the, the radio tower there, there  
18 are some things in the community that are sense... or a  
19 source of pride and there are some things that are  
20 sources of anx, right and, and that radio tower it's,  
21 it's in really poor shape and the, the opportunity  
22 that we're going to have to transform that into an  
23 Eco launch, into a kayak launch for the community is  
24 going to go beyond just access to the water, it's  
25 going to be an opportunity to clean up a, a sort of



1 likely will be revisiting as, as we evaluate it.

2 James, I don't know if you want to expand on that a  
3 little bit from what we found in that, that previous  
4 study.  
5

6 JAMES WONG: During the time in that 2013  
7 study it was actually looked at as a market rate  
8 service as one that people would be paying a...  
9 somewhat of a premium for but what we really  
10 understood out of that and several sorts of  
11 evaluations is that certainly for airport service  
12 you're looking primarily to support it with high  
13 capacity modes, things that can move hundreds and  
14 hundreds of people as opposed to sort of the smaller  
15 vessels that we have, 150 passenger vessel. So,  
16 keeping in mind what the best way... these ferries, the  
17 ones that we're using they're not a silver bullet,  
18 they're not the solution to all problems but  
19 certainly hear what you're saying in terms of looking  
20 forward to different ways to serve the airport.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: I mean if  
22 you look at the Grand Central at rush hour, right, if  
23 you look at Astoria Boulevard at rush hour you see  
24 humongous traffic jams like... and, and cars going in  
25 and out of the airport and if we can find a way to



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so... sorry guys but we are... we are kind of seeing that beautiful kind of transformation really of how our waterways are being used and so I have... I... and not only that but for my own commute to City Hall, I, I prefer the ferry, it just puts a smile on your face which is why I think you're seeing so much need for, for that to be expanded. I'll just throw some things that community folks wanted me to talk about. One of them is winter, people are anticipating a, a, a New York winter, a New York City winter and capacity really ranges when you can use the, the outside area versus the inside area and so are you calculating that ridership that has a fuller capacity, a higher capacity during summer times and spring time and fall and are you anticipating need for, for changes or... I guess what I'm trying to say is that there, there are... there are boats that are full when you use the whole boat and so when people are using this as their commute you're going... you're going to lose capacity when no one's going to want to be up on the higher outside space which means your capacity's going to go lower and... which means that people that weren't waiting before are going to start to wait, this is a great conversation to happen between a rider and one

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of the Hornblower captains that I overheard and injected myself in the middle of and I said I'd bring it to a, a hearing today. So, if you can kind of talk about winter capacity and what you're, you're thinking and prepping and preparing people for?

SETH MYERS: Sure, there, there are a couple of different aspects of how we're, we're getting ready for winter. On some of the, the newer landings we are actually winterizing the landing itself and that's something that we'll be continuing to do the, the fall and into the, the... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: All of them... [cross-talk]

SETH MYERS: ...early winter... all, all, all of the new landings that we've put in... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: ...the new landings... [cross-talk]

SETH MYERS: ...will be winterized and you... if you want to go see an example of that the landing at Astoria today was put in... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Sorry, which one?

SETH MYERS: The, the Astoria... [cross-talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Astoria?

SETH MYERS: Yep, currently has that in place. So, that... on, on... that's on the landing front. There are a couple of other considerations that happen in the winter. First and James should expand on this, we do have an overall decline in the system's ridership as you... as you'd imagine when it gets colder people use the ferry less and certainly any discretionary riders may not choose to ride in January or February of the year, right, versus a, a nice sunny and summer day but... Two, and, and someone should correct me if I'm wrong the, the capacity of the boat should not change whether people use the upper deck or the lower deck, the boat at large is rated for a, a capacity of passengers on it that's based on the ability to evacuate the boat and the amount of crew they have and life jackets and that should not change whether people are below or above the top deck and James do you want to talk a little more about... [cross-talk]

JAMES WONG: Yeah... [cross-talk]

SETH MYERS: ...scheduling ridership changes?







1 Atlantic Basin and can, can you tell me a little bit  
2 about, about that decision-making process and maybe  
3 some information that I can take back from.. or to my  
4 Red Hook community about where you do trainings for,  
5 for captains and, and pilots?  
6

7 SETH MYERS: So, throughout the whole  
8 system we actually have as Hornblower the operator is  
9 continuing to train and build up its crew there are  
10 regular trainings going on throughout the city, it's  
11 not just Atlantic Basin, in fact we're... you have  
12 captains who are getting... people who are getting  
13 promoted and are working to build up to those levels  
14 beyond the standard safe, safety trainings that  
15 they're doing indoors and with simulators, they also  
16 will be doing test dockings and working with vessels  
17 to actually try out at different landings as well.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Can we get... can  
19 we get... [cross-talk]

20 JUSTINE JOHNSON: Yeah... [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: ...transparent  
22 data about... [cross-talk]

23 JUSTINE JOHNSON: and at this, this...  
24 [cross-talk]

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: ...where, where  
3 they're... [cross-talk]

4 JUSTINE JOHNSON: ...point... [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: ...training, how  
6 long, etcetera?

7 JUSTINE JOHNSON: Yeah and so essentially  
8 all the landings there is frequent training at all of  
9 the landings, it's not just only at one place. So,  
10 essentially, we do frequent checks with our crew and  
11 as well, you know a variety of different tests as  
12 part of that.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Can we also get  
14 environmental impacts on, on the training and so was,  
15 was that part of your initial study or is that just  
16 like a transportation environmental impacts...

17 SETH MYERS: I'd have to go back and, and  
18 speak with the planner who did the EIS that we did  
19 and see what we would have assumed about trainings  
20 and whether that would fit a, a filter or a screen  
21 that the EIS would have picked up in terms of level  
22 of usage.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Okay... [cross-  
24 talk]

25 SETH MYERS: We can follow... [cross-talk]

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: And then you  
3 can probably... [cross-talk]

4 SETH MYERS: ...up with that... [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: ...assume that  
6 the, the concern here is that we just need to figure  
7 out how, how... what the impact is to communities where  
8 there's an extra boat activity that's happening and  
9 so we want to make sure that, that, that was studied  
10 and if it wasn't studied that we study it to figure  
11 out what that impact is... [cross-talk]

12 SETH MYERS: Absolutely... [cross-talk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: It's, it's  
14 making people feel a little bit nervous in places  
15 like Red Hook where we have shore power for example  
16 that is not being utilized right now by the ships;  
17 Queen Mary, the, the Princess and the... whatever the...  
18 there's a third... there's a third ship that, that  
19 docks in Red Hook and none of them have been  
20 connecting to shore power, that's for another  
21 conversation, another hearing possibly but that's of  
22 huge concern. So, as people are, are engaging the  
23 waterfront in a new way more people are seeing, more  
24 eyes, I'm getting a lot of concerned people about,  
25 about the lack of connection to shore power. Again,

1  
2 we'll come up... come back to that in another... at  
3 another time. Let's talk... let's talk about economic  
4 impacts, so in your... in your testimony you talked  
5 about the system support, housing development, job  
6 creation and neighborhood growth and so I'm kind of  
7 interested in a very kind of particular activation  
8 question around, around places like, like Sunset Park  
9 and Red Hook that have maritime, industrial, business  
10 zones, zones and zoning there and trying to figure  
11 out if, if there is a hierarchy of, of commitment  
12 about where housing and economic development on  
13 activation of industrial business like how, how EDC  
14 understands that and if you can kind of talk to us  
15 about how you're thinking about it, I know the  
16 community will be ready to talk about it... is ready to  
17 talk about it... is talking about it and it'd be good  
18 for them to hear today how you're thinking about  
19 that.

20                   SETH MYERS: I would say it's a very  
21 thoughtful question and let me try to give a  
22 thoughtful... [cross-talk]

23                   COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: That's a very  
24 what?

25

1  
2           SETH MYERS: That's a very thoughtful  
3 question... [cross-talk]

4           COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thoughtful  
5 question... [cross-talk]

6           SETH MYERS: And let me try to give a  
7 thoughtful answer to it which is I, I think there is  
8 a, a desire to serve all of those needs in terms of  
9 housing, job opportunities, see the retention and  
10 growth of industrial areas that are so important to  
11 our city's economy and obviously we would have to  
12 strike the right balance between some of those in  
13 places. So, we, we have seen the ferries as being  
14 able to connect existing communities that are in  
15 isolated neighborhoods that have been traditionally  
16 underserved by the existing transit system allowing  
17 those residents to get better access to job  
18 opportunities elsewhere in the city. There's a, a, a  
19 second middle ground where you have an existing  
20 neighborhood but there's continual growth there and  
21 you... when you look at growth patterns in the city and  
22 where a lot of the new housing went especially this  
23 Mayor's affordable housing program is happening so  
24 much of it is at the waterfront in areas where we're  
25 seeing that the... there is either too little transit



1  
2 we're already kind of past the rezoning and we kind  
3 of want to end with a kind of activation that is very  
4 particular or a priority for an administration like  
5 this one and so what I want to do is start even  
6 before the rezoning and say what, what are the  
7 community... what's, what's the community needs, how,  
8 how are we thinking about it, we have 197A plans that  
9 are connected to both of these landings as well and  
10 so I, I just want to very publicly say that that's  
11 where we start the conversation as we move forward  
12 and that the balancing act happens after that  
13 conversation has been... has been brought to the  
14 community with these, these data points about  
15 activation and increase or addressing some of these  
16 issues around transit deserts. And thank you for your  
17 response to Citi Bike, I have been calling for Citi  
18 Bike to be placed near the Red Hook Ferry as well... as  
19 well as other MTA lines around Red Hook and Sunset  
20 Park... [cross-talk]

21 SETH MYERS: Great... [cross-talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: ...and closer in  
23 proximity that, that can allow for winter ridership  
24 and other parts of the neighborhood ridership to, to  
25 the ferry. Thank you for your time... [cross-talk]



CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you...

[cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: ...Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you Council Member Menchaca now Council Member Gentile.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Thank you Mr. Chairs and thank you to the Chairs for this, this hearing, thank you for coming today. I'm also on that same South ferry line that Council Member Menchaca was, was lauding and, and, and rightfully so. I am on the, the first stop or the last stop of that line, the Bay Ridge stop on the South ferry line and as, as successful as that line has been in terms of access and equity there is a large swath of residents that live in my district in the lower portion of Bay Ridge near the Verrazano Bridge that have no public access means of getting to the... to the 69<sup>th</sup> Street, the Bay Ridge Avenue ferry stop and we're talking about a distance of maybe 30 blocks, 30, 30, 30... 35 blocks where there's no access, no, no, no train, no, no public bus to get anybody there; parking is almost non-existent near that, that stop at Bay Ridge Avenue. So, I have wondered why it is given that situation and that large swath of people that would

2 love... would love to use the ferry that a shuttle bus  
3 service was not instituted with this service much as  
4 it was instituted in Far Rockaway because of the  
5 large swath of areas in Far Rockaway on either side  
6 of the ferry that were not accessible by public  
7 transportation to the Far Rockaway ferry stop, you  
8 recognized it there but in terms of access and equity  
9 for everybody in the vicinity of this Bay Ridge stop  
10 you have yet to recognize the need for a shuttle  
11 service.

12 SETH MYERS: Thank you for the question  
13 Council Member, I think the, the right way to start  
14 this off before my, my preamble to James delving into  
15 a little more of our assessment around when and  
16 exactly how to put in shuttle bus service, I would  
17 say it... with, with very few exceptions we have  
18 strived to put in ferry landings that draw from a  
19 half mile radius around the landing where people can  
20 for the most part, the vast majority of our users  
21 would walk to that landing and when we've seen a  
22 capacity or a volume of people that is sufficient  
23 from that stop and then the other subsequent stops on  
24 the route that will get the boat to a level of  
25 capacity where we feel we can routinely accommodate

1 the level of ridership we want to that would be  
2 considered a, a, a success and the right amount of  
3 ridership to get to. The deviation from that would be  
4 in lower density areas like the Rockaways you  
5 mentioned where we do want to collect people who  
6 otherwise would have limited means to get to that  
7 ferry landing. James do you want to dig in a little  
8 more about how we accessed the Bay Ridge area?  
9

10 JAMES WONG: Sure, I mean you hit on a  
11 fair bit of it which is to say that the, the  
12 residential density in the immediate area is seen as  
13 the area that we are striving to support now of  
14 course people can come in from other areas and if  
15 fact you've highlighted some people who are looking  
16 to come in from just past there but in general what  
17 we have looking for is to find solutions where we can  
18 serve that walking market. We acknowledge that  
19 ferries are not the silver bullet and going to fix  
20 all transportation challenges which we acknowledge  
21 there are throughout the city but where we think this  
22 is most effective is really to serve that walking  
23 market and people who sometimes use bicycles which  
24 ends up being a good last mile connection. In  
25 general, we're trying not to be in the shuttle bus..



1 information available, we're happy to follow up with  
2 the right stuff.

3  
4 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Because I, I  
5 have to tell you the, the people that are most  
6 harassed and most effected by the R-Train and R  
7 stands for rarely and that's how often the R-Train  
8 runs into Bay Ridge, rarely, those are the people  
9 that go all the way to 95<sup>th</sup> Street or 86<sup>th</sup> Street that  
10 would love to have the option to use the ferry  
11 instead of the R-Train but cannot get to the ferry  
12 stop.

13 SETH MYERS: We'll be happy to share the  
14 numbers we have with you and see how we can  
15 collaborate to increase the access for the ferry  
16 landing there.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Great and I have  
18 spoken to Justine about this many times over and to  
19 Hornblower as well about this too.

20 SETH MYERS: Thank you.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Thank you.

22 SETH MYERS: Yep.

23 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you very  
24 much Council Member Gentile, on to Council Member  
25 Levin.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
3 much Mr. Chair. I just have a couple of questions  
4 about the East River Ferry, you know the, the, the  
5 former line being incorporated into the new system.  
6 With the entity coming over to operate Hornblower  
7 what we've seen... at least what I've seen personally  
8 and I live in that neighborhood and I've heard from  
9 constituents is there have been delays kind of  
10 inadequate communication around when delays are  
11 happening and why delays are happening obviously  
12 there are times when it's overcrowded and people  
13 can't get on and as a result my concern is that it is  
14 not seen by people that live in close proximity to  
15 the ferry stops as being a reliable commuter network  
16 and that's... so all of those delays, I mean I went one  
17 day and it was... you know I... I'll give you an example,  
18 I went one day and I was catching a afternoon ferry,  
19 it was a 3:50 ferry and I had to get over into  
20 Midtown Manhattan by... for a 4:10 meeting or something  
21 like that and... and there had been an oil slick a  
22 couple days... two days earlier so it was... you know 48  
23 hours earlier there was an oil slick and so there was  
24 some coast guard presence for this South line but the  
25 3:50 just never showed and the next ferry was at 4:20

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TRANSPORTATION

and so I got on the ferry at 4:20 and I asked the guys is this the 3:50 ferry or is this the 4:20 ferry and they were like this is the 4:20 ferry and I said well whatever happened to the 3:50 ferry, they're like I don't know, it just didn't show, there was no communication, they didn't tell people they were waiting, that like that ferry is... I mean it's not like the subway where it's coming every seven minutes, this is every half an hour and you know it just doesn't... that type of experience and stays with you, you know when you're deciding how you're going to commute it, it doesn't... you know it doesn't really give a lot of confidence that that's a reliable way to get around the city and so I realize it was early on in their... in their contract but how are you... how is EDC looking at the issues of reliability, how are you tracking it and how... what are you doing to require Hornblower or in conjunction with Hornblower what are you doing to, to increase the communication so at least it's... I mean it's not a very high standard but at least on par with what the MTA does when the... when there's a, a... delays in the subway system?

1  
2           SETH MYERS: Thank you for that question  
3 and in many ways when it comes to capacity or  
4 crowding that has been a, a challenge, a success  
5 driven challenge but a challenge that we've been  
6 working hard to address I think, you know unique to  
7 the East River where we had an existing service,  
8 where we had an existing base of riders who were  
9 familiar with it, the... has the largest line, people  
10 do routinely use that and continue to use it, we want  
11 to make sure that it is reliable and reliable as  
12 possible. I think one of the biggest changes for  
13 those regular commuters who used it was the, the  
14 change in the fare structure which in all likelihood  
15 led to higher, you know or increase in ridership as  
16 that became an attractive option for them. throughout  
17 the summer as we've... as we've learned more about the  
18 operations of this network and learned more about the  
19 particulars of, of these routes and especially as  
20 these routes now start working in conjunction with  
21 each other and how that affects the, the system as a  
22 whole. We are seeing the need to dramatically both  
23 shift... adjust our schedules and dramatically improve  
24 and increase the level of communication, that's  
25 something we, we noticed very early on in the system.



1  
2 Now I think under NYC Ferry we have a, a better  
3 ability to really increase substantially that level  
4 of communication than we've had previously primarily  
5 through the app and we want to continue to push for  
6 more improvements around that..

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I had the app on  
8 that day and it, it didn't say 3:50 ferry not coming.

9 SETH MYERS: Oh I, I, I agree that  
10 there's a lot of room for improvement on it and  
11 we're... that's something we're driving very hard to  
12 do. In addition to the app it's, it's looking at  
13 opportunities like getting people on the ground and  
14 that's a lot... our, our operator brought in a lot of  
15 extra customer service agents as soon as we heard  
16 about the initial problems like the one you're  
17 describing to us and, and bringing out our own staff  
18 to get out in the field.

19 JUSTINE JOHNSON: Yeah and in terms of  
20 communication aware that in the very beginning there  
21 were some challenges with communication and to Seth's  
22 point we really focus on... one, we have digital  
23 information displays and are utilizing that to our  
24 best ability now, if we have any, you know service  
25 interruptions really making sure that those delays





1  
2 running an errand, you know the, the vast majority of  
3 them are New York City residents. I will say with,  
4 with using the, the digital information displays or  
5 using the app we're striving to make sure that the  
6 information updates are in real time and people get  
7 the information as quickly and as fluidly as possible  
8 and I think another point I want to mention around  
9 evaluating and improving the operations on East River  
10 as we saw this summer, you know we, we did both  
11 modify the schedule and bring in additional  
12 supplemental vessels not just on the peak summer  
13 weekend days where we saw our system experience that  
14 enormous level of ridership and interest but also on,  
15 on those more routine weekday mornings where we saw  
16 routinely that the boats were, were hitting capacity  
17 and quickly brought in additional unscheduled boats  
18 to supplement that schedule so we could have  
19 additional capacity to make sure we weren't leaving  
20 anyone on the dock.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Now are you  
22 talking to the MTA and the DOT about how to work with  
23 them on the, the L-Train shut down plan?

24 SETH MYERS: Yes, we are. We're, we're in  
25 collaboration with them, you know in, in all

1  
2 likelihood the ferries will be but one piece of a  
3 larger mitigation strategy to... [cross-talk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So, when I'm  
5 having like a community meeting about the mitigations  
6 I can call you guys and you'll come?

7 JUSTINE JOHNSON: We, we attended your  
8 past meeting that you had so we will continue to be a  
9 part of those meetings.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay, thanks.  
11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you Council  
13 Member Levin, Council Member Chin.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you Chair. I  
15 just have a couple of questions, for my constituents  
16 who use it as commuting to work they love it but  
17 there were hiccups in terms of what you heard Council  
18 Member Levin said it all; crowding and then I think...  
19 especially with Hornblower in the... in the beginning  
20 they didn't... I don't think they, they hired trained  
21 staff that really... because on Pier 11, I represent  
22 Lower Manhattan so there's other ferry that stops  
23 there and they can actually see the difference  
24 between the different companies and for the, the East  
25 River Ferry there were... they needed extra help in

2 terms of making sure people know, you know the time  
3 and also getting online and things like that and, and  
4 that's here it's, it's pretty crowded with so much  
5 going on. So, I think that's something that we wanted  
6 to make sure that for the commuter it is a priority  
7 and during the summer the family loves it, I mean  
8 I've seen my constituents with their family, they all  
9 go in there and you know they going to the beach and  
10 it's great and so I think that there were services  
11 that were expanded during the summer. So, I, I want  
12 to make sure that you pay attention to the Pier 11.  
13 The other question I have is really bringing the  
14 ferry service to the Lower East Side, I know that on  
15 the Grand Street there's going to be a, a stop there  
16 and that's great, we're looking forward to it but I  
17 also wanted to advocate for additional stops along  
18 the way especially in the Two Bridges area where we  
19 have one subway line, which is the F-Train, one  
20 entrance, very crowded, we have a lot of residents  
21 there and we have Pier 36, Basketball City the pier  
22 there and all we're getting now is party boat docking  
23 there, getting you know... people going there to get on  
24 party boats or getting off of party boats but that  
25 would be another site that could be great for a

2 commuter because we already have a pier there and  
3 then going further down don't forget the South three  
4 Seaport, alright, I mean the historic area Hornblower  
5 already has their, their pier there, the pier 15 that  
6 is another great location for commuters but also with  
7 tourists but definitely a lot of families are moving  
8 into Lower Manhattan in that financial district area  
9 near the Seaport, we have schools there and it's  
10 another stop where people get a quick ride to go to  
11 work uptown instead of walking a few blocks or, or  
12 heading off to the train that's overcrowded. So, I...  
13 that's what I, I really want to advocate for more  
14 additional stops in Lower Manhattan on the East River  
15 route that would really help in terms of the  
16 commuting and the benefit of that would be like job  
17 creation, you know people are having more opportunity  
18 for job training and to be able to travel to their  
19 work site quicker because they are not that close to  
20 the subway especially on the Lower East Side part.

21 SETH MYERS: Thank you for that, we look  
22 forward to looking at ways that we can leverage the,  
23 the success we're had to date in both to continue to  
24 make improvements but to find ways to identify the  
25 right places that we can expand to and to continue a

1  
2 successful ferry service so thank you for that and  
3 thank you for your comments about Pier 11, that's  
4 probably at the forefront of our initiatives to make  
5 improvements to the, the existing infrastructure that  
6 we had before we launched and find ways to both  
7 increase the safety and the operations of that as, as  
8 well as the customer experience in terms of  
9 introducing some additional logic to the way that we  
10 que passengers and have customer agents in other way  
11 finding the signs that would be deployed to help make  
12 that a little more intuitive to how people should  
13 navigate through it.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Now I know one  
15 question we have is that in terms of discounts for  
16 seniors are there... are there able to take advantage  
17 of riding on the ferry with a discount?

18 SETH MYERS: Yeah, we do have a discount  
19 package.

20 JUSTINE JOHNSON: So, we do have  
21 discounts in place, they're 50 percent off monthly  
22 passes for senior citizens and as well as people with  
23 disabilities.

24

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1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay. So, how are  
3 you going to be publicizing the opening of the, the  
4 stop on Grand Street?

5 JUSTINE JOHNSON: Year, we're really  
6 excited about the launch of the 2018 routes and so as  
7 part of that we'll do an extensive amount of  
8 outreach, I'm actually going to community board  
9 tonight to talk about ferry service so, really  
10 excited to continue those outreach efforts as we did  
11 with the 2017 landings we engaged over 340 plus  
12 stakeholders and we continue to look forward to doing  
13 that as well. We've engaged even as young as the  
14 youngest New Yorkers through a vessel naming contest  
15 where we received really awesome names like Lunchbox  
16 and Friendship Express and we are going to continue  
17 that vessel naming process as well with the young New  
18 Yorkers and most recently yesterday we released the...  
19 launched the vessel naming contest for the next group  
20 of vessels that will be coming online. So, it is  
21 through those processes of, you know essentially  
22 encouraging young New Yorkers to be a part of this  
23 process and as well as adults as who are going to be  
24 taking advantage of this new ferry route and we're  
25 happy to work with you, should we do anything super

1  
2 fun and exciting we're happy to loop all the elected  
3 officials as part of this process.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Well I want to make  
5 sure that we get invited to the launch, you know I  
6 think we missed the last one.

7 JUSTINE JOHNSON: We will make sure that  
8 you receive an invite.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Alright, thank you.  
10 Thank you Chair.

11 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you Council  
12 Member Chin, Chair Rodriguez?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Just one  
14 question following Margaret's question, I know that  
15 you elaborated before about the discounts for the  
16 senior citizen and the question was asked about, it's  
17 great that there's a 50 percent discount but that's a  
18 monthly... [cross-talk]

19 JUSTINE JOHNSON: Correct... [cross-talk]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: ...and you said  
21 that you will work on the daily one... [cross-talk]

22 JUSTINE JOHNSON: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: ...how soon can  
24 we expect to see the daily one in place?

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JUSTINE JOHNSON: Yeah, right now we're again focusing on getting everything ready for a 2017... for the 2018 routes, I think what would be likely is once we get our routes up and running happy to come back with the information about the fare reduction for one ways on the senior citizen pack. If we have any additional information earlier than that I'm happy to come back and give that information as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: But it does... it should not take you... why... I mean what is the technology that you're using that you can upgrade that technology and be able to start implementing the daily senior pass discount as today?

JUSTINE JOHNSON: Yeah, I think that's a great point that you bring up. We are seeing a variety of different ways of how people apply for the discount programs and some people do have a smart phone technology, some people are using paper tickets, essentially, we have to think through what is easiest for the person who is going to be receiving that discount and what that could look like. There are a few logistical things that we need

1  
2 to work through and once we get some clarity on that  
3 we're happy to again follow up with you on that.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Can that  
5 happen before three months?

6 SETH MYERS: We would like it to happen  
7 as soon... [cross-talk]

8 JUSTINE JOHNSON: Yeah... [cross-talk]

9 SETH MYERS: ...as we can... [cross-talk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Okay... [cross-  
11 talk]

12 SETH MYERS: ...I mean... [cross-talk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thanks...  
14 [cross-talk]

15 SETH MYERS: Frankly... [cross-talk]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

17 SETH MYERS: You're welcome.

18 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you Chair  
19 Rodriguez. Let me just go into a speed round of some  
20 final clean up here if you don't mind. Let's talk  
21 about the, the budgeting for the... for the ferry, the  
22 city had projected 30 million dollars in annual  
23 operating support which was an average or anticipated  
24 per trip subsidy of \$6.60 just to confirm the 30  
25

1 million dollars that is what was actually allocated  
2 in the budget for this fiscal year, is that accurate?

3 SETH MYERS: No, that's not... that, that...  
4 the 30 million dollars per year we have a... from...  
5 since we started service to, to... we have a... about a  
6 six-year contract with our operator, Hornblower and  
7 that total contract is worth 180 million dollars so  
8 that averages out to about 30 million dollars a year  
9 which is based on our ridership projections how we  
10 came up with that subsidy.

11 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: So, the contract  
12 obligated the city to pay... [cross-talk]

13 SETH MYERS: I'm sorry? Sorry...

14 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: The, the contract  
15 obligated the city to pay 100 million... 180 million  
16 dollars for a six-year service agreement, is that  
17 accurate?

18 SETH MYERS: Generally speaking, yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: What is  
20 inaccurate about what I said?

21 SETH MYERS: There are lots of different  
22 carveouts and performance payments and other, other  
23 payments based on fuel or number of vessel hours that  
24 could change that number to some degree... [cross-talk]  
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CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: And we pay... you know our obligations to the contractor it's an annual payment to them or have we made most of this in a lump sum payment already?

SETH MYERS: We, we get regular invoices from the contractor, there are some performance payments that, that EDC would pay once a certain goal is achieved and there are others that would be on a more routine regular operation of service payment.

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: How much have we paid to date?

SETH MYERS: I don't have that number right now, I'm more than happy to follow up with you.

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay, we would like that, thank you. In your testimony you had cited a few capital expenditures for barges, gangways, vessels and for home court by my math that's around 196 million dollars based on just adding up the... what was in your testimony, how does that 196 million dollars compare to what initially was projected for capital costs, is it dollar for dollar exactly the same, is it higher or lower, tell us where... what the projection was and how it compares to the 196 million?

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SETH MYERS: The... our, our initial projections when we, we started this were much more focused on the landings that we were going to put in place so we, we initially came out with a 55-million-dollar capital number that we expanded to add in an additional funded project that we had on place already for a landing investment in Astoria to come to the 59 million dollar number. At the time we were starting the implementation of the ferry service we had not really foreseen or budgeted for the ability to do two things that came on later as we started working with operators which was the purchase of, of the vessels from the operator and the creation of a home port. So, as we worked with the operator and saw the long term financial benefits of both having a, a fleet... a set of vessels that we owned and then having a, a New York City based home port and the economic benefits and the workforce benefits of having that here in the city we added those, those numbers into our, our overall budget.

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay, so, so it was the 55 million plus additional four million for Astoria which got you to the, the landing... [cross-talk]

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SETH MYERS: The 59... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...the anticipated  
number and... [cross-talk]

SETH MYERS: ...that's correct... [cross-  
talk]

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...then everything  
else was purchase of vessels and the home port  
facility, is that... [cross-talk]

SETH MYERS: That's correct... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...that accurate...  
okay, is there any other source of funds for this  
other than our own funds here in New York City?

SETH MYERS: So, the, the capital  
investments for the landings, for the home port and  
for the purchase of the boats are the... city capital  
funds and then the operator expense are EDC funds so  
it's our, our corporation self-funds.

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: But nothing  
outside of New York's jurisdiction; state, federal,  
etcetera?

SETH MYERS: There, there are... there's a,  
a federal initiative and James can talk a little more  
about it where we have some grant money that's going



1  
2 to be used in the next year or two for some  
3 additional landings.

4 JAMES WONG: Yeah, we're actually going  
5 to be... we're in the middle of working to design  
6 upgrades to both the South Williamsburg and Hunters  
7 Point South landings to bring them up to compliance  
8 with the rest of ours which include adding additional  
9 slips to those. So, that's using federal money for,  
10 for impotent to the system.

11 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay, that's all  
12 we got for you guys so thank you very much for your  
13 time... [cross-talk]

14 SETH MYERS: Thank you... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...we look, look  
16 forward to collaborating with you and I know there  
17 are a few outstanding numbers we look forward to, to  
18 seeing those too.

19 JUSTINE JOHNSON: Yeah.

20 SETH MYERS: Thank you very much... [cross-  
21 talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: So, thank you  
23 all, thanks for your time.

24 SETH MYERS: Thank you.  
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CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: I have... I have six additional people wish to testify today, we have four seats over there so I'm going to ask the Sergeants to add two seats, we're going to bring everybody up together and I'm going to ask Michael Simas of the Partnership for New York City; Roland Lewis of the Waterfront Alliance; Peter Ebright of New York Water Taxi; Lauren Cosgrove of the National Parks Conservation Association; Mark Gjonaj, Assemblyman; Joseph Hartigan from Rockaway Civic.

Okay, Mr. Simas you're settled we're going to start with you and we're going to move right down the line.

MICHAEL SIMAS: Settled, hanging off the...

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: We're usually two minutes, we're going to give a three minute so...

MICHAEL SIMAS: I'll be under two...

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Do what you can.

MICHAEL SIMAS: Alright, thanks man.

Thanks Chair Garodnick, Rodriguez and Rose for having us here today. The Partnership for New York City represents the city's business leaders and largest private sector employers, we work with government labor and the non-profit sector to enhance the economy of the five boroughs. We support the expanded

1 use of ferries as a supplemental component of our  
2 mass transit system, the utility is become more  
3 important as new residential and employment centers  
4 have been developed along our long-neglected  
5 waterfront. Our part, partnership fund financed the..

6 [cross-talk]

7  
8 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Mike can you  
9 speak up a little bit or pull... [cross-talk]

10 MICHAEL SIMAS: Sure... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...the mic up there  
12 a little... [cross-talk]

13 MICHAEL SIMAS: Sorry... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...closer to you...

15 MICHAEL SIMAS: Our partnership fund  
16 financed the first boat purchased by New York Water  
17 Taxi because we understood the contribution ferries  
18 could make to mobility, access and quality of life in  
19 the city. At the same time, we would argue that the  
20 city and private company should not be operating  
21 ferries and shuttle busses independent of the MTA.  
22 Intermodal connections, fare and transfer systems of  
23 ferries need to be integrated with the MTA. We  
24 realize the MTA has resisted responsibility for  
25 ferries but that should not mean we give up, the city

2 cannot afford redundant and disjointed transportation  
3 activities and riders deserve better. Public  
4 transportation systems all over the world allow users  
5 to switch between modes of transportation using the  
6 same fare system, the city should accelerate the  
7 timetable for integrating ferry payments with the  
8 MetroCard system. In addition, it is important that  
9 ferry schedules be timed so that a rider can connect  
10 between ferries. For example, a person seeking to  
11 commute from Bay Ridge to 34<sup>th</sup> Street during morning  
12 rush hour can only take the 6:30 a.m. or nine a.m.  
13 South Brooklyn ferries and reliably make a connection  
14 to the Astoria route to Midtown without significant  
15 wait time. Along with commuter's, tourists have also  
16 discovered the new ferries, for example cruise ship  
17 companies at the Brooklyn Terminal are providing  
18 passengers with ferry schedules when they disembark.  
19 This is good news; however, the city should focus on  
20 following the models of localities around the world  
21 in our own subway and bus system which have  
22 differential fares targeted to residents and  
23 tourists. For example, in Seattle commuters can buy a  
24 multi ride card for 20 trips that expires after 90  
25 days and by doing so receive a 20 percent discount

1  
2 off the full fare. The New York City Ferry should  
3 create a similar system by raising the single ride  
4 fare to five dollars at a minimum and offering the  
5 rate of 2.75 only if purchasing a set of 10, 20 or  
6 more trips that can expire within a year. This will  
7 not prevent tourists from using the ferry system but  
8 will bring much needed revenue to offset the city  
9 subsidy of the ferries for residents. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you very  
11 much.

12 PETER EBRIGHT: Good afternoon and thank  
13 you to Chairs Rose, Garodnick, Rodriguez and  
14 committee members. I am Peter Ebright, Executive Vice  
15 President of New York Water Taxi. New York Water Taxi  
16 has been in operation for 15 years and we sold it  
17 earlier this year to New York Cruise Lines, operators  
18 of many water born products such as iconic Circle  
19 Line. Under our prior ownership we expressed the  
20 stress over the selection of the current operator of  
21 NYC Ferry and warned that it would be a danger to the  
22 existing water born transportation and sightseeing  
23 businesses. As it turned out the creation of a city  
24 subsidized ferry service did bring about a  
25 consolidation of the water born sightseeing and

1  
2 transportation businesses. Some businesses fell by  
3 the wayside and others consolidated as happened with  
4 New York Water Taxi and New York Cruise Lines. I can  
5 happily report that New York Water Taxi did find a  
6 fitting and welcoming home with New York Cruise Lines  
7 and we do see a bright future ahead in a very  
8 different industry. With that said as with every  
9 business there are opportunities and there are  
10 threats. Let's start with the threats, the dynamic  
11 hasn't changed with NYC Ferry, it does present  
12 heavily subsidized competitor into our industry. New  
13 York City has a vibrant tourism economy and many of  
14 those tourists enjoy viewing the city and the Statue  
15 of Liberty from the water, after all it's a beautiful  
16 view and there's something magical about... magical  
17 about being out in the water but we cannot overlook  
18 the fact this again... a significant number of the  
19 passengers on the \$2.75 NYC Ferry are out of towners  
20 and tourists who would otherwise be riding one of the  
21 non-subsidized offerings such as New York Water Taxi,  
22 this greatly effects our bottom line. In essence the  
23 city's taxpayers are footing the bill for the city to  
24 take business away from hometown companies with a  
25 long history on the harbor. Why buy something at

1 retail price that reflects the product's true cost  
2 when you can get it at a deep discount courtesy of  
3 New York City's taxpayers? I would urge the city to  
4 consider a differential fare structure that would  
5 allow regular riders to enjoy the subsidized fare  
6 while tourists pay an unsubsidized fare as my friend  
7 over here next to me on the panel has, has just  
8 mentioned.  
9

10 MICHAEL SIMAS: Unplanned...

11 PETER EBRIGHT: We didn't... we didn't  
12 collaborate, I swear. Now to the opportunities, New  
13 York Water Taxis in favor of New Yorkers enjoying the  
14 waterfront which has always been the city's great  
15 underappreciated resource. To the extent that NYC  
16 Ferry does this, bravo, it has gotten New Yorkers  
17 attuned to the reality that if you're near the water  
18 you should be able to use it for transportation. So,  
19 we're excited about the opportunities to serve those  
20 areas that are not served by NYC Ferry either via  
21 public service or via private contractor of the water  
22 front stakeholder. We also see opportunities to  
23 provide service during shutdowns of other systems.  
24 Over the summer we very successfully worked with the  
25 Long Island Railroad to serve their customers when

1  
2 repairs were done in Penn Station. Similarly, we are  
3 ready to work with the city and the MTA to provide  
4 service during the pending L-Train shutdown. Any  
5 waterfront community that is not served by NYC Ferry  
6 is understandably clamming for, for ferry service and  
7 as today's hearing shows so are their Council  
8 Members. New York Water Taxi stands ready  
9 enthusiastically willing and able to provide such  
10 service. There is already sufficient vessel inventory  
11 in New York Harbor to serve in expansion needs. I  
12 thank the committees for examining these issues and  
13 welcome any questions.

14 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you.

15 LAUREN COSGROVE: Good afternoon Chairs;  
16 Garodnick, Rodriguez, Rose and Council Members. My  
17 name is Lauren Cosgrove and I'm here today to provide  
18 testimony on behalf of the National Parks  
19 Conservation Association. The National Parks  
20 Conservation Association is the national advocate for  
21 all National Parks across the country and since 1919  
22 NPCA has worked to protect and preserve our nations  
23 national... natural, historical, and cultural resources  
24 for future generations. Here in the Northeast NPCA is  
25 the advocate for the ten National Parks that are



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2 located within New York City. With over a million  
3 members and supporters nationwide and with 40,000  
4 here in New York, NPCA is well aware of the  
5 challenges that New Yorkers face when trying to get  
6 to New York City's National Parks. I'm here today to  
7 encourage the New York City Council and EDC to  
8 provide bigger boats for the New York City Rockaway  
9 Ferry to meet better demand. Additionally, we want to  
10 open up isolated parts of our National Parks located  
11 within the Jamaica Bay unit of Gateway National  
12 Recreation area via boat access to Canarsie Pier.  
13 NPCA also highly encourages the New York City Council  
14 to continue the expansion of the ferry service so  
15 that New Yorkers can better access our National Parks  
16 in New York City especially servicing communities in  
17 the outer boroughs. Improving connections and access  
18 to New York City's National Parks from the outer  
19 boroughs is one of the primary goals of NPCA. Most of  
20 New York City's National Parks are located in  
21 Manhattan and they're often accessible by public  
22 transit. Our National Parks in the city consist of  
23 the African Burial Ground National Monument in Lower  
24 Manhattan, Castle Clinton National Monument in  
25 Battery Park, Federal Hall National Memorial on Wall



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2 Jamaica Bay.. once at Jamaica Bay visitors face  
3 difficulties traveling within the park because many  
4 of its attractions are physically disconnected by  
5 waterways, highways, bridges, tolls and privately-  
6 owned land.

7 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: You could just  
8 wrap it up it would be good.

9 LAUREN COSGROVE: Okay, so I'm, I'm here  
10 primarily to encourage to have larger boats for the  
11 Rockaway Ferry and to promote extended access to both  
12 the Canarsie Pier and Coney Island communities.

13 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Terrific, thank  
14 you.

15 LAUREN COSGROVE: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Roland.

17 ROLAND LEWIS: Good afternoon, Roland  
18 Lewis from the Waterfront Alliance an Alliance known  
19 for thousand civic organizations and businesses. I'm  
20 here to report as you've heard that the jury was out,  
21 the jury's in, New Yorkers like the ferries, they  
22 love the ferries. The, the ridership is beyond what  
23 we could have imagined and I applaud the, the city  
24 and Hornblower for building these new boats, the 350  
25 seat boats but I guess the bottom line point I want

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2 to make to you all right now is that, that we got it  
3 wrong or the city got it wrong in a good way, we  
4 underestimated the amount of interest in ferry  
5 service and therefore let's take that, that lesson to  
6 heart. The good thing about ferry service is that  
7 it's mobile, you can create... and it's relatively  
8 cheap in transit dollars you can create a dock for a  
9 couple of million dollars, that's a rounding era when  
10 you're talking about subway transit. So, we can try,  
11 pilot in lots of places; in the Bronx, up... Staten  
12 Island, all... down the West side of Manhattan, let's  
13 try ferry service in those communities, if it doesn't  
14 work and we get it wrong, really wrong because it's  
15 underutilized we can move it to other, other places.  
16 So, that's, that's the... I think the bottom line is we  
17 have to recognize... I think that we discovered,  
18 rediscovered a mode of transportation that New  
19 Yorkers want and need, we are... our system... our subway  
20 system in groaning under the number of folks that are  
21 on it and I'm, I'm sure each of us experienced that...  
22 I mean this morning a, a sardine into a car. We need  
23 to find alternatives, it's not a substitute for the  
24 subway and bus system but it is a great addition.  
25 The, the other thing we got right was keeping the



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2 to commend... we worked... we got 1,000 signatures up in  
3 the Bronx to get the, the first... the first and  
4 inadequately but the, the first Bronx man we worked  
5 with the City Council Representatives, we worked with  
6 community groups around the city, this is a great  
7 accomplishment of civic pollical leadership and, and  
8 the folks at EDC working together and the private  
9 sector working together to create something new and  
10 something important, we're proud to be a part of that  
11 and I look forward to expanding it, this, this is  
12 just the beginning. Thank you very much, Assemblyman  
13 thank you for your patience.

14 MARK GJONAJ: First of all, good  
15 afternoon Chair's Garodnick and Chair's Rose.  
16 Certainly, there was... it's been a long hearing and my  
17 time's very passionate to say the least but solving  
18 the lack of reliable public transportation for many  
19 areas in the city and in particular the borough of  
20 the Bronx is a problem that has a direct impact on  
21 the residents, quality of life and the local economy.  
22 It's an issue that desperately deserves the  
23 attention, efforts, and commitment of elected leaders  
24 and the agencies that oversight. For these reasons I  
25 strongly support the expansion of the new citywide

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2 ferry service to include communities along the Bronx  
3 coastal line. While the city's current plan includes  
4 Soundview it's essential that the city expands that  
5 service to the other areas that are in desperate need  
6 for a mass transit solution such as Throgs Neck,  
7 Ferry Point and Orchard Beach. And while we must  
8 continue to look for ways to upgrade and improve the  
9 district's current mass transportation and  
10 infrastructure such as moving forward with the  
11 proposed Morris Park and Parkchester Metro North  
12 stops revamping the dilapidated Pelham Station and  
13 improving the efficiencies and availability of bus  
14 routes and express bus service that currently move as  
15 slow as five miles per hour during rush hour,  
16 exploring ways the East traffic congestion to improve  
17 flow of major roadways, the expansion of the city's  
18 ferry service represents the best alternative to  
19 provide relatively immediate relief to areas that are  
20 already dubbed as transportation deserts.  
21 Unfortunately, this sounds more and more like the  
22 tale of two boroughs where either one city or we're  
23 not. Citywide transportation funding should be based  
24 on need and urgency not on a system that seems to  
25 favor allocating four billion dollars to 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue

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2 subway lines or the 2.5 billion Brooklyn Queens  
3 trolley service when it is virtually impossible for  
4 Bronx sites in transit starved areas to have reliable  
5 transportations to take them to Manhattan, other  
6 parts of the Bronx or the city. And I will add this  
7 morning on my commute into the city it was quite  
8 disturbing as I sat in bumper to bumper traffic as I  
9 looked to my left I saw open waters that would be  
10 clearly and option that we could use as an  
11 alternative transportation. Thank you for your time.

12 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you very  
13 much.

14 JOE HARTIGAN: Joe Hartigan from Far  
15 Rockaway, I'm probably the longest ferry advocate in  
16 this room for over 23 years, you can take everybody  
17 from the Metropolitan Waterfront and I have more time  
18 than they do. Okay, first off, this is the biggest  
19 investment in Rockaway so any negative comment I make  
20 the Mayor's... it's the biggest investment Rockaway's  
21 poised to be the number one tourist destination in  
22 the country. Having said that let's take the Staten  
23 Island Ferry, why is the Staten Island Ferry still  
24 free if we charge for people... for tourists, no one in  
25 Staten Island should have a double fare though and no



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TRANSPORTATION

one in Staten Island should have more than a 45-minute commute. I'll give you an example, 223 million dollars for three new ferry boats and I was a former fire... New York City Fire Lieutenant, those boats cannot be used anywhere else in the city in an emergency, they can't dock anywhere else but from Staten Island back and force. For 223 million dollars I can buy ten, 600 passenger ferry boats knock a third of the commute time to Staten Island, I can also buy 20, 340 passenger ferry boats and have ferry service up and running throughout the city within less than a year and a half, period, that's it. I, I, I don't understand, I attended the City Council meeting, I attended the one a year ago, I attended the one five years ago and it's the same nonsense. New York City I gave you two letters, one is ferry service that makes C-E-N-T-S on how its... throughout, throughout the five boroughs. The other one is notice to claim, when they... what the EDC forgot to tell you is the reason why they went for 149 passenger boats because I actually read the coast guard regulations and the contract is 186 pages. If you use 149 passenger ferry boat you don't have to have a security guard at the dock that's why they did it.

2 Even in Rockaway they didn't even look at their past  
3 numbers, that... SeaStreak when they had the ferry took  
4 away the 149-passenger ferry boat. What I recommend  
5 to you to do is getting another ferry operator to  
6 get, get a new... afford a taxi, get SeaStreak and sit  
7 down with the them and say what would it cost to do  
8 that. So, anyway Staten Island is great, they get  
9 over 400 express buses, if you ever think about for  
10 running for another public office and you want to be  
11 Queens Borough President you're, you're my lady.  
12 Staten Island gets everything, the Staten Island  
13 Ferry should not be free, period.

14 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Alright, thank  
15 you very much, I'm sure that you might see some  
16 disagreement on some... from some members of the panel  
17 on that... [cross-talk]

18 JOE HARTIGAN: One last... one last...  
19 [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: ...you know it's,  
21 it's alright... [cross-talk]

22 JOE HARTIGAN: ...one last point, one third  
23 of the Staten Island Ferry is state money so you  
24 should be calling your state representatives and  
25 saying how about forking over 30 million dollars.

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CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: So, thank you very much. Okay, thank you all for your testimony, we appreciate it. Actually I said that you, you, your... you guys are free, I, I said this was the last panel but we did have one additional person come in, in the midst so I'm just going to call Alexandra Silversmith from the Alliance for Coney Island, Miss Silversmith come have a seat and you will be the, the last word of the day so... if there's anybody else who wants to testify this is your moment; going once, going twice, okay that's it Miss Silversmith.

ALEXANDRA SILVERSMITH: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: The floor is yours.

ALEXANDRA SILVERSMITH: Thank you so much. Good, good afternoon everyone, my name is Alexandra Silversmith and I thank you for the opportunity to speak about ferry service. I am the Executive Director of the Alliance for Coney Island and our non-profit seeks to continue the revitalization of Coney Island and improve quality of life. I'm here today to express our support for citywide ferry service in Coney Island. We believe that Coney Island as a neighborhood and destination

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2 on the waterfront is particularly in need of this  
3 service. It has been five years since superstorm  
4 Sandy and in those five years we have witnessed the  
5 city of New York expand, grow and modernize to meet  
6 the needs of all of its communities. During this  
7 time, we have also seen the introduction of citywide  
8 ferry service. Confronted by transportation starved  
9 neighborhoods the city has used ferries to increase  
10 economic viability of these neighborhoods as well as  
11 improve quality of life of its residents who had long  
12 been underserved by transit options. And while we  
13 applaud the city for their swift implementation of  
14 the ferry service in isolated communities many of the  
15 businesses, residents and visitors of Coney Island  
16 are frustrated by the fact that their neighborhood  
17 was overlooked. This past summer a very striking view  
18 from the boardwalk was not amazing sand sculptures  
19 but rather the countless ferries that would float by  
20 the beach to the Rockaways. Watching ferry after  
21 ferry go by one thinks why doesn't the city believe  
22 that this is a necessity for us. We are a  
23 neighborhood in need of transit equity. As you know  
24 Coney Island has seen growth in recent years because  
25 of both city and private investment but we have yet

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2 to receive our... to reach our fullest potential  
3 because of unequal access to services such as  
4 transportation. With over five million visitors  
5 annually and a growing neighborhood the lack of  
6 transit options is putting a toll on the peninsula's  
7 businesses and residents. In order to ensure both  
8 current and future residents on the peninsula have  
9 equal access to job opportunities and city services,  
10 investment in transportation is essential. The growth  
11 and economic success of the businesses also is  
12 requiring increased transit options. We urge the city  
13 to follow through on setting Coney Island and adding  
14 the neighborhood to the ferry plan to ensure that  
15 current and future residents, visitors, and  
16 businesses are part of a prospering neighborhood for  
17 decades to come. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Terrific, thank  
19 you very much and we're going to let that be the last  
20 word for today. Chair Rose thank you for your  
21 collaboration today and of course all of the staff  
22 who helped us put this together, to Chair Rodriguez  
23 and to members of the Committee. Obviously, we have  
24 an important moment in history for our transportation  
25 infrastructure here. We have some open questions,

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some issues of geography, new routes, new stops and things like that. We also have questions about how to make sure that the system is functioning properly and is timely and is able to deliver a reliable product for New Yorkers. So, I am very pleased we had the hearing today, we'll look forward to a continued conversation with EDC and DOT and with that we are adjourned.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date

October 25, 2017