

New York City Economic Development Corporation
Citywide Ferry System Hearing Testimony
Seth Myers, Director of Project Implementation
September 21st, 2015

Good afternoon Council Members Rodriguez, Rose, and Garodnick, and members of the Committees on Transportation, Waterfronts, and Economic Development. My name is Seth Myers, Director of Project Implementation at the New York City Economic Development Corporation (“NYCEDC”), and I am pleased to testify before you today on the expansion of the Citywide Ferry Service. I am joined today by Justine Johnson and James Wong from our project team.

I would like to give you an overview of the evolution of the City’s ferry systems and NYCEDC’s role in implementing ferry service as well as an update on the current progress of the Citywide Ferry Service, which Mayor de Blasio announced in his State of the City address earlier this year.

History of Ferry Service

New York is a maritime city that was founded and grew up along its waterfront. Starting in the early 1800s, we connected our boroughs by ferry for well over a century. As our city developed and we expanded our bridge, tunnel and subway systems, we turned away from our waterfront. By the mid 1970’s, the only ferry service left in New York Harbor was the City’s Staten Island Ferry. The ferry industry saw a resurgence in the late 1980’s with private operators providing service to supplement the existing and overburdened Hudson River crossings. Through the 1990’s and early 2000’s, ferry service along the East River began in fits and starts as short term private services competed with the many subway and bridge crossings.

East River Ferry Pilot

In 2011, NYCEDC led the implementation of a pilot ferry service that would reset the city's understanding of ferries as a viable transportation option.

The East River Ferry began as a pilot program in 2011. It connects five ferry stops along the Brooklyn and Queens waterfront with midtown Manhattan's East 34th Street and the Financial District's Pier 11.

The East River Ferry had a goal of carrying 1.2 million passengers in three years – from 2011 to 2014. It passed that goal in only 14 months. With this success the operations were extended into a long-term program running through 2019. It now carries an average of 100,000 passengers every month, over three million riders have used the service since its launch and around 1.3 million trips every year.

To gauge customer experience on the East River Ferry, we recently conducted a customer survey to learn what was working and areas where we can improve.

Passengers have an overwhelming 97% satisfaction rate. We found that nearly two-thirds of our riders use the ferry to commute to work, and the remainder uses it for leisure, personal trips, and the experience of being on the water. Ferry rides allow passengers to spend their time traveling above ground, enjoying the sights and sounds of the harbor, offering a more comfortable, and for those along the waterfront, a less congested and more time efficient commute than other transit options.

The success of the East River Ferry and ongoing community desire for more ferry service generated interest in a service expansion. To that end, we commissioned the 2013 Citywide Ferry Study to analyze the impact of ferries and explore options for

potential growth of our ferry network. That 2013 planning study along with the public engagement process which informed the study, formed the basis of the system we are building now.

Rockaway Emergency Ferry Service

NYCEDC has developed its experience working with private ferry operators under contract not only on the East River Ferry, but also on other services such as the Rockaway Emergency Ferry Service. Immediately after Hurricane Sandy, FEMA provided emergency funding to temporarily run a ferry service until major transportation systems like the A train were back on-line.

When the MTA announced the restoration of the A Train in May 2013, we tried to continue ferry services as long as we could. But the ferry had been extremely expensive due to the emergency nature of the contract. It required that the City pay a subsidy of around \$30 per ride which is nearly ten times that of other ferry subsidies and without being in the context of a broader ferry network, the Rockaway route was financially unsustainable. Nearly a year and a half after A train service was restored, we ended the service in October of 2014.

Citywide Ferry Service

On the whole, and under the right conditions, the ferry services we have overseen have been both popular and effective. And even while we have the best municipal mass transit systems in the country, that system is running up against its

limits, and paying to expand subways and buses is increasingly challenging and expensive.

So, as Mayor de Blasio announced a few months ago, the City of New York is overseeing the greatest expansion of ferry service in New York Harbor in decades: the Citywide Ferry Service. The Citywide Ferry Service will provide transit connections to waterfront communities around the City that are currently underserved by transit, and unlock opportunities in transit challenged areas, increasing connectivity, equity, resiliency and economic benefits.

The new Citywide Ferry Service will build off of the success of the existing East River Ferry and incorporate lessons from the Rockaway Emergency Ferry Service. It will create waterborne connections to 21 landings around the City, starting with three new routes in 2017. And by 2018 we will have five routes serving more waterfront communities along with the existing East River Ferry.

The City's relationship with the waterfront is changing dramatically. Over the last quarter century, nearly 3,000 acres of waterfront land have been rezoned for residential and commercial uses throughout Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. New Yorkers have access to 220 miles of publicly accessible areas on the waterfront as well as destination waterfront parks. Additionally, job growth has emerged outside of Manhattan's traditional central business districts in places like Astoria, Long Island City, Red Hook, DUMBO and Sunset Park. Despite their growth, these areas face transportation and access challenges.

The Citywide Ferry Service will not only enhance cross-borough access, but also facilitate access to *new* areas. It will connect areas that have traditionally been transit

deserts---Soundview, Red Hook, Rockaway ---with access to work and recreational opportunities in the rest of the City. There are nearly 500,000 residents and almost 15,000 NYCHA units that are within half a mile of a proposed ferry landing and that will be directly served by the new system. Over 200,000 or 40% of those residents are low and moderate income. These waterfront neighborhoods are also where many new, affordable housing units will be added over the next decade.

Think of someone who needs to get from the Rockaways or Soundview midtown Manhattan or from the Astoria Houses to work in South Brooklyn. This service means they would no longer have to travel as much as 30-minutes to the closest subway stop before spending another hour on the train. Ferries can make these interborough trips more directly, increasing access and connecting people with opportunities across the city for the cost of a subway ride.

To be clear about one thing: ferries are not a silver bullet to the city's transportation challenges, nor are they a replacement for the existing subway system. What Citywide Ferry does do is add a vital and complementary *addition* to our existing system, particularly for those people who live near the water. In our survey, we found that over 80% of our regular riders come from within half a mile from the landings.

The Citywide Ferry Service also adds redundancy to our transportation network, which is extremely important, as we saw in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. When the L train was out of service after the storm, some 7,400 commuters took the East River Ferry on a single day in early November, and ferries were also able to quickly reconnect communities in Red Hook, the Rockaways and Staten Island.

All of this value, in the form of access and resiliency, comes at a relatively low up-front capital cost: just \$55 million to build new or upgrade existing ferry landings throughout the city. Compare that with the amount of time, disruption, and billions of dollars for any expanded or new subway line. As is the case for any public transit system a subsidy will be required to operate - we believe that we can set-up this expanded service in a way that is both affordable, sustainable and fiscally responsible. Although it is too early to say, we have taken the preliminary steps through our operator procurement to ensure that any sponsorship or branding pursued by NYCEDC can be accommodated on the vessels and system as a potential mechanism to limit the amount of subsidy required.

In addition, our planning studies show that ferry service at the scale we are talking about will likely result in subsidies that are in keeping with the rest of the city's transit options. In fact, the per-trip subsidy for current ferry service on the East River is almost the same as local buses at around \$2.20/trip and far less than subsidies for the Long Island Railroad and commuter buses, some of which can reach as high as \$14. It's too early to say what the exact subsidy will be as we are in an active procurement process with operators over the next few months but it should be clear we're looking for the best deal possible. Besides the negotiations, the best way to keep the cost per ride as low as possible is to make sure the ridership is as high as possible – so I hope lots of lots of people show to use the ferries.

Overview of Ferry Routes

I would like to take a minute to walk you through the five new routes planned for the entire ferry system. Three of them, Rockaways, Astoria and South Brooklyn, will launch in 2017.

The Rockaway route will provide a transit link between the Rockaways, Sunset Park, and Lower Manhattan, serving as a gateway to some of our city's finest beaches.

The Astoria route of the Citywide Ferry Service will connect the growing residential and business communities of Astoria; Roosevelt Island, including the new Cornell-Tech campus; Long Island City, and residents and job centers in Midtown and the Financial District in less than 30 minutes in one direction.

The South Brooklyn route of the Ferry Service will connect South Brooklyn's residential communities, waterfront parks, and innovative industries to residents and job centers in Midtown and the Financial District. It will begin in Bay Ridge, stop at Sunset Park, Red Hook, Brooklyn Bridge Park at Atlantic and DUMBO, and finally to Wall Street. All of these three routes will be launch by the end of 2017.

The remaining two additional routes, Lower East Side and Soundview, will launch in 2018. The Lower East Side route will connect Long Island City with East 34th street, Stuyvesant Cove around East 20th street, Grand Street, and Wall Street's Pier 11. Finally, the Soundview Route will begin at Soundview in the eastern Bronx, go to East 90th street in Manhattan, East 62nd Street, and turn around at Wall Street.

While these routes are important to consider at the broad scale, I also want to point your attention to some of the specific lessons we have learned. Our ferry landings are designed to have a minimal impact on upland areas. In many cases, these access points are already highly trafficked areas of the waterfront. All amenities, including

ticketing, queuing areas, and information kiosks, will be enclosed on the barges with shelters and wind screens, making the landings more accommodating in cold-weather months and limiting the landing's "footprint" in these upland areas. And with new infrastructure comes the ability for us to ensure that the entire system will be ADA and Local Law 68 compliant, an important step in ensuring transportation access to all New Yorkers.

The last thing I would like to say about the system is perhaps the most important to highlight for the city. This system is being brought to New Yorkers at a cost of only \$2.75 per trip, the same as the subway or bus fare. It is critical that the fare be comparable to existing transit options to ensure equal access to all New Yorkers. Many have asked us about fare integration with MTA. The MTA has advised us that we should not invest in the legacy MetroCard system. Believe it or not, MetroCard is over 20 years old and the MTA is pursuing a new fare payment system to replace it but that won't be resolved by the time the expanded service launches in 2017. In order to ensure that city capital dollars are spent in a way that will outlast the next few years, we want to work with the MTA on that next generation fare system. We hope to become an affiliate with the future fare system so that it will be as easy as connecting between PATH trains and subways.

Project Implementation Update

In order to keep our project on schedule, we have taken an innovative approach that allows us to run many tasks in parallel, accelerating timelines to bring service back

to places like the Rockaways and start carrying passengers by the spring of 2017. A few key milestones are worth noting.

Within weeks after the Mayor's announcement, a Request for Proposals was released to begin the procurement process of identifying a private ferry operator. We are currently in the midst of our selection and negotiation process with multiple respondents and look forward to having a team on-board by early 2016.

At the same time as our ferry service planning was underway, we are conducting an environmental consultant team on to begin the environmental review process. Through that process we have worked to create conceptual designs that are now in our public scoping documents, and are working to evaluate all our sites and the service for potential impacts to transportation, urban design, and air quality, among other areas. The scoping process is underway and we plan to have a draft Environment Impact Statement (EIS) by February of next year. The Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development is acting as the lead agency for environmental review process. We are working with the Mayor's Office of Sustainability (MOS), as a lead agency representative, to receive community feedback, through a series of public meetings I will describe momentarily, and to release an EIS.

And finally, because we have learned many lessons in our work building and managing landings, we are able to accelerate the barge construction process and are already cutting steel to manufacture our landings right here in New York City. We are confident we will meet our promise to deliver service to the City starting in 2017.

Outreach

This has been a banner project for NYCEDC and we are proud to be so engaged with so many communities, civic organizations and elected officials. Since the Mayor's announcement, we have met with dozens of community boards and civic organizations, briefed or reached out to over 60 elected officials at the city, state and federal level, and have responded to many, many inquiries from the public and through our website. Last week alone, our team conducted outreach with Bronx CB9, presented to the Hunters Point Park Conservancy and Hunters Point Civic Association, and listened to public comments at Queens Borough Hall and also at the Sotomayor Center in the Bronx. We have worked hard to collaborate with as many people and groups as we can, and we invite others to reach out to us on our website to invite additional engagement.

Because we want to be as thorough as possible in engaging with all stakeholders, we have hired a full-time staff member, Justine Johnson, who is responsible for all community outreach and engagement throughout the duration of the Citywide Ferry Service implementation process. We will continue to engage with communities throughout the city as we approach the 2017 and 2018 service launches and of course, that will continue following the inception of service.

We are also fortunate to have the great support of our sister agencies, particularly at the Department of Transportation, Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Department of City Planning. We are closely coordinated on the many tasks and steps that must be taken to deliver a project of this scale to the City.

Lastly, we are conducting a series of public hearings during our environmental review process, and we will be fully engaged with all communities with ferry service. As

I mentioned, we have already held Scoping Meetings in Queens and the Bronx. This evening we will be hosting a similar meeting at our EDC headquarters in Lower Manhattan, and our final Public Scoping meeting will take place at Brooklyn Borough Hall next Monday. For those who cannot attend in person, we invite them to provide comments on our website which will be included in the same record. The Draft Scope of Work for the EIS has been available on our website and the website of the Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination since mid-August, and we look forward to hearing public comments through 5:00 pm on Thursday, October 8th, 2015.

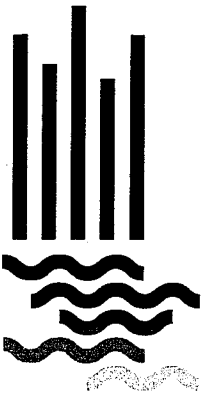
Closing remarks

It is rare that we have an opportunity to add new points and lines on the transit map in a developed city, and even more so in one of the densest and most populated cities in the world. Investing in our ferry transit infrastructure and delivering the service that will connect the city's waterfront communities to one another is a tremendous opportunity. We look forward to continuing to work with you, and with communities around the waterfront to roll out the entire ferry system which will promote connectivity, equity resiliency and economic development.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions you have along with Justine and James.

**Testimony of Roland Lewis, President & CEO
New York City Council Oversight Hearing
Committees on Waterfronts, Transportation, Economic Development
September 21, 2015
Re: Citywide Ferry Service**

INTRODUCTION



The Waterfront Alliance is a bi-state coalition of over 850 community and recreational groups, educational institutions, businesses, and other stakeholders committed to restoring and revitalizing the New York and New Jersey waterways. We have been the foremost civic voice for expanded waterborne transit, raising the call for new ferry service—and improved connections between ferries and upland transit modes—as a vital component of a comprehensive regional transportation network.

Citywide Ferry Service (CFS) is an extraordinary step forward in the ongoing revitalization of our waterways. Expanding our ferry network will relieve pressure from an already overburdened mass transit network, and increase our region's preparedness to emergency system-wide shutdowns, as witnessed on 9/11, the 2003 blackout, and Superstorm Sandy, for the cost of a "rounding error" in typical transportation dollars. The proposed network will expand waterborne transit to all five boroughs by 2018, doubling the number of New York City neighborhoods with regular ferry service. This will increase connections for working families in waterfront districts such as Red Hook, Brooklyn; Astoria, Queens; or Soundview, Bronx to economic opportunities in Manhattan's central business districts.

Ferries are not a substitute for subway service, but should be seen instead as a complement to a wider system, to serve targeted markets where other options are unavailable or insufficient. Their relatively low barrier to entry is perhaps their single greatest advantage. There are no expensive tracks to lay, and new routes can be implemented quickly at a relatively low cost. CFS will be delivered relatively quickly, and for modest public investment relative to other transportation projects. Its infrastructure can be moved to other locations if more suitable locations are identified. Yet ferries are sometimes unfortunately perceived as "luxury" transportation options, commanding high fares when unsubsidized.

We agree with the Administration's policy that ferries should be subsidized to serve everyone, like any other form of mass transit, so that all New Yorkers have reliable, affordable transportation choices. The City's commitment to support CFS with affordable fares equivalent to a subway or bus ride is a significant and cost-effective step toward transit equity in an increasingly unequal city. The proposed \$55 million capital expense is roughly equivalent to the renovation of Williamsburg's McCarren Park Pool, and its operating costs are projected to be competitive with subsidies for local buses and substantially below those for express buses and commuter rail. But that support is not yet secure in the long-term. We urge policymakers to identify and implement a dedicated, sustainable source of operating funding, such as value capture or congestion charge revenue, in order to preserve CFS benefits beyond the five-year pilot window.

COMMENTS ON CITYWIDE FERRY SERVICE PLANNING and IMPLEMENTATION

We recommend that NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) and the CFS operator, once selected, execute a robust public engagement process that provides a framework for user feedback both during the planning process and after

implementation. We are encouraged that the Administration is currently engaged in a public review for this project as part of the City Environmental Quality Review process, and it is a great start. We also support the launch of a public-facing microsite on NYCEDC's website as a single point of reference for questions and comments about CFS. We encourage CFS planners and its operators to ensure that this amenity is indeed not a "luxury service," but reaches disenfranchised communities through outreach to Community Boards and tenants associations, as well as targeted marketing efforts, ensuring high ridership and a sense of community ownership.

We recommend setting clear metrics to define the success of CFS, which could support the implementation of its next phase and further ferry expansion throughout the region of the "solid line" routes included in the first phase of CFS. We recommend defining a clear process to implement the next phase of CFS, or the "dotted line" of a route that is proposed but not yet planned, which would serve Coney Island and Stapleton, Staten Island. We also look forward to working with the Administration and the Council to define a process for further expansion, filling in the "blank lines" not yet planned: this includes calls by members of the Council to expand service to northern Manhattan, as well as northeast Queens, and elsewhere in the Bronx.

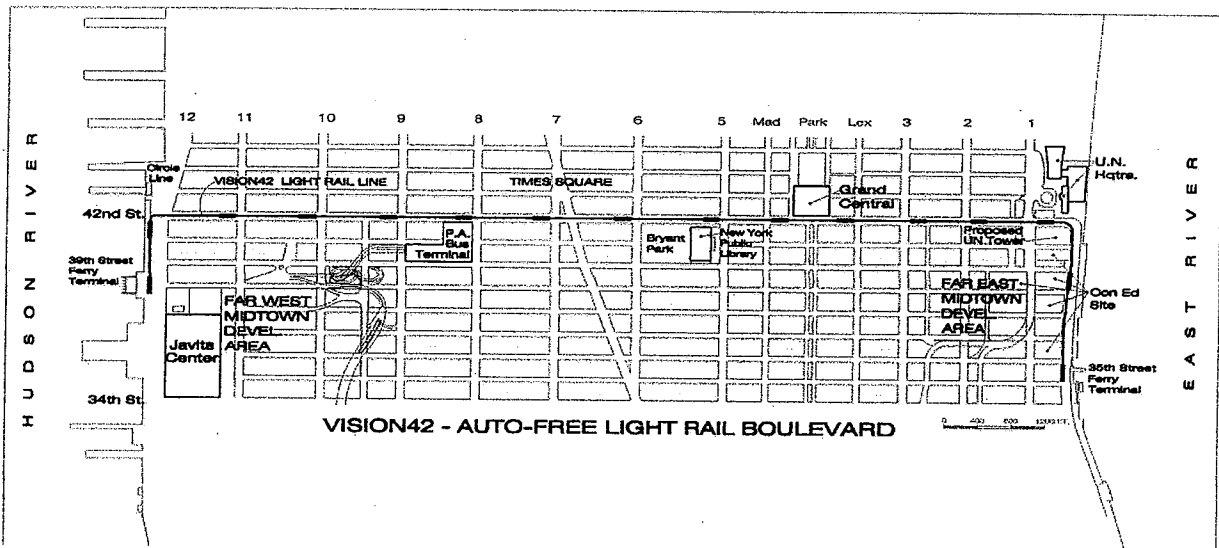
We also recommend that other harbor users, both recreational and commercial, be consulted in the drafting of standard operating procedures for CFS, so that all users of our shared waterways can obey safe and fair "rules of the road." NYCEDC is currently planning improvements for on-water recreational access at Stuyvesant Cove and Halletts Cove in Astoria, in addition to new CFS ferry landings at those locations. Those projects should be closely coordinated. Additionally, the proposed placement of the ferry dock at Sunset Park's Brooklyn Army Terminal Pier 4 must be coordinated with planned infrastructure improvements there intended to serve historic, cultural, and recreational vessels for community programming.

We recommend working with those communities toward the creation of CFS riders' committees. There are strong precedents, both here in New York, as well as across the country, of citizen participation toward improving transit service. The Staten Island Ferry Riders Committee provides a conduit between transit users and service operators, and has helped inform changes to scheduling and amenities. In Red Hook, for example, community members have expressed that Atlantic Basin would be a more accessible site for a ferry landing. We understand that security procedures for cruise terminal operations there present obstacles to year-round commuter service, but encourage the development of formal riders' committees to create a forum to resolve potential long-term challenges such as these. Washington State's ferry advisory committees or London's River Concordant provide a broad sense of ownership, and accountability, in the communities served, and give people the power to shape and improve their system.

For ferries to succeed, they must connect with the wider transit network, both physically and psychologically. Although a ferry ride will cost the same as a bus or subway fare, there are no plans yet for free or discounted transfers, or even Metrocard payment. That may limit CFS' ability to serve low-income riders. This is due to the Metropolitan Transit Authority's (MTA) plans to replace the Metrocard with a new fare-payment service. We welcome discussion between CFS administrators and MTA representatives to incorporate ferries as one of many participants in a unified fare-payment system, which includes not only NYCT buses and subways but also the PATH rail; the Roosevelt Island Tramway; AirTrain JFK; and Westchester County's Bee-Line Bus System. We encourage them to work to pilot the next generation of MTA fare payment, an idea already under discussion, as it is developed. We also encourage continued discussion with NYCDOT regarding possible improvements to bicycle and pedestrian networks, to improve safety and connectivity to new ferry landings.

**Statement at September 21, 2015 NY City Council hearing on Citywide Ferry System
George Haikalis, President, Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Inc.**

212-473-3394 geo@irum.org www.irum.org www.vision42.org



The Institute for Rational Urban Mobility, Inc. (IRUM) is a NYC-based non-profit concerned with reducing motor vehicular congestion and improving the livability of dense urban places.

IRUM urges the NY City Council to seriously consider including a 42nd Street light rail line – river-to-river, ferry dock-to-ferry dock - as an integral part of a plan for a citywide ferry system. A map of this proposal – *vision42* - is shown above.

The Manhattan Central Business District (CBD), by far the nation's largest, is an important economic engine for NYC and the entire the NY-NJ-CT region and is a key generator of public transit trips. Clearly, good access to the core of the CBD is an important element in a successful ferry system. The Staten Island Ferry owes its utility to the valuable subway and bus connections at South Ferry.

A crosstown surface light rail on 42nd Street would allow passengers using ferries to reach important destinations that are a long walk from the city-owned waterfront ferry terminals at 39th Street on the Hudson River, and at 35th Street on the East River. While the Hudson River ferry terminal is an imposing new facility, the East River terminal clearly needs a major expansion.

The 42nd Street light rail line is estimated to cost a half billion dollars. It will greatly improve access to the many developments that line this renowned thoroughfare, boosting commercial and residential property values in the corridor by an estimated four billion dollars. Capturing a fraction of this gain would pay for the light rail investment, not even counting the enhanced value to a citywide ferry system.

As a second phase, the light rail line could be extended across 34th Street, creating a loop that would conveniently distribute ferry riders to much of Midtown.

IRUM urges the City Council to seriously consider this inland connection as an integral part of a citywide ferry system.

Queens Chamber of Commerce

FOR THE RECORD

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Chairman Ydanis A. Rodriguez, Deborah L. Rose, and Daniel R. Garodnick, and the members of all the committees represented here today, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on the importance of creating and expanding ferry services throughout the city.

As New York City's population continues to grow and we compete with other cities to attract the best talent, having a transportation system that allows residents to get to one place to another is increasingly important. Mayor de Blasio's proposal to create a new ferry service will enable the businesses currently in the city to attract the best talent to help them compete, more entrepreneurs will want to start a business here, and the hotel and cultural institutions, particularly in the outer borough's, will benefit as well.

Having the ferry service in Long Island City has opened up the door for entrepreneurs who are looking to start a business and are priced out of Manhattan. Knowing that having a meeting outside the office will not take up their entire day, more businesses are starting to look there. Cultural institutions have benefited as well because the ferry makes it easier for residents and tourists to visit the great exhibits they have year round.

In the Rockaway's, the ferry service provided after Superstorm Sandy was a huge boost for businesses on the peninsula. As driving is not always the easiest option for people, the route that will be restored will enable people to enjoy the beach and all the amenities entrepreneurs are offering.

This past August, the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) released data on the positive impacts ferry service has had. Even though ferries are not currently abundant, the city still has the highest ridership of ferries than any other city in the United States. While ridership dips on the weekends that just proves how important it has become for residents to get to work.

NYCEDC also noted that "The East River Ferry's capital costs ran an estimated \$8 million per mile served, whereas the extension of the 2nd Ave subway line is costing the City upwards of \$2 billion/mile." Providing even more evidence that creating more ferry routes will help build the transportation infrastructure the city needs, in a timely matter, at a much more reasonable cost.

The costs and benefits to for expanding services are clear and I look forward to working with the City Council, the de Blasio administration, and all the partners involved, to see this project come to fruition.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Grech
Executive Director, Queens Chamber of Commerce

FOR THE RECORD



PARTNERSHIP
for New York City

**WRITTEN COMMENTS TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES ON
TRANSPORTATION, WATERFRONTS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2015

**KATHRYN WYLDE
PRESIDENT & CEO**

PARTNERSHIP FOR NEW YORK CITY

The Partnership for New York City is a nonprofit organization working to enhance the economy of the five boroughs of New York City and maintain the city's position as the pre-eminent global center of commerce, innovation and economic opportunity.

We have reviewed the Mayor's plan for five borough ferry service and believe it is a critical breakthrough that will help drive economic growth. The Partnership has long supported expanded ferry service in the five boroughs as an efficient and cost effective way to provide increased public transit services to areas that are underserved by the current system, to expand transit options for commuters, and to reduce congestion on roads and bridges.

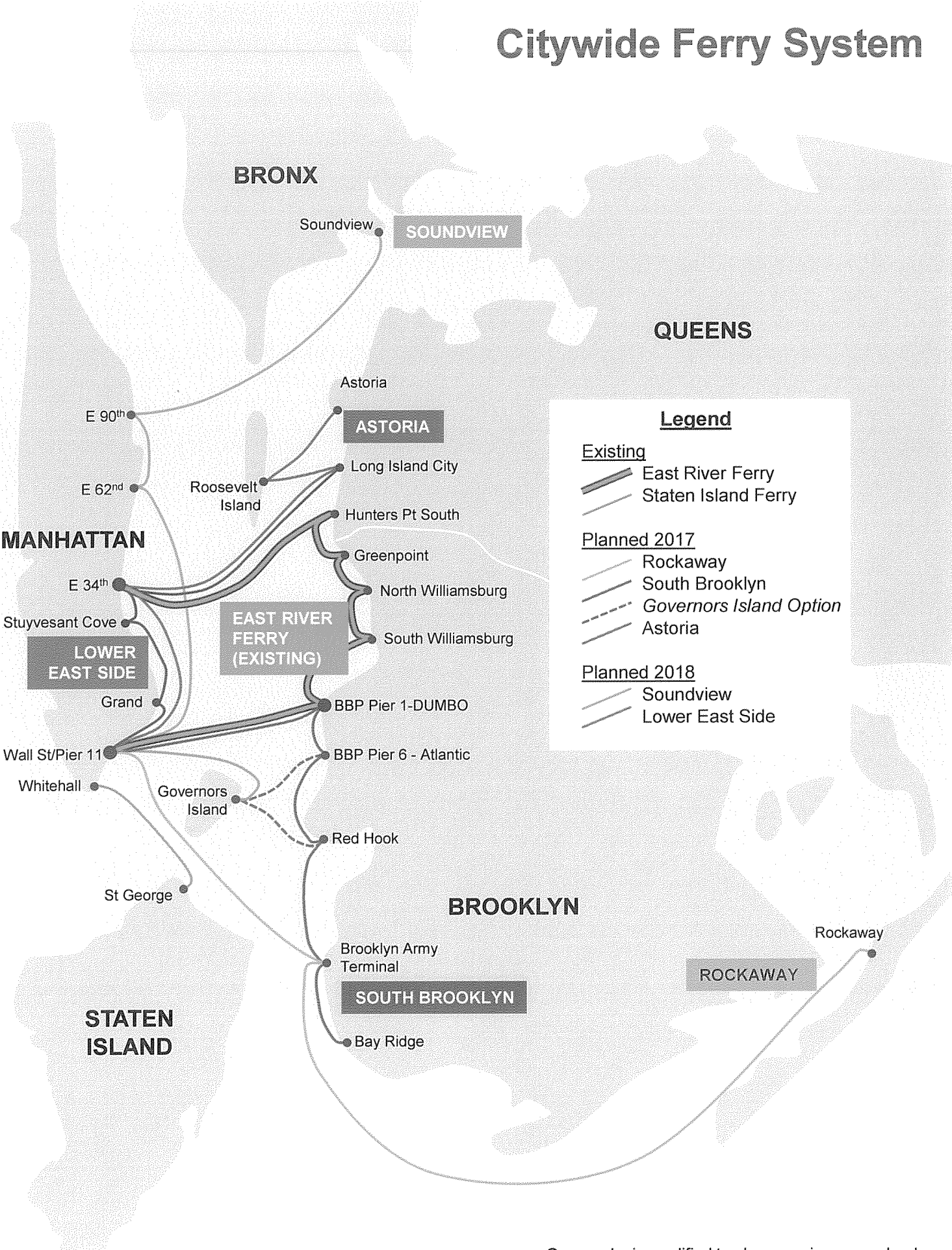
Nearly one million commuters travel from beyond the city limits to work in New York, on top of residents who hold down the balance of the 3.7 million jobs in the five boroughs. In addition, tourists flock here, with a record 56.4 million visitors in 2014. Together, workers and visitors put a significant strain on the city's transportation infrastructure, which is compounded by the fact that many parts of the city, including new centers of employment like the Brooklyn Navy Yard, are poorly served by the public transit system that was designed and built as much as a century ago.

The average commute for city residents who use public transit is 48 minutes, one of the longest in the nation. Long commute times reduce the overall productivity of the city economy. In addition, more jobs are being created in boroughs other than Manhattan—our transportation infrastructure needs to efficiently expand to reach these areas with increasing job growth.

Cities around the world have demonstrated that modern, efficient ferry service can meet transit needs more quickly and at a far lower cost than trains, highways and subways. New York City is no different. East River ferry ridership surpassed 1.7 million passengers in 2012, demonstrating the potential of this commute option, assuming adequate operating subsidies and intermodal connections. In the wake of 9/11 and Superstorm Sandy, ferries were the first mass transit option to be up and running and provided interim transportation for badly hit communities.

We support the Mayor's capital commitment and plan to add routes in areas of the city lacking other public transit options. We hope this will be the first step in creating seamless connections between ferry landings and the MTA mass transit system. The Partnership stands ready to work with you in this effort and others to increase and improve ferry service in the region. Thank you.

Citywide Ferry System



Get more information online at: www.nycfdc.com/ferry
 Questions? E-mail us at: citywideferry@nycfdc.com

Geography is modified to show service more clearly.
 Some landings shown do not yet exist or require upgrades to become operational.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Nancy Brous and I represent the New York City Water Trail Association (NYCWTA).

NYCWTA is citizens' group launched to support and promote the safe use of the New York City Water Trail, established by the NYCDPR in 2008. We are an umbrella group that promotes the interests of more than 20 community-based non-motorized boating programs, and a contact point for the city's rapidly growing community of kayakers, paddlers, and rowers. Our mission is to advocate for the safe use of human-powered boats in the harbor, an expansion of the number and quality of launches, landings and storage facilities available to human-powered boaters, and wider awareness of the public ownership of our shared urban waterways.

I'm here to express our concerns over the proposed plan as it affects water-borne recreation, safety, and public health.

1) Siting concerns:

The sites of many proposed new terminals are in direct conflict with existing human-powered boat launch sites.

Human powered boating programs throughout the region have brought urban dwellers back into contact with their natural environment, and a community that is engaged with its environment is one that cares about and for it. These programs, mostly free or very low cost, community driven and volunteer run, strive foster a sense of stewardship for our local waterways, but they also contribute to the health of the community itself by providing affordable, safe, outdoor activities suitable for people of all ages. Moreover, they spur economic growth by opening the long-neglected waterfront to new generations of water lovers who just a few years ago would have turned their backs to the water due to its reputation as being dirty and dangerous.

The value of water-borne recreation is being recognized nationwide and we aim to protect the places where people can access the water, in this case, asking NYCDC to re-consider some of their proposed sites for new ferry docks, negotiate with operators of the community boathouses and to find alternative locations for some ferry docks, if necessary.

Locations of proposed sites are included in the Environmental Assessment Statement here

http://www.nycedc.com/sites/default/files/filemanager/CitywideFerry/15DME009Y_Citywide_Ferry_EAS_8_12_15_FINAL.pdf

The sites that concern us, in particular:

Site 1a/1b Soundview which is adjacent to the Classon Point Park launch

Site 2 Hallet's Cover which is adjacent to the Hallet's cove launch

Site 5 Long Island City North which is at the mouth of Annable Basin, the long time home of the Long Island City Community Boathouse

Site 6 Stuyvesant Cove which is in the cove where a new kayak launch has been funded by City Council members with support of the local community and Community Board 6, and many within EDC with whom the community has been working to establish the access point

Site 7 Grand Street/East River Park which is adjacent to a proposed new launch about which NYCWTA has been contacted by architects working with NYCDPR to assess the suitability of the site

Site 8B Red Hook Valentino Pier which is adjacent to the Red Hook launch, beach, and popular fishing pier

2) Operational concerns:

Failure to heed maritime regulations amongst some ferry captains will become worse with significant increase in ferry traffic:

Currently many ferry captains fail to follow maritime regulations that should be part of their operators' Standard Operating Procedures, namely the use of audible signals and stern lookouts. We feel this creates unsafe conditions for ALL mariners, including but in no way limited to recreational power-boat operators and human-powered boaters. For several years we have tried to work with the Coast Guard and the operators to ameliorate this situation, to little

or no avail. The operators insist that the captains do follow maritime law and that they do use audible signals, and the Coast Guard tells us they do not have the resources to police the issue.

We feel that it is the responsibility of NYCEDC and the city to address this failure on the part of the some operators to ensure that their captains abide by maritime law before they begin a process of subsidizing the operators' businesses and before they literally pave the way for expanded service which will make a dangerous situation that much more dangerous simply due to economy of scale.

3) Environmental and quality of life concerns:

The documentation provided by NYCEDC about their environmental review process cites a list of special zoning changes that would have to be made to create the new ferry stops, and a long string of concerns for the adjacent communities and the populace of NYC in general.

These zoning regulations were seemingly put in place to protect residents from harm (poor air quality, too much noise, greenhouse gas emissions) and to improve their quality of life by preserving open space and view corridors.

Excerpted from the Notice of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

http://www.nycedc.com/sites/default/files/filemanager/CitywideFerry/15DME009Y_Determination_of_Significance_08122015.pdf

(emphasis added)

"It is anticipated that the proposed Citywide Ferry Service would require approval of several discretionary actions including the following: 1) Capital expenditures by the City of New York to provide funding for procurement of barge and gangway infrastructure for use at landings; 2) Potential decision to provide funding for the operation of the CFS; 3) **Mayoral Zoning Override to waive regulations relating to permitted uses in residential districts (Zoning Resolution [ZR] §22-00) to allow for the proposed new landings and upgrades to existing landings; parking (ZR §62-43) and pick up and drop off areas (ZR §62-462); **general requirements for visual corridors and waterfront public access areas** (ZR §62-51 through §62-54 and §62-56 through §62-59); **design requirements for waterfront public areas** (ZR §62-60); **certification by the City Planning Commission (CPC) regarding waterfront public access and visual corridor requirements** (ZR §62-81); and special permit to allow ferries in residential districts (ZR §62-832)."**

Excerpted from the same document:

http://www.nycedc.com/sites/default/files/filemanager/CitywideFerry/15DME009Y_Determination_of_Significance_08122015.pdf

(emphasis added)

"STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT EFFECT

....the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development, lead agency for the referenced project, has determined that the proposed project may have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. "

From the same document, a list of aspects that may require evaluation of potential environmental impacts include potential for substantial impacts to open space, historic and cultural resources, urban and visual design, natural resources, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, and to public health in general.

We are not sure that the assumed "need" for expanded ferry service and associated government subsidies warrants the grave impacts the construction and operation of such service may have on the hard-won quality of life for residents and their environment in many of the affected communities, nor are we convinced that the override of zoning in these areas is a good precedent to set as quality of life and environmental concerns come up against economic development "needs" – what will people be giving up and to whose benefit?

We believe that ferries can be a great form of public transportation and that they can happily and safely coexist with recreational boating which both city agencies and NGOs have been actively promoting in and around NYC for quite some time. We hope that NYCEDC will hear and heed our concerns over siting the new terminals and ferry operating procedures as they further develop the plan, keeping New Yorkers' public health, quality of life, need for open space, and their right to safely shared waters at the top of their list of priorities.



FOR THE RECORD

September 21, 2015

NY City Council
Committees on Transportation, Waterfronts, and Economic Development
250 Broadway
NY, NY 10007

Re: East River Ferry Expansion Plan

Dear Council Members:

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Governors Island Alliance (GIA) regarding the City's new East River ferry plan proposed by Mayor de Blasio.

First, I want to make it abundantly clear that the Board of GIA is hugely supportive of the expanded ferry plan and of the long sought-after price point comparable to other forms of public transit. This has the potential to greatly expand the audience for water transportation and will vastly increase the city's activation of its most advantageous natural resource, its waterways. We applaud this far-reaching plan, which has the potential to change the city's public transit network far into the future.

However, we are deeply concerned about a piece of this plan that is still in doubt - Governors Island - when it would be so easy to include it in one or more of the many routes already proposed. The future of Governors Island depends on convenient, regular, affordable, and year-round transportation to the island from Manhattan and Brooklyn. This is the single most critical factor in making sure that the island's long-term economic development and social potential are realized.

In a city with a pervasive scarcity of vacant land and underutilized buildings, Governors Island offers both in a dramatic setting unlike any other to be found in New York. We are confident that the integration of Governors Island into a citywide ferry network will help attract the institutional, cultural, educational, and commercial tenants that can activate these undeveloped spaces.

We urge you to include Governors Island in the City's comprehensive East River ferry plan. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Handwritten signature of Marc Ricks.

Marc Ricks, Chair

Handwritten signature of Connie Fishman.

Connie Fishman, Executive Director



Testimony of Chris Len, Hudson River Program Director
Riverkeeper, Inc.

New York City Council
Joint Oversight Hearing of the Committees on
Transportation, Waterfronts, and Economic Development

September 21, 2015

On Evaluating the Plan for a Citywide Ferry System

Thank you to the New York City Council Committees on Transportation, Waterfronts, and Economic Development for giving Riverkeeper an opportunity to testify on the proposed Citywide Ferry System expansion.

Riverkeeper is a member-supported watchdog organization whose mission includes safeguarding the environmental, recreational and commercial integrity of the waters of the Hudson River, including the East River, New York Harbor, and tributaries thereto. Riverkeeper has a long history of community involvement, advocacy, citizen science, and litigation (where necessary) along the very same sections of the City where this proposed Ferry expansion is planned.

Overall, Riverkeeper lauds the plan to bring more people, attention, and beneficial uses to the East River and New York Harbor. We respectfully request, though, that the City work to ensure that this project minimizes impacts to the River from system construction and operation while maximizing the opportunity for public education and engagement.

I. Minimizing Impacts

This proposal, first and foremost, involves creation, expansion, or modernization of over a dozen ferry landings. Included in this construction is a significant amount of in-water work, including pile driving, bulkhead stabilization, and in some places, fill. Clearly, these impacts should be assessed individually and cumulatively for their impact on the East River ecosystem.

During operation, these ferry docks will attract – indeed are designed to attract – thousands of people on a daily and weekly basis. Whether they are commuters or tourists, people generate trash (including cigarette filters, plastics, and food waste). On streets, in parks, and at ferry docks, these pollutants usually end up in adjacent waterways. From the ferries themselves, during operation, this system expansion will introduce new, localized, marine engine pollution

(including soot, oil discharges, and noise pollution). Collectively, clearly, there are potentially significant impacts to the East River from ferry expansion.

Given this potential, we call on the City to take all reasonable steps to avoid – or minimize where avoidance is not possible – these impacts. A non-exhaustive list of steps that can and should be taken includes:

- Development of a full environmental impact statement under the State Environmental Quality Review Act, wherein mitigation and avoidance measures would be developed that specifically address the potentially significant impacts from construction and operation activities.
- Creation of a robust debris-management program with a zero-pollution goal of keeping human-generated trash out of the water.
- Holding the ferry operator to a zero-oil-discharge standard.
- Mandated local post-construction air quality monitoring, with a goal of protecting public health and East River air pollutant deposition.

Many of these initiatives are already part of the City’s planning processes, ferry operator best management practices, and environmental justice community protection protocols. These solutions aren’t meant to burden Citywide Ferry System expansion, but protect the environment and public health from avoidable, known risks. We have – as a City – been relying on ferries for centuries; it is only appropriate that we should implement the best ideas and solutions from the lessons we have learned over that history.

We ask that the Council monitor and manage this goal, and truly make New York City’s development of this ferry system as innovative, transparent, inclusive, and environmentally-friendly as possible.

II. Maximizing Opportunity

The proposal at hand is a great opportunity for the City to be a leader in waterfront education, public access, and urban waterway innovation. Riverkeeper urges the Council to work to ensure that these opportunities are maximized.

- **Education.** In our experience, people need to see waterways before they fully understand why it is important to keep them clean. Across the City’s 535 miles of waterfront, recent investments in access, open space, and community hubs have brought millions of New Yorkers closer to the water, and thereby, closer to full recognition of the connection between our City and the waterways that surround it. This ferry system expansion will bring thousands – if not millions – of new visitors to the East River and New York Harbor, from the Bronx to the Rockaways. Whether on a ferry or along the docks and esplanades proposed for reconstruction as part of this project, visitors to this system should be presented with information on the waters around them – both the good and the bad. This public education opportunity could include information kiosks, signs, and murals detailing:

- The history of the New York waterfront, the legacy pollution problems facing the waterways, and the initiatives by the City, State, and communities that are working to remedy this legacy;
 - The species, ecosystems, and dynamics of the Hudson River, East River, and New York Harbor, including the historical oyster beds, fisheries, and wetlands;
 - The ways by which human activity affects the waters around New York City (e.g., plastic pollution, trash, and stormwater discharges), and the solutions that individuals, communities, or businesses can implement to reduce these impacts; and
 - The American Indian, colonial, and industrial-era histories and traditions of the region's water uses.
- **Public Access.** Given that the proposed system expansion would require waterfront construction (to varying degrees of complexity) at over a dozen sites City-wide, Riverkeeper suggests that the Council explore how these sites could be designed to allow for multiple forms of public access. As we have seen elsewhere in the City, waterfront projects like this can be the perfect opportunities for human-powered boat access, fishing piers, or green docks – each with several significant co-benefits for the community and aquatic ecosystem. The Council should ask the proponents of this plan to explore such access opportunities.
 - **Innovation.** As stated above, this expansion is an opportunity to implement the best management practices we've learned over the past decade for minimizing impacts from construction (of pilings, bulkheads, and piers) and operations. This expansion is also an opportunity for innovation in how we approach community engagement around water issues, urban planning along climate-vulnerable waterfronts, and multiple uses. We urge the Council to consider all of the ways that this proposal could be used to further the City's connection to the waters around it.

* * *

To close, with structured Council oversight that demands environmentally conscious construction and operation that avoids or minimizes potentially significant impacts, Riverkeeper supports this plan wholeheartedly. This is an opportunity to connect millions of people to the waterways around them, educate the public, and create meaningful change in the way we access, use, honor, and perceive the waters of New York City.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify.

/s/

Chris Len
Hudson River Program Director
Riverkeeper, Inc.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tom Grech or Ian Magerkuth

Address: _____

I represent: Queens Chamber of Commerce

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: George Hakalis

Address: Wash Sq. Vill. 5D NY 10012

I represent: Inst. for Rational Urban Mobil

Address: (same)

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Douglas Adams

Address: 217 Water St, #300, NY 10038

I represent: Waterfront Alliance

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/21/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JAMES WONG

Address: 110 WILLIAM ST

I represent: NYC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP.

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9/21/2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JUSTINE JOHNSON

Address: 110 WILLIAM ST

I represent: EDC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: SETH MYERS

Address: 110 WILLIAM ST. NY, NY 10038

I represent: EDC

Address: AS ABOVE

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: PAMELA Pettyjohn, President

Address: 3207 Mermaid Ave

I represent: Coney Island Beautification Project

Address: S/A

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 9-21-15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Connie Fishman

Address: 55 Exchange Pl. 405

I represent: Governors Island Alliance

Address: Same

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms