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Speaker Quinn, Mayor Bloomberg Unveil Plans for Five-Borough Ferry Service *Service to the Far Rockaways to Commence May 12th, East River Service to Follow in July*

City Hall – Speaker Christine C. Quinn was joined on Monday by Mayor Bloomberg, New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Jeanette Sadik-Kahn, local elected officials and advocates as she announced new details of her plan to bring ferry service to all five boroughs of New York City. The announcement represents the most recent step in the Speaker’s continuing effort to make mass-transit a better option for more of New York City’s commuters.

“I was proud in February to announce an ambitious initiative to make five-borough ferry service a reality in New York City,” said **Speaker Christine C. Quinn**. “I am even prouder today that less than three months later, the first pieces of this plan are in place. I thank Mayor Bloomberg and my Council colleagues for their incredible support on this project. Ferries offer New Yorkers an affordable, convenient and environmentally responsible way of getting from point A to point B. By making them a key part of our city’s transportation infrastructure, we are helping to ensure that New York City remains a shining example of urban sustainability for cities all over the world.”

“I am grateful to the administration for responding to my urging to restore ferry service to Sunset Park” said **Council Member Sara Gonzalez**. “In keeping with the Speaker’s vision to eventually link all five boroughs via our waterways, this is an important step to establishing a true mass transit alternative. Expanded ferry service is not only a method to help solve our congestion woes, but an attractive mode of transportation delivering tourists and occasional visitors to Sunset Park. The ancillary services tied to full-time ferry terminal operations on our waterfront will not only create more local jobs but will provide other economic development benefits throughout the community as well.”

The plan to implement ferry service in all five boroughs is tiered such that service will begin earliest in parts of the city where both the demand and infrastructure are already in place to support it. At the same time, the city will begin planning and building new landings in waterfront areas located close to neighborhoods where ferry service is expected to be the most useful. Finally, a comprehensive citywide study will be launched in early 2009 to choose new sites where service will be expanded.

The first tier of the plan, which will commence within the month, will establish ferry service between the Far Rockaways in Queens and Pier 11 in Manhattan. Shortly thereafter, this service

will be connected with core service along the East River, which will comprise stops at Pier 11, South Williamsburg in Brooklyn, East 34th Street in Manhattan and Queens West in Queens.

While previous attempts to connect the boroughs with ferry service have had mixed results, plans for the new service differ in important ways. The Council and DOT are currently working with the MTA to connect ferry landings with bus service, providing commuters an important layer of convenience traveling to and from their destinations. Furthermore, funding has been secured that will keep the cost of a ride comparable to that of express bus service. The result will be ferry service that offers a truly fast, convenient and affordable option for moving about the city.

The second tier of the plan will further expand East River service by adding new stops at North Williamsburg and Greenpoint in Brooklyn. Studies conducted by the New York City Economic Development Corporation and DOT have concluded that this arrangement on the East River will provide the most useful service for commuters in Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn. This phase of the plan will also include the construction of a new landing at Roosevelt Island that will be used by a private operator.

For the third tier, an in-depth study will be conducted by City agencies and outside consultants of potential sites in all five boroughs capable of supporting new ferry service. The study will include an analysis of the regional ferry market and will be used to plan new routes that will take pressure off of already-crowded transportation conduits and connect areas of the city currently underserved by mass-transit.

“Everyone knows the subways are stretched,” said **Council Member David Yassky**. “The fastest, least expensive way to expand our mass transit network is to take advantage of the waterways – our natural highways for ferries and water taxis.”

“Increased ferry service is a positive step toward better utilizing our waterways and pulling cars off our roads,” said **Council Member Domenic M. Recchia, Jr.** “I’m thrilled there’s a commitment to augment ferry service around the city, and I’m optimistic that we’re getting closer to providing service at Coney Island and Bay Ridge. When we provide more options to commuters, we loosen the grip congestion has on our city.”

“As a lifelong resident of the Northeast Bronx, I know that the average rush-hour trip to Manhattan is enough to give the calmest commuter agita! That’s why ferry service in the waterfront communities that I represent has long been a passion of mine. This third mode of mass transit will not only reduce crowding on subways and buses but also make great use of our city’s most untapped resource: our waterways. I look forward to working with the city and local community groups to find suitable locations for ferry landings in my District,” said **Council Member James Vacca** (D-East Bronx).”

“Ferry service from Riverdale would be a great convenience, especially for those people who commute to the Wall Street area,” said **Council Member Oliver Koppell**.

“With the daily increase in fuel costs, we need to provide residents with alternatives to driving,” said **Council Member Annabel Palma**. “My constituents suffer from some of the highest rates of respiratory illness due to the amount of congestion from trucks on the Cross Bronx Expressway and Bruckner. By creating Ferry Service around New York City, we are able to not only provide a

tremendous Economic Opportunity and environmental impact on my district and Borough, but on New York City as a whole.”

“Roosevelt Island is just that: an island,” said **Council Member Jessica Lappin**. “It's surrounded by water, its population is growing, and it's desperately in need of more mass transit. It's a perfect location for ferry service. And, with the tram going down for a considerable amount of time next year, ferry service will provide a critical transportation link to the Island.”

Council Member Alan Gerson said, “Citywide ferry service will have a real effect on reducing traffic congestion in Lower Manhattan. Combined with the recent passage of the Green Ferries bill, we are moving in the right direction for our environment.”

Council Member Vincent J. Gentile said, “I'm pleased, in conjunction with City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and Mayor Bloomberg, that the need for citywide ferry service has now been realized. I have long advocated for citywide ferry service, which is a comfortable and efficient mode of transportation. Through this effort, the City Council is showing that we understand that our communities' need more transportation options. I will continue to work with Speaker Quinn and the Mayor to ensure this plan moves beyond just a pilot program and is becomes part of the City's permanent mass transportation system.”

“New York City's waterways are our untapped resource. As neighborhoods near the water in all five boroughs grow, transportation is becoming a major hurdle,” said **Council Member Eric Gioia**. “Ferries are part of the future of mass transit, and for service to be successful, the ferries need the City's support to be affordable, convenient, and reliable.”

“I am delighted that enhanced waterway and ferry usage is being embraced as a priority from of transportation,” said **Council Member Gale Brewer**. “New Yorkers love the waterfront and want more access to it for work and pleasure. Congratulations to the Mayor and the Speaker for their advocacy for ferries.”

“This is a city of water,” said **Council Member Dan Garodnick**. “As we continue to search for alternatives that will take cars off the road and expand the reach of our mass transit options, we need to look at one our most valuable resources – our waterways. Ferry service from the Rockaways should be our model for developing an environmentally and economically sustainable water transit system.”

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