



# THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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## Speaker Quinn, Council Member Addabbo and the National Park Service Kick-Off Rockaways Ferry Service

*New Route Will Provide Commuters a Fast, Affordable and Convenient Alternative to Driving*

**City Hall** – Speaker Christine C. Quinn and Council Member Joseph Addabbo were in Queens this morning to announce the start of a two-year pilot program for ferry service that will run between Riis Landing in the Rockaways and Pier 11 in Manhattan, with an intermediate stop at the Brooklyn Army Terminal. They were joined by Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, Congressman Anthony Weiner, Gateway Deputy General Superintendent Billy Garrett, Assembly Member Audrey Pheffer, Senate Minority Leader Malcolm Smith, Economic Development Corporation President Seth Pinsky, Department of Transportation (DOT) Deputy Commissioner David Woloch, DOT Ferries Division COO Jim DeSimone, New York Water Taxi President Tom Fox and Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance President Roland Lewis. Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz joined the group later on.

The new ferry service, which has been made possible in part by a \$1.1 million allocation from the New York City Council, will be operated by New York Water Taxi and will provide commuters a fast, affordable and convenient alternative to using their cars, allowing them to make the trip from the Rockaways to Manhattan in approximately one hour. The trip between Brooklyn Army Terminal and Manhattan will take approximately 25 minutes. Though they will not be available immediately, plans to equip the ferries with wireless internet connectivity and television service are currently in place.

The launch of Rockaways ferry service represents the first step in the Speaker's plan to create ferry service to all five boroughs, which she announced in her State of the City speech earlier this year.

“Ferry service will make the very difficult commute between the Rockaways and Manhattan much easier and less expensive,” said **Speaker Christine C. Quinn**. “Plus, by riding a ferry instead of climbing into an automobile, those who use the service will be making an important contribution to the effort to make sure New York City remains green, clean and sustainable for years to come. I would like to thank the people of the Rockaways who fought long and hard for this day. I look forward to working with my partners in government and New Yorkers all over the city to make five-borough ferry service a reality.”

“I believe the start of the Rockaway ferry is a positive step forward toward utilizing our waterways as a mode of transportation,” said **Council Member Joseph Addabbo**. “I am so proud to be a part of bringing this ferry service to the residents of the Rockaways, and I look forward to watching my constituents use this new option for their commute.”

The plan to create this new ferry route from the Rockaways took on new urgency after the New York City Council Transportation Committee held a special hearing on the topic in Broad Channel in April of 2007. The outpouring of local residents who demanded ferry service helped convince the Department of Transportation to conduct a study to analyze the feasibility of establishing ferry service to the area. The results of that study, coupled with the Council allocation, led directly to today's announcement.

Two trips will be made during peak commuting times. During the morning rush hour, ferries will leave Riis Landing at 5:45 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. In the evening, ferries will leave Manhattan at 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Tickets will cost \$6 per one-way trip, though a 10% discount will be available for 40 packs (\$216).

"The National Park Service is strongly supportive of waterborne transportation as a way to link the many national park sites in and around New York Harbor," said **Gateway Deputy General Superintendent Billy Garrett**. "The summer ferry service that will bring visitors to the beaches of Gateway National Recreation Area is a great beginning to what we hope will one day be an extensive ferry network."

"Fast, environmentally-friendly ferries are becoming increasingly important to our City's transportation network, serving the new housing and inviting open spaces that the Mayor and City Council have made possible along the our waterfront," said **NYCEDC President Seth Pinsky**. "These new amenities will complement other projects that we have undertaken to reconnect the City with its historic maritime heritage, including revitalizing cargo and industrial maritime facilities and building and renovating our cruise terminals. EDC is proud to be playing a role in all of these endeavors."

"Service to the Rockaways and the Brooklyn Army Terminal are the first steps as we work with our partners to establish ferry service citywide where it is most needed," said **Department of Transportation Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan**. We are planning for a more sustainable future under the Mayor's PlaNYC and the DOT's strategic plan by giving New Yorkers real alternatives for how they get to work."

"I have been hoping for this day to come since taking office as Borough President," said **Queens Borough President Helen Marshall**. "The Rockaway Peninsula is one of our city's greatest resources, but has suffered from a lack of transportation options. When the ferry leaves Riis Landing today it will open a new chapter in the history of transportation in New York City. The residents of the Rockaway Peninsula now have an added a long-sought option for traveling to and from Manhattan. Given Rockaway's current housing boom and the increased retail and recreational opportunities that come with it, this ferry service will be an important component for the continued growth of the Rockaways. I thank the Mayor and City Council and especially Councilman Joe Addabbo for their support for this Rockaway ferry service and look forward to working with my colleagues in government to making its operation a huge success."

## **FIVE-BOROUGH FERRIES**

The Rockaways ferry route is part of the Speaker and the Council's larger effort to create a five-borough ferry network in New York City. Ferry service will first be launched in locations where both the demand and the infrastructure are already in place to support it, which includes the Rockaways. Service along the East River will begin in July of this year and will include stops at

Pier 11 in Manhattan, Schaefer Landing in South Williamsburg, East 34<sup>th</sup> Street in Manhattan and Hunter's Point in Long Island City.

To lay the groundwork for the expansion of ferry service into all five boroughs, the Council is funding a comprehensive citywide study of additional sites in all five boroughs to determine which will be 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. A comprehensive citywide ferry service will take pressure off of already-crowded transportation conduits and connect areas of the city currently underserved by mass-transit.

While previous attempts to connect the boroughs with ferry service have had mixed results, plans for the new service differ in important ways. Funding has been secured that will keep the cost of a ride comparable to that of express bus service. Furthermore, the Council and the Department of Transportation 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. As a result, New Yorkers will have access to a truly fast, convenient and affordable option for moving about the city.

“The City’s support for waterborne transportation will ensure that our industry grows to meet the needs of New York City’s neighborhoods,” said **Tom Fox, president and CEO, New York Water Taxi**. “As the first private waterborne transportation company based in the City, New York Water Taxi is thrilled to be providing service to residents of the Rockaways and to be part of the City’s long-term vision to provide enjoyable and environmentally friendly transportation alternatives to New Yorkers.”

“The City's efforts to expand the five-borough ferry system are a testament to the local leaders’ determination to bring this service to the Far Rockaway community,” said **Senator Malcolm Smith**. The recently added transportation network provides an alternative to commuters traveling to lower Manhattan from Riis Landing. It is my hope that the City's willingness to subsidize the ferry plan will encourage residents to utilize the services, which will likely reduce traffic congestion on our city roads. Unlike previous ferry systems, the City has begun to work with MTA to create bus connections with the service and I trust this measure will ensure its success. I remain optimistic that residents will take advantage of this new service.”

“I’m very excited about the beginning of the ferry service to Far Rockaway,” said **Assembly Member Audrey Pheffer**. “It’s a fast, affordable and long overdue alternative to the A Train, which is slow and unreliable.”

“This is an important first step in creating a truly citywide ferry system and we applaud the speaker for winning the Mayor's commitment to make this a reality and integrating it to landside transit such as buses, said **Roland Lewis, President of the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance**. “We look forward to the day that a rider can swipe their Metrocard to board the ferry and then swipe it again for free transfer to a metro bus and subway.”

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