



**Comments of Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams  
In Response to the Proposed Scope of Work for the  
Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the  
East River Ferry—September 28, 2015**

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My name is Eric L. Adams, and I represent Brooklyn's 2.6 million residents as Borough President. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today at the scoping hearing of the Environmental Impact Assessment for citywide ferry service.

I am a long-time supporter of ferry service as a means to improve transit accessibility, reduce congestion, catalyze economic development, and connect communities. As a result, I support the efforts of New York City's Economic Development Corporation to implement a Citywide Ferry Service (CFS) that would provide an affordable and convenient transit option to residents in otherwise transit-isolated neighborhoods.

The introduction of a Southern Brooklyn local ferry route would provide reliable service to Bay Ridge, Sunset Park, Red Hook, Brooklyn Heights, and DUMBO communities. In addition, the Rockaway ferry would include express ferry service to Bay Ridge. Both of these additions would offer resilient transit service to communities in dire need of more transportation options.

I also believe that the local route would have subsequent potential to add an additional stop in Sunset Park in proximity to the Bush Terminal complex, and that the Rockaway route could subsequently be modified after initial success to add service to the Canarsie Pier, the marina opposite Aviator Sports in Dead Horse Bay, Plumb Beach, and Coney Island (possibly West 21<sup>st</sup> Street landing in Coney Island Creek).

Even though I support this effort, I also offer the following comments for the Draft Scope:

**Site Selection**

I have several concerns about the ferry landing sites included in the project description, particularly the appropriateness of the proposed landing in Red Hook. This concern stems from the distance these sites are to the nearest points of transportation and to concentrations of community residents. The Beard Store site is hundreds of feet beyond the dead end of Van Brunt Street and largely secluded from residential development. Walking from beyond the dead end of Van Brunt Street places ferry riders in direct contact with adverse seasonal harbor storm conditions, such as strong winds and requires

significant maintenance of the pedestrian pathway in terms of snow and ice clearance on private property.

Walking through Valentino Park to the Valentino Pier raises similar concerns for the Parks Department to keep the Pier free of snow on a seasonal daily basis beyond the standards maintained for typical park users. In response, I propose the following:

- That for the Beard Store site, nautical consideration is given to shifting the landing closer to the dead end of Van Brunt Street.
- In addition to Beard Store and Valentino Pier, consideration be given to:
  - The dead end of Wolcott Street (a landing could be placed adjacent to the road, which would allow for more efficient transfer of goods, including efforts to supply Governor's Island, possible Red Hook based contracting efforts, as well as shielding from harbor winds through the wind-screen from the adjacent warehouse along Wolcott Street; and
  - Atlantic Basin, pending up-to-date acknowledgement from the Coast Guard that year round service would not be in conflict with security requirements pertaining to cruise ship operation.

The analysis framework and scope of work should consider these alternatives for a Red Hook landing.

As for Brooklyn Bridge Park's Pier 6 and the Brooklyn Army Terminal landing, I applaud the investment that would permit additional ferry landings.

### **Transportation**

In addition, I have concerns regarding the Travel Demand and Screening Assessment in terms of a lack of consideration given to connections with Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) bus routes, Citi Bike stations, and general bicycle use. I believe that the Transportation Planning Factors and Travel Forecast Demand Technical Memorandum should be modified to reflect these modes of connecting ferry service to its ridership.

Going beyond the direct improvements for ferry landings, the City should be working with the MTA to coordinate route adjustment, including frequency of service, and with Citi Bike to best locate bike-sharing stations and the capacity of such stations in proximity to ferry landings. The City should also coordinate with the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) to foster safer pedestrian connections to ferry landings, including traffic-calming improvements that link communities to access points. Also, NYCDOT should provide adequate bike racks in proximity to these landings. Consideration should also be given for the inclusion of wind/rain shields and shading for those waiting for the arriving ferry.

Improved connections to surrounding communities and job centers are imperative if this new transportation system is to be successful.

Finally, I believe that more must be done to seamlessly integrate the ferry payment system into the MTA's fare-payment network. The City should be lauded for working to keep the fare aligned with MTA's current per-ride fare. However, while I recognize that

the MTA is working to replace its MetroCard system in the coming years, providing a free-transfer in the short-term, as well as integrating future ferry payments into the MTA's next generation payment system, will go a long way towards generating ridership and effectively connecting our City's transit networks.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.