

Keep NYC Free

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Keeping Score – Another Keep NYC Free idea moves

As Keep NYC Free welcomes the plans for expanded East River ferry service, we direct attention to our [recommendations](#) over the course of the “discussions” of the [congestion tax](#).

As we stated in our our initial [report](#),

“For commuters from some New York City neighborhoods that are not now well served by mass transit (such as the South Shore of Staten Island) or where existing transit services are overcrowded (such as waterfront areas in Greenpoint and Williamsburg), new ferry services could provide an attractive alternative. The City should continue its efforts to develop new services in these and other neighborhoods – and should work with the Port Authority, the MTA and other agencies to create new routes linking communities outside New York City to the CBD.”

Our follow-up report, [Alternative Approaches to Traffic Congestion Mitigation in the Manhattan Central Business District](#) (October 2007), continued to press for a greater reliance on ferry service.

Perhaps, more [recommendations](#) offered by Keep NYC merit more of a look and adoption.

Read the New York Times [story](#) on ferry service from this week.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/02/nyregion/02ferry.html?ref=nyregion>

Ferries to Ply East River Far More Regularly Soon

By [MICHAEL M. GRYNBAUM](#)

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For all their dominance on Staten Island, ferries have long struggled to muscle their way into the city's mass transit mainstream. Experiments in Queens and Brooklyn have been held back by **On the East River** infrequent service, outsize operating costs and low ridership.

Ferry boats will operate between 34th Street and Pier 11 on Wall Street. Fares will be based on two zones. In the summer, the ferries will also stop at Pier 6, at Atlantic Avenue.

But the city, unfazed by past failures, is now embarking on a more ambitious plan: a year-round ferry network that will provide all-day service in the East River, starting in June.



Under the plan, to be announced on Wednesday, ferries will travel along a seven-stop route that stretches from Long Island City, Queens, to the Fulton Ferry landing by the Brooklyn Bridge, and includes Manhattan terminals at Pier 11 in the financial district and East 34th Street. During peak hours, boats will arrive at each stop every 20 minutes and travel in both directions.

The service is an attempt by the Bloomberg administration and the City Council to create a robust and viable mass transit alternative for a growing waterfront population that has struggled with clogged subway lines and bus routes that have been truncated or eliminated altogether.

The New York Times

“If we want every part of Brooklyn, every part of Queens, to be as attractive to businesses and residents as Midtown Manhattan is,” said Christine C. Quinn, the City Council speaker, “we have to make it as easy as possible to get to and from in an orderly, affordable fashion. That is what ferries can do.”

The program comes with \$9 million in guaranteed city money and a commitment to maintain the service for three years. The board of the city's Economic Development Corporation, which will oversee the service, is expected to award a contract to BillyBey, a division of New York Waterway, in a vote on Wednesday.

There is an existing East River ferry service, run by New York Water Taxi, but it makes only a handful of runs each day, during the morning and afternoon rush.

The new network will offer two additional stops in Brooklyn, at India Street in Greenpoint and at North Sixth Street in Williamsburg, and the boats will travel far more frequently, running from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekends. In the summer, ferries will also stop at a pier near Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn and, on Fridays, make a run to Governors Island.

A spokeswoman for New York Water Taxi, which had also bid for the contract, said the company had not decided whether it would continue its current service along the route.

City officials said they were hopeful that the expanded route — and subsidized fares, as low as \$3 a ride — would foster a commuting culture, in which waterfront residents integrate the ferries into their daily routines. The boats are to arrive at each stop every 20 minutes during the morning and afternoon rush times, and every half-hour at off-peak hours in the summer. In the winter, the off-peak frequency would be reduced to every hour.

“Consistent and dependable service will be a magnet for potential users,” Robert K. Steel, the city’s deputy mayor for economic development, said in an interview in the fall. “Development has occurred along this corridor.

You’ve got more people who would potentially find the service attractive.”

Passengers will pay \$3 or \$5.50 a ride; the route has two price zones, with the northern part of Williamsburg as the dividing line.

Bicycles will be allowed onboard, and at rush hours, a free bus service will pick up passengers at the 34th Street pier and make stops along the Midtown office corridor.

“It’s an opportunity for anybody who lives in the area on an overcrowded bus, or an overcrowded subway line,” Ms. Quinn said. “It isn’t just for waterfront dwellers; it’s for people in a radius around the waterfront.”