Toward Regional Water Mass Transit
New York Metropolitan Transportation Council
Brown Bag Presentation

October 23, 2013

Roland Lewis, President & CEO, Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance
Agenda

- About the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance
- History of ferries in NYC
- Why does NYC need ferries today?
- East River Ferry and MWA’s ferry advocacy
- Maximizing the benefits of ferries
- Discussion
MWA is determined to transform the New York and New Jersey Harbor and Waterways to make them clean and accessible, a vibrant place to play, learn and work, with great parks, great jobs, and great transportation for all.
The Alliance

[Logos of various organizations associated with the Alliance]

Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance
Thanks to MWA Advocacy…

- NYC City Council establishes Waterfronts Committee (2002)
- Legislation passes to reinstate the Waterfront Management Advisory Board (WMAB) and require a new comprehensive waterfront plan every ten years (2008)
- NY-NJ Harbor Coalition launches to bring federal funds to the Harbor (2010)
- *Comprehensive Citywide Ferry Study* released (2010), which resulted in East River Ferry Service (2011)
- *Vision 2020*, first update to the Comprehensive Waterfront Plan in 18 years, is released (2011)
- City of Water Day attracts more than 25,000 visitors and incorporates 17 waterfront events across the city (2012)
- Ferry service resumes between Brooklyn Army Terminal and Manhattan (2013)
- City’s first Eco Dock opens (2013)
History of Ferries in NYC

1642 First regular ferry service in NY Harbor (rowboat)

1807 First commercial steamboat runs from New York City

1871 Midland Railway purchases Weehawken ferry route

1927 Holland Tunnel opens

1931 George Washington Bridge opens

1937 Lincoln Tunnel opens

1959 New York Central Railroad Weehawken ferry service discontinued after 259 years

1967 Hoboken ferry final route discontinued

1986 Trans-Hudson ferry service re-established to ease PATH congestion

2001 New routes established to replace transit after 9/11; ridership spikes

2008 Mayor Bloomberg and Speaker Quinn call for 5-borough ferry service

2011 East River Ferry launches, doubles ridership projections

2013 SIRR report calls for expanded ferry service for more resilient public transit.

Sources: Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, nyc.gov. Image Sources: pbase.com, brooklyn-usa.org, interferry.com, NYCEDC
WHY DOES NYC NEED FERRIES TODAY?
Overburdened transit and roadways
Emergency management/extreme weather
Transit-poor waterfront communities/transit equity
Cost-effective transportation

Transit Subsidies

$5-$8M for new landing

Sources: NYC Economic Development Corporation, silive.com
Growing residential and commercial centers on waterfront
East River Ferry

- Launched June 2011
- Connects rapidly developing waterfronts to each other and to Manhattan
- Ridership doubled initial projections
- 2013 ridership to date 10% higher than same period in 2012.
- Q3 2013 60% higher than Q3 2011

Source: NYCEDC. Image source: NY Waterway.
MWA FERRY ADVOCACY

Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance
Building on success of East River Ferry, MWA is working to establish ferry service that is:

- **Extensive**, serving residents in all five boroughs
- **Affordable**, making ferry transit accessible to all New Yorkers
- **Frequent**, running on a schedule that conveniently serves community needs
- **Integrated** with New York City Transit so riders may pay fares with a MetroCard
- **Reliable** for mobilization during emergency events
Methodology

- Studied ½-mile radius around proposed ferry site in dense, walkable neighborhoods and roughly 5-minute drive from ferry in auto-dependent areas.

- Analyzed travel behavior, commute times, demographics, community support, and development patterns for 43 potential sites for commuter ferry service.

- Set up Ferry Advisory Committees in neighborhoods that would be well-served by ferry transit (southeast Bronx and southwest Brooklyn).
MWA-Proposed Ferry Sites

- Brooklyn Army Terminal
- Bay Ridge (69th St.)
- Red Hook
- Astoria (Hallett's Cove)
- Pier 6 (Atlantic Ave.)
- Soundview
- Ferry Pt. Park
- Throgs Neck

About
- Background
- Ferries Today
- MWA & Ferries
- Maximizing Ferries
- Discussion
Soundview

Significant time savings: 30-40 minutes each way to Lower Manhattan, 15-20 to Midtown

Dense population within walking/driving distance of site

Planned residential and marina development

Very high share of commuters driving to Manhattan alone—unmet need for transit

High potential for park and sail; ample parking opportunities; potential to divert Bruckner Expressway traffic
Ferry Point Park

Significant time savings: 31-42 minutes to Lower Manhattan, 22-34 to Midtown

Large population within short driving distance from site

Lack of subway access (3+ miles from subway); overburdened bus lines

High share of commuters driving to Manhattan alone—unmet need for transit

Ample parking available; potential to divert highway traffic

Transit demand generators—golf course and outlet mall opening in area

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Regional Ferry Integration
MAXIMIZING THE BENEFITS OF FERRY SERVICE
Multimodal Service Coordination

Challenge

Waterfronts can be difficult to access by public transit.

Solution

Extend bus routes and bike lanes to the waterfront.
Facilities Integration

**Challenge**
Interborough ferries are not conducive to suburban commuting.

**Solution**
Coordinate ferry service with commuter rails, and provide ample parking.

Image sources: railfanwindow.com, NYCH2O
Fare Integration

Challenge
The need to pay separate fares makes riding ferries expensive.

Solution
Integrate ferry fare payment with the MTA MetroCard.