

“Every Staten Islander has had that experience of missing the ferry and waiting an hour for the next one to pull in. Today, that’s a thing of the past.”

—MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO

BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S DIRECT CONNECT SUNDAY

AT THE PETRIDES SCHOOL



HEALTH & WELLNESS QUALITY OF LIFE DEVELOPMENT **TRANSPORTATION** SAFETY JOBS RECREATION EDUCATION TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Staten Island is, of course, surrounded by water, and BP Oddo believes that we need to make better use of these waterways to help commuters. Over the years, he has been engaged in this battle on many fronts.

It has been a frustrating journey, but there have been victories for the Borough President. Almost three years ago, the City finally implemented his law mandating a maximum of 30-minute waiting times between boats, 24/7/365. The result was a significant increase in ridership.

But there is still much more to do. Inexplicably, Staten Island was left out of the initiative now called NYC Ferry (it was originally called the Five Borough Ferry Plan, and later Citywide Ferry Service). Even BP Oddo’s rational proposal to connect Staten Island to the South Brooklyn route was denied by the City, although it is patently unfair to design a fast ferry plan that does not include all five boroughs.

In response, BP Oddo worked with the private sector to secure a commitment for a new, private fast ferry route to Midtown that will open in St. George after the pier at the NY Wheel/Empire Outlets site is completed.

The South Shore has some of the worst commute times in the nation, and a fast ferry would help alleviate the long and unpredictable journey to and from work. BP Oddo has been engaged with the private sector in an effort to bring this long-overdue option to South Shore residents. There is no doubt this will be a difficult and multi-faceted process, not the least of which is finding the right location—including sufficient parking—and a commuter-friendly price point.

While we are grateful for the Staten Island Ferry, it is limited in that it only stops in downtown Manhattan. This is why BP Oddo asked DOT to think outside the box and consider a potential Midtown stop. DOT agreed and is in the process of studying this proposal to determine if it is feasible, and if so, how to best implement it.

We are an island and must re-think our transportation options to reflect that fact. The Mayor recently said that he will make a decision on expanding NYC Ferry in 2018, so let’s make “Boats Over Bridges” our next rallying cry.



December 19, 2016

The Honorable Alicia Glen
Deputy Mayor, City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Five-Borough Ferry Service

Dear Deputy Mayor *Alicia Glen*

I hope this letter finds you well.

I am writing to put forth a suggestion for an enhancement to the five-borough ferry initiative that will begin in 2017. In particular, I am referring to that portion of the service connecting Manhattan with DUMBO, Red Hook and Bay Ridge.

My suggestion is to include St. George as a destination.

The \$1 billion+ investment in the New York Wheel, Empire Outlets and Lighthouse Point will undoubtedly attract millions of visitors and will provide New Yorkers with thousands of jobs, many of whom will seek alternative methods of transportation. This investment, along with the City’s commitment to extend ferry service, offers a unique opportunity to reconnect the boroughs of Brooklyn and Staten Island in a manner far more efficient, and far less expensive, than driving over the Verrazano Bridge.

I have been told that the developers of the St. George projects are currently about to finalize an agreement with NYCEDC to install a ferry dock, and that the developers have agreed to assume responsibility for the capital expenditure and the maintenance of the facility.

As things stand now, there will be significant demand from Brooklyn and Queens residents to visit the St. George attractions, yet there are limited public transportation options from these boroughs to the North Shore. Many of these visitors will choose to drive, pay the \$15 toll, and add additional pressure to an already overtaxed Staten Island road system.

We must also consider that there will be a heavy weekend component, thereby insuring ridership during what would otherwise be a slack time.

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We also know there are currently underutilized parking facilities both at Brooklyn Army Terminal and in Red Hook. A park and ride system to the North Shore will save those visitors time and money, while helping relieve traffic congestion.

Additionally, the New York Wheel, Empire Outlets and Lighthouse Point projects will create thousands of permanent jobs. Currently, these jobs will not be physically accessible to communities such as the Red Hook Houses due to lack of transportation options. A low-cost transportation alternative will give these deserving communities access to the new jobs.

Finally, due to the significant demand, ferry service efficiency and developer contributions to infrastructure investment, adding St. George as a destination should greatly decrease the size of any subsidies needed to keep the service running.

Thank you for your kind attention, and I hope you will give this suggestion your most serious consideration.

Sincerely,
James S. Oddo
James S. Oddo
President, Borough of Staten Island

P.S. Let's talk. This could be a great step towards what we all want/need.

Thank you!



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A Fractured Ferry Tale

“WE ARE A ROCK, WE ARE AN ISLAND”