



Old Astoria Neighborhood Association (OANA)
www.OANA-NY.org

A Ferry System Accessible to All New Yorkers!

Now that congestion pricing is on pause, this is a great opportunity to re-examine public transit capabilities in NYC.

To this end, we would like to focus on the NYC Ferry system.

Transit by ferry has shown itself to be extremely popular to those in NYC who can easily access it. However, this primarily means those who live or work on the waterfront.

This has proven a great asset to those neighborhoods. Before the Ferry they were almost always transit deserts, and usually were home to underutilized warehouses and factories. Regretfully, many of those businesses were from industries that no longer operate efficiently in NYC. This resulted in many empty or lightly utilized buildings. Many became storage facilities, which, while economically positive for the owners, offered little in the way of jobs for New Yorkers.

The ferry has allowed for significant new commercial and residential development, and, as a result, we are seeing a renaissance on our waterfront. Most of the city's growth is located here, in addition to the amenities solid residential neighborhoods generate.

However, we are missing out on another great possibility: Direct access to subways and local business districts. These are invariably not near the waterfront.

As an example, in Astoria it is a 1 mile walk to the N/W line and the business district.

An obvious solution is a first and last mile system that will integrate the ferry into the greater NYC Public transit system.

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This could be shuttle services. A circular service from the ferry landing to the subway and business districts and back would be a great asset!

This would open the ferry system to all neighborhoods in the 4 mainland boroughs and expand possibilities for economic growth.

Also, the Ferry should become part of the OMNY system, allowing for seamless payment and transfer options. We understand that OMNY is controlled by the State, and the Ferry is city run, but we should never let bureaucratic roadblocks be the enemy of the good. Let this become an example how 2 separate bureaucracies can put aside their territorial tendencies and unite for the public benefit.

Currently, there are few if any shuttles. We are sure that if OMNY is in place with transfers to the Subway/Bus networks, shuttles would be prevalent throughout the transit system. While Citi bikes and Micromobility are options, they only are available to certain segments of the population. We need access to all, including our older and disabled residents. We cannot keep discriminating against these neighbors.

Almost everyone that has taken the ferry greatly enjoys the experience. And it is a great way to start and end your workday!!!!

One knock on the ferry is that it tends to be utilized by our more privileged residents, especially those in the new waterfront developments. And we agree that this is an area of deep concern.

In spite of our best efforts, transportation “desert” issues persist across the boroughs. An obvious solution is to open ferry ridership to the entire borough, and a first and last mile service via shuttle that integrates into the OMNY system is an obvious fix. This solution would

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ensure equity by providing a comprehensive and holistic approach, making reliable transportation accessible to all residents, especially those in underserved areas.

Richard Khuzami
President