

NYC Ferry Forward

A Plan for a More Equitable, Accessible, and Financially Sustainable System



NYC Ferry Forward: A Plan for a More Equitable, Accessible, and Financially Sustainable System

Since its launch in 2017, NYC Ferry has become an essential part of the city's transit system, connecting New Yorkers and visitors alike to all five boroughs. At the direction of Mayor Eric Adams, NYC Ferry and New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) have developed a number of new strategies for improving the system, building on successes, and incorporating lessons from the past five years of operations.

These changes are designed to improve equity and access to the ferry, especially for lower-income New Yorkers, while also making it more financially sustainable and reducing the amount of public subsidy required to operate the system over time.

Shoring up NYC Ferry's finances and increasing ridership through improved access and outreach are critical first steps towards planning for the future of the system. Once these new policies go into effect, NYC Ferry and the Adams administration will be able to observe impacts to revenue and ridership, which will in turn help inform future decisions about the service. Additionally, NYCEDC plans to issue a competitive RFP for operation of the system later this year, which will provide an opportunity for further improvements to the system's operation.



1. Expanded Discount Program for NYC Ferry

Starting in September 2022, NYC Ferry will expand its **discount program to offer \$1.35 one-way tickets for seniors, people with disabilities, and other riders who participate in the Fair Fares NYC program.**

Eligible New Yorkers will be able to apply for the ferry discount program using the NYC Ferry website or by mailing in an application. Once verified, eligible riders can buy discounted tickets through the app or from NYC Ferry ticket windows and agents. This discounted rate will make the ferry accessible to even more New Yorkers, while also helping to diversify NYC Ferry's ridership.

Timing: Starts September 12, 2022

2. Free Trip Vouchers and Expanded Outreach at NYCHA

There are almost 60 NYCHA developments within a 15-minute walk of an NYC Ferry landing, and the expanded discount program presents a new opportunity to encourage residents to try NYC Ferry for the first time. In partnership with NYCHA and other community organizations, the NYC Ferry team will conduct targeted and ongoing outreach to NYCHA residents and offer **two free NYC Ferry app tickets for new riders in every NYCHA residence** within a mile of an NYC Ferry stop.

Timing: Starts late summer 2022



3. Making It Easier for New Yorkers to Bike to and From the Ferry

To reduce impediments for New Yorkers looking to take their bicycles onto the ferry, NYC Ferry will **eliminate the current \$1.00 bike fee** starting in September 2022. While bike capacity is limited on vessels, this will better connect NYC Ferry with other environmentally sustainable modes of transit and help encourage ridership among New Yorkers looking to incorporate bicycles as a “last mile” transportation option.

Timing: Starts September 12, 2022

4. Creative Opportunities for Revenue Generation to Improve Equity and Financial Sustainability

While all public transit systems use subsidies to keep fares affordable and encourage robust usage, there are clear opportunities for NYC Ferry to generate additional revenues that could reduce the amount of public funds required to operate.

NYC Ferry initially launched at a uniform price point of \$2.75 per single ride, the same as the cost of a MetroCard, to encourage early ridership among all New Yorkers. Now that the system has further matured, there is an opportunity to adjust the fare structure to ensure that commuters and frequent riders retain access to affordable rates, while tourists and occasional riders contribute more to help support the system.



Starting in September 2022, NYC Ferry will increase the base fare to **\$4.00 for single trips**, while adding a **10-trip bundle for \$27.50**, enabling commuters and other frequent riders to continue enjoying a \$2.75 fare. The new expanded discount program will ensure that NYC Ferry remains affordable to New Yorkers at all income levels.

NYC Ferry will also pilot a **new direct-to-beach service called “Rockaway Rocket,”** expected to launch later this summer. This service will operate from Wall Street to Rockaway on summer weekends as an additional and supplementary service to the existing departures. Rockaway Rocket will offer a **pre-booked trip at a set departure time for \$8.00 each way.** In addition to raising revenue, the new service is expected to help divert some recreational travelers from the standard ferry trips, helping to reduce wait times for commuters and other riders.

Finally, NYC Ferry will be looking for revenue-generating sponsorship opportunities to help reduce system costs. These could include advertising on board as well as sponsored naming rights opportunities.

Timing: Base fare and bundle start September 12, 2022;
Rockaway Rocket starts July 23, 2022



5. Plan for the System's Future and Increase Public Engagement

NYC Ferry will launch an expanded public information campaign—through digital and in-person outreach—to familiarize New Yorkers with the benefits of the system and encourage them to experience and ride NYC Ferry. And, in addition to all current reporting, which includes quarterly ridership report summaries and annual onboard survey reports, NYCEDC will make financial information and ridership data publicly accessible on its website.

NYCEDC will also release a public, competitive procurement for a new operating contract for NYC Ferry later this summer, a process that will help shape the future of the system over the next five years and beyond. Among other factors, the procurement will focus on preserving affordability and equity, increasing ridership, driving innovation, ensuring safety and reliability, and maximizing opportunities for non-farebox revenue.

Timing: RFP releases in late summer 2022

