

Dan Wiley's comments on behalf of Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez
NYC Public Scoping Meeting on Citywide Ferry Service
Brooklyn Borough Hall
September 28, 2015

Good evening, I'm Dan Wiley, Community Coordinator for Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez, who is in Washington today keeping the Federal Government open.

Her district includes much of the East River Ferry route, from Williamsburg down through Red Hook, and Sunset Park, and the Lower East Side of Manhattan. I'd like to echo some of the sentiments expressed by Anthony Drummond of the Brooklyn Borough President's office: more ferry stops centrally located in Brooklyn neighborhoods, in particular at Bush Terminal Park which was recently opened and is in the center of the Sunset Park waterfront neighborhood. It's great that ferry service is coming back to more parts of the city and further out into the boroughs. So reactivating service at Brooklyn Army Terminal, which we saw after 9/11 is great, but bringing it to the middle of Sunset Park would be greater.

I also wanted to echo the sentiments from the City Councilman Carlos Menchaca, and his Chief of Staff David Estrada, on the need for a centrally located stop in Red Hook. I understand that NYC EDC has two alternative sites, one of which is an actively used park which could be negatively impacted by having a ferry landing there, and the other one at the end of a commercial corridor. We'd like to suggest that the City EDC seriously take into account the community's desires to have a ferry location in Red Hook more centrally located at Atlantic Basin.

I'd like to submit for the record a chapter from a report that the Red Hook Committee of NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program (that's the Governor's program which funded Sandy-impacted communities to do their own plans for recovery and resiliency). One of the nine projects that the community came up with was ferry service to Red Hook at Atlantic Basin. It's great that we're going to get the subsidy and the actual ferry service to Red Hook, now the detail of putting it in Atlantic Basin needs to have due diligence. I'd like to submit for the record their chapter "New Ferry Landing and Additional Ferry Service for Red Hook" and their cost-benefit analysis of locating it at Atlantic Basin, which has benefits that are economic as well as social and give greater community resiliency. I'd also like to point out that today is National Preparedness Day. So happy Preparedness Day!

Atlantic Basin is in the center: if you look at the Van Brunt Street commercial corridor, the basin it is more to the center of that corridor as opposed to the very end of the corridor. Of course we have destinations at the end of the corridor, but we want to encourage that the whole corridor and the people in Public Housing have better access to the ferry.

Lastly, the Cruise Terminal is located at Atlantic Basin at Pier 12. Issues have been raised about security when there's a ship docked. We have a letter from the Coast Guard going back ten years -- after 9/11 -- saying that there can be ferry access in and out of Atlantic Basin with the right safety precautions. So we look forward to working with the City, and following up with the Coast Guard and Homeland Security to see what are the considerations, what are the security requirements for that location, if that's an issue.

Thank you.