

2011

Staten Island Ferry Report



New York State Senate
State Senator Diane J. Savino
5/8/2011



Introduction

Since taking office in early 2005, Senator Savino has often received suggestions and complaints regarding the Staten Island Ferry service. Since Senator Savino's Staten Island District Office is located directly across the street from the Terminal, several staff members take the ferry daily and the Senator occasionally rides it to meetings and hearings in Manhattan.

While many Islanders are pleased with aspects of their daily commute via the ferry service there is always room for improvement, especially in several key areas. These key areas span a wide range of concerns, including, the condition of the bathrooms, security and behavior on the bus ramps and other quality of life concerns. Senator Savino normally addresses each concern on a case by case basis, however, in 2009 the Senator desired a more pro-active and comprehensive approach.

In June of 2009, Senator Savino's office reached out to ferry riders to ask them questions regarding quality of life issues on the boats and in the terminals via ferry rider survey cards. The response was overwhelming; over 1000 survey cards were filled out by daily Island ferry commuters.

The Senator's office did this by creating a "mobile district office" in the St. George/Staten Island Terminal, where we surveyed commuters. "Senator Savino's Mobile District Office" took place from June 29th through July 1st, 2009, between the hours of 7:00 am-9:00 am and 4:00 pm-6:00 pm on Tuesday June 29th.

In the 2009 survey, Ferry riders expressed their desire for a greater retail options and the establishment of a "quiet deck."

With the success of the 2009 Ferry Rider Survey and Report, Senator Diane Savino commissioned another such effort. Her office yet again established "Senator Savino's Mobile Office" in the Staten Island/St. George Ferry Terminal on March 23rd and March 24th from the hours of 7-9 am and 4-5:30 pm.

This report details the findings of the 2011 Ferry Rider Survey.



Staten Island Advance

Ferry Facts

In 1898, Staten Islander's overwhelmingly voted for consolidation of the boroughs into a Greater City of New York the consensus is that vote was based on the promise of frequent municipal ferry service between Manhattan and Staten Island.

New York City Department of Transportation operates and maintains the nine vessel fleet, as well as the St. George Ferry Terminal on Staten Island and the Whitehall Ferry Terminal in Manhattan.

As often noted, the Ferry itself is free. What most non-Islanders do not realize is that virtually all of those riding the Ferry first must get to the terminal. Getting to the terminal can cost \$2.50 via bus or Staten Island Rapid Transit (SIRT) or \$7 parking in adjacent lots if driving to the terminal. Those who walk or are dropped off, unless they work in the immediate Battery Park City or Financial Districts, must continue on via subway or Manhattan bus. Of course, the return trip has a similar cost. The New York City Independent Budget Office recently proposed charging a fare for the Ferry. Placing even a minimal cost on the ride will significantly reduce the number of tourists that ride the Ferry.

Most Islanders will not end up paying a fare as, the majority pay to travel to the terminal. Due to the "One City, One Fare" free transfer program, codified into law in 1997, no Ferry fare would be collected. Therefore, collecting a fare for a Ferry ride would never realize significant revenue.

The Staten Island Ferry is one of the key modes of transportation for residents. It provides transportation to over 20 million people a year; over 65,000 passengers a day (on weekdays). The trip between Whitehall in lower Manhattan and St. George on Staten Island is five miles and takes approximately twenty-five minutes to cross the Harbor.

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/ferrybus/statfery.shtml>

A typical weekday schedule involves the use of five boats to transport approximately 65,000 passengers daily (109 daily trips). During the day, between rush hours, boats are regularly fueled and maintenance work is conducted. Terminals are cleaned and routine terminal maintenance is performed mostly at night. On weekends, three boats are used (75 trips each Saturday and 68 trips each Sunday). Over 35,000 trips are made annually.

Mayor's Management Report 2010

Summary for 2011 Survey

Survey respondents were asked to evaluate their ferry service. Survey respondents filled out report cards either in the Staten Island/St. George Terminal or Manhattan/Whitehall Terminal. Those cards were then collected by staff members. Survey respondents also had the option of mailing in the survey themselves. One hundred and forty three commuters took the cards to work or home with them and mailed in the survey. Compare that to 42 in the 2009 survey. The office also received 51 submissions online through the Senator's website.

<http://www.nysenate.gov/senator/diane-j-savino>

All told, the Senator's office received 1140 responses, or 22% of the cards handed out. This would be considered a high response rate from any survey. The high return rate is an excellent indicator that commuters were enthusiastic about being given the opportunity to evaluate and comment on their ferry service. The Department of Transportation has a ferry rider survey; we would relish the chance to examine results when published.

Respondents were asked to evaluate three specific areas: "Boats," "Terminals" and "Bus Ramps/SIRT Station/Parking Lots." Each of these three areas were ranked for "Cleanliness," "Services from Personnel," "Frequency of Service," and "Security." Three additional sections were available for the commuter's evaluation: "Rate your Retail Experience," Overall Opinion of the Ferry," and finally, "How do you get to the Ferry Terminal." The last section had different answer categories including "SIRT," "Bus," "Car/Dropped Off," and "Walk."

Additional feedback from survey respondents mentioned that the last question should have had a section for "Bike" as many Islanders are now bicycling to and from the Ferry via the Bike lanes along Richmond Terrace and Bay Street. Eight respondents actually wrote in the comment section that they used their bicycle to get to the terminal.

By far the highest number of respondents indicated that the bus was their method of travel to the Ferry Terminal. 518 respondents or 45% commute via bus to the Terminal. According to the 2010 census, a mere 1% of Americans walk to work, yet 125 commuters, almost 11% walk to the Ferry Terminal. 171 respondents or 15% drive themselves or are dropped off by car. While 267 or 23% are SIRT riders.

The evaluations were assigned numbers as follows: Unsatisfactory" was a "0", "Poor" was a "1", "Fair" a "2", and so forth. Grades were assigned for the fourteen specific categories. Utilizing a 4.0 grading system, the rankings were averaged for a letter grade, i.e., 4.0=A, 3.0=B, 2.0=C, etc. (See chart available on page 6)

The fourteen separate categories had rating boxes of "Unsatisfactory," "Poor," "Fair," "Good" or, "Excellent." A comments section was included as well.

"Security" in the "Bus Ramps/SIRT/Parking lots" section had the lowest average of 1.49, or a grade of D+. "Cleanliness" of the "Bus Ramps/SIRT/Parking Lots" had a 1.93 average, or a grade of C-, and "Frequency of Service" on the "Bus Ramps/SIRT/Parking Lots" had a 1.9 average, a grade of C-. These above-mentioned categories had the three lowest averages. We were able to ascertain that the overwhelming majority were describing conditions on the bus

ramps as they answered the “How do you get to the terminal” questions was answered by either “Bus” or “Walk.”

Many of the comments reflected the poorest grades in the evaluation section. This process was then repeated in determining which category each column would fall in throughout the sheet. Included in each category is a brief synopsis of the views of the constituents.

The next section used in analyzing the data was a chart (see page 6) computing the number of Unsatisfactory, Poor’s, Fair’s, Good’s, and Excellent’s received on the Staten Island Ferry Report Cards. The process was calculated using the Excel Program.

Out of the 1140 respondents, 538 added their own comments on how to improve the ferry service. A breakdown of those comments is available on page seven. It is telling that 47% of respondents chose to take additional time to make a comment.

State Senator Diane J. Savino - State Island Ferry Report Card

Boats	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	How do you get to the Ferry Terminal?	SIRT	Bus	Car/ Dropped Off	Walk	
Cleanliness											
Services from personnel											
Frequency of service							Unsatisfactory	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Security											
Terminal	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Rate your Retail Experience in the terminal					
Cleanliness											
Services from personnel						Overall Opinion of Ferry					
Frequency of service											
Security											
Bus Ramps/SIRT Station/parking lots	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	 <p>Thank you for taking the time to fill out the "Staten Island Ferry Report Card". Your opinions matter! Please mark the answers to the questions as indicated and return them to one of my staff members wearing a yellow and blue t-shirt.</p> <p>Again, thank you for evaluating Staten Island's world famous mass transit option.</p> <p>Sincerely,  New York State Senator Diane J. Savino</p>					
Cleanliness											
Services from personnel											
Frequency of service											
Security											
Additional comments for improvement of the Staten Island Ferry											

Senator Savino’s 2011 Ferry Report Card

Methodology for the Survey

The methodology for “State Senator Diane Savino’s Ferry Report Card” is as follows: 5000 cards were dispersed during rush hours of 7:00 am to 9:00 am to workday commuters on the following dates: Wednesday March 23, 2011, Thursday March 24, 2011 and Friday March 25, 2011. Cards were also dispersed on Wednesday March 23rd, 2011 and Thursday March 24, 2011 from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm. These two time frames represent the highest level of ridership, according to a 2003 study conducted by the New York City Council and the New York City Department of Transportation Ferry Division.

Averages and Grades

Boats

Cleanliness	Services from Personnel	Frequency of Service	Security
B-	B-	B-	B-
2.77	2.66	2.58	2.83

Terminals

Cleanliness	Services from Personnel	Frequency of Service (transfers)	Security
B-	B-	B-	B-
2.77	2.66	2.58	2.83

Bus Ramps/SIRT Station/Parking Lots

Cleanliness	Services from personnel	Frequency of Service	Security
C-	C	C	D+
1.85	2.04	1.91	1.49

Retail and Overall

Rate your retail experience	Overall opinion of the Ferry
C+	B-
2.4	2.68

Grades and Quotes from Ferry Riders

Bus/Subway/SIRT

Cleanliness on the Bus Ramps 1.85 C-

Frequency of Service 1.91 C

Security on the Bus Ramps 1.49 D+

- Bus ramps have no security, commuters feel very unsafe
- The “no smoking” is incessantly ignored due to complete lack of enforcement
- Illegal sales, harassment and solicitation of commuters by vagrants and loitering school aged children taking place in broad daylight
- Commuters specifically mentioned connections between the S40/S90, S42, S44, S46, S51/S81, S52, S61/S91, S62/S92, and S76, buses, the SIRT, the 1, 4, 5 and R subways to be difficult at best; often the mode of transit arrives after and leaves before the boat docks or disembarks



www.manit.com

“I am a St. George resident. I am so disappointed in the follow up on this new terminal. The terminal itself has turned into a homeless shelter with at least 50% of the seating is taken by homeless who sleep there and hang out committing crimes or sleeping all day. There is sale of illegal cigarettes on the ramps.”

“At all hours the bus ramps have people smoking- Where is the law enforcement? and selling illegal cigarettes.”

“we...need the buses to wait for us to walk up three flights before pulling away. The S66 should be there waiting for us not us waiting for it. Can the S66 run on weekends? “

Cleanliness in the Terminals 2.77 B-

Cleanliness on the Boats 2.61 B-

- Bathrooms require greater, or more frequent attention
- Bathrooms are regularly lacking soap, or paper towels, etc

“Afraid to let my girls use restrooms, because I'm afraid of them catching some kind of disease, or some crazy man will walk in the restroom behind them. Bus ramps are always filled with teens and smokers, which makes it bad for people, my teen was robbed near the terminal of her cell phone, and no one did anything. Over all I hate, really hate taking the ferry cause it's not really safe with teens and people hanging on the ramps, please do something.”

Security on Ferry Boats 2.80 B-

Security in the Terminals 2.83 B-

- The consensus is security on the boats and in the terminals has improved greatly; passengers feel safer and more secure
- Some comments requested that the private security force concentrate more on patrols and less on female commuters

- Significant comments were dedicated to the homeless or vagrant population that seems to be a permanent fixture in the terminals. Loitering, soliciting, urinating, public sex and drugs are problems commuters claim to have witnessed; more must be done than simply preventing these individuals from lying down in the terminal...most simply sleep sitting up.

“Amount of persons sleeping/hanging out in terminals Both SI/Mnh side has increased over past 2 years. NYPD/Ferry Staff do not address above issue- even when ask to do so. More seating in terminals is needed- People selling items on bus ramps and blocking walkways.”

Overall Opinion of the Ferry 2.68 B-

- Riders suggested announcements in advance of delayed or cancelled boats via an RSS info blast, text alert or on Twitter.
- Riders wanted metro card service on the boat
- Poor frequency of ferry boats on nights and weekends
- Complaints of delayed, late, slow and cancelled boats
- TVs with closed captioning to help keep commuters informed; preferably on local channels, such as NY1
- Remove homeless making terminals a hostile place for commuters and an embarrassment to tourists, mentally unstable people solicit/harass commuters daily

“I have been riding the ferry for 25...The ferry could twitter the change in schedule since there emailing system via DOT doesn't work, fix the stuttering announcements. Ferry announcements are too loud. We are not Deaf! Thank you for getting rid of preachers that was embarrassing. Schedule should be better on weekend nights ever half-hour. I would like to see a nice sit down dinner with a view somewhere on Staten Island side.”



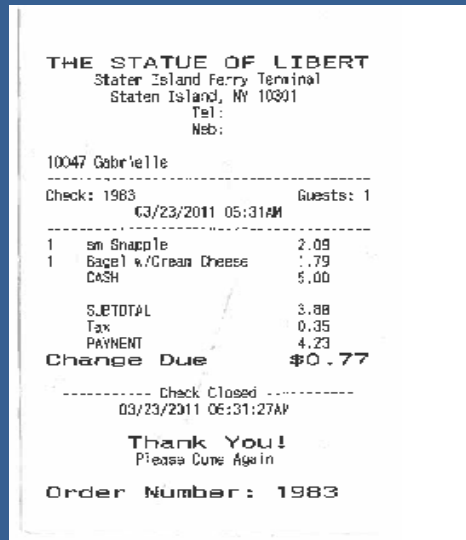
“Get rid of the hang outs that are in front of the terminals. Have cleaner terminals, cleaner toilets, and more security on the terminals. Get rid of the people that smoke in front of the terminal doors. Less expensive stores on terminal, prices are ridiculous, most of all we need the cleaners back on the ferry. Because of safety issues about the toilets need the matrons back”

“Get rid of the homeless people this isn't a shelter it is SI's front porch,”

Rate your Retail Experience

2.40 C+

- Current vendors were found to be expensive for the average commuter. A bottle of Poland Spring™ retails for \$2.25, it's cheaper in JFK airport. Below is a receipt from the Statue of Liberty Deli; a bagel w/cream cheese (\$1.79) and a Snapple (\$2.09) total \$4.23!
- Suggestions remain mixed on retail options with some Islanders wanting more healthy options. Less fast food places. Some commuters were nostalgic for the McDonalds that use to be in the terminal.
- Many passengers longed for healthier options and more basic necessities like a bank, pharmacy, dry cleaner, barber/nail salon etc besides 3 delis and a pretzel shop.



“Manhattan side use to have a fruit stand, why r the bathrooms half closed or closed on the ferry and in Manhattan? nothing makes any sense here. Look to union station in DC for what a terminal should be restaurants, retail shops etc.”

“On the SI side, shops use to have practical purposes dry cleaner shoe repair produce stand how many overpriced chain stores pretzel shops do we need? missed opportunity it would be great to have a gym/fitness club in the terminal there use to be a bar and grill why does the terminal close after 1:30am? It all seems so punitive like we are being done a favor;”

“The food options in the terminals are a joke, an expensive joke. City government rails against excess salt, fats and sugars, but that's all you offer at the terminals. Find a vendor who's not fast food or open a grocery store/pharmacy at the St. George Terminal”

Seven comments asked specifically for a bank in the terminals, and eighteen comments requested some form of the following: a dry cleaners, a pharmacy, a tavern or an upscale restaurant. These types of stores existed in the terminal before the fire and renovations.

Eight comments focused on how much the new stores charge for food. A few indicated the Terminal is a tourist trap we just happen to commute through daily.

Comparison of the 2009 and 2011 Surveys

Major differences between 2009 and 2011 Survey and areas where improvement has been significant. While commuters still clamor for more shops that serve their needs such as a pharmacy, dry cleaners; they acknowledge that there has been significant progress since 2009 with the addition of food vendors. That said, eight comments stated that the prices at the stores are outrageous (\$2.25 for a 16.9 oz. Poland spring water bottle!) Note the differences highlighted in the 2009 and 2011 surveys.

Comments	2009	2011
Expensive merchandise	0	8
Problems with the homeless	6	47
Lack of security on bus ramps extend boat and terminal patrols onto ramps especially, stop smoking and illegal cigarette sales	27	76
Ferries always late off schedule	0	17
Island bike area is terrible	0	11
Poor transfer ferry/SIRT	1	18
Poor transfer ferry/bus	5	23
Complaints about preachers	24	3
More proactive employees	21	4
More retail options	140	18
2009 Establish Quiet Deck/2011 Quiet Deck needs better enforcement	54	19
Parking lot a mess due to drop offs and taxis	0	16
More frequent service	93	63
Like to see muted closed captioned TV's in terminal	12	6
Seeking the return of car ferries	11	9
Compliments with overall ferry performance	9	7
Seeking live entertainment/cultural enhancement inside terminals or on boats	7	2
More ATMs/Bank branch	1	7
Poor transfer ferry/subway	0	3
SIRT station filthy, not very attractive waiting area	0	5

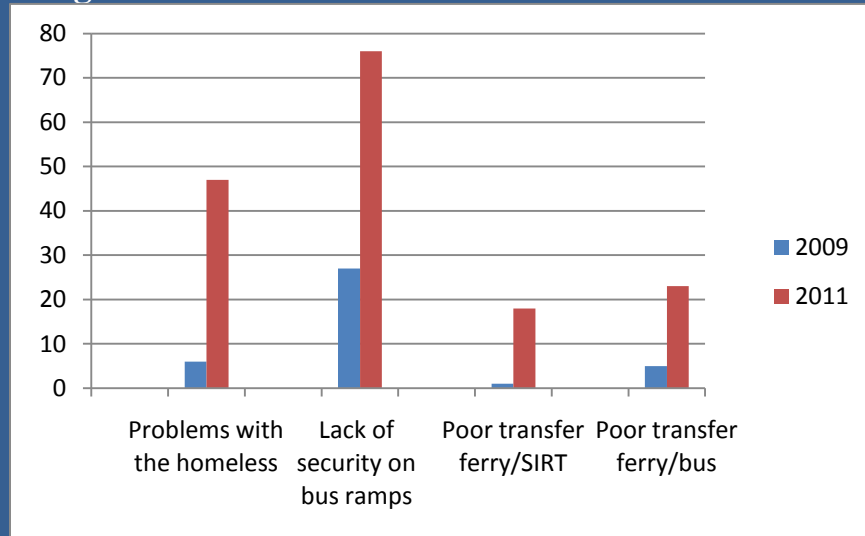
Comments in **green** are trends that seem worse than in 2009. Security on the bus ramps was non-existent and is in even greater demand today as illegal cigarette sales, harassment of commuters, loitering and smoking on the ramps has become untenable.

Comments in **orange** are trending in a positive way. For instance, there are more retail options; therefore 122 less respondents noted their desire for them. Those who did request greater options requested the same type of amenities as in 2009, a pharmacy, a dry cleaner, a bank, upscale restaurants and fast food restaurants. Requests also included placing a Citystore, a museum/gift shop in the terminal.

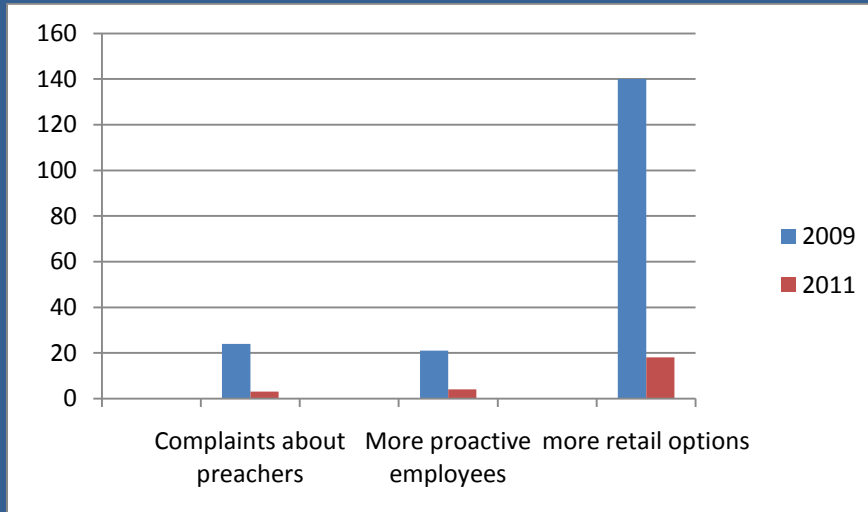
Requests for more frequent bathroom cleanups are down, a good sign. In 2009, 21 respondents complained of ferry staff not being productive only 4 did in 2011.

Comments in blue are new problems not considered in 2009. The Quiet Deck was established by request of the Senator and action by the DOT in the summer of 2009 after the first survey. The new issue is that the Quiet Deck needs enforcement. The Senator believes this can be accomplished through legislation and proactive NYPD/ferry personnel.

Negative Trends in Public Comments for 2009-2011



Positive Trends in Public Comments for 2009-2011



A Synopsis of Suggestions Directly from Riders

1) Make bus ramps more secure:

Security cameras, increased lighting and patrols on the bus ramps

- Signs posted on bus ramps and SIRT station “under 24 hour surveillance”
- End pan handling and illegal sales of cigarettes
- Keep unruly students from truancy and harassment of commuters and tourists

2) Make ferry rides more enjoyable:

- Lower the volume of announcements
- Bathrooms should be more frequently cleaned and stocked with soap, paper towels, etc
- Post on ramps and in SIRT station some auditory or visual sign as to when the doors are open/closed
- Sell newspapers on the boats
- Have informative plaques on the balcony railings so that tourists know what they are looking at
- Allow vehicles on boats, the Coast Guard allows it; Seattle moves 10,000 vehicles per weekday via passenger ferry
- On weekends and during off-peak hours, run boats more frequently, hour wait is excruciating, purchase smaller faster boats, with less headway allowing for greater evening service

3) Make the time spent waiting for the Ferry more enjoyable for riders:

- Sports bar, tavern and an upscale sit down restaurant in both the terminals
- Vendors should serve commuters needs, not just tourists; stores like dry cleaners, pharmacy, barber and shoe shine/repair like the stores that existed in the old terminal before the 1991 fire
- Continue to host and expand the farmer's market and local artists and performers
- Riders requested food vendors, less fast food/deli style more restaurants and fresh foods

4) Help keep commuters and tourists informed and on time:

- Use the screens already installed, twitter, etc to indicate delays and cancellations; have signs posted for the hearing impaired or simply begin using the twitter feed DOT already has, when boats are delayed, and when positive events are happening in and around the terminals
- Create a system that informs ferry riders of bus, subway, and SIRT arrival and departure times on the bus ramps at the drop offs and in the SIRT station
- Install metro card machines and ATM's in more locations and on the boats themselves
- Install WI-FI on the boats and in the terminals
- Install a decorative large clock in both terminals
- Install muted closed-captioning TV tuned to local news stations
- Post more subway/bus maps in terminals and on boats add kiosks

5) Assist and encourage cyclists in and around the ferry

- Clean the Bike Area on the boats
- Install better lighting and make the Staten Island lower level bike boarding area more like the bike waiting area on the Manhattan side

Successes from the 2009 Survey

Retail Improved, Commuters Still Desire Daily Necessities

Retail has improved greatly since the 2009 survey. Understandably, ferry riders in 2009 clamored for more retail; for five years a sole deli stood in both terminals. In 2009, by far the number one concern and suggestion was the lack of retail options in the Ferry Terminals. That year, out of the 422 separate comments that the riders filled out, 140 of the comments were concerning retail options in the terminals.

Commuters in this year's survey noted the 9,435 of remaining unused square footage in the St. George Terminal, and the remaining 7,784 vacant square footage in Whitehall Terminal. Combined the terminals have 36,000 square feet of retail space, 18,781 of that space now has retail. In 2009, a mere 7,000 square feet had retail, now 17,219 square feet is still vacant; a marked improvement to be sure, yet, that means 47% of the terminal's retail space remains vacant.

www.nycedc.com

While the new stores in the terminal are welcomed additions, the remaining vacant space must be retail for commuters daily needs. What is still lacking in the terminals are stores that service commuter's needs, such as: a pharmacy, a dry cleaner, a barber/nail salon, a bank branch, a tavern and an upscale sit down restaurant.

Quiet Deck Now Established, Requires the Force of Law

A quiet zone or deck on the ferry has been established on the top deck of each large vessel. The City designated a "quiet deck," where voluntarily cell phone use, loud music, audible video games, and loud conversations or "preaching" is restricted. Just as Amtrak, riders have access to quiet cars; Islanders now have a quiet deck for a better commute. Obviously the quiet deck is a success as complaints against preachers dropped from twenty-four to just three.

Through the 2009 survey and the willingness of the DOT to listen to their ferry riders the voluntary quiet deck was established. We applaud DOT's initiative on this issue and now want to press for the quiet deck to be codified into law. Nineteen comments stated that the quiet deck needs to have the force of law.

The City Council has enacted cell phone bans at theatres, the subway and bus system have loud music citations, **and a law enforcing the quiet deck should be introduced and passed.**

Thousands of Staten Islanders cross the Harbor everyday on their way to work or school. Most riders start their voyage much earlier, on a bus or car ride to the ferry. With the longest commute times in the nation, many Staten Island residents must travel over an hour before reaching their final destination, suffering through transfers, traffic, and road construction. One would hope that a trip on the ferry should be a welcome respite from the stress of commuting.



However, their commute can be interrupted daily by inconsiderate preachers, cell phone screamers, blaring music, loud video games and other nuisances, making the trip unbearable for many. While the Constitution rightly upholds the right to free speech, past court cases have made allowances for limiting public and private areas where one can express themselves. For example, an individual cannot yell, “fire” in an emergency room or a theater, and public libraries can enforce “no talking” policies. A quiet ride would be a tremendous improvement in the quality of lives of thousands of riders spending an hour a day on the ferry.

In 2011, while complaints regarding illegal activity on the bus ramps persist; a mere three complaints alluded to roaming preachers. The Quiet deck is an unmitigated success.

However, the Senator remains vigilant that legislation is necessary in order for the Quiet Deck to have the force of law behind it. Ferry personnel and NYPD need greater enforcement tools to properly ensure the quiet deck remain a sanctuary for commuters. Senator Savino commends the DOT for its willingness to implement this change in conjunction with the NYPD.

Letters to Speaker Christine Quinn, Police Commissioner Ray Kelly and Mayor Michael Bloomberg will follow this report concerning the quiet deck enforcement. If the City is not inclined to pass this legislation, Senator Savino will attempt a statewide version.

Problems that Persist

More Frequent Nighttime and Weekend Service

The second most suggested improvement, with 63 separately written comments, was for more frequent service.

Weekday Ferry service between the hours of 1:30 am and 5:30 am is on an hourly schedule. The majority of the people taking these boats back from Manhattan are service industry workers

with no commuting alternative. Additional service would accommodate these hard-working and often, low-wage earners; second and third shift workers and allow them to spend more time with their families. **Commuters requested a weekday 24 hour, half-hour ferry service.**

Currently, the last additional rush hour service leaving Staten Island is 9 am, after which there is no service until 9:30 am. **Riders requested a 9:15 am weekday boat to Manhattan to accommodate the later schedules of many commuters.** More and more companies are allowing flexible schedules so that employees can run errands or see their child off to school before work. Unfortunately, this is not an option for many Islanders because of the limited ferry service after 9:00 am.

During the weekend, the ferry service begins running hourly to Manhattan starting at 7:00 pm and 7:30 pm to Staten Island, imposing a defacto curfew on Staten Islanders who desire access to the nightlife and cultural aspects of Manhattan. In the past decade, ideas for filling this glaring service gap have been floated. Bus service from Whitehall to St. George Terminals and back every half hour to serve the riders missing hourly boats, smaller faster boats allowing for the same staffing while crossing the harbor more frequently and a half hour minimum pick up. **The present disparity between the amount of round the clock transit options for Staten Island and the other boroughs cannot and should not be allowed to continue.**

Lack of Security on Bus Ramps

The lowest grade of D+ (a 1.49) and the highest number of comments were for improved security on the bus ramps on the St. George/Staten Island Terminal. Respondents felt uneasy when entering or leaving the terminal due to inadequate lighting, as well as the number of indigent individuals loitering or soliciting. There is no comparison to the security once in the terminal or on the boats versus on the bus ramps. The security in the terminals is exemplary receiving the highest grade on the boats and the second highest in the terminals. Yet the security questions for the Bus ramps/SIRT/Parking lots received the lowest grade.

Currently, riders enjoy new terminals that are well maintained and patrolled, as well as new ferries. However, when one leaves the confines of the terminal there is a definite lack of security. These ramps are the “gateway” to Staten Island. Often, these bus ramps are the very first and for many the only piece of Staten Island people will see.

The ramps are owned by the New York City Department of Transportation. The MTA supervises the loading and unloading of passengers from the buses but not the potential passengers waiting on the bus ramps. NYPD patrols these ramps when staffing levels permit.

The MTA Police’s mandate is for the SIRT station security, nothing else. MTA Police do not conduct patrols even though a patrol car is stationed there. NYPD Patrol Borough Staten Island does an excellent job on the boats and in the terminals; they are understaffed during rush hours as two officers must patrol each boats for counterterrorism duties. Three boats trolling the harbor during rush hour (one loading) require six officers, leaving few for the terminal. NYPD patrols of the terminal are therefore thinnest during rush hours when they are most needed. The Senator supports a greater NYPD presence in and around the terminal especially during rush hour.

New York City pays \$15 million a year for the Allied Security contract; perhaps the private guards' duties can be expanded to include ramp security.

Conditions on the ramps would improve greatly with an enhanced presence of these agencies; the Senator's office is working toward that goal and has been assured that these agencies will address bus ramp security in the immediate future.

As the Ramps are undergoing a renovation, this is the opportunity to install cameras, new lighting and have expanded patrols by the NYPD. Senator Savino believes this would greatly improve the ramps lack of security and give commuters a better sense of safety.

Increased security of the bus ramps should also include enforcement of the non-smoking policy in the bus ramps. Currently, there is a flagrant disregard for the no smoking policy on DOT property and commuters must wade through a cloud of smoke when exiting the terminal. Considering the City has just banned smoking on golf courses, parks, etc. It is bewildering to watch a Mayor ban smoking on golf courses while Islanders can't get through the cloud of smoke to get to work or school.

Moreover, a black market of tax fraud is taking place in the open on each bus ramp every day. Ramp "D" was described by several comments as "the Newports! Ramp" or "the Loosie Ramp" as packs of Newport's are sold illegally. A loosie is a single cigarette separated from its pack and sold individually to a passerby for up to \$1. If purchased in New York City, selling a pack of "loosies" nets the seller a profit of up to \$8, if the pack is imported from a low tax state such as Virginia the profit can be as much as \$13 a pack.

These out of state packs are sold by the pack as well, in broad daylight all day long. A strong odor of marijuana can often be smelled and several riders indicated that it is being sold in the open on the bus ramps. In addition to the uneasy nature of commuters navigating this black market of nefarious criminals, New York City is losing the revenue of properly sold cigarette packs into our tax coffers.

New Issues and Suggestions

Make the Ferry More Cyclist Friendly

The City has made a concerted effort to establish and promote bike lanes and cycling. Many Islanders locked into their cars by a lack of mass transit option, resent the expedient increase in bike lanes at the expense of traffic and parking lanes. The City recently spent \$60,000 installing bike racks along Hylan Blvd., a heavily traffic congested main thoroughfare with no bike lane. None of these new bike racks are being used.

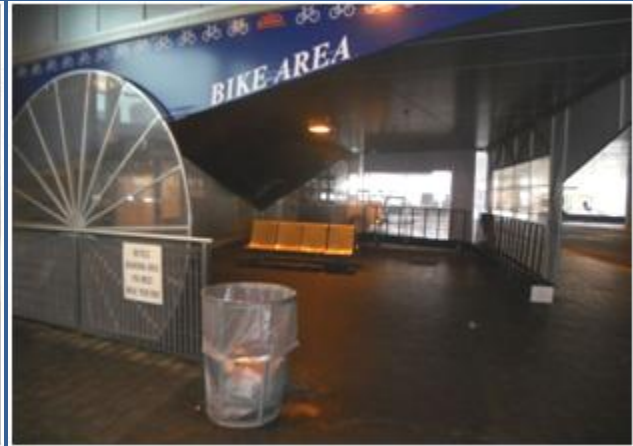
However, the Senator's office has never received a complaint regarding bike lanes or cyclists in and around the Ferry Terminal. Hundreds of Islanders cycle to the Ferry everyday; it is healthier for them and removes cars from the roads. It just makes sense to bike the fifteen minutes or less for those living in St. George, Tompkinsville, New Brighton, and Snug Harbor. The Ferry Terminal is a major cycling destination, yet it is unfriendly to cyclists.

Strangely, the Department of Transportation Commissioner is a cycling enthusiast; yet the agency's Ferry keeps cyclists in a dank, poorly lit, unsafe lower level boarding area on the St. George side. The "Bike Waiting Area" on the Whitehall side is adequately lit and allows direct access to the terminal so that the cyclist can use the facilities. Why the disparity?

On the boats the "Bike Area" resembles a holding cell. The "Bike Area" on every boat is dirty and trash strewn. The Barberi class boats have a leaking water pipe dripping directly into the "Bike Area."



Staten Island Bike Waiting Area



Manhattan Bike Waiting Area

Several cyclists complained they are forced to miss boats as their bikes are searched daily by security personnel. Security and random checks have become the norm and rightfully so at the Terminal.

That said, surely a quicker and more friendly system can be established, perhaps while in the bike waiting area as opposed to when they board. **Better lighting, a large bike parking lot at the St. George Terminal and improved security conditions could encourage even more Ferry riders to take their bike to the Ferry.**

Open an Official Citystore in the Terminal

The SI 2020 Center for an Urban Future study of Staten Island commissioned in 2007 by the Staten Island Economic Development Corporation stated:

"Other major transportation hubs—from South Station in Boston to Union Station in Washington, D.C. and Grand Central Station in Manhattan—are also hubs of activity: book sellers, open-air food courts and souvenir shop. When you get off the boat in Staten Island, you can't even buy a key chain or a coffee mug with an image of the ferry. Let's be frank: there are villages in Peru with a better tourist management policy."

Unfortunately, this statement is still true to this day. No effort is made to capture a tourist dollar outside of their stomachs. Opening a satellite of the Official Citystore in the Whitehall or St. George Terminal would provide an opportunity for New York City to capture revenue while

filling a need. **FDNY and NYPD merchandise, key chains and ferry gear would go like hot cakes. The present location of the Official City Store is unknown to the majority of New Yorkers and definitely off the radar for tourists.**

One location of the Official City Store is on the ground floor of One Centre Street, across from City Hall and at the base of the Brooklyn Bridge. This might appear to be an ideal location for New York City's Official merchandise location, but we remain unconvinced. While we were unable to ascertain revenue from the City Store, the location tends to go unnoticed, unused and revenue must suffer. The satellite location is even more obscure and off any path a tourist would take in the lobby of 141 Worth Street a mere 3 blocks away from the 1 Centre Street location. Having locations that close together goes against any marketing advice available.

<http://a856-citystore.nyc.gov/>

A satellite store in a terminal would provide a high profile location for the Official Citystore with access to 23 million tourists and commuters a year.

The Ferry Terminal is Not a Homeless Shelter

The Manhattan and especially the Staten Ferry Terminal have become defacto homeless shelters. There was an 80% spike in comments regarding homeless in the terminal. While we certainly feel for people who are homeless, especially considering today's economic difficulties, we are not helping these people transition to a better life by allowing them to languish all day in the terminals.

Moreover, many of these individuals have significant mental health issues; that are not being treated. Many of these homeless people use the opportunity of 65,000 tourists and commuters coming through their "bedroom" to solicit money, food and cigarettes via pan handling from hard-working commuters just trying to get to work or home. Worse yet, for tourists, many of whom have never nor ever will again step foot on Staten Island; this is the only part they may see, homeless vagrants on what one rider called Staten Island's front porch.

Again, the Department of Transportation must expand its contract to have private security ask those loitering or obstructing boarding to move along. The taxpayers of New York City did not pay \$100 million to renovate the St. George Terminal and \$201 million to renovate the Whitehall Terminal so they could become the nicest homeless shelters in New York City.

The Department of Homeless Services must make the Terminals a priority for placement and assistance services. According to a recent DHS survey there are 27% less homeless on Staten Island streets this year compared to last. Are they all in the Ferry Terminal?

NYPD must be aggressive in arresting crimes like public urination, pan handling, and public intoxication. Keeping our new terminals pleasant for the commuters for whom they were constructed is paramount. Our tax dollars paid for these new terminals, it would be nice if we could sit in them undisturbed.

Conclusions

- 1) The Ferry Terminals are not a homeless shelter.
- 2) Bus ramps are the wild west, where are the Mayor's anti-smoking troops here?
- 3) Passage of a law enforcing the Quiet Deck.
- 4) Remaining retail must serve commuters needs, (a bank, pharmacy, tavern, dry cleaners, etc) .
- 5) Increase nighttime and weekend service with smaller faster boats.
- 6) Find a way to allow vehicles on the boats. The Coast Guard allows vehicles on ferries; Seattle moves 10,000 vehicles per weekday via passenger ferry.
- 7) An Official City Store should be placed in the Whitehall or St. George Terminal.
- 8) For a City putting bike racks and lanes everywhere these bike areas stink.

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