



THE ALGIERS/ CANAL STREET FERRY

A CRITICAL
TRANSPORTATION &
ECONOMIC LINK



Ride New Orleans is an **independent** non-profit organization.
We advocate for safe, convenient and affordable
transportation for all New Orleanians.
Learn more - 504.345.8360 / www.rideneworleans.org

THE SITUATION AND WHAT WE'RE DOING ABOUT IT

New Orleans Ferries are in Crisis

In 2012, the Louisiana State Legislature voted to strip the ferries of their dedicated funding source by prohibiting any future Crescent City Connection bridge tolls from funding them, but failed to provide other funding sources in order to maintain ferry service long-term.

The State will end funding for the Algiers - Canal Street ferry in June 2013, putting ferry service in danger of being drastically reduced or cut altogether.

Why the Ferry Matters

The Mississippi River poses a significant barrier between East and West Bank neighborhoods. While the Crescent City Connection bridge (built in 1958) provides access for vehicles, it does not accommodate pedestrians or cyclists.

Fortunately, the ferries have provided a safe and reliable way across the Mississippi River for pedestrians and cyclists since ferry service began in 1827. The most recent statistics show that the Algiers - Canal Street ferry serves 1.1 million pedestrian passengers and 175,000 vehicle passengers per year from the early morning to late evening, making it the fourth largest ferry in terms of ridership in the country.

What We're Doing About it

When Ride New Orleans first discovered that ferry service was in danger, because we work so closely with transit dependent populations, we knew that service cuts would mean a devastating loss of mobility for New Orleans and Algiers residents lacking a personal vehicle. After discovering that there has not been a comprehensive effort to understand the human story of our ferries, and that decisions about cutting service would likely be made without considering the true impact, we decided to collect as much information as we could about who rides the New Orleans - Algiers ferry and why.

So, with the help of over 40 volunteers, we conducted a survey of 1,575 ferry riders on the Algiers - Canal Street ferry in April 2013. We collected 1,300 surveys from ferry riders on board the ferry and at both ferry terminals over the course of 2 days (a Saturday and a Tuesday), and an additional 275 individuals submitted surveys online.

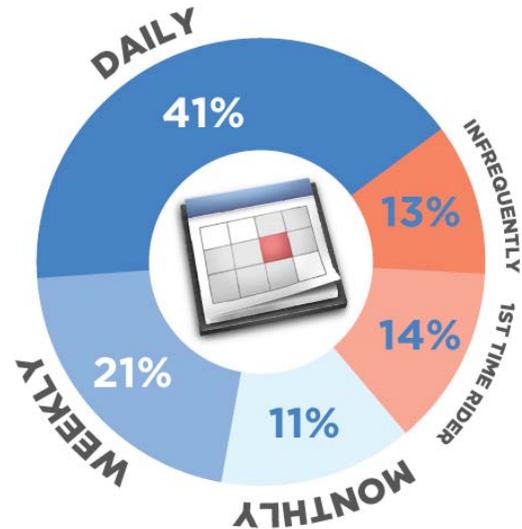
The survey asked riders how often they rely on the ferry, the reasons they ride, where they live, how difficult their commute would be if service were to end, whether they would be willing to pay a fare, and other general demographic questions. This report serves to provide you with the full picture of our most compelling results, and should help you to see that there is so much more to lose than just the ferry itself.

SURVEY RESULTS

WHO IS RIDING THE FERRY, HOW OFTEN, AND WHY?

Most Riders take the Ferry Often

Our survey results show that the majority of respondents ride the ferry regularly, including 41% who ride daily, and 21% who ride weekly. We also encountered many tourists riding the ferry – but all in all, only 14% of riders we surveyed said they were riding the ferry for the first time. Unfortunately, this means that if the ferry is no longer in service, the 41% of riders who rely on the ferry at least 5 days a week can expect to face spending either 10+ hours a week commuting by bus, or \$200 a week on a cab to save time.



Most Riders are Pedestrians

A significant percentage of ferry riders walk, bike, ride transit, take a taxi, or catch a ride with a friend to get to and from their ferry terminal. If ferry service were to be cut, the majority of those riders would not have a straightforward way to cross the river. Some may get lucky, and find a friend willing to take them over the bridge, but transit options for those who can't find a ride are either time-consuming or overwhelmingly expensive.

Pedestrians who rely on the ferry will be forced to choose between adding 2 hours to their commute each day to ride the bus round-trip, or to spend \$40 to take a taxi round-trip.

Most Riders are Commuting to Work

More than half of ferry riders use the Algiers-Canal Street ferry in order to travel to and from work. In contrast, only 37% of the ferry riders we surveyed were riding for a tourist experience. This shows that the ferry is a critical economic linkage for our regional workforce while also playing a significant role in our tourist economy.

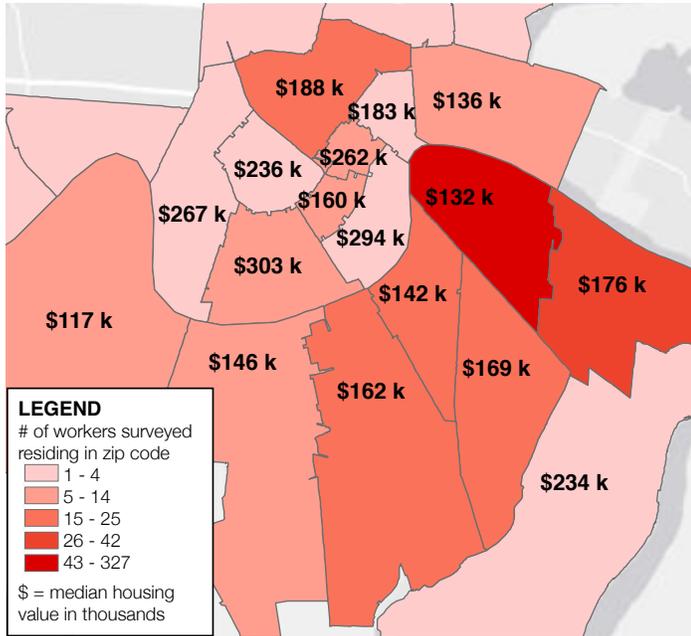
Tourists Love the Ferry

The Algiers-Canal Street ferry is ranked #23 of 151 New Orleans' attractions on Trip Advisor. A visitor in March 2013 reviewed the ferry as 'must-see', saying: "Every time I go to NOLA, I ride the ferry. It's free and you get wonderful views of the city, especially at night when the bridge looks phenomenal lit up with light!"



WITHOUT INTERVENTION

FERRY COMMUTERS ARE IN TROUBLE



The Ferry Connects 1,500 Riders to Jobs Daily

Comparing the survey data with the over 1.3 million annual riders on the Algiers - Canal Street ferry, we can see that ferries connect more than 1,500 riders to their jobs daily.

Ferry Commuters Live in West Bank Neighborhoods

81% of ferry commuters come from the West Bank where housing is very affordable. According to the 2011 U.S. Census American Community Survey, the median housing price in West Bank neighborhoods is more affordable than East Bank neighborhoods adjacent to the CBD and French Quarter on average with a difference in median housing prices greater than \$100,000.



Ferry Commuters Work in Tourism and Hospitality

Of the riders commuting to work, 46% are working in the tourism and hospitality industries. "In a city with more than 10 million visitors annually, the hospitality business supplies more than 66,000 jobs in the service sector such as accommodations and restaurants." (city-data.com)

"I work in Harvey and ride the ferry to work five times a week. It is very important to have a viable option for bikers and pedestrians to get across the river."
 - Chris Thomasson



WITHOUT INTERVENTION FERRY COMMUTERS ARE IN TROUBLE

Ferry Commuters Earn Under \$40,000

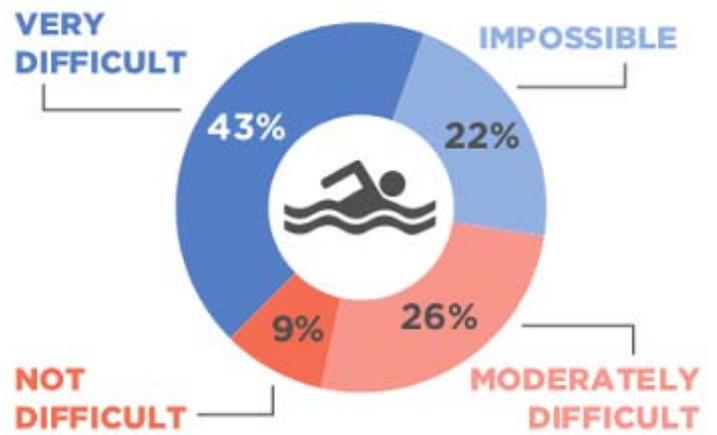
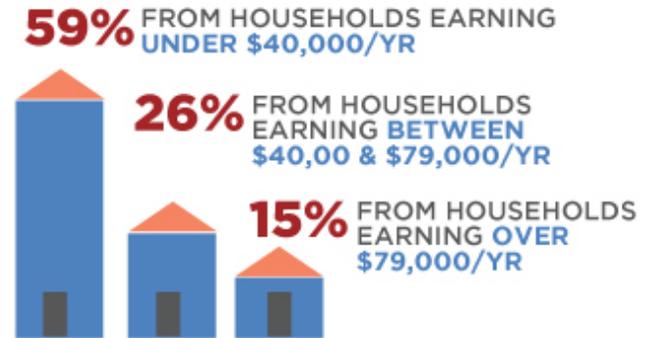
With an average Leisure and Hospitality industry salary of \$18,000 a year (Bureau of Labor Statistics), it is no surprise that 59% of ferry commuters come from households earning less than \$40,000 a year.

Ferry Commuters Don't Have Access to a Car & Won't be Able to Get to Work Without the Ferry

Ferry commuters will face the most hardship in the event of ferry service cuts.

More than 38% of ferry riders commuting to work do not own or have access to a car. Although taking the bus over the Crescent City Connection is affordable, it takes time. Further compounding the problem of a long commute is that regular bus service to Algiers stops at 9:00PM. Ferry commuters who get off work after 9:00PM have two chances to get home on the RTA Algiers Loop Owl: 10:15PM or 12:15AM. In comparison, the ferry provides cross-river trips every 30 minutes until 1am.

When asked about what their commute would be like if the ferry stopped running, 22% of ferry commuters said they would be unable to get to work if the ferry were to stop running and another 43% said their commute would become very difficult.

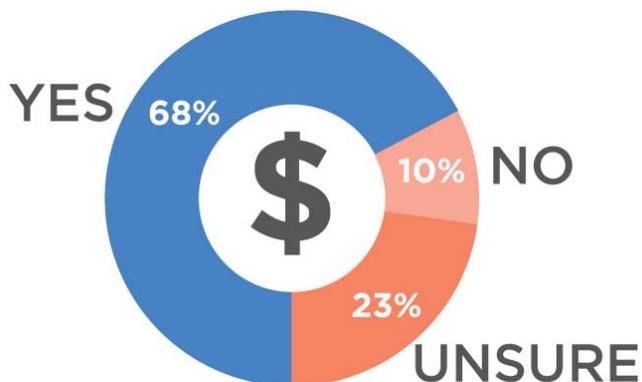


“As a westbank homeowner and daily ferry rider I strongly urge the continuation of the ferry. I ride my bike to work in the CBD rather than drive and would gladly pay my share to preserve this tremendous resource.”

-Paul Langenwalter

FARE ANALYSIS

FERRY RIDERS ARE WILLING TO PAY



Ferry Riders are Willing to Pay

Currently, no fares are charged for ferry riders that walk or bring their bikes. 68% of surveyed riders responded that they are willing to pay a fare in order to support continued ferry service. Only 10% indicated they would be unwilling to pay a fare. The remaining 23% answered that they were unsure. The majority of respondents answering that they were unsure come from low-income households making under \$40,000 per year.

Introducing a Fare Will Help to Cover Ferry Costs

Assuming ridership trends continue, the introduction of a \$1.25 per passenger and / or vehicle fare* would generate \$1.6 million annually to support continued ferry service. The Algiers-Canal Street Ferry costs \$4 million annually to run. The revenue that would be generated by fares could be used as a local match to leverage federal funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Currently, motorists pay \$1 travelling only in one direction. Not surprisingly, the current fare structure brings in a mere \$65,000. The introduction of fares for all passengers is a major opportunity for helping to sustain future ferry service. The \$1.25 fare is consistent with the current bus and streetcar fare collected by the Regional Transit Authority.

Willingness to Pay a Fare based on Why People Ride

	Yes	Not Sure	No
For a tourist experience	68.3%	23.0%	8.7%
To get to work / job	69.0%	21.9%	9.1%
To access recreation	74.7%	18.9%	6.4%
To visit family and/or friends	70.2%	20.5%	9.4%
To access healthcare/services	69.3%	18.9%	11.8%
I don't have a car	63.7%	23.9%	12.4%

Willingness to Pay a Fare based on how Frequently People Ride

	Yes	Not Sure	No
Daily	66.5%	22.7%	10.9%
Weekly	73.4%	18.1%	8.5%
Monthly	73.5%	15.2%	11.3%
Infrequently	62.1%	27.7%	10.2%
First-time rider	62.4%	31.2%	6.5%

“I depend on the ferry to get to work, make groceries, and about everything else.”

-Bryon Hensel

TAKE ACTION

Without intervention by our state, regional and local officials, the Algiers - Canal Street ferry will cease operations in July 2013. Please consider joining our campaign to save the ferries by visiting <http://www.rideneworleans.org>.

SPECIAL THANKS

This report was powered by our volunteers and donors. Their commitment to the ferries and enthusiasm for lending a hand made this report possible.

Survey Day Volunteers

Alexandra Miller
Casey Stanton
Christopher Lane
David Bess
Emily Ramirez
Heather Shields
Heather Szapary
James Amdal
Jann Fenner
Jeffrey Goodman
Jennifer Terry
Judy Mclauchlan
Kaitlin Marone
Kathleen Onufer
Lechea Deamicis
Liz Allen
Maria Levitsky
Mary Goldie
Matt Rufo
Peter Bennett
Susan Gohd
Tara Lambeth
Tyler Antrup
Vincent Paciera

Data Entry Volunteers

Alexandra Miller
Amery Matinat
Casey Stanton
Emily Frock
Emily Ramirez
Fay Faron
Flora Shepherd
Jeffrey Goodman
Jann Fenner
Kaitlin Joerger
Kathleen Onufer
Kelsey Foster
Lucien Bruno
Megan Capone
Paul Langenwalter
Tara Tolford
Valerie Jefferson

Data Analyst Volunteers

Alexandra Miller
Kaitlin Joerger
Matthew Rufo

Campaign Donors

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Alexandra Miller
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Carl-Uno Backman
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