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RAIL SERVICE TO AND FROM LYNN IS CRUCIAL TO ECONOMY

BY THOR JOURGENSEN | June 6, 2018



A Blue Line train leaving Wonderland Station in Revere. Plans to extend the line into Lynn were spiked in the 1970's. (File photo)

LYNN — Electric trains and ferry service to Boston are the transportation engines that can accelerate Lynn's economy and put its waterfront into overdrive, transit experts told city leaders and residents Wednesday.

Mayor Thomas M. McGee led the discussion at the Lynn Museum. He invited Alden Raine, an engineer with Los Angeles-based multinational firm AECOM, and Richard A. Dimino, CEO of A Better City, to amplify on a point McGee has repeatedly hammered home.

“The reality is we are 45th in the country in terms of transit investment. You can’t make reforms a reality without investing in the system,” McGee said.

Raine invited his audience to view the MBTA not as a \$2 billion transit system with crippling debt and spotty service, but as a transit engine generating \$11.4 billion in economic benefits by keeping drivers off the road and lessening the need for new highways.

“All these savings get pushed back into the economy,” Raine said.

Reviving ferry service from Lynn to Boston and bringing electric rail service with more frequency than the commuter rail to Lynn are ideas that make sense, Raine said.

“Relatively speaking, it’s the cheapest investment you can make,” Raine said.

He pointed to the Silver Line bus service in Chelsea, with its connections to Logan Airport, the World Trade Center in Boston and South Station, as another option to consider. The Chelsea line opened this year and operates with maximum 24-minute travel times.

President of Bayview Realty Corp. in Lynn and a director of *The Item*, John M. Gilberg, questioned the wisdom of investing more money into the MBTA.

“Why would I as a taxpayer want to put a dime into this?” he asked.

McGee said the MBTA, prodded by the Legislature, has undergone substantial financial and administrative reforms, including employee pension control measures. But the mayor said even anti-tax proponents recognize the need for more transit spending.

Four recent reports on transportation have amplified this point, said McGee, who insisted electrified rail service to and from Lynn with a more frequent stop schedule than the commuter rail could make the Market Street commuter rail garage “the vibrant place it should be instead of a place where 600 people park.”

Dimino credited McGee’s work as a former state senator to push for more transportation spending. He said mayors must build coalitions stressing the critical connection between transit and the Massachusetts economy.

“The urban core business community needs to stand up and advocate for these changes. The bottom line is we can’t excuse the inability to move forward,” Dimino said.

The bottom line, said Raine, is transit is crucial to economic productivity in densely concentrated areas like Lynn.

“It’s critical,” he said.



Thor Jourgensen

A newspaperman for 34 years, Thor Jourgensen has worked for the Item for 29 years and lived in Lynn 20 years. He has overseen the Item's editorial department since January 2016 and is the 2015 New England Newspaper and Press Association Bob Wallack Community Journalism Award recipient.

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