

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, NEWS

BAKER OPENS THE DOOR TO PERMANENT FERRY SERVICE

THOMAS GRILLO | August 29, 2017



(File photo)

LYNN — Gov. Charlie Baker said the temporary ferry service to Boston could become permanent.

“If we can come up with a model that works for the city, works for commuters and works for T, I think people probably would be happy to do it,” Baker told The Item following the ribbon cutting at the new Market Basket on Federal Street last week.

After [previously opposing the service](#), the Baker administration [reversed course this summer](#) and provided \$200,000 to fund one round trip weekday excursion from the city’s terminal on the Blossom Street Extension to Boston’s Long Wharf.

At the time, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation said ferry service was relaunched to mitigate the impact of Route 1A and Sumner Tunnel construction projects.

Baker said the major reason for reintroducing the ferry was construction work being done on the commuter rail lines.

“We thought we needed to give people another option and decided to give this a try and see what happens,” Baker said. Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy said while it would be great if the MBTA could pick up the ferry service tab, the city is in no position to pay \$650,000 annually for the boat’s operation.

“It’s expensive to operate and I don’t see where the city can afford to spend that money to run it at this time,” she said. “With 80 percent of the commuters who use it coming from outside of Lynn, it seems like city money could be better spent on Lynn residents given the city’s finances.”

State Sen. Thomas McGee (D-Lynn), who made ferry service to Boston a priority and is challenging Kennedy for the mayor’s office, said the Baker administration is taking a closer look at water and other transportation options.

“There’s a synergy that’s building and a growing recognition that with the continued gridlock in the region and the challenges we face on transportation, water transportation is an option,” he said. “This is something we need to continue to look at and creating the pieces that help make that happen.” he said.

Last summer, the governor said Lynn's two-year demonstration project in 2014 and 2015 to launch the ferry on the state's dime was an opportunity to examine whether the service made economic sense. He concluded it didn't generate the ridership and the price tag per rider was too expensive.

But the governor has since taken a different tone.

"The city is continuing to have conversations with the MBTA about the possibilities of this going forward," Baker said.

The boat is expected to operate until Friday, Sept. 22 with a single departure at 7:45 a.m., and one evening return from Boston at 6 p.m. The cost for the 35-minute trip is \$7 each way, \$3.50 for children and seniors.

During the 2014 season, the estimated total number of rides was 13,322 and during the 2015 season, the estimated number of rides taken totaled 14,577.

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Thomas Grillo is an award-winning business reporter who has worked at Boston's major newspapers covering real estate trends such as the emergence of Assembly Square in Somerville and chronicling the growth of Boston's Seaport District. In Lynn, Thomas covers City Hall and commercial real estate development including the transformation of Lynn's waterfront into a mixed-use neighborhood. Follow him on Twitter [@BosBizThomas](#).

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