

Final phase of Lynn ferry project 'on target, within budget'

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By Chris Stevens/The Daily Item

When Phase III of the commuter ferry project is complete, all that will be left to do is buy the boat, said Economic Development and Industrial Corporation Executive Director James Cowdell.

"Phase III is under way, it's on target and within budget," he said. "It should be completed by the end of this calendar year."

Cowdell told board members during a recent EDIC meeting that if they stopped by Blossom Street Extension they would see a very different picture than a year ago.

The commuter ferry project is nearly five years in the making, and when Phase III is complete it will represent a total \$7 million investment to the area, Cowdell said.

"And that is 100 percent through grants," he added. "Phase III is a Department of Transportation grant. Phase I and II were Seaport Advisory Council grants."

Cowdell said for many years people doubted the ferry project would ever happen

"Now they ask me when it will happen," he said. "We've been slowly selling people on the idea."

Phase I of the ferry project was completed in 2008 when EDIC rebuilt the boat ramp at the end of Blossom Street extension, tore down an old building that Cowdell said was a bait shop when he was young, upgraded the drainage and put down new asphalt for the driveway.

Phase II included installing a steel bulkhead that protects the shoreline while also expanding the waterfront access from 60-feet to 150-feet. The final phase brings dredging, a 60-foot wave attenuator, a new pier and final upland improvements such as new sidewalks, park amenities, paving, striping and lighting.

While other ferries, such as Salem's, have suffered from a lack of ridership, Cowdell said he doesn't believe that will be an issue for Lynn.

"Salem was a tourist ferry, it was seasonal," he said. "This will operate 52 weeks a year. It will truly be a commuter ferry."

He is not, however, ruling out using the ferry for a tourist use venue. He said they are working on a plan that would have the ferry make seasonal trips to the Boston Islands.

"And I think that will be met with great success," he said.

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The Blossom Street extension, which will be the ferry terminal, shows progress on Friday as one of several projects on the Lynn waterfront. (Item Photo / Angela Owens)

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