

# Lynn ferry set for second season at sea

Posted: Saturday, May 16, 2015 3:00 am

**LYNN** — The Lynn-to-Boston commuter ferry, which exceeded expectations during last year’s initial run, returns Monday at 6:30 a.m. from the launching point at Blossom Street Extension with the promise of a smooth ride not only for Lynners but for those throughout the North Shore.

The ferry service attracted a loyal ridership last year, to the point that almost 200 customers signed a petition requesting that the schedule be extended beyond the original end date of Sept. 12. They were hoping for an additional several weeks, but settled for two.

Laura Patrick of Marblehead, a designer at a Boston architectural firm, led the petition drive.

“Most people are looking forward to picking up where they left off last year,” said Patrick. “It is a wonderful experience —beautiful scenery and you smell the fresh air. It is a relaxing and sometimes social ride. It takes the stress out of the commute.”

This is the second of a two-year pilot program. Last year, ridership was 13,136 — more than 3,000 over the projected total of 10,000.

“It was awesome, the best thing that could have happened to the North Shore,” said Debbie Perates of Peabody, who knocked a half-hour off of her previous commute by car to Vertex Pharmaceuticals in the Seaport District. “Being on a boat just adds to the enjoyment of not being in traffic. I love it.”

The schedule will remain the same: three departures Monday-Friday at 6:30 a.m., 8 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. from the Blossom Street Extension ramp to Central Wharf in Boston (at the New England Aquarium); and three return trips from Central Wharf at 7:15 a.m., 5:45 p.m. and 7:15 p.m.

The trip takes about 30 minutes and costs \$7 each way, \$3.50 for seniors and children ages 3-12. MBTA Zone 2 passes or higher are honored. There is free parking for almost 250 cars at the Blossom Street Extension dock.



## Lynn ferry

The commuter ferry surpassed expectations last year.

“There clearly is value in providing this service,” Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy said. “Not only does the ferry offer a quick, convenient and cost-effective method of getting into Boston and back, there is also the added benefit of having people from other communities come to Lynn and see first-hand what we have to offer. It is a win-win in that respect.”

The two-year pilot program is being funded through the Seaport Advisory Council. The city is hoping that another successful season will result in a continued commitment from the state.

“After years of effort, it was gratifying to see the Lynn ferry project come to fruition last year,” said Sen. Thomas McGee of Lynn, chair of the state legislature’s Joint Committee on Transportation and a driving force behind bringing ferry service to the city. “We are confident that the ferry will spur additional economic development while showcasing one of Lynn’s greatest resources: the waterfront.”

James Cowdell, executive director of the EDIC/Lynn, which contracts with Boston Harbor Cruises to operate the ferry, said he is optimistic that this year will be even more successful than last.

“We feel we will build on the success we had last year and have an even better year in 2015,” he said.

“The overall atmosphere is great,” said Paula Mackin of Lynn, a paralegal at a Boston law firm, who took the ferry at least two days a week last summer. “Everyone is in a pretty good mood because you don’t have to deal with traffic. There’s a social aspect where you can get a cup of coffee and have a conversation with someone. All the feedback was positive.”

Mackin and Patrick pointed to the reliability of the service as another positive. “It pretty much ran on time and it was pretty consistent,” Patrick said.

Cowdell said that he hopes that, in addition to commuters, people looking to spend a day in Boston or even on the Cape will take advantage of the ferry. “You can easily get to Boston and then take another boat to the Cape and islands,” he said. “We hope people will see it as a recreational opportunity.”

The first 100 riders on the 8 a.m. ferry on Monday will receive a Dunkin’ Donuts gift card and a free copy of The Item, Cowdell said. There will be no charge to ride the ferry the first week.