

Lynn ferry shore sign of spring

By Cyrus Moulton / The Daily Item | Posted: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 3:00 am

LYNN — The commuter ferry will return to port beginning in May for the second year of the two-year pilot program, city officials said Monday.

“We are very excited to get the ferry up and running again,” said James Cowdell, executive director of the city Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC). The EDIC contracted with Boston Harbor Cruises to run the ferry last year and this summer. “The ferry is a convenient, cost-effective, efficient option that thousands of people utilized last year, and we hope even more will discover this year.”

The commuter ferry had its long-awaited inaugural voyage last May after years of dreaming by Sen. Tom McGee (D-Lynn), chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation. Ridership far exceeded expectations, with more than 10,000 riders using the ferry this summer, according to Cowdell. In fact, the ferry season was extended from Sept. 12 until Sept. 26. A petition by riders to extend the season further was unsuccessful.

The ferry leaves from the Blossom Street Extension ramp on weekdays at 6:30 a.m., 8 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Return trips leave Boston’s Long Wharf at 7:15 a.m. 5:45 p.m. and 7:15 p.m. each weekday. The ferry ride from Lynn to Boston and vice versa runs just about 35 minutes. The ship can hold up to 250 passengers with seats both inside and outside, and the boat sells snacks along with coffee, beer and wine. Tickets will remain at the same price: \$7 each way for adults and \$3.50 for seniors and children ages 3-12. MBTA Zone 2 passes will be honored, and payment is made on the boat with cash and credit cards accepted. There is free parking for 243 spaces.

The schedule will resume on Monday, May 18.

McGee said in the announcement he was looking forward to a second successful year of the pilot program.

“This alternative option of traveling to and from Boston attracted many passionate commuters from all over the North Shore last year,” McGee said. “I am confident that as congestion continues to grow on the roads, more people will turn to this accessible and affordable mode of transportation.”



Lynn ferry back in May

Commuters exit the Lynn ferry, which will return in May.

The ferry is one part of a plan to redevelop the city's waterfront — a project to which the state has dedicated \$7 million to rebuilding the pier and creating parking, Cowdell previously told The Daily Item. City officials have said they hope to make the ferry permanent and year-round.

Last year's pilot project had its hiccups. The ferry boat is also used for whale watching, and the boat was stranded with 157 whale-watchers aboard in July when its propellers got entangled in underwater cables. The same boat then ran aground on a ferry run Aug. 29 and had to wait for rising tides. It was 90 minutes late for its scheduled arrival.

But city officials are optimistic the ferry will attract further development in the area, with hopes that the next phase will be the construction of a 20,000 square-foot terminal with a second-floor restaurant. Other plans include a dredging project to create a contiguous loop in and out of the harbor for the ferry, shortening the commuting time.

“It's just one more reason to look forward to spring and to say bon voyage to winter,” City Council President Dan Cahill said of the ferry resuming.