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## News

# MCGEE NEVER GAVE UP ON FERRY

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**ITEM PHOTO BY OWEN O'ROURKE**

*Passengers getting off the 6:30 pm ferry at the Blossom Street Extension dock.*

**By THOMAS GRILLO**

The loss of ferry service to **Boston's Long Wharf** last summer didn't deter state **Sen. Thomas McGee** from lobbying the Baker administration to bring the alternative commute back. The Lynn **Democrat** said two weeks before Gov. Charlie Baker did an about face on ferry funding, he called **Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Secretary**

**Stephanie Pollack** and suggested the ferry be restored this summer in light of several North Shore construction projects.

A 28-day shutdown of train service along the **Newburyport/Rockport Commuter Rail Line** has been scheduled for July 16 through August 13 to repair **Beverly Draw Bridge**. Road reconstruction is also slated for Route 1A and the Sumner Tunnel.

“Given all the projects going on, I explained how important it was to mitigate the impacts and restore the ferry and she agreed,” McGee said.

But McGee said the administration’s decision was not the result of a single conversation. In May, he made a presentation to the **Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization**, the agency responsible for conducting the region’s transportation planning process. He was seeking \$200,000 to operate the service, a partial payment toward the \$700,000 to operate the service with multiple trips each way. But the request was rejected.

McGee said he was able to convince the **MBTA’s Control Board**, the T’s operating authority, to launch a ferry pilot program.

Last summer, the Lynn delegation supported creation of the **Water Transportation Advisory Council** over the governor’s veto. The panel plans to devise a regional water transportation system.

McGee said expansion of ferry service is not limited to Lynn. He said the **John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum** and the **University of Massachusetts at Boston** are exploring ferry opportunities. The new **Wynn** casino in Everett is expected to offer ferry services for its customer.

“This is part of a long-term vision for regional ferry service,” McGee said. A spokeswoman for Pollack did not return a call seeking comment.

After operating in 2014 and 2015, the ferry was docked last summer due to budget constraints. Baker and Pollack concluded it didn’t generate the ridership and the price tag per rider was too expensive.

The boat was relaunched last week with \$170,000 in MassDOT funds to pay for the operation by **Boston Harbor Cruises**.

It departs at 7:45 a.m. from the **Blossom Street Extension**, arriving in Long Wharf at 8:20 a.m., and returns to Lynn at 6:35 p.m.

The cost for the 35-minute trip is \$7 each way, \$3.50 for children and seniors.

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*Thomas Grillo can be reached at [tgrillo@itemlive.com](mailto:tgrillo@itemlive.com).*