

NEWS

LYNN SHARES \$28M FERRY FUNDING

BY CHARLIE MCKENNA | July 17, 2022



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

LYNN — A more than \$10 billion transportation infrastructure bill passed by the state Senate on Friday would resurrect the city's ferry program, which has remained dormant since 2017, with \$28 million going to an intracoastal ferry pilot connecting terminals in Salem, Gloucester, Lynn, Winthrop, Quincy, and Boston.

The new initiative could provide some relief for commuters staring down the imminent closure of the Lynn commuter rail station on July 25, as well as the Sumner Tunnel, which connects the North Shore to Boston, which will be fully closed between May and September 2023. Sen. Brendan Crighton, who chairs the legislature's Joint Committee on Transportation, said officials hope to have the ferry up and running by next spring, "hopefully for April or May."

"With the closure of that tunnel it's going to be an unbearable commute," Crighton said in a telephone interview Sunday. Senators Joan Lovely, Lydia Edwards, Bruce Tarr, and John Keenan worked with Crighton to secure the funding for the ferry pilot.

Lynn Mayor Jared Nicholson echoed Crighton, saying the city "desperately needs" mitigation efforts for commuters.

"The time is also right for a serious water transportation system in Greater Boston. I'm grateful for the leadership and advocacy of Sen. Crighton and our state delegation and collaboration across the region to identify these funds," Nicholson said in a statement.

Crighton said the hope is for the ferry program to become a staple of the North Shore, noting that the Hingham/Hull ferry similarly began as a mitigation effort before becoming a permanent feature on the South Shore.

Gov. Charlie Baker's administration shut the city's ferry down after two years, Crighton said, but officials hope a new administration would be more receptive to water transportation, especially considering much of the infrastructure is already in place in Lynn.

"We have a top-notch commuter ferry terminal," Crighton said. "We might as well put it to use."

"We don't need track, we don't need right of ways ... we just need a boat," he quipped.

Crighton said city officials, including Nicholson and the Economic Development & Industrial Corporation, have experience in water transportation, and have been "working hand in hand" with the legislature.

Plans for the revived ferry remain in the early stages, Crighton said, as officials have yet to identify who will operate the ferry though he noted that "we certainly hope to work with the MBTA on this."

The MBTA operates the Hingham/Hull ferry as well as a ferry from Boston to Charlestown. The Salem ferry, which shuttles commuters from Boston's Long Wharf to Blaney Street, is operated by Boston City Cruises.

Crighton said officials will continue to look for additional funding for the ferry, but said the allocation for mitigation is a "strong start."