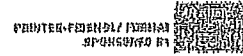


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COMMUTING

Ferry Project to Restore Service to Manhattan

By STEWART AIN

NOT many people speak of their commute to work as fondly as Barbara A. Peebles does.

Mrs. Peebles said she took the Glen Cove ferry, which was less than a mile from her home, to her office at a financial company in Lower Manhattan from the time it started service in May 2001 until that Sept. 11. "I absolutely appreciated every single day because I got to look at the most wonderful city in the world," said Mrs. Peebles, who began working from home when her company relocated to New Jersey after 9/11. "You had almost a sightseeing tour every day."

The high-speed ferry suspended service indefinitely in November 2001, and no other ferry service took its place. Now that seems likely to change, giving Glen Cove the only ferry service between Long Island and New York City.

Cara Longworth, executive director of the Glen Cove Industrial Development Agency, said the city was expected to begin work on the final designs for a new ferryboat basin and terminal along Glen Cove Creek, not far from downtown Glen Cove. She said the goal was to begin construction of the boat building a year from now, to have service running out of a temporary terminal in the spring of 2009 and to complete the project in 2012.

The project is expected to cost \$16.9 million, Ms. Longworth said. The federal government will finance most of it, with some matching grants from the city, "but we hope to cover any outlays with rent" from a restaurant planned for the second floor of the terminal, she said.

Other ferries serve Long Island, but none go to Manhattan. Ferries in Orient Point and Port Jefferson cross Long Island Sound to Connecticut, and ferries from Montauk go to Connecticut, Block Island, R.I., and Martha's Vineyard.

The Glen Cove project manager, Kevin Williams, vice president of the Urbitran Group, a Manhattan engineering, architecture and planning company, said that more than half a dozen ferry operators had expressed interest in the project and that several were consulted during the terminal's design. More talks will occur with operators to ensure the city has "a plan that works," he said.

"We have to make sure that they have the right vessels and are able to do it at a cost that makes sense," Mr. Williams said. "We want to be a competitive alternative to the Long Island

Rail Road.”

Ms. Longworth said that the fare had not yet been determined (the old ferry cost in the mid-\$30 range round trip) and that about 250 commuters a day are expected to ride it initially, with several daily departures. She said the trip to Lower Manhattan would be 46 minutes. The trip from Glen Cove to Pennsylvania Station on the Long Island Rail Road takes just over an hour and costs \$9.25 each way.

Jonathan L. Guss, 37, of Old Brookville said he drives to Manhasset each morning and takes the train to Penn Station and then the subway to Lower Manhattan, which takes up to 90 minutes. He said he was eagerly awaiting ferry service.

Mr. Guss said he moved to Long Island about three years ago from Boston, where he took a 30-minute ferry ride to work. He said he knows of many businesses and commuters who would embrace the ferry.

“It would be more convenient and more enjoyable,” he said.

Mayor Ralph V. Suozzi said that although community reaction had been “overwhelmingly positive,” some residents question whether the ferry is worth the cost of building a terminal. But he said it might open up Glen Cove to commercial development by businesses wishing to expand or to relocate from Lower Manhattan to avoid high rents.

“The ferry would be an opportunity to attract business that would not otherwise come here,” he said.

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