

Riverdale seeks ferry godmother

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AFTER WATCHING the Yonkers ferry race by on its way to lower Manhattan for months, residents of Riverdale in the Bronx have seen enough.

A small group has started an ef-



THE DOCK IS TRICKY: Operator NY Water Taxi supports the effort to add a stop in the Bronx.

fort to get the high-speed ferry to stop in the borough. The Riverdale Ferry Coalition has already rallied support from the boat's operator, New York Water Taxi, and from local congressmen.

"The commute downtown from here is 75 minutes," says Ari Hoffnung, local resident and coalition founder. "The ferry could stop in Riverdale and just shoot down to lower Manhattan."

All that's missing is a dock, federal and city permits, and a cool \$5 million. The coalition has approached the Lower Manhattan Development Corp., which provided most of the funding for the Yonkers ferry dock.

About 3,300 Riverdale residents drive into Manhattan every workday, according to a study from the Campaign for New York's Future. Many more take Metro-North to Grand Central, then switch to the subway to get downtown.

"In a city surrounded by water, we really should have ferry service running all over the place," says Tony Perez Cassino, chairman of Community Board 8 in Riverdale. His daily commute to Wall Street involves a bus and two trains.

New York Water Taxi's Yonkers service, which began in May, whisks an average of 120 people a day to the financial district. The \$10 trip takes 30 minutes. Another stop would add just five minutes to the ride, says President Tom Fox. "It's getting the dock that's the tricky part," he says.

The LMDC gave \$3 million to the Yonkers dock project, and the Riverdale coalition hopes to get similar support. So far, the development group says it is only talking "informally" about the idea.

—HILARY POTKEWITZ