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## Downtown traffic trouble ends soon

Haverhill official: Friday's detour among the last

By Mike LaBella [mlabela@eagletribune.com](mailto:mlabela@eagletribune.com) Sep 16, 2016



HAVERHILL — Downtown drivers and business people who have dealt with frequent road closures during the summer because of Harbor Place construction are being asked to be patient for a bit longer.

City officials said another road closure will happen Friday, but that such problems should be ending soon.

William Pillsbury, the city's economic development and planning director, said the disruptions, as inconvenient as they might be, are a necessary part of the Harbor Place development project at the eastern end of Merrimack Street.

"The good news is we are fast approaching the need for fewer and fewer disruptions," Pillsbury said.

He said Friday's closure will be similar to past street closures in that local access will be maintained to Pentucket Bank and other downtown businesses at that end of Merrimack Street, but no traffic will be allowed to pass completely through the area. Drivers will not be able to enter or exit Merrimack Street near Basiliere Bridge.

"You can get to the (Pentucket) bank and you can get to restaurants and other businesses in that area, as well as the parking garage, which is fully accessible and is how you get to the bank," Pillsbury said.

He said Harbor Place is moving toward completion and has reached important stages of interior finish work.

"We project we will be repaving streets and sidewalks and planting trees before the end of fall," he said. "The public boardwalk is essentially complete, and will be open to the public for a sneak peak on Sept. 23. It is fast approaching and it is exciting."

A public tour of the new 650-foot Harbor Place boardwalk is planned for Sept. 23 at 1 p.m. Construction at the site will be suspended so visitors will not have to wear safety helmets.

The Harbor Place project is a partnership between the nonprofit Greater Haverhill Foundation, the same group that developed the Ward Hill Business Park in the 1960s, and the Planning Office for Urban Affairs, the nonprofit residential development arm of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston.

The first phase of Harbor Place includes a commercial building built on the site of the former Woolworth building. That phase is nearly complete and will include HC Media in a section of the first floor, a satellite campus for UMass Lowell on the second and third floors, and corporate headquarters for Pentucket Bank on the fourth floor. The fifth floor, which was recently purchased by the foundation and a local investor, will likely be leased as office space with views of the river.

The neighboring six-story Merrimack Street building and its connected riverfront wing will include 80 housing units on upper floors and first-floor shops and restaurants.

State Rep. Brian Dempsey helped secure \$36 million from the state to help pay for the \$70 million project.

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