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## **Merrimack Street Ventures plans \$80 million Harbor Place, Haverhill, MA - master planned and designed by The Architectural Team**

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A new and innovative mixed-use waterfront complex and boardwalk has been planned for the city, to revitalize the ailing area on the Merrimack River. The public-private project, master planned and designed by The Architectural Team, will become a mixed-use home to apartment and condominium dwellers, a satellite campus for the University of Massachusetts-Lowell and new restaurants and retail stores overlooking the river. The large-scale development will also have green spaces and a new public riverwalk, according to the developers Planning Office for Urban Affairs and the Greater Haverhill Foundation, who are partnered as Merrimack Street Ventures, LLC, and have gained support from government leaders including state representative Brian Dempsey, UMass president Robert Caret, UMass-Lowell chancellor Martin Meehan and mayor James Fiorentini.

Demolition of the site has been scheduled for late spring to allow for the first phase of the major redevelopment project, to be renamed Harbor Place. Seen as the eastern gateway to downtown, the new development will include an elevated pedestrian plaza above the existing floodwall that has long blocked access to the river from the downtown core. Existing buildings, including a Woolworth's store that has sat vacant for 40 years, will be replaced by two new structures: a seven story, 81,000 s/f, glass-and-masonry building with first-floor retail, the satellite university on the second and third floors and upper floor office space; as well as a six-story, 80-unit residential building with ground floor retail and commercial space. Below the 25,000 s/f public plaza and boardwalk will be a new parking garage.

The first phase includes the \$18 million building, which will begin construction next fall and create about 150 construction positions, according to Lisa Alberghini, president of the nonprofit Planning Office for Urban Affairs (POUA), which has developed more than 30 major projects around the region including many designed in collaboration with The Architectural Team. The entire area plan for phase one is projected to cost \$80 million. The final build-out will include mixed-income housing, which continues to be in high demand in the area around Haverhill. It will also establish a new Merrimack River Boardwalk, a public boat dock and a public plaza, all connected to the downtown area by a series of pedestrian walkways. "The riverfront will come alive and investment will follow from this transformational, lifestylechanging development," said Alberghini, emphasizing the experience what POUA brings to the new development.

State Representative Dempsey (D), whose district is based in Haverhill, has long championed the revitalization of the city. He recently stated that Harbor Place "will change the downtown landscape while promoting one of our city's greatest resources in providing access to the Merrimack River." Dempsey added that the undertaking "will prove to be the most significant development project in the city of Haverhill."

"This is a major opportunity to revitalize Haverhill, build community, and encourage investment all along the riverfront, a major asset for residents and visitors," said Michael Binette, AIA, principal of The Architectural Team. "We're thrilled to be part of the team helping to revitalize this gateway city and bring new life and activity to the water's edge and downtown nearby." Binette adds that the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Boston chapter played a key role in creating a peer-reviewed redevelopment concept through a community charrette, or design collaboration, as well as a pro-bono study involving its Technical Advisory Panel, or TAP.

The university chancellor Meehan said, "We are committed to making access to a high-quality UMass-Lowell education even more convenient for residents of Haverhill and surrounding communities and to help bring economic vitality to the downtown."

According to city officials, it is anticipated that an adjacent recreational boat dock facility with ocean access "will further enhance this 1-1/2 acre downtown Haverhill waterfront site in the future."

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