

Council to reopen York Place on Friday morning



York Place to open to traffic following tram works

The council has announced that finishing touches are being made to tram works on York Place and the street will be open to traffic on Friday 6 September, four months ahead of the revised programme. Buses will return on Sunday 8 September 2013.

The completion of the track and road works means that the vast majority of tram infrastructure is now in place between Princes Street and east end of York Place.

Underground cables will be pulled through already installed ducts under the street during a series of overnight shifts and work on the tram stop will continue. These planned works will be localised but may occasionally impact on traffic flows until the beginning of the tram's testing and commissioning phase.

This stage when traffic returns to York Place follows the full reopening of Princes Street at the end of 2012 and St Andrew Square in April 2013.

Transport Convener Lesley Hinds said:- "The city centre has come a long way in twelve months with Princes Street opening, St Andrew Square fully accessible, overhead wires installed throughout the city centre and York Place reopened.

"Our target remains to have a service up and running by summer next year but we'll bring this date forward if we can. However, there is still some construction work to be completed and, following that, a major programme of testing,

commissioning and driver training.

“We are now in final stages of the tram project construction phase and while this is a relief, it’s also an opportunity for our city. We want to develop a new approach where transport options are fully integrated – a system that will benefit residents and visitors whilst ensuring that Edinburgh is well positioned in the eyes of potential investors who can create jobs for residents.”
Transport Minister Keith Brown said:

“I am pleased to see progress on the project and the opening of the east end of Edinburgh for residents and businesses. This is a significant milestone with Haymarket and the West End also set to re-open during the autumn of this year.

“Once the construction works are complete the emphasis will quickly move to ensuring that the appropriate tests, checks and driver training are run as quickly and effectively as possible so that businesses, residents and visitors can really start to plan ahead with confidence.

“Since the new governance arrangements were put in place, Transport Scotland has played a key role in supporting the Council and Contractor in getting the project back on track. We remain committed to ensuring that there are no further delays, that any opportunity to increase progress is exploited, and that costs are contained within the revised target.”
The early September reopening has come four months earlier than originally scheduled in the revised work programme. Colin Smith, Senior Responsible Officer for the Tram Project, said:
“We welcome the co-operative approach from the contractor to hand back parts of the works ahead of the revised schedule for the benefit of the city. This really demonstrates the ongoing excellent working relationship between the Council and the contractor.”

York Place will be open for use to all traffic via three new traffic signal controlled junctions with North St Andrew

Street, Elder Street and Broughton Street. Buses will return to their previous routes and access to and from the bus station will be available from the east and the west via the Elder Street junction.

Access to the multi-storey car parking for St James Centre/John Lewis and surrounding businesses will also be available from York Place via Elder Street. □ The tram track sections on York Place are for tram use only and these areas will not be available for general traffic use.

Work continues in the city's West End area from Shandwick Place to Haymarket with roads expected to open over the coming weeks with overall completion of the West End construction works in Autumn 2013.

The project remains in line with the revised budget (£776m) approved by the Council in September 2011, with work either ahead of schedule or in line with the revised timescale reported in December 2011. Current remedial works at the West End are nearing completion and will not impact upon the financial position or the project timeframe.

The Council will publish an updated Client target programme towards the end of September. Last month the Council set out plans to create a new organisation, Transport for Edinburgh, to integrate transport services in the Capital. Transport for Edinburgh will be set up initially to integrate the tram and bus services, with Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams confirmed as the operators.

Information about bus stops and times can be found on the [Lothian Buses website](#).