

# Business Construction Toolkit



2016

## Dear Business Owner:

Sound Transit believes in being a good neighbor during construction of its transit system. We are committed to projects that better serve our communities, respond to community needs and enhance quality of life.

Sound Transit's Community Outreach role during construction is to keep you informed of activities that may affect your business, help your customers get around, mitigate physical construction impacts and sponsor events and promotions to bring potential customers to your business.

Industry rule of thumb states that 80 percent of your company's future revenue will come from just 20 percent of your existing customers. In addition, attracting new customers costs five times more than keeping an existing customer. Good business planning and preparation for construction will help keep your customers coming back. This may mean going beyond the status quo and implementing new business strategies to better reach your customers during construction.

This **Business Construction Toolkit** offers proven strategies, tips and best practices to help you, your employees and customers thrive. Through preparation, coordination, planning and sharing of information, your business can endure and even prosper during a seemingly challenging period. This toolkit includes the following information:

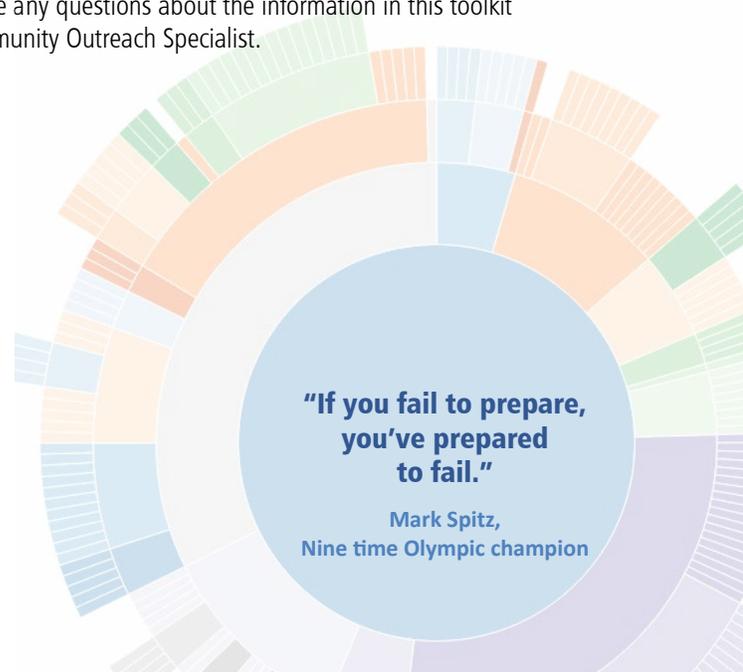
- **Plan ahead** (strategies to consider to ease the impacts of construction, break potential barriers and help your business thrive)
- **Business marketing & advertising ideas** (marketing and advertising strategies that have been successfully used by other businesses during construction)
- **Sound Transit Business Relations services** (core services Sound Transit Outreach provides during construction)
- **Business resources** (business resources available in your community)

Sound Transit is committed to providing tools to keep you informed. Our Community Outreach team will work with you to communicate construction information and keep disruption to a minimum.

We know that the success of local business is the lifeline of our communities. We are looking forward to working with you as we bring light rail to your neighborhood. If you have any questions about the information in this toolkit or about Sound Transit, please contact your neighborhood Community Outreach Specialist.

Sincerely,

Rossana Garner  
*Sound Transit Business Relations Officer*



**WE TAKE YOUR SUCCESS SERIOUSLY. SOUND TRANSIT IS COMMITTED TO KEEPING YOU INFORMED AND WORKING WITH YOU TO HELP MINIMIZE THE PHYSICAL IMPACTS OF CONSTRUCTION.** We also have the marketing resources and visibility to get potential customers to walk through your door. What we can't do is turn them into customers, or even better, repeat customers. That's where you come in - having a plan to build relationships with your loyal customers can make all the difference in the world during construction.

**Jeff Munnoch**, *Community Outreach Director*



**Plan ahead**



**Business marketing  
& advertising ideas**



**Sound Transit  
Business Relations  
services**



**Business resources**

# Plan ahead

*Strategies to ease the impacts of construction, break potential barriers and help your business thrive*

**Construction often means less revenue coming into your business while construction is underway. By developing a game plan, you can minimize the financial impacts to your business during construction. Being proactive instead of reactive will help your business succeed.**

Here's how:

- Get involved
- Review your business plan
- Create or refine your identity
- Activate your customer base
- Adjust your business operations

## Get involved

Sound Transit will host opportunities for you to learn about construction before it begins. Staff will provide information on construction activities and be available to answer your questions. Please watch for notifications of these events and attend meetings with the project team to discuss your concerns, questions and suggestions. Complete the Business Construction Workbook to help us better understand your unique business needs.

Consider joining a local business organization or forming one with neighboring businesses to prepare for construction and pool resources. Invite us to attend your business association or group meetings.

Here's how:

- Attend project meetings
- Keep in touch with Sound Transit Community Outreach
- Complete Business Construction Workbook
- Stay informed
- Subscribe to project email list ([soundtransit.org/subscribe](http://soundtransit.org/subscribe))
- Develop partnerships
- Pool resources

## Review your business plan

Planning ahead and being prepared will help your business thrive. Assess how your business may be affected during construction and revisit your Business Plan. Consider making adjustments to your plan and budget that better reflect potential financial performance during construction. Look for grants that may be available through local government, non-profit organizations or philanthropic organizations. Business consultants can also help identify ways to reduce business operations. This could include ways to cut unnecessary inventory, expand marketing, revamp your business identity, better communicate with customers and share costs.

Here's how:

- Review business plan
- Tighten business operations
- Keep staff lean
- Trim overhead costs
- Reduce inventory
- Review budget
- Expand sales channels
- Research grants and loans
- Contact lenders
- Secure a good line of credit
- Contact suppliers and partners
- Hire a business consultant

## Create or refine your identity

### **FACT:**

*Construction can be challenging at times. There are physical challenges to "business as usual" during construction, which may include impacts to parking, business access and visibility, as well as increased dust and noise.*





Establishing your identity and fine tuning your brand can draw customers' attention during construction.

Here's how:

- Establish an identity (logo, tagline)
- Redefine your brand
- Create ambience through custom window displays, lighting and signage

### Activate your customer base

Building a strong customer base before construction begins will help you get through the slower periods. Solid customer relationships means repeat business.

Here's how:

- Collect customer contact information
- Tell customers construction is coming
- Thank customers for their loyalty
- Offer incentives to existing customers

### Adjust your business operations

### Keeping customers informed will help keep customers walking through your doors.

Be flexible - consider extending or changing your business hours to open during peak times when you will get the most business. Adjust your staff shift times to help employees travel through work zones. Provide directions to employees, customers and suppliers and ask suppliers to make deliveries during off-peak construction hours.

Here's how:

- Open during peak times
- Adjust staff schedules
- Promote alternative modes of transportation
- Schedule deliveries during off-peak construction hours

Access is one of the most common challenges during construction. Making it easier for your customers to visit your business will benefit you. Increase the value for your customers by simplifying their experience and go to where your customers are.

Here's how:

- Catering
- Local deliveries
- Grab-and-go items
- Curbside services
- Convenience services
- Hardhat lunches



**Convenient, local, grab-and-go and delivery options are effective ways to reach your customers. Consider hand delivery or partnering with food delivery services such as Bite Squad or Eat24.**

# Business marketing and advertising ideas



*Successful marketing and advertising strategies used by businesses during construction*



**It is important to actively reach your customers during construction. This means going beyond the status quo and getting creative with marketing and advertising. Creative promotions, use of web and social media, participation in community events and offering new services are a few ways you can expand your brand during construction.**

A few tried-and-true examples of promoting your business and reaching your customers are listed here. Check out the Business Resources section in this Toolkit for contacts in your community that offer training and services in business marketing and advertising.

## **Customer loyalty programs**

*Customers appreciate being recognized.*

- ❑ Reward existing customers for their business so they keep coming back.
- ❑ Collect customer contact information to help keep your customers informed of construction activities and promotions.
- ❑ Communicate promotions, specials, new products and events.

Here's how:

- Frequent punch cards
- Customer of the month
- Customer appreciation events
- Customer-only promotions
- Thank you cards
- Birthday specials

## **Creative promotions**

*Run special promotions such as game day or seasonal specials, cookouts, sidewalk sales, block parties and prize drawings.*

- ❑ Door prizes and giveaways provide an extra incentive.
- ❑ Make it fun by partnering with other businesses to hold scavenger hunts or a passport program.

Here's how:

- Prize drawings
- Giveaways
- Coupon books
- Scavenger hunts
- Passport programs
- Door prizes
- Seasonal specials
- Sidewalk sales
- Game day specials



**“Creativity without strategy is called art, creative with strategy is called advertising.”**

**Professor Jef L. Richards**

Department Chair & Professor  
at Michigan State University



### Community events

Participate in community events.

- ❑ Talk to your neighbors and pool your resources.
- ❑ Plan your own promotions around special events to maximize foot traffic and attract new customers.
- ❑ An added bonus is that planned events often include advertising!

Here's how:

- |                       |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| ■ Sponsored events    | ■ Kids' events  |
| ■ Block parties       | ■ Tours         |
| ■ Fairs and festivals | ■ First Fridays |
| ■ Holiday events      | ■ Cookouts      |
| ■ School activities   |                 |



**TIP:**

Use social media to promote your business. Send messages and specials to your customers through Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and other social media channels.

### Web and social media

Communicate with your customers where they are.

- ❑ Newsletters and social media (such as Nextdoor, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and Twitter) are excellent channels to stay in touch with customers.
- ❑ Ask customers to leave a review on social media for future discounted services.

Here's how:

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| ■ Facebook  | ■ LinkedIn  |
| ■ Yelp      | ■ Website   |
| ■ Twitter   | ■ Next Door |
| ■ Instagram | ■ Apps      |
| ■ Pinterest |             |

### Advertisements

Get creative in your advertising.

- ❑ Promotional products, or swag, can help market your product.
- ❑ Create awareness of promotions by placing ads in your bill folders, bags, on coasters or placemats.

Here's how:

- |                   |                                 |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| ■ Slogans/jingles | ■ Placemat promotions           |
| ■ Swag            | ■ Ads in community publications |
| ■ Bill inserts    |                                 |

# Sound Transit Business Relations services

Core services Sound Transit Outreach provides during construction



Sound Transit provides a variety of services to help businesses through construction. To learn what services may fit your business or community, please contact your Sound Transit Community Outreach Specialist.

## ST experiences

Sound Transit provides hands-on experiences to engage and inform the public. These can include Lunch Bus tours, facility and construction tours as well as specialty tours. These VIP experiences provide a behind-the-scenes look at Sound Transit's existing and future services, while promoting the local businesses in the communities we serve.

- Lunch Bus tours
- Facility tours
- Construction tours
- Specialty tours

Sound Transit's Enter to Win a Tour of the University of Washington Station promotion provided a sneak peek of the new station before it opened. Customers who spent at least \$5 at a participating business were eligible to enter the promotion. Over 400 people entered the promotion, bringing more than \$2,000 to local businesses. Eight lucky winners participated in the tour in fall 2015.



**"We had a customer buy ice cream every day during the promotion to increase his chances of winning." - Lois Ko, former Haagen Dazs business owner**

## Marketing and advertising

Sound Transit holds various promotions to bring new customers to local businesses. The agency supports the creative – advertising, promotions and prizes – while using its social media channels and partners to help spread the word.

Here's how:

- Enter-to-win promotions
- Creative services
- Promotional materials
- Advertising
- Prizes
- Media

## Outreach

The role of Sound Transit Community Outreach is to keep the public informed and engaged, while minimizing the impacts of construction. Sound Transit staffs community events and holds project meetings, briefings and drop-in sessions. The agency also offers translation and interpretation services to engage limited English speaking individuals. Contact your Community Outreach Specialist to learn about upcoming events in your neighborhood.

Here's how:

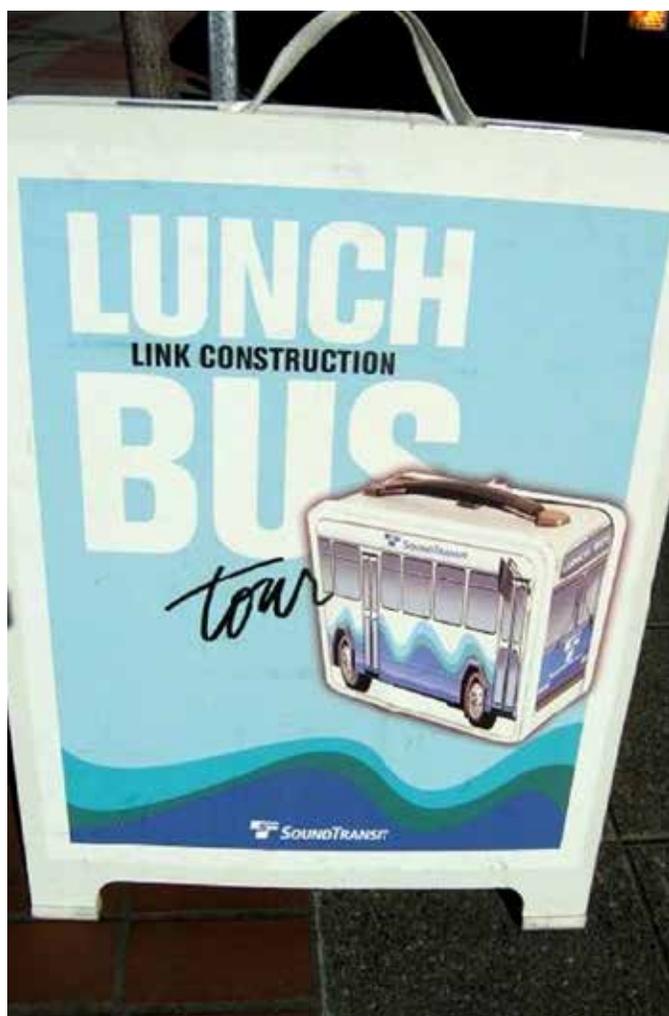
- Community events
- Public meetings
- Drop-in sessions
- Briefings
- Translation services
- Interpretation services
- Surveys



**Wayfinding signage helps direct customers to your business.** Posting signs in highly-visible locations helps your customers get around construction. Contact Sound Transit to request a sign for your business.



**Sound Transit tries to make its construction sites safe, attractive and interesting to visit.** Sound Transit's art program, STArt, installs temporary art on project construction walls to create a sense of place.



**Community events, fairs and festivals attract visitors to the community, boosting the local economy both on and off the festival site.** Sound Transit participates in community events to help promote local businesses located near our construction sites.

**Lunch Bus tours are narrated visual tours of Sound Transit construction sites and operations facilities.** The Lunch Bus averages 30 people per tour, bringing customers to a local restaurant for lunch.

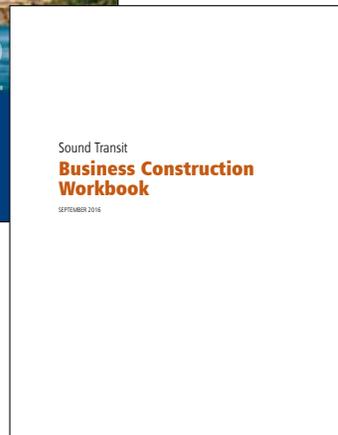
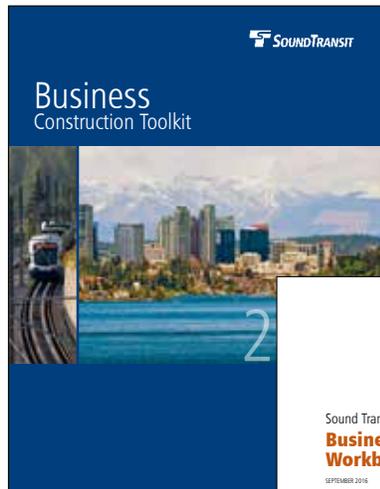


### Project information

Sound Transit develops a variety of materials to create awareness of its projects. This includes providing advanced notification of upcoming construction activities. Visit Sound Transits project website to learn more and view project materials. Subscribe to construction alerts by visiting [soundtransit.org/subscribe](http://soundtransit.org/subscribe).

Here's how:

- Business construction toolkit
- Project website
- Presentations
- Construction updates
- Newsletters
- Fact sheets
- Exhibits
- Maps



### Construction support

Our Community Outreach team is here to support you during construction. A list of tools available to help ease construction impacts are listed below. Tools to help mitigate construction noise include the use of project construction walls around our sites, as well as noise blankets, white noise machines ear plugs upon request. Tools to combat construction dust include using a street sweeper and offering car wash vouchers and window washing services to businesses located directly adjacent to our sites.

If you have questions or comments about the project or to let us know about your individual business needs, contact your community outreach specialist. Contact our toll-free 24-hour construction hotline (888-298-2395)

Here's how:

- 24-hour construction hotline
- Signage
- Wayfinding
- Construction wall/fencing
- Window washing
- Street sweeping
- White noise machines
- Noise blankets
- Ear plugs



# Business resources



## Stay connected

to the Seattle Business Administration (SBA) Seattle District Office and it's resources designed to help businesses start, grow and succeed.

**Counseling:** [www.sba.gov/Local-Assistance](http://www.sba.gov/Local-Assistance)

**Capital:** [www.sba.gov/LoanPrograms](http://www.sba.gov/LoanPrograms)

**Contracting:** [www.sba.gov/Contracting](http://www.sba.gov/Contracting)

**Resources:** <http://tinyurl.com/SBALocalGuide>

**Subscribe:** <http://tinyurl.com/SBAReporter>

**Follow:** @SBAPacificNW

[www.youtube.com/SBA](http://www.youtube.com/SBA)

[www.facebook.com/SBAgov](http://www.facebook.com/SBAgov)

[www.sba.gov/blogs](http://www.sba.gov/blogs)

<https://plus.google.com/+SBAgov>

**Talk:** 206.553.7310 Seattle  
509.353.2800 Spokane

[infoSDO@sba.gov](mailto:infoSDO@sba.gov)

[SpokaneBranch@sba.gov](mailto:SpokaneBranch@sba.gov)

**Visit:** 2401 Fourth Avenue, Suite 450,  
Seattle, WA 98121

801 W. Riverside Avenue, Suite 444

Spokane, WA 99201

**Surf:** [www.sba.gov/wa](http://www.sba.gov/wa)

## Counseling

Connect with the following partners for one-on-one advising and training.

### SCORE

[www.score.org](http://www.score.org)

### Small Business Development Center

[www.wsbdc.org](http://www.wsbdc.org)

### Women's Business Center - Seattle

<http://wbc.seattleccd.com>

### Women's Business Center - Spokane

[www.snapwa.org](http://www.snapwa.org)

### Women's Business Center - Lacey

[www.wcwb.org](http://www.wcwb.org)

### Veterans Business Outreach Center

<http://seattleccd.com/vboc>

## Capital

How the SBA Loan Program works.

## Contracting

Contact the following for assistance selling to federal, state and local governments.

**Washington PTAC** [www.washingtonptac.org](http://www.washingtonptac.org)

**Native PTAC** [www.nativeptac.org](http://www.nativeptac.org)

**SBA 8(a) Program** [www.sba.gov/8a](http://www.sba.gov/8a)

**HUBZone Certification** [www.sba.gov/hubzone](http://www.sba.gov/hubzone)



