



BUSINESS CONSTRUCTION TOOLKIT

JANUARY 2021

Opportunities don't happen. You create them.

OUR GOAL IS YOUR SUCCESS



 **SOUNDTRANSIT**



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 the 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.

An 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 a new customer costs five times more than keeping an existing one. 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 a 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*





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Plan ahead The time to start planning for the impact of the upcoming construction is now. Here are some strategies that can help ease the impact of construction, overcome potential obstacles and help your business thrive.

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Business marketing & advertising ideas We have proven marketing and advertising strategies that can reach your customers during the construction phase.

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Sound Transit Business Relations services We are here to help in any way we can. Our core services are designed to bring awareness to your business and to take the mystery out of the construction process.

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Business resources We're not the only ones who want your business to succeed. Here's a list of other resources that you can tap into.

"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

"IF YOU FAIL TO PREPARE, YOU'VE PREPARED TO FAIL."

Mark Spitz, NINE TIME OLYMPIC CHAMPION

PLAN AHEAD

Construction often means less revenue is coming into your business. Start developing a game plan now so you can minimize the financial impacts to your business. Being proactive will help your business succeed.

Here's how:

- Get involved
- Review your business plan (If you don't have one, create one today)
- Create or define what your business is offering
- Look at who your customers are and reach out to them to keep them informed
- Adjust your business operations – think about making changes in preparation for the construction. This could mean adjusting your hours of operation, reducing staffing, etc.

Get involved

Sound Transit will host opportunities for you to learn about construction before it begins. Our Outreach team will provide information on construction activities and be available to answer your questions. 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.

You should also consider joining a local business organization or forming one with neighboring businesses to prepare for construction and to pool your resources. We are more than happy to attend those meetings to answer questions or to help you through the process.

Here's how to get involved:

- Attend project meetings
- Keep in touch with Sound Transit Community Outreach
- Complete this Business Construction Workbook
- Stay informed by subscribing to our project email list (soundtransit.org/subscribe)
- Develop partnerships with other businesses around you for possible cross-promoting opportunities

Review your business plan

If you don't have a business plan, we can help you put one together. If you already have a business plan, now would be a good time to make any adjustments to better reflect your potential financial performance during construction. For example, 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:

- Tighten business operations
- Review budget
- Expand sales channels
- Research grants and loans
- Secure a good line of credit
- Hire a business consultant

Create or refine your identity

Strengthen your identity and fine-tuning your brand to attract customers' attention during construction.

Here's how:

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





Reach out and reconnect with your customers.

Building a strong customer base before construction will help you get through the slower periods. Reassure your customers that it's still business as usual by reaching out and keeping them informed. This will not only strengthen your relationship with them but help to stay top-of-mind as well.

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

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, but there are ways to make it easier for your customers to visit your business. And, if they find it difficult to get to you, can go to them.

Here's how:

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



FACT: 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.



BUSINESS MARKETING AND ADVERTISING IDEAS

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.

Some 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, so here are a few ways you can show them some love.

- 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 appreciation events
- Customer-only promotions
- Thank you cards
- Birthday specials

Creative promotions

Get creative. Run special promotions such as Game Day or seasonal specials.

- 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
- Sidewalk sales
- Cookouts
- Block parties

Community events

Participating in community events is a great way to get exposure for your business.

- 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
- Fairs and festivals
- School activities
- Kids' events
- Tours
- Farmer's markets



Web and social media

In an average week, people will spend over 24 hours surfing the web, so make sure you're there too.

Here's how:

- 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 where:

- Social Media Channels
- Yelp
- Pinterest
- Website
- Next Door
- LinkedIn



Advertisements

Get creative with your advertising and promotions.

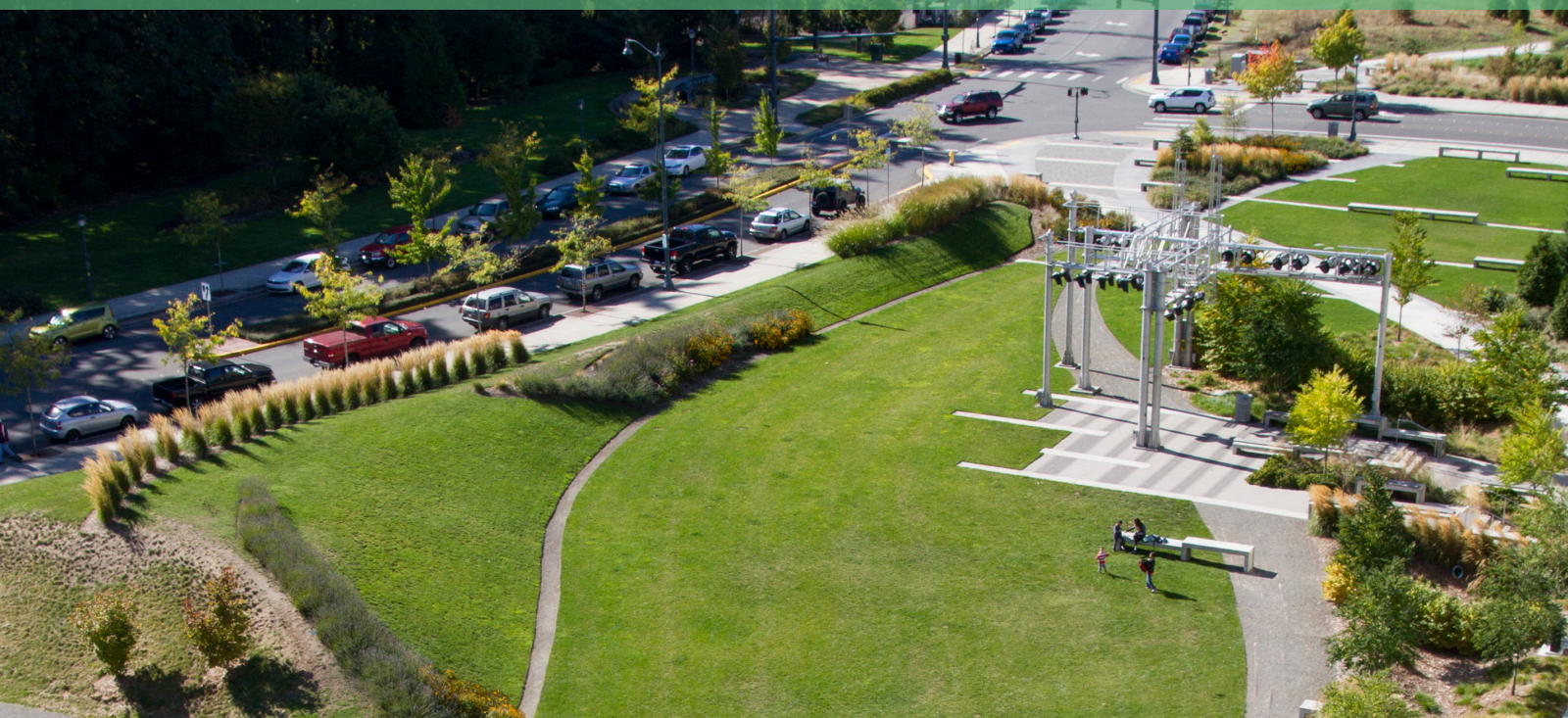
- Promotional products, or free giveaways, can help market your product.
- Create awareness of promotions by placing ads in your bill folders, bags, on coasters or placemats.

Here's how:

- Taglines/jingles
- Free giveaways
- Bill folder inserts
- Placemat promotions
- Ads in community publications

“CREATIVITY WITHOUT STRATEGY IS CALLED ART,
CREATIVE WITH STRATEGY IS CALLED ADVERTISING.”

Professor Jef L. Richards, DEPARTMENT CHAIR & PROFESSOR AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



SOUND TRANSIT BUSINESS RELATIONS SERVICES

We understand the construction phase can be a difficult time for your business, which is why we're here to help with a variety of services to fit your business or community. Contact your Sound Transit Community Outreach Specialist to find out more.



Marketing and advertising Loyal to the Local™

Loyal to the Local is a program built around you. It's designed to help local businesses succeed during construction by promoting and highlighting them in online videos, print ads and through social media.

The goals of the campaign are:

- 1) Raise awareness that impacted businesses are open during construction.
- 2) Encourage people to shop and dine locally.

The campaign is marketed on display ads, shop windows, gas stations and social media.



Here are a few other services to consider:

ST Experiences

Promotions

Keeping your customer updated and informed is key to a successful transition. Sound Transit holds various promotions to bring new customers to local businesses. Providing opportunities to win hands-on experiences such as facility and construction tours as well as specialty tours is a great way to engage and inform the public. The agency supports the creative – advertising and promotions – while using its social media channels and partners to help spread the word. These VIP experiences are used as promotional giveaways and will provide a behind-the-scenes look at Sound Transit's existing and future services while promoting the local businesses in the communities.

Here's how:

- Enter-to-win promotions
- Promotional materials
- Advertising
- Media
- Outreach

The role of our Community Outreach is to keep the public informed and engaged while minimizing the impacts of construction. We staff community events, hold project meetings, briefings and drop-in sessions. We even offer 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:

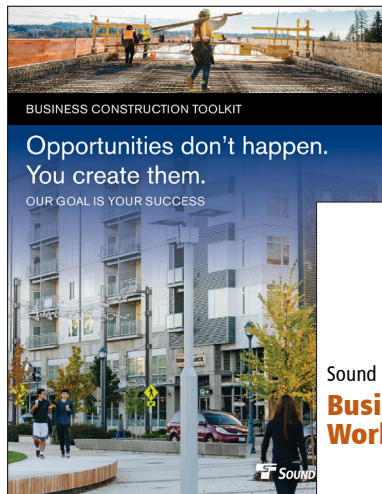
- Community events
- Public meetings
- Drop-in sessions
- Briefings
- Translation services
- Surveys

Project information

We've developed a variety of materials to create awareness of our projects. Visit Sound Transit's project website to learn more and to view our project materials. You can also subscribe to construction alerts by visiting soundtransit.org/subscribe.

Here's how:

- Project website
- Presentations
- Construction updates
- Newsletters
- Fact sheets
- Maps



Construction support

Our Community Outreach team is here to help during the construction phase. We understand that this can be a trying time for your business, which is why we do everything we can help ease the impact of construction on your business. To help mitigate construction noise we use project construction walls around our sites, noise blankets and white noise machines. To combat construction dust, we implement street sweepers and offer 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 at 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 and ear plugs
- Car wash



"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

BUSINESS RESOURCES

Stay connected to the local resources available in North King and Snohomish Counties. These resources are designed to help businesses prosper. They can help you connect to the various services and navigate city process and systems overall.

OneRedmond

8383 158th Avenue NE,
Suite 225
Redmond, WA 98052
(425) 885-4014
OneRedmond.org

Small Business Development Center

8383 158th Avenue NE,
Suite 225
Redmond, WA 98052
wsbdc.org/redmond/

SCORE – Mentoring and education

Greater Seattle East Side Branch
555 116th NE, Suite 242
Bellevue, WA, 98004
206-553-7320

ARE YOU AN ENTREPRENEUR OR A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER?

Washington Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is a network of business advisors who help entrepreneurs or small business owners start, grow or buy/sell a business.

wsbdc.org

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is a federal agency that helps Americans start, build, and grow businesses.

Contact

Seattle District Office
2401 Fourth Ave. Suite 450
Seattle, WA 98121
Phone: (206) 553-7310
sba.gov/offices/district/wa/seattle

Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) is a nonprofit committed to providing training and financing opportunities to entrepreneurs from various communities, including the U.S. Military community.



Contact

Business Impact NW
1437 S. Jackson St.
Seattle, WA 98144
Phone: (206) 324-4330, ext.136
businessimpactnw.org/vboc/

Washington State Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) is an agency that provides no cost assistance with selling to federal, state, and local governments. PTAC offers training to help businesses compete for government contracts.

Contact

Main Office
4220 6th Ave. SE
Lacey, WA 98503
Phone: (360) 464-6043
info@washingtonptac.org
washingtonptac.org

NON-PROFIT ASSISTANCE

- **Ventures** provides assistance to small businesses.
venturesnonprofit.org
- **Wayfind** provides access to free business legal services for nonprofits and microenterprises.
wayfindlegal.org
- **Ethnic Business Coalition** develops, promotes, and improves the long-term growth, sustainability, and success of immigrant and minority-owned small businesses in the state of Washington.
ethnicbusinesscoalition.org

RECAP

1 Plan ahead

The time to start planning for the impact of the upcoming construction is now.

2 Business marketing & advertising ideas

Proven marketing and advertising strategies that can reach your customers during the construction phase.

3 Sound Transit Business Relations services

Sound Transit is here to help in any way we can. Our core services are designed to bring awareness to your business and to take the mystery out of the construction process.

4 Business resources


We're not the only ones who want your business to succeed. See page 10 for a list of other resources you can tap into.

Questions? Get in touch:

Email: eastlink@soundtransit.org

Call: (206) 398-5465

Learn about the project and subscribe to updates:

 soundtransit.org/eastlink

For information in alternative formats, call 1-800-201-4900 / TTY Relay: 711 or email accessibility@soundtransit.org.

Para información acerca del proyecto

llame al: 1-800-823-9230

Звоните 1-800-823-9230, чтобы получить информацию о проекте.

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1-800-823-9230

프로젝트에 관한 정보는 다음으로 연락하십시오.

시오: 1-800-823-9230

要瞭解項目資訊，請致電：1-800-823-9230

Để biết tin tức về dự án này, xin gọi:
1-800-823-9230



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