

Survive and thrive

Tips for businesses in the Bottineau Boulevard reconstruction area

Road construction will begin on Bottineau Boulevard (County Road 81) this summer. There will be major construction activities and road closures in this area through 2020.

Below are some strategies you can take before and during construction to minimize challenges based on lessons learned from other businesses that have survived, and even thrived, during road projects.

Communicate

- **Communicate with customers.** Build your customer mailing/email lists, Facebook and Twitter followers, and keep your website updated. Use these tools to quickly, and regularly communicate exciting things happening in your business including, events, sales, best routes, and construction updates.
- **Use marketing and advertising to emphasize you are open for business, have terrific prices and promotions, and provide fabulous service** rather than using marketing images and taglines branding your business as a construction zone.
- **Maintain a positive attitude when talking with your customers.** Studies show that customers gravitate toward and purchase more from a business with a positive message than a negative one.
- **Focus on maintaining a loyal customer base,** and save efforts to attract new customers for after construction.
- **Create loyalty programs and promotions** such as frequency incentives (such as “buy three services, get the fourth at 50 percent off”).
- **Construction teams are customers too!** Some businesses have found it helpful to create discounts or lunch specials geared toward construction workers.
- **Collaborate with businesses in your area.** Promote a complimentary product or service: for example an automotive service working with a nearby coffee shop – ‘grab a coffee while you wait’. Businesses outside the construction zone can remind their customers that businesses in the construction area are “open for business” and encourage them to patronize the area.

Bottineau Boulevard reconstruction

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Partner with the construction team

As this project gets closer to construction, there will be a construction team identified. You should learn the best way to contact the project to work with these construction partners to address issues, such as:

- **Business entrance and parking is accessible**
- **Backup plans are in place** in case of construction related emergencies such as utility outages, water shutoffs, etc.
- **Wayfinding and detour signage is properly placed**
- **Sidewalks are free from debris and safety hazards**
- **Construction zones are well maintained**, properly marked, free of debris and safe

Evaluate and plan

Connect with an experienced business advisor who has worked with other businesses through major public construction projects. The earlier you can begin this process the more options and the better situated you can be. Open to Business advisors provide one-on-one consulting to businesses in suburban Hennepin County, free of charge, who can help you consider options such as the following:

- **Secure a line of credit** when times are good to provide a backup in case of an emergency. Restructure existing debt in light of potentially diminished revenue.
- **Time renovations, interior design, and capital improvements** with the slower business period.
- **Review inventory levels and reduce if possible.**
- **Evaluate your staffing plans and adjust schedules to meet your business needs.**
- **Prepare, train and reassure your staff.** Some strategies include:
 - Prepare your own project FAQ sheet including information on routes, access points and parking for staff's ability to answer questions.
 - Encourage staff to be positive, helpful, and reassuring and to maintain a positive attitude about the project when communicating with customers.

Learn more

For questions about Bottineau Boulevard reconstruction project, contact Hennepin County transportation at bottineauboulevard@hennepin.us

For free, one-on-one business advising and technical assistance, contact Open to Business advisors at info@opentobusinessmn.org

Information provided in this handout has been adapted from "Survive & Thrive: A guide to help your business during construction," published in 2013 by the City of Minneapolis with support from Nicollet-East Harriet Business Association.