



# Engaging and Supporting Small Businesses Owners


By

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# Project Overview

- Central Corridor LRT
  - Second light rail, connects St. Paul and Minneapolis
  - 11 miles of construction, 18 stations
  - Work began in 2010, will be completed in 2014
  - 700 small businesses impacted by construction
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- A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of a large orange and red wave-like shape with a globe-like sphere on top.

# Project Overview



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# Small Business Engagement

- Traditional Chambers are often not the best representatives of small businesses owners interests
- Find a few representatives that are willing and able to actively participate in the process, most will not
- Small Business owners
  - Need to organize early in the process
  - Gain support of elected officials
  - Find a funding source for their effort
  - Know what they want
  - Know what they need
  - Become part of the solution



# Business Resources Collaborative

| Business  | Government  | Community   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Midway Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Southeast Business Association</li> <li>• Stadium Village Commercial Association</li> <li>• University Avenue Business Association</li> <li>• West Bank Business Association</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of St. Paul</li> <li>• City of Minneapolis</li> <li>• Metropolitan Council</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• African Development Center</li> <li>• Asian Economic Development Association</li> <li>• Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers</li> <li>• Neighborhood Development Center</li> <li>• University Avenue Business Preparation Collaborative (U7)</li> </ul> |

- **Mantra: Prepare, Survive and Thrive**
- **Strategy: Construction Mitigation, Business Support and Economic Development**



# Accomplishments To Date

- Ready For Rail
- Business Survival Guide
- Forgivable Loan program
- \$1.4 M in marketing commitments
- \$1 M in Technical assistance, 171 businesses helped
- Regular meetings with political leaders to address systemic issues
- Broad Community support



# Keys to Success

- Actually listen to small business owners
- Be honest, do not hide the truth, admit and fix mistakes
- Drop in traffic not revenue
- New marketing ideas
- Engage the community, ask for help
- Positive media stories
- Support from electeds
- Visionary partner and funding source





# Summary

- Start early
- Build Trust
- Find champions/leaders
- Do not sugar coat the truth
- Meet construction deadlines





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