Engaging and Supporting Small Businesses Owners

By

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Chair, Business Resources Collaborative
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
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

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Business</strong></th>
<th><strong>Government</strong></th>
<th><strong>Community</strong></th>
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| • Midway Chamber of Commerce  
• Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce  
• Southeast Business Association  
• Stadium Village Commercial Association  
• University Avenue Business Association  
• West Bank Business Association | • City of St. Paul  
• City of Minneapolis  
• Metropolitan Council | • African Development Center  
• Asian Economic Development Association  
• Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers  
• Neighborhood Development Center  
• University Avenue Business Preparation Collaborative (U7) |

- **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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