

# CONSTRUCTION GUIDE



# IN THIS TOGETHER

**“In This Together”** is a WisDOT program that targets statewide businesses facing road construction in their community. The program’s goal is to help businesses maintain business while construction is underway.

WisDOT recognizes that businesses located in work zones have special needs. It is critical that customers have access and continue to patronize the businesses, in spite of any roadwork inconvenience.

This Road Construction Guide is one of the tools WisDOT provides to businesses and includes techniques and tips that have been successfully used in communities throughout Wisconsin to help maintain customer and employee access during road construction. It is meant as an idea source as you prepare for construction in your area.



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# IN THIS TOGETHER WORKSHEET

## *Checklist and timeline for business owners/operators*

### **12 to 18 months before construction**

- Conduct first meeting with Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) staff responsible for project design. Discuss the In This Together program and participate in question and answer session.
- Discuss access during construction and other issues.
- Form an association/group of businesses that will be impacted by the construction project. Determine who will lead and coordinate efforts for the community.
- Form committees for signing, advertising, promotions, special events, etc.
- Develop promotional campaign:
  - Adopt theme
  - Design and produce newspaper, television, and radio advertisements
  - Brainstorm and produce additional promotional materials
  - Plan special events

### **3 to 6 months before construction**

- Conduct second meeting with appropriate WisDOT staff and business owners.
- Discuss In This Together progress.
- Begin work on sign development. Be sure to coordinate with WisDOT.

### **1 month before construction**

- Conduct third meeting with community leaders and business owners.
- Obtain latest available information regarding project from WisDOT.
- Discuss access during construction, project schedule, and other outstanding issues.
- Complete work on signing development.
- Arrange for installation of signs to coincide with the start of work and/or any detours. Be sure to coordinate sign location with WisDOT.

### **After construction begins**

- Attend construction business meetings. (WisDOT project leader and prime contractor will arrange.)
- Continue committee work as appropriate.
- Stay positive! Customers do notice.

# PLAN FOR CONSTRUCTION

Businesses should begin planning early to mitigate the short-term impact and inconvenience of road construction. The following tips can help businesses better plan for construction:

- Attend WisDOT information meetings to learn about the project and to ask questions or raise concerns. Get involved early and stay involved.
- Establish lines of communication with WisDOT project managers to stay informed about specific project details, schedules, and any expected traffic impact.
- Pay close attention to construction that will impact front access to your business, including changes to driveways or on-street parking, and understand how these changes may affect you.
- Begin planning for road construction and traffic disruptions.
- Think about the impact construction will have on customers, employees, and suppliers.
- Begin planning to keep customers informed during construction. Update customer contact information so you can keep them informed once construction begins.
- Help your suppliers identify alternate routes to your business and schedule shipments at non-peak travel times.
- Examine your overhead and employee staffing levels to make sure they are appropriate for the construction period.
- Begin to work on marketing strategies needed to accomplish your goals once construction has begun.
- You may want to consider doing some long needed remodeling or repairs during construction.

# WORK TOGETHER

Businesses and other affected parties will be much more successful if they work together to prepare for the impact of road construction. Businesses that work cooperatively to address their concerns have great advantages. They can share resources and ideas for maximum benefit, saving time and money, and more effectively prepare for the impact caused by road construction.

A local chamber of commerce or business association often becomes the focal point as businesses get organized. The following tips can help businesses cooperatively prepare for and deal with road construction:

- Meet with other nearby businesses to discuss collaborative solutions to concerns and issues raised by construction.
- Consider identifying a leader to represent the business community and act as a liaison with WisDOT.
- Identify key business people to whom WisDOT can mail or fax news releases and project updates. Then develop a plan for how that information is shared with the rest of the group such as a fax hotline or email distribution group.
- Meet with local business organizations, such as a chamber of commerce or business association, to identify and plan for construction.
- Invite WisDOT representative to discuss the project at your business association or group meetings.
- Share construction coping strategies with other nearby businesses.
- Brainstorm ideas to promote affected businesses and creatively communicate with customers via printed materials, e-mail, advertising and social media.
- Cooperatively plan special events or promotions prior to construction to raise customer awareness.
- Collectively pool marketing, advertising or website resources.
- Work with WisDOT to install signage in the highway right of way to reassure customers that businesses are accessible.

# COMMUNICATE WITH CUSTOMERS

Customers who are well informed about road construction are generally tolerant of traffic disruption. They know about the construction before leaving home, so they are better prepared for delays, construction, equipment, or road closed signs.

Informed customers also may have allotted extra time for navigating construction zones or have given thought to alternative routes and alternative parking options. The following tips can help businesses effectively communicate with their customers:

- Communicate with customers via your business website, email, brochures, flyers, advertising and social media channels.
- Emphasize “Open for Business” in advertisements and customer communications.
- Consider using a special logo to use during construction and incorporate it in your business website, email and advertising.
- Incorporate maps in your business website, email and advertising to show customers how to reach your business during construction.
- Install signs directing customers to alternative entrances and parking.
- Add directions to your outgoing voicemail or keep a script with directions to your business next to the phone.



# KEEP CUSTOMERS ENGAGED

Loyal customers who patronize your business during nearby construction deserve to be recognized and rewarded. There are many ways to make it easier for them to access your business and to reward and encourage their continued patronage. The following tips can help businesses keep their customers engaged during construction:

- Hold special promotions to raise customer awareness.
- Adjust or extend business hours to avoid the most disruptive construction activities.
- Take your product to your customers by starting a delivery service during construction.
- Plan special promotional events around construction milestones, such as groundbreaking, mid-point and ribbon cuttings.
- Once construction is complete, celebrate the new image and convenience of the finished project through advertising and promotions.
- Stay positive! Customers do notice.

Ultimately, only you can decide which ideas are best for your business. The key to success is to focus your efforts on long-term planning and short-term strategies to maintain your core customer base, attract new customers through unique and rewarding promotions, and minimize the impact of construction. Through planning, cooperation, communication and engagement, your business will not only succeed during construction, but emerge prepared to capitalize on economic opportunities the new road provides.