

TEMPE STREETCAR MERCHANT GUIDEBOOK

Summer 2019

#ItsGettingRail

Tempe Streetcar is the first modern streetcar line in the Valley. It will serve one of the highest transit ridership centers in the region and connect riders to neighborhoods, major business centers, and regional events and destinations. The line will cover 3 miles and have 14 stops. Installation of track begins late 2018 and will be in the heart of downtown on Mill Avenue from May 13 - August 15, 2019. The streetcar is expected to open for ridership in 2021.

Plan for Success

This guidebook contains helpful tips and outlines services and resources available to you to help your business prosper before and during construction.



	2019					
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
Zone 1: Rio Salado Pkwy	[Construction activity]					
Zone 2: Downtown			[Construction activity]			
Zone 3: S. Mill Ave / Gammage Curve	[Construction activity]					
Zone 4: Apache Blvd	[Construction activity]					

Legend	
Utility Relocation	[Red]
Street Work	[Orange]
Track Installation	[Dark Purple]
Stop Platforms	[Light Blue]
Systems Installation	[Light Green]
Vehicle & Systems Testing	[Grey]

In This Guide

- Preparing your business for construction
- Managing your business during construction
- Free resources for your business
- Key contact information



Preparing Your Business for Construction

Investment in the City's infrastructure provides a long-term benefit to your business and the economy in general. The following are tactics that have been found to fortify businesses during a construction project when incorporated into a strategic plan of action.

Be Proactive

Set short term goals, prepare a budget and devise a plan of action.

Prepare your customers

Plan to communicate with customers before and during construction to let them know you are open for business. Advise alternate routes to reach you and where to park.

Identify your most valuable customers

Track the sales revenue from each type of customer. Then segment the customers and focus the majority of your marketing strategies on the most lucrative segment.

Develop tighter controls over billing and collections

To speed up cash flow, reduce the time between shipping your product and sending an invoice. Consider semi-monthly instead of monthly billing and send second notices more quickly.

Build up cash reserves

The reality of construction (in addition to the hot summer) is that walk-in sales will most likely decrease. You will need more advertising and promotions to encourage new customers and maintain existing ones. Start setting funds aside for any increased marketing needs.

Implement new technologies

Consider where you can advance technologically. Think about expanding your web presence by developing your social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. If you already utilize these mediums, make sure you are communicating the construction plans with your customers.

Communicate with your employees & use down-time for cross training opportunities

Immediately inform your staff about the pending construction and how you perceive it will affect the business and their jobs. Make sure your high-performing employees know that you value them and you want them to stay with the company. This assures them that you have a plan and their contribution is essential to the business' success.

Reassign employees to tasks that may have been overlooked in busier times. For example, create a new inventory systems, update your website or revamp your menu. This will broaden employees' skill levels, increasing staffing flexibility, and help you to retain good employees.



Preparing Your Business for Construction (Continued)



Review your accounts payables

Consider possible renegotiation of rates on your business lease, loans, credit cards and supplier terms.

Review your personal and business credit scores

Address all issues on the credit reports. Good credit provides benefits like access to capital and lower interest rates.

TIP: For a low interest loan during construction, check out the [Tempe Streetcar Asset Assistance Program](#)

Encourage customers to regularly visit your business

Offer coupons, special offers, a loyalty program, gift certificates, BOGOs or bounce back offers to be redeemed during the construction period.

Find new revenue sources

Introduce a new product to existing customers, find a new market for existing offerings or find new uses for existing products.

Expand your knowledge

Be open to new solutions. Increase your business' capabilities by soliciting aid from mentors, front line employees and business experts.

Collect past due receivables

Reach out to customers with outstanding accounts. If you can't collect in full, try negotiating a payment schedule.

Create a new way to deliver your product/services

Deliver your product or services through a different outlet such as e-commerce, using an alternative retail outlet or implementing a delivering service (DoorDash, GrubHub, UberEats, etc.).

Start a generous loyalty program

If you already offer one, increase the benefits or lessen the requirements necessary for your customers to receive benefits during construction.

Evaluate product mix

Calculate the profit margins of each of your products. Give particular attention to low margin products to determine if it is still worthwhile to carry them.

Update customer contact information

Use proactive communication. Start a newsletter, share event & product information to remain relevant to customers.



Preparing Your Business for Construction (Continued)

Get active in local organizations

Keep abreast of your industry, community and customers through participation in Downtown Tempe Authority initiatives & events, the Tempe Chamber of Commerce, Tempe Tourism and Local First Arizona initiatives.

Implement a cooperative marketing strategy

Team up with neighbors to participate in a co-op ad. This saves you money and makes a stronger impact through larger ad space than if you placed it yourself.

TIP: Check out the DTA Merchant Perks Media Buy Discounts on the Merchant Resources webpage at www.downtowntempe.com/about-us/merchant-resources

Identify your key performance indicators

Use key performance indicators. They are a set of quantifiable measures that a business uses to gauge or compare performance in terms of meeting goals. Having these in place allows you to quickly monitor your business performance and identify potential problems.

Managing Your Business During Construction

While most business owners are passively waiting for construction to end, the savvy owners are looking past the short-term and are proactively laying the groundwork for future growth.

Monitor inventory carefully

Review inventory levels monthly and make sure stock levels are appropriate for the season.

Network

Use this time to broaden your connections. Speak to groups, sponsor charity functions or supply goods/services to a well-publicized organization.

Implement creative, low-budget marketing strategies

Construction will impact your bottom line. With your staff, brainstorm ways to communicate to passersby that you are open for business and implement them.

Stay informed

Attend DTA, Valley Metro, and other information sessions, stay tuned to project website and communicate regularly with the Business Assistance and Project Outreach Coordinators.

Managing Your Business During Construction (Continued)



Use advisors wisely

Keep your accountant, banker, insurance agent and lawyer informed. These professionals can help you avoid pitfalls when making business decisions.

Explain to customers how construction will benefit them

Discuss the benefits of a multi-modal city and how the streetcar will help them move around downtown Tempe and ASU.

Plan an “excuse the dust” sale or event right after construction begins

Act fast. A sale or event quickly gets customers in the habit of coming to your business during construction, before they have a chance to seek out the competition.

Avoid making across-the-board cuts

Analyze and identify which areas can be cut with the least amount of harm to the bottom line. Rarely do all areas of the business contribute equally to its success or failure.

Track your ad spending to revenue

Know how much you are earning for every dollar you are spending. You'll have a better understanding of where to cut or what your focus should be. Use promo codes and web analytics to help with tracking.

Research new technology

Implementation of new technology can greatly help your business. The proper upgrades can increase your efficiency, lower your expenses and reduce down time.



Stay positive

Construction may be the worst thing in your life, but do not complain to customers. Your feeling about construction will pass, but your customers will associate your negativity with your business long after construction is over.

Refresh your website content

Keep your website current—it's the first place potential customers go to learn about your business. Your site's appearance and content should be current, your information accurate and your site easy to navigate.

TIP: Make sure you've claimed your business on Google and maintain & manage your profile.

Accentuate the positive

Never go to the media with your fears about your business; that rarely draws customers to your door. Always lead with your strengths; go to the media with solutions. Show how you are using your creativity and business savvy to overcome this challenge.



Managing Your Business During Construction (Continued)

Update customer contact information

Use proactive communication. Continue (or start) a newsletter, share event & product information to remain relevant to customers.

Research vendors

Conduct a competitive comparison of vendors. Look for vendors with new products, lower prices or better terms.

Acknowledge the construction

Thank each customer for visiting upon arrival. Ask if there is anything you can do to help them through the inconvenience of the construction.

Create a strategic alliance

Find a business that serves your target market but is not your competition. Find ways to collaborate, such as creating a referral program or purchasing co-op advertising.

Create news

Use every opportunity to speak to your customers. Updating customers on the current construction is a great reason to send out a newsletter or a tweet. Create construction themed sales, such as "Get 1% off your purchase for every orange sign on the block". Participate in DTA's Hard Hat Happy Hour promotions and other construction events.

Focus on customer care

Customer loyalty will be tested during construction. Continually ask yourself, "Do I offer the best value, quality, service and prices? What can I do to make my business more competitive?"

Resist the temptation to offer deep discounts

Discounting can hurt profit and encourage competitive matching. Consider a free-with-purchase deal as an alternative. It doesn't affect margins in the way discounts do and customers see it as a valuable deal (and stay away from Groupon!).

Keep your customers informed

Maintain constant status updates. Inform every customer of the latest construction developments and how to negotiate detours when visiting your business. In addition to your store hours, share alternative routes on your outgoing voicemail. Include a map on your website. Tweet or update your Facebook page with current information.

Share parking information

Near a business with their own parking lot? Enter an agreement to share parking. Identify other parking lots and garages closest to your business and share that information with your customers. Share GRID bike sharing stations and bike racks near you as well.



Take advantage of marketing, promotional & financial resources

Valley Metro's Shop On Program

Shop local and save. The Shop On Rewards program is designed to attract patrons to your business by offering customers with exclusive deals when they visit businesses along the Tempe Streetcar line during construction. The program offers discounts, contests, giveaways and special event previews to the community.

Contact Mary Ann Miller at mmiller@valleymetro.org or www.valleymetro.org/project/tempe-streetcar



Downtown Tempe Authority Merchant Promotions

DTA is promoting downtown businesses by featuring three opportunities to promote your business and let the Valley know that Downtown Tempe is open for business during streetcar construction this summer:

- Hard Hat Happy Hours every Thursday, May 16 - August 15
- Tempe Heat Week June 24-28 Sign up for summer promotions at www.surveymonkey.com/r/GettinDiggy
- #RandomKindnessDT



In addition, the DTA website at www.downtowntempe.com has several opportunities to promote your business. You can submit your events to the DTA Event Calendar for publishing on our website and you have a landing page on our site for your business. DTA also offers co-op ad buy opportunities and an extensive library of marketing presentations.

Contact Lori Foster at Lori@downtowntempe.com or www.downtowntempe.com/about-us/merchant-resources

Take advantage of classes & workshops

- Downtown Tempe Authority www.downtowntempe.com
- Local First ARIZONA www.localfirstaz.com
- Tempe Chamber of Commerce www.tempechamber.org
- Valley Metro Tempe Streetcar www.valleymetro.org/project/tempe-streetcar
- City of Tempe Business Resource and Innovation Center (BRIC) www.tempe.gov
- SCORE: free workshops and one-on-one mentoring : www.greaterphoenix.score.org

Take advantage of business resources

Streetcar Asset Assistance Program - low-interest loan opportunities to businesses directly adjacent to the streetcar route, so they can have access to funds during construction. www.tempechamber.org

Arizona Microcredit Initiative - a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that empowers underserved entrepreneurs to start or expand businesses through business instruction, consulting services and microloans. www.azmicrocredit.org

NEDCO (Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation) www.turnanewleaf.org

Maricopa Small Business Development Corporation, www.maricopa-sbdc.com

Contact Information

Tempe Streetcar Project Website

www.valleymetro.org/project/tempe-streetcar

Downtown Tempe Authority

Lori Foster, Director of Business Relations

lori@downtowntempe.com

Office: 480-355-6067

www.downtowntempe.com

Valley Metro

Jordan Brackett, Community Outreach Coordinator

jbrackett@valleymetro.org

Office: 602-744-5552 Mobile: 936-524-8842

Bree Boehlke Community Outreach Coordinator

bboehlke@valleymetro.org

Office: 602-256-5822 Mobile: 602-697-4905

Valley Metro Streetcar Project Office Hours for Downtown Tempe

April 15, 4 - 5 pm June 17, 4 - 5 pm

May 2, 12 - 1 pm July 11, 12 - 1 pm

May 7, 9 - 10 am July 23, 4 - 5 pm

May 23, 8 - 9 am August 7, 8 - 9 am

June 4, 2 - 3 pm

You bring questions, they'll have answers, details & logistics. All meetings at the DTA Community Room, 310 S. Mill Avenue (entrance on 3rd Street across from light rail station).

Mary Ann Miller, Business Assistance Coordinator

mmiller@valleymetro.org

Office: 602-322-4475 Mobile: 480-468-3620

