



## ***What you should be doing now to prepare for streetcar construction***

### **What's the construction schedule?**

Heavy streetcar construction (laying of track) has started on Mill Avenue south of University Dr. and will work its way south along the Gammage Curve. Track installation on the NB side of Mill Avenue between University and Rio Salado Parkway will begin the day after ASU graduation in May 2019 and end the day before class begins in August of 2019. Work will happen day and night, 6 days a week. Construction on streets surrounding downtown such as Ash Avenue, University Dr., Rio Salado Pkwy and Mill Avenue south of University Dr. will be happening throughout 2018-2020. Now is the time to take a look at your business and see what you need to do to prepare your business for the project.

### **Marketing**

- Create and actively manage **social media** accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) to enable ease of communication with existing and future/potential customers.
- Contact **business resources** available to you – some are even free – to help you with planning, marketing, accounting and more. See list of resources below.
- Arrange the ability to **sell gift certificates** for your business (enables you to participate in promotions and events during construction).
- Gather customer **email addresses**. Create a **promotion** now to gather customer emails/ mailing addresses so you can communicate with customers directly (sales, special offers, traffic & parking information) during construction.
- **Create events** for destination shopping & dining and start early – even before construction starts so people are in the habit of coming to your business.
- **Collaborate** with complimentary merchants in the area; take advantage of cooperative advertising opportunities.
- Plan to **increase** your marketing & advertising budget.

### **Cash Flow & Budget Planning**

- **Analyze your cash flow and budget projections** for the next 3 years and forecast best and worst case scenarios to help you weather construction.
  - Best case scenario would be that your marketing efforts result in no loss of sales to a 10-20% loss in sales. Worst case scenario would be a 35-50% drop in sales over the course of construction lasting longer than anticipated (i.e. they find ancient burial ground under Mill Avenue; not likely to happen, but you never know what they may find underground). Analyze cash flow projections, inventory on hand and staffing.
  - Plan ahead for the slowdown in business you may experience and remember, it's never too early to start:
    - It may be a good time to refinance your business loan or take advantage of special financing available.

- Use the construction time to make physical improvements to your business; road construction is a great time for construction projects in your business.
  - Cross train your staff so you can get by with fewer on your payroll if necessary.
  - Cut/reduce inventory to only the stuff that sells. Start this process early.
  - Create events for destination shopping & dining and start early – even before construction starts so people are in the habit of coming to your business.
  - Collaborate with complimentary merchants in the area
  - Ask your landlord for short term (1-3 months) lease relief during the heaviest points of construction.
- **Identify what your Streetcar PAIN POINT** will be. This is the specific thing that will cause your business the MOST pain during construction. It could be access to your front door, lack of parking, dirt & dust in your business, etc. Don't just say "lack of customers", get to the root cause of the pain with a specific reason customers will have a hard time getting to your business. Then make plans to mitigate your specific pain point. You won't be the only merchant with your pain point so the business community can work together to mitigate them.

### **Business Resources**

SCORE: One-on-One Mentoring at BRiC (Tempe's Business Resource and Innovation Center), located at Tempe Library, 3500 S. Rural Road; also [www.greaterphoenix.score.org](http://www.greaterphoenix.score.org)

NEDCO (Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation (NEDCO), [www.turnanewleaf.org](http://www.turnanewleaf.org)

Maricopa Small Business Development Corporation, [www.maricopa-sbdc.com](http://www.maricopa-sbdc.com)

Tempe Chamber of Commerce, [www.tempechamber.org](http://www.tempechamber.org)

Local First Arizona, <https://www.localfirstaz.com/>

Arizona Microcredit Initiative, <https://www.azmicrocredit.org/> (free business consulting)