REPORT ON

MITIGATION OF TRANSPORTATION CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

Prepared for the Legislature
of the State of Minnesota

February 2009

TB012009001MKE

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Minnesota Department of Transportation

Transportation Building
395 John Ireland Boulevard
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155-1899

February 27, 2009

The Honorable Steve Murphy, Chair
Senate Transportation Budget & Policy Division

The Honorable Michael Jungbauer
Ranking Minority Member
Senate Transportation Budget & Policy Division

The Honorable James Metzen, Chair
Senate Business, Industry & Jobs Committee

The Honorable Geoff Michel
Ranking Minority Member
Senate Business, Industry & Jobs Committee

The Honorable David Tomassoni, Chair
Senate Economic Development & Housing
Budget Division

The Honorable Amy Koch
Ranking Minority Member
Senate Economic Development & Housing
Budget Division

The Honorable Bernie Lieder, Chair
House Transportation Finance & Policy Division

The Honorable Michael Beard
Ranking Minority Member
House Transportation Finance & Policy Division

The Honorable Frank Hornstein, Chair
House Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight
Division Committee

The Honorable Dean Urdahl
Ranking Minority Member
House Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight
Division Committee

The Honorable Tom Rukavina, Chair
House Higher Education & Workforce
Development Finance & Policy Division

The Honorable Sarah Anderson
Ranking Minority Member - Workforce
House Higher Education & Workforce
Development Finance & Policy Division

RE: Report on Mitigation of Transportation Construction Impacts

Dear Chairs and Ranking Minority Members:

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) has completed the enclosed Report on Mitigation of Transportation Construction Impacts in response to the law passed by the Minnesota State Legislature (Laws 2008, Chapter 308). The report will help Mn/DOT implement our new strategic direction to encourage public involvement and build public trust.

In developing this report, Mn/DOT worked with many groups, including other state agencies, counties, cities, chambers of commerce, and business owners from across Minnesota. The input we received was very valuable in identifying successful practices that are currently being used, and areas where we can improve in reaching out to small businesses before, during, and after transportation construction projects.

In compliance with the law, Mn/DOT developed the following plan to assist small businesses impacted by Mn/DOT construction projects.

1. Mn/DOT will emphasize small business outreach as an integral part of our broader public participation process by making revisions to our current "Hear Every Voice" program (described in Appendix B) and will place greater emphasis on the identification and mitigation of impacts to small businesses.

2. Mn/DOT will develop a checklist to be used by Mn/DOT project managers to initiate consultations with local government representatives and business community representatives. The checklist is a list of steps to be taken by Mn/DOT project managers to identify impacts to businesses, to plan and coordinate with local governments and small businesses, to identify mitigation measures (including signing), and to involve the construction engineer and contractor in an effort to improve communication and coordination with small businesses.

3. In order to better communicate with small businesses affected by construction projects, Mn/DOT will develop a packet for businesses that includes information about the nature, extent and timing of construction activities, identifies a single point of contact for small business owners, and, working with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, will seek the assistance of area business development organizations.

4. From our surveys and discussions with small business owners, we learned that placing appropriate signing for businesses and business districts that are affected by construction projects is crucial. Mn/DOT will review its policies for signing in construction zones to document appropriate signing practices and to determine how to improve its response to requests from small businesses for additional signs.

5. Mn/DOT will regularly evaluate our program to make sure that our small business outreach activities are effective and continue to improve so we can avoid, minimize and mitigate the negative impacts of our projects on businesses.

The recommendations and opportunities identified in this report are well aligned with our increased efforts to include public participation and collaborative solutions not only in the project development and construction processes, but throughout the department.

If you have any questions or comments about the attached report, please contact Tom O'Keefe, Mn/DOT Metro District Program Delivery Director and Chair of the Advisory Committee at 651 234-7725. If you have questions about the implementation or ongoing support for the recommendations, please contact Michael Barnes, Mn/DOT Division Director of Engineering Services at 651 366-4825.

Sincerely,

Thomas K. Sorel

Thomas K. Sorel
Commissioner

Attachment

cc: Peter Wattson, Secretary of the Senate
Albin A. Mathiowetz, Chief Clerk of the House
Legislative Reference Library
Senator Patricia Torres Ray
Billie Ball, Division Administrator
Abbey Mahin, Committee Administrator
Brian Martinson, Committee Administrator
Cap O'Rourke, Committee Administrator
Kerry Kinney Fine, Committee Administrator

Final Report

Report on Mitigation of Transportation Construction Impacts

Prepared for

Minnesota Department of Transportation

February 2009

Prepared by

CH2MHILL

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Acknowledgements

The authors of this report would like to acknowledge and thank the individuals, agencies, and communities who have participated developing the *Report on Mitigation of Transportation Construction Impacts.* First and foremost, thank you to the businesses that have provided input regarding experiences of operating a business during a transportation construction project. By sharing these experiences, you've added to a knowledge base that will be used by transportation agencies—including Mn/DOT—to improve interactions with businesses during future transportation construction projects.

The following listed agencies participated on the study's Advisory Committee, which was instrumental in providing input on candidate projects to study, how to collect input from businesses, including assistance in conducting public outreach meetings.

- Minnesota Department of Transportation (various districts and offices)
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Anoka County
- City of North St. Paul
- Metropolitan Council Central Corridor project office
- Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers

The following listed organizations were instrumental in preparing for and conducting on-site business outreach meetings which provided a wealth of information regarding business operator experiences during transportation constructions.

- Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce
- MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce

The following listed business associations were key to providing contact information for businesses located in an area recently affected by a transportation construction project, as well as assisting with distribution of the assessment forms to businesses.

- Lake Street Council
- La Crescent Chamber of Commerce
- North St. Paul Business Association

Cost of Preparing this Report

This report cost approximately $95,000 to develop and publish.

Costs included:

- Consultant contract costs up to the date of publication
- Mn/DOT agency staff and partner agency staff time
- Document printing
- Travel expenses
- Postage and related costs for business assessment distribution and collection

Executive Summary

Transportation construction projects in Minnesota have wide-ranging impacts that, depending on the size of the project, can have an impact on neighborhoods, entire communities, or sometimes even broader multi-county regions of the State. All aspects of the population, including the business community, are affected by the construction of transportation projects. Often the impacts are very small and of short duration, such as during a routine maintenance project. Larger construction projects, such as complete reconstruction of an interchange or highway corridor, have several direct and long-term impacts on the daily lives of people.

This report has been prepared in response to Laws of Minnesota 2008, Chapter 308, requiring the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) to prepare a report on the mitigation of construction impacts on small businesses. Mn/DOT recognizes that as construction projects become larger in size and duration, small businesses are at risk for difficulties arising from construction impacts. Working with small businesses to provide them with the information they need to understand the potential impacts of a project and the available resources to manage their business during construction is especially important.

Through outreach conducted as part of this study, Mn/DOT has reviewed several previous projects to identify the practices that made for successful communications with small businesses, as well as the lessons learned from those projects. The report summarizes business owner and operator assessments, the input received from a project Advisory Committee, as well as observations from the practices of other agencies (including from other states).

Recommendations

As a result of this work, Mn/DOT makes the following overarching recommendations:

1. Small business outreach must be emphasized as an integral part of a broader public participation process.

While greater emphasis on business outreach is necessary, the outreach must be conducted as part of an integrated public outreach program. Businesses and their surrounding communities rely upon each other—only when the potential impacts to each are communicated broadly can an appreciation of their need for support be developed.

2. Mn/DOT has the tools, practices, and relationships in place to assist small businesses—they need to be better leveraged with consistent and rigorous application through the entire project development process.

Programs such as "Hear Every Voice" offer training for Mn/DOT and its project development/construction partners to be sensitive to the needs of the public. Revisions to the Hear Every Voice program will be made to place greater emphasis on the mitigation of impacts to small businesses.

3. Important business issues need to be identified early in project development.

Once identified, Mn/DOT will identify appropriate agency (Mn/DOT and non-Mn/DOT) project contacts and decision-makers to ensure their involvement at the proper time. By doing so, Mn/DOT's commitments for mitigation activities will be implemented as intended. A project manager checklist will be used to guide this process. This checklist will also be used by transportation agency staff to initiate the following activities:

a. Consultation with local units of government and business community representatives to identify businesses surrounding the project, potential impacts to small businesses (e.g., parking, traffic, and access), and to discuss potential mitigation measures;

b. Development of a packet for businesses that will include project information (e.g., nature, extent, and timing of construction and anticipated changes in parking, traffic, and public access), a transportation agency project contact; and

c. Determine a list of project-specific area business development organizations that may offer support and resources to affected businesses. This determination will be completed with assistance from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

4. Identify opportunities for partnership with a greater depth of resources, including economic development offices, dynamic local business leaders, or local government agencies.

Every project has unique technical issues but also unique human resources, personalities, and organizations. Taking advantage of the ideas, services, and relationships that these resources can offer will help businesses manage the challenges of construction. Besides offering greater knowledge of site-specific issues, their presence often serves as a moderating force in public outreach that enables a shared understanding of project impacts.

5. Enhance engagement of the construction contractor as an important resource for business communication and relationships.

The construction contractor offers a tremendous resource that can positively or adversely affect the effectiveness of business outreach. As a result of their visibility in the construction area, contractors oftentimes become the face of a project in the eyes of the public. Mn/DOT will work with contractors on a project-by-project basis to ensure that contractors are aware of this dynamic. Transportation agency staff may consider including contract provisions related to contractor participation or communication in projects where small businesses will be impacted. This may include a requirement that the contractor provide a business liaison to communicate with business operators and resolve issues on a regular basis (e.g. weekly) or as need may arise.

6. Review policies for signing in construction zones.

Mn/DOT will review policies regarding signing for businesses or business districts in construction zones. Appropriate signing can benefit businesses but, at the same time, good signing practices must be maintained (for example, drivers can be overwhelmed

with information from too many signs, spaced frequently). Signing practices that can be considered should be documented as well as those that should not be used. A clear policy will help ensure that signing proposals discussed early in the project development process are feasible and can be implemented during construction.

7. Evaluate the effectiveness of small business outreach activities.

Mn/DOT will regularly review business outreach efforts on a project-by-project basis and apply lessons learned to future projects. Mn/DOT will use its *Hear Every Voice Initiative Team* to begin this process and establish a long-term evaluation approach.

Implementation Opportunities

Several opportunities exist for Mn/DOT to implement the recommendations described in this report. In summary, those opportunities include:

1) **Update the Hear Every Voice program**. This update will include a module specifically focused on small business outreach. As Mn/DOT's core program in public involvement training, Hear Every Voice provides the principles and tools to implement an effective small business outreach plan.

2) **Implementation of a Project Manager's Checklist**. Incorporating a business outreach checklist into the Mn/DOT project development process will allow for a consistent application of business impacts review. The checklist offers an opportunity to document business outreach actions, the commitments that have been made, and plans for following through on business outreach before, during, and after construction.

3) **Conduct an Initiative Study to Assess the Requirements of Small Business Outreach**. Mn/DOT District 6 will be reviewing business outreach needs during the 2009 construction season. The findings from this initiative study may be used to update previous editions of business outreach materials, such as the draft "Survive and Thrive" workbook being developed by District 6 staff.

4) **Continue to Recognize the Construction Contractor as a Business Outreach Provider**. For continued use of the contractor on outreach activities, the best opportunity to ensure their success is at the "pre-construction meeting." This meeting is held between Mn/DOT and the contractor after they are selected, but before construction begins. Including the whole team (i.e. include contractor's sub-contractors) in the meeting will provide a shared understanding of the project business concerns and methods to be used in outreach.

Introduction

Transportation construction projects have wide-ranging impacts to the communities in which the projects take place. The interim impacts of construction often disrupt the normal activities and routines of business owners and operators. When the nature, extent, and timing of those construction impacts are uncertain, it is especially difficult for small business owners to implement measures that will mitigate the negative effects of construction.

This report was developed by Mn/DOT, with assistance from several cooperating partners, in an effort to help agency staff develop better communication methods with small businesses. Improved communications with small businesses before and during transportation construction projects are expected to help reduce the impacts of construction to businesses. This effort was undertaken in response to legislation passed in 2008 by the Minnesota State Legislature (Laws of Minnesota 2008, Chapter 308) requiring a report on this topic. (See Appendix A for complete language of this law).

In developing this report, Mn/DOT collected information from owners/operators of small businesses that had recently been affected by a transportation construction project. Gathering this information helped Mn/DOT:

- understand the needs of small businesses during transportation construction projects,
- identify what types of communications are most useful to small businesses, and
- identify ways to lessen transportation construction impacts to small businesses.

From this information, Mn/DOT has developed a variety of recommendations that give agency staff a set of guiding principles for business outreach as new project construction plans are developed and implemented. The report also identifies organizations that are available to assist businesses with financial, marketing, and technical counseling during transportation construction projects.

Mn/DOT's Project Development Process

There are several steps in the development of a highway improvement project. A brief summary of each step follows:

Planning: identification of a need or deficiency within the transportation system. These may be identified by Mn/DOT staff, affected regions, counties, cities, or townships, and individual citizens. The deficiencies are prioritized so that the most important needs are addressed with current funding.

Scoping: determination of what the project should entail. An environmental study is conducted and social, economic, and environmental impacts are identified. Several alternatives are developed with hearings and information meetings for public comment. Large/complex projects may include advisory committees with representatives from the community, local governments, and other federal and state agencies. These committees are involved with guiding project decisions and are often involved through the design phase. A preliminary cost estimate and schedule are developed.

Programming: identification of the projects that will be implemented with current revenue. These projects are documented in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.

Mn/DOT Project Development and Public Involvement

- Project Scoping is an important first assessment of a project's potential impacts – and a chance to obtain input from the community.
- Several opportunities for public involvement occur throughout the project development process, including notably during environmental studies.
- *Hear Every Voice* serves as the centerpiece of Mn/DOT's public involvement program, offering training to Mn/DOT staff and its partners in project delivery.

Detail Design and Right-of-Way Acquisition: final plans and specifications are developed that provide the information that a contractor uses to build the project. Details on construction impacts, traffic staging, and scheduling are identified and worked through in this stage.

Construction: the final plans are let for competitive bidding and the project is built. The focus of public involvement during construction is to provide current, on-going information to affected residents, businesses, and the traveling public.

Operations and Maintenance: use of the highway after construction is complete. Ongoing maintenance activities occur to prolong the life of the roadway and ensure safe and efficient operation.

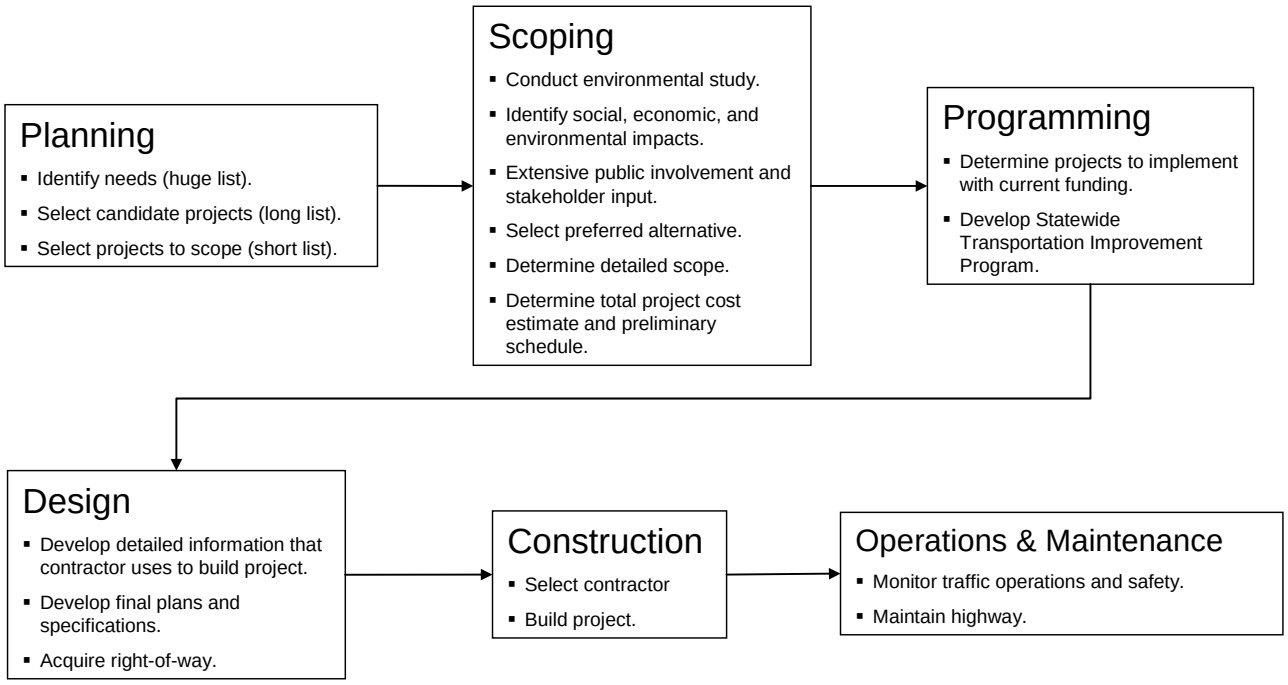


Figure 1. Mn/DOT's project development process. Public involvement is emphasized through every step.

Public Involvement and *Hear Every Voice*

Mn/DOT provides detailed guidance for project managers and other staff on the highway project development process at http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/hpdp/scoping.html. The importance of stakeholder consultation and public involvement through every step in the process is emphasized. A sampling of *Hear Every Voice* Program materials is provided in Appendix B.

As an integral part of the project development process, the *Hear Every Voice* program documents Mn/DOT's approach to public involvement. This program provides written guidance, as well as a number of tools and resources, which employees can use to conduct meaningful and productive public involvement. Best practices for each step are documented including requirements and timelines, when applicable. Because each project is different—in terms of scale, impacts, and context—*Hear Every Voice* appropriately emphasizes the importance of tailoring public involvement to the unique characteristics of each project. Training courses are offered on an on-going basis to support employees in planning, implementation, evaluation and management of public and stakeholder participation.

The *Hear Every Voice* program provides an existing platform that can be expanded or improved to better address the needs of small business during construction projects.

Context Sensitive Design and Solutions

Context Sensitive Design and Solutions (CSD&S) is another integral part of Mn/DOT's project development process. CSD&S is the simultaneous balancing of the objectives of safety and mobility with preservation and enhancement of aesthetic, scenic, historic, cultural, environmental, and community values in transportation projects. CSD&S is the art of creating and sustaining transportation public works that satisfy users, stakeholders, and neighboring communities by integrating and balancing projects with the context and setting in a sensitive manner that relies upon broadly-informed planning, consideration of differing values and perspectives, and tailoring designs to unique project circumstances. CSD&S uses a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach that includes early and ongoing involvement of key stakeholders to ensure that transportation projects not only perform safely and efficiently, but are also in harmony with the natural, social, economic, and cultural environment. Mn/DOT's commitment to the CSD&S approach to project development offers another existing means through which outreach and coordination with small business can be improved.

Current Practices to Address the Needs of Small Business

The following practices are currently used by Mn/DOT at various stages of project development to address the needs of small business:

- Opportunities for business representatives to serve on project advisory committees.
- Opportunities for early input at public hearings and public information meetings.
- Direct conversations with businesses during project design to provide input on how to mitigate impacts, including those related to traffic, access, and parking.
- Pre-construction meetings after contractor selection, but prior to construction that involve impacted businesses, Mn/DOT staff, and the contractor.
- Special signing, if it consistent with current signing standards and practices (for example, drivers can be overwhelmed with information from too many signs, spaced frequently).
- Construction restricted to nighttime or time periods when businesses are closed.
- Construction restricted during community events.
- Weekly meetings during construction between businesses, contractors, and Mn/DOT construction staff.
- Ongoing updates during construction using a variety of communication methods and media sources.

Data Collection and Outreach

Project Advisory Committee and Agency Staff Outreach

Project Advisory Committee Role in Report Development

A project Advisory Committee was assembled to draw upon experiences from recent construction projects across Minnesota. The Advisory Committee included representatives from local government, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers, the Metropolitan Council Central Corridor project office and several Mn/DOT districts and offices. The Advisory Committee provided input on candidate projects for business assessments, how to collect input from businesses, including assistance in conducting public outreach meetings.

Transportation Agency Staff Role in Report Development

Several individuals who work for transportation agencies also provided a great deal of information and input that aided in the development of this report. These individuals frequently work on transportation construction projects and have extensive experience coordinating with communities and businesses through project development.

Transportation agency staff assisted with development of business assessment forms (discussed below) and provided feedback regarding their experiences of coordinating with businesses through the project development.

Advisory Committee and Agency Support in Report Development

- An Advisory Committee of several agencies provided direction in data collection and outreach.
- Transportation agency staff provided feedback about recent project examples to review for agency practices and obtain input from affected businesses.
- Advisory Committee members noted a continuing problem in identifying the correct contact information for businesses that are tenants of buildings owned by others. (See the discussion in the "Challenges" section of this report).

Business Experience Assessment Form

Mn/DOT developed assessment forms aimed at capturing input from businesses recently affected by transportation construction projects. A complete version of the assessment form is provided in Appendix C. The assessment of business representatives was intended to:

- Gain a better perspective of challenges and impacts business operators within close proximity to transportation projects encounter during construction,
- Identify the extent to which business operators had access to information from transportation agency staff or other resources throughout the project development and construction process, and
- Determine the type of information, as well as methods and frequency of communications, that are most useful for business operators before and during a construction project.

Assessment Form Development & Distribution

The business owner/operator assessment form was developed through a collaborative effort that involved the Advisory Committee and volunteer form testers. The Advisory Committee decided to distribute the business assessment forms to owners/operators who recently have had the experience of operating a business during construction. The Committee selected seven recent projects within Minnesota. Three projects are located in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area; the other four were located throughout Minnesota. With the exception of one project, all were completed by Mn/DOT. The Lake Street major reconstruction project, completed by Hennepin County, was included in the assessment effort to capture input from the high number of small businesses along the corridor. Information about these projects is provided in the table below:

Illustrative Project Case Studies

- Several recent transportation projects from across Minnesota were the source of business owner/operator input.

Table 1. Recent Transportation Construction Projects for Business Input

Project Name & Type	Agency	Location
Highway 36 between White Bear Ave. and Hwy 120/Century Ave.—Major reconstruction	Mn/DOT Metro District	Maplewood & North Saint Paul
Highways 16/61—Major reconstruction	Mn/DOT District 6	La Crescent
Highway 2 West of Highway 38 intersection—Mill and Overlay	Mn/DOT District 1	Grand Rapids
Highway 2 East of Highway 38—Major reconstruction	Mn/DOT District 1	Grand Rapids
I-35W & 54th Street/Diamond Lake Road Improvements (part of I-35W/Hwy 62 Crosstown Project)—Major reconstruction	Mn/DOT Metro District	Minneapolis
Lake Street—Major reconstruction	Hennepin County	Minneapolis
Highway 10 Detroit Lakes—Major reconstruction	Mn/DOT District 4	Detroit Lakes

Lists of business owner/operator contacts were obtained from transportation agency staff involved with each project. Agency project staff also helped identify the best means for distributing the forms. As such, a variety of distribution methods were used—including mailing, along with an addressed, stamped return envelope; e-mailing an electronic link to an on-line assessment form; and hand-delivery and pick-up.

Business Assessment Results

In total, assessment forms were distributed to over 400 business owner/operators. Responses were received from ninety-five businesses. A complete summary of business assessment results is provided at the end of this document, in Appendix C. The following discussion highlights findings from the business assessment that were influential in developing recommendations for Mn/DOT staff in communicating with small businesses in the future.

Effects of Transportation Construction on Businesses

Business Assessment Results

- Over 400 businesses were asked to provide input, with more than 20% responding.
- While the business assessments provide a valuable source of input from recently affected businesses, statistical significance should not be implied from the results.
- A majority of business respondents reported having lost business during construction.
- Businesses are sensitive to the practices of construction contractors – including as a source of project information.

76% (72 respondents) of the respondents reported having been affected by a transportation construction project. Over 60% (59 respondents) reported having lost business during construction. The most commonly cited reasons for business loss were:

- Loss of access
- Length of project
- Less traffic
- Highway/road closures
- Detours
- Lack of or poor signing

In addition to selecting choices from the list of impacts on the multiple choice question, business operators also wrote in the following business impacts:

- Lane closures resulted in heavy traffic and congestion; in some cases, this made it difficult for customers to enter or exit a business.
- Loss of parking resulted in impacts ranging from customer inconvenience to avoidance of the construction area.
- Property damage to business property resulting from contractor actions was cited by several business operators. In several instances, the business representatives noted that the situation had not been resolved to their satisfaction.
- Construction activities that took place over the July 4th weekend resulted in less business for some businesses located in a community that historically receives a high volume of tourist traffic.

Notably among the written comments received from business owners and operators was the impact a contractor's practices can have on their perceptions of the project. A frequent comment of frustration from businesses was concern about contractor equipment or activities blocking access to businesses or eliminating customer parking. In cases where the business person communicated directly with on-site contractor employees, there was a great improvement in knowledge of the project and an understanding of what was being done.

Very few businesses responded that that their business had benefited from the transportation construction project. Over one-quarter of respondents

indicated that it was too soon to tell or that the project was still under construction. However, only 8% felt the project had provided a benefit to their business.

Fewer than 40% of business representatives knew the specific transportation agency staff person they could contact with project related inquiries. Few businesses reported coordinating with local chambers of commerce, community development agencies, or marketing/business consultants for assistance during construction. Roughly over one-quarter of the businesses reported they had coordinated with other businesses during the construction period.

Business Operations during Construction

In general, 45-60% of business representatives indicated that they had received adequate information about the following topics:

- Timing and phasing of construction
- Length of project
- Changes in Parking
- Construction-related detours
- Changes in public access

However, less than 30% of respondents indicated that the construction project included adequate signing that directed customers to area businesses. Regarding signing issues, several written comments expressed frustration with transportation agency signing policies, noting the need for the transportation agency and the businesses to work together.

Business Assessment Results

- Most businesses were unable to identify the specific transportation agency contact person available for project-related inquiries.
- Signing was a consistently highlighted issue of concern for businesses during construction.
- Most businesses were satisfied with the amount of project information they received for their own development of plans for operation during construction.

Business Response to Construction

Overall, nearly 60% of businesses reported having enough information to development and implement a business plan for the construction period. Below is a sampling of actions businesses noted they took to better serve customers during construction:

- Advertised
- Sent map or flier with detailed directions and project updates
- Telephoned customers
- Developed and paid for own signage; specific entrance/exit and detour directions
- Read construction updates in neighborhood newspaper
- Provided good customer service/apologized for inconvenience
- Expanded hours and increased delivery

Business Outreach Meetings

During development of this report, Mn/DOT met with business managers/operators representative of two recent projects: the ROC52 design-build project in Rochester, Minnesota, and the Highway 65/County Road 14 Interchange project in Blaine, Minnesota. A brief summary of the findings from each meeting is provided below. Complete summaries are provided in Appendix C of this document.

Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce

This meeting was held in cooperation with the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce. The meeting was a regular meeting of their Transportation Committee, but was held as a meeting open to the public. Press releases were provided to the local news media in advance of the meeting. Feedback from participants about the ROC 52 project in Rochester was generally positive. They noted that communications throughout the entire project were good and that Mn/DOT and the contractor worked to provide the community with up-to-date information. Project buy-in from community leaders also helped a great deal in completing the project in a manner that kept community relations intact.

Communications

Good communication practices; started early and lasted throughout the project. Elements of the ROC 52 communications program included:

- Daily radio announcements
- Regular press releases
- Newsletters
- 1-800 number for project information
- Project website

The design-build contractor hired a public relations firm that was responsible for coordinating most elements of the public outreach program. This firm also frequently followed-up with stakeholders to determine the effectiveness of various communication methods.

Coordination with Businesses

Frequent and meaningful communications with businesses along the Highway 52 corridor resulted in successful business operations during construction. Below are some specific efforts that were taken to ease business impacts during construction:

- Signs directing drivers how to reach specific businesses entrances were moved around as project conditions changed
- Businesses worked together to develop incentives to shop during construction, e.g., Miracle Mile businesses and the local chamber of commerce coordinated to offer special sales during construction

Focus Group Findings

- The design-build contractor management of public outreach was effective in Rochester (the "ROC 52" project) due to an extensive outreach program and broad community support for the project.
- The same ROC 52 outreach model was applied to an Oronoco design-build project with less success.
- Each project has unique characteristics that prevent a "one-size-fits-all" approach to outreach.

Mn/DOT's attempt to replicate the public outreach approach used on ROC 52 in the Oronoco Highway 52 design-build project approximately 12 miles to the north was not successful for a variety of reasons, including a lack of community buy-in for the project. Comparing the results of the community outreach programs on Oronoco and ROC 52 demonstrates that projects possess unique characteristics that require tailored approaches to outreach—even within close proximity to one another.

MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce

The group focused on the experiences of businesses that operated during the Highway 65/County Road 14 project in Blaine. Highlights from the discussion are summarized below:

- Sponsors of the project—Anoka County, City of Blaine, and Mn/DOT—explained benefits of the project (e.g., access management) with stakeholders before and during construction.
- Contractors play a large role in project communications with the business community. This role is valuable and should be explored further for future projects.
- Businesses, the County, and the City of Blaine all coordinated to develop and fund the "Heart of Blaine" marketing effort, which was focused on keeping customers within the project corridor during construction. One business person in particular championed the effort for the businesses.
- Anoka County's Transportation Management Organization (TMO) Director devoted a considerable portion of her time to coordination with businesses along the project corridor.

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

As a result of reviewing the outreach efforts described above, Mn/DOT has identified several best practices and lessons learned from past projects and the outreach practices used by other state and local transportation agencies. Generally, the lessons learned discussions are incorporated within the project-specific case studies included in this section.

The observed best practices, described in five broad categories below, form the basis for the recommendations of this report. The first four categories relate to project-specific needs and actions necessary to promote an effective and efficient communications strategy between the project sponsor and the business community. The fifth category is focused on existing agency practices that can be drawn upon to create a structured business outreach protocol, which is discussed in the Recommendations and Implementation section below.

Successful Business Outreach Includes the Whole Community

Businesses are part of the Community

- Successful business outreach integrates the entire community.
- Provide project information that can be used by business – for their customers, suppliers, and employees.
- Community support and awareness of the project enables a cohesive business community marketing plan.

As described above, one of the findings from the survey of businesses is that business owners and operators often do not perceive a benefit from the planned or completed transportation construction project.

A common theme from the best examples of outreach to the business community is that project outreach efforts are conducted in a holistic manner. That is, outreach to businesses should not be conducted in a vacuum, but as part of a broader public involvement program that also includes businesses, community residents, locally elected officials, and other governmental agencies as stakeholders. The benefit of this approach is that all stakeholders have an opportunity to hear the perspectives of other groups, thereby increasing the potential for project understanding and enthusiasm for the project from all stakeholders—including businesses.

Successful communication with business owners and operators recognizes that communications do not stop at the businesses. Customers, employees, and suppliers to businesses are all affected by construction activities. Providing project information to businesses that can easily be passed on to those types of business stakeholders is another example of how broad project outreach is necessary.

An example of good community outreach (shown as a Case Study below) is the Highway 52 design-build project in Rochester, also known as "ROC 52." This case study is a demonstration of the benefit of broad community support as a means to engage the business community. Conversely, a similar Highway 52 design-build project approximately 12 miles north of Rochester in the City of Oronoco did not demonstrate the same type of broad

community support. This resulted in fractured communications between the community, including businesses, and the project sponsor.

The experience from these two Highway 52 design-build projects not only demonstrates the value of broad community support, but it also reflects a lesson learned that applies to the third category of best practices described below in this report: each project is unique and requires a tailored approach to outreach. Mn/DOT, having gone through a successful community outreach program on the ROC 52 project, applied the exact same approach to the Oronoco design-build project. However, the Oronoco project did not have the same foundation of community support as experienced in Rochester – a different approach was needed.

Case Study: ROC 52 Design-Build Project

Demonstrated Effort to Minimize Impacts

Expansion of an 11.8 mile section of Highway 52 to six-lanes in Rochester, Minnesota was Mn/DOT's first design-build highway project. The ROC 52 project was completed in 3 ½ years, versus the eleven year schedule that was estimated with a traditional, non-design-build construction approach.

Maintaining the function of Highway 52 as a major artery within Rochester, the region, and state was an important goal during construction. As such, four lanes of traffic (two lanes in each direction) were maintained during peak travel periods (6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday - Friday). Lane closures were allowed during non-restricted hours (night and weekends). Additionally, access to residences and business was maintained throughout the project. Efforts were made to minimize impacts to businesses, including minimizing construction during the November-December holiday shopping season.

Business Communications Conducted Within the Community Context

The ROC 52 project stands apart from many others in that many businesses view the project as a success—including the period of construction. Through discussions with members of the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce's Transportation Committee, we learned that one of the keys to this success was viewing the outreach program as a community outreach, rather than a business outreach effort. This theme was apparent even in the project slogan of "We're in this together."

Another key to the success of ROC 52 was that Mn/DOT and the contractor worked together with an understanding that this project was not to be "business as usual." The contractors were aware of important business community concerns. Other elements of the ROC 52 public outreach program are discussed above, under Outreach Meetings.

Project Ambassadors" Provided Leadership

Perhaps one of the keys to the success of the ROC 52 project was the fact that a Leadership Group within the community acted as "project ambassadors" within the community. That is, they were key in building community support for the project, which included educating the public about the need for, and benefits of the project.

Project Team Planning: Consider the Whole Project

One common theme in business owner feedback was frustration about changes in project contacts and decision-makers. This was most notable relative to the topic of signing and visibility of businesses during and after construction.

Case Study: Highway 36 (North Saint Paul and Maplewood, MN)

Improvements to Highway 36 were constructed in 2007 and 2008. The goal of the project was to rebuild a segment of Highway 36 to increase safety and improve access through the cities of North St. Paul and Maplewood. After conducting market research and substantial outreach with the affected communities, Mn/DOT chose to expedite the project schedule by completely closing Highway 36 to traffic in North Saint Paul for several months in 2007. Business input was critical to this decision. As a result, Mn/DOT staff established a close working relationship with businesses early in project development.

The value of this early work with businesses was confirmed through feedback received from businesses and from the Advisory Committee. Businesses and the broader communities generally believed Mn/DOT's outreach efforts met their needs for information. However, some businesses noted commitments made by the Mn/DOT project representatives were not always implemented. Specifically, project staff involved in the early outreach efforts worked with affected businesses and communities to develop a system for installing temporary signs that would direct motorists to business entrances. However, when it came time to design and install the signing plan, Mn/DOT was unable to implement the arrangement because the signs would not conform to agency standards. This left businesses and city representatives frustrated and temporarily without a plan for signing during construction.

Another aspect of project signing that needs consideration is signing for the finished project. In the case of Highway 36 at McKnight Road, the new interchange included full access to McKnight Road and the option to drive straight toward the North Saint Paul business district from eastbound Highway 36. This unique feature created a need to coordinate with the city for signing at this location. A compromise between the parties was reached (a "Downtown North Saint Paul" sign at the exit ramp with a straight-ahead arrow) after completion of the project. The business community involvement in that decision was important for buy-in on the final design and location. An opportunity to avoid the temporary confusion would have been to hold the discussion of final project signing earlier in project design and development.

Signing is a key concern of businesses during construction, especially if a detour or change in business access is involved. As can be seen from the case studies below, difficulties arise from misunderstandings about what can and

cannot be done in terms of the types, locations, and sizes of signing during construction. Many layers of decision-making occur, often involving multiple levels of government (e.g. the State and City) depending on the extent of construction and best opportunities to provide signing. Problems such as those identified in the Case Studies of Highway 36 and Highway 2 can often be avoided if the right decision-makers are involved early in the project outreach process and if staff identifies the problems that must be resolved.

For this reason, it is extremely important to map out the key decision makers and project managers early in project development, even before a formal business outreach program is underway. Each project will have its unique characteristics that require different resources to be available according to the project's key issues.

Getting the right resources involved at the appropriate time will help to provide seamless project communications that are not hindered by participants' climbing a project learning curve. Relative to Mn/DOT, this means that staff with specific project development responsibilities (see Figure 1) becomes involved with the project before their specific project phase begins. For example, Mn/DOT's construction manager would be aware of project details and commitments well before the start of construction. This would allow the construction manager to understand the project's unique issues, the variety of stakeholders involved, and any commitments that the agency has made in previous project development phases. All of this would help to ensure a smooth transition into the construction phase and minimize the potential for glitches in communication.

One resource that may be often overlooked as an opportunity for business outreach and support is the construction contractor. Many business owners described how they relied on face-to-face interaction with the contractor to receive project updates. Occasionally businesses described situations where the contractor's construction practices (e.g. material placement or equipment operation) was disruptive to the business for prolonged periods with no explanation or warning. While the identity of a contractor may not be officially known until immediately prior to construction, planning for their active involvement and engagement as an outreach participant has been proven as a successful strategy.

Adapt Communication Methods to Business Needs and Project Resources

As described above and in the case studies, each project is unique and will have its own key issues and associated level of public outreach. For this reason, assigning a specific universal template or approach to business outreach for every project is not likely to be successful. Instead, the people directly involved need to have the freedom to conduct and adjust business outreach in a way that responds to the distinct needs of each project. (Note: this does not preclude a structured approach to communications, as described further below in Section 5 of this Best Practices section).

Adapt Business Communication Methods to Your Project Needs

- Each project has unique characteristics and associated potential for business impacts.
- Tailor your business communications strategies accordingly.
- Early outreach with businesses will enable them to identify those methods of outreach that will be most helpful.
- Large construction projects often require community outreach more than one year in advance of construction.
- To maximize business contact, conduct public outreach in the affected area – look for opportunities to hold meetings at affected businesses.

One advantage to early communication with businesses is that besides learning about specific issues, it also offers an opportunity for leaders of the business community to emerge. A great example of this comes from the Highway 65/County Road 14 project in Blaine, Minnesota (see Case Study below). This project shows how valuable it is to allow committed individuals to identify themselves and in turn leverage their interest and abilities. Not only did the project gain a new vehicle for communications, but the business community relationship to the sponsoring agencies was strengthened as well. The leadership from these individuals will often play a critical role in understanding what types and frequencies of communication are appropriate for the project.

Among the findings of the business survey was that business owners and operators do distinguish between the types of projects that may be

Case Study: Highway 2 (Grand Rapids, MN)

Highway 2 in Grand Rapids has undergone a wide range of improvements recently, from major construction for one portion, to a regularly scheduled "mill and overlay" maintenance work on another. Businesses located around these projects expressed concerns similar to those expressed by businesses near the Highway 36 project. In this case, early communications about signing for businesses during construction were conducted between Mn/DOT and the businesses. Later as construction on Highway 2 began, the businesses learned that city of Grand Rapids requirements for signing did not allow for the construction signing to be implemented as planned.

This project example reinforces the importance of signing as an issue for coordination with businesses in advance of construction. A key lesson from this project and the Highway 36 example above is that getting the proper decision makers involved early in project development is very important for ensuring the implementation of project commitments. This involves Mn/DOT staff and local government officials.

constructed and the relative need for information. For those projects more oriented around routine maintenance, the need for early communication is less – with notification timeframes of several weeks often being adequate for businesses. For projects that involve more extensive construction, access changes, and certainly if a detour is planned, the timeframe for advance communications is much longer. Businesses often prefer to hear about these types of projects more than a year in advance.

The actual methods for communications with businesses can vary widely. Projects have used web sites, newsletters, post cards, email, and, newspaper advertisements, to various degrees. All of these methods can be successful; the right choice will depend on learning the needs of specific project stakeholders.

A positive method of demonstrating commitment to the affected businesses is to hold project meetings in the immediate project area. Many owners and operators have limited flexibility in their schedules, so making meetings as accessible as possible is important. Especially valuable in gaining business support is to hold project meetings (ranging from small internal to larger community meetings) in one or more of the affected businesses.

Outreach to businesses and methods for mitigating impacts must be tailored to each project. The scale and site-specific characteristics of every project are different. An early assessment of the project's potential impacts to businesses is necessary to determine the approach to business outreach.

Figure 2**. **Project Impact Continuum and Corresponding Business Outreach Approach

Demonstrate Responsiveness

Businesses identified clear and timely project communications as valuable to their operations before, during, and after construction. Information about the following topics was noted as important by several business representatives:

- Project start date
- Length of construction
- Areas of the project with likelihood of changing, including updates when project elements change
- Project completion announcement to allow businesses to communicate with customers, suppliers, and employees

Several businesses also noted the value of receiving fast responses to their inquiries to project staff. Also, for larger projects, such as the ROC 52 reconstruction in Rochester, business representatives noted value in being able to provide feedback regarding the effectiveness of the public outreach efforts, and seeing the outreach approach change based on the feedback.

The Highway 65/County Road 14 interchange project in Blaine offers an excellent example of both adapting outreach and demonstrating responsiveness to the business community's needs. As described in the Case Study below, representative government agencies worked cooperatively with businesses to not only implement a cohesive business marketing plan and outreach effort, but to also engage with specific individuals easily identified as business community members to moderate discussions and represent business interests. This responsiveness to business needs has resulted in creative methods to mitigate construction impacts and complete the project on schedule.

Case Study: Highway 65/County Road 14 Interchange Project (Blaine, MN)

Work on the interchange at Highway 65 and County Road 14 began in March 2008 and was completed in August 2008. The interchange—which was completed through a partnership between Anoka County, the City of Blaine, and Mn/DOT—was the second of three phases that will ultimately convert a section of Highway 65 to a freeway. The third phase remains underway at the time of this report publication.

Prior to implementation of improvements, the intersection of Highway 65 and County Road 14 was one of the most congested and dangerous intersections in Minnesota. Existing and planned development (including retail development) along Highway 65 was expected to add additional congestion to an already congested corridor.

Construction of the interchange required closing and detouring County Road 14 traffic for several months. However, access was maintained to all businesses and detours were signed to allow drivers to reach their intended destinations. The Highway 65/County Road 14 interchange project provides an excellent example of successful coordination with the business community before and during a construction project. Highlights of the business outreach program are provided below:

A Unique Partnership of Business and Community

Early in project development, one business representative and member of the MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce became very engaged in project planning. This person was invited to participate in Mn/DOT and other agency discussions about the project. He served as the "eyes and ears" of the business community. Project features were explained to him and he in turn told project designers what he heard from a business owners' perspective. The relationship building fostered by this collaboration resulted in his serving as a public meeting moderator and reinforced the business community's role as a part of the project development process.

Another business owner seized the opportunity to initiate a marketing campaign on behalf of affected businesses. Her leadership resulted in a formalized organization of project partners that included area businesses, the MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce, and the city of Blaine. Each of the three groups contributed funding toward a collective advertising and marketing campaign fund to last through project construction.

The Anoka County Transportation Management Organization (TMO) was also an important partner in the business coordination effort. The Anoka TMO has provided staff time, agency coordination, and informational handouts throughout project construction to maintain awareness of the project activities.

Coordinated Marketing Plan

The joint advertising fund was used to develop the "Heart of Blaine" brand for the area businesses. The "Heart of Blaine" advertising campaign relied on businesses cross-marketing with each other during construction; this included promotions that offered prizes for patronage at business in the Heart of Blaine. The campaign also included sending out project updates to community residents and businesses via postcards and e-mails. These updates not only provided information to the community, but also armed businesses with information that they could distribute to their own clients, employees, and suppliers.

Case Study (Continued): Highway 65/County Road 14 Interchange Project (Blaine, MN)

Project Web Sites Offer Continual Project Updates

Mn/DOT and the City of Blaine developed project web sites that link to each other to take advantage of each agency's resources for project information and updates. The Mn/DOT site offers an opportunity to sign up for automatic e-mail notifications of project news, a list of project contacts (at Mn/DOT and other project partners), along with detailed information about the project background and stages. The Blaine web site includes similar project overview information, but notably includes an "Open for Business" link to help locate businesses in the project area with business phone number and web site information provided.

Leverage Existing Tools and Practices for Business Communications

Through current project development processes, Mn/DOT accumulates information that is useful to businesses in developing and implementing plans to operate during construction. Existing Mn/DOT tools and practices can be re-packaged into a project information packet that provides businesses with project information—including anticipated impacts to traffic, access, and parking—so that they are able to more effectively operate during construction. Elements of a business information packet must include:

- Information regarding the nature, extent, timing, and duration of planned construction—this includes changes in parking, traffic, and public access in the project area
- Information about how businesses can contact Mn/DOT staff throughout the project regarding construction progress and timing
- A listing of area business development organizations that can assist businesses with financing, marketing, and technical counseling during the construction period

In addition to the required information listed above, information packets should be tailored to unique project descriptions. Mn/DOT staff may also consider including an educational piece explaining why the project is being done (e.g., to address safety, demand, etc.), so that businesses are more likely to see a project benefit.

Based on the ability of Mn/DOT to use existing tools and practices to improve communications with businesses, there is not a need for any legislation to improve this process. However, Mn/DOT will update public involvement guidance, including the *Hear Every Voice* document, to specifically address business communications within the project development process. This step will ensure that Mn/DOT staff is consistently applying the same set of considerations to projects, while also being allowed flexibility to respond to unique project circumstances.

Challenges

Some transportation agency staff noted they had had difficulty with obtaining complete, accurate, and cost-effective business contact information—particularly with tenant-based businesses. Most of the transportation agency staff noted that they rely on tax records. Other sources of this information included chambers of commerce, local business groups, and going door-to-door to collect this information. Experiences from the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit project provide an example (see the Case Study below) of the challenges agency staff face when trying to determine the appropriate owner/operator contact information.

Case Study: Central Corridor LRT (St. Paul & Minneapolis, MN)

Difficulty Obtaining Complete, Accurate, and Cost-effective Business Contact Data

The Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project will link the downtowns of St. Paul and Minneapolis, with construction anticipated to begin in 2010 with service in 2014. The 11-mile line will serve the University of Minnesota, Midway businesses and neighborhoods and the Capitol area.

The corridor is home to 2,500 businesses, of which 1,300 are directly on University Avenue; therefore business outreach was determined to be of great importance. One of the first tasks undertaken by the Central Corridor's outreach team was to develop a business operator database. This data needed to include complete and accurate business contact information, and be available at a cost within the team's budget. Ultimately, the task took the outreach team one year to complete; the effort was considerably more difficult and time consuming than originally anticipated, for the following reasons:

- *Utility companies, which have access to the most complete data for both property owners and tenants, would not share the information with the Metropolitan Council.*
- *High cost data bases offered 2005 information. One source estimates that about 5% of businesses turn over every year, meaning that the data was outdated. Given the cost and the accuracy of the data, the Council chose not to make this investment.*
- *Data from the Secretary of State (SOS) is accurate, but only for businesses with current annual filings. SOS business data can be queried by address, however, many businesses list addresses that do not match the physical business address. For instance, chain or franchise locations are listed under headquarters addresses; or businesses list a home or different address.*
- *Property tax databases provided a list of property owners but not tenants. A survey conducted by the Metropolitan Council showed that 58% of the businesses lease space, meaning that their contact information would not be in the property tax information.*
- *The Council requested that property owners share project information with their tenants, which some did by including information with monthly bills. Project outreach staff discovered that some property owners were hesitant to share project information with tenants, especially if a lease was up. These owners were worried that tenant business owners would not renew a lease if they learned about the project.*

Ultimately, the outreach team stitched together a business contact database by starting with the property tax database and cross referencing it with free business data which was downloaded from a research website. Staff then went door-to-door to fill in the blanks and make corrections to the contact data that had been compiled. Recently, a mailing sent by outreach staff resulted in about 10% of the envelopes being returned to outreach staff. Maintenance of the business database will be an ongoing issue for the Central Corridor outreach team.

Recommendations and Implementation

Mn/DOT has the vision of "A coordinated transportation network that meets the needs of Minnesota's citizens and businesses for safe, timely, and predictable travel." In this regard, Mn/DOT is committed to improving its work and coordination with small businesses. Providing businesses with the opportunity to understand potential project impacts and the resources to plan for mitigating those impacts is fundamental to the success of achieving Mn/DOT's vision for Minnesotans.

As a result of the work in developing this report, Mn/DOT makes the following overarching recommendations:

1. Small business outreach must be emphasized as an integral part of a broader public participation process.

While greater emphasis on business outreach is necessary, the outreach must be conducted as part of an integrated public outreach program. Businesses and their surrounding communities rely upon each other—only when the potential impacts to each are communicated broadly can an appreciation of their need for support be developed.

2. Mn/DOT has the tools, practices, and relationships in place to assist small businesses—they need to be better leveraged with consistent and rigorous application through the entire project development process.

Programs such as *Hear Every Voice* offer training for Mn/DOT and its project development/construction partners to be sensitive to the needs of the public. Revisions to the *Hear Every Voice* program will be made to place greater emphasis on the mitigation of impacts to small businesses.

3. Important business issues need to be identified early in project development.

Once identified, Mn/DOT will identify appropriate agency (Mn/DOT and non-Mn/DOT) project contacts and decision-makers to ensure their involvement at the proper time. By doing so, Mn/DOT's commitments for mitigation activities will be implemented as intended. A project manager checklist will be used to guide this process. This checklist will also be used by transportation agency staff to initiate the following activities:

a. Consultation with local units of government and business community representatives to identify businesses surrounding the project, potential impacts to small businesses (e.g., parking, traffic, and access), and to discuss potential mitigation measures;

b. Development of a packet for businesses that will include project information (e.g., nature, extent, and timing of construction and

anticipated changes in parking, traffic, and public access), a transportation agency project contact; and

c. Determine a list of project-specific area business development organizations that may offer support and resources to affected businesses. This determination will be completed with assistance from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. Appendix D provides a sample list of resources that may be available to businesses impacted by transportation projects.

4. Identify opportunities for partnership with a greater depth of resources, including economic development offices, dynamic local business leaders, or local government agencies.

Every project has unique technical issues but also unique human resources, personalities, and organizations. Taking advantage of the ideas, services, and relationships that these resources can offer will help businesses manage the challenges of construction. Besides offering greater knowledge of site-specific issues, their presence often serves as a moderating force in public outreach that enables a shared understanding of project impacts. The Lake Street Reconstruction project offers and example of how this can work (see the Case Study below).

Case Study: Lake Street Reconstruction Project (Minneapolis, MN)

In 2004, Hennepin County Public Works contracted with the non-profit Minneapolis Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD) to provide mitigation assistance for small businesses impacted by the multi-year reconstruction of Lake Street.

MCCD is an association of community development organizations committed to expanding the wealth and resources of neighborhoods, partially through economic development initiatives. MCCD and a group of its members, including African Development Center and Latino Economic Development Center, had existing relationships with many of the businesses along the corridor and were committed to supporting them through the project.

MCCD augmented its Hennepin County contract with additional public and private funding in order to support the work of its Community Outreach Coordinator. In partnership with the area's business association, the Lake Street Council (LSC), the Outreach Coordinator assisted businesses to prepare for the start of the construction in the spring of 2005. Because the Coordinator was bilingual in Spanish and English, she was able to work with the more than 40 Latino-owned businesses located in the Lake Street project's initial phase.

Prior to the start of construction, the Coordinator helped organize a survey of Lake Street area businesses. The survey results pointed out business concerns about need for marketing assistance, signage and off-street parking. After the start of construction, the Coordinator helped inform businesses about the weekly project update meetings conducted by Hennepin County staff and its construction contractor.

MCCD, in partnership with LSC and Hennepin County staff, helped area businesses access some shared public parking for their customers on several privately-owned lots. The multi-agency group also provided some customized marketing assistance for individual businesses so these businesses could keep their customers apprised of access routes during the construction period, when one lane of traffic in each direction was kept open. Using its own loan fund, MCCD was also able to provide some small cash flow loans for businesses that experienced a temporary drop in revenues during the construction period.

Starting in 2006, construction mitigation services were transitioned from MCCD to LSC. LSC has continued to work with Lake Street area businesses affected by the more recent phases of the County reconstruction project.

5. Enhance engagement of the construction contractor as an important resource for business communication and relationships.

The construction contractor offers a tremendous resource that can positively or adversely affect the effectiveness of business outreach. As a result of their visibility in the construction area, contractors oftentimes become the face of a project in the eyes of the public. Mn/DOT will more consistently work with contractors on a project-by-project basis to ensure that contractors are aware of this dynamic. Transportation agency staff may consider including contract provisions related to contractor participation or communication in projects where small businesses will be impacted. This may include a requirement that the contractor provide a business liaison to communicate with business operators and resolve issues on a regular basis (e.g. weekly) or as need may arise.

6. Review policies for signing in construction zones.

Mn/DOT will review policies regarding signing for businesses or business districts in construction zones. Appropriate signing can benefit businesses but, at the same time, good signing practices must be maintained (for example, drivers can be overwhelmed with information from too many signs, spaced frequently). Signing practices that can be considered should be documented as well as those that should not be used. A clear policy will help ensure that any signing proposals discussed early in the project development process are feasible and can be implemented during construction.

7. Evaluate the effectiveness of small business outreach activities.

Mn/DOT will regularly review business outreach efforts on a project-by-project basis and apply lessons learned to future projects. Mn/DOT will use its *Hear Every Voice* Initiative Team to begin this process and establish a long-term evaluation approach.

Implementation Opportunities

Update the Hear Every Voice program

As described on the Mn/DOT public involvement web site,[1] "Engaging the public is no longer optional. It is the way transportation departments must do business – now and into the future." With a recent update ("Phase II") to the entire *Hear Every Voice* program, Mn/DOT has affirmed its commitment to the program. Based on early feedback and the reviews of its *Hear Every Voice* Initiative Team, Mn/DOT is planning additional refinements to its public involvement program with the inclusion of additional training modules and expanded offerings for Mn/DOT staff and external partners (e.g., consultants, other agencies, and contractors).

Incorporate a Business Outreach into Mn/DOT's *Hear Every Voice Initiative*

- Mn/DOT was updating the agency's *Hear Every Voice* program at the time of this report's publication.
- One of the proposed new modules is dedicated to the topic of small businesses.
- The findings of this report will feed into the development of a new module for small business outreach.

At the time of this report's publication, one of the proposed new modules for *Hear Every Voice* is dedicated to the topic of Small Businesses. The findings of this report will feed into the development of this new module.

Implementation of a Project Manager's Checklist

Included in this report is a Project Manager's Checklist for use in Mn/DOT project development (see Appendix E). The checklist provides an inventory of the steps to be taken to account for the interests of small businesses surrounding the proposed construction project. Besides reminding project managers of the need to consider business impacts, the checklist also offers an opportunity to document business outreach actions, the commitments that have been made, and plans for following through on business outreach before, during, and after construction.

Conduct an Initiative Study to Assess the Requirements of Small Business Outreach

Mn/DOT District 6, covering southwestern Minnesota, will be reviewing business outreach needs during the 2009 construction season. The findings from this initiative study may be used to update previous editions of business outreach materials, such as the draft *How to Thrive during Road Construction* workbook that is being developed by District staff. This workbook includes tips and tools aimed to assist businesses operate and thrive during construction, and is included in Appendix F.

District 6 is also exploring the possibility of assigning a community relations person to function as a single point of contact for stakeholders throughout the duration of a project. Immediately, these initiatives will be applied to

[1] The Hear Every Voice web site may be found at: http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/publicinvolvement/

larger District 6 projects that are soon entering the construction phase. The initiative will also be applied to larger projects entering the scoping phase.

Once complete, the outcomes of the initiative will be assessed. Ultimately, this effort will provide Mn/DOT Districts further guidance and experience for the implementation of business outreach programs that allow variability based on the unique needs and available resources within each District.

Continue to Recognize the Construction Contractor as a Business Outreach Provider

Mn/DOT has successfully worked with construction contractors to partner in conducting business outreach. The methods that have been employed to use contractors in outreach have varied, including requiring design-build contractors to include a public relations firm on the team. For continued use of the contractor on outreach activities, the best opportunity to ensure their success is at the "pre-construction meeting." This meeting is held between Mn/DOT and the contractor after they are selected, but before construction begins. Including the whole team (i.e. include contractor's sub-contractors) in the meeting will provide a shared understanding of the project business concerns and methods to be used in outreach. Future enhancements to the *Hear Every Voice* program could include a standard reference guide for covering business outreach issues at the pre-construction meeting.

Costs of Implementation

The table below provides estimated costs for common business outreach activities. Costs for certain services and products can vary considerably through for various markets throughout the state; also, project needs vary considerably, also causing variability in costs.

Table 2. Business Outreach Activities & Estimated Costs

Outreach Activity	Range of Estimated Costs
Face-to-face communication	Variable—agency and/or consulting staff labor
Telephone calls	Variable—agency and/or consulting staff labor
Mailings—Postcards (including printing)	$0.20-$0.30 per card
Mailings—Newsletter, black & white printing	$0.50-$0.75 one page
Advertising—Newspaper	$100-$1,000 per ad
Project Website	$3,000-$4,000 per site per year
On-line Survey Tool (e.g., Survey Monkey)	$200 per year for subscription
Full-time Public Information Staff Person	$4,000-$5,000 per week

Experience from the Advisory Committee on past projects indicates that public involvement costs account for 0.7-0.9 % of the total project costs, including construction.

Appendix A—2008 Legislation

Contents:

CHAPTER 308--S.F.No. 3669

An act

relating to transportation; requiring report on mitigating effects of transportation construction projects on small businesses.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. **REPORT ON MITIGATION OF TRANSPORTATION CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS.**

(a) The commissioner of transportation shall submit a report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the senate and house of representatives committees with jurisdiction over transportation policy and finance and over economic development policy and finance that proposes a plan targeted at small businesses as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 645.445, subdivision 2, that are impacted by transportation construction projects.

(b) The report must include, but not be limited to:

(1) identification of methods and techniques for informing small businesses about upcoming transportation construction projects;

(2) a description of components of an information packet for businesses, which includes:

(i) the nature, extent, and timing of planned construction, including anticipated changes in parking, traffic, and public access in the area;

(ii) identification of a contact within the appropriate road authority that can provide information about construction progress and timing; and

(iii) a listing of area business development organizations that can assist businesses with financing, marketing, and technical counseling during the construction period;

(3) recommendations for opportunities and possible legislation to further assist small businesses impacted by transportation construction projects, including a process for consultation, before a transportation construction project begins, between the commissioner and local units of government to deal with parking, traffic, and access concerns of small businesses that will be impacted by the project; and

(4) the cost of implementing the program described in the report.

(c) In preparing the report, the commissioner shall consult with the commissioner of employment and economic development, the Metropolitan Council, counties, cities, and community organizations, including a metropolitan consortium of community developers and local chambers of commerce.

(d) The commissioner of transportation shall submit the report no later than February 15, 2009.

Presented to the governor May 12, 2008
Signed by the governor May 15, 2008, 2:46 p.m.

Appendix B—Hear Every Voice

Contents:

1. Excerpts from Minnesota Department of Transportation's Hear Every Voice Program Documents

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Hear Every Voice: Mn/DOT Public and Stakeholder Participation Guidance

September 2008 - May 2009

Arden Hills Training Center
1900 West County Road I
Shoreview MN, 55126

OBJECTIVES

The "Hear Every Voice: Mn/DOT Public and Stakeholder Participation Guidance" initiative offers state-of-the-art comprehensive curricula and skill building in best practices. Training is supported with online tools and resources to provide "real world" implementation opportunities and achieve maximum efficiency.

CLASSES

Participants are strongly encouraged to take the Core Course #101, Stop the Pain and Increase the Gain: Public Participation and Mn/DOT, prior to attending other classes. All Hear Every Voice classes are based on the foundational concepts presented in the Core Course.

Here are a few of the other courses being planned:

- Designing as if Stakeholders Matter: Engaging Underrepresented Stakeholders
- Productive Advisory Groups
- Setting Expectation with Consultants

Additional course descriptions and schedule appears on reverse side. For more information about the Hear Every Voice initiative or to register for a class please visit http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/publicinvolvement/index.html

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

- Mn/DOT employees
- City, County and MPO staff
- Other transportation partners
- Transportation consultants

MN/DOT GOALS LEADING TO 21ST CENTURY SOLUTIONS TO 21ST CENTURY PROBLEMS

To rebuild public trust and confidence in Mn/DOT and the transportation community as a whole to 21st century problems.

To make sure the decisions we make in the future are really being responsive to public values.

To regenerate a spirit of innovation and creativity in the state of Minnesota.

Tom Sorel,
Transportation Commissioner

For more information, contact:
Norm Plasch
Mn/DOT, Office of Technical Support
651-366-4661

For registration information, contact:
Shirley Mueffelman
Continuing Professional Education
University of Minnesota
612-624-4754
cceconf2@umn.edu

University of Minnesota
CTS
Center for Transportation Studies

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Sponsored by the US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration and the Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Technical Support

Hosted by the Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota

Course #	Course Title	Description	Dates:
01	**Introduction to Hear Every Voice**	Understanding the business case for participation	Sept. 15
101	**Stop the Pain and Increase the Gain: Public Participation and Mn/DOT** This is the core course in Mn/DOT's Hear Every Voice initiative.	Productive participation is the result of basic foundational principles and core values guiding the planning and implementation process. Experience how these elements enhance your participation efforts. Core course (#101) is designed as a prerequisite to all other courses.	Sept. 16 & Dec. 16 & Jan. 13, '09
102	**Effective public participation within Mn/DOT: Core Curriculum Overview for Upper Management**	Effective public participation within Mn/DOT Mn/DOT Commissioner and Management Team, by invitation	Oct. 22
201	**Minimize Risk: How to Determine the Need for and Level of Participation**	Answer questions such as: How much participation is enough? How is that determined? What kind of participation is appropriate?	Oct. 14 & Jan. 14, '09
202	**Plan to Achieve: How to Design an Effective Participation Plan**	Learn and apply a proven planning process. Discover tools and strategies for increased efficiency.	Oct. 15 & Jan. 15, 09
203	**How to Successfully Engage Non-Traditional Stakeholders**	Explore effective strategies for involving non-traditional groups. Expand understanding of unique needs of under-represented populations.	Oct. 29 & Feb. 5, '09
301	**Overview and Selection of Participation Tools & Techniques**	Explore a wide variety of tools & techniques to engage participants. Learn how to select tools & techniques that can achieve your goals – and which may be counter-productive	Oct. 28
302	**Improving Participation Meetings**	There will always be meetings. Learn how to enhance meeting effectiveness and various meeting techniques such as World Café and Open Space.	Nov. 18
303	**Productive Advisory Groups**	Stakeholder, public officials and/or technical advisory groups are frequently used tools that under achieve. Learn how to improve the productivity of advisory groups	Nov. 17
304	**Participation Over Time and Distance**	Projects that take years and initiatives in which a major segment of the stakeholders are physically distant present unique participation challenges. Explore best practices to enhance participation in these instances.	Nov. 19
401	**Enhancing Your Personal Communications with Participants**	Understand participants' needs for communication and improve our ability to convey and receive messages.	Dec. 17

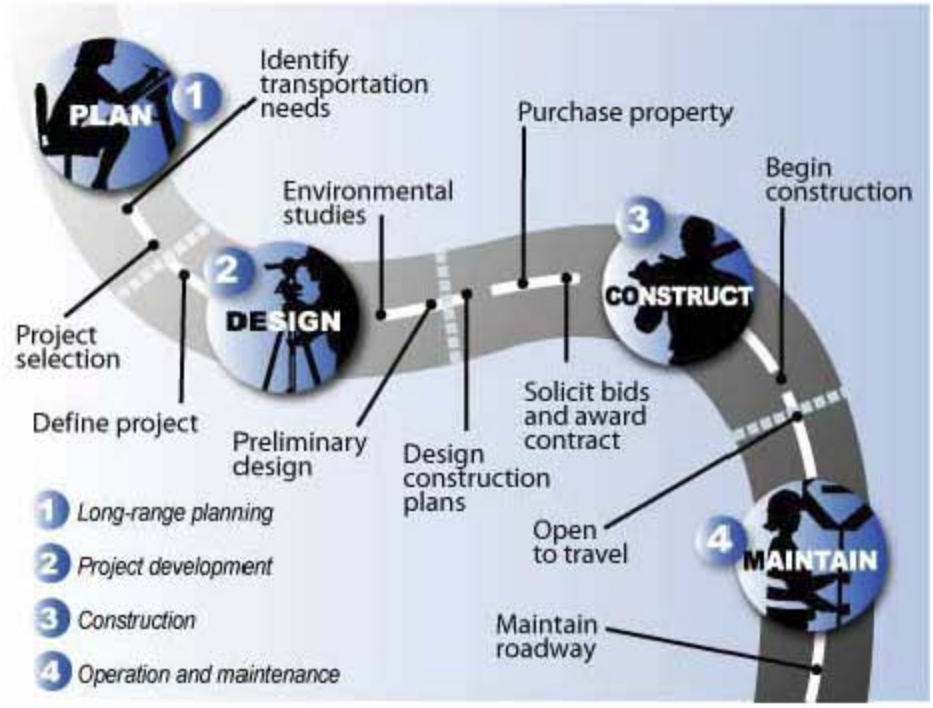
Hear Every Voice
Part II

Project Development

Public involvement must happen at every stop along the road

Stakeholder consultation and public involvement play an integral role in Mn/DOT's decision-making processes at every step of a project from planning to project maintenance and operations. In order to fulfill the department's mission, Mn/DOT is committed to involving members of the public throughout the state in the development and implementation of its plans and programs. In order to "hear every voice," Mn/DOT's stakeholder consultation and public involvement processes must be:

- appropriate
- accessible
- transparent
- accountable
- meaningful
- inclusive of the state's diverse population



Planning

Minnesota transportation planning helps identify the needs and potential responses to providing a statewide transportation system. Planning sets into motion subsequent

spending allocations and determines what transportation projects and initiatives will be addressed within a predetermined timeframe.

Mn/DOT must involve members of the public throughout the state in the development and implementation of its plans and programs. This participation encourages the development of a joint vision for transportation shared by stakeholders, the public and Mn/DOT.

Objectives of participation in planning:

- To reach out to Minnesota's diverse population and stakeholders to gather input and communicate Mn/DOTs understanding of issues and needs.
- To educate stakeholders and the public about Mn/DOTs planning process and the status of the state's transportation system and resources.
- To gain external and internal information that will aid in setting policies and priorities based on the needs and desires of our customers/stakeholders.
- To fully comply with stakeholder consultation and public involvement requirements identified in state or federal law, rules or regulations.

Who is responsible for stakeholder consultation and public involvement?

Generally, the organization that has the responsibility for the transportation facility and/or is the lead agency within a partnership holds the responsibility for participation.

Examples:
Mn/DOT's Office Aeronautics does not own or maintain any airports. Airports are usually owned by a local unit of government or privately. While Aeronautics provides services and support, it is the owner's responsibility to conduct participation and meet federal requirements.

Major Plans

1. Mn/DOT public involvement policy and directions are based on Mn/DOT's over-arching Mn/DOT Strategic Plan that sets the direction for subsequent plans. Mn/DOT's vision and mission as stated in the Strategic Plan is to focus on priority transportation improvements and investments that result in a transportation system that helps Minnesotans travel safer, smarter and more efficiently.

2. The 20-year Statewide Transportation Plan establishes the policies and performance measures required to implement the Strategic Plan. The commitment to involve the public is expressed in Policy 9 of the 2003 Minnesota Statewide Transportation Plan, which states Mn/DOT's policy is to "Inform,

Involve and Educate All Potentially Affected Stakeholders in Transportation Plans and Investment Decision Processes."

The following outcome statements are identified for this policy.

- Mn/DOT will proactively seek early and continuing public input and involvement so as to be responsive and accountable to its stakeholders.
- Mn/DOT will listen to its customers and respond with accurate, timely information upon which they can rely. Mn/DOT will be a trusted source of information.
- Customers will understand Mn/DOT's roles, processes and priorities, and will have access to information about Mn/DOT's projects and activities.

3. Identification of system and service deficiencies, improvements and opportunities are identified in several plans including:
    - Local plans specific to metropolitan planning organizations and regional development commissions, tribal governments and other local plans.
    - Mn/DOT district long-range plans
    - Interregional corridor management plans
    - Modal plans (freight, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, motor carrier and aeronautics)
    - Other state long-range improvement plans (e.g. Strategic Highway Safety Plan, Highway Systems Operation Plan, Statewide Heavy Vehicle Safety Plan and the ITS Safety Plan).

Planning Framework

Every major planning effort should:

- Establish early and continuous stakeholder consultation and public involvement opportunities;
- Provide timely information about transportation issues and decision-making processes to stakeholders,
- Provide the appropriate level of stakeholder involvement in the planning process.

The planning framework ensures that essential levels of stakeholder consultation and public involvement approaches are developed and tailored to the complexities of the project.

The approach is consistent with each type of plan. The strategies for stakeholder consultation and public involvment vary according to the type and scope of the plan/project and any unique applicable requirements.

The Tools and Resources section offers guidance regarding all components of outreach including Stakeholder Identification, Levels of Consultation and Involvement, Tribal Consultation, and Techniques such as visualization, electronic formats, public notices and meetings.

*****

Approval of Work/Scope by Senior Management

Every major plan must have a documented stakeholder consultation/public involvement process. The process is integrated into the overall plan.

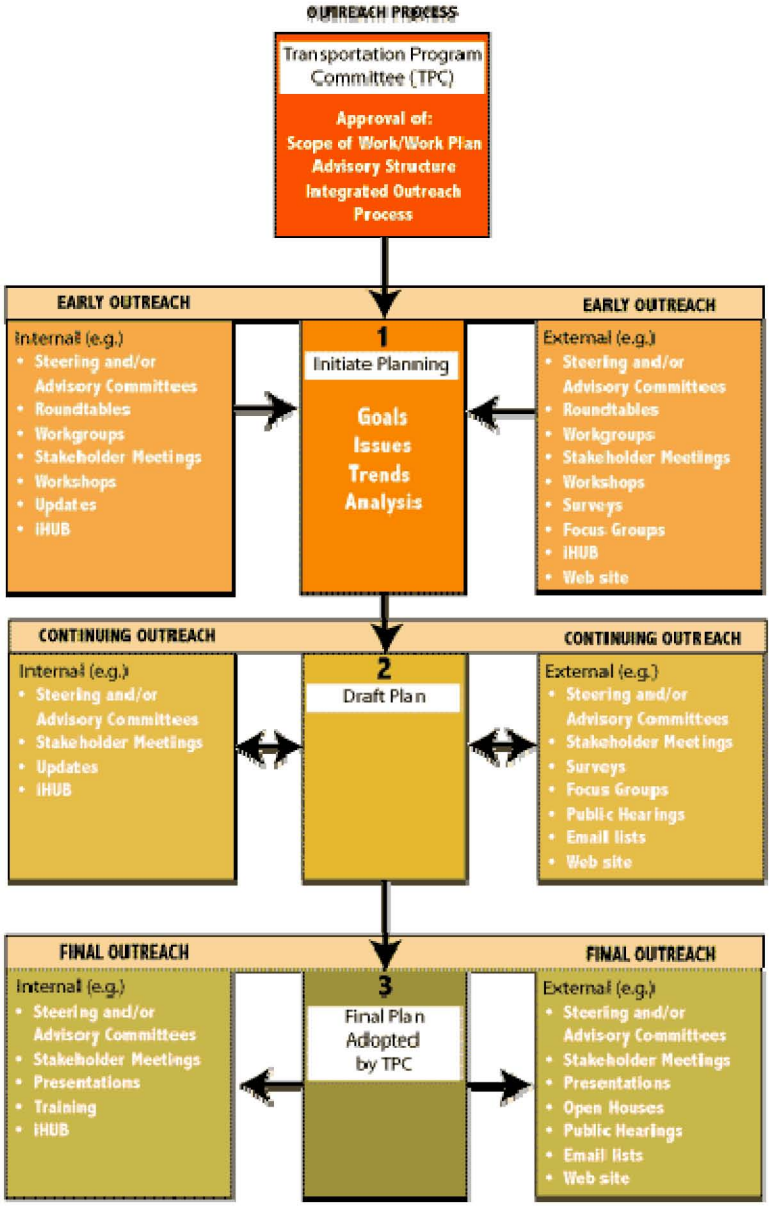
The scope of work, advisory structure and stakeholder consultation and public involvement process of any major plan requires Mn/DOT senior management approval.

Any major plan that will use funds from the State Road Construction budget requires the approval of Mn/DOT's Transportation Program Committee as outlined in Mn/DOT's Policy Guidelines for Plan Development/Approval Process Memorandum dated November 3, 2006. The TPC consists of Mn/DOT's division directors, district engineers and deputy commissioner.

*****

Stakeholder Consultation and Public Involvement Process Framework – The general stakeholder consultation and public involvement process framework indicates internal and external outreach efforts scheduled according to three milestones: project initiation, draft plan and final plan. *Outreach* indicates receipt of information and/or some level of participation.

Planning Framework



Plan Initiation

The first major stakeholder consultation effort is undertaken early in the planning process. This outreach (participation) effort is designed to solicit input from internal and external stakeholders at the beginning of the planning effort. Thus, allowing the input to influence the direction and focus of the planning process as well as the plan outcomes. This first outreach effort is primarily an opportunity for Mn/DOT to listen to stakeholder concerns and issues.

Draft Plan

The second major stakeholder and public involvement outreach (participation) effort follows the completion and presentation of the draft plan. It is a two-way conversation between Mn/DOT and stakeholders. It provides Mn/DOT the opportunity to communicate:

- findings from the early outreach effort,
- subsequent trend and data analyses, and
- draft recommendations.

The effort also affords stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the elements and recommendations of the draft plan, making the continuing outreach phase a two-way dialogue between Mn/DOT and stakeholders.

Final Plan

The third major stakeholder and public outreach effort occurs after revisions to the draft plan are made based on input from the previous outreach phase and the final plan is presented. The final outreach (participation) phase communicates to stakeholders what is in the final plan and how previous input influenced and shaped the final plan.

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Outreach Pathways & Responsibilities

Under SAFETEA-LU, five levels of outreach Spectrum of Participation Levels are identified. Outreach is described by the following Spectrum of Participation Levels - of communication and participation.

1. *Inform* – to provide objective, balanced information to assist the public in understanding issues, planning and program efforts.

2. *Consider* – to take into account opinions, actions or information from others.

3. *Consult* – to confer periodically and consider each other's views prior to acting and report actions afterward.

4. *Cooperate* – Work together to achieve a common goal or objective.

5. *Coordinate* – Compare plans, programs & schedules, and adjust them for general consistency.

Requirements for minimum outreach activity directed toward specific types of stakeholders are also provided by SAFETEA-LU. For details see, Identified Stakeholders & SAFETEA-LU Levels of Outreach.

Area Transportation Partnerships (ATPs) are a means of:

- considering transportation improvement recommendations and
- Recommending to the District Engineer an integrated list of transportation investments.

The ATPs also serve as a forum for information exchange among transportation partners and to foster a climate of cooperation, coordination, and partnership efforts.

Members of the ATPs are determined by each group and may include:

- Representatives of the district and transportation partners within the ATP, including representatives of non-metropolitan local governments.
- MPO executive directors are required to serve on the District/ATP (where applicable), and
- Tribal governments are provided the opportunity to be represented on the ATP.

The unique ATP process, provides a forum for coordination and cooperation among representatives from non-metropolitan area, MPOs, tribal governments, and Mn/DOT.

Market Research provides information to better understand and respond to its customers. Customers of the transportation system include:

- The general public,
- Freight shippers and generators,
- Bicyclists,
- Transit users, etc. and
- Discrete market segments based on how they use the transportation system.

Mn/DOT's market research helps Mn/DOT work with its stakeholders to provide the right products and services to end users.

Tribal Consultation responds to the unique sovereign status of federally recognized Tribes by:

- Respecting the cultural values of the eleven (11) American Indian tribes of Minnesota,
- Committing to the strengthening the Government-to-Government Relationship between the State of Minnesota and Indian Tribal Governments located within the State.

Mn/DOT has established and staffed the Advocacy Council for Tribal Transportation (ACTT) to discuss roadway policy and devise a cohesive plan for roadways on or near Indian Reservations.

Membership includes:

- 11 Minnesota tribes,
- The Minnesota Department of Transportation,
- The Federal Highway Administration,
- Bureau of Indian Affairs,
- The Michigan TTAP,
- Minnesota Indian Affairs Council and
- MN Counties and cities.

The ACTT provides a forum for Mn/DOT and tribal consultation.

Each District also periodically meets with Tribal representatives of tribes located in their area.

An annual Tribes and Transportation Conference provides opportunities for information sharing and consultation.

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Final Plan Approval/Adoption

The internal process of Mn/DOT review and approval occurs throughout the planning process at key milestones.

The Commissioner's approval of the final plan, where required, follows the recommendation of Senior Mn/DOT Management.

For major plans implemented through funding from the State Road Construction Budget, the TPC will serve as the Mn/DOT authority for final plan approval and adoption (where the Commissioner's approval is not required).

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Engineering Services Division
Technical Memorandum No. 06-19-TS-07
October 17, 2006

To: Distribution 57, 612, 618, and 650

From: Acting Division Director
Engineering Services

Subject: Design Policy – "Design Excellence through Context Sensitive Design and Solutions"

Expiration
This Technical Memorandum supersedes Technical Memorandum 00-24-TS-03 and will remain in effect until October 17, 2011, or until the guidance is fully incorporated into the Mn/DOT Road Design Manual and Highway Project Development Process.

Implementation
This policy will only apply to Trunk Highways (not State Aid routes) and is effective immediately.

Introduction (A Tradition of Design Excellence)
The 20-year Minnesota Statewide Transportation Plan articulates 10 policies that support Mn/DOT's Strategic Directions. In alignment with Mn/DOT's Strategic Direction to "Make Mn/DOT Work Better", Policy 10 is "Protect the Environment and Respect Community Values". Mn/DOT has a tradition of context-sensitive planning, design, construction and operation of transportation facilities that become a source of community pride and enhance the economic vitality of the state. In recognition of this tradition of context-sensitivity, FHWA designated Mn/DOT as one of 5 "pilot states" charged with the responsibility to help advance the understanding and application of the philosophy and principles of Context Sensitive Design and Solutions nationwide. While many of Mn/DOT's program and project accomplishments have been recognized nationally and internationally, it is important to articulate Mn/DOT's policy, principles, and approach in regards to the implementation of Context Sensitive Design and Solutions (CSD&S).

Purpose ("Design Excellence through Context Sensitive Design and Solutions")
The purpose of this tech memo is to articulate Mn/DOT's project development philosophy and design policy within the changing context of what society expects of public agencies in fulfilling their mission. It is Mn/DOT's policy to use a "context-sensitive" approach to create excellence in transportation project development - an approach that incorporates flexibility within design standards, safety measures, environmental stewardship, visual quality, and community sensitive planning and design.

Guidelines (Context Sensitive Design and Solutions (CSD&S))

CSD&S can be defined as the simultaneous balancing and advancement of the objectives of safety and mobility with preservation and enhancement of aesthetic, scenic, historic, cultural, environmental, and community values in transportation projects. CSD&S is the art of creating and sustaining transportation public works that satisfy users, stakeholders, and neighboring communities by integrating and balancing projects with the context and setting in a sensitive manner that relies upon broadly-informed planning, consideration of differing values and perspectives, and tailoring of designs and solutions to unique project circumstances. CSD&S uses a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach that includes early and ongoing involvement of key stakeholders to ensure that transportation projects not only perform safely and efficiently, but also in harmony with the natural, social, economic and cultural environment. Effective management of early and ongoing public and stakeholder involvement helps reduce delays, rework cycles, and unnecessary expenditures of time and money and thereby contributes to streamlined and cost-effective project and program delivery.

-MORE-

Principles: (Mn/DOT's CSD&S approach promotes six core principles)

1) Balance safety, mobility, community and environmental goals in all projects
2) Involve the public and affected stakeholders early and continuously
3) Address all modes of travel
4) Use an interdisciplinary team tailored to project needs
5) Apply flexibility inherent in design standards
6) Incorporate visual quality considerations throughout project development

Measures of Success: (Successful projects exhibit the following attributes)

1) Community acceptance
2) Environmental compatibility
3) Engineering and technical functionality
4) Financial feasibility
5) Timeliness of delivery
6) Commitment beyond the project (preserving the investment)

Cost:

The State's cost participation shall be consistent with Mn/DOT's "cost participation policies". Furthermore, it should be recognized that while CSD&S can increase the scope and budget of project costs, CSD&S can also reduce project costs.

Questions

For information on the technical contents of this memorandum, please contact **Scott Bradley, Landscape Architecture Principal Supervisor, (651) 284-3758**.

Any questions regarding publication or distribution of this technical memorandum should be referred to Sophia Wicklund, Design Standards Unit at (651) 296-3190 or Michael Elle, Design Standards Engineer at (651) 296-4859. A link to all active Memoranda and a list of historical Technical Memoranda can be found at http://www.dot.state.mn.us/atoz.html.

-END-

Appendix C—Business Outreach Summary

Contents:

1. Business Assessment Form
2. Business Assessment Results Summary
3. Business Outreach Meetings Summary

Communicating with Small Businesses About Transportation Construction

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) is seeking your input to help understand and mitigate the impacts of transportation construction projects on small businesses. Mn/DOT has identified you as the owner or operator of a business that is near a recently completed or ongoing transportation construction project. Mn/DOT is requesting that you share your experiences of doing business during construction. The information gathered in this survey will help us better understand the needs of small businesses. Improved communications with small businesses before and during transportation construction projects are expected to help reduce impacts of construction to businesses. Thank you for your valuable input.

1. Respondent Information - PROVIDING CONTACT INFORMATION IS OPTIONAL. Personal and business names, email addresses, phone numbers and addresses (with the exception of zip codes) provided in responses to this survey are classified as private or non-public and will not be shared publicly. (Minn Stat.13.72 subd 14).

Name:

Business Name:

Title:

Address:

City/Town:

State:

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email:

Phone:

A. GENERAL BUSINESS INFORMATION

2. Business type:

- ◯ Retail
- ◯ Services
- ◯ Wholesale/Distribution
- ◯ Manufacturing
- ◯ Construction
- ◯ Other

If other, please specify

3. How many employees work at this location?

Full time:

Part time:

4. Do you lease or own your business space?

◯ Lease ◯ Own

5. How long have you been at your current location?

- ◯ 0-2 years
- ◯ 6-10 years
- ◯ 3-5 years
- ◯ 11+ years

EFFECTS OF CONSTRUCTION ON BUSINESS

6. Which of the following transportation construction projects has recently taken or is taking place near your business?

- ◯ TH 36 Reconstruction - Maplewood & North St. Paul
- ◯ TH 2 Major Reconstruction east of TH 38 - Grand Rapids
- ◯ TH 2 Resurfacing west of TH 38 - Grand Rapids
- ◯ La Crescent Highway Construction Project (Highways 16/61)
- ◯ TH 65/TH 242/CSAH 14 Freeway Upgrade - Blaine and Ham Lake
- ◯ TH 10 - Detroit Lakes
- ◯ Crosstown, I-35W and Diamond Lake Road - Minneapolis
- ◯ Lake Street Reconstruction - Minneapolis
- ◯ Other (please specify)

* 7. Was your business impacted by the transportation construction project?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

EFFECTS OF CONSTRUCTION ON BUSINESS, CONT'D.

8. Please indicate how your business was impacted by the transportation construction project.

BUSINESS LOSS

* 9. Did you experience a loss of business during construction?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

BUSINESS LOSS, CONT'D. 2

10. Please indicate what you believe caused the loss of business during construction. (Please check all that apply):

- [ ] Loss of access
- [ ] Highway/road closures
- [ ] Ramp closures
- [ ] Detours
- [ ] Less traffic
- [ ] Length of project
- [ ] Lack of signs
- [ ] Poor signs
- [ ] Other

If other, please specify:

CONSTRUCTION BENEFITS

11. Has your business benefited from the results of the transportation construction project?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Project still under construction
- ◯ Too soon to tell

12. If your business has benefited from the construction project, please indicate how.

AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

13. Did you know what government agency was in charge of the transportation project?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

14. Did you have a specific contact at the agency you could contact with questions?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

15. Please indicate any other agencies or organizations you relied on for information about the project.

BUSINESS OPERATIONS DURING CONSTRUCTION

16. For the transportation project near your business, did you have enough information about the following topics?

	Yes	No
Timing or phasing of construction	◯	◯
Length of construction	◯	◯
Changes in parking	◯	◯
Changes in traffic routes	◯	◯
Changes in public access	◯	◯

Please add any other comments

17. Were adequate signs used during construction to direct customers to your business?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

BUSINESS RESPONSE TO CONSTRUCTION

18. At anytime before, during, or after the project, did you coordinate with any of the following groups? (please check all that apply).

	Yes	No
Chamber of commerce	☐	☐
Community development agency	☐	☐
Economic development agency	☐	☐
Marketing/business consultants	☐	☐
Other businesses	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐

If other, please specify:

19. Did you have enough information to develop and implement an effective plan for operating your business during construction?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

20. What actions did you take to better serve your customers during construction?

21. For your business, did your need for information change based on the stage of the project? (e.g., before, during, or after construction)

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Communication Needs

Please answer the following questions based on your experience during a recent transportation construction project to reflect what you would like see happen on future construction projects.

22. What information would you like to receive:

before construction? _____

during construction? _____

after construction? _____

23. How frequently would you like to receive the information about transportation projects taking place near your business?

24. How soon in advance would you like to be notified for a transportation maintenance project (e.g., guardrail repair, crack sealing) or preservation project (e.g., resurfacing, restoration, or rehabilitation)?

- ☐ less than 3 months
- ☐ 3 to 12 months
- ☐ more than 12 months

25. How soon in advance would you like to be notified for a transportation reconstruction or construction project (usually requires new right-of-way)?

- ☐ less than 3 months
- ☐ 3 to 12 months
- ☐ more than 12 months

26. Please indicate how you'd like to receive information about construction projects affecting your business.

- [ ] Newsletters
- [ ] Email notices
- [ ] Public meetings
- [ ] Website updates
- [ ] Discussions with project staff

Other (please specify)

OTHER THOUGHTS

27. Please provide any other thoughts you have about how transportation agencies could better communicate with small business owners before, during, and after construction.

Small Business Assessment Form - Summary of Results		Total # of Surveys =	95
1/20/2009		Totals	% or avg.
	Retail	45	47%
	Services	41	43%
	Wholesale/Distribution	4	4%
	Manufacturing	1	1%
	Construction	3	3%
#2 - Business Type	Other	14	15%
#3- # How many employees work at the location?	# Full time	845	8.9
	# Part time	443	4.7
#4 - Own or lease business business space?	Own	61	64%
	Lease	32	34%
	0-2 yrs	8	8%
	3-5 yrs	3	3%
	6-10 yrs	15	16%
#5 - Length of time at current location?	11+ yrs	51	54%
#7 - Was business Impacted by the transportation construction project?	Business was impacted by transportation construction project.	72	76%
#9 - Experience a loss of business during construction?	Expreienced a loss of business during construction	59	62%
	Loss of access	58	61%
	Highway/road closures	35	37%
	Ramp closures	7	7%
	Detours	31	33%
	Less traffic	35	37%
	Length of project	35	37%
#10 - Indicate what caused loss of	Lack of signs	12	13%
business during construction (check all	Poor signs	12	13%
that apply)	Other	3	3%
	Benefited from Construction	8	8%
#11 - Business benefited from results of	Project still under construction	4	4%
transportation construction project?	Too soon to tell	25	26%
#13 - Know what agency was in charge of the transportation project?	Had knowledge of the government agency in charge of the transportation construction project	52	55%
#14 - Specific contact at the agency that could be contacted with questions?	Specific Contact?	37	39%
	Timing & phasing of construction	54	57%
	Length of project	50	53%
#16 - Did business operator have enough	Changes in parking	41	43%
information about the following topics for	Changes in traffic routes	53	56%
the transportation project near the business?:	Changes in public access	47	49%
#17 - Were adequate signs used during construction to direct customers to business?	Adequate signs to direct Customer?	28	29%

Small Business Assessment Form - Summary of Results		Total # of Surveys =	95
1/20/2009		Totals	% or avg.
#18 - Did business person coordinate with any of the following groups at any time (before, during, or after) during the project?	Chamber of commerce	13	14%
	Community development agency	7	7%
	Economic development agency	2	2%
	Marketing/business consultants	5	5%
	Other businesses	25	26%
	Other	6	6%
#19 - Did business person have enough information to develop and implement an effective plan for operating their business during construction?	Enough Info to develop & Implement plan during Const?	53	56%
#21 - Did business person's information needs change based on the stage of the project (e.g., before, during, or after construction)?	Need for info change over time?	35	37%
#24 - How soon in advance would business person like to be notified regarding maintenance projects?	Notification for maintenance - less than 3 months	42	44%
	3 to 12 months	40	42%
	more than 12 months	3	3%
#25 - How soon in advance would business person like to be notified regarding transportation reconstruction or construction projects?	Notification for reconstruction/const - less than 3 months	17	18%
	3 to 12 months	37	39%
	more than 12 months	34	36%
#26 - Preference for receiving information about construction projects affecting business.	Receive info by Newsletter	57	60%
	Email notices	37	39%
	Public Meetings	31	33%
	Website Updates	11	12%
	Discussions with project staff	25	26%

Community Outreach Meeting Summaries

Rochester Chamber of Commerce – December 5, 2008

ROC52 Design-Build Project in Rochester, MN

Communications

- Good communication practices; started early and lasted throughout the project, included:
  - Daily radio announcements
  - Regular press releases
  - Newsletters
  - 1-800 number
  - Project website
  - Design-Build Contractor hired a public relations firm; PR staff frequently followed-up regarding effectiveness of communications for community members

Coordination with Businesses

- Signs for how to get to specific businesses entrances; moved around as project changed
- Businesses worked together to develop incentives to shop during construction, e.g., Miracle Mile businesses did special sales during construction, in coordination with the Chamber of Commerce
- Some businesses incorporated the ROC 52 project logo into their advertisements
- After construction celebration at Miracle Mile at those business owners success

On the Corridor during Construction

- Changeable message boards
- Good signing of detours
- Lanes were kept open that allowed traffic to flow
- Traffic flow and good access kept people on the corridor during the project
- Highway helper in construction zone
- Speed reduction effort with state troopers at each end

Within the Community

- Reduction of construction period from 11 to 3 ½ years viewed as major benefit
- Community continually saw progress, which made the project more bearable
- Leadership Group that acted as "Project Ambassadors" within the Community
- Project brand and slogan of "We're in this together"
- Constant coordination with Mayo allowed the organization to effectively communicate with staff and patients about changing project conditions
- Contractor education; this project was not to be "business as usual"

Oronoco, MN Design-Build Project (TH 52)

- Why were experiences in Oronoco different than in Rochester? It was difficult to obtain community buy-in about the project; this includes the buy-in of community leaders. Demonstrated the need for broad based community buy-in, not just individual.

Other/Lessons Learned

- Involve the entire community, not just businesses along the corridor
- Coordination with businesses to be affected by construction not always optimal, e.g., sound walls included in the project block business signs; these businesses weren't notified that matter was to be discussed at key project meetings
- Contractor provided incentives for hitting targets; may mean that the low bidder may not be the best selection
- Consider use of new technology when communicating, e.g., use of text messaging
- Get contractor input about the process
- Local governments should be allowed to carry-out design build projects

MetroNorth (Blaine, MN) Chamber of Commerce Focus Group – December 11, 2008

The Highway 65 corridor, specifically the 65/242 interchange project offers a very good case study of how to work with the business community before and during a construction project.

Highway 65/242 Interchange Project

This project is ongoing, with work entering the third phase of a three-phase project. The main interchange along with associated access roads (phases 2 and 1, respectively) are complete. Highway 65 overpasses will be built beginning in 2009.

A Unique Partnership of Business and Community

Early in project development, as the business community was learning of the project, one business owner became very active in planning for the project. This person's leadership resulted in a formalized organization of project partners, to the extent that three groups contributed funds to be used in a consolidated marketing plan. The funding partners included:

1) area businesses
2) MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce
3) City of Blaine (matched the contribution of the Chamber)

Another important partner in the work was the Anoka County Transportation Management Organization (TMO). The Anoka TMO has provided resources and informational handouts throughout project construction to maintain awareness of the project activities.

Coordinated Marketing Plan

Raised funds were used to develop a brand for the area businesses (the "Heart of Blaine") and an advertising campaign that relied on businesses cross-marketing with each other – including promotions that offered prizes for patronage at business in the Heart of Blaine. The active leadership from an affected business owner was a critical driving force for gaining stakeholder buy-in on the efforts.

Postcards and electronic (PDF) documents with project updates were sent to community residents and businesses. These updates not only provided information to the community, but also armed businesses with information that they could distribute to their own clients, employees, and suppliers.

Outreach IN the Project Area

One aspect of success noted by the focus group was the use of affected businesses for project meetings. For instance, one of the restaurants impacted by construction was used for community meetings. For many of the small business owners, it is difficult to dedicate time away from the business to attend project update meetings. Holding meetings near their business was one means to increase accessibility. It was noted by the group that face-to-face communications are sometimes necessary to ensure project information is shared.

Other Lessons Learned

- Signing and visibility is a big concern. One successful outcome was noted where early project information allowed a business to plan for changes to their signing and work with the City of Blaine for the necessary variances to accommodate the signing. The changes were able to be made with no disruption in visibility caused by construction.
- Education about why the project is being done and how businesses can expect to benefit is especially helpful. A "Construction 101" informational guide describing anticipated work and timing and what businesses can generally expect would be helpful.
- Community (e.g. elected officials or community organizations) endorsement of the project is also important for maintaining enthusiasm for the project.
- The construction contractor should be recognized as an important partner in the process. They are closest to the action and are best positioned to notify project stakeholders about changes in schedule or project activities. The contractor also represents a business opportunity for impacted businesses – their patronage at the businesses would generate good will and offer direct information sharing with businesses.
- Getting information out too early, before project details are known, can be risky. On a different project, the project sponsors were planning a median closure. Details about the project were shared with the community as much as two years ahead of the scheduled work. When the project was constructed, many business owners were frustrated by the changes in the final project and associated unanticipated consequences.

Grand Rapids (TH 2) Survey Results

Results from the surveys distributed to Grand Rapids businesses are being compiled. Over thirty surveys have been returned to date, and another 15-20 are expected to arrive.

Initial observations from a review of the surveys indicate the following:

- **Signing and visibility continues to be a central concern** of businesses. In this case, there appears to have been a disconnect between Mn/DOT, the business owners, and the City of Grand Rapids as to what signing mitigations may be available. (Sounds similar to the TH 36 experience in North Saint Paul)
- Many people identified concerns about how contractor equipment or activities disproportionately affected access or parking availability. Some respondents also noted that the contractor served as a valuable source of project information.
- Among the pieces of information that people would like to have is the anticipated length/duration of project construction, and changes to that schedule as they are known.
- Perhaps not a Mn/DOT issue, but some business owners expressed a desire to have received property tax/assessment implications of the project.
- When asked if the project benefitted them, most business owners did not identify any real or perceived benefits of the project.

Appendix D—Business Resources

Contents:

1. Sample list of outside agencies and resources for businesses impacted by transportation construction projects

Small Business Resources

There are a large number of public and private organizations that offer technical, financial, and marketing assistance to small businesses. For a comprehensive list of organizations that assist businesses see the "Resource Directory" section of *A Guide to Starting a Business in Minnesota*, published by the **Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development** (DEED).
http://www.deed.state.mn.us/publications/PDFs/A_Guide_To_STARTING_A_BUSINESS_IN_MINNESOTA_27th_Ed.pdf
DEED can assist businesses and Mn/DOT staff with identifying the most appropriate resources for specific challenges that may arise during a construction project. Contact Madeline Harris, Business Advisor at Madeline.Harris@state.mn.us, 651-259-7474.

A sampling of organizations that offer business financing and technical assistance is provided later in this appendix. Other organizations that may be particularly useful to businesses working through a construction project are summarized below.

Transportation Management Organizations (TMO) are non-profit, member-controlled organizations that provide a forum for employers, developers, business owners, residents, government representatives and others to work together to establish policies, programs and services to address their district's particular transportation issues. Since they are typically public-private partnerships, TMOs can improve the level of communication between the sectors to ensure that community goals are promoted in the most flexible and creative way throughout a transportation improvement project.

The **Minnesota Small Business Assistance Office** (MnSBAO) provides information and assistance in all areas of start-up, operation or expansion. For example, if a business has a transactional question ("what do I need" or "where do I get it?"), this would be a good office to contact. This office has a number of publications that deal with starting a business, business structure issues, tax issues or employment/labor related issues that might arise in the course of construction and would be a good choice for businesses trying to understand and overcome the challenges of running a business. Services of the office are provided on a one-to-one basis without charge to the business. The MnSBAO maintains a database of service resources in the state.

Minnesota Small Business Development Centers (MnSBDC) offer confidential one-on-one business counseling that primarily focuses on assisting existing and growing businesses in the areas of business planning, marketing, E-commerce technology, financial analysis, and loan packaging. Directly and through collaboration with other resource organizations, the MnSBDC program also offers assistance and referrals in areas like regulatory compliance assistance, information technology, exporting, government procurement, and federal research and development opportunities. Counseling is customized to meet the needs of the client, and most of the services are provided without charge. A contact list of MnSBDCs is provided later in this appendix.

The **SCORE** Association is a volunteer business counseling service partnering with the SBA and provides counseling on various topics like business plans, sales and marketing and understanding SBA lending.

1-22-09

Twin Cities area business financing and technical assistance organizations*

ADC
African Development Center
1808 Riverside Avenue, #200
Minneapolis, MN 55454
612/333-4772
www.adcminnesota.org

LEDC
Latino Economic Development Center
1516 East Lake Street, #201
Minneapolis, MN 55407
612-724-5332
www.ledc-mn.org

MEDA
Metropolitan Economic. Development Association.
250 South Second Ave.
Minneapolis MN 55401
612/332-6332
www.meda.net

MCCD
Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers
3137 Chicago Ave. S.
Minneapolis MN 55407
612/789-7337
www.mccdmn.org

NDC
Neighborhood Development Center
663 University Avenue #200
St. Paul MN 55104
651/291-2480
www.ndc-mn.org

WomenVenture
2324 University Ave.
St. Paul MN 55104
651/646-3808
www.womenventure.org

*Individual organizations may target certain client groups and geographical areas.

1-22-09

Greater Minnesota Business Finance and Technical Assistance Organizations

Northwest Minnesota Foundation
4225 Technology Drive NW
Bemidji, MN 56601
800-659-7859
218-759-2057
www.nwmf.org

Northland Foundation
202 West Superior Street, Suite 610
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
(218) 723-4040
www.northlandfdn.org

Northeast Entrepreneur Fund,
8355 Unity Drive, Suite 100
Virginia, MN 55792
218-749-4191
www.entrepreneurfund.org

West Central Initiative
1000 Western Avenue
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
218-739-2239
www.wcifa.org

Initiative Foundation
405 First Street SE
Little Falls, MN 56345
877-632-9255
www.ifound.org

Southwest Initiative Foundation
15 3rd Avenue NW
Hutchinson, MN 55350
320- 587-4848
www.swifoundation.org

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation
525 Florence Avenue
Owatonna, MN 55060
507-455-3215
www.smifoundation.org

Listing of 9 MnSBDC regional offices, and the U.S. Small Business Administration office

Northwest MnSBDC Program
ATTN: Jorge Prince, Regional Director
Bemidji State University
Center for Research and Innovation
3801 Bemidji Avenue North
Bemidji, MN 56601

Central MnSBDC Program
ATTN: Barry Kirchoff, Regional Director
St Cloud State University
616 Roosevelt Road, Suite 100
St. Cloud, MN 56301

Twin Cities Metro Area MnSBDC Program
ATTN: Mike Ryan, Regional Director
University of St. Thomas
Schulze Hall 103
46 South 11th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Southeast MnSBDC Program
ATTN: Michelle Pyfferoen, Regional Director
Rochester Comm. &Tech College
Heintz Center
1926 College View Road
Rochester, MN 55904

Southwest MnSBDC Program
ATTN: Elizabeth Struve, Regional Director
Southwest Minnesota State University
1501 State Street- *ST 201*
Marshall, MN 56258

West Central MnSBDC Program
ATTN: Leonard Sliwoski, Regional Director
Minnesota State University Moorhead
1104 7th Ave. S.
Moorhead, MN 56563

South Central MnSBDC Program
ATTN: Robert Klanderud, Regional Director
Region Nine Development Commission
1961 Premier Drive
Suite 268
Mankato, MN 56001

Northeast MnSBDC Program
ATTN: Elaine Hansen, Regional Director
University of Minnesota Duluth
Center for Economic Development
Duluth Technology Village
11 East Superior St. STE 210
Duluth, MN 55802

North Central MnSBDC Program
ATTN: Greg Bergman, Regional Director
Central Lakes College
Business & Industry Center
501 West College Drive
Brainerd, MN 56401

Mr. Andy Amoroso
SBDC Project Officer
U.S. Small Business Administration
Minnesota District Office
100 N. 6th Street
Suite 210-C Butler Square
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Appendix E—Agency Checklist

Contents:

Draft

Mitigating Small Business Impacts

Pre-Construction Process for Major Construction Projects

1. Identify potential impacts to businesses and the degree of those impacts. Issues to consider:
   - duration of project
   - lane closures
   - detours
   - periods of complete highway/street closure
   - increased congestion
   - access impacts: customers, suppliers, shipping
   - parking impacts: customers, employees
   - confusion on how to reach business: customers
   - visibility
   - noise
   - dust
   - vibration
   - travel time and accessibility for emergency responders

2. Coordinate with local units of government to: a) review expected impacts; b) discuss potential mitigation measures; c) identify issues specific to the project area that may affect how businesses are impacted. Local governments and businesses have the greatest knowledge and insight on these issues.

3. Develop business information packet that includes:
   - Nature, extent, and timing of planned construction, including anticipated changes in parking, traffic, and public access in the area.
   - Identification of a contact that can provide information about construction progress and timing.
   - A listing of area business development organizations that can assist businesses with financing, marketing, and technical counseling during the construction period.

4. Engage key individuals. Identify opportunities for coordination and partnership.

   Agencies
   - Pre-Construction or Design Manager
   - Construction Manager
   - Public Affairs Coordinator
   - Signing Engineer
   - Area Manager
   - City/County Planner
   - City/County Economic Development Office

   Resources
   - Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
   - Transportation Management Organizations
   - Small Business Development Centers

   Partners
   - Business Owners/Operators
   - Business Organizations/Chambers of Commerce
   - Community/Neighborhood Organizations
   - Contractor

5. Ensure that mitigation measures committed to during pre-construction are carried forward and implemented in the construction phase.

Mitigating Small Business Impacts

Checklist

Trunk Highway Number _____

Minnesota Project Number _____

State Project Number _____

Project Limits _____

Pre-Construction **(Planning → Scoping → Programming → Design)**	**Comments**
☐ Identify potential impacts to businesses.	
☐ Compile a list of affected businesses and contact information. Include both property owners and tenants.	
☐ Notify businesses of the project. Establish relationships and preferred communication methods for on-going communication and updates.	
☐ Consider special outreach for certain business populations such as tenant-operated, recently-located, and immigrant.	

- ☐ Prepare information packet. For major projects include: 1) summary of construction project, preliminary schedule, and expected impacts including changes in parking, traffic, and access; 2) identification of a contact who can provide information on construction progress and timing; 3) listing of organizations that can assist businesses during construction.

- ☐ Contact the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development for assistance with identification of organizations that assist businesses:
  Madeline Harris, Business Advisor
  Madeline.Harris@state.mn.us
  651-259-7474

- ☐ Determine when to send information packet.

- ☐ Identify measures that will mitigate business impacts, with input from business owners, local governments, and construction personnel. These measures are incorporated into the contract documents (plans, specifications, special provisions) or separately documented to ensure implementation during construction.

- ☐ Investigate the use of signing to help drivers locate business areas/districts.

- ☐ Involve agency decision-makers early on issues such as special signing to ensure that proposed measures are feasible.

- ☐ Identify a single point of contact who businesses can contact directly with questions and concerns. For smaller projects, this may be the construction engineer, Public Affairs Coordinator, or other agency staff person. For larger projects, a separate individual may need to be dedicated to work with businesses, the community, and the media.

- ☐ Emphasize the importance of coordination with businesses at the pre-construction meeting with the contractor. Contractor is informed that any proposed construction and schedule changes must be approved by the construction engineer so that impacts on business can be assessed and coordinated.

- ☐ Provide the more detailed construction schedule provided by the winning contractor to businesses.

During Construction

- ☐ Ensure that the construction engineer is aware of and committed to mitigation measures that were identified in the pre-construction phase. Share documentation on mitigating business impacts with the construction engineer.

- ☐ Keep businesses up-to-date on construction progress and the timing of impacts.

- ☐ Notify the construction engineer as early as possible of other construction work in the area (including private development construction).

- ☐ Evaluate effectiveness of communication with businesses and make necessary adjustments.

Post Construction

- ☐ Provide business owners the opportunity to provide feedback on what worked well and what could be improved. Feedback is made available to project staff, but may also be used to improve agency guidance on business coordination and impact mitigation on future projects.

- ☐ Notify business owners when project is complete.

Appendix F—Business Packet Content

Contents:

1. List of materials required for business information packet
2. Sample of Minnesota Department of Transportation business outreach materials

Business Information Packet Content

Existing Mn/DOT tools and practices can be re-packaged into a project information packet that provides businesses with project information—including anticipated impacts to traffic, access, and parking—so that they are able to more effectively operate during construction. Elements of a business information packet must include:

- Information regarding the nature, extent, timing, and duration of planned construction—this includes changes in parking, traffic, and public access in the project area.
- Information about how businesses can contact Mn/DOT staff throughout the project regarding construction progress and timing.
- A listing of area business development organizations that can assist businesses with financing, marketing, and technical counseling during the construction period.

In addition to the required information listed above, information packets should be tailored to unique project descriptions. Mn/DOT staff may also consider including an educational piece explaining why the project is being done (e.g., to address safety, demand, etc.), so that businesses are more likely to see a project benefit.

Sample Business Outreach Materials

Mn/DOT and other local transportation agencies have applied rigorous business outreach efforts to some projects. A sampling of materials used for some of these efforts is provided within this Appendix. Enclosed materials include:

- *Open for Business: A workbook to help Minnesota businesses survive and thrive during highway construction*. Developed by Mn/DOT and used during the TH 36 reconstruction project
- *Highway 10 Connect Detroit Lakes Project: Improved Safety, Mobility & Access*. Developed by Mn/DOT District 4 and used to describe project benefits.
- *3rd Avenue in Alexandria, MN Open for Business* brochure. Developed by Mn/DOT District 4 to communicate project related detours, including truck detours.
- *Medians & Access Management* brochure. Developed by Anoka County Highway Department and used to educate stakeholders, including businesses on the need for transportation improvements.
- *TH 65 Detour Map.* Developed by Anoka County for the TH 54/County Road Reconstruction Project and provided to businesses and communities to communicate project-related detours.

Mn/DOT District 6 will be reviewing business outreach needs during the 2009 construction season. This work includes development of a workbook that includes tips and tools aimed to assist businesses operate and thrive during construction. The draft document listed below is also included in this appendix:

- *DRAFT: How to Thrive during Road Construction*

Open for Business

Minnesota Department of Transportation Metro District

A workbook to help Minnesota businesses survive and thrive during highway construction

Contents

A workbook to help Minnesota businesses thrive during highway construction

Minnesota Department of Transportation

Introduction

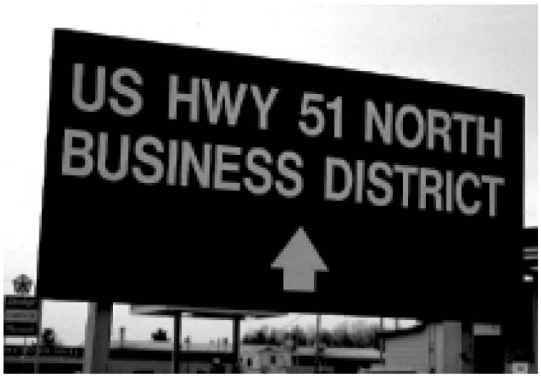
A cartoonist once portrayed a lost tourist asking a local resident for directions, to which the laid back homeowner replied, "Mister, you can't get there from here." Little did the cartoonist realize that "You can't get there from here" would become an idiom that's repeated every time a driver is lost, confused, or detoured by highway construction.

The cartoonist did no favor for businesses that rely on customers having an unimpeded path to their doors. "You can't get there from here" became the convenient excuse for shoppers to take their business elsewhere.

You *can* get there from here
"You can't get there from here" should be stripped from our lexicon. It should be replaced by a can-do attitude epitomized by the children's story "The Little Train That Could." It would be helpful to recall the courageous attitude of the Pilgrims and other immigrants who crossed treacherous oceans to get here or pioneers who pushed westward across mountains and plains to find new homes in the West or Midwest. They were not people easily intimidated by challenge; they wouldn't be intimidated by today's orange barrels at road construction sites. The barrels would be welcome beacons to safely guide them to their destinations.

Deal with perceptions
Now, the reality check: Without a strong motivation, it is human nature to avoid orange barrels, barricades, Road Closed signs, big trucks, earthmovers and other indications of dusty, dirty construction zones. The perception that "you can't get there from here" may be wrong. But this is a case when perception is reality, and our challenge is to deal with the perception and to keep customers coming.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) recognizes that businesses located in a work zone have special needs. It's critical that their customers have access to business and that they continue to patronize the businesses, in spite of any road work inconvenience.



Mn/DOT helps these businesses in a variety of ways and tries to help businesses to help themselves.

This workbook is a compilation of techniques that have been used successfully in several Minnesota communities and in the state of Wisconsin. It includes samples of what others have done, and descriptions of their efforts. It is offered to business and community leaders as an idea source as they plan for road construction closer to home.

This workbook includes an array of ideas communities might implement, worksheets to follow progress, and a timeline to check off accomplishments as they are completed.

Planning ahead

Many highway construction projects have a design phase of five or more years. This is the time when Mn/DOT engineers, in cooperation with local government officials, plan the project, define the scope of what will be accomplished, study the alternatives available, evaluate the social, economic, and safety impacts on the community or neighborhood, and design the plans that a contractor will need to finish the improvement. Occasionally, Mn/DOT hires consulting engineering firms to design the improvement, and sometimes to manage its construction.

Throughout this design phase, Mn/DOT holds periodic meetings with local officials and citizens to hear their suggestions and concerns. By the time the construction crew rolls on-site, all of the design decisions have been made. It's important, therefore, for the business community to get involved early in the design phase and stay involved during construction.

Getting organized

The key to survival is bringing businesses and the affected stakeholders together early and working together to survive economically while the infrastructure is improved. A local chamber of commerce or business association often becomes the focal point as business people get organized. A leader can be identified to represent the business community to keep business concerns in mind, to channel questions or suggestions to Mn/DOT and to carry information back to the businesses. Sometimes, a smaller group or committee is formed to specifically represent those who are most affected by the construction.

Working cooperatively as a group has advantages. Together, the business community has the synergy to accomplish more than its individual members could accomplish on their own. Resources and ideas can be pooled for the maximum benefit. Working together saves time and money in the long run.

Staying informed

Keeping the public informed about highway projects and their impacts on citizens' lives is a key to public understanding, and Mn/DOT uses a variety of techniques to spread the message. It's important for businesses, as well as citizens, to understand why a highway or bridge needs to be rebuilt, the alternative solutions that were evaluated, the efforts to ensure that negative impacts are kept to a minimum, and why there may be some inconvenience during repairs.

Businesses play a dual role in road construction: first as citizens impacted by road work; second working with Mn/DOT to keep their customers coming and minimizing inconvenience for customers and drivers. Businesses and Mn/DOT are truly "in this together," united in recognizing the need for road improvements and the long-term benefits they will share when the project is completed, and working together to minimize any negative consequences.

Businesses, not unlike the general public, are more likely to endorse highway repairs when they have all the facts early enough so they can participate in the decisions, offer suggestions and plan ahead. When they are involved early, businesses tend to assume some ownership for the improvement and more optimistically face the challenges during construction.

How to do it
As a business person, you can stay informed by:

- Attending public meetings during the design phase and other meetings just prior to construction.
- Inviting Mn/DOT representatives to discuss the project at your business association or group meetings.
- Sharing what you've learned with other business people, using letters, newsletters, ads and other techniques to make the community more aware of what's ahead.
- Staying in touch with the Mn/DOT project manager, once construction begins. Learn the project manager's name and phone number and where the project field office is located.
- Establishing a line of communications. Call if you have questions. You may identify one of your members as the point person to collect questions and concerns, to take them to the project manager, and to bring back responses and other information. When warranted, the point person may wish to attend periodic meetings between the project manager and the contractors.
- Identifying key business people to whom Mn/DOT can mail or fax news releases and project updates.

Handling traffic

Ideally, a contractor can repair or rebuild a road more quickly and less expensively if all traffic is removed during the work. But that is not feasible many times if Mn/DOT is to maintain access to businesses and minimize the impacts on them or if an adequate detour is not available.

Mn/DOT strives to maintain some form of access to businesses during construction except for short periods of time, which cannot be avoided. It is equally important to note that Mn/DOT is not legally required to maintain access. Mn/DOT does make every attempt to minimize negative business impacts from its highway construction, although it cannot prevent all of them

When front access is critical, we accommodate traffic in two ways:

Under construction but open to traffic
This alternative is used on high-volume highways like the Interstate or on multilane roads where one lane can be rebuilt while traffic is restricted on the other, or for resurfacing on low-volume roads where suitable detours are not available and the project can be done one lane at a time with signs or flag persons to direct traffic.

Road closed to through traffic, open to local traffic
"Through traffic" means those vehicles that don't have an origin or destination inside the work zone.

Detour signs direct them to an alternate route around the work zone. We usually keep the detour length to a minimum, making certain the road is in good condition and capable of safely handling heavy traffic, including trucks. An important consideration is whether travelers can follow the detour easily.

When a road is closed to through traffic, the "through traffic" driver who does not have an origin or a destination within the work zone is subject to a traffic ticket.

"Local traffic" means those drivers who *do* have an origin or destination within the work zone. This includes people who need access to their homes, their visitors, businesses making deliveries or pickups, school buses, emergency vehicles, business owners, their customers and employees.

When someone needs access in the work zone, we ask them to minimize their use of the road. This can be done by using side roads that intersect close to the destination.

The reason we restrict local traffic is because the work zone may be filled with dozens of trucks, earthmovers and other equipment, all moving in different directions. When local traffic is heavy, the contractor needs to hire flag persons to direct traffic and prevent collisions between drivers' vehicles and construction equipment. The heavier the traffic, the greater the danger of collisions, delays for everyone, and cost.

While the contractor is required to maintain a safe and adequate path on which local traffic can drive, the roadway may be bumpy, dusty, or muddy. Occasionally, the contractor may provide a temporary path on gravel adjacent to the construction. Sometimes, the road may be temporarily closed to all traffic and only maintained for emergency vehicles. It may be a few hours or a few days, and Mn/DOT works hard to keep that time as short as possible. Important deliveries can be scheduled with the contractor and the project manager.

Concrete pavement requires a “cure” time of three to seven days, depending on the amount of cement in the concrete. If access is given to businesses during this time period, it is necessary to provide a “gap” in the pavement. Such gaps require the paving contractor to stop operations, move the paver ahead and restart the entire operation. The contractor must then fill the gaps at a later date.

Pavement gaps delay project completion, compromise ride quality and increase costs. Businesses may be approached by the paving contractor to work with them to

eliminate the need for paving gaps. Without paving gaps, contractors can pave nearly a mile a day. With gaps, the production can be cut in half or worse. That means overall construction will take longer. The goal of everyone is to get the project completed as quickly as possible, at a reasonable cost. Businesses may consider closing shop for a few days to enable earlier project completion. Or they may share gaps with other businesses to reduce the number of gaps.

Reducing traffic

Businesses and Mn/DOT walk a fine line together, seeking to reduce traffic on the highway under construction so that contractors can complete their work efficiently, quickly and safely, while maintaining the traffic stream so that customers and employees can reach the businesses as easily as possible.

When four lanes are reduced to two lanes, or when two lanes are narrowed to one, it becomes essential to reduce traffic by a significant amount. Even when the highway capacity has been cut in half, diverting 10-20 percent of the traffic to other routes can keep the traffic stream workable for both drivers and the contractor. That permits the remaining 80-90 percent of the traffic to flow through the work zone at a reasonable speed and for drivers to reach businesses, industries, and residences along the route.

Traffic is like an overflowing river: it takes the path of least resistance. It may follow a marked detour route. But most local traffic spills onto nearby streets and roads with which drivers are familiar, each driver finding his or her own special way to circumvent construction.

When the highway is being reconstructed "under traffic," Mn/DOT suggests drivers use alternate routes.

How businesses can help reduce traffic
Here is a checklist of ways in which business can help reduce traffic jams during construction:

- Tell your customers and employees about traffic restrictions. Distribute brochures, flyers and paycheck stuffers. Inserts with regular customer billings can be very effective.
- Help your suppliers and their truck drivers identify alternate routes to your business or industry. Do this *before* construction starts.
- Consider routes for your outgoing vehicles to avoid the work zone or schedule shipments at nonpeak times.
- Establish a company-sponsored carpool or vanpool program, or encourage employees to use existing programs.
- Look into starting a company shuttle to take employees to and from park-and-ride lots at locations outside the construction area.
- Investigate flextime or four-day work weeks that reduce employee travel during rush hours from 7 to 9 a.m. and 3 to 6 p.m. weekdays.
- Consider telecommuting or other strategies that allow employees to work at home.

Keeping customers informed

Drivers who are well informed about road construction tend to be “happy campers, inconvenience notwithstanding. They understand why the improvement is desirable. They know about construction before they leave home, rather than being surprised by the sudden appearance of barricades, orange barrels, and Road Closed signs. They’ve been told about roads that are closed or restricted; they follow and sense the construction progress being made; and they've given some thought to other ways around construction either by studying the map or checking out possible alternate routes on their own rather than fuming in frustration as their vehicles sit in a long line of stop-and-go traffic.

Mn/DOT has stepped up the flow of road work information to the public. We use changeable electronic message signs to advise drivers when delays are expected and to safely steer them through or around construction zones. Communications professionals use a variety of techniques to inform drivers about projects, their value to the public, and traffic detours or restrictions that might affect the public. News releases provide valuable background information to news media. News stories and interviews with TV, radio and newspaper reporters can be set up. Major projects with significant traffic impacts warrant brochures, generally with maps, that clarify the work ahead, detours, and alternate routes. Telephone recordings are used to bring inquiring drivers up to date. And the Public Affairs Coordinator in each of Mn/DOT’s eight districts statewide is a convenient, available information source for drivers needing help.

How businesses can keep the customers coming:

- Mn/DOT may permit businesses to have directional signs in construction zone.
- Contact the project manager to make certain that the sign you contemplate complies with Mn/DOT guidelines.
- Use simple maps to tell your customers about the best alternate routes to reach your business. Post them on your doors and bulletin boards, insert them into billings and other mailings and distribute them to your customers. Be especially mindful of customers who come a long distance and may be unfamiliar with local streets and roads.

- Let the public know that you’re open for business. Develop ads for newspaper, radio or television. Pool your resources for group advertising. Advertising cooperatively can be very cost-effective. Brainstorm for innovative ideas to promote your businesses.

Tips for businesses:
how to survive road construction

Here are some basic actions business owners can take to help survive roadway construction:

- ♣ Plan ahead as much as possible; get involved early. A year is not too far ahead to begin organizing and planning.
- ♣ Form an alliance with other businesses in your locale.
- ♣ Attend public meetings to stay informed. Have knowledge of the project. Contact Minnesota Department of Transportation to voice your concerns.
- ♣ Hold frequent and regular meetings with other businesses for support and strategies. Write down your fears and questions for discussion.
- ♣ Pool resources to purchase group advertising.
- ♣ Hold a pre-construction meeting with the Mn/DOT project manager and contractor to find out how long the project will take, what to expect, i.e. dirt, mud, ground shaking, etc.
- ♣ Meet the on-site project manager. Keep his/her telephone number in a handy place.
- ♣ Establish a line of communication with the project manager. Project managers coordinate with the contractor.

Brainstorm for innovative ideas to promote your business and to communicate with customers:

- ♣ Hold events prior to construction start-up to draw attention to the area.
- ♣ Work with the Mn/DOT Public Affairs Coordinator to plan groundbreaking activities.
- ♣ Design a logo for use by all affected merchants during the construction period.
- ♣ Hold special promotions such as free hot dogs and pop, or a one-day sign-up in parking lot for a free vacation.
- ♣ Print placemat advertisements.
- ♣ Place advertisements in outlying newspapers.
- ♣ Plan hard-hat promotions—some for sale, some as giveaways.
- ♣ Sell hard-hat lunches to go.
- ♣ Schedule a grand finale—work with the Mn/DOT Public Affairs Coordinator to plan ribbon cutting ceremonies; plan street dance, t-shirts, prizes.
- ♣ _____
  _____
- ♣ _____
  _____

Worksheet CHECKLIST & TIMELINE for business owners

- θ Form an association of businesses that will be affected by the construction project. Let the Mn/DOT district office know the name and address of your organization's primary contacts.

- θ Attend first meeting with Mn/DOT project development staff responsible for project design.

- θ Discuss project schedule, question and answer session.

- θ Form committees for advertising, promotions, signing, special events, etc.
  Committees: *Members:*

- θ Develop and implement promotional campaign.
  Adopt theme.
  *Delegated to:*_____ *Due by:*__/__/__

  Design and produce newspaper, television and radio advertisements.
  *Delegated to:*_____ *Due by:*__/__/__

  Brainstorm and produce additional promotional materials.
  *Delegated to:*_____ *Due by:*__/__/__

  Plan special events.
  *Delegated to:*_____ *Due by:*__/__/__

***TASK* - 3 to 6 months ahead**

- θ Attend second meeting with Mn/DOT staff.

- θ Discuss project schedule, question and answer session.

- θ Meet Mn/DOT project manager, who is responsible for construction, and with the prime contractor.

***TASK* - 1 month ahead**

- θ Meet Mn/DOT project manager and contractor.

- θ Discuss project schedule.

- θ Construct roadside signs needed to guide drivers to parking and business accesses. Arrange for erection of signs to coincide with the start of any detour.

- θ Distribute final promotional materials.
  *Delegated to:*_____ *Due by:*__/__/__

TASK

- θ Attend construction business meetings held throughout the duration of the project.
- θ Continue committee work.

Key contacts

Minnesota Department of Transportation

Please feel free to contact me for more information on this booklet or any other Mn/DOT construction project questions you may have:

Chris Roy, North Area Manager
Phone: 651/582-1481
E-mail: chris.roy@dot.state.mn.us

Kent Barnard, Public Affairs Coordinator
Phone: 651/582-1364 *or* Cell: 651/253-2803
E-mail: kent.barnard@dot.state.mn.us

Metro District Headquarters
1500 West County Road B-2
Roseville, MN 55113
Main office phone: 651/582-1000

Other information and key contacts are listed on the Mn/DOT Metro District Website:
http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/th36/index.html

Conclusion

We hope this workbook helps you to keep your business, and the other businesses in the construction zone, healthy and thriving throughout the construction period. Your customers will appreciate your special attention to them and will keep coming back for years to come. When the project is done, both you and your customers will look at the new road or bridge as a definite improvement. The temporary inconvenience will be just that —temporary. But the new road or bridge will last.

Project Benefits

Once completed, the Highway 10/Connect Detroit Lakes project will provide our community with these safety and mobility improvements:

- New BNSF railroad bridge over the Roosevelt Avenue underpass
- Reduced access points on Highway 10 from 70 to seven
- Intersection revision, including traffic signals at Highways 59 and 34
- Reconstructed intersection at Highways 59 and 10
- Widening of Highway 59 bridge over the BNSF and Canadian Pacific railroads
- Improved sight distance at Becker County Roads 54 and 53 railroad crossing
- Reconstructed frontage road around Big Detroit Lake from East Shore Drive to North Shore Drive
- Resurfaced Highway 10 from Summit Avenue to Highway 59
- Landscaping and aesthetic treatments on the retaining wall and bridges

We're in This Together

Our goal is to maintain safety and mobility for Detroit Lakes area residents and visitors during construction.

Please stay alert and plan ahead when traveling through the Highway10/Connect Detroit Lakes project area. Motorists are urged to slow down, pay attention and watch for workers and equipment while traveling through the construction zone—for your safety and ours.

Work Zones.
Pay Attention
or pay the price.

Stay Informed and Involved

- More detail about the project can be found on the project Web site at www.dot.state.mn.us/d4/projects/connectdetroitlakes
- Watch local media for project updates
- Attend the project update meetings the second Monday of each month at Detroit Lakes City Hall
- Call 511 or log onto www.511mn.org for information about lane closures and detours

Mn/DOT Contacts

For further information on this project, please contact:

Shiloh Wahl
Construction Project Engineer
218/846-3630
shiloh.wahl@dot.state.mn.us

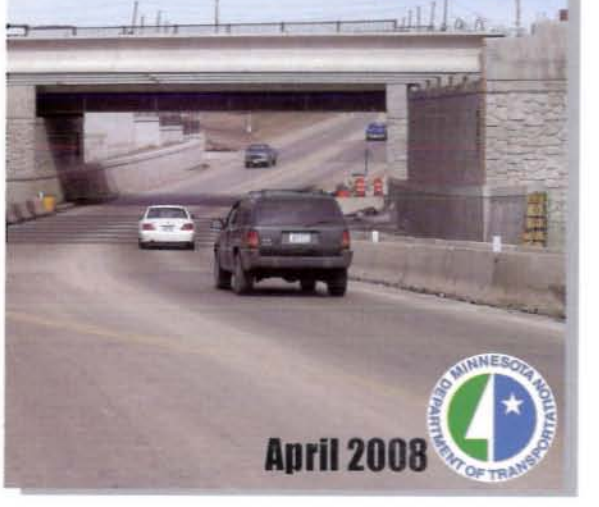
Jeff Perkins
Resident Construction Engineer
218/846-3628
jeff.perkins@dot.state.mn.us

Judy Jacobs
Communications
218/846-3609
judy.jacobs@dot.state.mn.us

Mn/DOT District 4
1000 Highway 10 West
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
Toll Free 1-800/657-3984

Highway 10 Connect Detroit Lakes Project

Improved Safety, Mobility & Access



April 2008

Project Overview

The Highway 10/Connect Detroit Lakes project includes reconstruction and realignment of approximately three miles of Highway 10, realignment of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad tracks, construction of a Roosevelt Avenue underpass of Highway 10 and BNSF railroad tracks, reconstruction of approximately 1/2 mile of Highway 59 between Highways 10 and 34, and construction of a frontage road around Big Detroit Lake from East Shore Drive to downtown Detroit Lakes.

In April 2007, Hoffman Construction Company, Black River Falls, Wis., was hired as prime contractor on the Highway 10/Connect Detroit Lakes project.

The goal of this project is to improve safety along the Highway 10 corridor. The design balances mobility for through traffic on Highway 10 and access for local traffic movements in harmony with the surrounding cultural and natural resources.

Upcoming Construction

Construction on the Highway 10/Connect Detroit Lakes project will resume in mid-April. Major operations scheduled for 2008 include:

- Concrete paving on the new Highway 10 alignment
- Placement of the deck on the Highway 10 bridge over Roosevelt Avenue
- Traffic shift onto the new Highway 10 alignment by the end of July 2008
- Construction of a new frontage road linking East Shore Drive with downtown Detroit Lakes
- Removal of the "S-curve" portion of the old Highway 10 alignment through downtown Detroit Lakes
- Construction and connection of city streets to the new alignment
- Reconstruction of Roosevelt Avenue from the underpass to Oak Street
- Reconstruction of the Washington Avenue and Highway 10 intersection
- Construction of the new scenic overlook between the frontage road and Big Detroit Lake

Work is scheduled to be completed by fall of 2008.

Final turf establishment, clean-up and miscellaneous work is planned for 2009. This work will have minimal impacts to traffic.

Detours

Work on this project will require both short- and long-term road and lane closures.

Advance notice will be provided to motorists prior to a lane or road closure.

Please refer to the Web site for the most current road closure information.

Construction Plan Minimizes Impact to Motorists

To minimize construction impacts, Mn/DOT will:

- Keep one lane open in each direction on Highway 10 during morning and afternoon peak traffic periods
- Limit work during major holidays and festivals, including fishing opener and WE Fest weekends
- Provide advance notice of daytime lane closures
- Utilize portable message boards with daily construction activity information
- Provide weekly updates on the project Web site and via an email distribution list

The Highway 10/Connect Detroit Lakes project has been contracted with innovative contracting methods to reduce the project duration and help with traffic flow through town.

www.dot.state.mn.us/d4/projects/connectdetroitlakes

Project Overview

This reconstruction project will turn 3rd Avenue in Alexandria from a three lane roadway to a five lane roadway with a center turn lane in each direction, dual left turns at Nokomis (eastbound to northbound) and Broadway Street (westbound to southbound), new signals and street lights, retaining walls adjacent to the Canadian Pacific Rail Bridge, new utilities, and new CP Rail bridge.

The project is scheduled to begin in mid-May, 2004. Work will stop for the winter in late October/early November and resume in the spring of 2005 with a planned completion date in August or September.

SEE ORANGE. WE'RE IN THE WORK ZONE TOGETHER.

CONTACTS:

Minnesota Department of Transportation
1000 Highway 10 West
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
1-800-657-3984 or 218/847-1500

Mike Ginnaty, Planning & Project Development Manager
218/847-1553
mike.ginnaty@dot.state.mn.us

Tom Lundberg, Project Manager
218/847-1537
thomas.lundberg@dot.state.mn.us

Dan Kuhn, Resident Engineer
Jesse Miller, Project Engineer
320/589-7307
320/589-7354
daniel.kuhn@dot.state.mn.us
jesse.miller@dot.state.mn.us

Brian Bausman, Right-of-Way Acquisitions Manager
218/847-1599
brian.bausman@dot.state.mn.us

Judy Jacobs, Public Affairs Coordinator
218/847-1568
judy.jacobs@dot.state.mn.us

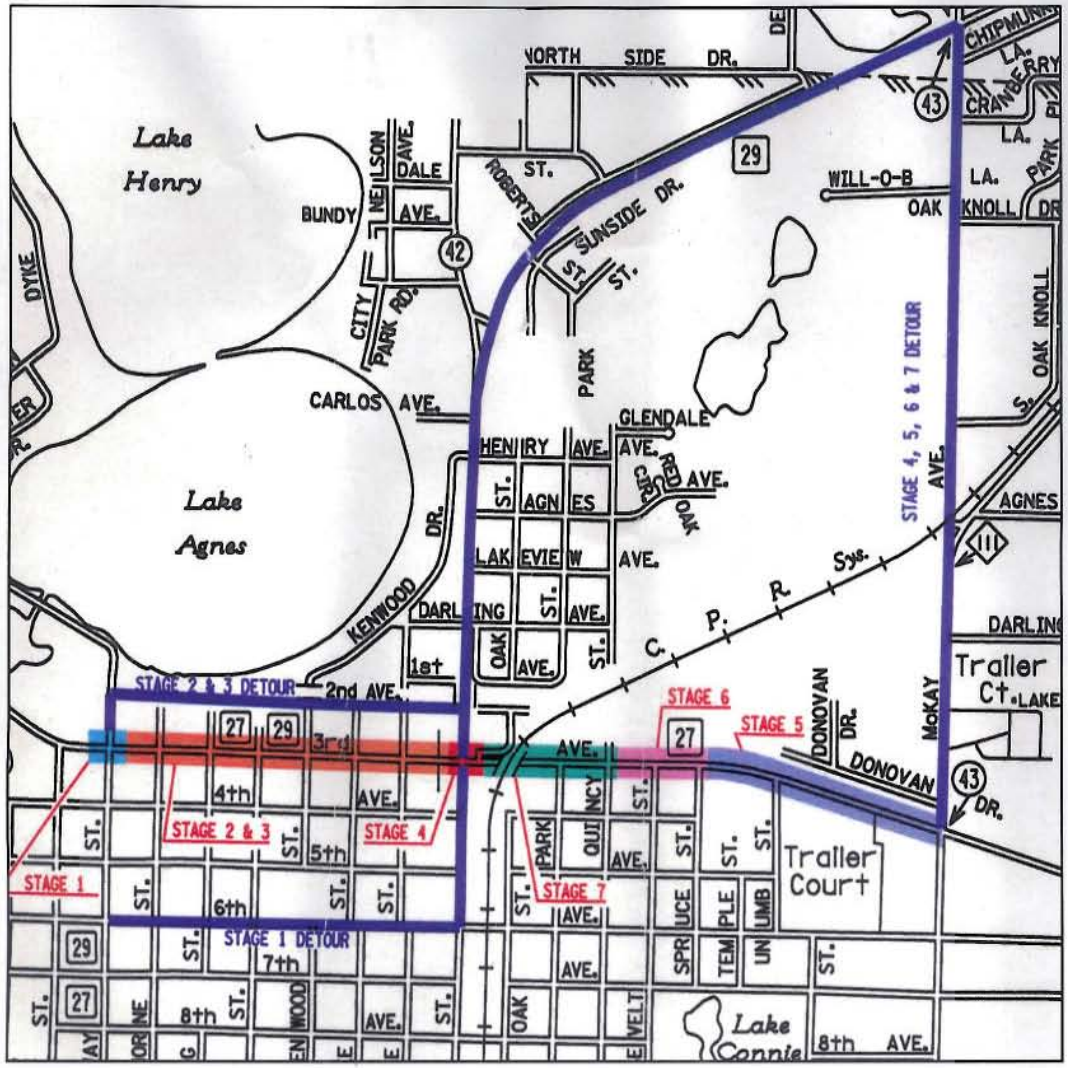
Website (Available April 15, 2004)

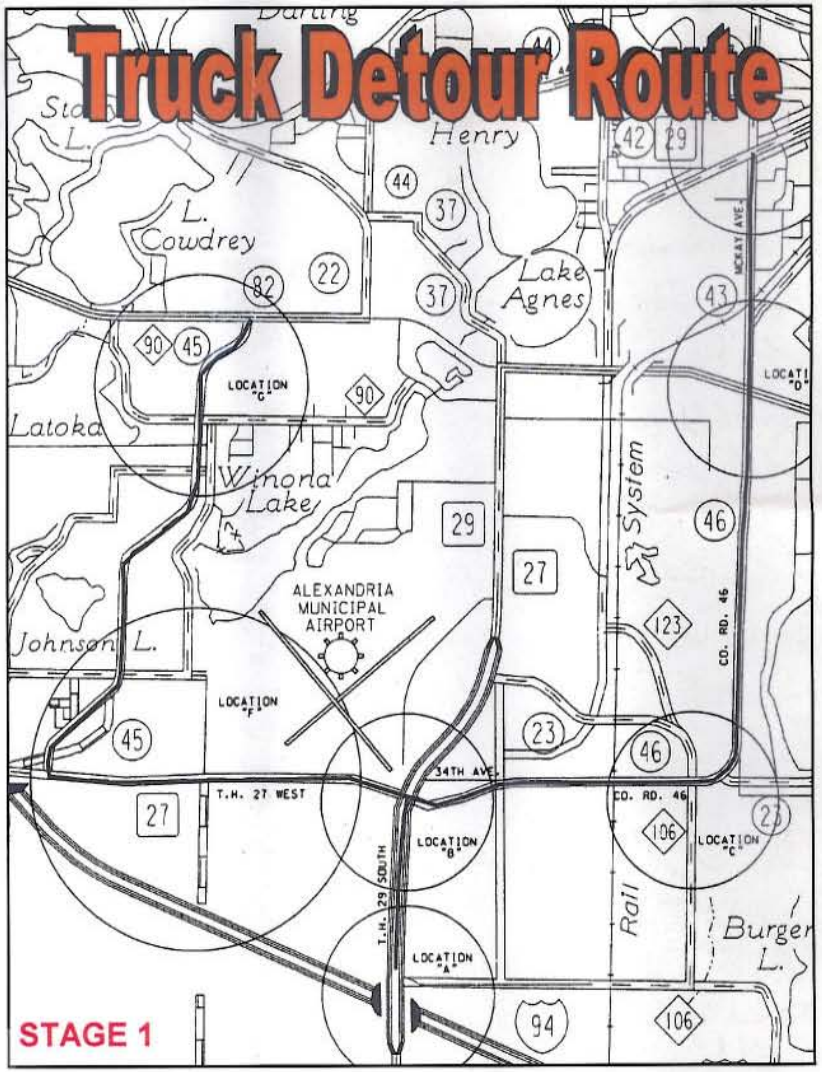
www.dot.state.mn.us/d4/projects/3rd_avenue_alexandria

3rd Avenue in Alexandria, MN

Open for Business

April 1, 2004





Stage 1 – Broadway Intersection

Approximate Dates – May 17, 2004 to June 30, 2004 (45 days) Open to traffic 2 weeks cleanup afterwards
Detour – 6th Avenue (**Cars**)
Detour – County Road 45, Highway 27, County Road 46 (**Trucks**)

Stages 2 and 3 – Broadway Street to Nokomis Street

Approximate Dates – May 17, 2004 to mid-August (75 days)
Detour – 2nd Avenue

Stage 4 – Nokomis Intersection

Approximate Dates – mid-August to early October (40 days)
Detour – McKay Avenue, Highway 29, 2nd Avenue

Stage 5 – McKay Avenue to Spruce Street (Fall '04 Time Permitting)

Approximate Dates – May 2, 2005 to mid-June 2005 (45 days)
Detour – McKay Avenue, Highway 29

Stage 6 – Spruce Street to Quincy Street

Approximate Dates – mid-June 2005 to end of July 2005 (40 days)
Detour – McKay Avenue, Highway 29

Stage 7 – Quincy Street to Nokomis Street

Approximate Dates – end of July 2005 to early September 2005 (50 days)
Detour – McKay Avenue, Highway 29

Canadian Pacific Railroad Bridge – summer 2004

Anoka County
Highway Department
1440 Bunker Lake Boulevard
Andover, MN 55304
(763) 862-4200
www.AnokaCounty.us/highways

Anoka County | **Commitment to Public Safety**

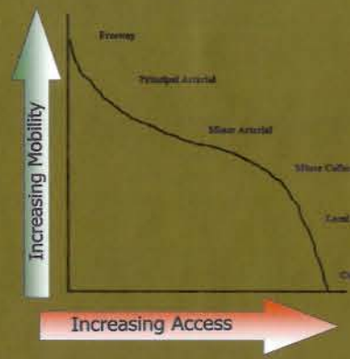
Medians & Access Management

Anoka County
Highway Department
1440 Bunker Lake Boulevard
Andover, MN 55304

(763) 862-4200
www.AnokaCounty.us/highways

Anoka County Highway Department Access Spacing Guidelines

Functional Class	Route Speed (MPH)	Area or Facility Type	Intersection Primary Full Movement	Spacing Conditional Secondary	Signal Spacing	Private Access
Principal Arterials	50-55	Rural	1 mile	1/2 mile	1 mile	By Deviation Only
	40-45	Urbanizing	1/2 mile	1/4 mile	1/2 mile	By Exception or Deviation
	<40	Urban Core	1/8 mile	300-660 ft*	1/4 mile	Subject to Conditions
A Minor Arterials	50-55	Rural	1/2 mile	1/4 mile	1/2 mile	Subject to Conditions
	40-45	Urbanizing	1/4 mile	1/8 mile	1/4 mile	By Exception or Deviation
	<40	Urban Core	1/8 mile	300-660 ft*	1/4 mile	Subject to Conditions
B Minor Arterials	50-55	Rural	1/2 mile	1/4 mile	1/2 mile	Subject to Conditions
	40-45	Urbanizing	1/4 mile	1/8 mile	1/4 mile	By Exception or Deviation
	<40	Urban Core	1/8 mile	300-660 ft*	1/4 mile	Subject to Conditions
Collectors	50-55	Rural	1/2 mile	1/4 mile	1/2 mile	Subject to Conditions
	40-45	Urbanizing	1/8 mile	N/A	1/4 mile	Subject to Conditions
	<40	Urban Core	1/8 mile	300-660 ft*	1/8 mile	Subject to Conditions
Local	50-55	Rural	1/2 mile	1/4 mile	1/2 mile	Subject to Conditions
	40-45	Urbanizing	1/8 mile	N/A	1/2 mile	Subject to Conditions
	<40	Urban Core	1/8 mile	300-660 ft*	1/8 mile	Subject to Conditions
						Dependent Upon Block Length



Function	Services Provided
Arterial	Provides the highest level of service at the greatest speed for the longest uninterrupted distance, with some degree of access control.
Collector	Provides a less highly developed level of service at a lower speed for shorter distances by collecting traffic from local roads and connecting them with arterials.
Local	Consists of all roads not defined as arterials or collectors; primarily provides access to land with little or no through movement.

Anoka County's access management program provides planned and managed access to land in Anoka County; undeveloped, residential, and commercial. The highways of Anoka County constitute a valuable resource and major public investment. It is essential to operate them safely and efficiently by managing the access to and from adjoining property.

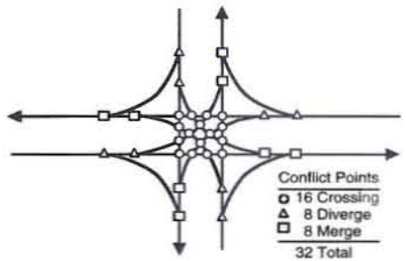
Medians are an effective way to control access along highways. This brochure will address some of the concerns regarding the use of medians.

Why are medians needed? Safety

Medians improve safety by reducing conflicting traffic movements along roadways while preserving efficient traffic flow. Medians also create safer access points for adjacent property owners and businesses.

According to the Federal Highway Administration, nearly 70% of two vehicle crashes on county roads that occur at driveways involve left turns. Medians are an effective method of reducing crashes.

Conflicts at a typical intersection



How is access determined?

Have you ever been stopped by one traffic signal, then given the green light, only to be stopped by another traffic signal just down the road? Or has someone slowed down in front of you to make a left turn?

Anoka County has implemented Access Spacing Guidelines to determine the best location for median openings. Limiting the number of openings is vital to reducing crashes and efficiently controlling traffic flow.

Anoka County has implemented access spacing guidelines as a means to be consistent in its highway design and development review process. Under most circumstances, to accommodate traffic flow in the most efficient manner, there should be no less than 1/2 mile between intersections with traffic signals and 1/4 mile between intersections without traffic signals. These distances are widely accepted as a proven engineering practice though the criteria can vary dependent upon the speed and type of roadway.

Our spacing guidelines minimize the delay caused by having too many traffic signals or uncontrolled intersections (intersections where no signal is present). For specific spacing guidelines see the Anoka County Access Spacing Guidelines Table on the previous page.

How will a median affect access?

A common concern of property owners regarding the construction of raised medians is how will they enter or exit their driveway. With raised medians installed, access to property will be accommodated by a right turn in and right turn out access point. Exiting the access point, the driver will make a right turn, which will be followed by a u-turn at the next acceptable intersection if the driver wishes to travel in the opposite direction. Contrary to most driver's thoughts, u-turns from protected left turn lanes are significantly safer than left turns across multiple lanes. With increased traffic congestion many times a right turn followed by a u-turn will be more efficient than a left turn across multiple lanes of traffic from a through lane. The Universities of South Florida and Kentucky have done major studies on the safety and efficiency of a right turn movement followed by a u-turn. The studies found that the use of median u-turns increased intersection capacity and decreased the rate of crashes by up to 30%.

How will a median impact business?

A study was conducted by Texas A&M University to determine the economic impacts of raised medians. Key points from the study showed that customers rated customer service, product quality, and product price above accessibility. The research team asked business owners and managers to indicate whether the median installation had caused several elements such as congestion, safety, access, business opportunities, customer satisfaction, and delivery convenience to become better, worse, or remain the same.

Overall, a majority of business owners rated any given item either better or the same.

When are medians installed?

Anoka County will usually construct medians in the following circumstances:

- New or reconstructed four lane road corridors with posted speeds of 45 mph and above.
- New or reconstructed six lane roads.
- New or reconstructed two or four lane intersections (any speed limit) with a history of significant crash rates or an expected high crash rate due to increased traffic or changed land use.
- Existing two or four lane county road corridors (any speed limit) with a history of significant crash rates due to direct access issues.

For additional information visit our website at www.AnokaCounty.us/highways

Brochure Produced by:

ANOKA COUNTY **TMO** *Your Commuting Resource*

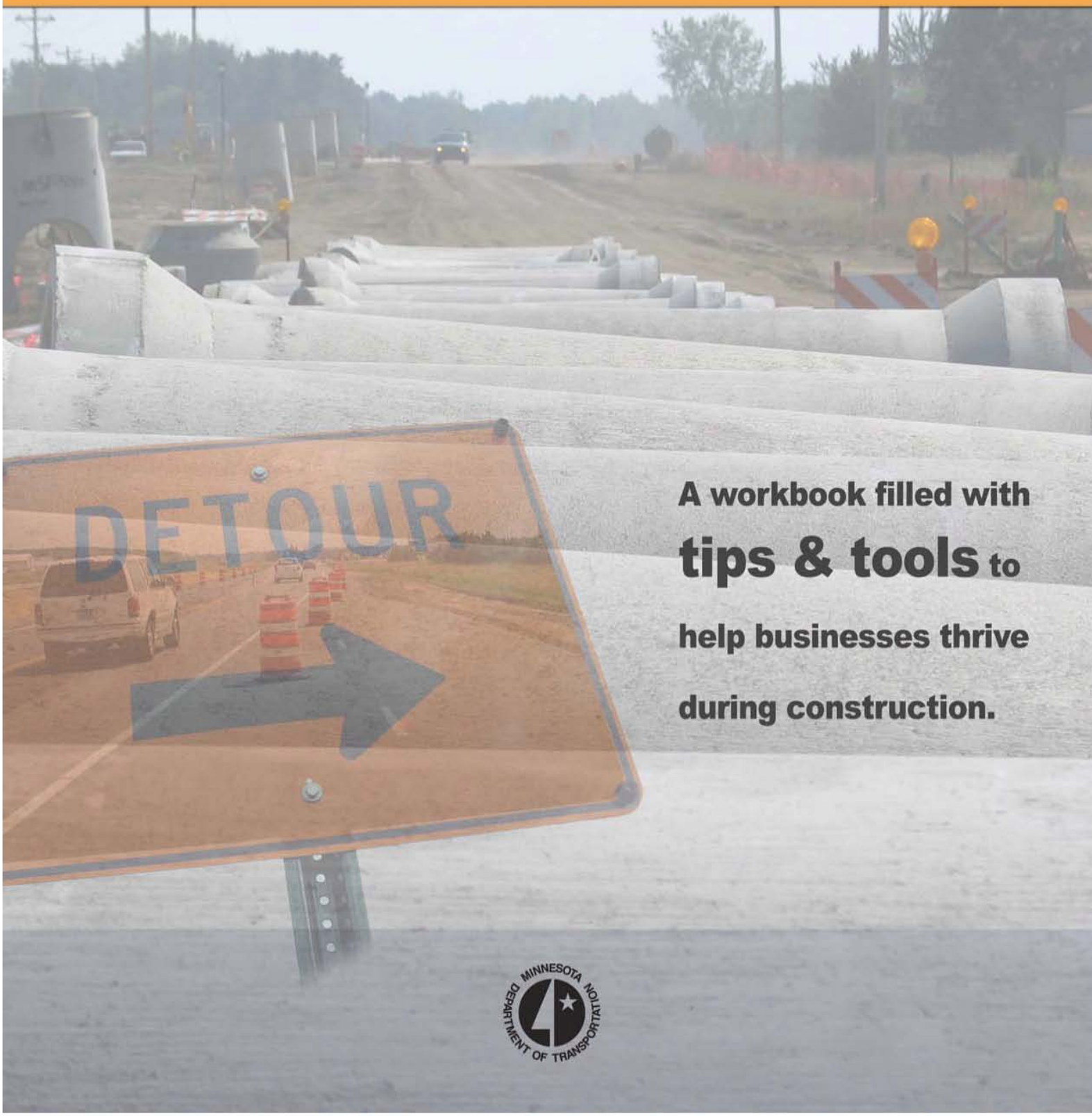
*Carpools * Vanpools * Transit*
www.AnokaCounty.us/tmo
763-862-4260

Tentative Detour Map

Hwy 65/County Road 14 Reconstruction Project - Blaine, MN
September 2007 - October 2007

08/08/2007

How to THRIVE during Road Construction



A workbook filled with tips & tools to help businesses thrive during construction.

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Contents

A workbook filled with tools to help Minnesota businesses thrive during road construction

Introduction

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) recognizes that businesses located in a work zone have special needs. It's critical that their customers have access to business and that they continue to patronize the businesses, in spite of any road work inconvenience.

Mn/DOT helps these businesses in a variety of ways and tries to help businesses to help themselves.

This workbook is a compilation of techniques that have been used successfully in several Minnesota communities and in the state of Wisconsin. It includes samples of what others have done, and descriptions of their efforts. It is offered to business and community leaders as an idea source as they plan for road construction closer to home.

You *can* get there from here
A cartoonist once portrayed a lost tourist asking a local resident for directions, to which the laid back homeowner replied, "Mister, you can't get there from here." Little did the cartoonist realize that "You can't get there from here" would become an idiom that's repeated every time a driver is lost, confused, or detoured by highway construction.

The cartoonist did no favor for businesses that rely on customers having an unimpeded path to their doors. "You can't get there from here" became the convenient excuse for shoppers to take their business elsewhere.

"You can't get there from here" should be stripped from our lexicon. It should be replaced by a can-do attitude epitomized by the children's story "The Little Train That Could." It's helpful to recall the courageous attitude of the Pilgrims and other immigrants who crossed treacherous oceans to get here or pioneers who pushed westward across mountains and plains to find new homes in the West or Midwest. They were not people easily intimidated by challenge; they wouldn't be intimidated by today's orange barrels at road construction sites. The barrels would be welcome beacons to safely guide them to their destinations.

Deal with perceptions
Now, the reality check: Without a strong motivation, it is human nature to avoid orange barrels, barricades, Road Closed signs, big trucks, earthmovers and other indications of dusty, dirty construction zones. The perception that "you can't get there from here" may be wrong. But this is a case when perception is reality, and our challenge is to deal with the perception and to keep customers coming.

How we can do it together
This workbook includes an array of ideas communities might implement, worksheets to follow progress, and a timeline to check off accomplishments as they are completed.

Planning ahead

Many highway construction projects have a design phase of five or more years. This is the time when Mn/DOT engineers, in cooperation with local government officials, plan the project, define the scope of what will be accomplished, study the alternatives available, evaluate the impacts on the community or neighborhood, and design the plans that a contractor will need to finish the improvement. Occasionally, Mn/DOT hires consulting engineering firms to design the improvement, and sometimes to manage its construction.

Throughout this design phase, Mn/DOT holds periodic meetings with local officials and citizens to hear their suggestions and concerns. By the time the construction crew rolls on-site, all of the design decisions have been made. It's important, therefore, for the business community to get involved early in the design phase and stay involved during construction.

Getting organized
The key to survival is bringing businesses and the affected stakeholders together early and working together to survive economically while the infrastructure is improved. A local chamber of commerce or business association often becomes the focal point as business people get organized. A leader can be identified to represent the business community to keep business concerns in mind, to channel questions or suggestions to Mn/DOT and to carry information back to the businesses. Sometimes, a smaller group or committee is formed to specifically represent those who are most affected by the construction.

Working cooperatively as a group has advantages. Together, the business community has the synergy to accomplish more than its individual members could accomplish on their own. Resources and ideas can be pooled for the maximum benefit. Working together saves time and money in the long run.

Staying informed

Keeping the public informed about highway projects and their impacts on citizens' lives is a key to public understanding, and Mn/DOT uses a variety of techniques to spread the message. It's important for businesses, as well as citizens, to understand why a highway or bridge needs to be rebuilt, the alternative solutions that were evaluated, the efforts to ensure that negative impacts are kept to a minimum, and why there may be some inconvenience during repairs.

Businesses play a dual role in road construction: first as citizens impacted by road work; second working with Mn/DOT to keep their customers coming and minimizing inconvenience for customers and drivers. Businesses and Mn/DOT are truly "in this together," united in recognizing the need for road improvements and the long-term benefits they will share when the project is completed, and working together to minimize any negative consequences.

Businesses, not unlike the general public, are more likely to endorse highway repairs when they have all the facts early enough so they can participate in the decisions, offer suggestions and plan ahead. When they are involved early, businesses tend to assume some ownership for the improvement and more optimistically face the challenges during construction.

How to do it
As a business person, you can stay informed by:

- Attending public meetings during the design phase and other meetings just prior to construction.
- Inviting Mn/DOT representatives to discuss the project at your business association or group meetings.
- Sharing what you've learned with other business people, using letters, newsletters, ads and other techniques to make the community more aware of what's ahead.
- Staying in touch with the Mn/DOT project manager, once construction begins. Learn the project manager's name and phone number and where the project field office is located.
- Establishing a line of communications. Call if you have questions. You may identify one of your members as the point person to collect questions and concerns, to take them to the project manager, and to bring back responses and other information. When warranted, the point person may wish to attend periodic meetings between the project manager and the contractors.
- Identifying key business people to whom Mn/DOT can mail or fax news releases and project updates.

Handling traffic

Ideally, a contractor can repair or rebuild a road more quickly and less expensively if all traffic is removed during the work. But that is not feasible many times if Mn/DOT is to maintain access to businesses and minimize the impacts on them or if an adequate detour is not available.

When front access is critical, we accommodate traffic in two ways:

Under construction but open to traffic
This alternative is used on high-volume highways like the Interstate or on multilane roads where one lane can be rebuilt while traffic is restricted on the other, or for resurfacing on low-volume roads where suitable detours are not available and the project can be done one lane at a time with signs or flag persons to direct traffic.

Road closed to through traffic, open to local traffic
"Through traffic" means those vehicles that don't have an origin or destination inside the work zone.

Detour signs direct them to an alternate route around the work zone. We usually keep the detour length to a minimum, making certain the road is in good condition and capable of safely handling heavy traffic, including trucks. An important consideration is whether travelers can follow the detour easily.

When a road is closed to through traffic, the "through traffic" driver who does not have an origin or a destination within the work zone is subject to a traffic ticket.

"Local traffic" means those drivers who *do* have an origin or destination within the work zone. This includes people who need access to their homes, their visitors, businesses making deliveries or pickups, school buses, emergency vehicles, business owners, their customers and employees.

When someone needs access in the work zone, we ask them to minimize their use of the road. This can be done by using side roads that intersect close to the destination.

The reason we restrict local traffic is because the work zone may be filled with dozens of trucks, earthmovers and other equipment, all moving in different directions. When local traffic is heavy, the contractor needs to hire flag persons to direct traffic and prevent collisions between drivers' vehicles and construction equipment. The heavier the traffic, the greater the danger of collisions, delays for everyone, and cost.

Handling traffic

While the contractor is required to maintain a safe and adequate path on which local traffic can drive, the roadway may be bumpy, dusty, or muddy. Occasionally, the contractor may provide a temporary path on gravel adjacent to the construction. Sometimes, the road may be temporarily closed to all traffic and only maintained for emergency vehicles. It may be a few hours or a few days, and Mn/DOT works hard to keep that time as short as possible. Important deliveries can be scheduled with the contractor and the project manager.

Concrete pavement requires a “cure” time of three to seven days, depending on the amount of cement in the concrete. If access is given to businesses during this time period, it is necessary to provide a “gap” in the pavement. Such gaps require the paving contractor to stop operations, move the paver ahead and restart the entire operation. The contractor must then fill the gaps at a later date.

Pavement gaps delay project completion, compromise ride quality and increase costs. Businesses may be approached by the paving contractor to work with them to

eliminate the need for paving gaps. Without paving gaps, contractors can pave nearly a mile a day. With gaps, the production can be cut in half or worse. That means overall construction will take longer. The goal of everyone is to get the project completed as quickly as possible, at a reasonable cost. Businesses may consider closing shop for a few days to enable earlier project completion. Or they may share gaps with other businesses to reduce the number of gaps.

Reducing traffic

Businesses and Mn/DOT walk a fine line together, seeking to reduce traffic on the highway under construction so that contractors can complete their work efficiently, quickly and safely, while maintaining the traffic stream so that customers and employees can reach the businesses as easily as possible.

When four lanes are reduced to two lanes, or when two lanes are narrowed to one, it becomes essential to reduce traffic by a significant amount. Even when the highway capacity has been cut in half, diverting 10-20 percent of the traffic to other routes can keep the traffic stream workable for both drivers and the contractor. That permits the remaining 80-90 percent of the traffic to flow through the work zone at a reasonable speed and for drivers to reach businesses, industries, and residences along the route.

Traffic is like an overflowing river: it takes the path of least resistance. It may follow a marked detour route. But most local traffic spills onto nearby streets and roads with which drivers are familiar, each driver finding his or her own special way to circumvent construction.
When the highway is being reconstructed "under traffic," Mn/DOT suggests drivers use alternate routes.

How businesses can help reduce traffic
Here is a checklist of ways in which business can help reduce traffic jams during construction:

- ❑ Tell your customers and employees about traffic restrictions. Distribute brochures, flyers and paycheck stuffers. Inserts with regular customer billings can be very effective.
- ❑ Help your suppliers and their truck drivers identify alternate routes to your business or industry. Do this *before* construction starts.
- ❑ Consider routes for your outgoing vehicles to avoid the work zone or schedule shipments at nonpeak times.
- ❑ Establish a company-sponsored carpool or vanpool program, or encourage employees to use existing programs.
- ❑ Look into starting a company shuttle to take employees to and from park-and-ride lots at locations outside the construction area.
- ❑ Investigate flextime or four-day work weeks that reduce employee travel during rush hours from 7 to 9 a.m. and 3 to 6 p.m. weekdays.
- ❑ Consider telecommuting or other strategies that allow employees to work at home.

Keeping customers informed

Drivers who are well informed about road construction tend to be “happy campers,” inconvenience notwithstanding. After all, it’s essential for drivers to understand why the improvement is desirable. They know about construction before they leave home, rather than being surprised by the sudden appearance of barricades, orange barrels, and Road Closed signs. They’ve been told about roads that are closed or restricted; they follow and sense the construction progress being made; and they've given some thought to other ways around construction either by studying the map or checking out possible alternate routes on their own rather than fuming in frustration as their vehicles sit in a long line of stop-and-go traffic.

Mn/DOT has stepped up the flow of road work information to the public. We use changeable electronic message signs to advise drivers when delays are expected and to safely steer them through or around construction zones. Communications professionals use a variety of techniques to inform drivers about projects, their value to the public, and traffic detours or restrictions that might affect the public. News releases provide valuable background information to news media. News stories and interviews with TV, radio and newspaper reporters can be set up. Major projects with significant traffic impacts warrant brochures, generally with maps, that clarify the work ahead, detours, and alternate routes. Telephone recordings are used to bring inquiring drivers up to date. And the Public Affairs Coordinator in each of Mn/DOT’s eight districts statewide is a convenient, available information source for drivers needing help.

How businesses can keep the customers coming:

- Mn/DOT may permit businesses to have directional signs in construction zone.
- Contact the project manager to make certain that the sign you contemplate complies with Mn/DOT guidelines.
- Use simple maps to tell your customers about the best alternate routes to reach your business. Post them on your doors and bulletin boards, insert them into billings and other mailings and distribute them to your customers. Be especially mindful of customers who come a long distance and may be unfamiliar with local streets and roads.

- Let the public know that you’re open for business. Develop ads for newspaper, radio or television. Pool your resources for group advertising. Advertising cooperatively can be very cost-effective. Brainstorm for innovative ideas to promote your businesses.

Tips for businesses:
how to survive road construction

Here are some basic actions business owners can take to help survive roadway construction:

- Plan ahead as much as possible; get involved early.
- Form an alliance with other businesses in your locale.
- Attend public meetings to stay informed. Have knowledge of the project. Contact Minnesota Department of Transportation to voice your concerns.
- Hold frequent and regular meetings with other businesses for support and strategies. Write down your fears and questions for discussion.
- Pool resources to purchase group advertising.
- Hold a pre-construction meeting with the Mn/DOT project manager and contractor to find out how long the project will take, what to expect, i.e. dirt, mud, ground shaking, etc.
- Meet the on-site project manager. Keep his/her telephone number in a handy place.
- Establish a line of communication with the project manager. Project managers coordinate with the contractor.

Brainstorm for innovative ideas to promote your business and to communicate with customers:

- Hold events prior to construction start-up to draw attention to the area.
- Work with the Mn/DOT Community Relations Coordinator to plan groundbreaking activities.
- Get the “Open for Business” logo from Mn/DOT Community Relations Coordinator so all affected merchants can use it during the construction period.
- Hold special promotions such as free hot dogs and pop, or a one-day sign-up in parking lot for a free vacation.
- Print placemat advertisements or car flyers.
- Place advertisements in outlying newspapers, radio or local shoppers.
- Plan hard-hat promotions—some for sale, some as giveaways.
- Sell hard-hat lunches to go or offer construction specials.
- Schedule a grand finale—work with the Mn/DOT Community Relations Coordinator to plan ribbon cutting ceremonies; plan street dance, t-shirts, prizes.
- _____
  _____

Worksheet

CHECKLIST & TIMELINE for business owners

TASK - 12 to 18 months ahead

- ☐ Attend first meeting with Mn/DOT staff responsible for project design. Discuss "In This Together" 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. Provide Mn/DOT staff with contact information for group leaders.
- ☐ Form committees for signing, advertising, promotions, special events, etc.
- ☐ Develop promotional campaign:
    - Adopt theme
      *Delegated to:*_____ *Due by:*__/__/__
    - Design and produce newspaper, television, and radio advertisements
      *Delegated to:*_____ *Due by:*__/__/__
    - Brainstorm and produce additional promotional materials
      *Delegated to:*_____ *Due by:*__/__/__
    - Plan special events
      *Delegated to:*_____ *Due by:*__/__/__

TASK - 3 to 6 months ahead

- ☐ Attend second meeting with Mn/DOT staff.
- ☐ Discuss "In This Together" and participate in question and answer session.
- ☐ Meet Mn/DOT project engineer.
- ☐ Discuss access during construction and other issues.
- ☐ Begin work on signing.
  *Delegated to:*_____ *Due by:*__/__/__

TASK - 1 month ahead

- ☐ Meet with Mn/DOT staff and prime contractor.
- ☐ Discuss project schedule
- ☐ Construct roadside signs needed to guide drivers to parking and business accesses. Arrange for erection of signs to coincide with the start of any detour.
- ☐ Distribute final promotional materials.

TASK - During construction

- ☐ Attend construction business meetings throughout the duration of the project.
- ☐ Continue committee work.

TASK - Post construction

- ☐ Celebratory event (ribbon cutting, dedication, street dance, christening, awards ceremony, etc.).

Marketing Ideas

get the creative juices flowing…

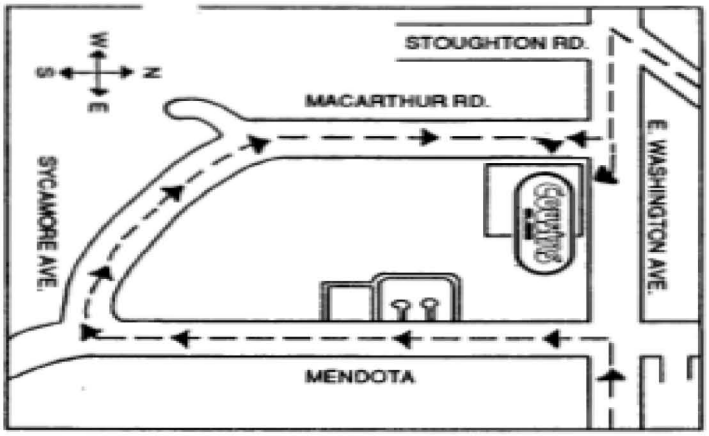
Coupons

Develop construction themed coupons to attract customers to your business during the project.

Marketing ideas cont.

Detour Maps

Develop maps and post them in the store and online to tell customers how to get to your store prior to construction beginning. Maybe even hand them out with every purchase.



Local Advertising

Make sure your customers know you're still open by advertising in local newspapers, television or radio.

Business signs during construction

Communication is essential to the success of every construction project. This includes Mn/DOT's communication with the community as well as business owners' communication with their customers. A great first step is for business owners to attend the scheduled "In This Together" meeting to hear about the project details, detours and schedule from Mn/DOT staff. Business owners will learn valuable information that will help them communicate with their customers.

Who is eligible for Mn/DOT signs?
While some businesses may be eligible for signing, Mn/DOT does not provide signing for all businesses. Business signing in work zones is used to improve driver guidance, create safer operations, and minimize the impact on businesses created by construction activities and detours. Mn/DOT uses the following criteria to decide if signing is appropriate:

- One or more business in the business area must be "traffic sensitive" or "regionally significant,"
- The business area's primary access must be closed or significantly changed, and
- The change in the business area's access requires signing to guide traffic to the new access.

Mn/DOT encourages businesses to use alternative forms of marketing for communication such as advertising, coupons, email blasts or maps to inform customers of upcoming construction impacts.

Business Signing Guidelines for Detours:
When there is a detour required, whether the roadway is open to local traffic only or completely closed, the following signage guidelines apply:

- When the construction zone is open to a local street, a sign may be installed indicating that the road is open to that street.
- In areas where there are four or fewer traffic oriented businesses, sign panels for each specific business may be installed.
- In areas where there are more than four traffic oriented businesses along the closed section, one of the following options may be used:
    - When the businesses are scattered, a sign with the message "LOCAL BUSINESSES" may be installed.
    - When the businesses are grouped in an area, a sign with the message "BUSINESS DISTRICT" may be installed.
    - Major attractions may be approved for signing.
    - Trailblazing signs (trailblazing signs are installed at roads leading to intersections taking motorists to businesses not visible from the road) may be required.

When there is no detour required or the roadway is being reconstructed under traffic and motorists are having difficulty locating the access to the businesses, "BUSINESS ACCESS" signs may be used.

Business signs cont.

If I'm not eligible for signs, what else can I do?
Mn/DOT has worked with business owners on projects in the past to develop business signs at the cost of the business owners. Businesses have had success partnering and coordinating with the project engineer to determine the appropriate size, design and location for directional sign. By coming together, business owners have directed customers to their business at a minimal cost. Business owners should:

- Appoint a lead contact to represent the businesses and develop sign requests.
- Group signs together whenever possible to avoid distractions.
- Lead person should contact Mn/DOT project engineer and make certain all sign requests comply with Mn/DOT guidelines. Some things for business owners to consider are:
    - Signs cannot restrict visibility or impede pedestrian and/or vehicle traffic.
    - Sign placement must follow and respect landowner rights, and city-county sign ordinances.
    - Signs cannot restrict sight distances at driveways or intersections.
    - Signs will be erected further from the road than official highway signs.
        - Business signs can't be posted too close to other in-place highway or detour signs.
    - Too many signs can overload the driver
    - Size – signs that are too small are hard to read so appropriate sizing should be discussed with Mn/DOT project engineer.

Need more information?
Please contact Krystal Ohlhaber, community relations coordinator to address your questions and be connected with the appropriate Mn/DOT staff.

Krystal Ohlhaber
Phone: 507/286-7684
krystal.ohlhaber@dot.state.mn.us

Key contacts

Minnesota Department of Transportation

Please feel free to contact the community relations coordinator for more information on this booklet or any other Mn/DOT construction project questions you may have:

Gary Lovelace, Construction Resident Engineer, East Operations
Phone: 507/286-7530
Email: gary.lovelace@dot.state.mn.us

Mark Anderson, Construction Project Engineer, East Operations
Phone: 507/453-2903
Email: mark.anderson@dot.state.mn.us

Paul Schauer, Construction Project Engineer, East Operations
Phone: 507/286-7538
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Jim Roberts, Construction Resident Engineer, West Operations
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Chad Casey, Construction Project Engineer, West Operations
Phone: 507/446-5858
Email: chad.casey@dot.state.mn.us

Kyle Lake, Construction Project Engineer, West Operations
Phone: 507/286-7558
Email: kyle.lake@dot.state.mn.us

Krystal Ohlhaber, Community Relations Coordinator
Phone: 507/286-7684
Email: krystal.ohlhaber@dot.state.mn.us

Mn/DOT District 6 Office
2900 48th Street NW
Phone: 507/286-7600

Other key contacts are listed on the District 6 Website:
http://www.dot.state.mn.us/d6.html

District 6 Construction News Releases:
http://www.dot.state.mn.us/d6/construct.html

For updated statewide traffic, construction, weather, and travel information visit www.511mn.org.

Conclusion

We hope this workbook helps you to keep your business, and the other businesses in the construction zone, healthy and thriving throughout the construction period. Your customers will appreciate your special attention to them and will keep coming back for years to come. When the project is done, both you and your customers will look at the new road or bridge as a definite improvement. The temporary inconvenience will be just that —temporary. But the new road or bridge will last.