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**Best Practices for the Mitigation of new Streetcar and Streetscaping
Construction on Businesses Within Existing Commercial Corridors:**

A survey of accepted strategies and recommendations
for future implementation.

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Executive Summary

The city of Washington D.C. is planning to greatly expand the reach of their public transportation system over the coming decades and modernize the streetscapes of their historic commercial corridors. This will require a massive amount of construction on some of the District's more historic and potentially vulnerable business corridors. The improved access and development opportunities provided by the DC Streetcar plan stand to improve the overall economic conditions for businesses on and around corridors earmarked for upgrades; however, businesses that struggle to remain revenue positive in historically disinvested parts of the city often cannot bear the brunt of construction impacts in order to reap the benefits of the expanded system.

The city can, however, successfully mitigate the impacts of construction on small businesses to ensure that the economic vitality the District strives to maintain post-construction. By analyzing best practices used in Portland, New Orleans, Kansas City, Saint Paul, and several projects within the District a comprehensive list of successful strategies became evident.

The common failure of construction mitigation strategies comes down to a fragmentation of responsibilities and communication over a number of governmental agencies, private firms, and non-governmental organizations. Additionally, a serious knowledge-based problem with small businesses can create problems with access to capital and assistance to survive business disruptions. The following general recommendations represent a combination of the most successful mitigation strategies from all the studied cases:

- Develop a comprehensive communications plan that filters all public information through a single agency or person.
- Streamline public-facing responsibility for all construction through a single person or agency.
- Contractually obligate contractors and other interested parties to engage with affected parties.
- Provide specific timelines in longer periods to allow for the unexpected.
- Partner closely with NGOs and business groups throughout the process.
- Encourage creative mitigation strategies beyond typical government intervention.
- Provide small business technical assistance long before construction begins.

By implementing a combination of any or all of the above recommendations, the District of Columbia would be able to more successfully implement their plans. Keeping in constant communication with the public and streamlining as many aspects of the projects as possible will lead to a happier public, and ultimately to a higher business retention rate. Furthermore, providing small and local businesses with the tools necessary to run a successful business and maximize their access to capital not only prevents loss of business due to construction, but also creates a stronger network of entrepreneurial entities that strengthen the community and economy of the District as a whole.

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Introduction

In 2005, the District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT) officially declared its readiness to proceed with a world-class streetcar system, effectively setting the stage for the return of the mode for the first time since 1962 and putting into motion a decade-long planning process.¹ The District of Columbia Transit Improvements Alternatives Analysis is often considered as a catalyst due to its role in shaping the physical structure a multi-modal transit system to support future growth in the District.² Since that time, the DC government has undertaken a massive effort spanning nearly every District department to expand the reach of the city's transit program. Streetcars have remained a strong component of this vision, in addition to the DC Circulator, Express Metrobus and bus rapid transit services. The DCAA set forth a broad vision for an increasingly connected capital city, and one that could flourish through the widespread implementation of new, technologically advanced transit alternatives.

The District sees many advantages to improving transit access through streetcar technology. DDOT has publicly outlined five clear goals:

Link neighborhoods with a modern, convenient and attractive transportation alternative. Provide quality service to attract and reach new transit ridership. Offer a broader range of transit options for District residents. Reduce short inner-city auto trips, parking demand, traffic congestion and air pollution. Encourage economic development and affordable housing options along streetcar corridors.³

¹ "The District of Columbia Transit Improvements Alternatives Analysis" (DCAA)

² These modes include the DC Circulator, an express-type bus service that runs every ten minutes and on very specific, fixed routes, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) bringing streetcar-like service with the use of buses, and the Metro Extra service which serves as a hybrid streetcar/BRT system with large buses.

³ "DC Streetcar." DC Streetcar. Accessed April 10, 2012. <http://www.dcstreetcar.com/history.html>.

The DC Office of Planning refers to streetcar technology as “premium transit”, placing it in the same class as the MetroRail subway system.⁴ The office’s projections indicate that the current system-wide plan provided within DCAA and further studies would increase access to premium transit to 50% more of the District’s population. Not only is the system seen as a way to increase overall access to premium transit and ridership, but is seen by the Office of Planning as a catalyst for increased private property values. Planners suggest that interest in development in areas previously seen as undesirable will surge. The Office of Planning estimates that, “The increases in real estate values and development that the streetcar could spur over a ten-year period ... would exceed the projected cost of creating the system by 600% to 1000%.”⁵

Given the ambitious scope of the project and despite its myriad perceived advantages, it comes as no surprise that the plan has its detractors. Existing business owners on commercial corridors slated for infrastructure upgrades have grown suspicious of the District’s plans to eliminate parking that has long sustained their businesses; meanwhile, stories circulate of rent and property taxes doubling or even tripling as other similar corridors’ construction is completed. Neighborhood groups and business associations organize, and often clash about what exactly to do about proposed changes to their neighborhoods, which have often experienced longstanding decline and neglect. Business owners on commercial corridors slated for upgrades fear

⁴ Goody Clancy. *District of Columbia Streetcar Land Use Study*. Publication. January 2012. Accessed February 2012. <http://planning.dc.gov/DC/Planning/Across> the City/Other Citywide Initiatives/Streetcar Land Use Study, 9.

⁵ Goody Clancy. *District of Columbia Streetcar Land Use Study*. 8.

that the impacts to revenue caused by long term street disruption could put them out of business.

This study examines a number of recent case studies and existing District of Columbia regulations and standard operating procedures for construction mitigation techniques. This data will be cross referenced with accounts from business owners and their representatives in the District to determine what methods have worked, and which have not. There will also be an analysis of more experimental mitigation strategies used across the country, and an analysis of their respective potential for implementation on a broader scale.

Ultimately, the purpose of this research is to develop a dynamic set of best practices for the District of Columbia to assist in the implementation of their plans for improving access to public transit and improving street conditions, while preserving the businesses and communities in the process.

Overview of Case Studies

When looking to develop a comprehensive database of construction mitigation strategies for the District of Columbia, it is crucial to look not just at past projects in the District, but also to similar projects from across the country. This study will look at five case studies from other US cities as well as delve deeper into the issues surrounding past DC infrastructure projects. These cases were chosen for their diversity in providing a wide breadth of scale, cost, and relative comparison to past and proposed DC infrastructure projects.

The New Orleans area serves as an excellent place to study both streetcar and streetscaping infrastructure improvements. The city is home to the oldest continuously running streetcar line in the world and has more electrified above ground single-car passenger rail lines than any other American city.⁶ The city is actively working to expand its streetcar system and is also making crucial streetscaping upgrades that have defined its post-Katrina entrepreneurial retail identity.

Completed in 2009 after a thirteen year planning process, the Oak Street merchants association was integral to the completion of the six-block corridor's streetscape revitalization.⁷

Integrating streetscaping elements that are relatively new to the New Orleans area, the street has served as a model for other budding commercial corridors in the city. The project features bumped-out pedestrian crossings, textured pavement at intersections, and



generous street furniture to create a pedestrian-friendly shopping experience that merchants have celebrated. At a cost of \$5.4 million the project is relatively small, but

⁶ "Streetcars." *New Orleans Super Bowl 2013 Official Host Committee Web Site*. Web. 15 Mar. 2012. <<http://www.neworleans-superbowl.com/plan/transportation/streetcars.php>>.

⁷ Stroud, Sandi. "Oak Street - Twelfth on Oprah's List of 100 Things That Are (actually) Getting Better." *Examiner.com*. February 3, 2010. Accessed April 15, 2012. <http://www.examiner.com/article/oak-street-twelfth-on-oprah-s-list-of-100-things-that-are-actually-getting-better>.



the long-term involvement of nearly all the businesses on the corridor make this case extremely relevant.

In addition to streetscaping upgrades, the City of New Orleans has been aggressively pursuing streetcar technology for years. The Canal Street streetcar line has a unique story, very different from that of many of the proposed DC streetcar lines. Canal Street has always served as a transit hub for the City of New Orleans. A streetcar line served the corridor for over 100 years, ending with bus replacement in 1964.⁸ By the mid 1990's, interest had grown significantly in reinstating streetcar service.

Many of the impacts associated with the construction of this particular line were mitigated strictly out of circumstance. The line was being rebuilt where one had run less

⁸ United States. Canal Streetcar Line, New Orleans, Louisiana: Draft Environmental Impact Statement. [New Orleans]: RTA, 1997.

than 50 years prior. Additionally, the cars run down a very wide neutral ground (median) within a mostly six lane boulevard. The neutral ground provides an ideal corridor for streetcar transit serving as a dedicated right of way, preserving operational quality of service for automobiles and parking lanes, as well as isolating construction impacts from businesses on either side. By 2004, complete streetcar service had returned to Canal Street.

Building upon the success of the Canal Streetcar Line, the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority continued its goal of improving access to streetcars in February 2010 when it was granted \$45 million from the US Department of Transportation to design and construct the .8 route mile (1.6 track mile) Loyola Avenue line which will connect the New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal with the Canal Street Line.⁹

Even though the Loyola line is similar to the Canal line in its neutral ground alignment, this distinction should not disqualify this case as an excellent example of successful construction mitigation. Construction of streetcar lines in medians still impact traffic circulation, visibility, and at times, parking during the construction period. Additionally, these cases are still a viable source of information for issues of community involvement, long term planning, and for examining changes in property values, rents, and business retention. The RTA and City of New Orleans have still pioneered several notable communications and construction mitigation strategies that will be introduced in later sections.

⁹ HDR, and New Orleans RTA. *Draft New Orleans UPT/Loyola Avenue Streetcar Environmental Assessment Section 4(f) Statement*. Publication. August 2010. Accessed February 2012. http://www.norta.com/_meta/files/Streetcar_expansion/RTA_env_assessment.pdf.

The city of Portland, Oregon stands in contrast to the work being done in New Orleans. Claiming the title of “First *modern* streetcar system in the country” the city



began the planning process of its eight mile system in the early 1990s.¹⁰ Portland’s streetcars run on a 4-mile route from Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital, through the Pearl District, Portland State University Urban Center, RiverPlace, OHSU, the Aerial Tram and to a terminus at the South Waterfront District.

This complex system connecting several different modes of transit across the urban core was implemented over four phases and began first service in 2001 with the last phase opening in 2007. A new phase of

construction called the Portland Streetcar Loop began construction in 2010 and adds just over seven more track miles to the existing system.

A departure from streetcar specific projects, the City of Kansas City and the Main Street Development Corporations (MainCor) work on the Main Street Streetscaping project is especially notable. In 2008 the city and MainCor commissioned the Main

¹⁰ "Portland Streetcar." Portland Streetcar Inc. Web. 10 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.portlandstreetcar.org/>>.

Street Corridor Streetscape Masterplan.¹¹ The plan identified four key nodal points of interest for focused streetscaping relief, along with making recommendations for upgrading lighting, curbs and sidewalks, and signage infrastructure. Construction began on the 43rd and Main node in the fall of 2011 and was completed in February of 2012, with construction moving incrementally north along the corridor.¹² The streetscaping will assist in the continued redevelopment of the corridor most recently spurred by the completion of the city's first MAX (bus rapid transit) line which began service on the corridor in 2005. Though this project is much smaller than many of the streetcar projects, MainCor developed several interesting low-cost mitigation strategies to protect its businesses.

The final external case reviewed for this study is the mitigation being conducted by a group of arts-based organizations in St. Paul, Minnesota called Irrigate. Irrigate is a joint project of Springboard for the Arts, the City of St. Paul and Twin Cities Local Initiatives Support Corporation. The work is being focused along the six-mile "Central Corridor" light rail plan in St. Paul. Susannah Schouweiler describes the general goals of the project:

Irrigate plans to actively enlist the city's arts community and put them to work in Central Corridor neighborhoods, training artists to lead community development efforts on behalf of the area's affected businesses and residents, with the aim of

¹¹ Brian Clark + Associates, SK Design Group Inc., Lightworks Inc., and Kansas City Department of Planning and Development. *Main Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan*. Publication. February 14, 2008. Accessed February 2012. <http://www.kcmo.org/idc/groups/cityplanningplanningdiv/documents/cityplanninganddevelopment/018165.pdf>.

¹² "The Main Street/43rd Street Streetscape Project." *MainCor*. 9 Feb. 2012. Web. 10 Feb. 2012. <<http://www.maincor.org/?page=streetscape>>.

encouraging cultural vitality and fueling economic growth in those neighborhoods during the construction process and beyond.¹³

This project is an exciting, artist-led initiative that differs completely from any other construction mitigation strategy found for this study.

Summary of Findings

Over the course of interviewing multiple stakeholder groups, a clearer picture of current trends in construction mitigation has become apparent. There appear to be several ways in which the many mitigation strategies can be classified and therefore analyzed. For the purposes of this study, there are four overarching categories in which various mitigation strategies can be separated and further tested for effectiveness, accuracy, and efficiency. First, a summary of common issues reported by three major stakeholder groups will identify systemic problems that have been identified during past infrastructure projects within the District of Columbia. Special emphasis is given to identifying places in which problems seem to stem mostly from communications issues rather than more complex logistical issues that could not have been covered under this time frame.

Next, a summary of successful mitigation strategies will lay the foundation for the final series of recommended best practices for further implementation. These strategies have been vetted from the five case studies introduced in the previous section, as well as through research and in-person interviews of stakeholders in past and current

¹³ Schouweiler, Susannah. "Knight Arts." *Knight Arts*. 03 Oct. 2011. Web. 10 Apr. 2012. <<http://www.knightarts.org/uncategorized/a-plan-to-irrigate-st-pauls-economic-development-through-the-arts>>.

projects in the District of Columbia. These will be further broken down into three sub-categories (contractual and construction-led strategies, direct government-to-community strategies, and non-governmental organization and private sector led strategies) to best identify who and where best to take action for each.

Finally, for contrast and to further test previously mentioned strategies against, a summary of unsuccessful mitigation strategies will be discussed, broken down into the same three sub-categories as the previous section of successful strategies. After summarizing the various strategies employed, successful or unsuccessful, a series of recommendations will clear to move the mitigation strategies of the District of Columbia forward.

Common Issues

When discussing the impacts of infrastructure improvements with the general public, there tends to be a short list of commonly raised concerns. Issues with access, parking, congestion, noise and air quality are always top concerns. When dealing with small and local businesses on historic business corridors, these issues tend to be high priority. These stakeholders tend to come with a unique set of challenges as well. After interviewing affected business groups and community development organizations, it became clear that often the more common issues of access, parking, traffic, etc are often used as a scapegoat for other challenges these businesses face.

In speaking with Diane Burnette and John DeBauche¹⁴ about the Kansas City Main Street streetscaping, they expressed the community's concern about access to

¹⁴ Executive Director of the Main Street Development Corporation and Lead Planner- Kansas City Department of Planning and Development, respectively.

parking and driveways as a primary driver of mitigation efforts.¹⁵ One major challenge in a project like the Kansas City example is attempting to transition a corridor from primarily auto-oriented to a pedestrian friendly environment without forcing the change too quickly. Burnette also suggested that businesses are extremely concerned that there will be access to their doorways at all times and that plans must address access issues. Specifically, she mentioned common issues with designers and contractors planting street trees or placing posts and lighting directly in front of a businesses doorway, where a placement slightly to either way would be better for the business owner.

Another high priority issue for business owners is timeline. Circe Torruellas, Program Analyst for DDOT spoke directly about construction timeline issues causing immense strain on business owners within affected corridors, specifically, issues with effectively making clear what agencies or corporations are responsible for which phases of construction.¹⁶ For instance, while the streetcar tracks may only take two weeks to install, the electricity company needs another week after installation to upgrade their infrastructure. A week after that the city water department tears up sidewalks for three weeks to relocate a main, and finally, the gas company takes another two weeks to install new gas pipes. For DDOT, their construction timeline was two weeks, to a business owner it took six weeks longer than anticipated.

Back in Kansas City, Burnette spoke specifically about the importance of being both vague and specific about timelines. Businesses depend on being able to

¹⁵ Burnette, Dianne, and John Debauche. "Kansas City's Main Street Streetscaping." Telephone interview by author. March 2, 2012.

¹⁶ Torruellas, Circe. "DC Streetcar Construction Mitigation." Interview by author. March 12, 2012.

effectively schedule downtime, but when construction delays put a project off schedule, it affects every business down the line waiting for work to commence. Likewise, integrating other infrastructure projects doesn't just add a layer of complexity for the engineers and contractors, but adds an immense amount of complexity for business owners. Being both vague and specific entails providing stakeholders with an estimate for start and end dates, with some padding for overruns or late starts to allow business owners to generally plan for downtime, but also to prevent resentment when work starts late or runs over.

Digging deeper into understanding the specific concerns of business owners affected by construction activity, an interview with Tim Flanagan and Schuyler Woods¹⁷ from the Washington Area Community Investment Fund shed a lot of light on the specific needs of business owners.¹⁸ WACIF administers the District of Columbia's Streetscape Loan Relief Fund¹⁹, used to offset lost revenue directly correlated to infrastructure projects. Flanagan and Woods talked at length about the painstaking process of determining what costs and losses of revenue are directly related to construction impacts.

Often times, they expressed, businesses in disinvested corridors are barely getting by as is, or in the case of several businesses they have worked with, have already been losing money for years. Instances in which a business already barely - or cannot at all - support themselves can complicate the ability of any agency or

¹⁷ Executive Director and Credit Analyst, respectively.

¹⁸ Flanagan, Tim, and Schuyler Woods. "Washington DC Streetcar Loan Relief Fund." Interview by author. March 13, 2012.

¹⁹ A zero-interest loan fund established by the Washington D.C. government and administered by WACIF which will be discussed further in the successful mitigation strategies section.

organization to mitigate construction impacts. On one hand, infrastructure is being improved in order to bring more private investment and revenue to existing, and future businesses. On the other hand, however, some businesses may be so badly in need of reinvestment that they cannot stave off bankruptcy long enough to make it to the other side.

Finally, it becomes clear that a number of issues complicate business owner perception of infrastructure improvements. For successful businesses, issues of access could be potentially their only concern. However, for businesses already struggling to survive, issues of access, traffic, parking, noise, and timeframe could each or collectively be the death knell the owners have grappled to avoid.

Business owners are not the only victims of construction impacts. Governmental agencies bear a significant brunt of the resistance from affected parties, and often have little control over how to mitigate some of their biggest concerns. Government, by nature, tends to be increasingly complex and fragmented. Splitting up responsibilities for each aspect of a project between multiple government agencies ultimately causes communication deficiencies and poor service to stakeholders. Furthermore, if each agency is not aware of its specific role on a project, communication issues only get worse.

Similarly, communication issues extend to private firms. As mentioned above, Circe Torruellas talked at length about coordination between local government agencies and with private contractors and utilities. Many of the issues the District government has seen in recent projects, however, come down to planning. Torruellas mentioned that the most recent streetscaping and streetcar projects had difficulty mitigating

construction impacts due to lack of long term planning.²⁰ Since the streetcar component was included last minute in streetscaping projects that were already planned, DDOT's mitigation planning was not robust enough to ensure proper communication and coordination between District agencies, utilities, and business owners. What resulted was a successfully completed project that was perceived as a massive headache for business owners during implementation.

NGOs also have a huge stake in the successful mitigation of construction for streetscaping and streetcar projects. These groups, often classified as Main Street organizations, Community Development Corporations, or business owner associations, are highly concerned with the overall economic and social vitality of specific corridors or neighborhoods. More so than individual business owners, these groups understand intimately the needs of the entire corridor and the importance that investment improve long term prospects for the whole corridor rather than damage its image. In speaking with Anwar Saleem Executive Director of the H Street NE Main Street Organization, it became clear however, that the concerns of NGOs are still very similar to those of individual business owners.²¹

Mr. Saleem spoke about access to businesses, parking, and the overall desire to retain existing retail while opening up opportunities to draw new ventures and consumers. Saleem saw the streetcar and streetscaping as an economic development tool, and a way to draw in tourists and other District residents into the neighborhood. He was also concerned with larger event-related issues, like planning for their annual

²⁰ Specifically mentioning the H Street NE Streetscaping and Streetcar and the Anacostia Benning Road projects as a last minute inclusion into Great Streets Initiative upgrades for both corridors.

²¹ Saleem, Anwar. "H Street NE Streetscaping and Streetcar." Interview by author. March 13, 2012.

“What’s New on H Street” festival. To that end, however, issues of access and parking dominated that conversation as well.

NGOs are also extremely concerned with issues of timeline and phasing. It is very important to them to make sure that the majority of their corridor remains intact as often as possible in order to isolate disruption to only a few blocks. Saleem claimed that on the H Street project, they were initially told that three blocks at a time would be the maximum extent of construction impacts. He said however, that in a single day the entire corridor was torn up. Much of this could have been uncoordinated utility or private interest work, but in the eyes of the NGOs and business owners involved, it is difficult to distinguish between responsible parties, and for that matter, really doesn’t matter as far as they’re concerned.

Burnette in Kansas City expressed a similar sentiment when discussing phasing of construction along the Main Street corridor. In their case, they determined that disruption of any more than two blocks would cause too many issues for the corridor. Burnette expressed in no uncertain terms how important it was to the corridor to maintain a proper phasing of construction to minimize impacts on businesses saying, “It’s really important to button things down really early”.

Despite the barrage of negativity that seems to come from discussing the concerns of the various parties involved in streetcar and streetscaping improvements, there are countless positive accounts of strategies that have proved highly successful for all stakeholders. As with the negative impacts, the positive strategies can be broken down into three main sub-categories; contractual and construction-led strategies, direct

government-to-community strategies, and non-governmental organization and private sector led strategies.

Successful Strategies

It became very clear through out the research and interviews that the most important mitigation strategy employed by all parties is communication. Establishing successful routes for the sharing of information and planning of every aspect of a project between governmental entities, contractors, utilities, NGOs, and business owners can yield the greatest returns for the least overall investment. Communication lines are not always easy to make available, but many government officials and NGO representatives made clear that through the use of construction contracts communication from the contractor and other construction-side parties can become a part of the process from beginning to end.

For years it has been commonplace for public projects to have contractual clauses requiring community engagement. Most municipalities now have standard operating procedures that explicitly state minimum requirements for community engagement from all construction contracts. In many cases, however, local governments and NGOs are beginning to require even more stringent contractual obligations for contractors on large infrastructure projects like streetscaping and streetcar installation. These clauses typically include requirements for how often the contractor must hold town hall meetings, how soon in advance of each phase of construction the contractor must notify affected parties, and even in some cases,

provide for stop work provisions if certain parties are not happy with aspects of the construction process.

The advantage of using construction contract documents to control contractor communication is twofold. First and foremost, contractors are typically not concerned with community outreach, specifically. They are hired as a middle man, delivering the plans of one agency for the benefit of others, but are often not inherently involved in the planning process to the end that they would depend on direct community input for the work they are doing. Given that their primary responsibility -to construct a set of plans provided from another organization or agency- it does not necessarily make economic or logical sense in the eyes of the contractor to concern themselves with the community. Therefore, contractually obligating a contractor to engage with community stakeholders gives them motivation to engage in a way that is appropriate and necessary for the successful completion of the work.

Secondly, providing contractual obligations gives all other stakeholders peace of mind that required provisions will be completed as stated in the contract. The consequences of not following through with contractual obligations of any kind for a construction company range from reductions in pay for specified work to costly lawsuits that delay completion and can reduce or eliminate any compensation due for work completed or otherwise.

In terms of a highly successful communications plan with all parties involved, the Portland streetcar stands out. The construction communications plans put forth during the planning phase of each streetcar segment clearly states the primary goal of their communications strategy:

Communication of the construction schedule and information about the project to property owners and tenants in the construction area is vital to the project's success. Portland Streetcar is eager to work with its neighbors, customers, potential customers and the Portland community to mitigate the effect of construction on businesses, pedestrians and motorists.²²

The plan goes on to set goals like developing a comprehensive database of property owners, business owners, and residents as well as developing a signage plan for coordinating traffic, pedestrian, and "business open" signage. It specifically mentions working directly with the construction contractor to complete all of the above goals.

Other responsibilities that the plan puts under the purview of the contractor include:

- Distribute construction postcard alerts giving construction & contact information.
- Provide project signage with contact information.
- Provide daily contact with property owners, tenants, and residents within the database boundaries.
- Prepare press releases in coordination with PDOT of traffic impacts when necessary.
- Attend neighborhood and business meetings as necessary.

The comprehensive list of requirements for the contractor ensures that the communications plan's goals and mission can be effectively executed.

In almost direct contrast to the Portland Streetcar communications philosophy, the D.C. DDOT document laying out District-wide requirements for construction contracting is a much more complex and technical document. Of the eighty pages of stringent procedures for contracting with construction companies, the word "community" is only used a total of four times. A brief section titled "Public Relations" sums up the District's commitment and minimum procedures for community outreach in terms of the construction manager's role:

²² Dannen, Kay. *Construction Communications Plan- Portland Streetcar Project*. Publication. 2004.

Public relations are a major factor in public works projects. The CM must be active in public information and involvement programs, handling complaints and providing the interface between residents, businesses, other city agencies, and the construction forces.

The CM should be familiar with contract requirements relating to public relations and be prepared to cooperate with official PR programs and to monitor Contractor compliance with PR requirements.

The impact of the project on the local community must be recognized and all reasonable steps taken to mitigate or avoid potential nuisance, disruption, noise, and irritants. The CM should notify affected property owners of the contract scope, schedule and start date of construction. On some projects it may be necessary for the CM to provide updates to residents and businesses at some specific intervals or when items such as parking restrictions and driveway access are significantly altered. The CM should carefully review the drawings and specifications during the constructability reviews for loss of driveway access to multi-tenant buildings and businesses and include in the contract documents means for temporary driveways and accesses.

The Contractor is required to notify the property owner in advance of the loss of driveway access. The CM should review the contractor's notification procedures and insure that they comply with their contractual requirements.

The Contractor should be instructed to notify the CM of complaints received from the public and incidents or disputes that arise from construction operations. These should be communicated to appropriate City agencies. Consideration for the welfare of the local community will help to prevent incidents and disputes that can affect the progress and/or cost of the work. Where the local community can see that their comfort, safety and convenience are important and given due consideration, they will be far more cooperative. All news and press requests for information should be forwarded to DDOT public information official for reply.²³

Essentially the document lays out a similar map as the Portland example, but in this case relies more heavily on a construction manager to manage the community outreach. The DDOT approach also includes more broad language, using phrases like “reasonable steps” rather than listing specific action-oriented goals that would specifically address stakeholder concerns.

²³ Washington DC Department of Transportation. *Construction Management Manual*. May 2010. Accessed March 14, 2012. <http://ddot.dc.gov/DC/DDOT/About+DDOT/Publications/DDOT+Construction+Management+Manual+-+May+2010>.

In the Kansas City example, MainCor and the city's planning office laid out an even more specific contract-oriented communications strategy. Their construction documents required that the contractors only work on two blocks at a time, and only on one side of the street. All parking lots and doorways had to have access. The planning team and the contractor held a large town hall meeting to raise initial concerns and introduce contacts before construction started. This also allowed the contractor to follow up individually with issues that were raised at the meeting. Each new two block segment that was started got a new meeting two weeks before construction commenced and each business got individual touch base meetings with the contractor. Burnette described the importance of making sure to "button things down really early" in terms of getting all the stakeholders to the table, and addressing individual concerns before any problems could arise.

In addition to the requirements that municipalities require of contractors in order to open up effective communication lines for mitigating construction impacts, government agencies engage in their own outreach efforts. Often these efforts involve holding town hall meetings, creating email and mailing lists, setting up a phone number for questions and concerns, as well as contracting with third party entities to communicate directly with community members. Communication from government entities tends to be the most important factor in mitigating misunderstandings between parties.

Business owners and other affected community members generally see government agencies as the "instigators" of construction for these types of projects. Despite the fact that NGOs and business groups often work to attract government

investment in their corridors, many infrastructure projects are already rooted in long-term governmental planning priorities. The “instigator” attitude appears to be extremely prevalent in projects like the Anacostia Streetcar extension and has caused a tense relationship between government and the community.²⁴ It is precisely this breakdown in communication that causes further work (utility upgrades, private investment construction) to be blamed on the government and can cause a tenuous “he said, she said” communications strategy regarding who is responsible for what projects.

Even in amicable government-community relationships, however, these kind of misunderstandings can cause community unrest. There are a few examples, however, of government entities that have been able to effectively streamline their internal and community-based communications plans in order to provide effective relief.

In New Orleans, the Regional Transit Authority has worked with the engineering firm of Parsons Brinckerhoff, The City of New Orleans, and a private public relations firm to streamline communications. In interviewing Brendan Matthews and Michael Zeitz²⁵ about the project they had a significant amount of information about their government-down approach to communications.²⁶ A few significant aspects of the New Orleans approach stood out as unique. First, and considered most important to Matthews and Zeitz, is the integration of the project within city hall. The City of New Orleans has a Deputy Mayor whose only responsibility is to coordinate transit and transportation

²⁴ In this case community members have in the past turned down streetcar service and some business owners feel as though they are rehashing issues that were resolved in the past.

²⁵ Chief Maintenance Officer, RTA/Veolia Transportation and QA/QC Manager, Parsons Brinckerhoff, respectively.

²⁶ Matthews, Brendan, and Michael Zeitz. "Loyola/UPT Streetcar Construction Mitigation." Interview by author. April 3, 2012.

projects within the city. Given that this person is housed within the mayor's office, he has jurisdiction over all city agencies and can effectively communicate within the city's multiple departments. Additionally, he is responsible for all press releases and public engagement. Every update on the status of planning and construction must go through his office.

This allows for a unified message and eliminates the "he said, she said" banter caused by a fragmented communications strategy. Additionally, Matthews expressed the importance of owning all aspects of the project within one agency saying, "We take responsibility for everything" meaning issues with the planners, engineers, contractors, and even utilities. If the electrical utility is coming in to perform maintenance around the site, the RTA and Deputy Mayor coordinate the communications strategy to notify affected stakeholders that more work will be commencing, and reset timeline expectations. He went on to say, "There needs to be a clearly defined path to a final decision" but that [the agency] has "gotta be in front of them good or bad" meaning that no matter the news, it must be reported accurately, in a timely and unified manner.

Another layer of government-led community outreach became clear when talking with both Circe Torruellas from DDOT and Anwar Saleem from H Street NE. Both specifically mentioned the work of Margaret Gentry in working with the community on the H Street NE project.²⁷ Gentry's employer AMEC Environmental and Infrastructure was contracted by DDOT to manage the construction with Gentry serving as the on the ground "face" of the project. Both Saleem and Torruellas recounted stories of Gentry being on a first name basis with each and every business owner and resident along the

²⁷ Gentry is an employee of AMEC Environmental and Infrastructure who were contracted by DDOT to act as construction managers for the H Street NE project.

corridor. She would make daily visits to each business and update each stakeholder about any delays, progress, and addressed concerns of each specific individual. Mr. Saleem described her as “the Ringmaster” who was “always able to keep everyone up to date”.

Gentry spoke directly about the difficulty in working with various construction interests, specifically that some firms had on-site outreach and others would merely provide general 1-800 numbers.²⁸ She did speak to the resilience of the merchants and main street organization describing their individual efforts to cope with construction impacts as “fantastic” and that the contractor and individual construction workers were very willing to work with her and the merchants to accommodate any needs.

Having Gentry constantly available to and intimately acquainted with each business owner gave the DDOT a human face and streamlined the communications strategy for the government-led portion of the project. Given the complexity of streetcar and streetscaping projects, having a single point person to communicate with on a daily basis provides for a smoother process for businesses struggling to both overcome financial impacts of the project, but also the frustration of the physical impacts of the work.

Although government agencies hold the key to communication and coordination of all interested parties, some of the most interesting and effective mitigation strategies have come from NGOs and business groups. These groups are uniquely positioned to use more innovative strategies and tend to have more access to information to develop creative strategies. Being intimately involved with businesses on the affected corridor,

²⁸ Gentry, Margaret. "Washington DC Construction Mitigation." Telephone interview by author. April 24, 2012.

sometimes for decades, NGOs understand the specific needs of every type of user of their corridor and can act quickly to address its needs. Additionally, these organizations have unique funding options that can be leveraged to provide another layer of protection for businesses.



In Kansas City, MainCor invented a creative way to calm traffic in construction zones, as well as to show off the progress the corridor was making and advertise their businesses. Called the Main Street “Cool Cat” they devised three distinct phases of the campaign to emphasize the different phases of the project. The first phase, designed to distract drivers from the congestion caused by closed lanes of traffic, and also to



provide safety and awareness of the work being done. The goal was to successfully distract drivers from the frustrations of the new congestion and prevent drivers (and therefore potential consumers) from avoiding the corridor and its businesses during the construction period.

During phase two, the organization provided “cool cat” cutouts to businesses to

display in their windows in order to identify the businesses with the progress being made and to serve as a unifying theme for the project. This phase was implemented during the punch list phase of construction, when corrections and adjustments were being finished up, but major construction was finished. This allowed for businesses to self identify with the “cool cat” image used to calm potential customers during the construction process. The final phase is still to be determined, but will include a further branding with the “cool cat” and the businesses on Main Street in order to show off and bring awareness to the progress made.

MainCor’s efforts to unify the corridor worked in tandem with previously established amenities, having the Area Awareness Officers (AAOs) initiated by the Main Street Community Investment District²⁹ bring the all important “human face” concept to the project with AAOs constantly patrolling the corridor and addressing business concerns. The simple advantage of time and investment by MainCor and the Main Street CID provided invaluable insight into the needs of the businesses along the corridor and provided for a smooth construction process.

Looking to the most creative mitigation strategy, St. Paul, Minnesota seems to be a hotbed of activity. The Irrigate art mitigation strategy along the Central Corridor Light Rail Line in St.



²⁹ Main Street Community Improvement District- works under MainCor and levies taxes from the corridor and uses them to pay for awareness, safety, and cleanliness programs.

Paul has brought together hundreds of community leaders and artists to breathe new life into the corridor in the midst of the construction activity that dominates the street. The group encourages any kind of activity, from performance art, concerts, physical installations, marketing campaigns, etc to bring people into the corridor and support it during the construction. Through a grant from ArtPlace³⁰ and other local arts groups, Irrigate is able to provide small amounts of funding to make projects happen.

Projects include the picture above in which artist Clifford Dodd inventoried the districts black-owned businesses and created posters describing them and depicting their location within the corridor to encourage people to shop there.³¹ Another project by sculptor Gita Ghei will enlist neighborhood youth to create custom planters reflecting neighborhood values to hold native pine trees and be placed at bus stops on the corridor. The project seeks to create a key connection to nature and will include community engagement, as the planters will have cups for water attached and will require watering by community members.³²

The creative strategies employed by Irrigate serve two main purposes; first, to excite the community about the changes and things going on along the corridor during what would normally be a headache; and second, to create a creative brand for the corridor that not only serves to mitigate construction impacts, but also to serve the corridor long after construction is finished.

³⁰ ArtPlace is an organization that provides grants to support creative placemaking.

³¹ "Supporting Black Businesses." Irrigate. Accessed March 12, 2012. <http://irrigatearts.org/site/4f5fb569c0c10>.

³² "SEE D S TREE T." Irrigate. Accessed April 29, 2012. <http://irrigatearts.org/site/4f834da97a560>.

On Oak Street in New Orleans a number of successful strategies were employed by both the contractor and the Oak Street Merchants Association. The streetscaping on this corridor grew out of a need to improve sewage infrastructure beneath the street. The business owners successfully shut the project down three times between 1996 and 2008 until they were finally able to come to an agreement to move forward with the project. Ralph and Audrey Driscoll³³ described four main strategies that, in their words, were able to save their business as well as other businesses on the corridor.³⁴

First, the merchants association was able to work very closely with the city's planners on the project, as well as the contractor and their independently contracted public relations person. The PR person appointed by the contractor on the project did much of the same work as Margaret Gentry on H Street NE in Washington DC. He rented an office on the corridor and was constantly available to solve merchant's issues.

Second, was the general perseverance of the merchants and their extremely organized structure. The merchants organization banded together to place "shops still open" signs around the neighborhood when the city failed to do so. Additionally, they worked closely together on the design of the streetscaping and were able to share tips and tricks each had discovered.

Third, the Driscolls credited the ability to get forbearance from their local bank for their mortgage with helping enormously. Although this example may be a "only in New Orleans" case, they were able to work through the local banks and with the city councilwoman to convince the banks to place the merchants loans on forbearance, and

³³ Ralph Driscoll- President, Oak Street Merchants Residents and Property Owners and his wife Audrey, also associated with OSMRPO

³⁴ Driscoll, Ralph, and Audrey Driscoll. "Oak Street Streetscaping Construction Mitigation." Interview by author. April 26, 2012.

for this specific project, to essentially defer the payments until the end of their loans without accruing any additional interest or penalties. Eventually they were able to receive eighteen months of deferment on their loan.

The final key to the success of the mitigation for the Oak Street merchants was the existence at the time of ARC loans, provided under the stimulus package in 2009.³⁵ Driscoll noted that it was difficult receiving the funds because the banks were unfamiliar with the program and that it required detailed documentation of revenues and other financial documents. Ultimately, however, by the end of construction Oak street lost no businesses due to the construction and has since added 24 new businesses.

The District of Columbia has a locally-based program similar to the ARC program called the Streetscape Loan Relief Fund (SRLF). The program requires that businesses be independently owned and operated, be in good standing in terms of tax payments - or pay owed taxes or rent with received loan money - and be able to document financial hardship or debt resulting from streetscaping construction. The fund consists of a total of \$3 million available to businesses in the form of zero interest loans with relatively flexible terms and as of fall of 2011 had disbursed \$530,000 to five businesses.

Also, similar to the ARC loan program, the SRLF has had difficulty attracting a wide base of applicants because of what seems to be a relatively high threshold of entry in terms of financial disclosures. Many of the businesses in historic commercial corridors affected have one of two problems in terms of financial documentation: first, that they simply do not feel comfortable disclosing their financial information and

³⁵ ARC stands for American Recovery Capital Loan Program and provided loans of up to \$35,000 to small businesses with less than 500 employees who could document revenue losses of at least 20% due to the economic recession. The program finished on September 30, 2010 and was not extended.

second, that they don't have any formal documentation to provide. The second point seems to be the most poignant and serves as an excellent place to focus work to assist with construction mitigation.

Without proper knowledge of preparing basic financial documents and business documentation, it is difficult for businesses to take advantage of any programs available to them to assist with construction mitigation. The Driscolls related an anecdote about a woman who sold homemade soaps at markets around New Orleans and received a grant from the city to open a retail operation on Oak Street. After a few months she was forced to close because she wasn't able to cover her expenses. When asked what she might need to help her meet her financial obligations, she mentioned that the city was sending her a bill every month and she didn't know why it was so much. As it turns out the bill she was receiving was for sales taxes owed on the amount of revenue she was properly reporting, but she was not collecting sales tax from the purchases themselves, so the taxes were literally eating into her profit. In this case, her small business could have been a successful long-term addition to the corridor if anyone had spent a few hours explaining the basics of running her business.

Although this anecdote has very little to do specifically to streetscaping and streetcar construction mitigation it brings a lot of the key points related to construction mitigation together. A large small and local businesses located along historic commercial corridors, regardless of tenure, have little to no experience tracking their business in ways that most banks, government organizations, and community investment funds require for assistance. This fundamental lack of knowledge in terms

of tracking revenue and documentation limits business owner's access to capital, assistance, and ultimately ability to survive any major change in their business.

Conclusions

After analyzing the various case examples and data available about construction mitigation for the scale of public investment being proposed in the District of Columbia, it is clear that there are many possibilities to solve the construction impacts dilemma. No strategy listed herein is a silver bullet, but depending on the specific needs of each corridor, one or more can be implemented in order to preserve the small businesses that make each historic commercial corridor so unique. There are, however, several overarching strategies that seem to consistently show up in the case studies as truly effective strategies that can be molded to fit every community. The following recommendations are to be considered a broad suggestion of many different strategies that can lead to higher business retention rates, and ultimately a much more diverse and successful commercial corridor.

•Develop a comprehensive communications plan that filters all public information through a single agency or person.

This particular recommendation is potentially the most important. As seen in the case studies, communication truly is one of the biggest challenges to overcome in the construction mitigation process. Fragmented communication can only lead to fragmented results. Being able to filter everyone, including private agencies, public

interests, and NGO information through a single voice ensures that the message that everyone receives is consistent and helps both focus and spread blame for any negative issues that arise.

•Streamline public-facing responsibility for all construction through a single person or agency.

Everyday face-to-face contact can never be replaced by 24-hour phone lines, emails and postcards. Having a person who is present on the site day in and day out tremendously affects the business owners along the affected corridor. Having the same person or agency consistently reporting status and efficiently resetting expectations with all stakeholders empowers them to take ownership of the entire project and concede responsibility for every aspect of the project. Putting the responsibility for all aspects of the construction in the hands of a single agency or person gives both the business owners, but also the other agencies involved a clear path to solving problems. Having just one person or office to call with a concern no matter who is *truly* responsible for the problem puts the complainant's mind at ease and lets him or her know that the party taking responsibility is concerned about their issue, will solve it, and any other issues that may come up will be solved in an equally expeditious way.

•Contractually obligate contractors and other interested parties to engage with affected parties.

It is not in the inherent interests of a general contractor to spend any more time or money necessary engaging with the community than they have to. Contractually obligating general contractors to engage with the community in very specific ways can

literally change the entire course of a project. The Request for Qualifications stage of the bidding process should include specific outreach requirements and RFQs received should be stringently vetted for past experience with outreach on infrastructure projects. Contractors that cannot meet the required outreach goals should not be permitted to submit proposals.

•Provide specific timelines in longer periods to allow for the unexpected.

Setting expectations for a path to completion of an infrastructure project can be one of the most difficult tasks of a project manager. Timelines can erratically shift at a moments notice as construction crews unearth previously undetected problems or weather changes work schedules. It is important to give business owners accurate timelines so that they may plan staffing, stock levels, etc, around construction. It's also important to make timelines a little loose, meaning rather than telling a business that construction in front of their space will take place between April 29th and May 7th, it is more beneficial to both sides to say construction will take place between the last week in April and the second week of May. This broader estimation of time allows wiggle room for overruns. Additionally, if construction is slowed for any reason, the broad timeline needs to be adjusted immediately for those businesses that have been quoted times later on, so that they may also reset their expectations and preparations.

•Partner closely with NGOs and business groups throughout the process.

NGOs and business organizations literally stand on the front line of commercial corridor success every single day. Given their experience in the communities they serve, there is no single person or business that can better defend the interests of the

corridor or provide guidance on how to move forward with investment. These organizations also have the capacity and funding mechanisms to provide their own mitigation strategies that potentially better serve the community better than any of the above strategies.

•Encourage creative mitigation strategies beyond typical government intervention.

Finding funding sources to encourage small scale mitigation efforts by artists, community leaders, and business people can far outperform any government mitigation programs. The perspective of local voices can transform the community during the construction process and will continue to serve the community long after the “business still open” signs and orange cones have left.

•Provide small business technical assistance long before construction begins.

Plenty of resources are available to assist affected businesses with financial hardship during the construction process, but the problem stems with access. Businesses who cannot provide financial data or accurate figures concerning their revenue cannot begin to access the programs that propose to help them. The result is that the financial programs available either go underutilized or serve only to benefit businesses that have access to more sophisticated tools.

Existing small business technical assistance programs should be targeted to more specifically phase the D.C. Streetcar plan for the longterm needs of small businesses so that training can be performed on corridors slated for upgrades long before construction begins. In the case of the Streetscape Relief Loan Fund, businesses are required to provide a full two fiscal years worth of profit and loss

statements. Training sessions should be offered for businesses on corridors slated for construction at least two years before construction begins to allow business owners to get their financial information in order, and ultimately, better strengthen their businesses financial hardiness to prepare for the revenue losses during construction. If businesses are better able to prepare for potential revenue losses during construction, they would ostensibly require less in terms of financial support during construction, and better prepare them to reap the benefits of the upgrades after construction ceases.

The act of mitigating construction due to public infrastructure improvements can be difficult and often times requires a longterm commitment to trying new and creative techniques to best accomplish the project goals. Mitigation of construction impacts is not just something done because it's popular. In streetscaping and streetcar construction projects the mitigation strategies serve several purposes. As mentioned above, construction on commercial corridors can affect business owners in a number of ways. Negatively affecting a potentially vulnerable group of people whom the project was initially designed to benefit does not suit the goals of the municipality, the business owners, or the contractors.

Mitigation strategies also serve the users of the infrastructure being built. If the construction impacts are minimized on pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, transit riders, and shoppers along the affected corridors, the retention of and attraction of new users of the space will only be enhanced. Mitigation of impacts also creates a better quality of life for those living on or around affected corridors, and those who simply use the space interstitially.

Ultimately the goal of public investment in historic commercial corridors centers around improving the quality of life of the users of the space, to increase the economic and social vitality of the space, and to increase access to and out of the space. The District of Columbia is striving to meet these and several other goals by improving the streets and transit systems served by the city. By properly communicating with business owners and users of the affected corridors and better coordinating the efforts of contractors, planners, designers, and technical assistance officers, the city can greatly amplify the positive benefits of their investment.

Implementation of successful construction mitigation techniques lead to higher business retention rates and more efficient project completion. The faster and easier the project is to complete, the faster businesses can get back to work and new businesses can move in to further invest in the corridor. By ignoring the needs of existing businesses all stakeholders involved only stand to lose from the initial public investment. Loss of character, diversity, and vitality could cause the entire project to be for naught.

To the contrary, a successfully mitigated project lends itself to the kind of diverse, economically mixed and successful urban space that the District looks to create. A diverse urban commercial corridor provides a mix of uses in a walkable and transit oriented environment, creating a highly sustainable community.

Ultimately, by looking to the excellent work being done by city and NGO officials in New Orleans, Kansas City, Portland, St Paul, and Washington DC, it is clear to see that successful mitigation techniques come in a wide array of packaging. Through a mix of contractual obligations, community-based strategies, and more creative arts-based

solutions, not only can these corridors retain their historic character and existing businesses, but create an *authentic* brand that will continue to serve the corridor long after construction crews have left the site.

By examining the case studies mentioned above and digging into the existing regulations and standard operating procedures for the District of Columbia, a number of overarching themes became apparent. The most successful strategies have been gleaned from the more construction-oriented approaches, the community-oriented approaches, and the experimental approaches and analyzed for their potential for implementation on a broader scale. The final answer is not an easy one; there is no single mitigation strategy that is guaranteed to work every time.

However, the analysis has shown that there are seven basic best practices, that when used individually or as a kit of parts can serve very well to assist the District of Columbia in the implementation of their plans for improving access to public transit and improving street conditions, while preserving the businesses and communities in the process.

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Appendix A

Portland Streetcar Communications Plan Documents

PORTLAND STREETCAR, INC. COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN PORTLAND STREETCAR LOOP PROJECT Prepared: June 1, 2009

GOAL: To manage and implement communication of design and construction impacts to businesses, residents, building owners, public entities and others who might be affected by the construction of the Portland Streetcar Loop Project.

Target Audience

Property owners

Business owners

Tenants

Neighborhood & Business Associations and/or Coalitions Elected officials

Internal/external staff

General public, community-at-large

Media, radio, TV, newspaper (as well as neighborhood papers)

Transportation/traffic networks

Purpose of Community Relations Plan

- Build a broad base of public awareness and support for the Loop Project.
- Establish regular communications with residents, businesses, property owners and neighborhood organizations in the Loop project area regarding design & construction activities, traffic plans and related information.
- Resolve problems with residents, businesses and property owners in the construction areas.

- Create high visibility “on the street” to encourage open communication with residents, businesses and property owners affected by the construction project.
- Provide information and problem solve during construction in order to allow affected properties to experience as little inconvenience as possible.

**DESIGN WORK PROGRAM:
STAKEHOLDER DATA BASE**

- Establish e-mail data base communication network.
- Meet timeline of 9/08 to mail Fall Streetcar Loop newsletter.
- Integrate Loop LID information into data base.
- Develop neighborhood/business, coalitions, government agencies, institutions, Streetcar Loop Project Advisory Committee, Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee, Portland Streetcar board members, interested parties, etc., into data base.
- Canvass alignment of properties directly impacted by utility/rail construction.
- Organize data base by block or line segment sections for notification purposes.

OUTREACH PLAN

- Set up and staff information tables at high foot-traffic locations along the Loop alignment such as coffee shops, eateries, an athletic center, professional offices and banks.
- Set up Loop briefings to identified neighborhood and business associations.

SIGNAGE PLAN

- Partner with contractor to provide safety-directional and detour signage (contractor responsibility).
- Produce Streetcar project sign and “open for business” signage.
- Contractor will provide customized signs when requested.

WEB & INTERNET COMMUNICATION

- Develop web page to act as a centralized source of information for the public to get up-to-date information on streetcar construction and detours. Create a “3-week look-ahead” section that is updated weekly.
- Provide opportunity for visitors to subscribe to the site, receive project newsletters and email notices about the project.
- Coordinate with CEIC, Lloyd District Community Association and other partners to post weekly construction updates on their websites.

- Utilize free cable access messages when applicable

DEVELOP SPEAKERS BUREAU MESSAGE & GRAPHICS

- Develop presentation, talking points and graphics to present to existing community and business groups within the project area.
- Promote program on streetcar website, newsletters and in public meetings. Groups interested in learning more about the project can request a presentation via the project website, email or by telephone.

CONSTRUCTION WORK PROGRAM

INITIAL CONTACTS

- Contact business owners on alignment. Do drop-in or appointment visits with appropriate persons to answer questions and give information.
- Set up and staff information tables at high foot-traffic locations along the loop alignment such as coffee shops, eateries, an athletic center, professional offices and banks.
- Attend business associations meetings regularly and meet with their representatives and/or officers.
- Attend neighborhood association meetings regularly to provide up-to-date information on Streetcar construction. Set up smaller, one-on-one meetings with neighborhood association representatives.
- Schedule speaker bureau events as opportunities arise.
- Act as liaison between impacted home, property and business owners, and the general contractor to resolve issues as they arise.

EMAILED AND MAILED COMMUNICATION

- Develop and distribute construction postcard alerts to property and business owners, government entities and residents, providing construction and contact information.
 - On Track newsletter via e-mail and website.
 - General information brochures.
 - Technical facts & information.
 - E-notification to specific construction segments of the alignment utilizing the prepared data base and existing website.
 - Meet with property owners and tenants impacted by construction
- ### SCHEDULED NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITIES

- Neighborhood & business association, coalition presentations
Interested parties are likely to include:
Portland Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee
Lloyd District Community Association (LDCA)
Lloyd District Transportation Management Association (TMA)
Oregon Convention Center
OMSI
Portland Trail Blazers
Kerns Neighborhood Association
Buckman Neighborhood Association
Central Eastside Industrial Council (CEIC)
Hosford-Abernethy Neighborhood Association (HAND)
NE Broadway Business Association
Boise Neighborhood Association
Eliot Neighborhood Association
Irvington Neighborhood Association

Sullivan's Gulch Neighborhood Association
Pearl Neighborhood Association
Pearl Business Association
Northwest Neighborhood Association
Bicycle Transportation Alliance
Willamette Pedestrian Coalition
Community-at-Large

- Canvassing
 - Neighborhood walks
 - Tabling at local businesses
 - Coffees
 - Information board displays at prominent locations
- MEDIA STRATEGY
- Develop press strategy with PDOT, PDC
 - Provide media with project names & telephone numbers
 - Draft and distribute press releases for newsworthy events
 - Plan & organize press conferences and media events at milestones
 - Respond to media inquiries
 - Develop monthly message for cable bulletin boards
 - Provide updated articles for neighborhood newsletters
- Primary Medias
- Oregonian
 - The Portland Tribune

- The Daily Journal of Commerce
- SE Examiner
- Neighborhood & business newsletters
- Radio/TV
- Cable

SPECIAL EVENTS

- Groundbreaking event for track construction
 - Grand Opening weekend
 - Others as identified
- PSI #2381
-

PORTLAND STREETCAR, INC. COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN JANUARY 1999

GOAL: To manage and implement communication of construction impacts to businesses, residents, building owners, public entities and others who might be affected by the construction of the Portland Streetcar.

Target Audience

Property owners

Business owners

Tenants

Neighborhood & Business Associations and/or Coalitions Elected officials

Internal/external staff

General public, community-at-large

Media, radio, TV, newspaper (as well as neighborhood papers)

Transportation/traffic networks

PRE-CONSTRUCTION WORK PROGRAM:

DEVELOP DATA BASE

- Set up e-mail communication network
- Meet timeline of 1/20/99 to mail Streetcar newsletter
- Integrate existing LID information into data base
- Develop neighborhood/business, coalitions, government agencies, institutions, Streetcar Citizens Advisory Committee, Portland Streetcar board members, interested parties, etc., into data base

- Canvass alignment of properties directly impacted by utility/rail construction
- Organize data base by block or line segment sections for notification purposes
DEVELOP SIGNAGE PLAN
- Safety-directional (contractor responsibility)
- Streetcar project sign
- Contractor will provide customized signs when requested
SET UP WEB PAGE/CABLE MESSAGES
- Web page initiation including weekly construction updates
- Utilize free cable access messages when applicable
DEVELOP SPEAKERS BUREAU MESSAGE & GRAPHICS

Comm.Plan.PSI.4.19.05 5/6/2012

IMPLEMENTATION WORK PROGRAM

INITIAL CONTACTS

- Contact business owners on alignment. Do drop-in or appointment visits with appropriate persons to answer questions and give information.
- Attend business associations meetings regularly & meet with their representatives and/or officers.
- Attend neighborhood association meetings regularly to provide up-to-date information on

Streetcar construction. Set up smaller, one-on-one meetings with neighborhood association representatives.

- Schedule speaker bureau events as opportunities arise.

MAILED COMMUNICATION

- On Track newsletter (2-3 more editions)
- General information brochures
- Technical facts & information
- Notification to specific construction segments of the alignment utilizing the prepared data base.

SCHEDULED NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITIES (as needed)

- Neighborhood walks
- Canvassing
- Tabling at local businesses
- Coffees
- Information board displays at prominent locations

MEDIA STRATEGY

- Provide media with project names & telephone numbers
- Draft and distribute press releases for newsworthy events
- Plan & organize press conferences and media events at milestones
- Respond to media inquiries

- Develop monthly message for cable bulletin boards
- Provide updated articles for neighborhood newsletters

Primary Medias

- Oregonian
- Neighborhood & business newsletters
- Weekly newspapers
- Radio/TV
- Cable

SPECIAL EVENTS

- Streetcar Citizen Advisory Committee sponsored construction workshop, 2/23/99
- Groundbreaking event for track construction, 4/5/99
- Holiday moratorium (annual Christmas and Rose Festival moratorium)
- Grand Opening weekend, July 20-22, 2001
- Others as identified

CONSTRUCTION COMMUNICATION PLAN PORTLAND STREETCAR PROJECT RIVERPLACE EXTENSION HARRISON ROADWAY

FEBRUARY 2004

Construction of the Portland Streetcar 6 tenths of a mile to RiverPlace is scheduled to commence in February 2004. Advance utility work began in December 2003. Communication of the construction schedule and information about the project to property owners and tenants in the construction area is vital to the project's success. Portland Streetcar is eager to work with its neighbors, customers, potential customers and the Portland community to mitigate the effect of construction on businesses, pedestrians and motorists.

Purpose of Construction Communication Plan

- Build a broad base of public awareness and support for Portland Streetcar.
- Establish regular communications with residents, businesses, property owners and neighborhood organizations in the project area regarding construction activities, traffic plans and related information.
- Resolve problems with residents, businesses and property owners in the construction areas.
- Create high visibility “on the street” to encourage open communication with

residents, businesses and property owners affected by the construction project.

- Provide information and problem solving during construction in order to allow affected properties to experience as little inconvenience as possible.

Target Audience

Business & property owners

Tenants

Neighborhood and business organizations General public, community at-large Media, radio, TV, newspapers

Pre-construction Work Program

- Develop a RiverPlace Portland Streetcar Extension Construction Communication Plan.
- Develop a database of property owners, businesses and residents that will be affected by the impacts of the Project.
- Develop a signage plan, including coordinating traffic, pedestrian and “business open” signage with the construction contractor.

- Maintain a project web page which, in addition to general project information, provides a 3-week look-ahead of construction activities which will be updated weekly.
(www.portlandstreetcar.org)
- Create, produce and distribute informational handout materials, construction updates and one newsletter near the completion of the project.
- Participate in neighborhood and business association meetings and other neighborhood activities to communicate the project objectives, status, schedule, etc.
- Develop and manage a speaker's bureau. **Construction Work Plan**
- Distribute construction postcard alerts giving construction & contact information.
- Provide project signage with contact information.
- Provide daily contact with property owners, tenants and residents within the data base boundaries.
- Prepare press releases in coordination with PDOT of traffic impacts when necessary.
- Attend neighborhood and business meetings as necessary.
- Act as a liaison between impacted properties and the general contractor.

CONSTRUCTION COMMUNICATION PLAN PORTLAND STREETCAR PROJECT RIVERPLACE EXTENSION JANUARY 2004

Prepared by Kay Dannen

Construction of a continuation of the Portland Streetcar .6 tenths of a mile to RiverPlace started in late 2003. Communication of the construction schedule and information about the project is vital to the project's success. Portland Streetcar is eager to work with its customers, potential customers and the Portland community to mitigate the effect of construction on businesses, pedestrians and motorists.

Target Audience

Business & property owners

Tenants

Neighborhood and business organizations Elected officials

Internal/external staff

General public, community-at-large Media, radio, TV, newspapers

Transportation/traffic networks

Pre-construction Work Program

- Develop a database of property owners, businesses and residents along the alignment.
- Develop signage plan, traffic & pedestrian management, business signage.
- Create, produce and distribute informational handout materials.
- Develop and manage a speaker's bureau & graphics.



Construction Work Plan

- Construction postcard alerts giving construction & contact information.
- Daily contact with property owners, tenants and residents within the data base boundaries.
- Press releases through PDOT of traffic impacts when necessary.
- Attend neighborhood and business meetings as necessary.
- Act as liaison between impacted properties and the general contractor.
- Manage a 3-week look ahead of construction impacts on web page.

Construction Communication Plan 05/06/2012

Appendix B

Streetscape Loan Relief Fund Application / Documentation

 WACIF <small>Washington Area Community Investment Fund</small>	 DSLBD <small>DC Department of Small & Local Business Development</small>
<p>Washington Area Community Investment Fund 3624 12th Street, NE Washington DC, 20017 Phone: 202-529-5505 www.wacif.org</p>	<p>District of Columbia Department of Small and Local Business Development 441 4th Street NW Suite 970N Washington, DC, 20001 Phone: 202-727-3900 www.dslbd.dc.gov</p>



Streetscape Relief Loan Fund (SRLF) Fact Sheet – October 2011

- ***The SRLF was established to provide interest-free loans to retail businesses inside or adjoining a streetscape construction or rehabilitation project***
- ***To be eligible for the loan fund, the business in question must:***
 - o Be independently owned, operated, and controlled;
 - o Be licensed to operate and in good standing with DCRA;
 - o Have a Clean Hands Certificate from the Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR) or state that the loan will be used to pay back taxes due to OTR;
 - o Demonstrate financial hardship or debt resulting from, or accumulated during, the streetscape construction or rehabilitation in the District.
- ***Street vendors and regional or national franchises are ineligible for the SRLF***
- ***Eligible recipients of loans from the SRLF can use the proceeds for:***
 - o Working capital;
 - o Inventory;
 - o Repair of furniture, fixtures, machinery, or equipment;
 - o Contract cash flow assistance;
 - o Payment of taxes due the Office of Tax and Revenue;
 - o Payment of overdue rent for lease of retail business space affected by the streetscape construction or rehabilitation project;
 - o Payment of overdue mortgage of retail business space affected by the streetscape construction or rehabilitation project;
 - o Payment of other substantiated financial debt affecting the retail business derived from the streetscape construction or rehabilitation project;
 - o Payment of any fees or costs that may be associated with the loan process including 2.5% commitment fee. Commitment fee will sustain loan fund operations.
- ***To apply, be ready to provide:***
 - o Completed loan application (provided by WACIF or community partner);
 - o Financial status and evidence of hardship, including, but not limited to, tax returns, balance sheet(s), and profit and loss statements;
 - o Clean Hands Certification from the Office of Tax and Revenue or statement that the loan sought will be used to pay outstanding taxes owed the Office of Tax and Revenue together with tax bills;
 - o Certificate of Good Standing and license to operate the retail business from the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs.

Any additional questions may be directed to info@wacif.org or by calling (202) 529-5505. Thank you for your interest in the Streetscape Relief Loan Fund!

Streetscape Relief Loan Fund Application

November 2011

 WACIF <small>Washington Area Community Investment Fund</small>	DSLBD  <small>DC Department of Small & Local Business Development</small>
Washington Area Community Investment Fund 3624 12 th Street, NE Washington DC, 20017 Phone: 202-529-5505 www.wacif.org	District of Columbia Department of Small and Local Business Development 441 4 th Street NW Suite 970N Washington, DC, 20001 Phone: 202-727-3900 www.dslbd.dc.gov

Washington Area Community Investment Fund
APPLICATION FOR STREETSCAPE PROJECT RELIEF LOAN

Individual			Ward #		
Name of Applicant Business				Tax I.D. No. or SSN	
Full Street Address of Business				Tel. No. (inc. area code)	
City	State	ZIP	Number of Employees (Including subsidiaries and affiliates) At Time of Application _____		
			Jobs created/retained for low- to moderate income individuals if loan is approved: _____		
Business Type:		Date Business Established			
Are you certified by the Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) as a Certified Business Enterprise (CBE)?					
Is your business located in a DC Main Streets corridor?					
Is your business located in a Neighborhood Investment Program Target Area?					
Is your business located in another area identified for economic development and commercial revitalization?					

Use of Proceeds: (Enter Gross Dollar Amount)	Loan Request	Loan Request	Loan Request
Working Capital		Payment of overdue mortgage of retail business space affected by the streetscape improvements	
Inventory		Payment of other substantiated debt affecting the retail business derived by the streetscape improvements	
Furniture, Fixtures, Equipment, and Machinery		Payment of any fees associated with the closing and servicing of this loan	
Contract Cash Flow Assistance		Other (please explain)	
Payment of taxes due to the Office of Tax and Revenue		Other (please explain)	
Payment of overdue rent for lease of retail space affected by the streetscape improvements		Other (please explain)	

Credit Request

Total Loan Requested: _____ \$

Term of loan desired – (Not to exceed 5 years beyond completion of streetscape project): _____ Years or _____ Months

BUSINESS INDEBTEDNESS: Furnish the following information on all installment debts, contract, noted, and mortgages payable. Indicate by an asterisk (*) items to be paid by loan proceeds and reason for paying them (present balance should agree with the latest balance sheet submitted).

To Whom Payable	Original Amount	Original Date	Present Balance	Rate of Interest	Maturity Date	Monthly Payment	Security	Current or Past Due
Acct. #	\$		\$			\$		
Acct. #	\$		\$			\$		
Acct. #	\$		\$			\$		

Management (Proprietor, partners, officers, directors) Use separate sheet if necessary. *This information is for statistical purposes only. It has no bearing on the credit decision to approve or decline.

Name and Position Title	Complete Address	*Gender
Race*: American Indian/Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African-Amer. <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnicity* Hisp./Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Not Hisp./Latino <input type="checkbox"/>		
Race*: American Indian/Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African-Amer. <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnicity* Hisp./Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Not Hisp./Latino <input type="checkbox"/>		

Personal Financial Statement

All parties with greater than 15% ownership must provide a Personal Financial Statement and may be required to guaranty the loan

Applicant Name:			Co-Applicant Name:		
Employer (if other than applicant):			Employer (if other than applicant):		
Business Phone #:	# of Years with Employer	Title/Position	Business Phone #:	# of Years with Employer	Title/Position
Home Address:			Home Address:		
Home Phone #:	Social Security #	Date of Birth	Home Phone #:	Social Security #	Date of Birth
Name, Phone # of Accountant:			Name, Phone # of Accountant:		
ASSETS (Omit Cents)			LIABILITIES (omit Cents)		
Cash on hand & in Banks	\$ _____		Accounts Payable.....	\$ _____	
Savings Accounts	\$ _____		Notes payable to Banks and Others.....	\$ _____	
IRA or other Retirement Account.....	\$ _____		Installment Account (Auto).....	\$ _____	
Accounts & Notes Receivable.....	\$ _____		Mo. Payments \$ _____		
Life Insurance-Cash Surrender Value.....	\$ _____		Installment Account (Other).....	\$ _____	
Stocks and Bonds.....	\$ _____		Mo. Payments \$ _____		
Real Estate.....	\$ _____		Loan on Life insurance.....	\$ _____	
Automobile Present-Value.....	\$ _____		Mortgages on Real Estate	\$ _____	
Other Personal Property	\$ _____		Unpaid Taxes.....	\$ _____	
Other Assets.....	\$ _____		Other Liabilities.....	\$ _____	
Total	\$ _____		Total	\$ _____	
Minus Primary Residence	\$ _____		Minus Mortgage Primary Residence	\$ _____	
Total	\$ _____		Total	\$ _____	
Net Worth (Assets minus Liabilities)			_____		

I authorize WACIF to make inquiries as necessary to verify the accuracy of the statements made and to determine my creditworthiness. I certify the above and the statements contained in the attachments are true and accurate as of the stated date(s). These statements are made for the purpose of obtaining a loan. I understand false statements may result in forfeiture of benefits and possible prosecution.

Signature:	Printed Name:	Date:
Signature:	Printed Name:	Date:

Please briefly describe the hardship (both financial and otherwise) endured during the streetscape project, and how an interest-free loan will help your business. Please identify the applicable streetscape project in your response.

In addition to a completed application, please submit the following information:

- Financial documentation of applicant's hardship and financial condition, which should include:
 - a. Profit & Loss for last two fiscal years and year-to-date
 - b. Balance sheet for year-end 2009 and 2010
 - c. Balance sheet for most recent quarter-end
 - d. Tax Returns for last 3 years
 - e. Last 3 months of business bank statements, preferably with same three months of last year for comparison

- Projected Profit & Loss for next three fiscal years in order to show impact of both the loan and the end of the Streetscape

- Clean Hands Certification from the Office of Tax and Revenue *or* statement that the loan sought will be used to pay outstanding taxes owed the Office of Tax and Revenue together with tax bills

- Certificate of Good Standing with the DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs

- Certificate of Occupancy from the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs

Appendix C

4/20/12 Presentation Slides

Best Practices for the Mitigation of new Streetcar and Streetscaping Construction on Businesses Within Existing Commercial Corridors:

A survey of accepted strategies and recommendations for future implementation

Tyler Antrup

Prepared for
Washington D.C. Department of Housing and
Community Development

20 April 2012



System Overview

- 14 years of planning
- 37 miles
- 8 corridors
- 2 small sections complete

Map Source:
DC Streetcar Land Use Study- 01/2012

System Benefits

- Pays for itself in value added
- Increases economic vitality
- Preserves historic building stock
- Spurs development
- Increases access to premium transit



Image Source:
Urbanplacesandspaces.blogspot.com

Oak Street Streetscaping

New Orleans, LA

- \$5.4 million project
- Spearheaded by Oak Street Main Street Association

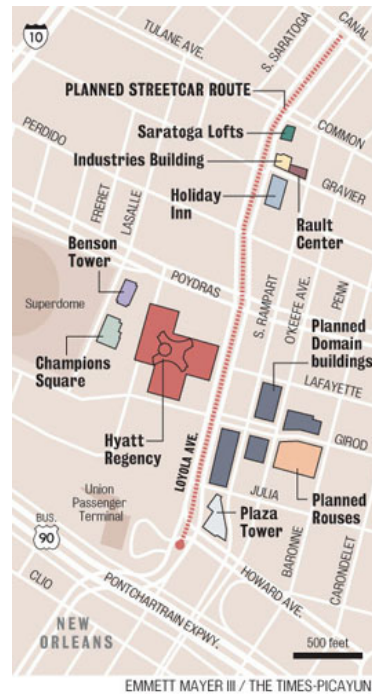


Image Source:
examiner.com

Loyola Avenue Streetcar Line

New Orleans, LA

- .8 route mile line
- Began construction in 2011
- Will connect UPT to existing Canal Street Line



Portland Streetcar

Portland, OR

- 8 track-mile route in service since 2001
- Additional 7 miles under construction now



Image Source: Southwaterfront.com

Main Street Streetscaping

Kansas City, MO

- \$7.5 Million project
- Spearheaded by 30 year old MainCor
- Funded through Main Street CID



Image Source:
Main Street Development Corporation

Irrigate Art

St. Paul, MN

- Arts-led mitigation program
- Focused on 6 mile Central Corridor Light Rail line



Image Source:
Irrigate

Common Issues

- Lack of clear communication channels
- Lack of accountability for every aspect of the project
- Unpredictable timeline and implementation
- Restriction of access, parking, signage
- Congestion
- Symptoms of historic disinvestment

Successful Strategies

- Streamlined communication
- Unify ownership of all aspects of project
- Designated “ringmaster”
- Contractor involvement
- Timeline coordination
- NGO and business group involvement
- Creative strategies

Recommendations

- Develop a comprehensive communications plan that filters all public information through a single agency or person
- Streamline public-facing responsibility for all construction through a single agency
- Contract with an external “ringmaster” to be the on-site face of the project
- Contractually obligate contractors and other interested parties to engage with affected parties
- Be “specific but vague” about timelines
- Partner closely with NGOs and business groups throughout the process
- Encourage creative mitigation strategies beyond typical government intervention

Conclusions

Successful mitigation advantages:

- Increased business retention
- Retain and support diverse mix of historic commercial uses
- Faster and easier turnaround time for proposed development

