



Road Work On Your Street: IDEAS FOR BUSINESSES





For more information:

For up-to-date road work and closures happening in Vancouver:

vancouver.ca/roadwork

Learn more about the City's vision for transportation networks in Vancouver:

vancouver.ca/transportation2040

Learn more about the City's water systems:

vancouver.ca/water

Phone: 3-1-1 TTY: 7-1-1

Contacts for your project:

Project: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Website: _____

Our commitment to you:

The City integrates a service focus into all dealings with citizens and customers, ensures they are appropriately informed and included in municipal decision-making, and maintains the corporate knowledge, data and information in a robust and accessible network of systems to ensure the right information gets to the right people to inform decision-making.

The City is also dedicated to ensuring that Vancouver's assets and infrastructure are well-managed and resilient. The City plans for, develops and sustains the low carbon, energy resilient, environmentally sound, cost-effective, reliable and safe public works and infrastructure that play an essential role in making Vancouver a healthy, safe and prosperous city.

From the City of Vancouver's 2014 Corporate Business Plan

Acknowledgements:

Thank you to the City of Spokane, Washington and the Spokane branch of the Public Relations Society of America for allowing us to adapt and draw inspiration from their "Open for Business: Making the Best of Rough Road Construction" toolkit.

Road work on your street

One of the most important services the City offers is maintenance of civic infrastructure such as streets, water mains and sewers. A street surface can last around 20 years, while water main and sewer pipes can last up to 100. Keeping this vital infrastructure in good condition requires regular maintenance, and keeping up with the dynamics of a growing, thriving city can invite opportunities for structural improvements.

There are two types of projects that may impact your business:

Routine maintenance and infrastructure upgrades

This work includes projects such as replacing old water mains and sewers or repaving old surfaces. These projects are vital for the continued effectiveness of city systems and typically encompass routine, pre-planned work.

Changes to existing roadways

The City is always looking to improve its systems through modifications and upgrades. Examples are changes to lanes or traffic patterns, updates to intersections to improve safety, or the installation of new active transportation corridors (such as wider sidewalks or protected bike lanes). Often, these projects are part of the City's Transportation 2040 Plan, a long-range strategic plan that outlines priorities for road and land-use planning. The Plan is part of the City's larger strategy to ensure an inclusive, healthy, prosperous and livable future for Vancouver.

These kinds of projects require public consultation, and the City is dedicated to engaging with the public to receive input and adjust projects to meet the needs of the community. If a project like this is taking place in your area, take the time to learn more about the Transportation 2040 Plan, attend public meetings, and read about the project on the City's website to learn about what changes may be coming to your street and the benefits they will bring to Vancouver residents.



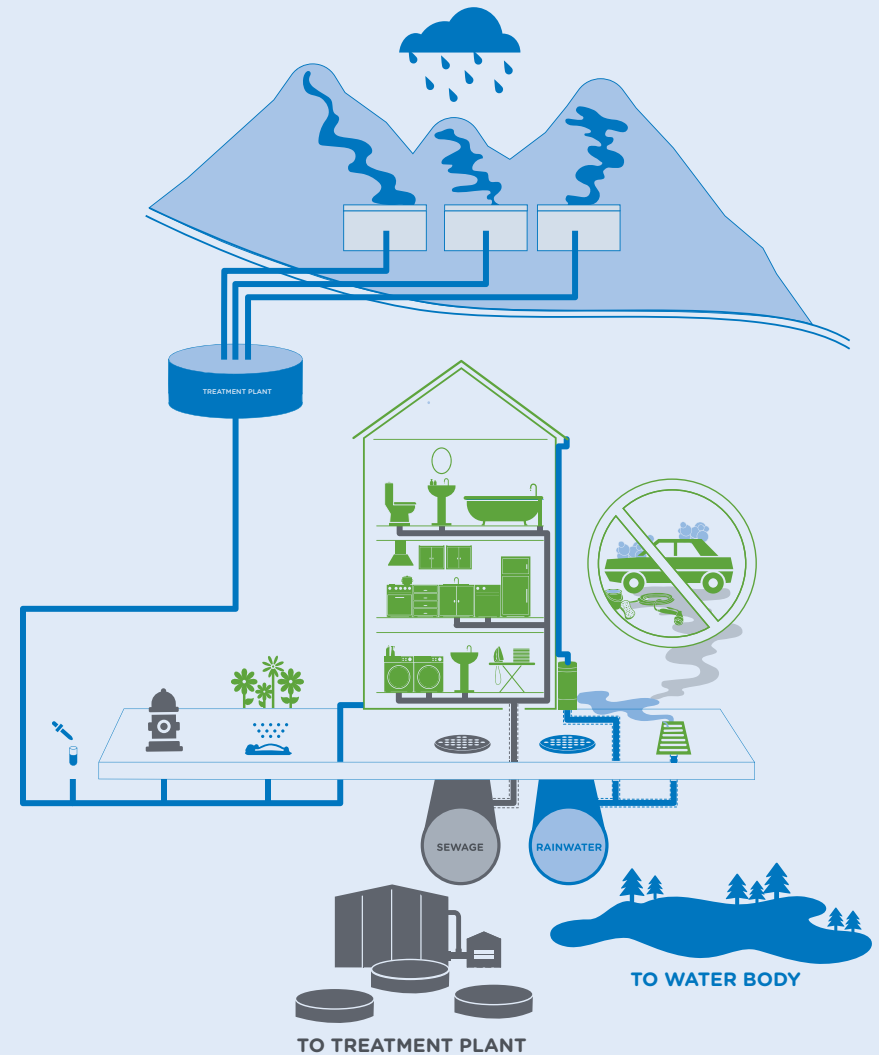
How Vancouver's water and sewer system works

Vancouver's water and sewer system is a complex network of pipes that delivers 114 billion litres of fresh, potable water into Vancouver homes and businesses, and removes excess water and sewage for treatment.

The City also builds on the latest environmental studies to develop systems to collect rainwater and storm water runoff from buildings, roads, and parking lots, to carry into the local waterways, like Burrard Inlet and the Fraser River.

Annual maintenance helps the City of Vancouver extend the life of sewer pipes and water mains. Underground pipes deteriorate over time due to soil conditions and age. Each year, the City replaces 7-10km of water main infrastructure. The life expectancy of an underground sewer or water main is approximately 100 years.

In addition, Vancouver is working toward the Province of BC's environmental goal to replace combined sewer systems with separated storm water and sanitary sewer systems on all buildings by 2050. This will stop untreated sewage overflows from entering our waterways.



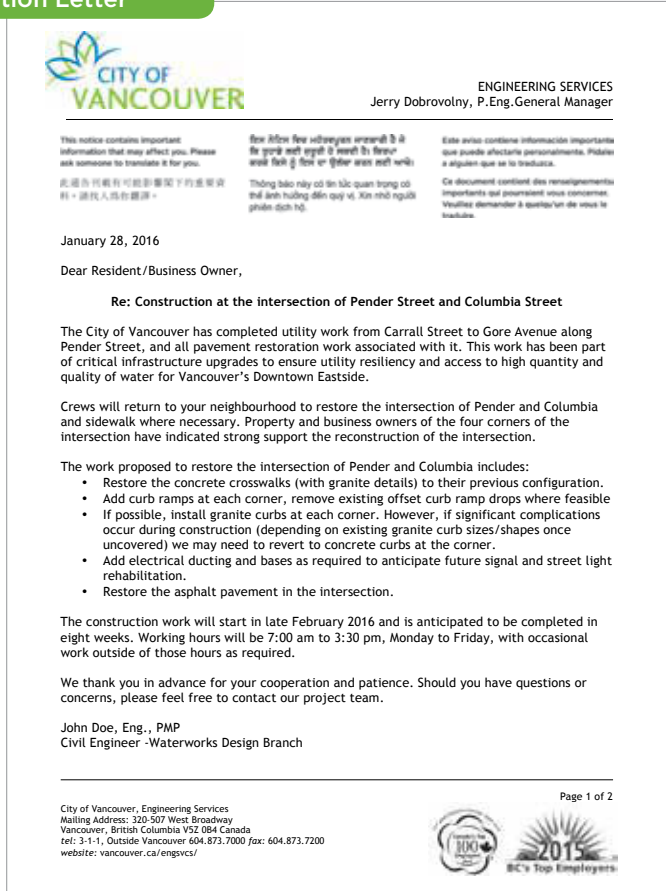
Planning for Construction

While road work can be hard on business, the maintenance, repairs and upgrades will be good for your company and the community in the long run. Plan carefully so that once the project is completed, your business can thrive.

Notification from the City:

Before construction, the City will reach out to businesses within the impacted area. This typically includes notification letters and in some cases, invitations to business owners to attend an information session or an open house. Your concerns, questions, and suggestions are very important at this early stage in the planning, as this is when the City has the greatest flexibility to incorporate changes into the project. We encourage you to attend these meetings, ask questions, and provide input.

Notification Letter



Now what

As a business owner, you are always planning and improving your business model. Take this time to evaluate scenarios for how your business may be affected during construction. Include analysis of the financial performance of your business based on predicted changes during the construction period and for the year as a whole. This will help identify opportunities or adjustments that you can make to your business plan to help your bottom line and allow you to proactively address areas of concern.

Here are suggestions from business owners who have been through construction themselves:

Read the whole toolkit

You may get ideas from the “during construction” section that you’ll want to plan for before construction starts.

Brainstorm

Work with your employees to develop a plan. Talk to them about the process and strategies to stay prosperous during construction. Discuss marketing efforts. Allow employees to share any concerns they may have. They will appreciate the opportunity and the discussion may produce new ideas that will benefit your business.

Secure a line of credit when times are good

It’s important to get a line of credit during good times when sales are up. That way you’ll have it if there’s an emergency.

Inform customers in advance

Put up a sign or send out an email to inform your customers that construction is coming and that you will be open. Openly ask for their continued patronage during construction and let them know of any planned changes to your business. Express to customers that their loyalty during construction is important.

Gather customer contact information

Collect email addresses and start a newsletter (if you don’t already have one) so that you can keep your customers informed of road conditions, changes to transit, and promotional specials during the construction period.

Stay informed about current and upcoming construction projects by reading the City’s website, joining your local BIA, and attending information sessions.



Plan a renovation

Renovations can be tough on business because they involve closing down your shop and losing business. If you think that business may be slow during construction, consider renovating during this period. If you have been planning any improvements or changes to your property that may need or require construction within the street, such as a new water service line or sewer connection, now is the time to get that done. Keep in mind that front access to your business will be impacted by construction, and ensure that if you plan for renovations that your alley or secondary doorways suit the access needs.

Keep your staff lean

If you expect a significant decrease in customers once construction begins you may want to consider keeping a small staff. If someone quits before construction begins, you may decide to keep the position vacant until construction ends. Other options might include job sharing or reduced hours.

Did you know?

The shape of Vancouver's business districts – long and straight – is a legacy of the city's historic street car system, which was run by BC Electric until 1958. The street car system encouraged business development along its routes, which can still be seen today on streets such as Commercial Drive, Main Street, West 4th Avenue, West Broadway, and Granville Street.

Once Construction Begins

Road construction teams are juggling many activities. They will work with you to maintain access to your business and to indicate that sidewalks are open. The City will also post “Businesses are Open” signs within your community. Your construction team will be in touch and strive to give you the best information possible for when work on your block will be complete. However, unexpected events may change the duration of a project and we appreciate your patience and understanding.

Keep your project contact's information close at hand. We encourage you to connect with us if you have any questions or concerns during the project.

Here are some tips and creative ideas from businesses that have been through construction.

Stay informed

If applicable, attend all public meetings relating to the construction project. Be sure to open all City correspondence (which may come by email or regular mail) and adjust your communication plan as needed.

Inform suppliers

Let your suppliers know where they can park for deliveries well in advance. Keep a description of their new drop off spot in an easily-accessible location that you can refer to and send by email or repeat over the phone. Let the construction team know if access to your business is blocked; they will do what they can to ensure access remains open.

Reduce inventory

Reducing inventory, if possible, can be a useful strategy to respond to slower periods due to construction.

Offer delivery

Consider delivering products in order to reach customers unable or unwilling to navigate the construction area. Some creative restaurant owners have initiated a catering business, delivering their meals to customers during constructions.

Sell online

Up your online presence during construction. If you don't currently sell online, consider adding inventory to your webpage. Some shops simply post inventory online (through a website, Facebook, or Instagram), take hold requests from customers by phone or email, then complete the sale in-store.

□ Partner with neighbouring businesses

Consider pooling advertising resources with other businesses in the construction zone to let the public know you are still open for business. This is an excellent time to make use of your BIA, which will be one of the City's main points of contact. During major work along West 4th in Kitsilano, the West 4th BIA coordinated communications, encouraged special events, purchased "Open For Business" advertising, and more to support their businesses during construction.

□ Change your hours

Consider being open later in the evening after construction crews are finished for the day. Be flexible to accommodate customer demands and other perceived needs.

□ Close for renovations

If you were considering a remodel for your business, why not do it during the construction period? Use this period to get things done that you haven't had time to address.

□ Open a pop-up shop in another location

If your business has the flexibility to move inventory temporarily to another location, consider creating a "pop-up" version of your shop. This temporary store location format may allow you to continue to move inventory.

□ Hold a special event day

Coordinate with other businesses on your street to have a sales day, a restaurant night, or another kind of special event (be creative!) during construction to boost business for a night or weekend.

□ Manage your parking

Know what parking is available and provide your customers with direction to parking spaces. Reserve the best spots for customers, even if employees have to park farther away. Encourage employees to use transit or consider commuting by bike or on foot in order to minimize using up parking spaces that could go to customers.

□ Encourage sustainable transportation

Chances are, your business is close to a transit station or bus stop. Encourage your customers and employees to walk or cycle to your place of business.

□ Keep on message

Keep a script next to your phone so that you and your employees have quick and easy directions to provide to customers. Make sure all your employees know what to say and how to say it and update the instructions as the project progresses.

□ Be positive

It can be hard to live through construction, but a positive attitude can make a difference. Encourage and generate a positive, healthy environment to support your staff and ensure retention of valued employees and customers.



Transportation 2040 Plan

The plan supports goals that address the many challenges we face, and seeks to meet Vancouver's economic, environmental, and social needs.

- **Economy** – We envision a smart and efficient transportation system that supports a thriving economy while increasing affordability
- **People** – We envision healthy citizens in a safe, accessible, and vibrant city
- **Environment** – We envision a city that enhances its natural environment, ensuring a healthy future for its people and the planet

Learn more:
vancouver.ca/transportation2040

Tips for getting by day-to-day

Introduce yourself to the team

Create a friendly rapport with construction workers. While the on-site construction crew numbers aren't the appropriate people to contact about concerns, it can improve your experience. Crews may even be a source of business during construction.

Inform the project manager of any concerns

If you have concerns, connect with the supervisor or project leader. They have the authority to take action on your concern. If you haven't already, write their contact information in the space available on page 1 of this toolkit.

Communication is key

As a business owner, you must communicate with the construction project managers, your employees, other businesses and, most importantly, your customers.

Clean more frequently

While there's little you can do to reduce the dust and noise of a construction site you may decide to allocate more time or money for general cleaning and upkeep in order to keep construction dust to a minimum.

Make sure signage is clear

Traffic delays and parking restrictions will be inevitable during a construction project, but signage can help a great deal. See what sort of signs are going up to direct traffic and make sure they make sense to your customers. Construction crews aren't aware of your needs and often it's just a matter of asking.

What to expect

Road work can be noisy and dusty. You may even notice that your shop vibrates during some drilling. Along the street, traffic changes and parking reductions may impact walk-in business. If the work taking place near you is water main or sewer work, crews will dig a trench to install new pipe. You can anticipate the presence of lots of activity and equipment on the road.

After construction



Congratulations! You have now survived a right-of-passage for all urban business owners: living through a construction project.

Now that construction is over, you can focus on recapturing market share and inviting back customers.

Promote the reopening of your street

Consider promotions and advertising to let customers know the streets are re-opened. Promote the new image and convenience of the completed roadway.

Celebrate the project's completion

Take advantage of the opportunity by holding a ribbon cutting ceremony and invite media to attend. Or consider pooling resources with local businesses for a grand celebration and/or shared advertisement.

Support your neighbours

Finally, support businesses from other neighbourhoods that undergo a similar process. Give them your patronage and provide helpful feedback based on your experiences.





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