

# Construction Toolkit

How to Thrive During the Main Street Revitalization Project



A guide to help Main Street businesses thrive during the Main Street Promise road construction, anticipated to last until mid-2026



# About this toolkit

The City of Vancouver is reimagining our historic downtown with reverence to its unique history. Our door is wide open to ideas and concerns from residents, merchants, food and beverage operators, and building owners as we enter the construction phase of the Main Street Promise streetscape project. This toolkit offers ideas, guidance, suggestions, and best practices to help our Main Street merchants survive and thrive in the construction phase expected to begin late 2024.



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Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle

## Letter from Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle

Dear Downtown Merchants, Building Owners,  
Workers and Residents —

We are very excited to announce the upcoming start of a project that has been in the works for 30 years. We are confident that downtown's Main Street Revitalization Project, the "Main Street Promise", will make a tremendous economic impact on our city for generations to come. Whether you are a downtown business owner, a resident, a building owner or an employee at a downtown business, road and sidewalk construction will have an impact. We hope this mitigation plan will serve as a valuable resource guide to help you thrive through this process.

Inside you will find suggestions and tips for ways to enhance and promote your business leading up to and during construction, as well as ways that the City of Vancouver will be supporting you. We will also post updates on our new website: [beheardvancouver.org/mainstreetpromise](https://beheardvancouver.org/mainstreetpromise). Be sure to check the "Project Timeline" often for updated project information. Road construction can be challenging, but the result can be very beneficial for your business and your customers. We look forward to working with you as we embark on this project, with improvements and upgrades that will elevate downtown Vancouver to a top-notch destination that offers economic growth and prosperity and creates a downtown that is safe, accessible and connected.

We hope you find this guide helpful. If you have any additional questions, please visit [beheardvancouver.org/mainstreetpromise](https://beheardvancouver.org/mainstreetpromise) for more details and staff contact information.

Sincerely,  
Mayor Anne





## Executive summary

The Main Street Promise is a transformative project by the city of Vancouver, aiming to revitalize Main Street from 5<sup>th</sup> Street to 15<sup>th</sup> Street. This initiative is a community-led effort nearly 30 years in the making, and will create a safer, more accessible, and connected downtown area that honors its past while embracing a vibrant future.

The project, funded by a combination of American Rescue Plan Act federal funds and local resources, will reconstruct Main Street to enhance safety, foster community, and ensure economic prosperity. With a focus on increasing pedestrian safety, widening sidewalks, improving lighting, and upgrading infrastructure, the project aims to create a welcoming environment for businesses, residents, and visitors alike.

Key improvements and benefits include increased safety for people and vehicles, enhanced pedestrian crossings, new LED streetlights, improved parking design, and upgraded infrastructure such as water

lines, sewer lines, and stormwater facilities. Additionally, the project will improve aesthetics while honoring the history and character of Main Street, encouraging community gathering and outdoor commerce.

The project's guiding principles include honoring and celebrating the history of downtown Vancouver, building positive relationships with local businesses and community members, creating a stronger sense of community identity, and establishing connections between neighborhoods and historic sites.

Community involvement has been integral to the project's development, and the City of Vancouver has actively engaged with stakeholders to gather input throughout the 2023 design process. The Main Street Promise represents a significant step towards revitalizing downtown Vancouver, and will create a timeless and vibrant hub for all to enjoy.

# Plan for success

## Take action to protect your business

Attention Main Street small business owners—road construction projects will likely impact your business. But road construction is necessary—pavement, sewers and utilities don't last forever. Remember, once reconstruction is complete, that corridor is likely to be construction-free for decades, and your business will benefit from the project's improvements. So don't panic. There are things you can

do to mitigate the effects on your business. It will require patience, as unforeseen issues that delay or lengthen projects always arise, so recognize that local government and project contractors are doing their utmost to resolve issues. It's in their best interests to complete projects on time.

To help small businesses survive road construction, the City of

Vancouver created this guide containing tips for surviving the construction process. While road construction can be hard on small businesses, the maintenance and repairs can be good for your business in the end. With this positive outcome in mind, be prepared ahead of time. Plan carefully so that once the project is complete, your business can continue to thrive.

## Get involved early and plan ahead

**With planning, you can lessen the impact of construction on your business.** Construction is expected to begin late 2024, but starting now and working with your suppliers, partners and customers is key.

We're all in this together and can't lose sight of the big picture. With planning, you can lessen the impact of construction on your business. Construction will be done in three phases on your block, with each phase only lasting a few weeks before moving northward, and is expected to last through 2026. As construction ramps up, we will be approaching the inevitable dust, noise, vibration, and traffic delays surrounding construction.

The Main Street Promise construction project has completed the design phase where, in cooperation with local government officials, planning the project, defining the scope of what will be accomplished, studying



the alternatives available, evaluating the impacts on the community or neighborhood, and designing the plans that a contractor will need to finish the improvement are complete. Occasionally, cities hire consulting engineering firms to design the improvement, and sometimes to manage its construction. Throughout the design phase, we held periodic

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

Businesses play a dual role in road construction: first as citizens impacted by road work; second working with the city and VDA to keep their customers coming in and minimizing inconvenience for customers and drivers. Businesses and the City of Vancouver are truly “in this together,” united in recognizing the need for road improvements and the long-term benefits we will all share when the project is completed, and working together to minimize any negative consequences.

One to two years before construction, the City started the process of reaching out to businesses within the impacted corridor. This included mailings to business owners inviting them to meetings for the project, letters about the project, and surveys. Your concerns, questions, and suggestions were very important at this stage in the planning process as the City worked hard to incorporate community input and changes into the project. Please watch for future mailings, and attend meetings to learn more about the project and to provide any input that you may have. For most projects, the City will release bids and hire a contractor during the winter or spring prior to the start of the spring or summer construction season. Once a contractor is hired to complete the work and construction begins, the City will host regular meetings (Coffee Corners) with the contractor and business owners. The goal of the meetings is to share information to ensure everyone is aware of the upcoming construction schedule and pertinent construction contacts. Make sure to find out when and where the Coffee Corner meetings will take place.

It is in your best interest as a business owner to keep informed of current and upcoming construction projects. Communicate with your construction and city contacts, check the City’s website at [beheardvancouver.org/mainstreetpromise](https://beheardvancouver.org/mainstreetpromise) for updates, join local business organizations like [Vancouver’s Downtown Association \(vdausa.org\)](https://vdausa.org), [Downtown Stakeholders Forum](#), or the [Uptown Village Association](#), and attend as many meetings as you can.



## What can you do to help? Stay informed:

- Attend public meetings and monthly Coffee Corner meetings during construction.
- Be sure to open all City correspondence and email alerts.
- Stay in touch with the hired construction team’s project manager once construction begins. Learn the project manager’s name and phone number and where the construction company’s field office is located.
- Establish a line of communication within your business. Consider identifying one of your team members as the point person to collect questions and concerns, to take them to the project manager, and to bring back responses and other information. When warranted, that point person may wish to attend periodic project meetings.
- Identify key businesspeople to whom the City can mail/email project updates.



## Tips for businesses and ideas for success

- Give customers more options to visit; consider changing/ extending your hours and days open.
- Start now. Connect with existing customers more strongly via email, websites and social media.
- Hold events prior to construction to draw attention to you (ex. hard hat sale or a jackhammer party).
- Use positive messaging with “Excuse our Progress” or “Building a Better Downtown” or “Investing in our Future.”
- Offer special services as an added value to the customer (curbside pickup, delivery, online ordering, etc.).
- Capture email addresses to create a customer database you can use.
- Become a destination business that doesn’t rely on “drive-by” customers. Focus on the immersive experience.
- Offer demonstrations or free classes that may lead to more business or new customers.
- Send thank you notes to customers, include an incentive to return within a specific timeframe—for instance, when your block is being worked on.
- If you’ve been thinking about remodeling or making upgrades to your space, this might be the perfect time to coordinate your improvements with the Main Street Promise project.
- Consider using a side or back door as your main entry when construction is happening on your block.
- Communicate project information and your block’s phasing and timing with suppliers and delivery partners.
- Make frequent posts on social media, updating customers by keeping your business on their mind. Best practice is at least three posts per week.
- Offer a “grand” prize—a case of wine, free tacos for a year, or a trip to encourage foot traffic.
- Combine advertising resources with block neighbors, letting the public know you are open for business.
- Share what you’ve learned with other businesspeople and your customers.
- Create unique in-store events/ promotions like sales, parties, drawings, giveaways, or offer prizes to customers who drop off an onsite entry for drawings each week.
- Reward customers who continue to patronize your business during construction.
- Sell hard hat lunches to go.
- Use the city’s online [Main Street Map](#). Make copies/ handouts that steer customers to nearby parking spots.





# The City's commitment

The City of Vancouver, in partnership with Vancouver's Downtown Association, is working to support businesses during construction through various initiatives.

## These include:

- Hosting coffee chats each month on Main Street, offering construction updates with the contractor.
- The Block Captain program, ensuring that each block has a go-to project expert.
- Assisting with information distribution for the affected areas.
- Working with the VDA to aid businesses' financial impact with a Bricks & Clicks grant program, providing resources for signage, facade enhancements, and e-commerce solutions.
- Create online map to identify Main Street retail businesses and nearby parking spots.
- Provide a website landing page for project updates, map of affected areas, and resources for businesses.
- Offering business promotion and exposure on City's website.
- Designated staff serving as the project liaison between business and property owners and project teams.
- Detailed construction contract language requiring that open business access is a top priority during construction.
- Communication in multiple languages, including Spanish and Russian.
- Hosting easily accessible project events, offered in person and online.
- Providing business owner updates with key construction milestones, project phases and detailed timelines.
- Creating additional "Businesses are Open" sidewalk signs for businesses.
- Hosting stakeholder meetings and informational meetings.

This is part of an effort to mitigate business impacts and help drive customer traffic to downtown during construction.



# Checklists: Before/During/After Construction

## BEFORE CONSTRUCTION

- ❑ Check the [City of Vancouver's website](#) to find the dates when your business will be impacted by construction.
- ❑ Ensure your staff is aware of upcoming construction; make a plan for employee parking.
- ❑ Help your suppliers and their truck drivers identify alternate routes to your business before construction begins using the [City's new online Main Street Map](#).
- ❑ Identify alternative routes, parking options, or entrance change for your customers.



## DURING CONSTRUCTION

- ❑ Make frequent posts to social media updating customers. Pro tip: post at least three times per week.
- ❑ Advertise alternative shopping methods (online shopping or delivery options).
- ❑ Create a friendly rapport with construction workers. Remember, onsite workers aren't the ones to talk to about concerns. Spreading kindness goes a long way, and may even be a source of income for your business during this time.
- ❑ Designate a "Business Captain" in your business to be the staff's point of contact for questions and concerns.
- ❑ Host events and sales to encourage customer traffic during construction.
- ❑ Ensure any alternative entrances/walkways are clearly marked for customers.
- ❑ Ensure your signage is clear, and communicate where nearby parking options are on the next block.
- ❑ Continue to check the [City of Vancouver's website](#) to stay aware of any construction notices or changes.

## AFTER CONSTRUCTION

- ❑ Thank customers who supported your business during construction.
- ❑ Get in touch with the City of Vancouver. Let us know what you learned... Did your business discover new tips and tricks for adapting to construction? Is there something you wish we had done differently to better support you? Your feedback will allow us to better assist businesses for the remainder of this project, and on future city projects.



# Additional business resources

## City of Vancouver Business Resources

The following local, state, and federal agencies are great resources for your business.

### Local

- [Business Impact NW](#)
- [Columbia River Economic Development Council \(CREDC\)](#)
- [Craft3](#)
- [East Vancouver Business Association](#)
- [Fort Vancouver Regional Library](#)
- [Fourth Plain Forward](#)
- [Greater Portland Inc. \(GPI\)](#)
- [Greater Vancouver Chamber](#)
- [Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber \(en Español\)](#)
- [Micro Enterprise Services of Oregon and SW WA \(MESO\)](#)
- [Oregon Minority Business Development Agency \(OR MBDA\)](#)
- [Uptown Village Association \(UVA\)](#)
- [Vancouver's Downtown Association \(VDA\)](#)
- [Visit Vancouver WA](#)
- [WSU Vancouver Business Growth Mentor and Analysis Program](#)

### State

- [WorkSource SW Washington](#) and [Workforce Southwest Washington](#) have several programs that can help businesses, including layoff-aversion programs
- [Washington APEX Accelerator Advising \(formally known as PTAC\)](#)
- [Washington Small Business Development Center \(WSBDC\) News and Resources](#)
  - Vancouver Office: Small Business Development Center  
360-952-4987 or [jerry.petrick@wsbdc.org](mailto:jerry.petrick@wsbdc.org)
- [Washington State Employment Security Department \(ESD\)](#)
- [Information for employers and businesses](#)
- [Washington Governor Jay Inslee's Office](#)

### Federal

- [U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Small Business Administration](#)
- [10 Commonly Asked Coronavirus Small Business Loan Questions](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)

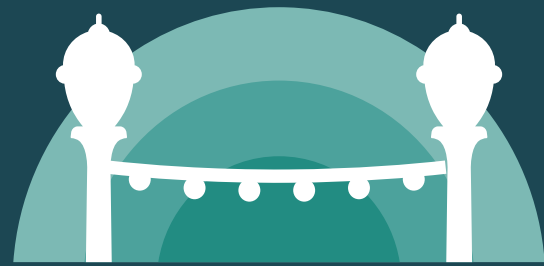
## Main Street Promise Project Contacts

Construction Manager: Alan Hargrave, MacKay Sposito  
360-601-0011 or [AHargrave@MacKaySposito.com](mailto:AHargrave@MacKaySposito.com)

Construction Ambassador: Jeff Daly, Nutter Corporation  
360-907-9408 or [JeffDaly@NutterCorp.com](mailto:JeffDaly@NutterCorp.com)

City of Vancouver Project Team:  
360-487-8770 or [MainStreetPromise@CityofVancouver.us](mailto:MainStreetPromise@CityofVancouver.us)  
[www.beheardvancouver.org/mainstreetpromise](http://www.beheardvancouver.org/mainstreetpromise)





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