



# Construction Survival Guide



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
TRANSPORTATION & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS



You've just learned that a road or drainage construction project is coming to your area – what do you do? Step 1 is -

# DON'T PANIC!

This guide will provide you with useful information about the construction process and tips to keep your business going during the life of the project.

Major construction is necessary every few decades – pavement and utilities like water and sewer pipes don't last forever. While the disruption of construction can be hard on businesses, the final product will be good for your company and the community in the end. Projects will improve street or drainage conditions, help with traffic flow and provide customers with better access to your business.

The City of San Antonio is not endorsing the businesses listed in this document. Owners should research these suggestions and others to determine what is right for their business.

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Capital Projects Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_



## A Little About Us

Transportation & Capital Improvements (TCI) manages the majority of the City of San Antonio's capital projects, including bond-funded projects. Capital projects are investments that develop, maintain or improve infrastructure like roads and drainage or City facilities like parks, libraries and fire stations.

Each project is selected because it meets a need for the residents and visitors of San Antonio. Our goal on every project is to complete it on time, on budget and to keep you informed along the way. Our teams of Engineers, **Capital Projects Officers (CPOs)** and Inspectors work with consultants and contractors to ensure each project of normal conditions meets its goal from the beginning of design to the end of construction.

### *What is a CPO?*

A CPO or Capital Projects Officer keeps up with the project schedule to inform businesses and residents about upcoming activities. The CPO can also help identify solutions to problems that arise.

## Our Best Advice:

# STAY POSITIVE

- Try to strike a realistic balance between the disruption of construction and the many reasons people have to visit you. If you only speak negatively about the project, your customers will associate the hassle of construction with your business which may stop them from coming to your store.
- Being knowledgeable about the construction project will allow you to help customers find detours and access points to make it as easy as possible for them to keep coming back. Stay informed about the project through web and social media sites or the project CPO.
- Keep your positive attitude by reminding your customers – and yourself – about the benefits your area will receive once construction is complete. Smooth roads, reduced congestion, better drainage and increased access are some of those benefits.

## Project Process

Street/drainage projects typically go through the following process:

- 1 Need is identified
- 2 Funding is secured
- 3 A private-sector consultant is selected through a competitive process
- 4 Public meetings are held to share information and gather community input
- 5 Design is complete
- 6 A private-sector contractor is selected through a competitive process
- 7 A public meeting is held to introduce the project team, share the approach with the public and receive input
- 8 A ground breaking ceremony is held
- 9 Construction starts
- 10 Regular updates are provided by the project team
- 11 Construction ends
- 12 A ribbon cutting ceremony is held

## Project Delays May Happen If . . .

- Weather like heavy rains or freezes occur
- Unmarked, buried utility lines are found unexpectedly
- Utility lines leak or break

### *What are Utility Lines?*

Utilities include electrical, gas, water, sewer, cable and telecommunications. Some of these lines are located above ground and some below ground.

## Safety First

Pay attention to construction signs and be aware of roadside construction workers and pedestrians while driving around the project area. As a project progresses, traffic and workers may change locations so please stay alert. Contact your project CPO if you see something that seems confusing or unsafe.

## A Comment on Construction Workers

- Don't see construction workers as a nuisance; see them as the potential customers they are!
- Understand that construction workers are doing their job. They are not going out of their way to inconvenience you.
- If you perceive a problem, contact the project CPO and see if a resolution can be reached.
- Usually, relocating underground utilities is the first step in construction. There are instances when there must be lane closures and a limited number of workers on-site. Don't let this discourage you – important work is happening even though you can't always see it.

## We're Committed to You

As part of the construction process, TCI will:

- Assign a CPO, who will provide project information and help resolve problems.
  - Can't remember who your CPO is? Call 207-8140 or email [tcinfo@sanantonio.gov](mailto:tcinfo@sanantonio.gov) and we'll get your question to the right person.
- Invite residents, businesses and associations in the construction area to the Ground Breaking and Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies.
  - Businesses' social media pages or websites will be referenced in the ceremony program.

- Post construction updates on our website:

- [www.sanantonio.gov/tci](http://www.sanantonio.gov/tci)

- Post construction updates on social media, including announcing that businesses are still open:

- [www.facebook.com/SanAntonioTCI](http://www.facebook.com/SanAntonioTCI)

### QR Codes

Scan with a QR Code Reader on your phone to go directly to websites!



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# Tips to Compete

Remember our advice: Stay Positive!

## Plan Ahead

- Create and evaluate several financial scenarios for your business and plan accordingly.
- Consider keeping an open position vacant if you anticipate a slow-down based on the scenarios you evaluated.
- Reduce inventory if the scenarios you evaluated call for it.
- Gather customer contact information to notify them of important news like directions, hours and sales or specials.
- Secure a line of credit or restructure existing debt now.
- If you were considering doing improvements like parking lot repair, try timing it so all construction is done at once.
- Our contractors are required to provide a level of dust control for the project but plan to invest more in cleaning for your property.
- Investigate whether grants for marketing or renovations are available through philanthropic or nonprofit organizations.

## Get Online

If you don't have them already, create a website and/or social media page to connect with customers.

- Remember to only start as many social media pages as you can keep up with. Customers don't like feeling neglected in person or online.
- Once you're online, start promoting your sites by posting signs in your store, including links in your emails.
- Use scheduling sites like HootSuite.com and Laterbro.com to schedule social media posts in advance so you don't forget.
- Use a URL shortener like bit.ly that lets you track how many people click on your posts.
  - This helps you determine the best times to post and what type of post gets the most interest.
- Use Google Analytics or another program like it to track how many people are going to your site and when.

## Post This

It's called "social" media because people want to interact. Post a lot about life in general and a little about your business and the project.

- detour routes
- funny stories and photos
- hours of operation
- encouraging messages
- sales
- useful or interesting information
- photos of products, staff
- share posts from other users



**traditional website** - allows you to post location, hours, images, etc. Be sure it can be viewed on smartphones.

**blog** - consider starting a blog so you can write about products or services in more detail



**Facebook** - the most popular social media site

**Twitter** - microblogging in 120 characters or less



**Instagram** - photo-based sharing

**Google+** - popular among tech-savvy audiences



**LinkedIn** **LinkedIn** - business site for professional connections

**foursquare** - location based sharing, allows users to let others know they are at your business



**YouTube** - video sharing, great for highlighting products or events

**Pinterest** - an online board where you can 'pin' images and videos related to your business or products



## Join Others

Create a “Marketing Coalition” of businesses in the project area to pool resources and/or do joint promotions.

- Incorporate construction into your marketing with a “Golden Shovel Promotion.” The first customer to find the golden shovel in any participating business and post/tag a photo on Facebook wins a prize.
- Coordinate your sale days with other businesses so customers will stay in your area to shop.
- Pool funds with other businesses to buy more or larger ads.
- Sell \$4 certificates that customers can redeem at participating businesses for \$5 off.
- Coordinate with your CPO on the schedule and host special events with local bands, farm or craft markets, vendor booths, and/or food trucks.
  - Spread the word about your event to local media for free publicity.

## Spread the Word

- Keep a script next to the phone so all employees know what to say when customers ask about directions and construction.
- Add directions on your outgoing voicemail.
- Keep delivery people informed about detour routes and alternate entrances; encourage delivery during non-peak traffic times.

## Creative Change

- Restaurants can incorporate to-go “Hard Hat” specials for the construction crews and on-the-go customers.
- Extend or change business hours to allow customers time to shop after construction is done for the day.
- Consider incorporating delivery into your business model by joining an existing **delivery service**.

*What are delivery services?*

Delivery Services offer you the convenience of delivery without having to hire extra employees. Some examples are:

[www.myrestaurants2go.com](http://www.myrestaurants2go.com)

[www.eatoutin.com](http://www.eatoutin.com)

[www.grubhub.com](http://www.grubhub.com)

[www.thebikewaiter.com](http://www.thebikewaiter.com) (specific participation area)

## Stay Visible

- Install new entrance signs.
- Clearly identify any alternate entrances.

## Every Little Bit Helps

- Restaurants can create “detour route map” placemats.
- Think about creating a “coupon” book alone or with fellow businesses.
- Create and distribute detour route maps with a coupon. Insert them into billings or other mailings, post them on doors, send them in emails, post them on the website and to social media.
- Create a “frequent buyer” program or “Hard Hat” discount club.





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