

PROGRAM OVERVIEW



PUBLIC WORKS
SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS
PROGRAM





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OVERVIEW:

Every year, the City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works (DPW) oversees nearly \$50 million in construction projects. That number is expected to increase to \$80 million during 2010 due to increased funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Recognizing that many of these construction projects will significantly affect commercial districts, the Milwaukee DPW and Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett have developed a groundbreaking, new initiative to mitigate construction impact: the Public Works Support for Business Program.

The Public Works Support for Business Program is designed specifically to support businesses in and around DPW construction projects. As its foundation, the program will establish a communications infrastructure to facilitate interaction and dialogue between these businesses and the DPW.

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The centerpiece of the program will be a team of "community liaisons," each of whom will act as a single point of contact for each major construction project. The community liaisons will

- Regularly update local neighborhoods and businesses about the planned construction project in their area
- Advocate with DPW on behalf of neighborhoods and businesses and help them communicate with various city departments, contractors and governmental agencies
- Help neighborhoods and businesses access available support resources

The program will also offer several new business support tools, including a new online micro-site; a printed "construction survival" handbook; and professional consulting services on issues from marketing and finance to business management and planning.

The Milwaukee Public Works Support for Business Program is an outgrowth of a pilot program which was successfully implemented by Milwaukee DPW on a small scale during 2009. The program also incorporates a number of stakeholder communications "best practices" used by Departments of Transportation and/or Public Works in other areas of the United States. It was developed by a group of Milwaukee DPW public affairs and civil engineering professionals, in conjunction with an external consultant. For 2010, the program will be applied to a handful of major construction projects, particularly those funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and lasting three months or longer.

PROGRAM GOALS:

- Minimize the impact of construction projects on the businesses and property owners in those neighborhoods.
- Build awareness of construction projects as opportunities for the economic growth of a neighborhood and its businesses; encourage public support for these projects.
- Explore the creation of a financial assistance framework.

OBJECTIVES:

- Invite and encourage broader public input/participation in the planning and implementation of DPW construction projects.
- Communicate the range of construction mitigation resources and options available from the DPW to businesses, Business Improvement Districts, property owners and neighborhood groups in affected areas. Establish infrastructure (tools) to facilitate this communication.
- Heighten the spirit of community relations and public education regarding the Support for Business Program among City of Milwaukee staff.

STRATEGIES:

- 1) *Direct community outreach* – While direct community outreach (in the form of neighborhood meetings and resident/business notifications) has routinely been done in the past, there is a great opportunity to improve that outreach process. A key element of this improvement program will be the establishment of a "lead" person to be the single point of contact for each project – the DPW Community Liaison.
- 2) *Online communications* – While relevant information currently exists on several different web sites and pages, it will be more frequently accessed (and thus acted upon) when brought together into a single, cohesive online "micro-site" accessed through the Milwaukee DPW home page. Online communications

elements of the program may also include electronic newsletters or e-mail messages, which could be used to disseminate news and updates to key stakeholders and neighborhood groups.

3) *Social media* – Social media tools such as Twitter offer the Milwaukee DPW an inexpensive and efficient way to get daily news updates as well as meeting notices, photography and a host of other relevant information to stakeholders.

4) *Media relations* – Increased and site-specific communication with the media will also be a key element of the Milwaukee DPW's Business Support Program.

5) *Business consulting services* – Milwaukee DPW will facilitate opportunities for businesses in some affected areas to receive professional consulting on issues ranging from business management to marketing, from IT to finance.

6) *Marketing consulting* – Milwaukee DPW will facilitate special marketing opportunities for businesses in some affected areas.



SPECIFIC PROGRAM ELEMENTS:

Direct community outreach: public meetings and notifications

The Milwaukee DPW will provide opportunities for public input and interaction at multiple phases throughout the construction process, beginning as much as two years prior to the anticipated start date. The DPW will also contact neighborhood property owners and businesses, both in-person and through the mail. Elements of this outreach include:

- Initial public meeting after preliminary funding approval
- Notification letters to property owners regarding issues to be addressed during construction
 - o Contact made initially by DPW, then subsequently by liaison
- Hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Public Works Committee
- Direct contact with businesses, property owners in the months leading up to construction and throughout construction (facilitated by liaison)

Direct community outreach: Community Liaison Team



The Milwaukee DPW will establish a team of community liaisons, with one liaison assigned to each major project. The liaison will serve as the neighborhood's "lead" point of contact regarding the construction project. Working in conjunction with DPW staff, liaisons will interact with neighborhood members at all points prior to and during the construction process, meeting with neighborhood organizations, participating in public meetings, sending letters (and, potentially,

e-newsletters) and meeting individually with neighborhood business people and property owners.

The liaison's primary roles will be to:

- Explain DPW plans, procedures and timelines to the neighborhood
- Educate neighborhood businesses and property owners on potential impact mitigation resources available
- Advocate on behalf of neighborhood members with the DPW
- Assess the impact of the planned construction on the neighborhood and request commensurate support through the DPW

Online communications: program micro-site and e-communications

All information related to the Business Support Program will be accessible through a new online "micro-site." This site will be reached by clicking on the program's icon on the existing DPW web site. Information and links will include:

- List of projects and project overviews
 - o include artist renderings of projects where possible
- Map Milwaukee link (<http://gis.milwaukee.gov/website/mm1/viewer.htm>)
- Community Liaison contact information
- List of upcoming public hearings, special events
- Media Room
- Milwaukee Construction Survival Handbook and merchant tools (such as sample letters and signage)



- Links to e-mail update sign-up for each major project
- Link to program Twitter feed

The online communications elements of this program will also include an e-mail update template, into which community liaisons can place news and photos. Distribution and list maintenance will be done by the liaison.

- E-mail updates, sent once per week or as needed

Brochure: Milwaukee Construction Survival Handbook

Much of the information available on the program micro-site will also be available (in abbreviated form) in a printed brochure called “The Milwaukee Construction Survival Handbook.” In addition to information on potential resources available, this handbook will also give business owners basic tips on how they can best prepare their businesses for the effects of construction and get through the active construction period. Content would include:

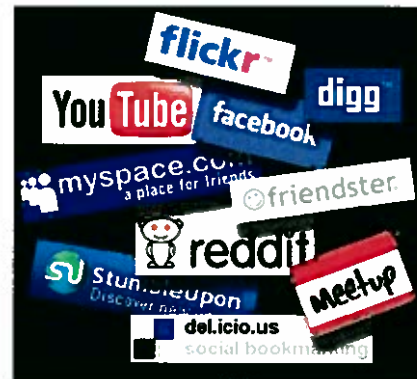
- Preparing for construction; business planning
- Overview of construction processes and what to expect during construction
- Ideas for alternative operations and other tips for the live construction period
- Overview of Public Works Business Support Program

The Milwaukee Construction Survival Handbook would also be available online at the program micro-site as a downloadable PDF.

Social Media

Social media, specifically Twitter, will also be used to disseminate program information and to interact with constituents. The program logo would be used as the avatar. Tweeted content would include:

- o Public Works Business Support Program news, photos, milestones reached, meeting notices, media coverage, etc.



Media relations

The Milwaukee DPW has always maintained open and active communication with the media. This program will enhance that communication through the addition of a media room on the program micro-site, releases in Spanish and releases distributed using social media (in addition to traditional channels).

Business/Technical Consulting

Milwaukee DPW will facilitate and underwrite opportunities for neighborhood groups and businesses in highly affected areas to receive professional consulting on issues ranging from business management and financial planning to human resources and information technology. Qualifying entities will be selected on a case-by-case basis, based on the assessment and recommendations from the community liaison in each area.

Marketing/Advertising Consulting

Neighborhood groups may also qualify for marketing/advertising consulting through the Public Works Support for Business Program. As with business/technical consulting, qualifying entities will be selected on a case-by-case basis, based on the assessment and recommendations from the community liaison in each area.

CRITERIA FOR LEVEL OF NEIGHBORHOOD AND BUSINESS SUPPORT:

The Milwaukee Department of Public Works will communicate with stakeholders openly and transparently on all construction projects. However, due to limited resources, differing levels of business support will be available to affected neighborhoods and businesses. A wide number of factors may determine support decisions; criteria may include:

- Scope of work
- Number and type of businesses affected
- Duration of project
- Traffic volume in affected area



The Public Works Business Support Program was created by the Milwaukee Department of Public Works, with the partnership and support of the City of Milwaukee Department of City Development and the City of Milwaukee Department of Administration's Community Development Block Grant agency.