

Coping with Construction

A Guide for Lincoln Businesses



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INTRODUCTION



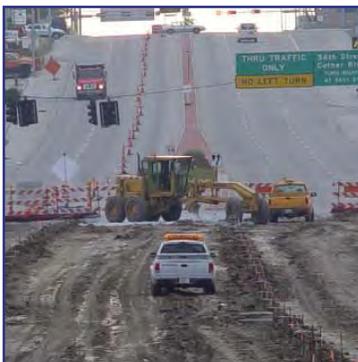
As a business owner, you contribute to—and benefit from—Lincoln’s growing community. Responding to the demands of this growth, while also preserving the high quality of life Lincoln residents have come to expect, is a constant challenge for City government. To facilitate these demands, the City of Lincoln’s Public Works & Utilities Department has an ongoing mission to maintain, enhance, and expand the City’s infrastructure.

More often than not, it is the business community that first recognizes the need for infrastructure improvements and their long-term benefits. More than likely, though, this means the short-term inconvenience embodied by orange barrels will someday be at your doorstep.



Most projects have been planned and programmed for several years through the City’s various planning processes. These include the Comprehensive Plan, the Capital Improvement Program, the Long-Range Transportation Plan, and the Transportation Improvement Program. Each of these planning activities includes public participation processes in which you, as a business owner, are encouraged to take part.

When a project goes to construction, the City needs to balance an array of what can be conflicting interests: using taxpayer dollars wisely while accommodating the needs of businesses, motorists, and residents.



The City and those businesses affected by construction need to work together to minimize inconveniences to motorists and customers, which is why the Public Works & Utilities Department has produced this guide. We hope it will increase your understanding of how construction projects operate and help you cope with them.

WHAT TO EXPECT



You already know to expect dust, mud, noise, orange barrels, and changes in traffic patterns. Here are some other “side effects” you may not have recognized.

Access During Construction

We understand that access to your business is a top concern. You rely on your customers, employees, and suppliers to keep your business going. While it is inevitable that

construction crews will need to work in front of driveways and access roads that lead to businesses, the City must maintain alternate access routes during construction. Unfortunately, this temporary access cannot always be as direct as the access before construction began. In addition, access may need to be provided on a newly graded, interim access road or may need to change several times throughout construction.

The City encourages businesses to use City-approved directional signs and to join together to communicate with customers and find ways to attract them throughout construction. See the “Tips and Ideas” section of this guide for more information.

On larger projects, the best time to begin communicating about access to your business is during the design stage of a project, when initial construction phasing plans are being developed. During this time, the City contacts the affected property and business owners and holds informational meetings. Your input will help the designers develop a recommended construction phasing plan.

On smaller projects, the City will contact the affected property and business owners to inform them of the upcoming project. While formal meetings are not always necessary, property and business owners can and should contact the City’s representative, who is listed on any project materials you will receive or on any posted signage.

This initial plan may need to change once a contractor is selected, according to the resources available to the contractor. At this time, more specifics can be known about duration of access changes and detours. Once a contractor is selected, you can remain in contact with the project manager so that necessary changes can be made with your input and you remain informed.



Closures and Detours

The City must strike a balance between giving full reign of a project area to the contractor and providing full access to people who need to get to and from the adjacent property, all while ensuring the work zone is safe for workers and the general public.

Allowing the contractor the freedom to work on a closed road can shorten the duration of construction while keeping costs lower, but it creates a greater inconvenience to people who need to access the adjacent property. Providing greater access for motorists—by keeping lanes open and using flagging crews—lessens inconveniences for motorists but can lengthen the duration of construction and increase cost.

While each project is evaluated, there are three typical ways to handle traffic during construction:

1. **Under construction, open to traffic.** Typically at least one lane remains open in each direction.
2. **Closed to through-traffic, open only to local traffic.** Detours are provided. This type of closure may be necessary to reduce the risk of conflicts with motorists when the construction requires many trucks and heavy equipment to be maneuvering in the area. However, local traffic that begins or ends within the construction zone is still allowed access, although the path may be very bumpy, dusty, or muddy.
3. **Closed to all but emergency vehicles.** Detours are provided. A road may need to be closed to all but emergency vehicles. In these cases, affected property owners are notified, and efforts are made to complete the work as quickly as possible.

When road closures are necessary, detours are marked with appropriate signage. Even for local traffic beginning or ending at property adjacent to the closed area, detours are usually a quicker, smoother way to travel. Less local traffic within the construction zone also means fewer interruptions and a safer working environment for construction crews, which can help control costs and ultimately contribute to construction being completed sooner.





Utilities

Construction in developed areas is similar to an intricate surgery. Peeling back the earth and pavement is only the first step to this process. A number of utility lines run along the roadway right-of-way to service the properties. These include both private and public utilities, such as telephone, gas, fiber optic, television, electric, water, storm drainage, and sanitary sewer utilities.

Service lines need to be identified and may require careful removal or relocation. These activities can be hazardous and must be coordinated between the utility and roadway construction crews. Actual construction often must cease until these lines are identified, service is shut off, and lines are relocated.

When planned service interruptions are necessary, you will be notified in advance. With so much activity on a construction site, sometimes service is inadvertently interrupted. The contractor works to communicate and correct unplanned interruptions as soon as possible. In some cases, the timing of an interruption may be coordinated with local businesses or properties.

Property Impacts

Most private property impacts are known during the final stages of a project's design and are negotiated with the owner before the project goes to construction. In addition to purchasing land for the project, there may be other impacts to your property as well. For example, lighting, fencing, signage, landscaping, or sprinkler systems may need to be relocated.

The City follows federal, state, and local laws for reimbursing and compensating owners of private property affected by a publicly funded project. The City's Housing Rehabilitation and Real Estate Division (lincoln.ne.gov, keyword: urban, or call 402.441.7864) has more information and can help you through this process. The City's Right-of-Way Acquisition and Your Property pamphlet can provide additional information.





Access After Construction

The way motorists access your property could change permanently once construction is complete. "Access management" is a process used to balance the competing needs of traffic movement and land access to prevent safety problems and traffic congestion. When a new road is built or an existing road is improved, the new design usually includes some form of access management to ensure the road's long-term effectiveness.

Methods of access management could include:

- Limiting the number of driveways and signalized intersections,
- Standardized spacing between driveways and between intersections,
- Raised medians,
- Dedicated turn lanes (auxiliary lanes),
- Sharing driveways, and
- Interior (frontage) roads that separate traffic traveling at lower speeds from traffic traveling at higher speeds.

A New Environment

Once infrastructure improvements are completed, the environment will have a different appearance. Many roadway projects involve adding additional lanes, which could mean a narrower space between traffic and your place of business. The new through lanes and/or turn lanes make for a safer roadway with less congestion. New traffic signals promote better traffic circulation.

New or updated pavement, sidewalks, street lights, traffic signals, pavement markings, and signing may also be part of the project. Driveways could be more or less steep once a roadway is tied back to the elevation of the property. Curbs, sidewalks, and associated landscaping could be at a higher or lower elevation. Removing trees and other landscaping may be necessary, as well as making changes to lights and signs.



Where possible, the City tries to mitigate these impacts and add aesthetic interest with new landscaping or architectural elements. All changes occur within City Codes and standards.

While you won't always see these changes after construction is complete, you'll recognize their benefits. New water mains bring added flow, pressure, and reliability to the system. New storm sewers and inlets increase the capacity and keep water moving during rain showers. New sanitary sewer lines ensure that our system can grow with the city and remain reliable.

WAYS TO COPE

Three guiding principles will help you cope during project construction:

1. **Get to know the project leadership, usually the project manager or project inspector.** These people are the first sources of project information, and they know the day-to-day activities. They will need direct contact with you throughout the project so they can keep you informed and respond to your concerns. It is helpful to know their names and phone numbers.
2. **Organize and collaborate with your neighbor businesses.** Strengthen your business community by joining forces and sharing resources to find mutually beneficial solutions to inconveniences and to communicate to your customers.
3. **Communicate with your customers.** The City communicates construction updates to the broader public in a variety of ways: flyers, newsletters, and media releases are some examples. But you can create more targeted communications to your customers to ensure them that you are still open and to entice them to keep coming back.



Tips and Ideas

- Take advantage of existing business associations. Look to your Chamber of Commerce or other organizations to help organize and lead efforts to work with the City during a construction project. This may involve establishing a special committee under the umbrella of an organization.
- Create a new association or committee comprising your neighbor businesses. Appoint leaders to attend construction progress meetings or communicate with the project manager on behalf of the group. If you don't have such a group already, this community alliance can continue after construction is complete.
- Aggressively communicate to your customers how to get to your business. You can do this through print and broadcast advertising, flyers, and direct mail. Place street maps in print ads and direct mail.
- Work with other businesses in your area and pool your resources for signage, coupons, or even a web site.
- Use your existing means of customer communication. Include construction information in your newsletter, bill-stuffers, and invoices.
- Use creative ways to advertise on the radio, which is an effective way to reach motorists.
- Conduct a cooperative advertising campaign with a special logo and slogans.
- Use City-approved temporary signs directing motorists to your business. The sign with the arrow in the photo to the right is an example of an acceptable guide sign, for which you need a City permit. Sign permit application forms are available on the City web site, lincoln.ne.gov (keyword: construction), then click the "Coping with Construction" link under the "Related Links" section. You can also call Engineering Services using the information on the back cover of this booklet.
- Hold construction-related events, such as special sales, cookouts, or festivals with activities, prizes, and treats to draw customers. Distribute calendars of these events.

South Street Construction Alert!

Madonna & Therapy+ Plus patrons please use our Normal Boulevard entrance. South Street is under construction from 48th to 56th street.

Therapy+ Plus
5445 SOUTH ST.

Therapy+ Plus
of Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
5445 South St. • 486-9099

Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital
5401 South St. • 489-7102
madonna.org



- Hold promotions offering discounts for frequent customers rewarding them for coming back.
- Plan your business remodeling when construction is at its peak near your property.
- Communicate travel routes with your suppliers and schedule deliveries at non-peak travel times.
- Run shuttle services from customer parking to businesses.
- Have employees car pool or take the bus.



Access to Petco during 'O' Street construction
February 2006 to mid September 2006

Taco Bell will remain open during the road construction. Below are directions to how you can still get to the food you crave day or night!

TACO BELL
4502 "O" Street

Advice and Experience

Kent Stadler, owner of Kent's Shoes, used radio advertising and a sense of humor to communicate with his customers during the East "O" Street widening project. Messages in his advertising included making challenges to his mostly male clientele ("It's a man thing to get to Kent's Shoes") and renaming the intersection where his store is located to "66th and Shoe" instead of 66th and "Q" Streets.

In spite of the closure of that intersection, Stadler said his business was more profitable that year than the year before.

"There's never a good time to do this (construction), but it's got to be done."

"A business has to be ready and willing to speak up and to tell their people what's going on—or they're not going to find you during construction...My guys found me."

Chad Winters, owner of Leon's Food Mart, used existing means of communication to tell his customers about construction occurring on South Street in front of his store. The store printed maps in its regular weekly newspaper inserts with the message, "You can still get to us."

Winters also held a cookout promotion during Independence Day week, with a local radio station doing a live remote broadcast. His store also hung posters and worked with area merchants to produce signs directing motorists to area stores.

Terry Reynoldson, assistant manager for Earl May Nursery and Garden Center, said his store offered special promotions during the East "O" Street project. The store advertised the promotions in the newspaper with maps illustrating how to get to the store. The store also rewarded customers who ventured through the inconvenience of the construction by giving them discount coupons for their next visit.

Reynoldson said getting to know the project manager was also helpful.



"It was good having one person to talk to," he said.

Wendy Birdsall, president of the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, said her organization can be a resource for businesses. In the past, the Chamber has acted as a liaison to make sure the impacts to individual businesses are understood by the City and the contractor.

Deli Fresh...

Homemade **Cole Slaw**
\$1.59 Per lb. Save 40¢

Big Eye Swiss **Cheese**
\$4.59 Per lb. Save \$1.40

Glazed **Donut Holes**
\$1.99 7.5oz. Save \$1.00

You Can Still Get To Us!

Road construction is underway on South Street. Although most of South St. will close from 27th to 38th, a portion of South St. will remain open from 33rd to Winthrop Rd. There will still be access to Leon's 3 different ways. Off Winthrop Rd., Sewell or by taking 33rd to South St. to Winthrop Rd.

Map showing South Street, Winthrop Rd., Sewell Street, and Leon's location.

GLOSSARY OF USEFUL TERMS

Access: An access is a way or means of entering or leaving a location.

Arterials: Designated “principal” or “minor,” these roadways may run for many miles across the city and county. Posted speed limits are generally in the middle ranges, 35 to 45 miles per hour, with access provided at grade. Traffic signals are often used to regulate the flow of vehicles along arterials. Access is managed, although movement to adjacent property along arterials is sometimes allowed depending upon the character of the area and the uses being served.

Bid/Let: To bid or let is to offer a price for a construction job. This is a competitive process by which construction companies submit “bids” to the City to construct a project. Bids are awarded to the lowest responsible, responsive bidder that meets the specification requirements. “Let” is a synonym for “Bid.”

Capacity: Capacity is the volume of vehicles the road was designed to carry; it can also be applied to transit or bicycle/pedestrian paths.

Capital Improvement Program: This is an annually updated document approved by the City Council that describes the City’s transportation, flood control, and park improvements, along with other capital projects and expenditures programmed for the next six years.

Comprehensive Plan: This is a planning document that comprises the city and county’s policies and vision for long-term development over a 25-year timeframe. The document establishes a vision for growth while considering land use, social and economic outlooks, transportation, and environmental issues. Updates are usually made every five years and coincide with an extensive public input effort.

Collectors: These streets serve as links between local streets and the arterial system. They provide both access and traffic circulation within residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Moderate to low traffic volumes are characteristic of these streets.

Design: Design is the engineering process that occurs before a project can be built. During the design phase, a project’s

detailed configuration and construction requirements are determined, and technical specifications, drawings, and cost estimates are produced.

Design Engineer: This is the person or firm responsible for designing a project.

Functional Classifications: These are road classifications that indicate how the roadway is intended to be used and the relative importance of a roadway to the neighborhood, community, and region. Functional classifications include interstate, expressway, arterial, collector, and local street.

Grade: The word grade has three possible definitions: (1) Elevation. “At-grade” means at ground level. (2) To shape or reshape an earth road by means of cutting or filling. (3) A roadway’s rate of ascent or descent.

Grade Intersection: This is an intersection where all roadways join or cross at the same level.

Grade Separation: This structure provides for highway, bicycle, or pedestrian traffic to pass over or under another highway or railroad tracks.

Grading: The word grading has two possible definitions: (1) Construction of the earthwork portion of the Highway. (2) Planing or smoothing the surface of various parts of a roadbed.

Level of Service (LOS): LOS is a qualitative rating of the effectiveness of a roadway in serving traffic, in terms of operating conditions such as traffic flow, using an alphabetical scale from A to F, with A being the best (free flow) and F being the worst (stopped traffic).

Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO): The MPO is a policy-making board made up of representatives from local government and transportation authorities who review transportation issues and develop transportation plans and programs for the metropolitan area. The Lincoln MPO is responsible for developing the Long-Range Transportation Plan, which is covered in the Mobility and Transportation sections of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan.



Local Streets: Local streets typically have a low amount of traffic with a high level of access to the properties along them. An example would be a residential street with a driveway for each of its houses.

Local Traffic: Local traffic is traffic that begins or ends (has an origin or destination) within a specified area.

Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP): An LRTP is a plan developed by the Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization that extends out over a 20-year horizon. The LRTP acts as the official guide for spending federal and state transportation funds expected to be available in Lincoln and Lancaster County. It is integrated into the Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan.

Median: The median is the portion of a divided roadway separating the traveled ways for traffic in opposite directions.

Minor Arterials: This functional class serves trips of moderate length and offers a lower level of mobility than principal arterials. This class interconnects with, and augments, principal arterials; distributes traffic to smaller areas; and contains streets that place some emphasis on land access. These are characterized by moderate to heavy traffic volumes.

Principal Arterial: This is the functional class of street serves the major portion of through-traffic entering and leaving the urban area and is designed to carry the highest traffic volumes. Included in this class are fully controlled access facilities and partially controlled access facilities. For other principal arterials, the concept of service to abutting land is subordinate to serving major traffic movements.

Project Inspector: The site representative for the City, responsible for issuing instructions and drawings to the contractor's representative. This title is also sometimes called the project observer, field representative, or field engineer.

Project Manager (PM): The PM is the person or firm responsible for planning, coordinating, and controlling a project from inception to completion, meeting the project's requirements and ensuring completion on time, within cost, and to required quality standards. Often, there is a City PM

and a consultant PM. There may also be design PM and a construction PM.

Right-of-Way (ROW): ROW is the land (usually a strip) acquired for or devoted to roadway or rail transportation purposes.

Traffic Calming: Traffic calming is the measures taken to reduce the negative effects of vehicles, and improve conditions for walking or bicycling. A familiar example is the orange barrels with the warning to stop for pedestrians.

Through-traffic: Through-traffic is traffic that passes through a specified area, without beginning or ending within the area.

Traffic Control Devices: Traffic control devices are signs, signals, markings, and devices used to regulate, warn, or guide traffic.

Traffic Control Plans: These are the overall plans for traffic control during construction. These plans are formulated during the final design phase or during project construction.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): The TIP is an intermediate-range planning document that reflects the transportation expenditures programmed over the next five years. Project details are provided in the TIP, such as the general project description and costs, the funding source, and the funding year.

Volume: Volume is the number of vehicles that actually pass through a given mile of road; it can also be applied to transit or bicycle/pedestrian paths.

Volume-to-Capacity (V/C) Ratio: V/C is the ratio of traffic volume (number of vehicles) on the roadway to the roadway's vehicle capacity; it is used to calculate level of service.

Superintendent: The superintendent is a representative of the contractor who is responsible for executing a construction project.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are some ways to cope through a construction project that affects my business?

Keeping in touch with project leadership, collaborating with neighbor businesses and aggressively communicating with your customers will help your business survive, and even thrive, through construction.

What is the most effective way to communicate my concerns during a construction project?

Your best avenue for communicating your concerns is to speak with the project leadership, usually the project manager or project inspector. They are responsible for overall project management, are keenly familiar with daily construction activities, and can respond to your questions and concerns. Project leadership and business operators who establish two-way communication are more aware of each other's concerns and constraints, and each can make better-informed decisions.

It helps to be aware of some of the basic constraints project leaders are under when they plan and carry out a construction project. Safety to construction workers and the public is the overriding factor in making decisions on construction activities. Budget, schedule and impacts to motorists, pedestrians and all affected businesses are other factors that project leaders must weigh when they try to address individual concerns.



What can I expect during construction?

You could experience the following temporary inconveniences during construction:

- Dust, dirt and mud.
- Changes in access to your business.
- Heavy equipment and noise.
- Utility service interruptions.

These temporary inconveniences literally pave the way for a better system of roads and utilities to serve Lincoln's citizens.

Will I be compensated for property impacts?

The City follows federal, state and local laws in compensating property owners and tenants for property impacts and relocation costs. Common examples of property impacts include the need for additional land (right-of-way) to make a street wider or the need for temporary access on private property during construction (easement). More information is available on the Urban Development Department's Housing Rehabilitation and Real Estate Division website at lincoln.ne.gov (keyword: urban) or call 402.441.7864.

Will my business be compensated for lost revenues that occur during a City construction project?

The City cannot compensate businesses for lost business revenues that occur during its construction projects. The Department of Public Works and Utilities' foremost responsibility in using taxpayer dollars is to maintain and enhance the City's infrastructure. It is this infrastructure of streets and utilities that enables businesses to operate and citizens to carry out their daily activities.

Revenue downturns can be one of the unfortunate repercussions to adjacent businesses. The inconveniences and hardships are temporary, yet necessary to achieve the long-term benefits of having road and utility systems that operate safely, effectively and efficiently for our



citizens, including you and your customers, suppliers and employees.

If you operate a business in Lincoln, it is probably only a matter of time before a City construction project will affect you in some way. Having a “rainy-day” plan in place can help you cope during construction.

Can I post signs to direct customers to my business?

The City of Lincoln allows businesses to post temporary guide signs on City right-of-way. In most cases, this right-of-way is the land adjacent to the street curb.

For safety reasons, certain rules and regulations need to be followed in order to obtain permission to use these signs on public right-of-way. Sign designs and locations must be approved by the Department of Public Works and Utilities. Formal approval is granted through a permit application process. Examples of acceptable signage and the Temporary Guide Sign Permit application form are available on the City’s web site.

Your permit application signifies that you have read and agree to follow these rules. Information about sign size, placement, design and examples of acceptable signs are posted on the City’s web site with the application form. City staff may remove or relocate, without notice, any signs found to be in violation of these rules.

When can I get involved in a project?

The best time to get involved is during the design stage of a project. Design can last a few months or a few years, depending on the project. Most major improvement projects are planned several years in advance and have lengthy design processes that include many opportunities for public participation. Rehabilitation projects often have a shorter timeframe to meet more immediate needs. In both cases, as design reaches completion, the City contacts affected business operators and holds informational meetings on pending construction.

You can stay abreast of planned improvements, both long-term and short-term, by familiarizing yourself with:

- The Capital Improvement Program
- The One- and Six-Year Streets and Highways Program
- The Comprehensive Plan
- The Long-Range Transportation Plan (see the Mobility and Transportation section of the Comprehensive Plan)

Each of these documents is updated periodically and available on the City website.

How can I contact the Department of Public Works and Utilities?

You can visit the website for the Department of Public Works and Utilities at lincoln.ne.gov (keyword: public works), e-mail us at pubworks@lincoln.ne.gov or call us at 402.441.7711.



PROJECT CONTACT INFORMATION

Project: _____

Name of Project Manager: _____

Phone Number: _____

Name of Project Inspector: _____

Phone Number: _____

Notes: _____



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