Cedar Lee Streetscape Construction

MERCHANT SURVIVAL GUIDE

Contacts, Information and Tips to Help Your Business Navigate the Construction Process

Presented By:

FutureHeights
Dear Cedar Lee Businesses:

A streetscape construction process can bring many challenges to your business. That’s why FutureHeights, in partnership with the City of Cleveland Heights, has compiled this resource packet with information about construction, parking, and financing, as well as helpful planning tips and promotional ideas, to help your business navigate the bumpy road outside and ahead. We’ve included strategies that other communities have implemented to mitigate the negative impact of streetscape construction.

Please know that while construction continues, FutureHeights and its partners are actively marketing vacant spaces in the district to specific businesses using data derived from the market study recently completed by Viking Planners, a student group from Cleveland State University. While business recruitment is difficult during a construction project like this, our hope is to line-up several new business openings near the construction completion date. Our strategy is to fill the vacancies and create retail clusters of stores that will lure more shoppers and help support your business.

FutureHeights is working with the city and Cedar Lee Special Improvement District (CLSID) to organize district-wide promotional events to help bring customers to your front door. Heights Music Hop will take place in Cedar Lee on Saturday, Sept. 24. The Happy 5K and Cedar Lee Kids Candy Crawl will take place this October. We are also working to secure funding for a Hard-Hat Happy Hour series of events on Friday evenings. Your participation will help us make these events work for you and your fellow business owners.

If you have questions or need other assistance during this tough time, do not hesitate to contact us. We will be happy to provide information and help you find the resources you need. We would enjoy speaking with you and can be reached at 216-320-1423 or info@futureheights.org.

Sincerely,

Deanna Bremer Fisher

FutureHeights Executive Director
TIPS DURING CONSTRUCTION

Make Sure Your Signage is Clear! Make certain people know that you are open for business and how they can access your store.

Keep Contact Information At Your Fingertips. Keep the list of important contacts: construction project manager, city staff, CLSID director, and others by your business phone where it is easily accessible.

Keep a Script. Consider keeping a script next to your phone, so that you and your staff have quick and easy answers for customers. Make sure all your employees know what to say and how to say it. Always keep the message positive. Instead of 'Sorry about the construction...' say, 'Please Pardon our Progress.'

Remember to Contact Suppliers/Delivery Companies to Provide Directions as Conditions Change!

Get to Know the Construction Workers. The workers are trying hard to do the work they are instructed to do and minimize the negative impact on your business. While they may not be able to answer your questions, they can facilitate a resolution if you encounter a problem. And, the workers can also be your customers, so get to know them and have them check out your store.

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

Advertising—Now May Be A Good Time. If you usually don’t advertise much, now may be a good time to supplement your efforts and spending. Be proactive by creating a marketing plan and making good advertising investments.

Consider Delivering Products to Customers. This can help reach customers unable or unwilling to navigate the construction area.

Participate In Creative District Events and Promotions. FutureHeights is working with the city and CLSID to organize several district-wide promotions during the construction period, and we invite your participation. We will also host a workshop with Small Business Development Center at the Lee Road Library so you can learn how to better implement some of the ideas listed above and learn what resources and assistance are available. Do something above and beyond what you would usually do in your business to attract customers.

Remodeling: Make Construction Work for You! Again, if you’ve been considering a remodel for your business, you may never have a better time. Contact FutureHeights for project ideas and connections to project financing.
BUSINESS PLANNING: WHAT TO DO

Secure a Line of Credit: This is important for especially lean times or in the event of an emergency. FutureHeights and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) can assist you with this.

Keep Your Staff Lean and Reduce Inventory. It's an unfortunate reality, but if you experience a significant decrease in customers due to construction, you may need to reduce your staffing levels. Reducing inventory can be a useful strategy to adjust to the slower construction period.

Take Time to Rework Your Budget. For instance, funds may need to be reallocated for additional cleaning or advertising. Take time to see where these funds can be accessed from your operating budget.

Work With Your Employees To Develop a Game Plan. Talk to your employees about the process and strategies to stay prosperous during the construction. Discuss marketing efforts and provide them with positive and informational messages to pass along to your patrons.

Gather Customer Contact information. Gather customer contacts so you can keep them apprised of your business developments.

Keep Customers Informed. Give your customers the information they need to navigate construction and access your business. Examples include putting up signs or passing out maps that show the nearest parking areas. Consider e-mail blitzes or daily Facebook notices to keep patrons in the loop.

Use Social Media. Use your social media, such as Alignable and Facebook pages to provide updates and remind customers that you are open for business. Remember to share important information and links from CLSJD and the city’s social media accounts when appropriate.

Partner With Other Neighborhood Businesses. Cross-promote and share customer databases with neighboring stores. It is much easier to attract your neighbor’s customers into your store than it is to attract brand new patrons during construction. Take advantage of this by working with your business neighbors.

Remodeling: Make Construction Work for You. If you’ve been considering a remodel for your business, why not do it during the construction period? Use this slower period to get things done that you haven’t had time to address. Assistance in securing project financing may be available!
ImportantContacts

Greg Susany, Project Manager
S.E.T. Inc.
Phone: Office - 330-536-6724
Cell - 330-519-7109
E-mail: greg@setinc.biz
Website: http://setinc.biz/

Alex Mannarino, Director of Public Works
City of Cleveland Heights
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E-mail: pwd@clvhts.com
Website: clevelandheights.com/index.aspx?page=1692

Kelly Robinson, Executive Director
Cedar Lee Special Improvement District
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E-mail: k.vandyke@csuohio.edu
Website: www.heightslibrary.org/hkic/small-business-development-center/
Parking Instructions:

These maps are available for download/printing on the City of Cleveland Heights’ website at http://www.clevelandheights.com/index.aspx?page=1692
TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS DURING STREETSCAPE CONSTRUCTION

Streetscape projects are necessary to maintain infrastructure in good working condition and to enhance an area’s visual appeal and enable it to remain competitive. If your business is located in the road construction area, your business will be financially impacted. While the construction can be hard on small businesses, the maintenance and repairs are ultimately good for your business and your customers.

There are things you can do to help mitigate the effects of streetscape construction on your business. It will require patience—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, too, to complete projects on time. It will require forethought—preparing for tough times while working harder on marketing and promotions to keep customers coming. And it will require a sense of humor—think creatively for ways to use this construction period to your advantage and keep your customers smiling and happy.

FutureHeights has published this guide to help you and other small business owners in the Cedar Lee Business District maintain their sanity amid the chaos.
Promotion Ideas

Our shared goal is to keep customers coming, keep them smiling, and shift their focus to the outcome, not the inconvenience of the streetscape construction. All businesses have a unique opportunity to have a little fun with the construction process by offering related business promotions and cross-promotions. Future Heights is working to organize a Hard Hat Happy Hour series of events for several Friday evenings, during which customers will be encouraged to wear and decorate costume hard hats in exchange for merchant discounts.

Here are a few more ideas for you to consider with your neighbors...

...We Have No Sidewalks Sale (Back Door Sale)

...‘Orange Cone’ Day Discounts

...‘Wine’ about Construction promotion (for Lee Road wineries, wine sellers, taverns, pubs, and restaurants.)

...‘Build’ a better burger contest (for restaurants…)

...‘Shovel it in’ eating competition (for restaurants)

...‘Dirty Martini’ specials (for restaurants, taverns and pubs)

(And definitely…)

...‘End of Construction Party’

...Can you think of more ideas for your business?

Businesses are encouraged to coordinate their respective hours with neighboring or similar businesses to take advantage of customers already in the district. Extend business hours if needed until after construction ends. Strategic promotions and minor adjustments in operating hours will help spur business volume and can be done on a weekly basis with some forethought and a little good humor.

Got a great promotional ideas and need help marketing and publicizing it? Please contact us at 216-320-1423.

Through Dust and Dirt, We Wish You Continued Success!

Your Friends at FutureHeights