

# Business Forward Playbook

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COMMUNITY-CENTERED  
CONSTRUCTION MITIGATION

# Acknowledgements

This Business Forward Playbook represents the collective effort, insights, and collaboration of many individuals and organizations. It was authored by Jess Roberts and Jamie Rothe, but its creation would not have been possible without the contributions of those who provided their expertise, experiences, and candid feedback.

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This Playbook is a testament to the power of collaboration and the belief that by working together, we can create a more supportive and thriving environment for businesses and communities during construction. Thank you to all who have contributed to this journey.

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# Contents

<b>01</b>	Introduction	4-5
<b>02</b>	Purpose & Background	6-9
<b>03</b>	Foundational Guiding Principles	10-13
<b>04</b>	Pework & Project Preparation	14-21
<b>05</b>	Business Forward Structure & Approach	22-29
<b>06</b>	Evaluation	30-31
<b>07</b>	Closing	32-33
<b>08</b>	Appendix	34-35



01

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# Introduction

While construction and growth are vital for creating healthy and vibrant communities and maintaining public infrastructure, they often impose significant challenges on local businesses and stakeholders. These challenges arise before, during, and after construction projects, resulting in:

- **Physical Impacts:** Reduced sidewalk access, street closures, loss of parking, excess noise, and dust.
- **Navigational Challenges:** Difficulty in accessing businesses and reduced foot and vehicular traffic.
- **Economic Consequences:** Fewer customers due to access difficulties, lower sales, and, in some cases, business closures.

### The “Business Forward” Approach

Recognizing these challenges, community leaders are challenging themselves to take a new construction approach and adopt a “Business Forward” approach. This strategy places businesses and community stakeholders at the center of the construction planning and delivery process. Key elements include:

01. **Proactive Collaboration:** Engaging businesses and stakeholders early to understand their needs and concerns.
02. **Prioritizing Access and Visibility:** Ensuring easy access to businesses and maintaining visibility for customers, with an emphasis on businesses that are disproportionately impacted.
03. **Mitigation and Support:** Going beyond inconvenience mitigation to actively support businesses in thriving during construction.

By emphasizing collaboration and prioritizing the needs of local businesses, the “Business Forward” approach aims to transform construction challenges into opportunities for sustainable community growth.



## How to Use This Playbook

This Business Forward Playbook is your guide to navigating the challenges of construction projects while keeping businesses and communities at the forefront. Think of it as a toolkit designed to help your team work together, spark meaningful conversations, and come up with solutions that make a real difference.

Inside, you’ll find guiding principles, key questions, and practical strategies to help you plan, communicate, and collaborate effectively. There’s space for discussion and notes—use it to brainstorm, reflect on what’s working, and refine your approach as you go. Every project is unique, so treat this Playbook as a starting point, not a strict rulebook. The goal is to adapt the Business Forward framework to meet the specific needs of your project and the community it serves.

The authors want to also acknowledge, that while this Playbook is called Business Forward, we understand that construction impacts extend far beyond businesses. Schools, churches, nonprofits, residents, and other community stakeholders are all affected by changes to accessibility, noise, and disruptions. This Playbook aims to support all who are impacted by providing strategies and tools that prioritize collaboration, communication, and inclusivity to ensure that the needs of the entire community are addressed during construction projects.

Grab a pen, gather your team, and dive in. Together, you’ll not only manage construction impacts but build stronger relationships and a more vibrant community along the way.



02

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## Purpose & Background

Core Principles / Flexible Application / Project Readiness /  
Addressing Budget and Preparing for Success

Initially implemented during the Heart of the City Phase 1 project in Rochester, Minnesota, Business Forward is a framework designed to enhance mitigation strategies for the unintended negative impacts of construction on businesses. By prioritizing proactive relationship-building and responsiveness to business needs, it fosters long-term trust among government agencies, construction teams, and local businesses.

“We prioritize business-forward planning by maintaining accessibility and visibility for businesses during construction, balancing immediate challenges due to construction with long-term economic benefits. Through informed construction phasing, clear communication, and innovative solutions, we empower stakeholders and set a new standard for community-centered infrastructure development.”

## Core Principles

The Core Principles of Business Forward provide a framework for minimizing disruption and fostering collaboration during construction projects. These principles focus on putting the needs of businesses and communities at the forefront, ensuring that access, communication, and engagement remain priorities throughout the process.



Business Forward emphasizes:

### Micro-phasing and Access

Building a sequencing plan that takes into consideration the needs of the businesses as a priority.

### Communications

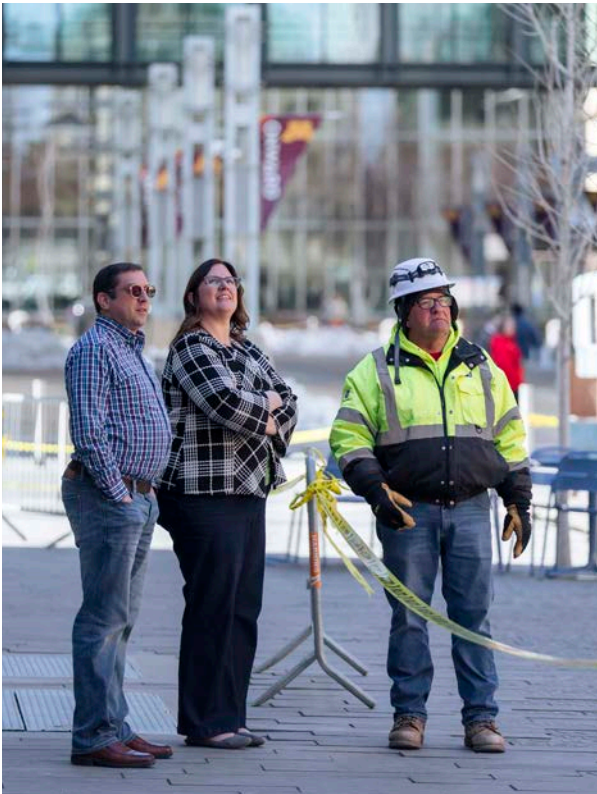
Building a communications strategy that helps communicate and listen regularly and thoroughly with stakeholders throughout the entire process.

### Wayfinding & Activation

Developing a wayfinding and activation strategy that encourages foot traffic to impacted areas during construction and builds excitement for the future of the project.

# Flexible Application

Each project is unique. The framework's adaptability allows customization based on the project's scale, timeline, challenges, and the specific needs of impacted businesses. Business Forward is only as good as the intention behind the work, so be sure to build the intention for Business Forward into the work as early and often as possible to minimize construction disruptions.



# Project Readiness

Before implementing Business Forward, it is important to evaluate the readiness of the project and team with the framework. Key questions to discuss include:

## Project Scope and Scale

- Is the construction likely to disrupt access to local businesses, pedestrian pathways, bikeways, or key community destinations? In what ways and to what degree?
- Does the project involve high-traffic areas or significant community anchors such as a library, healthcare facility, etc.?
- Are there other construction projects (current or future) nearby that are also causing disruption? How might this project add to that disruption?
- Are there times when this project might have greater disruption (Lunch rushes, workforce arrival or shift change, holiday shopping season, or times of worship)?
- Are there disadvantaged businesses that will be disproportionately impacted by this project? How will you know?

## Community and Business Impact Assessment

- What might the potential economic and social impact of construction on nearby businesses be?
- What is the length of impact (days, weeks, or years)?
- When was the last time the area was impacted by construction? What was the outcome of that project? Were businesses satisfied with the support they received throughout the project(s)?
- Are there lessons learned from previous projects or other like projects that should be considered?
- Are there businesses and/or communities that might be disproportionately impacted by this project (women and/or migrant-owned, small businesses, and other historically marginalized businesses and communities)? How?
- Which customers and customer needs might be most impacted by this project (medical equipment, specialized services, etc.)? Pay specific attention to the customers who might bear a disproportionate burden.

## Project Team

Are the city and construction teams open to adjusting traditional approaches to prioritize proactive engagement and the needs of businesses and communities?

- Do team members understand the principles of Business Forward and recognize the value of incorporating them into the project planning and execution process?
- Is the project team willing to collaborate across departments and with external stakeholders to create and implement business-focused solutions that balance construction goals with community impact?

By addressing these considerations and embedding Business Forward principles into the planning process early, teams can minimize disruptions and foster thriving businesses throughout all construction phases.



# Addressing Budget and Preparing for Success

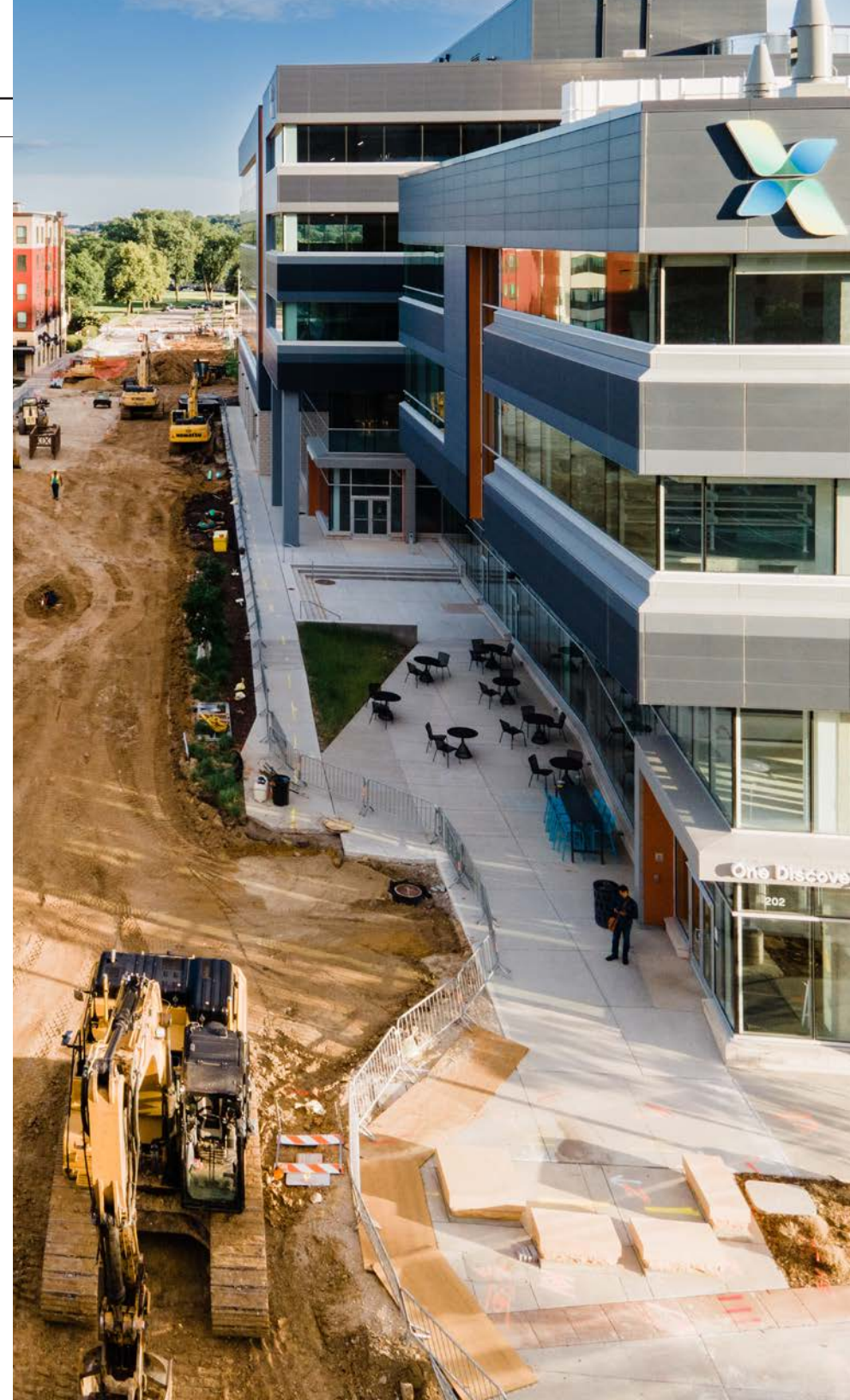
Implementing Business Forward effectively requires thoughtful budgeting to ensure resources are allocated for proactive engagement, communications, and mitigation strategies. While it may initially seem like an added expense, proper planning and learning from past projects can make these efforts cost-efficient and impactful.

- **Pre-Work Matters:** Conducting thorough pre-work, such as engaging stakeholders early, assessing potential impacts, and aligning goals across teams, allows the project team to identify necessary resources upfront. This minimizes unforeseen costs and ensures the budget reflects actual project needs.
- **Learning from Experience:** Drawing on lessons from similar projects helps teams anticipate challenges, avoid costly mistakes, and incorporate proven strategies that deliver value.
- **Investing Wisely:** A well-prepared Business Forward budget not only supports businesses and communities but also reduces delays, avoids conflicts, and ultimately saves time and money for the entire project.

By approaching the budgeting process with preparation and collaboration, teams can ensure the success of Business Forward while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

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# Foundational Guiding Principles

Making the Case / Why Business Forward Matters / Guiding Principles

# Making the Case

During most construction projects, project teams and city departments aim to establish effective and responsive communication and relationships with businesses. Still, it can be challenging to move beyond surface-level efforts or one-way engagement. Business Forward offers several key benefits:



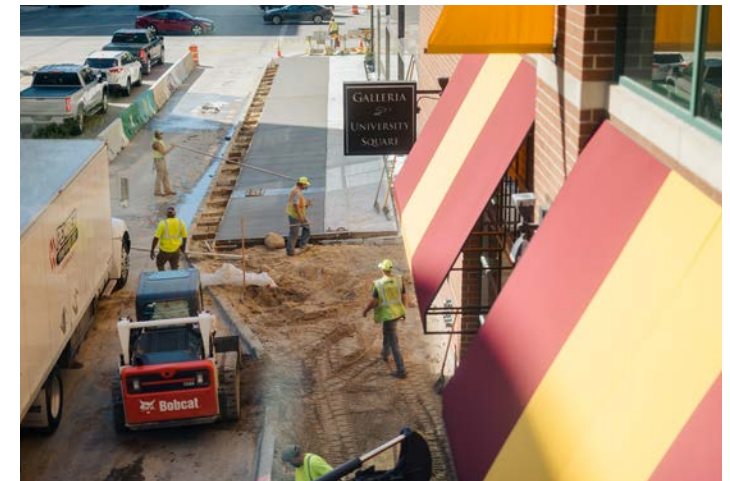
- **Proactively Empowering Businesses:** Position businesses as active partners rather than passive participants, enabling them to partner and engage fully in the construction process.
- **Strong and Sustainable Relationships:** Advocacy and responsiveness foster trust and establish lasting relationships between project teams and businesses, which build relational equity for future projects.
- **Proactively Addressing Issues:** Anticipating and resolving potential challenges before they escalate ensures smoother project execution.
- **Reducing Costs:** Being proactive and planful about the construction process saves time and money by preventing and mitigating disruptions and avoiding potential conflict with businesses.
- **Equity-Driven Planning:** Focuses on historically excluded businesses (e.g., minority, women, and veteran-owned) to ensure fair resource access and opportunities to thrive during construction.
- **Goodwill, Trust, and Community Connection:** Transparency and a collaborative approach build goodwill, trust, and humility by acknowledging the diverse and unique needs of businesses and communities. This relational equity strengthens problem-solving and supports future partnerships.



## Why Business Forward Matters

Business Forward redefines how construction projects intersect with businesses and communities by fostering collaboration and shared success.

- **Focusing on Partnership:** It moves beyond traditional, top-down communication frameworks to establish partnerships that empower businesses and communities to thrive during construction.
- **Proactive and Equitable Approach:** By emphasizing proactive engagement, equitable access, and thoughtful planning, Business Forward minimizes disruption while prioritizing the needs of diverse stakeholders.
- **Creating Long-Term Value:** This strategy not only addresses immediate construction challenges but also builds lasting relationships and economic resilience for businesses, communities, and project teams.



# Guiding Principles

1

## Relationship Building

Commit to direct, consistent engagement with all impacted businesses.

Focus on stakeholders less likely to attend formal meetings, such as newer businesses, small businesses, and those owned by women or minorities.

Build trust by investing time and effort into meaningful connections.

2

## Proactive Collaboration

Engage businesses early in the process to identify values, priorities, concerns, and schedules.

Develop strategic plans for mitigating potential disruptions before construction begins.

Maintain a regular communication schedule as plans and timelines evolve.

3

## Transparency

Share project details openly and clarify where flexibility exists in plans.

Clearly communicate non-negotiable elements and realistic expectations to avoid misunderstandings.

Build trust through honesty and strategic decision-making.

4

## Responsiveness & Adaptability

Establish structures to address unexpected challenges quickly and effectively.

Use designated points of contact to ensure consistency and accountability.

Approach problem-solving collaboratively and in good faith, even when solutions may differ from initial expectations.

5

## Equity-Focused Relationships

Prioritize outreach and support for historically excluded groups, including minority-owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned businesses.

Ensure these businesses are heard, included, and empowered throughout the project.



04

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## Prework & Project Preparation

Expectations / Stakeholder Mapping / Initial Data Gathering & Outreach

## Expectations:

Having a clear plan and clear roles and responsibilities for community and business engagement prior to the construction process is critical to building relationships and ensuring that every effort has been made to connect with all businesses that will be affected by the project, especially those that can be more difficult to reach.

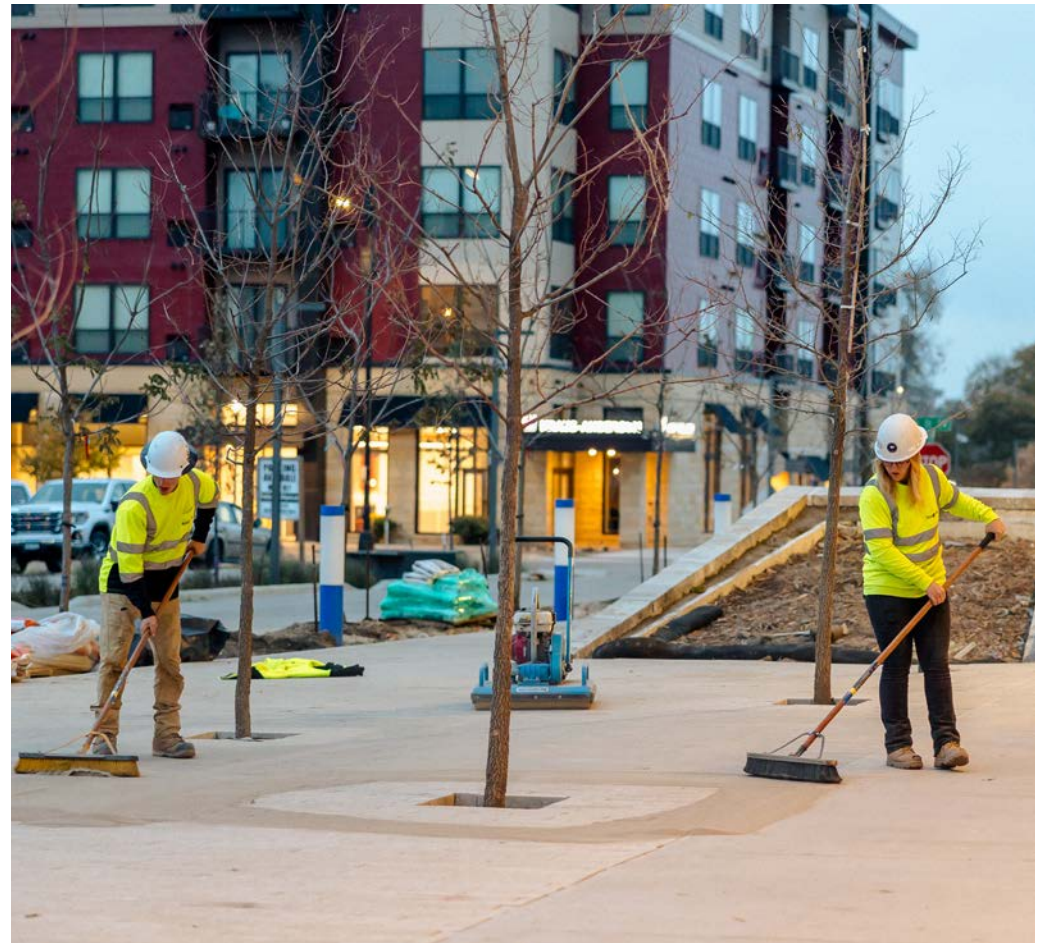
Prior to beginning outreach and engagement with stakeholders, the project team should ask and document:

- Which businesses are going to be impacted?
- What percentage of businesses are women-owned, minority-owned and/or small businesses?
- What information will each business need to navigate the project?
- Who and how will this information be disseminated?
- Who and how will unexpected issues be addressed?

While the Business Forward approach has standard sequencing and considerations, the prework phase is the project team's opportunity to tailor strategies to the unique nature of each project.

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## Stakeholder Mapping

Stakeholder Mapping involves systematically identifying and analyzing all key stakeholders to ensure comprehensive engagement. This process includes:

### Identifying Stakeholders

- *Core Project Team Members:* Define internal team roles and responsibilities.
- *Key Collaborating Organizations and Partners:* Include local governments, chambers of commerce, and community organizations.
- *Community and Businesses Affected by the Project:* Ensure representation from all impacted businesses and residents.

### Conducting Stakeholder Analysis

- Pinpoint gaps in knowledge or connections.
- Highlight stakeholders that require additional focus, such as disadvantaged business enterprises (DBEs).

### Tailoring Engagement Strategies

- Customize the Business Forward approach to the specific needs of the project and stakeholders.



## Implementation Tips:

01. **Map Relationships:** Use tools like stakeholder maps or charts to visualize connections among these groups.
02. **Prioritize Engagement:** Focus efforts on businesses and groups that are historically excluded or harder to reach.
03. **Leverage Collaborators:** Partner with trusted community organizations to build bridges with disengaged stakeholders.
04. **Document Findings:** Maintain a comprehensive record of stakeholder input and concerns to guide construction planning and mitigate challenges.



# Three Categories of Stakeholders

## Project Team

Who is responsible for the core aspects of the project and direct community engagement?

### *Responsibilities*

- Identify organizations or individuals responsible for project design, development, and follow-through.
- Determine who oversees project execution and monitors the alignment of goals with community needs

### *Influence and Responsiveness*

- Recognize individuals or entities with the most influence over the project, especially in addressing community/business concerns.
- Define the authority levels for each role, particularly for decision-making.

### *Community Engagement*

- Identify the primary “point person” for the community and ensure they:
- Have decision-making authority.
- Are available for early and ongoing engagement with businesses.

*Examples:* Design firms, Construction teams and subcontractors, City and affiliated agencies

## Project Collaborators

Who supports the project through established relationships or unique expertise?

### *Support Roles:*

- Identify organizations that will play a supporting role in engagement and communication with businesses and community members.

### *Existing Relationships:*

- Determine organizations with existing relationships with the impacted businesses or community.
- Leverage these relationships for smoother outreach and engagement.

### *Outreach Expansion:*

- Identify organizations not actively part of the project but could contribute meaningfully to engagement efforts.

### *Direct Support:*

- Recognize organizations equipped to work directly with businesses and communities, especially those harder to reach.

*Examples:* Neighborhood organizations, Chambers of commerce, Downtown alliances, Elected officials, Community-based organizations

## Businesses

Which businesses are directly or indirectly impacted by the project?

### *Directly Impacted Businesses:*

- Identify businesses located within the construction zone.

### *Indirectly Impacted Businesses:*

- Highlight businesses outside the immediate zone but affected by changes in traffic, accessibility, or visibility.

### *Disproportionately Impacted Businesses:*

- Identify categories of businesses more vulnerable to construction impacts, such as:
- Minority-owned businesses.
- Women- or veteran-owned businesses.
- New or small businesses.

### *Outreach Challenges:*

- Pinpoint businesses that are harder to reach and determine why (e.g., language barriers, lack of contact information, etc.).

*Examples:* Small and large businesses within site boundaries, Businesses adjacent to the site, Women-owned or minority-owned businesses, Businesses owned by people of color



# Initial Data Gathering & Outreach

## Effective Engagement and Outreach Strategies in Business Forward Key Principles:

- Engagement and outreach are vital at every phase of construction.
- Each interaction provides an opportunity to build or damage relationships.
- Early identification and connection with affected businesses are crucial for understanding the project's scope and potential disruptions.

To build effective engagement/outreach strategies it is important to be familiar with reasons that it might be difficult to identify and/or collaborate with some businesses.

## Barriers to Engagement:

Before engagement starts, the project team needs to be strategic about identifying the specific barriers to participation from businesses and community members. Some common barriers include (source ByDesign LLC):

- Lack of connection to existing communication channels.
- Distrust in government, institutions, or public processes.
- Language and cultural barriers.
- Inconvenient communication methods, locations, or timings.
- Businesses' time constraints and peak busy periods.
- Lack of appreciation for business owners' lived experiences.
- Engagement fatigue or burnout from prior projects.
- Fear of misuse of shared information.

## Tailored Outreach:

Consider businesses not readily accessible, such as non-English speaking, unaffiliated, small, or newly established businesses. Pay particular attention to businesses opening during or shortly after the project.

Initial data gathering is critical to a successful project for multiple reasons. It will become your source document for Business Forward implementation. Project teams will lean on this information to inform phasing, communication, and activation/wayfinding strategies. As your team becomes more familiar with the process, consider developing guidance to integrate lessons learned from this framework into future projects.

Often the people who lead/run businesses do not have much free time. When determining a communication and outreach strategy consider a combination of multiple tactics. Tracking attendance will be key. 100% participation should be the goal of every initial engagement and outreach strategy but the project team must have different approaches and expectations for each business type and situation (for example, small businesses often lack the flexibility of larger businesses).

During the initial outreach phase, the project team should document which engagement strategies were most effective and why. When the project team builds the communication and engagement strategies that will be used during construction, these outreach tactics should be integrated as well.



*Specific outreach tactics include:*

### **Small Group**

Bringing together several businesses (can be geographical or by business type) creates an opportunity for more focused dialog.

### **Business-initiated**

Offer ways for businesses to proactively connect with the project team (so that businesses can reach out how and when it is most accessible including email, dedicated project phone lines, and websites).

### **On-demand Discussions**

Offer “office hours” or schedule phone calls as needed for businesses to share urgent concerns and questions.

### **Peer Outreach**

Consider including project Collaborators when building your outreach strategy.

### **Open House**

This approach is often used in outreach strategies but rarely captures engagement with 100% participation.

### **Site Visits**

Non-scheduled visits with stakeholders can be effective for initial outreach and engaging stakeholders. As in all outreach, be sure to mitigate barriers such as language and meeting times before the visit.

### **1x1 Meetings**

Project team member(s) schedule regular individual check-ins with business leaders to discuss construction progress, forecast, and answer questions.

## Tailored Business Data Collection

During the initial outreach, project teams should be prepared to gather specific and personalized information for each business:

- **Operations:** Hours, type, flow (seasonal variations, unique aspects), and delivery schedules.
- **Customer Profiles:** Demographics, mix, and communities served.
- **Communication Needs:** Preferred methods and languages.
- **Challenges:** Concerns, previous construction experiences, and potential strategic overlaps.
- **Marketing Concerns:** Specific needs during construction.
- **Other Factors:** Strategic plans, community impact, and accessibility concerns.

Proactive and ongoing outreach starts with outreach staff, preferably, a singular point person who will also be a reliable “go-to” connection to businesses throughout the duration of the project (continued communication). This outreach individual should be part of the construction team and in some instances might be partnered with trusted peers from the community. On-going, these points of contact will act as responsive conduits between the construction team and businesses and will be the person or persons that businesses contact with questions or concerns. Even if these individuals do not have immediate answers to these questions, they will be able to rapidly access the needed information or guidance from others on the team on behalf of the businesses, and will be core to building strong relationships and setting realistic expectations.



## Setting clear and appropriate expectations:

As outreach begins, project teams may not have all the specific details, however, they should also be prepared to answer questions related to the topics below:

### **Timelines:**

Clearly communicate project timelines, including potential delays or challenges.

### **Addressing Barriers:**

Implement strategies to tackle barriers such as language, trust, and scheduling.

### **Stakeholder Support:**

Outline financial opportunities like grants for marketing or signage, reduced parking costs, or improved infrastructure.

### **Response Times:**

Establish and communicate expected response times from the project team.

### **Differential Impacts:**

Tailor mitigation strategies for different business types (e.g., retail, hospitality, healthcare).

### **Mitigation Examples:**

Share examples of construction mitigation strategies, involving past business owners who have navigated similar projects.





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How complex is the project? More complex projects will need outreach strategies that allow for more time for outreach.

How will the type and number of engagements be documented and how will they be shared with project stakeholders?

Are there a combination of outreach tactics that has worked well in the past when working with stakeholders in impacted areas? How might those things relate to the current project?

How might you prioritize and tailor an approach to reach difficult-to-reach businesses such as minority-owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned small businesses?

Are there partners you can lean into that can help with the initial outreach – are these different or similar partners for construction communication?

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# Business Forward Structure & Approach

Micro-phasing / Communication / Wayfinding & Activation

The Core Principles of Business Forward serve as the foundation for minimizing disruption and fostering collaboration during construction projects. These principles guide how the strategy is implemented and managed, ensuring that every phase of the project prioritizes accessibility, communication, and engagement. By embedding these principles into the construction process, Business Forward creates a proactive and inclusive approach that balances the needs of businesses, communities, and project teams.

## Micro-phasing

Every project will have global objectives and timelines, but being able to break things into smaller tangible, and actionable steps is critical for most businesses. Micro-phasing builds off the information collected during initial outreach and engagement strategy that is built before the construction process begins. Micro-phasing is the “problem-solving” phase of Business Forward as it requires direct collaboration between business owners, project managers, superintendents, and other project and city leadership and includes:

### Preparation:

- Use the outreach and engagement data gathered during pre-construction to inform micro-phasing plans.
- Identify high-priority businesses based on their potential to be most impacted.

### Regular Check-ins:

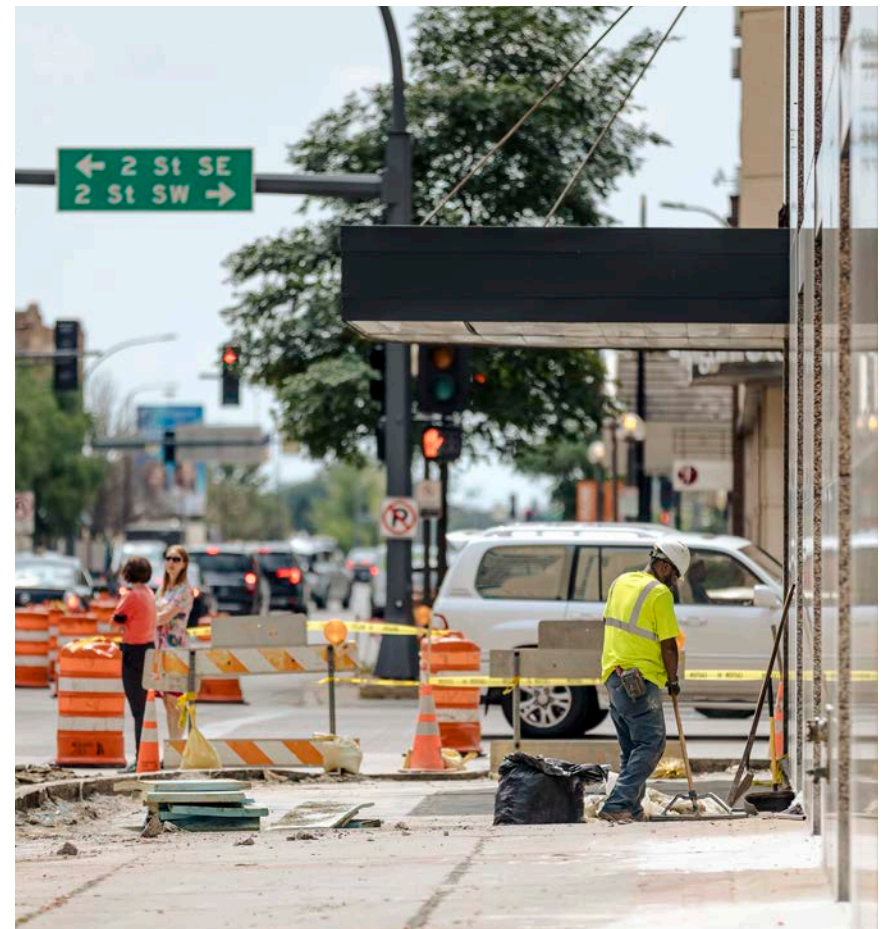
- Schedule ongoing meetings or site visits with business owners to discuss current and future impacts.
- Use these interactions to refine micro-phasing plans.

### Collaborative Decision-Making:

- Involve business owners in determining phasing priorities and mitigation measures.
- Ensure decisions are transparent and realistic within the constraints of the project.

### Documentation and Feedback:

- Maintain records of all micro-phasing decisions and their outcomes.
- Use feedback from businesses to improve the process for future phases.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What are the tension points in the project?

- Business access, length of time, complete shutdowns, water/utility impact
- Often it is helpful to print large maps during this exercise

How can the project be micro-phased to minimize disruption and maintain access?

- Can different construction approaches be used to shorten disruptions and cause less disruption (sound, dust, etc.) based on the project impacts
- Can different equipment be used to shorten or have less impact?
- If there is a full closure proposed, can adjustments be made to keep movement by traffic and pedestrians in the area?

Example: phasing a project to allow a restaurant to maintain patio use during peak summer hours

Is there flexibility to avoid key local events or high-traffic seasons?

Can the construction schedule align with business hours or peak activity times to reduce impacts?

- What other schedules need to be considered (School drop off, times of worship, lunch/dinner rushes)

Examples: Utilizing "night pours" for extensive concrete work

What collaborations/resources might help mitigate disruptions for businesses?

How might you develop equity-focused metrics, such as the percentage of minority-owned and women-owned businesses engaged, the number of translated materials distributed, or changes in sales for disproportionately impacted businesses during construction?

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## Lessons Learned:

Adjusting construction schedules for the least amount of impact

- Avoiding construction during busy times/days of operation.
- Understanding cultural holidays

Maintaining business access and parking

- Maintaining front and/or backdoor access
- Offering curbside pick-up
- Use of concrete walkways instead of mats, wood, or other temporary products
- Offer additional support to maintain access during winter months (clearing snow, ice, etc.)
- Maintaining valet options
- Prioritize patio seating locations
- Offering window washing

Mitigating environmental impacts

- Dust mitigation
- Sound mitigation
- Offer off-site supply yard
- Offering sidewalk cleaning

Create welcoming and safe spaces

- Additional lighting in walkways
- Open areas for use even when not fully completed

# Communication

Building a communications strategy during Business Forward that focuses on construction updates and mitigation is essential to ensure that all stakeholders—businesses, customers, residents, and visitors—are informed, prepared, and engaged throughout the construction process.

**Clarity:**

Ensure messages are straightforward and easy to understand, avoiding technical jargon whenever possible.

**Consistency:**

Regular updates and a unified voice across communication channels help minimize confusion.

**Accessibility:**

Provide information in multiple formats and languages to reach diverse audiences.

**Timeliness:**

Deliver updates proactively and in real-time, especially when plans or timelines change.

**Audience-Centric Messaging:**

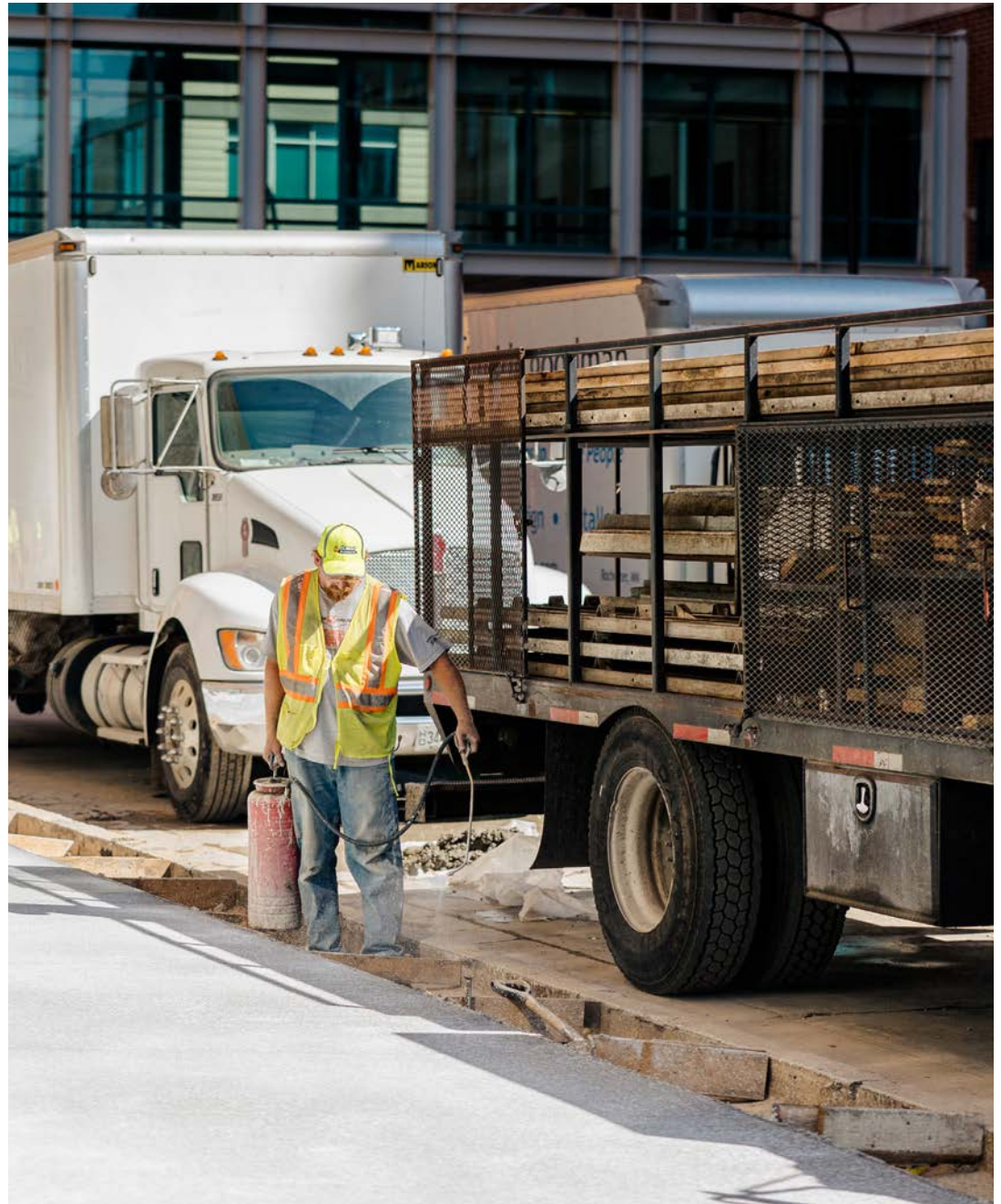
Tailor communications to address the unique concerns of different stakeholders, from businesses to residents and visitors.

**Transparency:**

Be upfront about what aspects of the project are flexible and what is non-negotiable. Transparency builds credibility.

**Responsiveness:**

Develop a feedback loop where stakeholders can ask questions, raise concerns, and receive timely responses.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Where and when do businesses/stakeholders communicate today?

- Are there other organizations that currently communicate with these groups?
- Who are the trusted voices?

How has past communications gone?

Are there mechanisms in place to provide regular updates to businesses and the public?

- Has it been determined what kind of communication is needed and how often

Example: Heart of the City - weekly 30 min calls, newsletter, dedicated phone

Is the information easily accessible and tailored to different audiences? Has it been determined what kind of communication is needed and how often?

- Has it been determined what other audiences need to be informed besides project stakeholders?

Examples Include: Community leaders, downtown task force, elected officials, nearby neighborhoods

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**Lessons Learned:**

Early, Often, and Consistency

- This helps to build confidence with businesses and stakeholders.

Business owners and property owners are two different groups of stakeholders with different communication needs.

Using multiple tactics (weekly virtual calls and newsletters for example) can help to keep busy stakeholders informed.

Creating time for feedback during every interaction is critical.

# Wayfinding and Activation

The construction process will inevitably offer challenges to businesses and the ability to attract customers. The construction team and partners can offer significant support in building interest in the businesses and spaces being impacted by construction. Where Micro-phasing is about mitigating the impacts of construction, Wayfinding and Activation is about finding creative and innovative ways to maintain attention and attraction to the businesses, their offerings and events, and unique incentives during the construction phase.



## Lessons Learned:

### Offering Incentives

- Create incentives (in collaboration with city and other partners) to attract customers/new customers (coupon books or special discounts at certain times of the day).
- Spotlighting individual businesses
- Identify support for businesses to update branding, business plans, etc.
- Support businesses in identifying funding and grants.

### Wayfinding and Navigation

- Temporary signage and imagery
- Partner with “ambassadors” to help customers navigate during high foot-traffic periods
- Foldable shopping maps

### Create direct access to important organizational and financial resources

- Don’t just direct business leaders to organizations, connect them directly with the people that can help them
- Support narrowing down available resources that are most applicable to each business type and situation.

### Promote businesses and events

- Work with marketing organizations to promote businesses
- Billboards
- Bus ads
- Work with local news sources to communicate business availability and incentives
- Shopping/dining/experience videos in hotel rooms

### Promote business innovation

- Work with businesses as issues arise to address them in collaborative and creative ways

### Promote customer engagement throughout the construction process

- Colored lighting during the winter
- Increase seating
- Weekly music series

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What partner organizations did you identify that could help in this area?

- Downtown/Business Improvement District, Chamber of Commerce, Neighborhood Associations, other City departments (Parks, etc)

What wayfinding is already in place? Is it digital, print, and/or in person?

What programming currently happens in the area? Can it be enhanced?

- Example: Are there pots/greenery already planted? Is holiday lighting already planned?

Can interim beautification, wayfinding, or events maintain vibrancy in the area during construction?

- Is there an opportunity for stakeholder input during this process?

Are there plans to enhance the post-construction space to benefit the community and businesses?

- What partners can be involved to help with this work?

What collaborations/resources might help mitigate disruptions for businesses?

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# Evaluation

# Evaluation of Business Forward

The evaluation process for Business Forward is conducted in two primary ways:

## **Embedded Real-Time Evaluation:**

Business Forward integrates evaluation throughout the engagement and construction process. Regular and frequent assessments ensure business concerns are addressed continuously. This iterative approach enables real-time adjustments to meet evolving project needs, informed by data and feedback from those most affected.

## **Post-Project Evaluation:**

Traditional post-project assessments capture outcomes and lessons learned. Business Forward emphasizes understanding the specific impacts on businesses by leveraging established relational channels, rather than relying solely on conventional methods like surveys.

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## Key Evaluation Metrics

### **Operational Impact:**

This metric measures how the approach has influenced day-to-day operations. It focuses on operational efficiency, changes in workflow, or the introduction of new practices that either improve or complicate operations.

### **Positive and Negative Impacts:**

This involves a balanced view of both the successes and challenges brought by the approach. Understanding what worked well and what didn't helps refine future strategies and ensures that positive outcomes are emphasized while negative ones are addressed.

### **Experience Validation:**

Evaluating if frustrations and challenges faced by stakeholders were recognized and responded to. Acknowledging these issues is crucial for maintaining trust and improving the experience for all involved.

### **Mitigation of Negative Impacts:**

Assessing which strategies or measures were most effective in reducing negative outcomes. This includes evaluating the success of corrective actions and whether they were implemented in time to make a meaningful difference.

### **Communication Effectiveness:**

This includes several key questions:

- **Adequacy of Communication:** Was the communication sufficient for stakeholders to stay informed and engaged?
- **Methods of Communication:** Which communication channels (emails, meetings, reports, etc.) were most effective and why?
- **Enhancing Understanding of the Process:** Did the communication methods help participants better understand the construction or business processes involved in the project?

### **Business Outcomes:**

This is the final evaluation area, which looks at tangible outcomes such as financial growth, sales increase, or other business improvements that can be attributed to the project. This section connects the broader project goals to real business results.

Using these metrics ensures a thorough, people-centered assessment, allowing for continuous improvement and adjustment of strategies to achieve the best possible outcomes.



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Closing



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As you implement the Business Forward approach, remember that this process is both a learning journey and an iterative one. Every construction project is unique, with its own challenges, opportunities, and stakeholders. While mistakes may happen along the way, embracing a proactive mindset and prioritizing collaboration can significantly reduce disruptions and build stronger relationships with the community.

By ensuring that every member of the construction project team understands the principles of Business Forward and actively participates in its implementation, you can create a more inclusive and responsive process. Together, these efforts will not only limit missteps but also foster trust, goodwill, and long-term success for businesses, communities, and future projects.



# Appendix

## Stakeholder Mapping Template

### A Crucial Tool

Stakeholder mapping is an essential step in the Business Forward approach. It helps identify the individuals, businesses, organizations, and community groups that will be impacted by or have an interest in the construction project. This tool ensures that everyone's voices are heard, and their needs are considered throughout every phase of the project—from planning to execution and beyond.

By clearly understanding who your stakeholders are, you can build stronger relationships, tailor communications, and proactively address concerns. A well-crafted stakeholder map becomes a living document that evolves as the project progresses, ensuring no one is left out and that every interaction is meaningful.

The Stakeholder Mapping Template included in this appendix is designed to guide your team through this process. It will help you organize key information, prioritize outreach efforts, and stay accountable to the communities and businesses you serve. Remember, effective stakeholder engagement is the foundation of a successful Business Forward project.

#### 1. Project Team

**Purpose:** Identify core members responsible for project design, execution, construction, and direct communication/engagement with stakeholders.

##### *Organizations/Individuals Responsible For Project:*

- [Insert organization/individual name]
- [Insert organization/individual name]

##### *Key Responsibilities:*

- Project design:
- Development and execution:
- Construction:
- Community/business communication/engagement:

##### *Decision-Making Authority:*

- Who is the primary point person for community engagement?
- Does this person have the authority to make decisions?
  - What decisions can be made?

##### *Additional Notes:*

- [Insert additional details or considerations]

#### 2. Project Collaborators

**Purpose:** Identify organizations that can support outreach, engagement, and connections to businesses and communities.

##### *Collaborating Organizations:*

- [Insert organization name] – Existing relationship with businesses? (Yes/No)
- [Insert organization name] – Active in project planning? (Yes/No)

##### *Support Roles:*

- Outreach to hard-to-reach businesses:
- Community engagement and education:
- What communication tools are each organizing using to communicate with businesses?

##### *Additional Notes:*

- [Insert additional details or considerations]

**3. Businesses**

**Purpose:** Identify businesses impacted by the project and categorize them based on direct or indirect impact and vulnerability.

*Directly Impacted Businesses*

- [Insert business name] – Construction zone? (Yes/No)
- [Insert business name] – Key considerations:

*Indirectly Impacted Businesses*

- [Insert business name] – Adjacent to construction zone? (Yes/No)
- [Insert business name] – Potential accessibility issues:

*Disproportionately Impacted Businesses*

- [Insert business name] – Minority-/immigrant-owned? (Yes/No)
- [Insert business name] – Women-/veteran-owned? (Yes/No)
- [Insert business name] – New or small business? (Yes/No)

*Outreach Challenges*

Hard-to-Reach Businesses:

- [Insert business name] – Reason for difficulty (e.g., language barrier, no contact info):

Key Engagement Needs:

- Information needed to navigate the project:
- Communication channels (email, in-person visits, community meetings):

Additional Notes:

- [Insert additional details or considerations]

**4. Stakeholder Communication Plan**

**Purpose:** Outline how information will be disseminated and challenges addressed.

*Primary Communication Methods:*

- [Email, social media, physical flyers, etc.]

*Frequency of Communication:*

- [Weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, etc.]

*Point of Contact for Issues:*

- Name:
- Role:
- Contact Information:

*Process for Addressing Issues:*

- [Insert process for documenting and resolving issues, e.g., dedicated hotline, online form, in-person office hours.]

*Additional Notes:*

- [Insert additional details or considerations]

**5. Mapping Visuals**

(Optional) Use diagrams or tables to visualize stakeholder relationships and categorize their impact and roles:

*Stakeholder Influence Chart:*

- High Influence, High Impact:
- High Influence, Low Impact:
- Low Influence, High Impact:
- Low Influence, Low Impact:

*Business Proximity Map:*

- [Insert map showing construction zone and affected businesses.]

