

## **Aggressively Plan & Manage Construction to Limit Community Impacts**

We recognize that construction of a major public works project such as the Red Line has the potential to be disruptive, messy and potentially burdensome for the communities where construction will occur. We also recognize that these construction impacts can be managed and mitigated. At the very least, construction of the Red Line should “do no harm” to residences, businesses and neighborhoods; and, with thoughtful planning and constructive community engagement, opportunities exist to enhance our neighborhoods as a result of the project construction.

We recommend that the following principles guide the final design and construction process for the Red Line. Each of these principles is based upon strategies which have been successfully deployed in other cities and which should be considered and implemented as appropriate. Where possible, these items should be addressed in specific and enforceable contract language issued by the MTA.

### **They did it. So can we. Salt Lake City’s 400 South TRAX Project**

During construction of the 400 South TRAX light rail line, the city sought to proactively manage the impact of construction on businesses and property owners. They hired an ombudsman, who prepared for and immediately responded to issues related to business access, traffic/parking, utility interruption, noise disruptions, and other concerns. The city also ensured that information about construction was shared frequently and openly with all community members. Finally, contractors were given incentives for minimizing construction impacts on neighborhoods.

#### **MTA will create early, excellent, and transparent project communications through the following actions:**

- Employ liaisons to coordinate and disseminate information among agencies/contractors and residents/businesses, and provide “rapid response” when issues occur. To the extent possible, liaisons will be hired from affected communities.
- To maximize community contact and take advantage of existing community networks, liaisons should be embedded in established organizations along the corridor such as community development corporations, umbrella organizations or special benefits districts.
- Establish regular communication mechanisms such as a highly functional project website, email distribution list, reverse 911 and project newsletter to notify residents/businesses of disruptions, construction schedules, etc.
- Be sure that all project communications are in layman’s terms, provided in multiple languages and available in multiple formats.
- Activate a 24/7 hotline for emergency information, reporting and response.

**MTA will create a strong, independent monitoring and reporting program for construction impacts, with a fair, independent dispute resolution process, including the following:**

- Provide for independent monitoring and reporting (via project website) for noise, vibration, air quality, time and place restrictions, vector control, hazardous materials, water leaks, etc.
- Establish a community-based monitoring and outreach program, such as the project created with East Baltimore Development, Inc., using project-area residents to educate other residents about public health issues associated with construction, and to deploy proactive strategies to reduce impacts.
- Notify the community if existing green space will be converted to some other use, utilizing communication mechanisms described above.
- Offer incentives/assess penalties for contractor compliance/non-compliance with approved mitigation and management plans; explore investing penalties back into the affected community rather than deducting from contractor payments.
- Work with a group such as the Baltimore Mediation Center or Community Law Center to proactively resolve matters in a setting that does not require full legal action.

**Provide support to affected residents and businesses, including the following:**

- MTA will implement an aggressive small business marketing campaign to reinforce that construction areas are “open for business.”
- MTA will minimize the loss of parking in residential and small-business retail areas through strategies such as discounted off-street parking or shuttle bus service.
- The City will create a mitigation fund to compensate business/property owners for loss of revenue or patronage during construction; provide for low-interest loans, façade improvement grants, etc. to business owners in affected areas.
- MTA will provide information to contractors about local suppliers, vendors and merchants during construction.
- MTA will provide every property owner adjacent to construction activities with a third-party pre-and post-construction inspection for structural tolerances, damage, foundation cracks, etc. Establish an ongoing monitoring program and protocol for properties which may be affected by Red Line operations.

**MTA will implement and enforce construction restrictions and requirements which limit community disruption, including the following:**

- Reject alternatives which require involuntary residential displacements as a result of the project.
- Minimize nighttime construction in residential areas.
- Require that contractors use best practices for low-emission construction equipment, such as the use of ultra-low sulfur diesel fuels, equipping machinery with diesel particulate filters, limiting vehicle idling, etc.
- Reduce dust by providing for regular watering of construction sites and daily street-weeping where appropriate, as well as other amenities.
- Require off-site parking for construction workers in areas with limited on-street parking.
- Schedule delivery of materials during non-rush hours; clearly establish and identify truck routes and staging areas for the delivery and disposal of materials.
- Locate stationary equipment as far as possible from noise-sensitive land uses.

**MTA will work to honor and protect community, historical and cultural resources by carrying out the following:**

- Work with the City, communities, and other partners to create an independent advisory committee to deal specifically with historic preservation issues throughout the corridor.
- Implement vibration-reducing measures during both construction and operations near historic buildings.
- Maintain an on-site historical/cultural resource specialist/advocate who will serve as a liaison during construction in historic areas and who can be contacted at all times.
- Develop and fund plans to highlight historical and cultural resources such as interpretive displays at stations, historically-appropriate street lighting and other street fixtures, promotional events, completion of National Register of Historic Places applications, etc in Red Line station areas.
- In all cases, provide for fair compensation of property owners where right-of-way acquisition is needed. Allow for creative strategies to compensate property owners if construction affects their property such as the replacement of landscaping, reconstruction of steps, etc.