Community Partnerships are the Key to Surviving Street Improvement Projects

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What You Will Learn Today

1. HOW TO BUILD EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

2. HOW TO IMPLEMENT A MULTI-LAYERED PUBLIC OUTREACH PLAN

3. TECHNIQUES TO MAINTAIN YOUR KEY SUPPORTERS
Project Description/Background

The Santa Monica Boulevard Transit Parkway Project is the largest street improvement project undertaken in the City of Los Angeles. The project reconstructed 2.5 miles of Santa Monica Blvd. in West Los Angeles, merging two roadways (Big and Little Santa Monica Blvds.) and an abandoned railroad right-of-way.

What We Faced

BUSTLING COMMUNITY

The Santa Monica Boulevard Transit Parkway Project took place in thriving West Los Angeles bordering Beverly Hills and Century City. Beverly Hills is best known for its internationally acclaimed restaurants, grand, luxury hotels and unparalleled shopping; while Century City is home to many law firms and executives with ties to the film, television, and music industries. Reconstructing Santa Monica Boulevard in the midst of these upscale communities was not an easy feat!
What We Faced

CONGESTED & NEGLECTED PROJECT AREA

- Abandoned railroad right-of-way
- Double intersections
- Unsightly billboards
- Dirt median

What We Faced

PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

- Neighborhood traffic calming
- Bikeway facilities
- Wider sidewalks
- Streetscaping
- Landscaping – 1,000 new street trees
- Transit priority
- Added parking
- Single-point intersections
Getting It Done: BUDGET

Final Project Budget
Approximately

$96 million
Getting It Done: DEADLINE

Construction began in March 2003, and was originally scheduled for completion in June of 2005.

Weather delays, underground utilities, and design conflicts caused the project to finish 16 months behind schedule in October 2006.

Getting It Done: CHALLENGES

- Unprecedented rainy season
- Design conflicts
Getting It Done: CHALLENGES

• Media attacks

Community Outreach

The project was introduced to the community more than 20 years before we began outreach in 2000. The Santa Monica Boulevard Transit Parkway Project Task Force included community and business representatives, the City of Los Angeles (Public Works, Department of Transportation, and the Department of Water and Power), the Metropolitan Transit Authority, and elected officials.
Community Outreach

Savvy, well-educated and politically connected.

Community Outreach/Meetings

Monthly open house briefings

Regular meetings with community groups
**Community Outreach/Meetings**

Don’t let them get you down. Stay in control of your meetings. If someone has a question and you do not have the answer—*that is OK*. Just be sure to say you will find out and get back to them.

Sometimes the team will feel beaten up as you see here. Remember to refocus and get back in there!

**Community Outreach Components**

- On-site project office
- Web site
- 24-hour traffic line
- 24-hour project hotline
Community Outreach Components

- Project Brochure
- Project Business Directory

- Project newsletter
- Weekly construction notices via “email blast”
- Fulltime outreach representative
Community Outreach Components

- Plan milestone events
- Groundbreakings
- Ribbon-cutting ceremonies
**Media Relations**

- Manage the message with a designated spokesperson to speak to media
- Build relationships with area media representatives

**Media Relations**

- Issue regular news releases
Media Relations

High Marks for Santa Monica Boulevard Project

The Department of City Works, Bureau of Engineering, recently received the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Transportation Achievement Award for the Santa Monica Boulevard Project. The project received 51 points in the "Most Improved Freeway" category, which is based on improvements to existing facilities. The project included the widening of Santa Monica Boulevard from four to six lanes, the introduction of dedicated bus lanes, and the installation of new traffic signals. The project was completed in 2012 and has been credited with greatly reducing congestion and improving traffic flow.

Business Outreach Components

- Separate briefings for business owners
Business Outreach Components

- Door-to-door business survey to determine needs before construction
- Business directory
- Business networking events
- Small Business Administration (SBA) workshops

Business Outreach Components

- “Open during construction” signage
- Monthly meetings with area chamber of commerce
- Business management and marketing workshops by SBDC
- Additional parking designated for area businesses
On-the-Spot Negotiations

Find the balance...

Fix the broken planters

On-the-Spot Negotiations

Clean dirty pools
**Keys to SUCCESS**

- Make supporters a top priority
- Keep your supporters happy
- Maintain relationships with detractors and learn from their perspectives

**Keys to SUCCESS**

*Keep your word!*
Project Awards

- 2004 Media Relations Award from the Los Angeles City Engineers and Scientists organization
- Mayor’s Quality and Productivity Commission’s 2004 Community Partnership & Community Outreach Award

Project Awards

- 2008 Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Transportation Achievement Award
- 2008 Project Achievement Award from the Los Angeles City Engineers and Scientists Organization.
- 2008 California Transportation Foundation “Tranny” Roadway Project of the Year Award
Lessons Learned

• Pre-construction outreach is essential
• Form partnerships
• Never underestimate the community

Lessons Learned

• Develop a core group of supporters
• Utilize current communication trends
• Do your part
• Know your target audience
Lessons Learned

• Make sure the project team is on the same page.

Questions & Answers