



**Title of Project/Program:** Shop Lake Grove: Business Support and Promotional Program

### **Brief Summary**

Over the course of almost three years, the [Boones Ferry Road Improvement Project](#) involved completely reconstructing and widening nearly a mile of undersized roadway, to transform it into a welcoming, comfortable and accessible corridor for all.

With more than 200 businesses located within the busy commercial corridor directly impacted by major construction, the City of Lake Oswego took a groundbreaking approach to mitigate impacts to businesses by developing a robust business support and promotional program. Core elements of the '[Shop Lake Grove](#)' program involved:

- Relationship Building: Support through ongoing business visits and 'canvassing.'
- Signage: Business support signage included large project signs, a-frame sandwich boards, blue traffic delineator cones, and blue business access signs for driveways.
- Free promotional [Videos and Articles](#): 'Who's Who on Boones Ferry Road' highlighted a different business each month:
  - Included a one-two minute video and a short article about the business
  - Promoted through project's e-newsletter, website and City social media channels
- [Raffle](#): Free monthly raffle where customers could enter to win one of two \$100 gift cards to a participating business of their choice.

The City went above and beyond to not only support businesses throughout construction, but help them thrive. Through promoting the program and highlighting many local businesses, new and old customers were brought into the area. No businesses located within the project limits closed due to construction. In fact, a few new businesses opened during construction. Many also revitalized their frontages in conjunction with the street improvements.

## **Detailed Description**

### ***Project Background***

More than 20 years in the making, the [Boones Ferry Road Improvement Project](#) involved completely reconstructing and widening nearly a mile of undersized arterial roadway within the City of Lake Oswego, to transform it into a welcoming, comfortable and accessible corridor for all. This bustling corridor now features: a new streetscape, wider Americans with Disabilities Act accessible sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, traffic signals, street lighting, landscape planters, underground utilities, artistic elements, upgraded water lines, and stormwater facilities.

The total project cost was approximately \$38 million, with the majority funded through Urban Renewal.

### ***Construction Concerns***

Construction started in summer 2019 and took almost three years to complete. The project was very complex and had many moving parts. This portion of Boones Ferry Road typically carries 20,000 average vehicle trips a day. There were periods where multiple construction crews were actively working throughout the project corridor, on side streets, both day and night, and along business frontages for long periods at a time.

Throughout planning and design for the project, there was excitement for the improvements and the transformation to begin, but also deep concern about how construction would impact businesses in the corridor.

The biggest concerns from businesses and commercial property owners were: business disruption due to active construction zones and travel lane reductions, loss of parking for customers or staff due to crews parking or blocking their parking spaces, restricted or blocked access to driveways and pedestrian routes, and interruption to their utilities during business hours.

### ***Business Outreach and Support Plan***

With more than 200 businesses located within the busy Lake Grove commercial corridor directly impacted by construction of the multi-year project, engaging the community early and often was essential. In order to help mitigate construction impacts to businesses, the City developed a robust 'Shop Lake Grove' business support and promotional program.

One of the program's core objectives was to build positive relationships with local businesses and provide support through communication, information, and promotional opportunities. Part of this was achieved by having the dedicated project communications specialist and contractor superintendent 'canvas' businesses throughout the entire duration of the project. This was crucial in developing a rapport and a positive relationship early on with each of the property owners and businesses, as the team members met businesses at their premises, during their business hours, and spoke with the businesses face-to-face.

It was important to reach businesses directly, gain their trust, and develop a robust contact list of all businesses in the corridor. This face-to-face relationship building provided businesses with a contact person for on-the-ground responses to issues that would arise. During visits, the team communicated to businesses what to expect during key construction stages and how their concerns would be mitigated.

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The multi-faceted business outreach program also provided tools and free promotional opportunities to businesses to help support them during construction. The goal was to make it as easy as possible for businesses to participate, as they were the ones experiencing several years of major construction. The City wanted to encourage the public and patrons to not only visit the businesses, but be rewarded for continuing to do so throughout construction.

More than 30 businesses signed up to participate in the program. Outlined below are some of the plan's tools to support businesses and encourage people to 'Shop Lake Grove.'

### ***Signage***

- Extra-large 'Open for Business' project signs were displayed at the start and end of the project corridor.
- A-frame sandwich boards were placed throughout the active work zones, specifically focused on business entrances, using the same 'Shop Lake Grove' branding.

The purpose of these were to support businesses, but also to provide contact information if the traveling public had questions or concerns.

### ***#FollowTheBlueCones***

The City created the message and hashtag #FollowTheBlueCones. During construction, blue traffic cones and blue business access signs were installed at each business' driveway to help customers find the entrances to businesses along the corridor.

### ***Featured Business Videos and Articles: Who's Who on Boones Ferry Road***

A core element of the program included a '[Featured Business](#)' video and article highlighting a different business located within the current active work zone each month. These included a short article about the business and a *Who's Who on Boones Ferry Road* one-two minute video shared across the City's social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Nextdoor), the project website, and the project e-newsletter.

In total, the City developed [15 featured business videos and articles](#). Businesses eligible to participate were those located within the active work zone and may have limited access for more than one week due to construction activities, or construction activities make it difficult for customers to access or see the business.

All videos were filmed and edited solely in-house by the communications representative using an iPhone, microphone, tripod, and edited using iMovie.

The feedback received about the business highlights from both the business community and greater community was overwhelmingly positive. The videos provided an opportunity to showcase what the local businesses had to offer, a call-to-action to encourage the local community to support them during the project (and pandemic), and also hear what the businesses were looking forward to about the project improvements. It was also an opportunity for local businesses to reach new and old customers.

### ***#ShopLakeGrove Raffle***

The 'Shop Lake Grove' promotional program also included a City-sponsored [monthly raffle](#) where participants could enter to win a \$100 gift card to a participating business of their choice. This was free to

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enter and open to all. The City partnered with the local business association to provide two \$100 gift cards a month to winners.

Given the focus was on businesses who were most impacted by construction, the City established eligibility criteria for businesses to participate. Raffle rules were also developed and these were outlined on the '[Shop Lake Grove' project page](#), located on the [project website](#). To enter, participants needed to physically visit a participating business, complete an entry card, and drop it in the raffle box.

The raffle was heavily promoted through all City communication channels including: HelloLO print newsletter, posters on display in businesses, LODown e-newsletter, at tabling events (the Lake Oswego Farmers' Market), social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Nextdoor), project website, City website, project e-newsletter, and the Lake Oswego Chamber of Commerce e-newsletter.

During the first seven months of the raffle, the average number of entries was 350 per month. Due to the pandemic, the campaign was temporarily put on hold in March 2020. In order to continue to provide support to the business community during the hardship and cumulative impacts of ongoing construction and the pandemic, the City revised the program and relaunched it in January 2021.

The featured business videos and articles resumed as they were, highlighting businesses directly located in the active construction zone. The monthly raffle was adjusted to a social media and photo-focused [#ShopLakeGrove](#) contest. This allowed people to feel safe participating under COVID-19 safety protocols/guidelines, instead of physically having to enter business premises or complete a raffle card.

### **Cost**

Labor costs that went into implementing the program were solely from in-house staff and the contractor. The approximate total cost of materials was \$10,000; an easy, attainable investment for business support in relationship to the \$38 million project in total.

### **Success of the Program**

By effectively working with the business community to maintain access, promote businesses impacted by construction, and keep them informed throughout, the business community not only survived, but thrived.

Through promoting the Shop Lake Grove program and highlighting many local businesses on the City's communications channels, new and old customers were brought into the area. Several raffle winners and participants stated they had never visited or heard of some of the participating businesses before, and several have since become loyal customers. Many of the videos were very popular on social media receiving high engagement, views, comments, and shares.

While some businesses temporarily closed due to the pandemic, no businesses located within the project limits closed due to construction. In fact, a few new businesses opened during construction and took advantage of the Shop Lake Grove program. Many also revitalized their frontages and redeveloped in conjunction with the street improvements.

The Lake Oswego Chamber of Commerce President shared his appreciation that the City and project team did a "tremendous effort" in supporting the business community. Other local jurisdictions have reached out to the City project team to learn about the business outreach plan and implement similar ideas for their construction projects located in business districts.