

COALITION OF SECOND AVENUE BUSINESSES

c/o Crowe's Nest Bar & Restaurant
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ELECTED OFFICIALS LAUNCH “SHOP SECOND AVENUE” CAMPAIGN AND ANNOUNCE STATE LEGISLATION TO SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS DURING SUBWAY CONSTRUCTION

A coalition of Second Avenue business owners, along with Assembly Member Jonathan Bing, Council Member Dan Garodnick and fellow East Side elected officials, today launched a grass-roots “Shop Second Avenue” campaign and announced State legislation to assist businesses affected by the construction of the Second Avenue Subway.

Council Member Garodnick and Assembly Member Bing were joined at the launch by Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Borough President Scott Stringer, State Senators Liz Krueger and José M. Serrano, Assembly Member Micah Kellner and Council Member Jessica Lappin.

Second Avenue Subway construction has been occurring between 91st and 96th Streets since April 2007. Current work is focused on utility relocation, which has narrowed sidewalk space significantly. The loss of sidewalks and curbside parking, along with the relocation of several stores' entrances, is taking its toll on businesses.

The “Shop Second Avenue” campaign combines community outreach, a partnership with the MTA, and State legislation to ease the burden for businesses along Second Avenue from 91st to 96th Streets — where subway construction is limiting foot traffic to the storefronts and causing other disruptions for merchants.

“The impact of the Second Avenue Subway construction has challenged business owners' capacity to maintain the integrity of their business income plans,” said **Barbara D'Antonio, owner of Wine Lovers**, a member of the coalition. “Revenues have declined steadily by 20 percent since March 2007 and the cost of doing business has increased due to changes in flow of transportation, sanitation, and utility supplies.”

“These businesses are taking a hit for all of us,” said **Council Member Dan Garodnick**. “If you support the Second Avenue Subway, you should support these merchants who are struggling now. Join us in eating, drinking and shopping in this neighborhood — they need our help.”

Assembly Member Jonathan Bing said, “The Second Avenue Subway will eventually increase business traffic and ease the burden of East Side commuters. But until the first stage of the subway is completed, we must vigilantly work to provide our local small businesses with the tools they need to survive the

disruptive construction process. For this reason, I will soon be introducing legislation in the New York State Assembly to provide much-needed financial assistance to affected businesses.”

The “Shop Second Avenue” campaign will include raising money to finance advertising and marketing materials to bring more customers to the area, as well as working with the MTA to improve visibility and signage for the businesses behind the high construction barriers. The MTA has also committed to displaying businesses’ logos and contact information on its website, www.mta.info.

Assembly Member Bing, with the support of Assembly Member Mark Weprin, Chair of the Committee on Small Business, will introduce legislation that will offer tax credits to small businesses within the construction zone. That bill will be carried in the Senate by State Senator José M. Serrano. Additionally, Assembly Member Bing is also investigating economic development grants and temporary tax free zones to increase pedestrian traffic to affected businesses. Assembly Member Kellner plans to introduce additional legislation aimed at relieving the property tax burden.

“Second Avenue offers a wide range of fabulous restaurants, intriguing stores and neighborhood shops. We don’t want to wake up and find a brand new subway line surrounded by empty storefronts,” said **Congresswoman Maloney**. “It is only fair that the New Yorkers who are bearing the burden of Second Avenue Subway construction get the help they need.”

Borough President Stringer said, “We’re going to be building this subway line for more than a decade - it could take two - and it is 100 percent predictable that its construction will affect hundreds of businesses from East Harlem to Wall Street. We need a permanent plan for preserving those businesses - a safety net if you will - so that we're not back here in six months trying to put together a piecemeal package to rescue businesses a few blocks south of here.”

“The Second Avenue Subway is a tremendous boost to the East Side,” said **Senator Serrano**. “But as the project moves forward, we must do all we can to ensure that local businesses are provided comprehensive protection. I am confident that, with community leaders and local business owners working together, this goal will be achieved.”

State Senator Krueger said, “There is no question that businesses are suffering due to the construction of the Second Avenue Subway. All New Yorkers should do their part by remembering these merchants and patronizing the wonderful stores and restaurants along Second Avenue.”

“Unfortunately, there has been pain with the progress of building the Second Avenue Subway. Businesses are hurting, and it’s time to take creative action to ensure that this pain doesn’t snowball into economic devastation for the local businesses in these neighborhoods,” said **Assembly Member Kellner**. “Next week, I will introduce a bill that offers property tax rebates to commercial property owners in the affected Second Avenue Subway corridor — extending downtown as construction progresses — so that hard-working small businesses who make Second Avenue a great commercial corridor will be able to weather this storm.”

“Stores in this area are seriously hurting and need our business,” **Council Member Lappin**. “For example, some lost phone service and the ability to do credit card transactions during the busy holiday season. That was devastating. By shopping on Second Avenue, we can help keep these businesses afloat and retain a vibrant commercial corridor in this neighborhood.”

While the subway’s first phase of construction will eventually move along towards 63rd Street, street-level disruption for businesses above 91st Street is projected to continue for three and a half years.

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