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The Second Avenue Subway Community Information Center at 1628 Second Avenue in New York, Ny (Photo Credit: Wikimedia)

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# EAST HARLEM BUSINESSES TAKE A HIT AS 2ND AVENUE SUBWAY CONSTRUCTION DISRUPTS SALES



with its East Harlem expansion.

Small businesses in New York City's East Harlem neighborhood are taking a massive hit.

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Business owners along Second Avenue say the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) Second Avenue Subway Phase 2 project is disrupting customer access and reducing sales. The nearly $7 billion project will extend Q train service to 125th Street in Harlem, with new stations at 106th and 116th streets. The project is slated to continue over the next six years until 2032, but some businesses may not survive.

Which MTA project is causing business disruption in East Harlem?

- Grand Central Renewal
- East Side Access
- Third Avenue Subway Phase 1
- Second Avenue Subway Phase 2

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At Go Donut, a Black-owned donut shop near East 118th Street, sales have fallen between 60% and 70% since construction began in April. Owner Solomon Fresh said fencing, generators, limited parking, and other construction obstacles have made the shop harder to find and access.

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"Once they put that up, it just started tanking after that," Fresh told *ABC7 New York*.

The disruption has gone beyond foot traffic. Fresh said construction also left his shop without running water on Thursday nights into Fridays for months, forcing him to

purchase water. As a result, he says the financial pressure has affected staffing.



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“Sometimes I have to pay people late, and I lost employees over that too; over not being able to pay them when [they] wanted to get paid,” he said. “I’m not against the train, but it’s just how they’re going about it,” he told *ABC7*. “It’s no respect. No communication. Nobody knows nothing that goes on.”

The MTA says it has been working directly with affected businesses. A spokesperson told ABC7 that its outreach team worked with Go Donut to relocate a generator, install noise blankets, and develop a custom fence wrap to improve the shop’s visibility during construction.

“Our outreach team has been in regular contact with Go Donuts and worked with the owner to move a generator from in front of the business and add noise blankets to nearby construction fencing. We’re also preparing a custom fence wrap to help customers spot Go Donuts during construction, part of our work to keep businesses in the project area visible and accessible as the Second Avenue Subway brings more people to the neighborhood,” MTA Spokesperson Laura Cala-Rauch said.

**godonuts_harlem**
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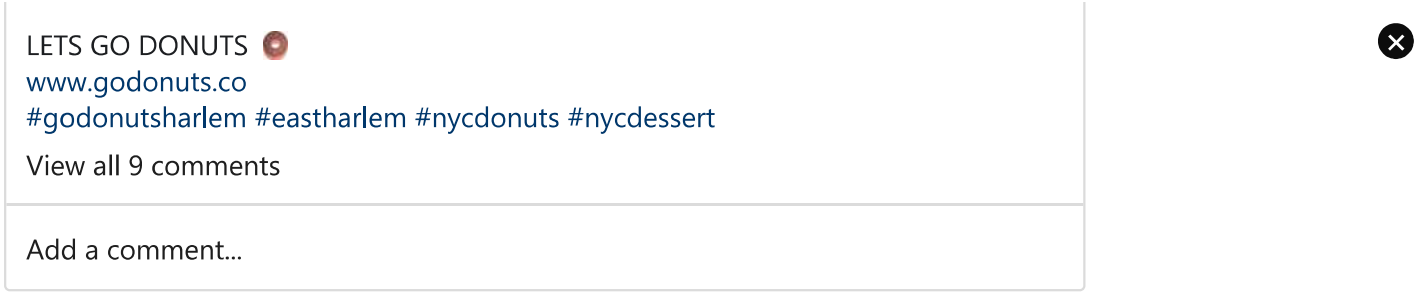
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But Fresh is not alone. *The New York Post* reported that Eagle Tile owner Lu Nicaj said construction barriers have severely reduced access for his contractor customers. Meanwhile, Casa Ricardo's Steakhouse owner Jimmy Mateus told the publication that his restaurant's sales have declined about 40% this year amid construction-related disruptions.

The project's long-term economic case is significant. MTA documents say Phase 2 is expected to serve more than 100,000 riders daily and improve connections between East Harlem, the Upper East Side, and other parts of Manhattan. But for merchants trying to make payroll today, the question remains: How do they keep the doors open until those promised benefits arrive?

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