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NATO Planners Soothe Business Owners' Fears

"It should be like Y2K," Dobry said. "A lot of buildup, a lot of hype, but at the end of the day, we should wake up on Tuesday morning, and say, 'That was it?'"

By [Phil Rogers](#) | Tuesday, Apr 24, 2012 | Updated 12:16 PM CDT



"Let me reiterate something, the city is open for business," said former police superintendent Terry Hillard, now a consultant for the NATO host committee. "You're going to be in one of the most secure areas in the United States."

At the same time, Hillard conceded "there are going to be a few knuckleheads" who will attempt to disrupt the proceedings.

The questions from the building owners and managers ran the gamut. One attendee who manages a development near Union Station wanted to know if the protest routes would come near his building. (The answer was, probably not.) Several asked for specifics on the security footprint, which has still not been released. Some wondered if they should curtail construction activity at their buildings, which might make security officials nervous.

In nearly all instances, they were told to conduct business as usual. Deputy Chief Debra Kirby said residents should be advised to carry identification, to facilitate entry to their buildings, but she quickly added that police would not be setting up checkpoints.

At the same time, Kirby conceded that police have prepared a list of delegate hotels which are likely to be targeted by protesters, and that those will receive special attention.

It is expected the lakefront bicycle path will be closed for the duration of the NATO events.

Thomas Skweres, the president of the Apartment Building Owners and Managers' Association (ABOMA), said access to buildings seems to be his members' greatest concern.

"Is their daily life going to be interrupted...are they going to be safe?" Skweres said. "I think their biggest concern is just getting in and out of the buildings, and is there going to be disruption going to and from their normal day?"

Tom Dobry, the chief of the Local One training center, says his staff has held training sessions for the staffs of about 60 buildings so far, and expects to train employees of another 50 buildings before the summit in May.

"It should be like Y2K," Dobry said. "A lot of buildup, a lot of hype, but at the end of the day, we should wake up on Tuesday morning, and say, 'That was it?'"



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