



Center for Transportation Excellence

# **MEDIA STRATEGIES**

Presented by  
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# Good Communications Planning

- Have a clear goal
- Identify your target audiences and plan everything you do with them in mind
- Develop core messages and repeat throughout the campaign
- Find the best messengers
- Develop a plan for several months of activities to get your message out (earned media, paid, mail)

# Dealing with the Press

- Build relationships before you need them
- Learn about each of the different local media outlets (deadlines, appropriate reporters, biases)
- Don't forget smaller publications (community papers, home owner association newsletters, African American newspapers)
- Become a resource for reporters (provide accurate information quickly, provide story ideas, be accessible)

# Dealing with the Press cont.

- Meet with the beat newspaper reporters early to discuss the initiative, rebut the misconceptions the opposition will put forth.
- Request an editorial board meeting early in case the board will weigh in multiple times throughout the campaign.
- Give press individualized treatment because they are often fiercely competitive. Do not rely on blast emails the day of an announcement.

# Responding to Attacks

- The best defense is a good offense
- Know what criticisms to expect and prepare all spokespeople with responses before you are attacked
- Brief press on what critics will tell them and why they are wrong
- Respond, then bridge to your main points
- Be available to press 24/7 and return calls quickly
- Prepare information on who is behind anti-transit campaigns

# Generating Coverage

What makes something  
newsworthy?


# New is the root of news. What is happening TODAY?

- Has the ballot been given the green light to go before voters?
- Are you launching new TV spots?
- Announcing the formation of the high-profile campaign committee?

# Making News with Reports and Analysis

- Studies showing impact on community/traffic if initiative is passed (and if it fails)
- Polls on support for initiative

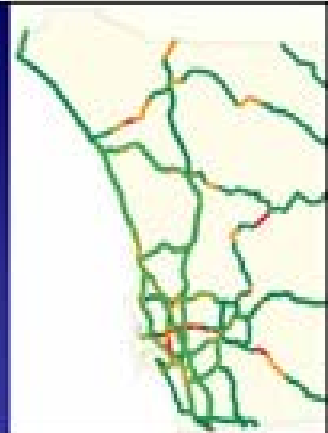
# San Diegans for Congestion Relief



Congestion  
*without*  
Proposition A

Click here for a closer look at:  
**congestion**  
***WITHOUT***  
**PROP A**

This graphic shows a map of San Diego with a network of roads. The roads are color-coded to represent congestion levels. In this version, without Proposition A, a large number of roads are colored in red and orange, indicating high levels of congestion. The map is presented on a dark blue background with the text 'Congestion without Proposition A'.



Congestion  
*with*  
Proposition A

Click here for a closer look at:  
**congestion**  
***WITH***  
**PROP A**

This graphic shows the same map of San Diego as the previous one, but with Proposition A implemented. In this version, the majority of roads are colored in green, indicating significantly reduced congestion. The map is presented on a dark blue background with the text 'Congestion with Proposition A'.

# Making News: Human Interest

- Identify real people who will be affected
- Have many real stories available for reporters and consider offering different individuals to competing news outlets
- Hold creative events to feature stories

# HIGH PROFILE SPOKESPEOPLE/CELEBRITIES

- Often what is news is not what someone is saying or doing, but who that person is
- Endorsements from public officials, former mayors, business leaders, interest groups

# STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

- Developers and Environmentalists
- Republicans and Democrats
- Elderly and Youths

# SUPERLATIVES!

- Do you have the broadEST coalition for transit in your area?
- Are commuters facing the longEST travel times with traffic ever?
- Do you have EVERY area mayor supporting you?
- Is this the BIGGEST transit initiative ever in your state?
- Is this the FIRST time something has happened?

# Unexpected/Counterintuitive

- Man bites dog
- Support for transit in a community that has voted against it in the past (Lexington, Kentucky)
- Unexpected opposition (fringe environmentalists against Austin transit initiative)

# Trends

- What are the trends that you can highlight that help make your case?
- Are people spending more time sitting in traffic in your area?
- Are more people riding transit?
- Are high gas prices prompting people to take the bus?

# Conflict

- No news is good news
- A fight is more interesting than harmony
- Republicans unifying around Social Security reform would not have been a story; crumbling support in the party was on the front page for weeks

# Peg to an Existing Story

- Reports on Increased Traffic
- State Budget Cuts
- Release of new data on poor regional air quality

For more information, contact Valerie Holford, VVH  
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