

## **Transportation for Economic Development in Hillsborough County Communications Framework**

Public engagement is critical to the Transportation for Economic Development in Hillsborough County (TED) initiative, as much as the input and guidance of the elected officials who are participating through the Transportation Policy Leadership Group (PLG).

Public engagement early in this process included a series of community meetings to encourage and receive feedback and input from those most closely affected by public transportation issues. At these meetings, we heard from business owners, corporate executives, anchor institutions, people who use public transit for their work commute, and the public.

As the PLG is evaluating the next steps for this initiative to create a more balanced transportation system in Hillsborough County that supports broader community goals, economic vitality, and advances the quality of life, the next stage of communicating and community engagement is also in the planning stages.

A group of communications professionals from Hillsborough County, City of Tampa, City of Plant City, City of Temple Terrace, Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit, Tampa Aviation Authority, Florida Department of Transportation, Tampa Expressway Authority, and Port Tampa has been meeting to develop a communications framework. This framework will serve to unify messaging between agencies and guide any substantial public engagement on transportation. As members, the MPO and HART should work with the communications committee to coordinate any upcoming outreach efforts in order for messaging to be collaborative and well planned.

A communications framework sets out the macro picture of an organization's communications, including overarching vision and direction, communication architecture, stakeholder and audience maps, positioning and categories/programs for communication and priorities for action. A communication strategy goes deeper into the specific communication programs and deliverables address detailed operational communication requirements, measurable objectives, key messages and evaluation methods. Finally, a communication plan is the enabling tool to provide an essential day-to-day guide of activity and clearly sets out the practical application of a strategy to a micro level – including all elements such as timing and production schedules.

The following information comprises the draft framework under construction by the TED Communications subgroup:

### **What do we need to accomplish?**

A proposed goal is to create a more balanced transportation system in Hillsborough County that supports broader community goals, economic vitality, and advances the quality of life.

### **How can communications help achieve this outcome?**

- Generate awareness of the Transportation for Economic Development in Hillsborough County (TED) initiative and its goals
- Build credibility for the approach and methodology being used identify and prioritize projects
- Educate and inform stakeholders on the work done so far and the work proposed to be undertaken

**What do we need to communicate?** [Key messages to be identified by the PLG; an example is provided below]

#### **Safer. Faster. Better Choices.**

Safer: targeted projects that make a difference to traveler safety

Faster: congestion relief projects that move more traffic in less time

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Better Choices: mobility choices to create the type of places where people want to live, work, and play

### With whom do we need to communicate?

We have identified the initial stakeholder audiences, grouped by categories.

**PARTICIPATING AGENCIES**— leaders and boards of municipalities and organization currently making transportation planning decisions for Hillsborough County and working with Transportation for Economic Development in Hillsborough County initiative.

**ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS** - medical, educational, arts and cultural institutions and sports venues, which occupy a unique and influential place as the largest employers.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT-FOCUSED GROUPS**— organizations committed to enhancing the community by building business success.

**NEIGHBORHOOD/COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS** - group of residents or property owners who advocate for or organize activities within a neighborhood or community.

**TRADE ASSOCIATIONS/TRANSPORTATION INTEREST GROUPS** - an organization founded and funded by businesses that operate in a specific industry and citizen action organizations advocating for transportations improvements

### What tools do we use?

An initial toolbox of communications and public participations options are available for the selected key messages and the selected audience. The highlighted options are recommended by the Communications subgroup as a first step.

#### Techniques to Share Information

**BILL STUFFERS** - Information flyer included with monthly utility bill

**BRIEFINGS** - Use regular meetings of social and civic clubs and organizations to provide an opportunity to inform and educate.

**CENTRAL INFORMATION CONTACTS** - Identify designated contacts for the public and media; can be a phone, email or social media tag directed to an assigned group.

**EXPERT PANELS** – Public meeting designed in “Meet the Press” format. Media panel interviews experts from different perspectives; can also be conducted with a neutral moderator asking questions of panel members.

**FEATURE STORIES** – Focused stories on general project-related issues

**FIELD OFFICES** – Offices established with prescribed hours to distribute information and respond to inquires

**HOT LINES** – Identify a separate line for public access to prerecorded project information or to reach project team members who can answer questions/obtain input

**INFORMATION KIOSKS** – a station where project information is available

**INFORMATION REPOSITORIES** – public facilities, such as libraries, for housing project-related information

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EMAIL GROUPS/SUBSCRIPTIONS– create and maintain distribution lists for persons interested in updates on the project

NEWS CONFERENCES - media event in which newsmakers invite journalists to hear them speak and, most often, ask questions.

NEWSPAPER INSERTS – a “fact sheet” within the local newspaper

PRESS RELEASES AND PRESS PACKETS – provide resource and background information plus contact information

PRINT ADVERTISEMENT – paid advertisement in newspapers and magazines

PRINTED PUBLIC INFORMATION MATERIALS – fact sheets, newsletters, brochures, issue papers, progress reports, direct mail letters

RESPONSIVENESS SUMMARIES – a form of documentation that provides feedback to the public regarding comments received and how they are being incorporated

TECHNICAL INFORMATION CONTACTS – providing access to technical experts for individuals and organizations

TECHNICAL REPORTS – technical documents reporting research or policy findings

TELEVISION – television programming to present information

WEB – web site provides information and links to other sites; can be interactive.

### Techniques to Compile and Provide Feedback

COMMENT FORMS – mail-in forms often included in fact sheets and other project mailings to gain information on public concerns and preferences; can provide a web-based or email form.

COMPUTER-BASED POLLING – surveys conducted via computer network; can be integrated in a kiosk

COMMUNITY FACILITATORS – use qualified individuals in local community organizations to conduct project outreach

CROWDSOURCING – the practice of engaging large groups of people, including online communities, to obtain input; can also be an online town hall meeting.

DELPHI PROCESS – a method of obtaining agreement on forecasts or other parameters by a group of people without the need for a face-to-face group process. The process involves several iterations of participant responses to a questionnaire and results tabulation and dissemination until iterations do not result in significant changes.

IN-PERSON SURVEYS – one-on-one “focus groups” with standardized questionnaire or methodology such as “stated preference”

INTERNET SURVEYS/POLLS – online response polls

INTERVIEWS – one-to-one meetings with stakeholders to gain information for developing or refining public involvement and consensus-building programs; can be recorded.

MAILED SURVEYS AND QUESTIONNAIRES – inquiries mailed randomly to sample population to gain specific information for statistical validation

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MOBILE APPS –software tools developed for use on smart phones, PDAs, table computers, and other portable devices connected to the Internet; can be used to provide information to the public, conduct data collection, or gather feedback and ideas.

PHOTO JOURNAL – members of the public are asked to share pictures of what they would like to see in their future; can be gathered via the web or using social media.

RESIDENT FEEDBACK REGISTERS – a randomly selected database of residents created to give feedback to an agency, business or organization about its services, priorities, project or contentious issues.

SOCIAL MEDIA - social interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks; examples include Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Pintrest, Instagram and Linked In.

TELEPHONE SURVEY/POLLS – random sampling of population by telephone to gain specific information for statistical validation

### Techniques to Bring People Together

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS – Appreciative inquiry is a systematic process that used the art and practice of asking questions and building upon narrative communications to surface imagination, innovation and commitment to action

CHARRETTES – intensive session where participants design project features

CITIZEN JURIES – small group of ordinary citizens empanelled to learn about an issue, cross-examine witnesses and make a recommendation. Always non-binding with no legal standing

COFFEE KLATCHES/KITCHEN TABLE MEETINGS – small meetings within a neighborhood usually at a person's home

COMPUTER-ASSISTED MEETINGS – any sized meeting when participants use interactive computer technology to register opinions

DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUES – a systematic dialogic process that brings people together as a group to make choices about difficult, complex public issues where there is a lot of uncertainty about solutions and a high likelihood of people polarizing on the issue. The goal of deliberation is to find where there is common ground for action.

DELIBERATIVE POLLING PROCESS – measures informed opinion on an issue

DIALOGUE TECHNIQUES – an intentional form of communication that supports the creation of shared meaning

FAIRS AND EVENTS – central event with multiple activities to provide project information and raise awareness

FISHBOWL PROCESSES – a meeting where decision makers do their work in a “fishbowl” so that the public can openly view their deliberations

FOCUSED CONVERSATIONS – a structured approach to exploring a challenging situation or difficult issue by using a series of questions arranged in four stages: Objective (review facts), Reflective (review emotional response), Interpretive (review meaning) and Decisional (consider future action).

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FOCUS GROUPS – message testing forum with randomly selected members of target audience; can also be used to obtain input on planning decisions.

FUTURE SEARCH COMMITTEES – focuses on the future of an organization, a network of people or community

GAMES/SIMULATIONS – physical or web based engagement through play; designed to create an opportunity for players to negotiate with one another, listen to their neighbors, and create solutions that reflect not only their own but other viewpoints, or help the player build an understanding/appreciation around a certain topic, through a strong sense of community with other players

MEETINGS WITH EXISTING GROUPS – small meetings with existing groups or in conjunction with another group's event

ONGOING ADVISORY GROUPS – a group of representative stakeholders assembled to provide input in the planning process; may also have members from the project team and experts.

OPEN HOUSES – an open house encourages the public to tour at their own pace. The facility should be set up with several informational stations, each addressing a separate issue. Resource people guide participants through the exhibits.

OPEN SPACE MEETINGS – participants offer topics and others participate according to interest.

PANELS – a group assembled to debate or provide input of specific issues

PUBLIC HEARINGS – formal meeting with scheduled presentations offered. Typically, members of the public individually state opinions/positions that are recorded.

PUBLIC MEETINGS – an organized large-group meeting usually used to make a presentation and give the public an opportunity to ask questions and give comments. Public meetings are open to the public at large.

REVOLVING CONVERSATIONS (SAMOAN CIRCLES) – Leaderless meeting that stimulates active participation

STUDY CIRCLES – a highly participatory process for involving numerous small groups in making a difference in their communities.

SYMPOSIA – A meeting or conference to discuss a particular topic involving multiple speakers

TASK FORCE/EXPERT COMMITTEE – a group of experts or representative stakeholders formed to develop a specific product or policy recommendation

TOURS AND FIELD TRIPS (GUIDED AND SELF-GUIDED) - provide tours for key stakeholders, elected officials, advisory group members and the media

TOWN HALL MEETINGS – A group meeting format where people come together as equals to share concerns; can occur as a telephone town hall or online forum.

WEB-BASED MEETINGS – meetings that occur via the internet

WORKSHOPS – an informal public meeting that may include presentations and exhibits but ends with interactive working groups

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WORLD CAFES/KNOWLEDGE CAFES – a meeting process featuring a series of simultaneous conversations on response to predetermined questions. Participants change tables during the process and focus on identifying common ground in response to each question.

### Examples of potential implementation:

Outreach events to connect with community stakeholders and to provide opportunities for more in-depth conversations about the work of the PLG. Tools such as a photo journal and online surveys using iPads to create a fun and inviting atmosphere and to encourage people to share their ideas for the future.

Hold localized World Cafés where all the outcomes are shared online to continue the discussion in a facilitated online forum.

Host a series of interactive telephone town hall meetings to share information and gather feedback about Hillsborough County's transportation network and key economic spaces.

Develop an interactive website to promote upcoming events, provide background on the work of the TED policy group, share photo journal photos and video interviews and host an online survey seeking feedback and ideas about the future.

Design a large public event at which members of the community are invited to hear perspectives from the PLG, local planning experts, etc. and share their thoughts and ideas about the future.

Bring the transportation subcommittees of agencies and organizations together for a town hall meeting.

Conduct video interviews with local community leaders and ask them to reflect on their thoughts about Hillsborough County today and their desires for the future.

### Next Steps

A discussion on how we track and define success is planned at the next TED Communication subgroup meeting. Also not identified are a budget and implementation resources. Implementation resources may include hiring an experienced public relations advisor to execute a coordinated outreach effort.