



Targeted Online Ads



online



low-cost

OVERVIEW:

Online advertising has become a popular way for agencies to promote public involvement in transportation projects and plans. Often promoting a survey, website, or social media account, ads are an economical way to encourage engagement in transportation planning and project development. Agencies can choose from a wide array of social media ads and promoted posts, as well as internet search ads and display ads that appear on websites or in mobile apps. Ads can also be targeted to geographic locations (“geo-targeting”) or demographic groups, to strategically expand awareness and bring new participants into a process. Online ads are often paired with traditional print, radio, or television ads, and with other types of publicity, as part of an overall communications campaign.

BEST SUITED FOR:

Planning Products and Projects, All Phases

CASE STUDIES:

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority, Regional Transportation Plan

The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) used geo-targeted ads to increase participation in a virtual meeting and survey for their regional transportation plan. NJTPA designed the ads to help viewers relate to planning topics on a personal level. The ads reached 1.6 million people over a six-week period and helped to generate 3,000 survey responses. This broad engagement helped NJTPA identify community-supported priorities for improving transportation in the region.

The NJTPA’s online ads were designed to attract interest and help viewers relate to the long time horizon of a regional transportation plan. Image courtesy of NJTPA.

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) ✓
Written by J. Eric McAndrew [?] · April 19 at 10:43am · 🌐

Plan for the Future!

1987
Age: 4 months

2017
Age: 30

PLAN 2045
Connecting North Jersey
NJTPA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

A lot can change in 30 years. Take a quick survey to help shape your future.

The NJTPA wants your input for Plan 2045: Connecting North Jersey, our latest...

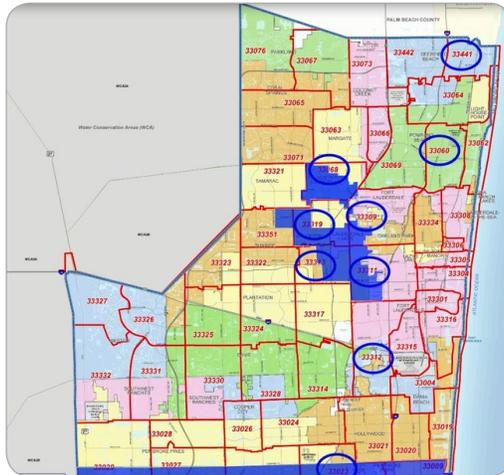
PLAN2045SURVEY.ORG [Learn More](#)

Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, Complete Streets Master Plan

The Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) used social media ads to promote participation in a survey for their Complete Streets Master Plan. As part of this effort, the MPO identified three under-represented areas of the region for a geo-targeted ad campaign. They received over 1,000 survey responses, including 378 responses from areas where participation had been low traditionally. The survey results informed Broward MPO’s development of a prioritized list of Complete Streets projects.



CASE STUDIES cont...



For their Complete Streets Master Plan, Broward MPO used geo-targeted ads to gather survey responses from areas where participation had been low in the past. Image prepared by WSP with Broward County mapping and Broward MPO data.

Snapshot

Advantages

- Helps expand the level of participation
- Reaches beyond the typical audience for a transportation plan, bringing in new participants
- Can provide access to hard-to-reach communities or demographic groups
- Relatively low cost (typically lower than a print media ad campaign)

Disadvantages

- Only reaches those who use the social media platforms, websites, or apps where ads are placed

Resources Required

- Staff time to plan ad campaign
- Basic creative/design expertise
- Advertising fees

Outcomes

- Broader base of participants for a plan or project
- Robust response to linked surveys
- Increased awareness of the agency, plan or project, and opportunities for public involvement

Tips for Success

- Begin by determining outreach goals, target audiences, and time-frame for an ad campaign; define the ad's call to action (for instance, taking a survey or commenting on project alternatives)
- Tailor ad concepts to your target audience(s): for example, different messaging or images might appeal to older adults vs. college students
- Consider pilot-testing one or more ad concepts before undertaking a full-scale campaign
- In planning an ad campaign, review any requirements for public notice that apply to your project; in some cases, print ads in major newspapers may be required
- Refer to 2 CFR 200.421 for guidance on the use of federal funds for advertising and public relations