COMMUNITIES OF CONCERN
The Hillsborough MPO defines a Community of Concern as any block group at least one standard deviation above the median in two or more of the following characteristics:

• minority population,
• elderly population,
• Limited English Proficiency population,
• disability,
• zero vehicle households,
• low income, or
• youth.
Communities of Concern face unique and often overwhelming obstacles related to transportation and engagement in MPO participation processes.

IDENTIFYING NEIGHBORHOOD GATEKEEPERS
People listen to people they know. The MPO contacted over 100 community leaders and asked how to best reach their community. Many hosted presentations, distributed information to their members, and sent e-mails to encourage the public to participate.

LESSON LEARNED
Coordinating with community leaders can take weeks, sometimes months, for real results. The MPO contacted most of the community leaders six to nine months before the outreach period.

LESSON LEARNED
Riding the bus was an effective strategy to engage communities of concern in person.

DIRECT CONTACT OUTREACH
Rode 6 bus routes through communities of concern.
Attended 100 community meetings and events.
Hosted 7 pop-up events at major transit transfer centers and local malls.

LESSON LEARNED
The MPO developed five social media ad sets and tested different images and text. Depending on ad performance, the MPO then adjusted the advertising spend to favor the ads that performed well.

LESSON LEARNED
Social media users had already taken the survey and created a custom social media advertising audience that allowed the MPO to avoid targeting these individuals. This helped to maximize budget by not wasting advertising dollars on those who had already taken the survey.

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES
Rather than expecting people to come to us, the MPO met people where they are by attending community events, existing neighborhood meetings, riding the bus, and leveraging social media advertising.

LESSON LEARNED
Set up advertising audiences strategically. The MPO used a tracking pixel to understand which social media users had already taken the survey and excluded them from advertising. This helped to maximize budget by not wasting advertising dollars on those who had already taken the survey.

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