

TIGETHER LAGGE

National Transit Adaptation Strategy

Transit Agency Toolkit

Introducing...

TOGETHER WAR

A ready-made public awareness campaign designed to...

- Promote the benefits, reliability, and ease of public transit
- Encourage riders to choose public transit for more trips

Table of Contents
Background and Toolkit Quick Guide3
Campaign Implementation5
Campaign Performance Measurement9
Appendix
Section 1: Case Study: "Together We Go" Pilot Campaign14
Section 2: Tips for Creating an Advertising Campaign
Section 3: Tips for Working with a Media Buyer
Section 4: Quick Reference Guide to Common Digital Marketing Terms
Section 5: "Together We Go" Campaign Style Guide





Background

The National Transit Adaptation Strategy (NTAS) is a federally-funded initiative to support transit agencies in boosting public confidence in—and ridership on—local transit systems.

Over the past years, transit agencies across the country have faced declining ridership, an issue exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Factors such as remote work, changes in daily routines, the rise in ride-hail companies, and others have led people to opt out of public transit, creating an uncertain future for local transit agencies.

To address these challenges, the Federal Transit Administration awarded a grant to the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) to develop the NTAS—a social-marketing strategy that provides tools to promote the benefits of public transit and encourage people to make use of their local transit system.

The NTAS was developed through diligent research, including the development and analysis of future scenarios, user personas, and impact modeling to determine the most effective approaches to reach new and lapsed transit riders.

Based on this research, the NTAS created the following core themes to serve as foundations for a campaign:

- Connecting communities through mobility: A transit system prioritizes social cohesion, fostering stronger community connections, and inclusivity.
- Creating a more livable and equitable city: Prioritizing accessibility, affordability, and equity in our transportation network to help create a more livable and equitable city.

Reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality:
 Promoting the use of more efficient and sustainable transportation options helps reduce traffic congestion and improves air quality, creating a cleaner and healthier city for all.

With these themes in mind, the SFMTA developed the "Together We Go" campaign to promote the ways which transit brings people together and fosters a sense of community and belonging.



In Spring 2025, the SFMTA, along with the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (CapMetro) in Austin, TX, launched "Together We Go" in their respective markets as part of a pilot campaign.

We are now ready to equip transit agencies across the country with the "Together We Go" campaign to reach markets nationwide.

For more information about the development of the NTAS, you can download the Phase I report on the <u>NTAS Project Page</u> (SFMTA.com/NTAS).

A Quick Guide

WHAT is in the toolkit?

The "Together We Go" toolkit provides the following resources:

- Creative assets to implement the "Together We Go" campaign in your area (See Appendix Section 5 for personalization and download instructions)
- Guidance on how to put together a marketing/advertising campaign
- Helpful findings from the San Francisco,
 Chicago, and Austin pilot campaigns
- Tips for how to work effectively with media buyers
- Ways to measure campaign performance and associated transportation impacts
- A glossary of common marketing and advertising terms



WHO is this toolkit for?

"Together We Go" was created for transit agencies looking to promote public transit in their region.

The toolkit provides campaign assets and clear recommendations for transit agency staff to implement an effective campaign.

The toolkit is designed to be used by any staff tasked with communications, even those without a marketing background.



WHY use this toolkit?



Our aim is to equip transit agencies with a campaign that promotes public transportation as a travel option for everyone. The goal of the campaign is to shift awareness and attitudes towards public transportation and mobility by emphasizing the benefits, reliability and ease of public transit, with the goal of encouraging riders to begin or resume using transit.

The "Together We Go" toolkit can supplement existing outreach and public education efforts. It can also be used as a stand-alone campaign—especially valuable for agencies with limited resources to design their own marketing materials.

WHEN should you use this tookit?

You can utilize "Together We Go" campaign assets at your discretion, based on your agency's particular communication goals. The campaign is designed to work across a wide range of populations, audiences, and situations.

The toolkit can be leveraged:

- As part of a general awareness-building effort
- During periods of higher traffic (holiday season, back-to-school, etc.)
- In conjunction with specific local events (sports, concerts, festivals, etc.)
- When targeting specific audiences and trip types (commuters, students, etc.)



Campaign Implementation

How you implement the "Together We Go" campaign depends on your budget and timeline. Below is a breakdown of the different advertising avenues you can choose from, starting with the most immediate and budget-friendly, to large-scale media buys.

	Organic Social Media Post(s)	Paid Social Media Digital Marketing	Digital Out-of-Home (OOH) Advertising	Print OOH
Medium	Digital	Digital	Digital	Print
Publisher	Coordinated internally, e.g., transit agency or city government social media account	Coordinated externally through a digital media buyer (paid campaign)	Coordinated internally through existing contracts (e.g., Intersection, Clear Channel, OutFront, etc.); externally through a digital media buyer (paid campaign)	Coordinated internally through existing contracts (e.g., Intersection, Clear Channel, OutFront, etc.); externally throug an OOH media buyer (paid campaign)
Lead Time (i.e., time from final artwork to publishing)	Can publish immediately	3-5 days to coordinate and publish	2 weeks to coordinate and publish	3-4 weeks to publish, including printing + installation
General Cost Range	\$: Free unless there is a desire to boost posts	\$\$: Typically reserved for buys more than \$800, assuming a local market focus and market size	\$\$: Depends on scale of the campaign, along with inventory demand/pricing	\$\$\$: Depends on scale of the campaign, along with printing, installation, inventory demand/pricing

Digital Marketing Campaigns: Additional Information

Digital media (social media, web advertising, etc.) has replaced print as the primary advertising medium. It can be quite cost-effective, especially in reaching the most relevant campaign audiences through targeted distribution. Navigating the landscape of digital media can feel daunting at first; however, with time it's relatively easy to master the basics of techniques and tactics like paid promotions and boosted posts.

Digital targeting tactics described below require the help of a digital media buyer.

Digital Marketing Targeting can help improve your campaign's performance. Methods include:



Geofencing creates a virtual boundary around an area (e.g., towns, cities, zip codes). Individuals who enter the designated general area will be targeted and served ads in real time. One example of geofencing is setting a boundary around a shopping district during the holiday season to serve ads to shoppers encouraging them take transit.



Polygonal Targeting Attribution (PTA) is a

custom boundary that targets devices in specific geographic locations (transit hubs, venues, etc.). Unlike geofencing, PTA can retarget and serve ads to devices that have passed through a designated space up to the last six months. An example of this is setting up PTA around a local sports arena. Any device that has passed through that boundary in the last X number of months will be served an ad whether they're in the area or not. One difference between PTA and geofencing is that PTA allows you to identify the devices and serve the ad at a desired time, where geofencing-targeted ads are served in real-time



Behavioral and Contextual Targeting targets specific users on social media based on behaviors, interests, and demographics. For example, ads targeted to devices where its owner has indicated an affinity for baseball or identified as a fan of the local home team (behavioral) or ads placed on MLB.com for baseball fans or fans of the local home team (contextual).

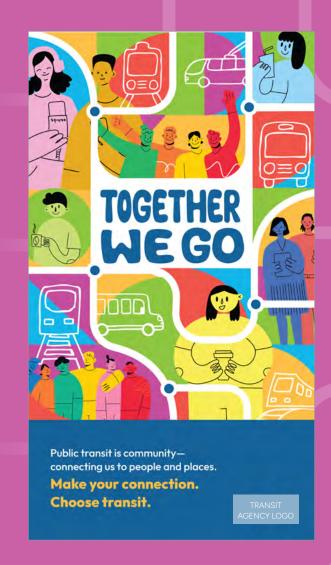


How to download the creative assets

To access and download the creative assets for the "Together We Go" campaign, visit the <u>NTAS Project Page</u> (SFMTA.com/NTAS).

The next page includes a list of the "Together We Go" creative assets we have made available for transit agencies and local governments—our NTAS partners—to use to prepare and distribute this campaign. Each creative asset includes an area for partners to add their agency's or jurisdiction's logo. You will most likely need to work with your creative services or graphic design production department to assist with this. While it's possible to run the campaign without your logo, we recommend including a local transit agency or government logo to strengthen relevance and ground the campaign with a recognizable authority and trusted local entity.

Once you've updated the creative assets with your logo, you will work with your marketing and advertising partners and/ or media buyers to deliver these assets for the launch and distribution of your campaign!



See Appendix
Section 5: "Together
We Go" Campaign
Style Guide for
direction on how
to custom these
creative assets for
your campaign.

"Together We Go" Creative Assets

Social Media Graphics

- Two (2) static social graphics: 1080x1080 and 1080x1350
- One (1) animated asset for Reels/Stories: 1080x1920
- Social Media Copy
 Options for organic and paid posts

Digital Display Ads

 Three (3) static digital display ads (i.e., 160x600 pixels, 300x250, 320x480)

Digital OOH Ads

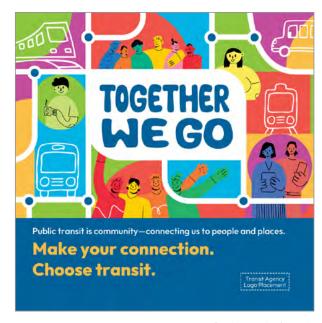
• Two (2) static digital transit shelters: 2160x3840 pixels

Print Out-of-Home Ads

- One (1) interior car card: 28"w x 11"h
- One (1) bus queen: 30"h x 96"w
- One (1) bus king: 30"h x 144"w
- Website Banner 2400x800 pixels
- Campaign Landing Page Copy
 Guidelines and Sample Language
 Guidelines and language for an online campaign destination

See Appendix Section 5: "Together We Go" Campaign Style Guide for direction on how to customize these creative assets for your campaign.

Sampling of Creative Assets





Social Media Graphic

Digital Display Ad



Interior Car Card

Campaign Performance Measurement

The following section outlines the different ways to evaluate the performance of your campaign, from tracking campaign effectiveness through impressions and clicks garnered through a digital marketing ad buy, to determining the influence of the campaign on overall ridership. Each metric plays an important role in assessing the impact and your transit agency's return on campaign and marketing investment.



Your ads are up! Now what?

Measuring your campaign's performance helps you understand your audience, evaluate who engages with your ads, and determine your campaign's reach.

All digital ads/posts are measured by the following criteria:



Impressions: Number of times a piece of digital content is displayed, regardless of clicks (e.g., any time you scroll past an ad in your feed, that counts as an impression)



Engagement: The total number of actions users have taken on your post and/or account page (e.g., likes, shares, comments)



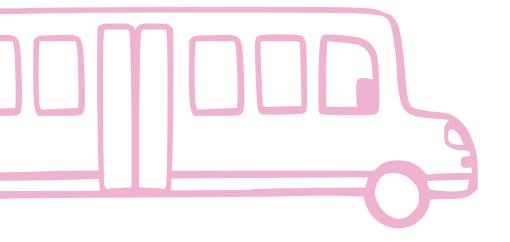
Reach: Total number of unique accounts (non-duplicative) that have seen your ad (e.g., if your ad was displayed 600 times, but 200 unique individuals saw it, your reach is 200)



Clicks: The number of times your content was clicked



Click-Through Rate (CTR): The number of clicks your campaign ad received divided by the total number of impressions, or number of times it was displayed (e.g., if a social ad had 176,316 total impressions and 2,521 total clicks, the CTR would be 1.43%—higher than the average CTR for social media ads, which is between 0.8% and 1.0%)



Each of these measurements can provide insight into how well your campaign's ad or social media post is performing.

Other valuable tools that can help measure performance include:

Urchin Tracking Modules (UTM codes)

Your paid digital ads or organic social posts will automatically have tracking capabilities. But what about your print ads?

While tracking the performance of print advertising is less precise than what's available for digital ads, we can measure click-through rates for print ads by assigning an Urchin Tracking Module—or UTM code—to a URL embedded in a QR code on the ad itself. UTM codes are customized links that allow us to track, sort, analyze, and compare the click-through data from all sources of the campaign.

For example, say a rider is waiting at a bus stop that displays your transit shelter ad. The UTM code assigned to the QR code could look like:

www.YourAgencyName.com/together-we-go?utm_source=bus&utm_medium=transit-shelter&utm_campaign=NTASfall25

Then let's say they board the bus and see your car card ad. The UTM code assigned to the QR code on that ad could look like:

www.YourAgencyName.com/together-we-go?utm_source=bus&utm_medium=car-card&utm_campaign=NTASfall25

By assigning specific UTM codes to each creative touchpoint—social media ad, car card, transit shelter ad, etc.—we can determine which ad received the highest percentage of clicks, thus informing future distribution strategies.

Note that while a printed OOH transit shelter ad may not garner as many "click throughs," it's constant physical presence in the market—tangible visibility—offers a quantitative advantage when you consider estimated impressions and its permanence contributes to the importance of the campaign.



Measuring Impacts on Ridership

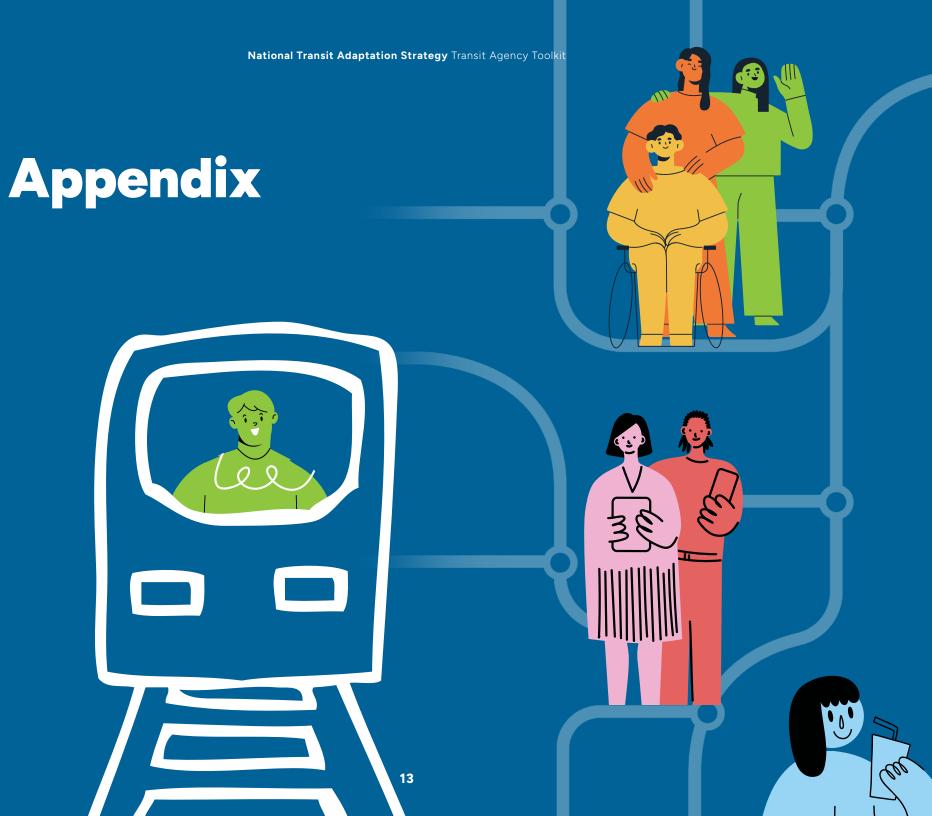
Phase IV of the NTAS included a **Data Model** that agencies can use to measure how specific interventions (like "Together We Go") impact ridership. Other interventions could include service changes, new fare programs, and more.

Developed by NTAS project partners at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the data model is an ARIMA (AutoRegressive Integrated Moving Average) model built and accessible in the R programming language.

To run the model, transit agencies will need to enter ridership data from before and after the intervention, preferably averaged separately for weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. The model creates a "counterfactual" prediction—an estimate of what ridership would have been without any new initiatives. By comparing this prediction to actual ridership measured during a campaign or intervention, transit agencies can determine whether their efforts made a difference. If real ridership exceeds the projection, the intervention may be deemed successful.

The model is available for download through the NTAS Phase IV website which includes a link to the GitHub page. Users will need a basic understanding of the R programming language to deploy the model. RStudio is the preferred Integrated Developer Environment (IDE) for working with the data model. If you would like to learn more about how the model works, you can find a technical report in the NTAS Phase IV Final Report, published on the NTAS Project Page (SFMTA.com/NTAS).





Case Study: "Together We Go" Pilot Campaign

The "Together We Go" campaign was made possible by a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant that the SFMTA received to build tools for transit agencies to use to boost confidence and ridership in public transportation.

The SFMTA partnered with MIG's communications and creative team to come up with a concept for the campaign and produce digital and print assets for marketing and advertising.

MIG faced the unique challenge of creating a concept that was both eye-catching and adaptable to a variety of transit markets. As a result, the SFMTA chose a bright, illustrative approach that was not tied to a specific geography or market. The concept displayed popular transit modes with a transit map element overlaid in the ad that connected individual segments to illustrate and bring the concept together as a whole.

With the chosen concept, the SFMTA reached out to public transit agencies across the United States to participate in the NTAS marketing campaign's pilot phase. Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) in Chicago, IL, and Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (CapMetro) in Austin, TX, opted to participate. The campaign ran from May 19, 2025 to June 20, 2025.



The digital media buy for the San Francisco market was \$14,000. Both CTA and CapMetro each had a paid social ad buy of \$3,000 (\$6,000 total). The digital media mix for this campaign consisted of:

- Digital display ads (the SFMTA only) placed on local news publication sites.
- Social media ads on Instagram and Facebook (all agencies)
 used to target individuals based on behaviors and interest.

The FTA grant also included budget for exterior transit ads placed through Intersection that the SFMTA managed themselves.

- Bus king and queen placements were included for the SFMTA, CTA, and CapMetro.
- The SFMTA print deliverables also included light rail vehicle queens and interior car cards on buses and light rail vehicles.

Overall, the "Together We Go" digital awareness campaign performed very well across agencies—all sub-campaigns meeting or exceeding industry averages. The four-week run garnered 1,636,241 total impressions and 8,122 total clicks.

At the time of publication, the data gathering and analysis of the ridership impact model was still in progress, and results were not yet available.



Tips for Creating an Advertising Campaign, How to Choose Your Campaign Touchpoints

A **touchpoint** is each form your campaign embodies. They can be physical—a printed transit shelter, a bumper sticker or an outreach event—and digital—a social media ad, a YouTube video, a digital transit shelter. Touchpoints are the vehicles for

conveying your campaign message. They comprise a myriad of forms. Below is a broad overview of the touchpoints that will be most relevant as you consider which to use for your "Together We Go" campaign:

Paid digital advertising requires working with a media buyer to create a customized digital media plan with specific targeting strategies to reach key audiences.

- Social media ads (static, animated or video) used to reach a mix of individuals based on interest or geography users have self-identified on social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok). These campaigns can be customized to:
 - Target specific users on social media based on behaviors, interests and demographics
 - Target devices that have passed through a specific area (PTA), or within a designated boundary (geofencing)

- Digital display ads are static or animated ads displayed on a website (e.g. banners, sidebars, mobile browsers, news sites, and other online platforms). These ads:
 - Target users based on their demographics, behaviors and interests and/or contextual targeting on contextually relevant sites
 - Include cross-device targeting and pixel-based targeting for optimization



Out-of-home advertising (OOH) can be placed through a media buyer or an advertising vendor (e.g., Clear Channel, Intersection, etc.). While tracking impressions or the reach of these ads is not as precise as with digital ads, media vendors can provide the estimated number of impressions for any placement—and the tangibility of OOH ads garners much more visibility and presence than digital ads.

- Digital OOH: Digital ads that are placed in areas such as:
 - Transit shelters and stations
 - Digital billboards or bikeshare ads managed by companies like Intersection, Clear Channel and OutFront
- **Print OOH:** Print ads that can be placed on transit such as:
 - Bus car cards
 - Bus kings, queens, tails
 - Transit shelters and stations

Organic social media posts—e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok—are not paid ads, but content posted through the organization's social media account.

- Collaborator posts are organic social media posts where one author can "collaborate" with two or three profiles at the same time.
 - Once accepted by the tagged collaborator account, these posts appear on the tagged account's grid and in their feed.
 - Even if a user does not follow your organization, they will still see the post on their feed if they follow a collaborator account.
 - These posts also do not have any explicit targeting capabilities, but knowing your ad is being distributed among the followers of all the collaborators on the post, allows you to be intentional and have some customization.

- Boosted posts turn an organic post into a paid ad, reaching account followers and those who do not follow your account.
 - Although your content does not change from the original post, you are able to add a call-to-action to your existing post to encourage people to click on your ad (e.g., "Take our 90-second survey!).
 - Boosting posts is a great option for shorter ad runs with smaller budgets. They do not require a media buyer, and can be placed directly through your social media account. Additionally, boosted posts:
 - Can be geofenced
 - Targeted by basic interest or demographic, but cannot be optimized for clicks

Tips for Working with a Media Buyer

Here are some things to keep in mind when planning a paid ad campaign with a media buyer:

- Give yourself plenty of time. Reach out to the buyer at least two months in advance to give yourself enough time to plan and deliver assets to your media buyer.
- Link up on social accounts. Connect your media buyer with whomever is running your social accounts to coordinate permissions and access to your sites.
 - Your media buyer can access your social sites via an agency request.
 - You can control their access permissions to your social media account. If you give them access via an "Agency Request", they will not have permission to do anything to your social site or interact with your followers—just place ads.
- Set your campaign goal. Is this an awareness campaign
 where you want to optimize for impressions—rather than
 clicks? An educational one? One where you want to get
 people to click on the ad—most applicable if you are trying
 to garner sign-ups for an event or sales during a promotional
 period? This will help focus your buy.
- Designate your audience or location. Who do you want to reach? Fans of your organization? People who like your city/ town or live in your area? People you have yet to engage?

Visitors? Your media buyer can share targeting strategies and creative ways to reach your desired audience.

- **Set a budget.** Ask your media buyer what they recommend for a specific amount. Some paid media buys have a minimum amount and time the ads need to run.
 - Follow up by asking what type of campaign they recommend and if there's any targeting (PTA, geofencing) that they can do to reach your intended audience.
- Establish a timeline. How long should the campaign run for the buy? Does the media buyer recommend you switch up the creative to keep it relevant (this usually is the case with social ad campaigns lasting longer than four weeks)?
- Get the details on deadlines and file types. Art and social copy typically take two-to-three days to upload to platforms. Find out what the art deadline is and what kind of art files the media buyer needs to place the ads.
- Ask for in-situ examples of your ad so you can see what your ad graphic and social copy, if applicable, looks like in real time.
- Ask for updates. You should get confirmation your campaign has launched, weekly metrics updates from your buyer, and a final marketing metrics report.



Quick Reference Guide to Common Digital Marketing Terms

Behavioral and Contextual Targeting: Targets specific users on social media based on behaviors, interests, and demographics.

Boosted posts: Organic social posts that are assigned a dollar amount to reach both account followers and those who do not follow your account.

Clicks: The number of times your content was clicked.

Click optimization: A paid digital ad campaign that works to maximize the number of times your ad is clicked on. Typically used in campaigns where there is a direct call-to-action (Take our survey! Visit our site!).



Click-Through Rate: The number of individuals who click on your campaign ad divided by the total number of individuals who viewed the ad.

Collaborator posts: Organic social media posts where one author can "collaborate" with two or three profiles at the same time.

Digital Display: Ads shown on websites and other online and mobile platforms.

Digital Out-of-Home (DOOH): Ads displayed in public spaces, typically larger format digital screens, often found in malls, plazas, and parking lots.

Engagement: The total number of actions users take on your account page and its posts.

Engagement Rate: The amount of interaction a piece of content gets compared to reach or followers or audience size.

Geofencing: Location-based technology that creates a virtual boundary around an area (e.g., towns, cities, zip codes).

Google Analytics: Web service that tracks and analyzes website and app traffic and user behavior.

Impression: Number of views a piece of digital content gets.

Impression Optimization: A paid digital ad campaign that works to maximize the number of times your ad is shown. Typically used in awareness campaigns.

Organic Social: Social media posts—Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, etc.—that are not paid and are posted directly through an organization's social platform.

Out-of-home (OOH): Ads displayed in public spaces, typically print.

Paid social ads: Ads placed through a digital media buyer to reach a mix of individuals based on interest or geography on a variety of social media platforms.

Pixel-based targeting: A pixel is a piece of code that you can place on your website that allows you to optimize and build an audience for your campaign.

Polygonal Targeting Attribution (PTA): A custom boundary that targets devices in specific geographic locations (transit hubs, venues, etc.).

Reach: Total number of unique accounts (non-duplicative) that have seen your posts.

Touchpoint: Each campaign distribution element that conveys the campaign—when taken in aggregate embodies the campaign.

Urchin Tracking Module (UTM): A personalized link to help gather traffic acquisition information from non-digital ads like print OOH in Google Analytics.



"Together We Go" Campaign Style Guide

Getting Your Assets Ready For Market

You've made the decision to launch "Together We Go" in your area; now it's time to customize your ads.

We have created this Style Guide to provide direction for how to customize "Together We Go" creative assets for your market's campaign. While the overall campaign has some design and copy elements that are pre-set and uneditable, the campaign creative assets provided as part of this toolkit—specifically, the _Use for Publish files—allow the addition of your logo, a QR code and text editing to specify the URL for your campaign landing page.

Prepping Your Files

The creative assets listed on page 8 of this toolkit can be found on the <u>SFMTA NTAS Project Page</u> (SFMTA.com/NTAS) for you to download and customize for your market.

Each creative asset includes two associated files:

The **Placement Guide** file (file name: NTAS_[file type]_ Placement Guide) shows where to place customized elements, including your logo, QR code and dedicated website URL. **The _Placement Guide files are not intended for publication, and simply serve as visual reference.**

The **Use for Publish** file (file name: NTAS_[file type]_Use for Publish) is the actual editable art file (PDF or JPEG) where you will add your logo, QR code and dedicated website URL to finalize each campaign ad before sending it to your printer or ad buyer. Use for Publish files are either PDFs (for print) or JPGs (for digital).



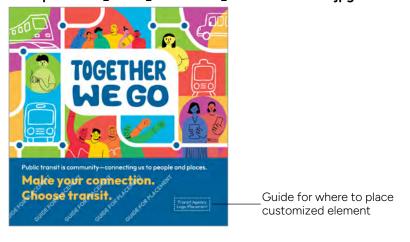
Downloading Your Assets

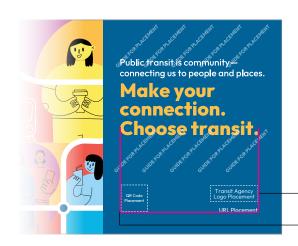
Before customizing and finalizing each creative asset using the Use for Publish file, download the Placement Guide file for each asset to inform the placement of the customizable elements—logo, QR code and campaign landing page URL. Placement Guide files are used for visual reference only. To create your customized ad, add and edit your customizable elements using the Use for Publish files provided—not the Placement Guide file.

Example: NTAS_BusCarCard_Placement Guide.pdf



Example: NTAS_Social_1080x1080_Placement Guide.jpg





Logo and URL should be right aligned to each other and within a safe distance from the right edge

_QR code should be left aligned with headline text and bottom aligned with URL

Typography

Outfit is the preferred font for URL copy on the "Together We Go" creative assets. You can download this font from the <u>Google Font website.</u>

Outfit Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Arial may be used on print collateral if the Outfit font is unavailable.

Arial Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Logo

Since your logo will be placed over a dark blue background, your agency's white-out logo is preferred.

If your agency does not have a white-out logo, make sure a white background is behind your agency's full-color logo to ensure contrast with the ad's background.

Remember when scaling objects, don't stretch your logo or QR code.



Customizing Your Files

When ready, download the **Use for Publish** PDF or JPEG for marketing asset you plan to use and place the elements as shown in the corresponding Placement Guide file.

Saving Your Files

Once you've added these elements, save them out as the original file type (PDF to PDF, JPEG to JPEG). These files been formatted for print and digital distribution accordingly.

Example of Final Product (customized for SFMTA Muni)

