Spokesperson Tips: Making your Voice Heard

From staying “on message” to making sure you have the most up-to-date facts and figures at your fingertips, these tips can help you serve as an effective spokesperson for your organization.

Good spokespeople:

- Have a compelling story or some special knowledge
- Are available
- Are predictable
- Are local

Staying prepared: The best spokespeople will be prepared for interviews at any event they attend. By following a few simple steps, you can help ensure you become a “go-to” expert on smart growth and other issues.

- Stay up-to-date on current events, especially those related to smart growth and transportation.
- If a reporter calls you for an on-the-record interview, tell them you’re tied up but can call them back shortly. Take a few minutes to prepare yourself, including making sure you have your most compelling points, facts and figures at your fingertips.
- Know your talking points. Make sure you can quickly and succinctly explain your organization’s position on any major items.
- If you don’t know the answer, say you’ll find out—and follow through.
- Anticipate questions. Before a media event or conversation with a reporter, take a minute to think through some of the questions you may be asked. Outline what your response might be—and make sure it ties back to your main messaging point. This will help you stay focused on your goal.
- Always tell a story. If you can point to a specific person or example, you will be all the more valuable to a reporter. Work with your staff to keep a “story bank” of impactful case studies and stories—and share them whenever you have the chance.
- Offer to provide more information. Tell the reporter about additional background information, news stories, fact sheets, or data you can send them that helps support your case.
- Be a source for other experts! Identify and help put reporters in touch with other compelling spokespersons, including allies at other organizations, policy experts, community, faith, or cultural leaders, and more.