

Meeting Environmental Program Goals  
at U.S. Public Transit Agencies:  
A Study of APTA Sustainability  
Commitment Signatories

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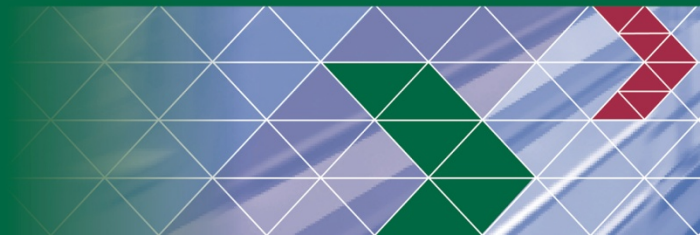
Capital Metro/Texas State University

Austin, TX



# Overview

- Capital Metro's environmental program
- Applied Research Paper
- Discussion of Barriers
- Survey Results and Conclusions
- Going for Gold
- Questions



# Capital Metro's Environmental Programs

- Sustainability Committee (2007)
  - Recycling programs for our administrative facilities
  - Recycling at large events where we run shuttle operations
  - Elimination of water bottle usage at shuttle events by giving our operators reusable water bottles and water refill stations.
  - Champion teams for community clean-ups
  - APTA Sustainability Commitment Signatory
  - Clean Air Force Partners



# Sustainability Committee

- Enthusiastic upper management 😊
- Enthusiastic committee members 😊
- Lack of financial resources ☹️
- Lack of dedicated time ☹️
- Lack of authority ☹️
- Committee member disenchantment ☹️



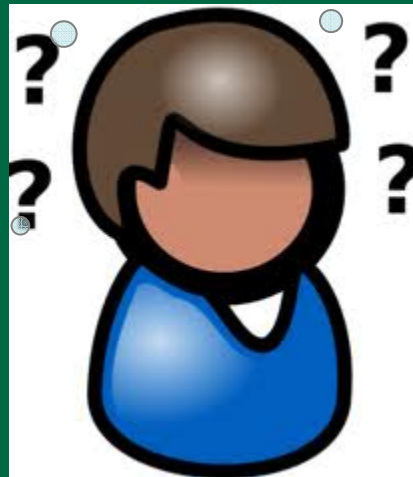
# How to make this better?

Do other transit agencies have these same problems?

What can be done to fix them?

What are the actual problems?

Can I write a whole thesis about it?



# Applied Research Paper

- Conducted a literature review and developed a conceptual framework for studying barriers to environmental program implementation.
- Three overarching categories of barriers:
  - Organizational Barriers
  - Industry Specific Barriers (Public Transportation)
  - Financial Barriers



# Barrier Categories

## Organizational Barriers

Leadership/Top Management

Attitudes of Personnel (including employee engagement)

Lack of Commitment

Lack of Political Support

Lack of Communication

Administrative Inertia/Standard Operating Procedures

## Public Transportation (Industry Specific)

Regulatory Constraints

Insufficient Technical Knowledge and Expertise

## Financial Barriers

Personnel Costs

Capital Costs



# Assessing the Barriers

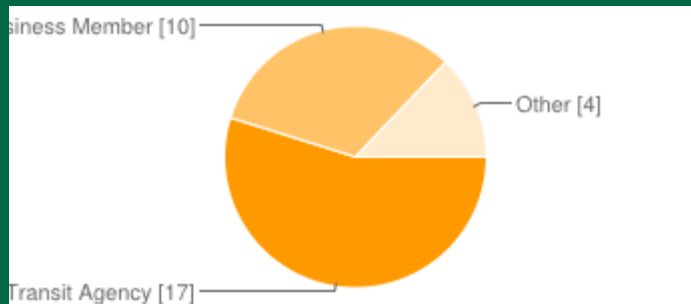
- Petra and I worked together and sent a survey to all APTA Signatory Sustainability Commitment Signatories
- 31 total responses received





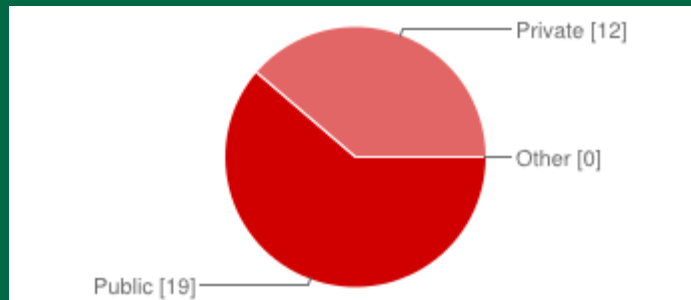
# Who Responded?

What type of organization do you represent?



<b>Transit Agency</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>APTA Business Member</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13%</b>

Is your organization public or private?

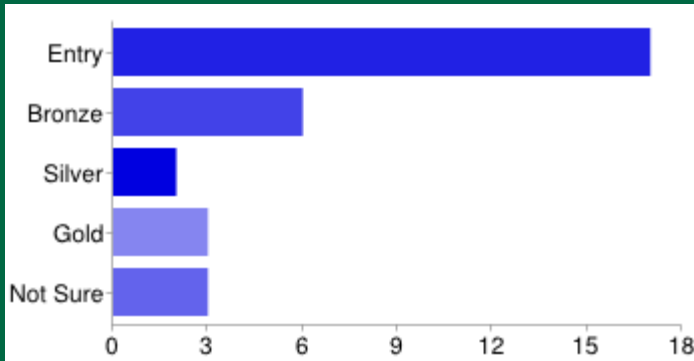


<b>Public</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>61%</b>
<b>Private</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>39%</b>



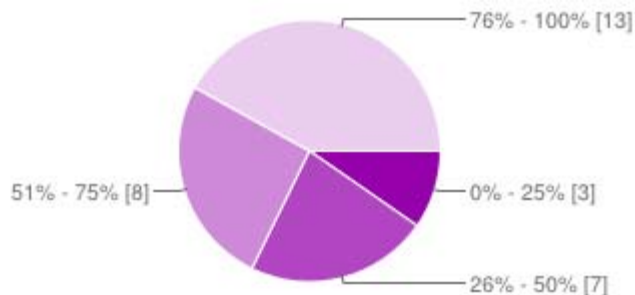
# What did they say?

## What APTA Sustainability Signatory Level is your organization?



Entry	17	55%
Bronze	6	19%
Silver	2	26%
Gold	3	10%
Not Sure	3	10%

## What percent do you think your organization is meeting your APTA Sustainability Commitment?



0% - 25%	3	10%
26% - 50%	7	23%
51% - 75%	8	26%
76% - 100%	13	42%

# Results

- Each of the barriers identified was considered a problem by at least one respondent
- No categories received a response rate of more than 50%, although some were close



# Conclusions

- This survey didn't provide an 'AH HAH moment' about where resources should go to help transit agencies succeed in their program implementation.
- This might be because the survey population were all already APTA Signatories and they may have already been well positioned to overcome these barriers.
- Or it could be that the recent stimulus funding is propping up sustainability initiatives at transit agencies right now.
- Survey could/should be repeated to transit agencies that are not already Commitment Signatories to find out if there is a big difference



# Capital Metro's current program

- Started an ESMS program in 2011
- Still wrestling with these “barriers” but have much more buy in from top management
- Considering ISO 14001 certification
- Plan to apply more resources to APTA Sustainability Commitment too!

**GOING GREEN EVERY MILE** **GREEN EVERY DAY**

*We all have a responsibility to make good choices for our family, our community and future generations. Realizing that our natural resources are limited, Capital Metro is implementing an Environmental & Sustainability Management System to help reduce our environmental impacts and operate more efficiently. With an ESMS, Capital Metro will:*

- Establish environmental objectives and targets that are measurable, meaningful and understandable
- Consider the efficient use of energy and materials that minimize environmental impacts while ensuring fiscal responsibility
- Implement reduction, recycling, and reuse practices
- Handle and dispose of waste safely and responsibly
- Continually improve management policies, programs and performance, based on results of ongoing reviews

*For more information, including the Environmental Policy, visit the ESMS section of the Capital Metro Intranet.*

THIS YEAR ALONE OUR **ESMS PROGRAM** WILL HELP SAVE CAPITAL METRO REAL MONEY, TO THE TUNE OF ABOUT **\$326,000**

SMALL CHANGES TO **BUS IDLING POLICIES** SAVED **\$117,000**

THESE CHANGES ALSO SAVED APPROXIMATELY **29,250 gallons** OF **DIESEL FUEL**, WHICH RESULTS IN AN ANNUAL **CO2 REDUCTION OF 652,275 lbs**

WHEN A NEW BUS WAS INSTALLED & **WASH POLICIES WERE CHANGED**, IT RESULTED IN NEARLY **\$146,000** IN FINANCIAL SAVINGS & BELIEVE IT OR NOT, AN ANNUAL SAVINGS OF **3,016,000** GALLONS OF WATER.

THIS YEAR'S MAINTENANCE **LIGHTING REPLACEMENT PROJECT** SAVED **\$63,000**

METRO



# Questions?

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<https://digital.library.txstate.edu/handle/10877/4211>

