



The APTA Sustainability Commitment

Sustainability, preserving the environment, being socially responsible and maintaining economic viability, with an overall contribution to quality of life, is integral to what we do and what we provide as the public transportation industry. Many APTA members have already made sustainability a strategic objective and have made great strides to increase the sustainability of their own organizations, in great part as a way to become more resource efficient, engage more with employees and customers and grow ridership, market share and funding support. And the drive towards sustainability is increasing as issues such as climate change, energy independence, preservation of resources and quality of life rise to the forefront in the public and political arenas.

The APTA sustainability commitment aims to give APTA members credit for the efforts they are already making as well as support those who are taking first steps. The commitment sets out common sustainability principles, an action plan and a course for progress. The commitment also supports the exchange of good practice and aims to mark the achievements in sustainability the public transportation industry is making overall. Through the commitment, the public transportation industry is demonstrating its significant contribution to and measurable leadership on sustainability.

All APTA members, whether from the public or private sectors, are eligible to sign the APTA sustainability commitment on a voluntary basis. APTA members who sign on commit to putting core internal processes and actions into place which set the basis for continuous improvement on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Signatories can obtain higher recognition levels of the commitment by achieving additional actions, putting long-term processes into place and attaining reduction targets for a series of set indicators.



Core commitment

Signing on to the APTA sustainability commitment means your organization aims to achieve a series of core principles. The core principles set the minimum actions which APTA members must take to demonstrate that they are serious about sustainability and are set up for success. The core principles also allow for establishing a baseline for reduction targets and long-term stretch goals. The core principles are outlined below and will be the entry-level commitment for all signatories. Commitment signatories are asked to measure and communicate on the results of the actions they have taken on an annual basis.

The core principles:

1. Making sustainability a part of your organization's strategic objectives
2. Identifying a sustainability champion within the organization coupled with the proper human and/or financial resources and mandates
3. Establishing an outreach program (awareness-raising and education) on sustainability for all staff of your organization
4. Undertaking a sustainability inventory of your organization. A list of indicators has been established below, outlining what needs to be measured and for which a baseline year needs to be determined based on data availability¹:
 - a. For Transit Agencies:
 - water usage* per unlinked passenger trip and vehicle revenue mile
 - criteria air pollutant emissions* and water pollutant discharge per unlinked passenger trip and vehicle revenue mile
 - GHG emissions and GHG savings per unlinked passenger trip and vehicle revenue mile²
 - energy use (electricity, fuel) per unlinked passenger trip and vehicle revenue mile
 - recycling levels/waste* per unlinked passenger trip and vehicle revenue mile
 - operating expense per unlinked passenger trip and vehicle revenue mile
 - unlinked passenger trips per capita in service area of operation
 - VMT per capita in service area of operation

*Techniques for measuring these indicators are still emerging and signatories are asked to make their best efforts.

¹ APTA members that have been measuring and managing certain indicators above prior to signing the commitment will be able to set their own baseline year in function of the year they started measuring and managing for improvements.

² An APTA Recommended Practice for measuring GHG emissions for transit agencies was published in September 2009 and is available at www.apta.com/sustainability

b. For Business Members and other non-operating APTA members*:

- water usage per employee or per unit of production
- criteria air pollutant emissions per employee or per unit of production
- GHG emissions per employee or per unit of production
- energy use (electricity, fuel) per employee or per unit of production
- recycling levels/waste per employee or per unit of production

* Justification must be provided for any indicator which cannot be measured and alternative policies or programs must be proposed which are aimed at achieving reductions.



Recognition levels

Signatories can apply for further recognition for their achievements on sustainability and make further commitments, six months following the signing of the core commitment. The recognition levels are defined as Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum and are outlined below. Signatories may choose to move up levels as they achieve their goals. Over time, as APTA members make progress in the achievement of their sustainability goals, it is expected additional recognition levels will be added.

Elements of the recognition levels

Action items are additional sustainability achievements made in the short- to medium-term (1-3 years) in operation, maintenance and capital, products and services and in education and outreach with a view to achieving economic, environmental and social sustainability objectives. The higher the recognition level aimed for, the more action items which need to be achieved. Examples are outlined in **appendix 1**.

Stretch goals are additional longer-term programmatic and process goals (4-6 years) that challenge the organizations committed to silver, gold or platinum status to make a very significant difference in the way they function in view of meeting sustainability criteria. Examples of stretch goals are outlined in **appendix 2**.

For each recognition level, increasingly ambitious **reduction targets** are set for key indicators based on baseline measurements made as part of the minimum requirements for adhering to the APTA sustainability commitment.

Examples of reduction targets:

- Reduce your organization's carbon footprint in terms of emissions per unlinked passenger trip and vehicle revenue mile or per employee by ___ percent over baseline year 20____ by 20____

Recognition levels³

- **Bronze:** pre-requisite that core principles adhered to and 5 action items have been achieved and a commitment to achieving 5 additional items and reduction targets of 2 percent over baseline within 2 years*
- **Silver:** pre-requisite that core principles adhered to, 10 action items and reduction targets of 2 percent over baseline have been achieved for at least 2 indicators and commitment to achieving an additional 10 action items, reduction targets of 5 percent over baseline for at least 2 indicators and a 2 % reduction for another 2 indicators as well as 3 stretch goals within 3 years*
- **Gold:** pre-requisite that core principles adhered to, 20 action items and reduction targets of 5 percent over baseline have been achieved for at least 2 indicators and a 2 % reduction for another 2 indicators and 3 stretch goals have been met; a commitment to achieve an additional 20 action items, reduction targets of 10 percent over baseline for at least 2 indicators, a 5% reduction for an additional 2 indicators and a 2% reduction for outstanding indicators and 3 additional stretch goals within 3 years*
- **Platinum:** pre-requisite that core principles adhered to, 40 action items have been achieved as well as a 10 percent reduction target over baseline for at least 2 indicators, a 5% reduction for an additional 2 indicators and a 2% reduction for outstanding indicators and 6 stretch goals; a commitment to achieve a minimum 20 percent reduction target over baseline for at least 2 indicators, a 10% reduction for an additional 2 indicators and a 5% reduction for outstanding indicators and 3 additional stretch goals within 6 years*

	Core principles	Action items		Reductions per indicator		Stretch goals	
	Require	Require	Commit to	Require	Commit to	Require	Commit to
Bronze	√	5 √	+5		2 at 2%		
Silver	√	10 √	+10	2 at 2% √	5% at 2 +2% at 2		3
Gold	√	20 √	+20	2 at 5% √ 2 at 2% √	2 at 10% 2 at 5% +all other at 2%	3 √	+3
Platinum	√	40 √		2 at 10% √ 2 at 5% √ all other at 2% √	2 at 20% 2 at 10% +all other at 5%	6 √	+3

³ To enter recognition levels, signatories must show they are maintaining an effective environmental compliance program (e.g., proactive handling of environmental requirements; compliance auditing; system for corrective action and continuous improvement).

APPENDIX 1

Examples of short to medium-term action items

a) **Operations, maintenance and capital (internal process and policy driven)**

- Initiate an ISO 14001, EMS and/or SMS process
- Put in place procurement methods that require (or favor) sustainable practices for at least one product line or area
 - Identify and purchase office supplies that make use of recycled products or have other environmentally-friendly attributes
- Locate future offices in urban centers with good transit accessibility.
- Use sustainable practices in the operations and maintenance of organizations and transit systems:
 - Carry out a system-wide energy and/or resource-use audit and a waste stream audit
 - Purchase Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) for one or more sites
 - Reduce water usage in at least one facility/office
 - Reduce hazardous waste and chemical usage in all agency facilities
 - Have a mobility plan for your organization and offer transit passes as part of employee benefits
 - Set a minimum recycling policy
 - Establish a composting system where possible
 - Establish policies for reducing paper use.
 - Reduce carbon footprint of meetings e.g. establishing collaborative sites and email distribution of documents as part of a paper-reduction policy
 - Establish a reduced idling policy to minimize fuel consumption
- Optimize employee travel by the use of tele-conferencing equipment, transit ridership, cycling and walking and car-pooling and other sustainable options
 - Establish a travel policy focused on sustainability, encouraging the reduction of carbon emissions and air pollutants associated with air travel
 - Incentivize employee commuting emissions reductions, establish policies for encouraging employee transit use and carpooling.
- Integrate sustainability into system and facilities design and construction:
 - Use green building principles for one new construction project or the adaptation of old infrastructure
 - Build in photovoltaics and/or green roofs at at least one agency/company building
 - Make contracting with DBE firms part of the design and construction policy
 - Adopt an energy efficient appliance purchasing policy and other sustainable office equipment and supplies
 - Establish a program to continuously green the vehicle fleet
 - Put energy-efficient lighting into all facilities and motion sensors where appropriate

- Put in place glazed/tinted exterior windows at one or several facilities
- Put in place a storm water management system
- update HVAC systems with more energy efficient equipment

b) Products and services (services or products that are externally based)

- Establish new energy efficiency targets for key products
- Investigate how to quantify, measure, and determine the carbon footprint for each product produced.
- Improve sustainability performance of key products
- Work systematically with customers to establish more sustainable processes and products
- Put in place a service(s) to help customers become more sustainable themselves
- Expand programs for populations with few transportation options, such as free passes for low-income school kids
- Use sustainable practices in project planning, development and implementation:
 - Integrate transport and land-use decision-making in all project development
 - Establish a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process for a new project
 - Put in place targets for costs savings from use of recycled materials/energy efficiency measures in all new projects
 - Establish a “sustainable proposals” policy (e.g. proposals for bids sent in on 100 percent recyclable paper, double-sided, only one hard copy, maximum set for amount of pages etc.)
 - Ensure all system offices/stations/facilities are in areas zoned for compact, mixed-use development with good transit accessibility
 - Put in place sustainability criteria in specifications for all new projects

c) Education and outreach

- Initiate training for employees on sustainability overall and/or on EMS (Environmental Management Systems), SMS (Sustainable Management Systems) and/or ISO 14001 practices
- Put sustainability on the agenda of regular staff meetings
- Establish resources and tools for use by employees, clients and the community on what sustainability means and how it can be achieved
- Establish an in-house knowledge management system on sustainability
- Put in place a regular internal reporting system on the progress of sustainability initiatives
- Establish an employee green team(s) or other formal programs for employee input coordination/engagement in the organization’s sustainability program
- Put in place partnerships which can allow for resource exchange to achieve sustainability
- Establish an employee recognition program for contributions to the organization’s sustainability efforts
- Put in place a sustainability hotline for employees and the general public

- Integrate sustainability into leadership development and recruiting
- Establish a strong collaboration with your MPO to exert influence on achieving more sustainable modal splits in your area of service
- Participate in region-wide sustainability planning

APPENDIX 2

Examples of stretch goals

- ❑ Establish a comprehensive measuring and reporting process on targets set, progress made, results achieved which is disseminated both internally within the organization as well as externally, available to all interested stakeholders, including the publication of an annual sustainability report
- ❑ Establish an organization-wide policy and action plan which covers economic, social and environmental sustainability
- ❑ Ensure all new construction meets LEED-like principles and bring existing construction into line
- ❑ Implement EMS, SMS and/or ISO 14001 standards
- ❑ Put in place an sustainable procurement policy and/or supply-chain policy which is based on comprehensive sustainability principles
- ❑ Develop in conjunction with your MPO an integrated transit/land use plan to reduce the acres of developed land/capita in your community and thereby reductions in VMT
- ❑ Obtain 3rd party verification of measurements and reductions
- ❑ Become viewed as a sustainability leader in one's community or areas where can play an active role in the community through established community programs
- ❑ Establish a Chief Sustainability Officer or equivalent post in your organization
- ❑ Establish a climate action plan for your organization
- ❑ Obtain "green business" certification of all corporate offices (where available)
- ❑ Establish policy to hold a regular and rigorous program of internal study/presentations into sustainable building and transit technologies.
- ❑ Achieve carbon neutrality and/or have a carbon neutral policy.
- ❑ Become a paperless office