"Kermit the frog is wrong," says Steve Salin, VP of Rail Planning, "it is easy to be green, and DART has been doing it for quite some time. Yet we have focused on the environmental and economic returns related to our sustainability actions and not so much on communicating to our internal and external audiences. With this issue of Connections, and other communications we have planned in the months ahead, we intend to be far more consistent with the social aspects of sustainability."

Sustainability has been gaining interest and popularity worldwide since the 1960s. As economic uncertainty continues, gas prices rise and global warming concerns are heightened, all businesses are under increasing pressure to use resources more efficiently and make decisions that consider environmental and social factors.

This focus applies to our industry as well. In 2005, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) developed a framework to help transit agencies organize and communicate their efforts, as well as provide some guidance on metrics to measure and track improvement. Agencies were encouraged to sign the APTA Sustainability Commitment, which included several core principles.

"DART became a signatory in late 2011," said Barbara Weigel from Rail Planning, the project manager for this initiative.

But DART was well ahead of the game. On May 22, 1990, the board of directors approved the DART Mitigation Policies, which defined a consistent method of assessing potential environmental, social and economic impacts for transit projects.

In September 1997, we joined the Governor's Recycling Program, instituting paper recycling at various facilities and earning a certificate from what was then known as the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission.

In July 2002, Gov. Rick Perry awarded DART $75 million to upgrade 360 diesel buses to cut nitrogen oxide emissions by roughly 2,000 tons and reduce particulate matter by 88 percent. At the time, 80 percent of DART's fleet already met Texas Clean Fuel Fleet requirements.

Our systemic approach does not end there. The Strategic Plan for FY 2011-2015 includes Strategic Priority 2 – Manage System Development and Maintain Infrastructure – that identifies the need to "improve the environmental sustainability of DART's system." Our FY 2012 goals included creating a five-year environmental sustainability plan; Salin was assigned that task.

"While I am the executive sponsor for our sustainability effort, it takes input from everyone to make this happen," Salin said. "I appreciate the support, input and data we got from Maintenance, Transportation, Mobility Management, Capital Planning/Service Planning, Human Capital, Procurement, Rail Program Development, Marketing, IT and Government Relations."

Steve Salin's sustainability team includes Victor Ibewuok from Rail Planning, as well as Elena Rohweder from Communications.
DART's definition of sustainability takes into account the agency's organizational culture; employee passions; and its Mission, Vision and Values statements. It also draws from a definition created for the U.S. Department of Transportation and illustrated above.

But to guide future efforts, DART developed its own Sustainability Vision:

"To promote a culture of sustainability that adds value for our customers, improves quality of service, attracts tomorrow's workforce, and positions DART as a leader in sustainability with a focus on continual improvement."

From that vision, we've identified three goals for our sustainability initiative. They are:

1. **Optimize** consumption, conservation and reuse of resources in our operations and provision of service
2. **Strengthen** our role in the community through enhancement of transit options and fostering of partnerships
3. **Promote** sustainable business practices that facilitate good decision-making and employee engagement, and enable continual improvement

For each goal, strategies and metrics were developed for near- and mid-term targets. The goals provide flexibility and allow for input as DART's system matures and the metrics evolve and improve over time.

DART submitted its first Sustainability Framework Plan as an APTA signatory in December and will learn later this year if it will be recognized at the Bronze or Silver level by APTA for what it has achieved to date.
Ever since the DART Mitigation Policies were adopted in 1990, staff has prepared environmental impact statement (EIS) documents and local environmental assessment (LEA) documents for each project. While an EIS is required for federally funded projects, locally funded projects and those where DART is serving as the technical lead require LEA documents per board policy.

“We apply impact assessments and mitigation guidelines to all projects as a matter of best practice,” said Cleo Grounds, director of real estate.

Grounds’ team includes Steve Griffin, Jeff Haynes and Tad Heimburger, environmental compliance managers who handle a broad range of responsibilities related to environmental and regulatory compliance.

Haynes, who was a consultant for 15 years and is a licensed geologist, joined DART in 2008 after working as a contractor for five years. “I decided to join DART because the agency really cares. There are not many organizations that put in this level of effort to be compliant,” he said.

DART incorporates environmental mitigation measures into project plans in four key areas: project specifications, construction, final design, and operating and maintenance procedures. When comparing alternative mitigation measures, the agency considers these factors:

- Effectiveness of achieving DART’s environmental goals
- Effects on transit operations
- Capital costs
- Operation and maintenance costs
- New impacts created
- Compliance with current environmental protection laws and ordinances
- Acceptability to the community and applicable regulatory agencies

Evaluating and mitigating environmental impact is a constant focus of Jeff Haynes, Steve Griffin, Cleo Grounds and Tad Heimburger (not shown) in Project Management.
According to 44 percent of DART workers who took an online survey in November, all employees are responsible for sustainability efforts. That high number speaks well to our mindset and willingness to contribute to this important goal.

But it is also interesting to note that 10 percent of employees feel it is a cross-functional effort; almost 7 percent believe it is the Board’s focus; nearly 5 percent point to senior-level managers; and almost 10 percent put the onus on Marketing and Community Affairs. Rounding out the results, 24 percent of employees are unclear on who drives this effort.

To facilitate developing the framework plan, DART brought in transit sustainability specialists from URS Corp., an engineering, construction and technical services firm ranked as the No. 1 green design firm in the country by Engineering News-Record. The agency previously contracted with URS on the construction documents for the Blue Line from Mockingbird Station to Downtown Garland Station.

DART then assembled a core team with representatives from all parts of the organization. The URS specialists walked the group through a report of how other U.S. transit agencies approach sustainability. MARTA, LA Metro, SEPTA, Salt Lake UTA, Santa Clara VTA and Sound Transit were selected based on their geographic distribution, successful sustainability programs and similarities to DART.

As the next step, the team inventoried existing projects and programs associated with sustainability. Based on that audit, the team developed a five-year sustainability framework that includes:

- Metrics, measurements and actions to achieve short-range goals and objectives
- Definitions of additional mid- and long-range targets or “stretch goals”
- Articulation and commitment of annual sustainability targets
- Definition of reports and tracking requirements for the sustainability plan
- Communication plans to build internal and external stakeholder engagement
Sustainability processes are nothing new to Mille Hubbell, John Rhone, Joe Coker, Rocky Rogers and Dwain Keltner (not shown) in Maintenance. The project team gathered ideas about how DART and its employees view sustainability through department interviews, Executive Management Team workshops, an online employee survey and other conversations at various levels within the agency. Based on the audit and research, the team determined that DART has focused primarily on the environmental and economic returns related to sustainability decisions and actions. But an opportunity exists to better communicate about its efforts to increase awareness and engagement among internal and external audiences.

The team conducted a sustainability assessment by interviewing 10 DART departments to get examples of their current or previous efforts to reduce the agency’s impact on the environment, address fiscal needs and attain social benefits. This revealed that DART already is involved in many efforts to use resources more efficiently and reduce its carbon footprint.

**Every Effort Contributes to Success**

“We found every department has made at least a small contribution toward this effort over the years, even if it was not branded as a ‘sustainable’ action,” said Mike Hubbell, VP of Maintenance, who presented the Sustainability Plan Vision and Objectives to the senior management team last September.

The Maintenance department manages such a huge inventory of assets, it has the greatest opportunity to make strides in sustainability. Energy consumption, commodity use and reuse, chemical recycling, and fleet maintenance and upgrades are examples of the areas in which the department plays a significant role.

Other leaders shared how their departments are making a difference:

- John Rhone, AVP of Ways Structures & Amenities, noted that the Track and ROW section uses biodegradable track lubricant throughout the light rail system to reduce wear on rails and wheels and cut down on noise. “DART currently uses 15 percent renewable sources of our total consumption for electricity,” he said.

- The evolution to a CNG fleet “is a clear success story for our ongoing sustainability focus,” said Joe Coker, AVP of Fleet Services. “Yet it is more than the buses themselves. It’s also making green choices about how we manage tires, batteries, paints and other items we consume as part of our maintenance plan.”

- “The mundane, everyday items really add up, like Styrofoam coffee cups and cleansers,” said Terrance “Dwain” Keltner, director of Passenger Amenities & Facility Services. “By changing to biodegradable and recyclable options, we can make a meaningful dent in our carbon footprint.”

- “Our team is constantly learning about green products as we change our practices such as installing solar lighting in our bus shelters and changing to more efficient LED lighting,” said Rocky Rogers, AVP of Technical Services Maintenance.
Glow for less. Install compact fluorescent bulbs (CFL) that better convert energy into light rather than heat, consume about 75 percent less electricity and last up to 10 times longer. **Impact?** Save up to $83 over the life of the bulb (based on replacing one 75-watt incandescent bulb with a 25-watt CFL).

Support your local farmer. Locally sourced food tastes better, burns less fossil fuel to produce and reduces carbon emissions. Did you realize that typical grocery store produce often travels nearly 1,500 miles before it hits your plate? **Impact?** Fresh, healthy food—and if you buy from within DART’s service area, you probably are helping a current or potential rider. Tools such as localharvest.org help you find exactly what you need.

Disconnect. Unplug electronics like TVs, printers and stereos from the wall and plug them into a power strip instead. That way, they are protected from destructive power surges, and it is easier to flip the power switch to cut the flow of electricity that costs you real money. **Impact?** Reduce your electric bill by up to $200 per year.

Recycle your electronics. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that more than 5.5 billion pounds of electronics hit our landfills in 2005. Imagine how much bigger that number is today. And chances are you have an old cellphone in a drawer that could be recycled. **Impact?** In 2009, only 8 percent of cellphones (approximately 11.8 million devices) were recycled. Go to call2recycle.org and search for a battery and cellphone recycling center to do your part in reducing our landfill waste.

Don’t be a drip. A leaky faucet can waste 74 gallons a day and a toilet can lose up to 200 gallons a day. **Impact?** Fix your toilet and save $30 a year on your water bill, and more important, up to 73,000 gallons of lost water that our drought-battling state needs.
Milestones

EMLOYMENT RECOGNITION

Anniversaries:
Feb. 1–28, 2013
(Based on Adjusted Date of Hire)

40 Years

Jack Logan Jr.
Maintenance Training Specialist III

Robert Drake
Bus Operator

35 Years

Mark Bowles
Fleet Services Senior Manager

Robert Coleman
Transportation Station Office Supervisor I

Roberto Deleon
Bus Operator

Elroy Williams
Bus Operator

30 Years

Gregory Ivy
Bus Operator

Diane Weatherly
Supervisor System Support

25 Years

Janette Hill
Schedule Analyst III

Koorosh Olyai
AVP Mobility Programs Development

20 Years

Davona Leake
Contract Compliance Field Supervisor

W. Micael Ocbahanes
Capital Budget Manager

15 Years

Raul Abarca
Bus Operator

Daniel Beck
DART Police Officer

Vivian Chaney
Rail Operations Training Assistant Manager

Kimberly Fantroy
Bus Operator

Rayford Forbin
Bus Operator

Sylvia Garcia
Rail Operations Station Office Yard Supervisor I

Ronald Hickman
Rail Operations Field Supervisor I

Bruce Jenkins
DART Police Officer

William Johnston
Chief Rail Operations Controller

Jeffery Joiner
Bus Operator

Stephen Jones
DART Police Sergeant

Efrain Maldonado
Bus Operator

Gina McCain-Edgar
Bus Operator

Gregorio Mendoza Jr.
DART Police Officer

Francisco Moreno Jr.
Bus Mechanic

Klisby Robinson
Body Mechanic

Jesus Rodriguez
Bus Operator

Andre Thompson
Bus Operator

Juan Torres
Bus Operator

Michael Tran
Bus Mechanic

Jaime Villarreal
Bus Mechanic

Rosalind Wilson
Bus Operator

Sevaria Brown
Bus Operator

Damien Butler
LRV Mechanic

Oscar Chavez
Construction Safety Manager

James Cruz
PA/Facility Services Supervisor I

Angela Cubit
Bus Operator

Aaron Drisdale
DART Police Officer

Micheal Garza
Rail Operator

Harold Johnson
Bus Operator

Correy Lowe
Rail Operator

Alexander McGlinchey
Commuter Rail Business Analyst

Eric Mease
HOV Operator

LeRoy Michalow
Electronic Support Technician

Alton Murray
Rail Operator

Terrence Parish
Rail Central Support Mechanic

Larry Rhodes
HOV Operator

Epifanio Rodriguez
Bus Operator

Sophia Young
Project Manager I
PRAISE FROM OUR PASSENGERS

(Customer Information Representative) Latonia Walker is so patient, yet so knowledgeable and thorough. In no time, she provided three different trip plan options, even designating which one was the easiest, and another that was quicker, but still allowing me to make the choice. She is just a jewel!
- Jennifer Kelly-Bowser, Dallas

I have never encountered a bus operator as truly outstanding as (SOCBOF’s) Melvin Hicks. How he maintains an upbeat, friendly personality, yet still reaches all his transfer points on time with a busy route like 453 is beyond me!
- Jeane Roper, Dallas

I owe a debt of gratitude to several DART employees, in particular (Station Monitor) Charles Harvey, for the recovery of my cellphone, which I had left on the train at Downtown Plano. Since the phone contained important business contacts, and the loss occurred after hours on a weekend, it was certainly a relief to know that it was in good hands until I could reclaim it.
- John Merlo, Plano

The special attention (Northwest Bus Operator) Rene Grullon gives to his passengers should not go unrecognized. Realizing I was legally blind, he asked specific questions about my destination and made sure I got off at the correct stop and pulled up close to the curb for my safety. This was no isolated incident, as he took a special interest in all of his passengers.
- (Ms.) Alex Maitland, Dallas

I lost my wallet on the bus in the middle of downtown Dallas of all places, but thanks to the honesty and kindness of (East Dallas Operator) Jamil Chowdhury, I got it back with everything intact. That is most appreciated.
- Barbara Henderson, Dallas

Receiving a green arrow and not realizing the “Train Coming” sign was not working, I turned left across Lancaster Road, directly in the path of (Rail Operator Michael Quarles), whose train clearly had the right of way. Had he not been alert to the situation and skilled in safety, I would probably not be here to say “thank you” today.
- Kay Harris, Dallas

When our bus’s lift equipment failed, and, to make matters worse, the radio malfunctioned, we all thought, “here we go again, we’re waiting for the next bus.” Lucky for us, the man in charge was (SOCBOF’s) Anthony Grace, who went right to work, manually fixed the lift problem, and no one was delayed. Never in my 17 years of riding DART have I ever encountered an operator who cared so much about his passengers. And he’s courteous and a great driver to boot!
- Dorothy Olszewski, Dallas

The final morning bus to Downtown Dallas from Jack Hatchell TC had broken down, leaving a number of commuters in a quandary about getting to work. Thanks to the diligence of (Station Monitor) Virgil McKinney Jr., who stayed in communication with Dispatch, we all got another bus and a huge inconvenience was averted.
- Richard Wallet, Plano

You have a bus operator in (East Dallas’) Rickey Nelson, who is not only observant, but very protective of his passengers as well. Even to the point of shielding a customer from a potentially dangerous pit bull that was hanging out too close to the bus stop.
- Joyce Perkins, Dallas

He picked us up at LBJ/Central at the usual time, then managed to arrive in Irving well in advance of everyone’s departing transfer connections. No simple task.
- Charles Tucker, Garland

As a season ticket holder who has attended many a Stars game, I appreciate the postgame announcements of approaching Blue and Red Line trains to the AAC. This eliminates passenger uncertainty about taking whatever comes along first and potentially changing trains in a much more dangerous location.
- Mary Roseler, Richardson

I’ve tried the new Wi-Fi on the TRE this morning and find it blazingly fast and easy to connect to. I regularly work on the train during my commute and welcome this as a great and highly appreciated service.
- Rob Shane, Dallas

You have a bus operator in (East Dallas’) Gregorio Rodriguez did an excellent job this morning of making a difficult route (234) look easy.