



# COMMUNICATING THE VALUE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT

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# Agenda

- Defining the Question
- Survey Details
- Best Practices
- Conclusion
- Questions/Discussion



# Defining the Question

*How do transit agencies communicate the value of public transit?*

- What messages and strategies work?
- What are the best practices and trends?

# Survey Details

- Online survey
- 10 questions
- Distribution Methods:
  - Email to personal contacts
  - Emerging Leaders Program Members
  - APTA Marketing Conference Attendees





- 60 Responses from 52 different transit agencies

# Have you done market research in your community in the last 5 years?



## Survey Results

- 43 out of 52 agencies performed market research in last 5 years
- Rider survey (29) most used instrument
- Total of 10 agencies conducted community outreach as part of their market research
- Phone surveys very rare (3)

# Agency key take-aways from the market research

- Three top customer requests:
  - Increased service
  - Safety
  - Better communication (e.g. delays, service cancellations)

**Transit Agencies have a high level of trust and customer satisfaction is fairly good**

# Messages that Resonate

Asked respondents to rank messages based on how well they resonate in their community

Transit ...

promotes economic development

has environmental benefits

is convenient

alleviates congestion

promotes active transportation for a healthy community

promotes social mobility (gets people to employment and educational opportunities)

saves individuals money

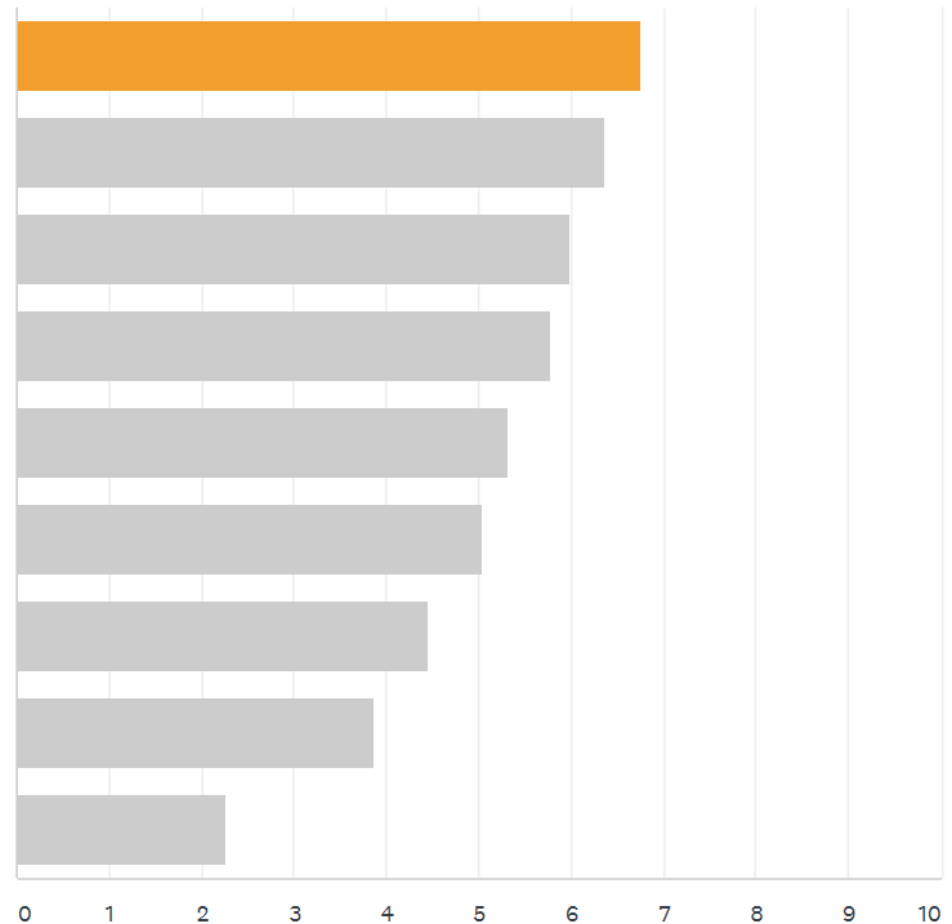
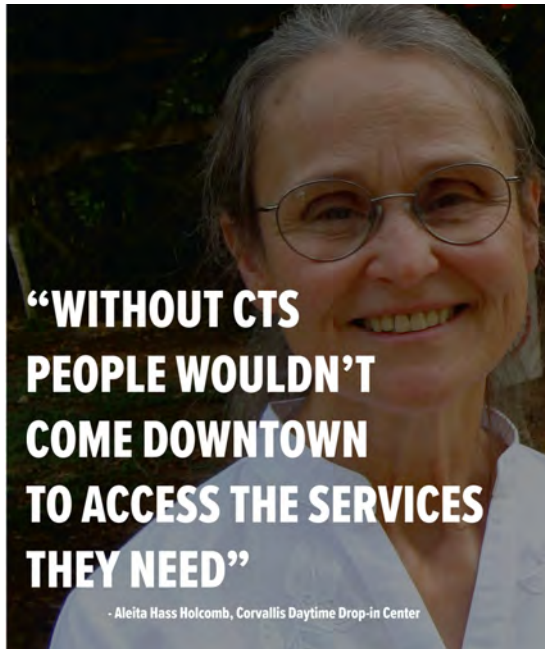
is a lifeline for those with no other options

other (share below)



# Top 3 Messages that Resonate

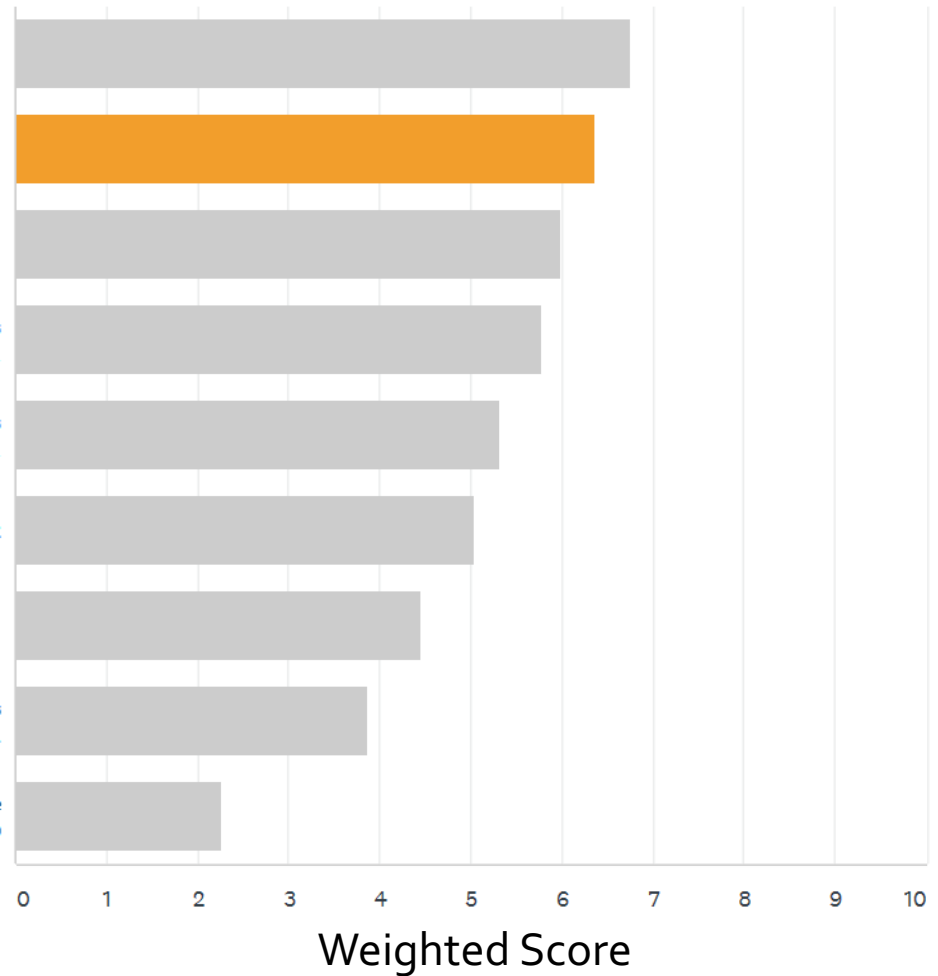
1. Transit is a lifeline for those with no other options



Weighted Score

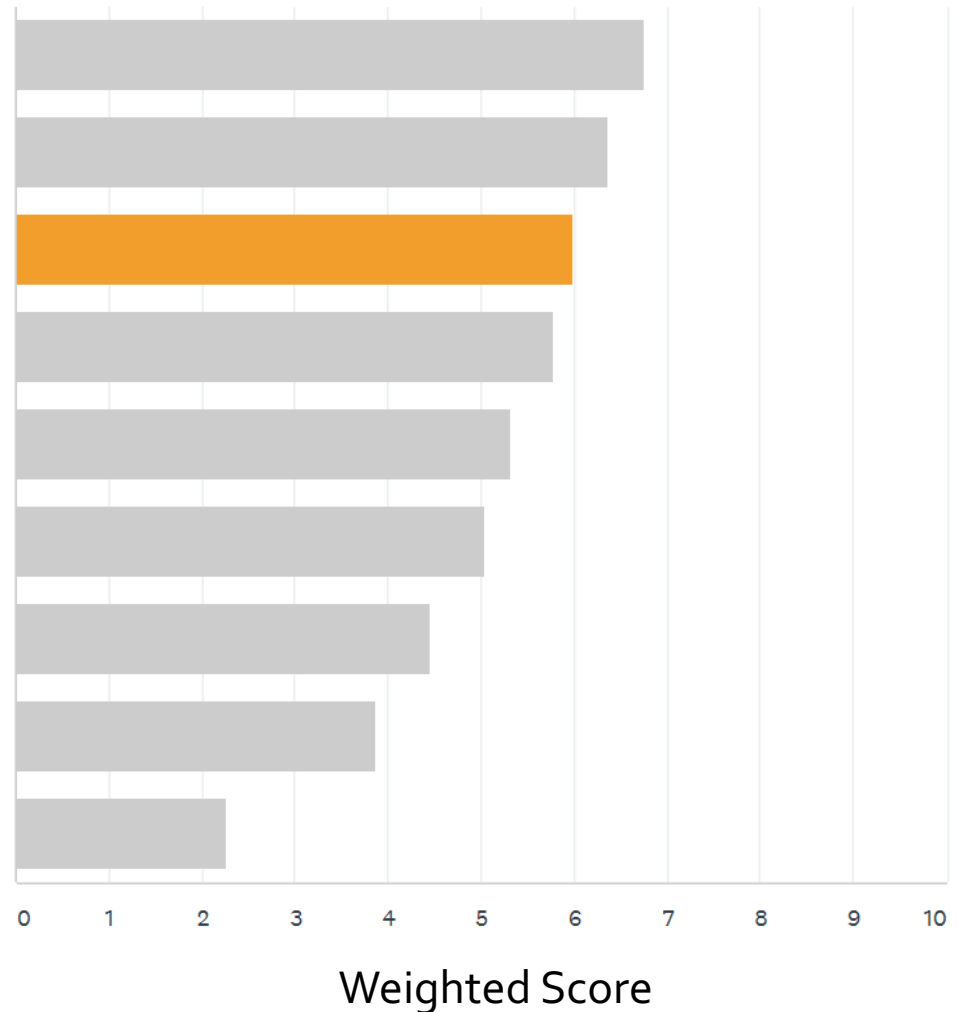
# Top 3 Messages that Resonate

2. Transit promotes social mobility (gets people to employment and educational opportunities)



# Top 3 Messages that Resonate

## 3. Transit alleviates congestion



# Educating the Community

## Most Discussed Methods:

- Social Media
- Paid advertising – radio, social, tv, print
- Partnerships and PR – earned media
  - Networking
  - Community events- tabling, information fairs
- Website
- Emails/E-Newsletters
- On-board advertising

## Unique responses:

- Lunch-n-learn with officials
- Annual State of the Authority (Transit agency) luncheon





# Targeting Non-Riders

## Most Discussed Methods:

- Social Media
- Outreach staff: Visit local businesses and attend events
- Paid advertising – digital, print, radio, TV



# Evolving Messages

Focused Outreach **Social Media** Advertising

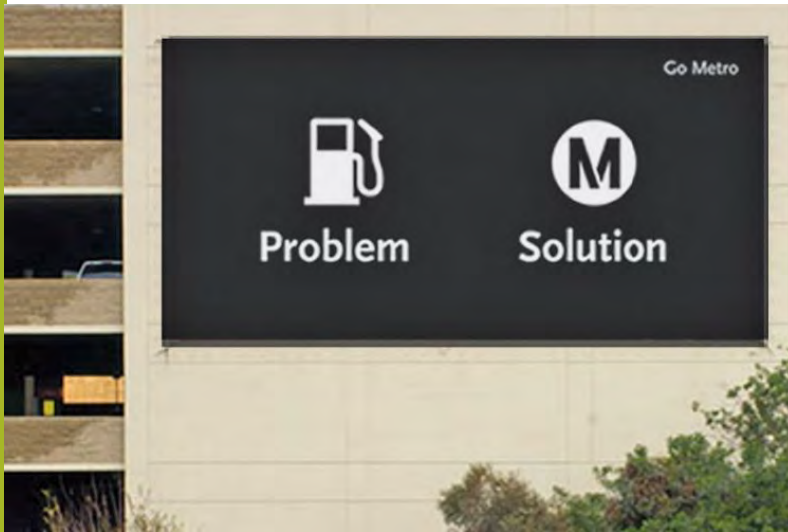
Radio **Videos** Broad Reach Social

Behavior Campaign



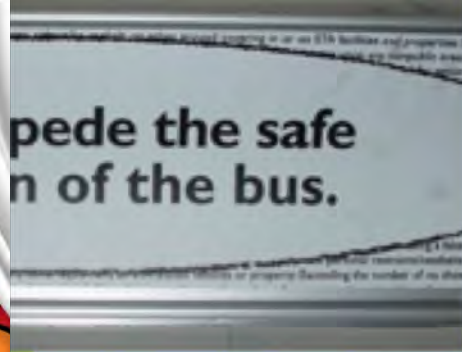
# Successful Marketing Campaigns

- Redesigned Communication Plan
- Increase Country Pride Campaign
- Promote Non-Riders
- Partnerships (including with employers)
- Customer Education Campaign
- Digital Marketing
- Incentives
- Video Marketing
- Social Media
- Musicians on Transit



## MEET THE RIDEALONGS

Throughout the year this cast of quirky characters will be sharing tips to help you safely ride the bus with confidence.



**Forgive us for Being so Direct,  
But Please Treat Others  
with Respect.**

Spokane Transit would like to remind you to respect the special needs of people who are older or physically challenged.



**Please Leave the Driver A  
So We All Make it Safely H**



Spokane Transit reminds you to please avoid...  
that might distract your driver.



# Spokane Transit



# Best Practices / Conclusion

- Increase messaging about the mission of the transit agency
- Value of transit as a lifeline service
- Marketing does benefit Transit Agencies, but providing Reliable, Efficient, Flexible and Accessible Service is Key
- Promoting saving money/protecting the environment is less of a motivator than promoting freedom and flexibility
- Involving local community and promoting local artist and music is key