

New Orleans BRT Survey Summary

Introduction

As part of the BRT feasibility study an extensive public engagement effort was undertaken. This summary documents the electronic survey that was conducted between April 22nd and June 1, 2022. The survey was released through multiple channels including the RTA website, email, and social media. This survey had three major sections: Rider Characteristics, BRT Concepts, and BRT Routing. There were 1,048 responses that were received on the project elements. The following summary documents the initial findings for the three sections that were surveyed.

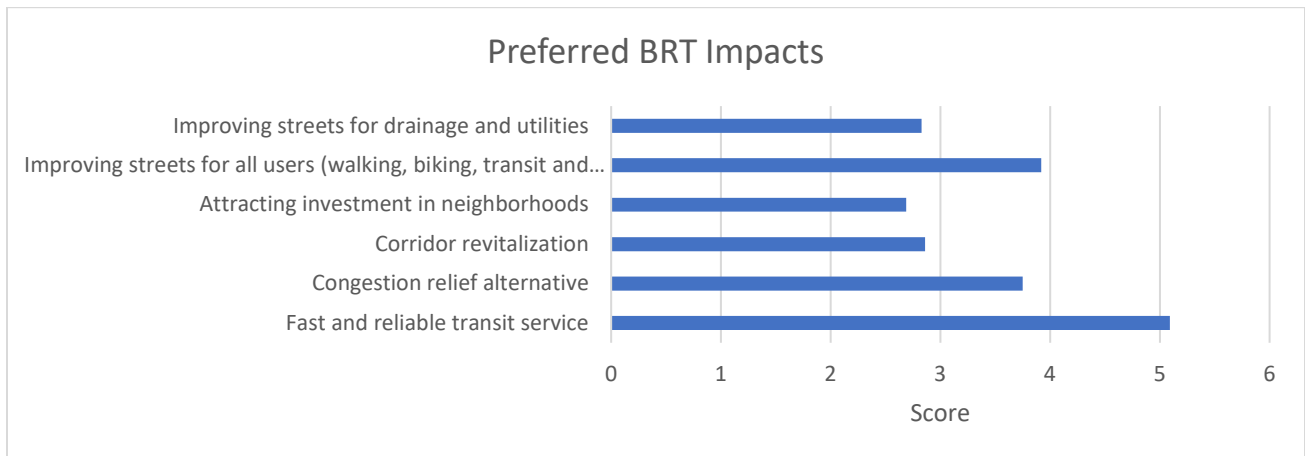
Rider Characteristics

The first section of the survey focused on asking the public how they used the public transit system, and where they used it. Most respondents that they use RTA's public transit system 'all the time', or more than 4 times per week. Many of these respondents live in either Uptown or Algiers, though many used the 'Other' category to provide their own answers, with some respondents even coming from foreign countries such as Ireland or Switzerland. Most of the public either work or attend school in the Downtown New Orleans area, though a large sum of respondents using the 'Other' category mentioned that they either worked from home or that they were retired and did not work. These members of the public reported that commutes typically took between 16-30 minutes to make.

BRT Concepts

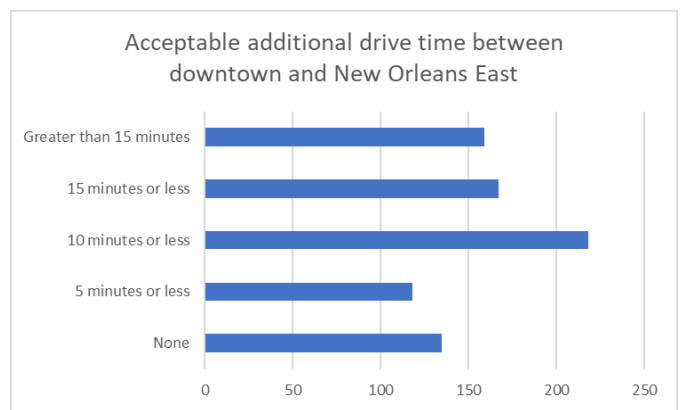
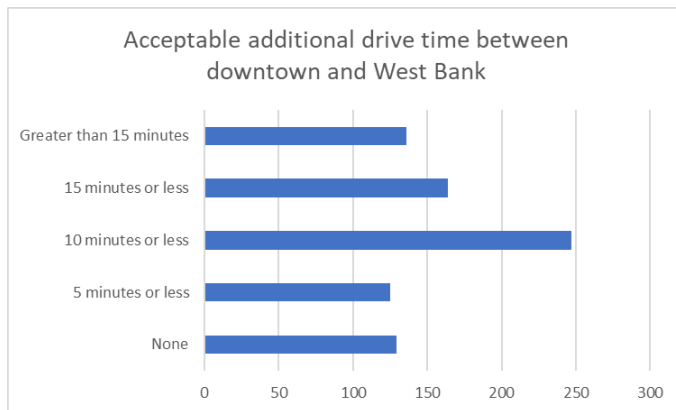
The second section of the survey focused on how the public perceived BRT and what they would want out of such a system. The respondents were clear on what aspects of BRT were the most important; BRT should be fast and reliable, act as a relief from congestion, and improve the streets for all users (including those who walk and bike). Responses from the public can be seen on the next page in order of perceived importance:

Table 1: Perceived ranking by the public of which BRT features are most important to them.



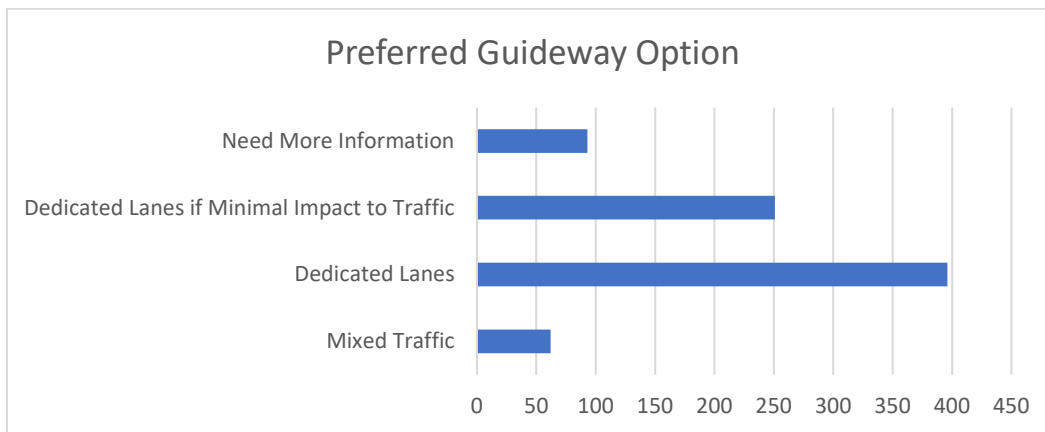
For BRT to happen changes in the road design must be made and respondents were clear in saying that they would accept less than 10 minutes of additional travel time, with 15 minutes of additional travel time being a close second, were they to commute during rush hour between downtown New Orleans and either West Bank or New Orleans East due to potential design changes.

Figures 1 & 2: Public input as to how much extra time they would be willing to drive during rush hour between downtown New Orleans and either West Bank or New Orleans East.



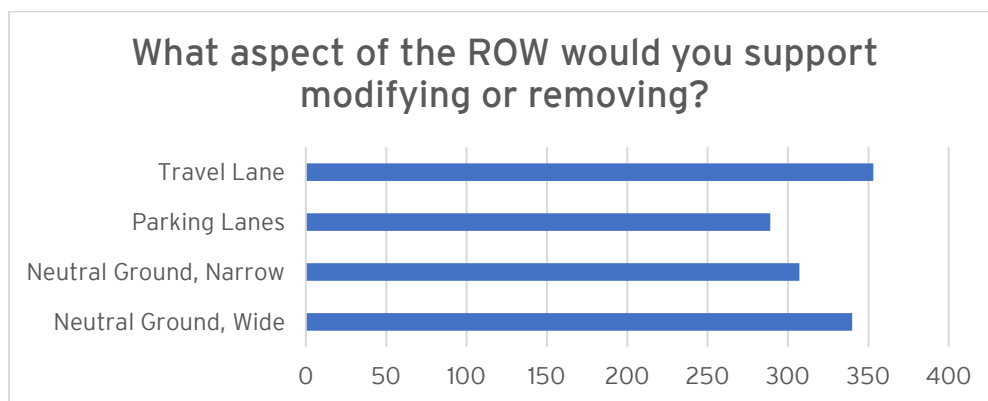
Dedicated lanes are preferred by respondents for the guideway design, though many commentors were worried about the impact the design would have on traffic flow and congestion. Additional comments were made that connections between Algiers and Downtown are already limited. Other popular comments were made calling for a light rail system instead of a BRT system.

Figure 3: Public input for what type of guideway they would prefer the BRT system to run on.



Along a similar lane of thought, respondents were equally dispersed amongst which aspect of the current ROW they would support modifying or eliminating to accommodate the BRT system, though modifying or eliminating travel lanes was slightly preferred over the others. Several respondents answered that none of the mentioned ROW facilities should be removed, using the 'Other' answer category.

Figure 4: Public input for what types of ROW they would be willing to either modify or remove for the implementation of the BRT system.



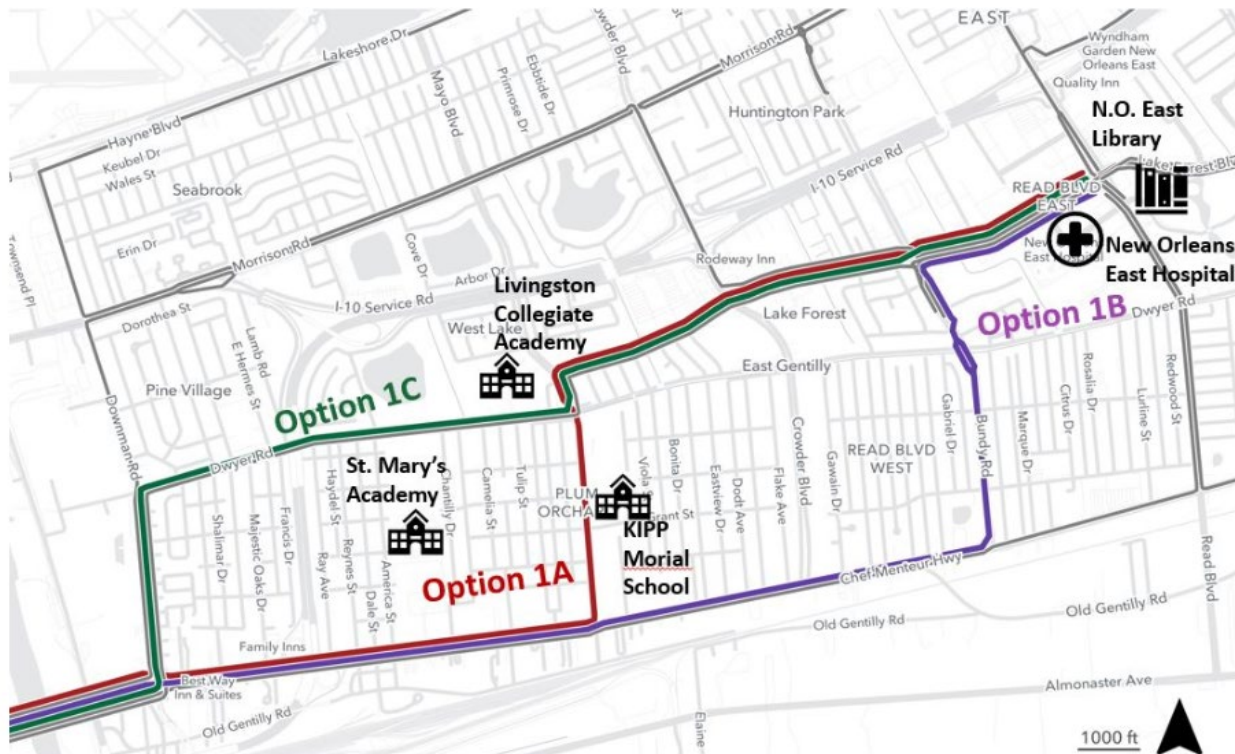
Many of those that responded to the survey asked about the need for a connection between Algiers and New Orleans East, and what the need for the connection between the two is. In addition, there were several respondents that wanted the RTA to focus on making modifications to and increasing the efficiency of the existing system before they create any more lines. There was also a large amount of interest for the project and public transit in general, with people wanting to know more about the system, how

it works, how to use it, and who they could go to if they had any questions about the system or the BRT project.

BRT Routing

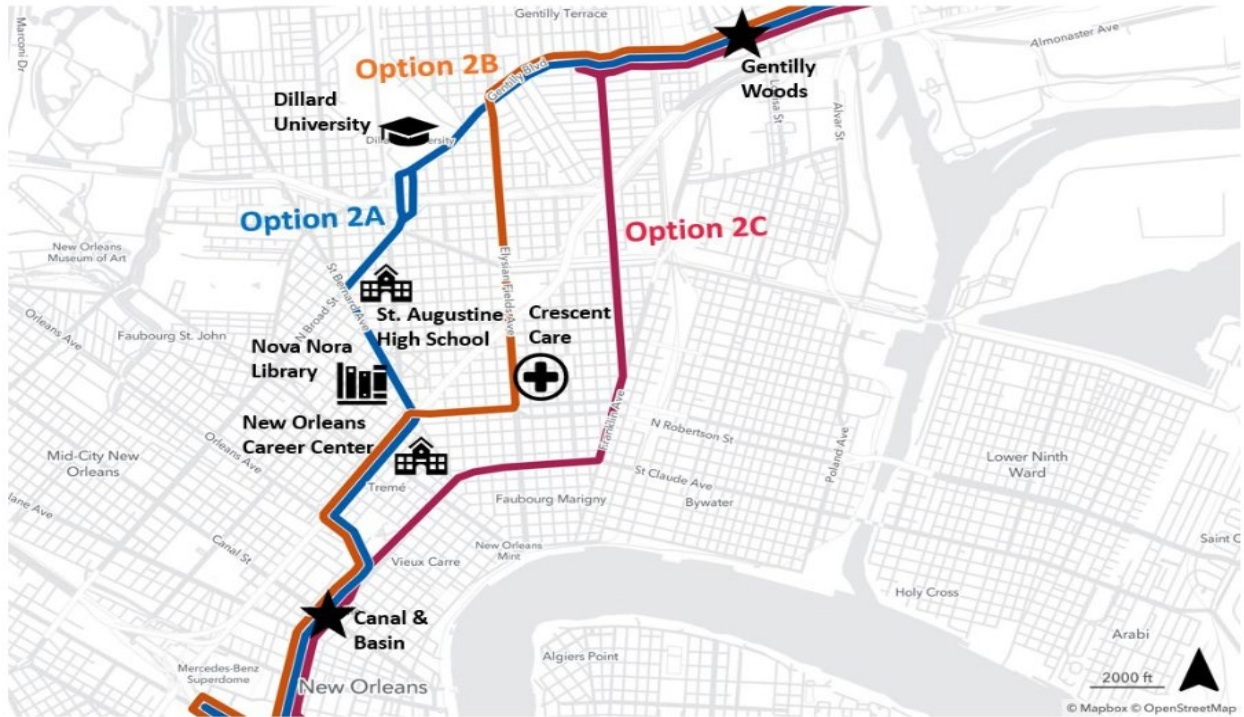
The final section of the survey concerned the route that the BRT line would take. The line was to be split into four (4) segments, where respondents could choose a location which would be best for that segment of the route. For segment One (1), respondents preferred Downman Road (1C). There were many respondents that said they were not familiar enough with the area to offer a strong opinion.

Figure 5: Map of potential route choices for segment 1.



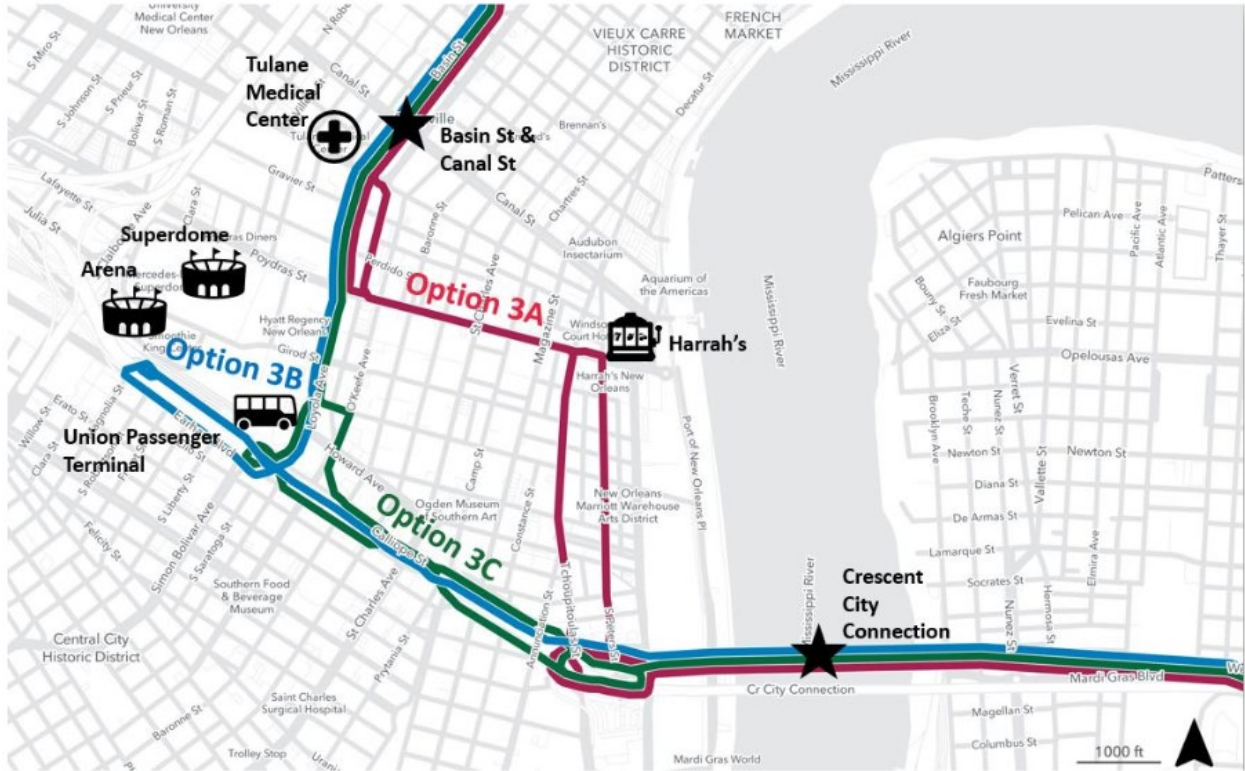
For segment two (2), the majority chose St. Bernard / Claiborne (2A). There were similar responses to comments made on segment one, but there was some concern about potentially removing the trees that line the roads in this area.

Figure 6: Map of potential route choices for segment 2.



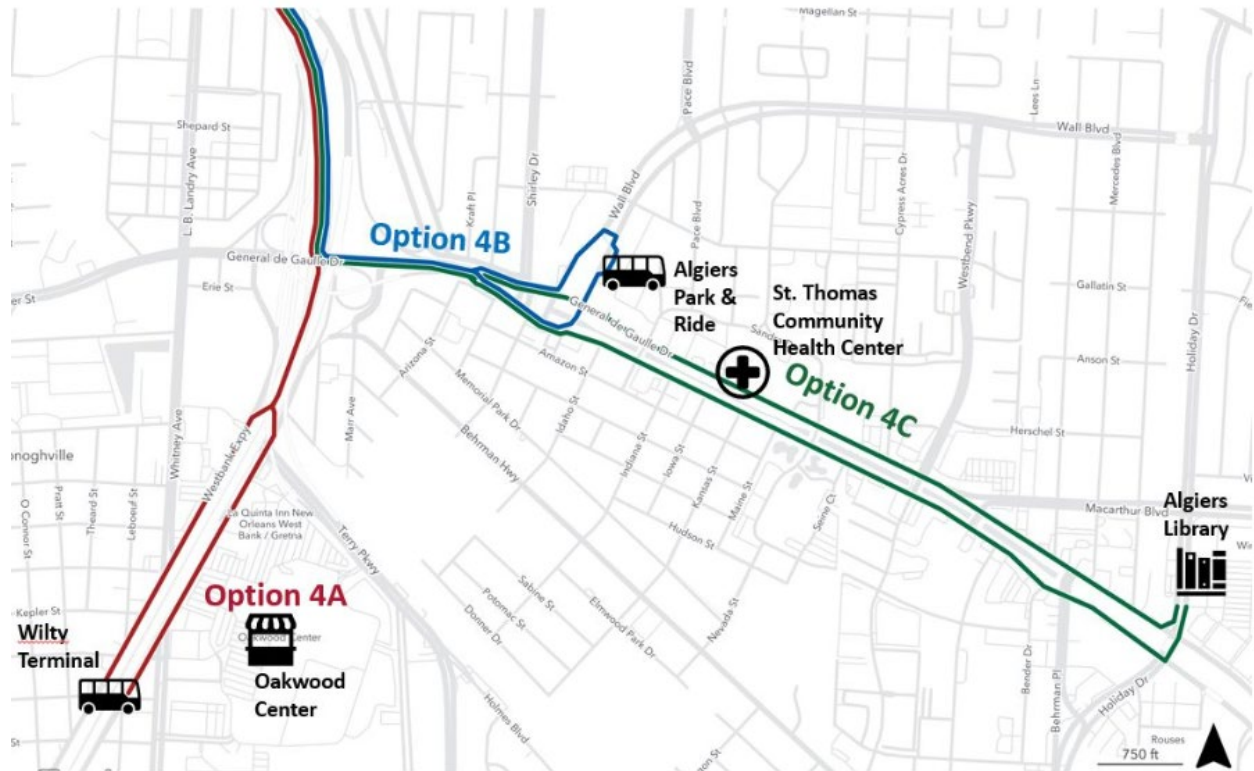
Segment three (3) was chosen to be Tchoupitoulas-Peters/Poydras (3A) with many saying that this was by far the best option of the three choices provided, commenting that it is where a major employment hub is.

Figure 7: Map of potential route choices for segment 3.



Finally, segment four (4) was chosen to be the Algiers Library (4C), though comments made mention that it may not be the best choice due to parking constraints at the library. Due to this, many commenters said that the Algiers Park & Ride or the Wilty Terminal would be a better choice for the fourth segment.

Figure 8: Map of potential route choices for segment 4.



When asked their thoughts about the proposed route options, many respondents wanted to know more about the data being used for the proposed BRT line, such as ridership estimates, potential commute times, and even similar information about the current transit system in place. Overall, there are equal parts excitement for the project to begin, and apprehension about how it will affect current traffic flow and congestion.

Conclusion

While there were the usual comments of 'completely do away with public transit' and 'it's a waste of money' to be found, overall, the survey respondents show a legitimate interest in the BRT project. While many members of the public expressed some concern over the potential impact to traffic flow and congestion, and many had differing opinions on where they wanted the route segments to be, they seemed willing to help RTA address these fears and concerns by being as honest as they can be in choosing how they wanted the BRT to best service them. This being to implement dedicated BRT lanes using the travel lanes currently in the ROW, with segments of the route going through Downman Road, St. Bernard/Claiborne, Tchoupitoulas-Peters/Poydras, and the Algiers Library. Special attention needs to be paid to the concerns voiced by the respondents in addition, such as their concerns about the Crescent City Connection Bridge being the only way to get downtown.