

RTA seeks comment on downtown bus hub location

(New Orleans) – Today, the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) announced that it is seeking public comment on the proposed downtown transit center hub locations resulting from a RTA commissioned study.

Interested community members are encouraged to attend the Riders Advisory Committee Meeting on March 4th at 5:30 pm to learn more about the project and to provide feedback. The meeting will be held in the board room at the RTA building located at 2817 Canal Street. People are also encouraged to provide written comments using the [online form](#) by March 11, 2020. The RTA will also meet with community stakeholders and conduct direct surveys with riders at Duncan Plaza to gain additional input.

The RTA identified the need to determine potential locations for a centrally located transit center or similar facility to serve as the system's primary transfer point and as a major downtown bus stop. To make this determination, RTA initiated a Downtown Transit Center Alternatives Analysis (Alternatives Analysis) in 2015. After completion of an in-depth analysis, which included significant community input, the study identified four potential primary sites based on facility design (rider and community experience), location, implementation, and RTA service impacts:

- **Basin Street** – The Basin Street site would occupy up to three blocks of the Basin Street neutral ground, from Canal Street to Conti Street. It was identified as a potential transit center site due to its sufficient size and proximity to Canal Street. The advantages to this site is it has minimal, pedestrian-bus-traffic conflicts, site in public realm, history of transportation use, accommodates current and future needs, ties in with the bike network, flexibility to allow for alternate layouts, allows for an enclosed structure and potential for iconic design.
- **Basin-Rampart Hybrid** – This alternative combines a version of the two block-layout along Basin Street with the northern half of the layout on Rampart. The advantages to this site it has the most flexible design accommodating current, system and future expansion, centrally located: downtown employment, activity and transit, site in public realm, adjacent to Canal Streetcar spine, can accommodate enclosed structure at Basin, and does not impact businesses on lake side of Rampart Street.
- **Duncan Plaza** – The Duncan Plaza site, occupies the space between the park area of Duncan Plaza and the walk of the parking garage that extends between Gravier and Perdido streets. It was identified as a potential transit center site due to its large size, its potential availability, and proximity to major employment sited in downtown. Other advantages identified, it's near office core, convenient to City Hall, can accommodate enclosed structure, and has Transit Oriented Development potential.
- **Rampart Street** – The Rampart Street site consists of the block between Canal Street and Common Street, one block south of Basin Street/Elk Place. Advantages of this alternative is that it is centrally located: downtown employment, activity and transit, site in public realm, accommodates current and future needs, and is adjacent to Canal Streetcar spine.

A robust study process was conducted which included numerous direct outreach on buses and at the Elks Place transit hub, briefings, public meetings, surveys of transit riders, and online tools. RTA staff met with the consultant team on a regular basis and conducted progress and coordination efforts weekly. A technical Advisory committee and an Agency/Stakeholder Committee was established composed of

representatives of local, state and federal agencies that have a role in the development process, including coordination, reviews, certifications, and funding of a transit center project.

During the course of the Alternatives Analysis, RTA initiated the process that led to the development of its Strategic Mobility Plan (SMP), which was completed in 2018. The SMP provides an in-depth analysis of existing conditions, current service, and community goals and vision for the regional transit system. Work on the Alternatives Analysis was paused to allow completion of the SMP and potential recommendations that may impact the siting and function of a potential downtown transit center. With the completion of the SMP and its follow-up design phase, the New Links comprehensive operational analysis (COA), the Downtown Transit Center Alternatives Analysis [report](#) provides documentation of the findings and analysis conducted as part of the Alternatives Analysis to help provide the basis on which to complete the selection process and identify a Locally Preferred Alternative.

The goal of the Alternatives Analysis study was to enable safe, comfortable, and convenient connections between buses and between buses and streetcars, while also providing opportunities for economic growth and community revitalization.

The RTA has placed an intense and deliberate focus on providing a world-class system experience for Greater New Orleans residents. The RTA system currently includes five streetcar lines, 34 bus routes, two ferry routes, para-transit services. Our passengers take more than 19 million rides throughout our system every year.

To learn more about RTA, visit www.RTAforward.org or call **Ride Line at 504-248-3900**.

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