

Canal Streetcar Improvement Analysis





Contents

- **Reasons and goals for this analysis**
- Process
- Three types of improvements
- Options impact
- Questions for the Community
- Next steps

Why this Analysis?

1. The Strategic Mobility Plan (SMP) specifically calls for an analysis of high-capacity transit on the Canal Street corridor
2. Many stakeholders have requested prioritizing improvements for riders on the Canal Streetcar line. The routes (47 and 48) on this line:
 - a. Carry 17% of passengers in the RTA system, 90% of which are local residents. Local residents take 3 million trips on Canal Streetcars every year.
 - b. Provide essential connections to employment centers, health services and other transit lines





Analysis Goals

Evaluate options to improve safety and travel times on the Canal Streetcar

Characteristics

High-Capacity Transit



Every 10-15 min



20-24 hour service



Stops every .25 - .5 miles



Pay before boarding



Extensive dedicated lanes and/or signal priority

Canal Streetcar



Every 8.5 min (day)
Every 20 – 30 min (overnight)



24 hours



Stops every 0.11 miles

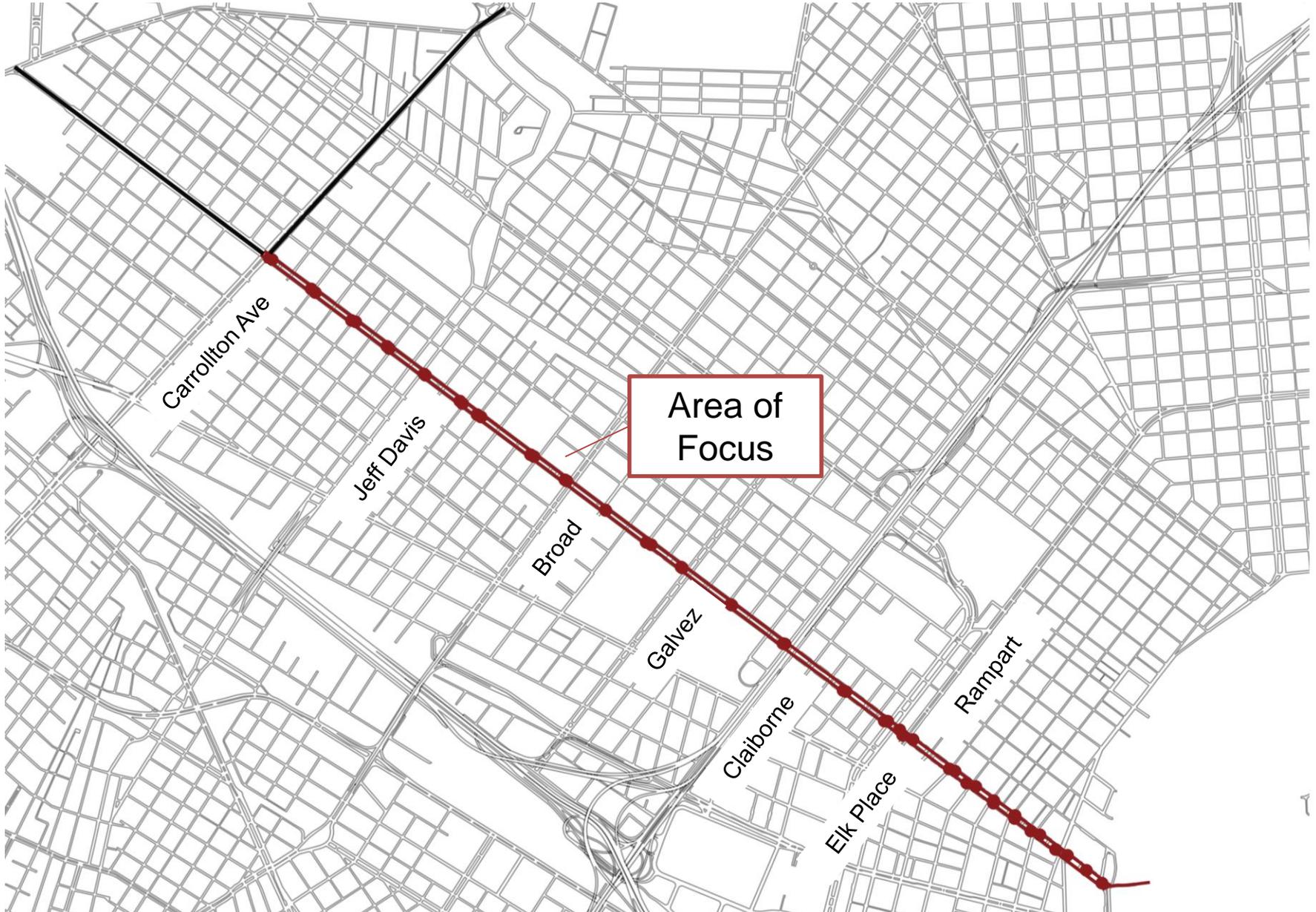


Many passengers pay with cash



Uncontrolled crossings contribute to frequent delays; no signal priority

Area of Focus: Carrollton to the River



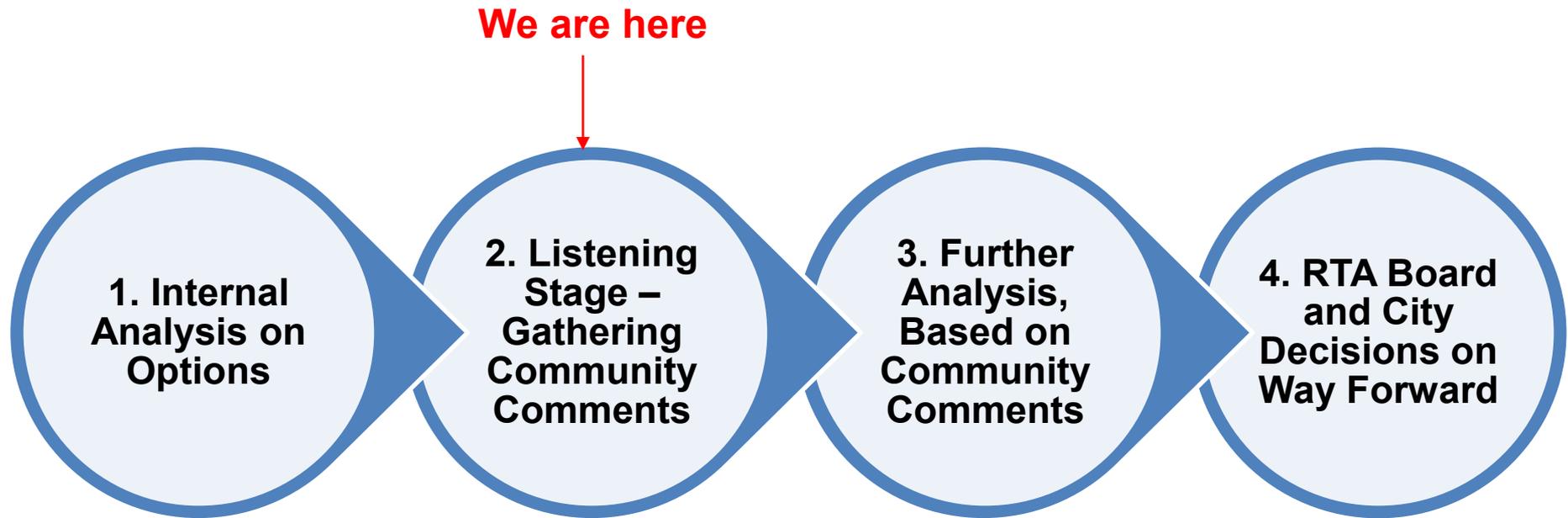


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Process





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Three Main Improvements

Staff looked at three main types of potential improvements for the Canal Streetcar line. We evaluated the potential impact of each one, including how they could work together.

1. Optimizing Stop Spacing
2. Removing Uncontrolled Crossings
3. Ticket-Taker



Improvement 1: Optimizing Stop Spacing

- There is no “best” spacing for transit stops. Rather, there is a tradeoff between:
 - **Travel time:** with fewer stops, the streetcar can move faster along the line
 - **Stop frequency:** with more stops, riders have more options to board the streetcar
- Data for Canal Street:
 - The **average Canal line stop adds 42 seconds in trip time**
 - Each consolidated stop would save 29-34 seconds
 - Between Claiborne and the River, there is a stop nearly every block
- During the RTA’s public outreach process for the Strategic Mobility Plan (SMP), our community clearly expressed a desire for shorter travel times on our most important corridors, with a particular emphasis on Canal Street.
- SMP guidance is from 0.25 miles to 0.5 miles between stops.
 - Canal Street today stops every 0.11 miles – more than twice as frequently as the guidance we received through the SMP outreach process
 - Improvement Options 1-4 would move spacing to every 0.2 to 0.28 miles
 - For reference, the Rampart-St. Claude Line stops every 0.22 miles

Improvement 2: Removing Uncontrolled Crossings

- Uncontrolled crossings are places where the streetcar rails and roads intersect with no traffic signals or barriers. These crossings are dangerous and cause delays
- Two types of uncontrolled crossings on Canal Street.
 1. **Non-signalized intersections** – uncontrolled cross streets. Automobiles use them to cross Canal Street or to make left turns or U-turns
 2. **Auxiliary crossings** – these turnarounds are used for left turns and U-turns, often near major intersections where left turns over Canal Street are not allowed
- **Benefits of removal** – reduced chance of collision and 7-9 seconds savings





Improvement 3: Adding a Temporary Ticket-Taker

- Adding a ticket-taker at high boarding stops can eliminate delays as passengers pay their fares
- Adding a temporary ticket-taker at 1 or 2 high-ridership stops could decrease travel times for passengers on the entire Canal Streetcar line
- This would allow the RTA to evaluate the effectiveness of speeding up boarding on the line as a whole
- The RTA will evaluate options for system-wide ticketing improvements in 2019
- This is similar to what the RTA already does for Jazz Fest – setting up queue lines to collect payment from passengers before they board vehicles



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Options Impact

Route		Current	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Speed	Average Total Trip	0:34:15	0:27:09	0:26:21	0:25:44	0:22:03
	Time Savings	-	0:7:05	0:7:54	0:08:31	0:12:12
Safety: Reduction in Collision Risk		-	None	3%	24%	24%
Average Miles between Stops		0.11	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.28
Uncontrolled Crossings	Auxiliary	22	22	11	17	17
	Non-signalized	19	19	19	2	2

* Time savings from ticket taker not included in projected impact



With Limited Space on Our Streets, Changes Always Come with Tradeoffs

Benefits

- Save over 12 minutes per trip for riders on the trunk of the Canal Streetcar line – the RTA's most important route for local residents
- Help our residents get downtown faster (and to work on time!)
- Improve reliability and attract ridership
- Reduce risk of collisions and cost to the RTA by 24%

Accessibility

- About 80% of the wheelchair deployments from the last 3 months were at stops that would remain, even in Option 4. Of the remaining 20%, more than half would be within 1 block of a remaining stop.
- Stop spacing, between 0.2 miles and 0.28 miles, is similar to Rampart-St. Claude Streetcar, which has stops every 0.22 miles

Effects on traffic

Likely only a small delay for some drivers, but larger traffic analysis is pending.



Measuring Success

Category	Measure
Travel times	Average travel time on the Canal St. trunk
	Travel times for slowest 10% of trips Canal St. trunk
Ridership	Total ridership for Oct-Dec 2019, compared to the same period for 2018
	Ridership trends on the 47 and 48 lines, compared with trends on other bus and streetcar lines
Accident rate	Number of accidents involving streetcars between Carrollton and Harrah's Casino



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Questions for the Community

We want your opinion! We invite everyone in our community to send us their thoughts on:

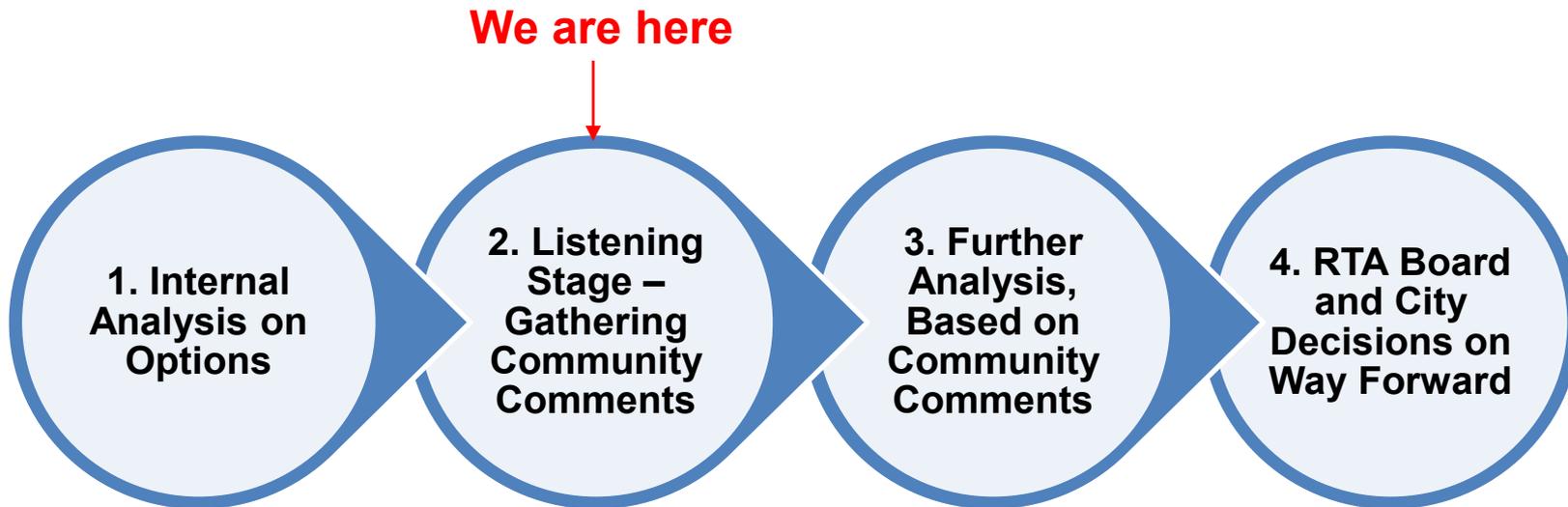
- Do you use the Canal Streetcar? If so, what do you use it for?
 - Get to work?
 - Get to the doctor, library, or other community services?
 - Shopping?
 - Get to recreation?
- Do you think the Canal Streetcar line works well, or does it need improvements?
- What improvements would you like to see?
 - Faster trips?
 - More reliability?
 - Other improvements?
- Can you share any personal experiences on the Canal Streetcar that would be better with some of the proposed improvements?
- What is **your** preference for stop spacing on Canal Street?
 - Every 1-2 blocks? (spacing today)
 - Every 3-4 blocks? (about the spacing on the Rampart-St. Claude line)
- What other improvements would you like the RTA to consider for the Canal Streetcar?
- What concerns do you have about the potential options for improvement?



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Next Steps



- **Ways to send the RTA your comments:**
 - Online: <https://www.norta.com/About/Customer-Service>
 - Call our Rideline: **504-248-3900**
- **How you can stay up to date:** Future outreach events and updated information (further analysis, for example) will be posted online: <https://www.norta.com/About/Canal-Streetcar-Improvement-Analysis>