



RTA's Community Engagement Process

The RTA aims to engage with communities throughout the New Orleans region to make collaborative decisions on public transit services and investments. Specifically, we try to remain in constant dialogue with RTA passengers, other residents (even those who do not regularly ride RTA vehicles), and community groups – such as non-profit organizations, churches, and neighborhood associations. We make a particular effort to regularly engage with groups with unique needs, such as disabled riders and their caregivers.

In all interactions with community members, we strive to be:

- Inclusive
- Transparent
- Proactive
- Responsive
- Effective Communicators – The RTA uses many forms of communication to inform and engage with communities, including: traditional media, through public events and community events, feedback forms, interviews, and digital communications (social media, e-newsletter, the GoMobile app, text messaging, and the RTA website).

Two Forms of Community Outreach

1. Events

The RTA holds regular events to inform the public and community groups about developments in transit services, and to gather input from attendees. We participate in two main types of community events:

- **RTA-organized events** to speak about transit developments, get feedback on transit services, or both. These events are typically organized in partnership with a specific group or organization.
- **Events organized by others** that are likely to attract riders and potential riders. Examples include festivals, setting up an RTA table at an event held by New Orleans Public Schools or the New Orleans Public Library. These events help us reach a larger group of riders, as well as residents who could be riders with more information on RTA routes and services.

The RTA maintains a database of community groups and regularly reaches out to them. Our staff makes themselves available to meet with groups at times that work best for them, including evenings and weekends.

For each event, we define clear outreach goals. Those goals vary according to the group and context for the event. Typically, goals fall into two main categories:

- Inform
- Solicit feedback

Many community events have both goals – to inform riders and to solicit feedback on proposals or upcoming decisions.

At all events, every participant is given the opportunity to fill out a feedback form on their satisfaction with the RTA and transit services in New Orleans. Specific comments, in which follow-up is needed are entered into our LISTEN system. All entries in LISTEN are reported and a customer service agent follows up on them.

2. Projects

The RTA organizes targeted community engagement campaigns for important projects and planning studies. Because these campaigns are essential parts of our public engagement, and because they often require a lot of staff time for short periods, the RTA typically engages consultants to lead them.

To work with consultants for community engagement on important projects and planning studies, we use the following process:

- The RTA requests a project-specific community outreach plan from a consultant. The community outreach plan identifies the stakeholders the project impacts, the strategy for how the consultant will engage the public and key stakeholders. It also describes the number and type of public meetings that will be held, as well as proposed schedules and locations. In addition to public meetings, the plan may include targeted approaches for engaging with key stakeholders in the project – ranging from community groups to elected officials.
- The community outreach plan(s) are reviewed and approved by the RTA, and the RTA work closely with the consultant throughout the process.
- Once the RTA approves the plan, the consultant organizes the meetings, including sending invitations, presenting at the meetings, recording them (if appropriate), and handling questions and answers from attendees. This coordination ensures the messaging is correct and in-line with RTA's vision for the project, and that public input is considered.

The consultant typically sets up and manages a wide range of platforms for communicating project information to the community, such as:

- Implementing a project-specific webpage, in addition to project updates and service alerts on the RTA's main webpage
- Providing Fact Sheets for distribution at meetings and to other stakeholders
- Hosting special events to celebrate milestones, such as ribbon-cuttings and ground-breakings
- Developing and placing signs to assist riders, motorists, and businesses impacted by projects.

For projects at the engineering and construction phase, the RTA engages a sub-consultant through the construction firm to organize and run public meetings. There is typically one pre-construction meeting, and then monthly progress updates are issued.