

STRATEGIC MOBILITY PLAN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

March 2018



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public and stakeholder input was essential to creating a Strategic Mobility Plan (SMP) that reflects the needs of the community and has broad public support. This document summarizes how we engaged with the community, what we heard, and how it shaped the development of the Plan.

There were many opportunities to get involved

The planning process included more than 4,500 engagements with people who attended meetings and workshops, listened to presentations, participated in interviews, or submitted surveys or comments. The Plan is a result of this collaborative effort that included stakeholders of all types, including:

	Riders and Non-Riders		Advocacy Groups		Government and Public Agencies
	RTA Operators and Administrative Staff		Schools and Universities		Major Employers and Economic Development Agencies

The project team used a combination of in-person and online outreach strategies to ensure that all types of people throughout the region had opportunities to get involved in every phase of the planning process. These strategies included:

- A project advisory committee
- Interactive public meetings
- Stakeholder interviews
- Elected official briefings
- Presentations at standing community meetings
- Presentations at other events and meetings
- Pop-up events
- Online surveys supplementing in-person activities



Riders and non-riders had similar top priorities

Throughout the engagement process, the project team looked at how input given by riders varied from input given by non-riders. While there were some differences between these groups, there was a remarkable level of consistency in their top priorities.

In the first phase of the project – Listening and Learning - both groups unanimously said that improving existing services was their number one priority for improving public transportation and mobility in the region. In particular, both riders and non-riders highly valued improving access to destinations and improving reliability of transit services.

In the Evaluating Options phase, when strategies were being developed, both groups were also unanimous in their prioritization providing fast, frequent service on major corridors in the region.

Stakeholders want high-quality public transportation throughout the region

In addition to clear priorities emerging from public input, there was a consensus amongst stakeholders and elected officials interviewed that the entire region, not just the City of New Orleans, needs seamless, high-quality public transportation.

Stakeholders also frequently mentioned the need to change the public perception of transit, add more late night bus and ferry service, and make transit accessible for all.

Transit operators (drivers) frequently commented that schedules are too tight, more service is needed during high-demand periods, and that buses are breaking down too frequently.

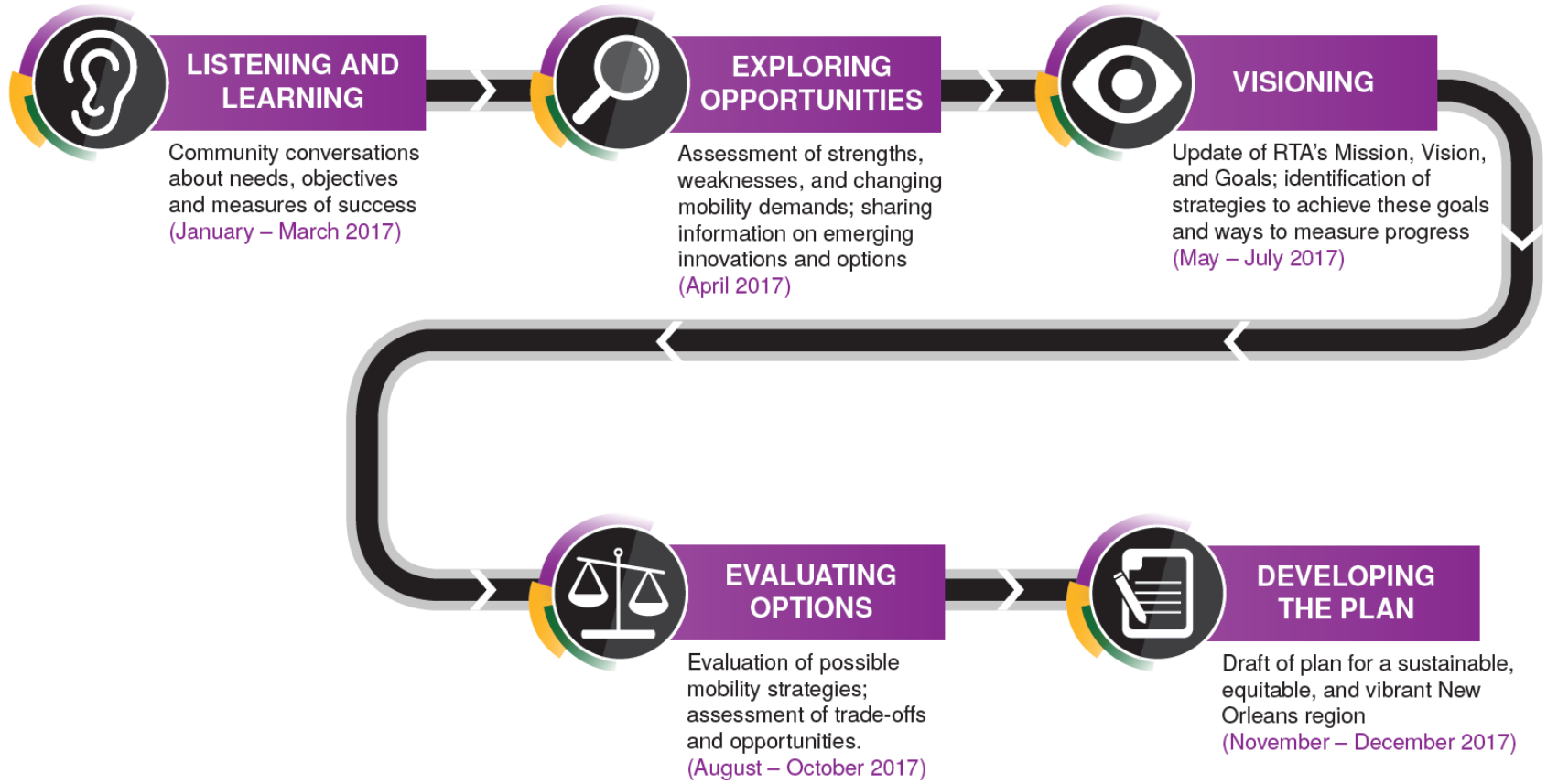
The Plan has broad support

The robust engagement process and careful consideration of input received in each phase of the planning process resulted in a draft plan that was well-received as it was released to the public.

During the Visioning phase, riders and non-riders alike gave high approval ratings of the draft Mission, Vision, and Goals.

When the draft plan was released in the final phase of the project, many comments received were positive and conversation shifted to focusing on implementation as soon as possible. At the end of this phase, several stakeholders, community groups, and members of the public attended the RTA Board of Commissioners meeting to speak in support of the Plan and the plan was adopted unanimously.

Project Timeline



1.0 LISTENING AND LEARNING

JANUARY 2017 – MARCH 2017

The first phase of the planning process – Listening and Learning – was set up to learn about people’s values around public transportation and mobility in the region and to hear about their big ideas for the future. It was also an opportunity to meet with key stakeholders in the region and learn about their upcoming plans and long-term trends.

During this phase, the project team engaged with nearly 2,000 people across the region.

Table 1: Listening and Learning Phase Outreach

Activity	People Engaged	Surveys Completed
Advisory Committee Meeting	53	0
Elected Official Briefings (5)	21	0
Public Meetings (2)	95	0
Standing Community Meetings (18)	457	176
Pop-Ups (11)	435	197
Online Survey	497	497
Stakeholder Interviews (37)	60	0
Total	1,815	870

1.1 HOW INPUT SHAPED THE PLAN

The input from this first phase helped the project team to understand the concerns and needs of the public and stakeholders throughout the region.

Specifically, input was used to inform a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis in the next phase of the SMP and to begin developing a new mission and vision for RTA and accompanying goals and objectives.

1.2 HOW WE ENGAGED

Advisory Committee Meeting

Over 50 stakeholders convened as an Advisory Committee during the first phase of the project. The purpose of this initial advisory committee meeting was for the project team to introduce the project and for committee members to share their values related to public transportation and mobility in the region and to communicate their expectations for what the plan should accomplish.

The meeting took place on November 11, 2016 at the University Medical Center (UMC) Conference Center and additional accommodations were made for invitees who could not attend. Members attending

included elected officials and representatives from local government agencies, economic development groups, transportation providers, advocacy groups, community groups, and others.

Elected Official Briefings

During this first phase of the project, elected official briefings were designed to introduce the Strategic Mobility Plan and the planning process to elected officials and to provide an opportunity for the project team to learn about unique considerations for individual jurisdictions and districts.

The project team e-mailed project information to all elected officials in Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard, and St. Tammany parishes and offered to arrange briefings with the project team. During this phase, the team was able to conduct five elected official briefings and engage directly with 14 elected officials or their staff.

Public Meetings

Nearly 100 people attended two open house-style public meetings in January 2017. These meetings included several “station areas” with poster boards. Some station areas were interactive and others were informational in nature. People from the project team staffed the sign-in area and facilitated activities at all station areas. The times and locations of these meetings were as follows:

- January 17, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the RTA Boardroom at 2817 Canal Street
- January 18, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Kenner City Park Pavilion

The purpose of these initial public meetings was to introduce the public to the project and planning process and to solicit input on their values and big ideas for public transportation and mobility in the region. There was also informational material to introduce the public to emerging mobility options and traditional transit improvements.

Standing Community Meetings

In order to reach people in their own neighborhoods, the project team attended standing community meetings across the region. During this phase, the project team introduced the project and planning process and encouraged people to fill out paper surveys during the meeting or fill out the online survey on the project webpage.

The team reached out to over 250 neighborhood and community groups throughout the region, striving to get good geographic and demographic representation. The team was committed to presenting at any organization that extended an invitation. Ultimately, the project team was able to make presentations at the following 18 community organizations:

- Audubon Riverside Neighborhood Association
- Broadmoor Improvement Association
- Carrollton-Riverbend Neighborhood Association
- Coliseum Square Association
- Eastern New Orleans Advisory Commission (ENONAC)
- Edgewood Park Neighborhood Association
- Faubourg Lafitte Tenants' Association
- Faubourg Marigny Improvement Association
- Faubourg St. John Neighborhood Association
- Faubourg St. Roch Improvement Association
- French Quarter Business Association
- French Quarter Citizens, Inc.

- Irish Channel Neighborhood Association
- Lakeview Civic Improvement Association
- Lower Ninth Ward Senior Center (Sanchez Center)
- Marrero Commons Tenants Meeting
- Mid-City Neighborhood Association
- Neighbors First for Bywater
- Pontchartrain Park Neighborhood Association

Pop-Ups

Recognizing that not everyone attends public meetings or is actively engaged in their community, the project team distributed information and paper surveys at 11 pop-up events in the Listening and Learning phase. These pop-ups were especially useful in reaching transit riders.

Altogether, about 200 people were reached by pop-ups in Orleans, Jefferson, and St. Bernard parishes, including at:

- Canal Street & Elk Place
- Airport Employee's Lounge
- Wilty Terminal
- Delgado Community College
- Canal Boulevard & City Park Avenue
- Lighthouse Louisiana
- Algiers Point Ferry Terminal
- Claiborne Avenue & Carrollton Avenue
- Walmart (Harahan)
- St. Bernard Transit (on-board)
- Magazine Street at Audubon Park

Online Survey

In addition to paper surveys distributed at standing community meetings and pop-ups, an online survey was created to provide yet another alternative way of providing input. As with the paper surveys, the online survey replicated information and input opportunities at the public meetings.

The online survey lasted approximately nine weeks from January 26, 2017 through the end of March 2017 and received nearly 500 responses.

Stakeholder Interviews

Over 30 stakeholder interviews were conducted with representatives from local universities, local governments, large employers, housing and economic development groups, advocacy organizations, and other transportation providers in the region.

The purpose of these interviews was to introduce the project to stakeholders, listen about their organization's upcoming plans, and learn about long-term trends or changes affecting their organization.

Stakeholder interviews were conducted with the following organizations, sometimes with multiple people or departments within the same organization:

- AARP Louisiana
- City of Covington
- City of Gretna
- City of Kenner
- City of New Orleans
- City of Slidell
- Delgado Community College
- Dillard University
- GNO, Inc.
- Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO)

- HousingNOLA
- JEDCO
- Jefferson Parish and Jefferson Transit (JeT)
- Jefferson Parish Workforce Connection
- JOB-1
- Kingsley House
- Lyft
- New Orleans Business Alliance
- New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
- New Orleans International Airport
- New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA)
- New Orleans Regional Planning Commission
- Ochsner
- Port of New Orleans
- Propeller
- RTA Management Team
- St. Bernard Parish and SBURT
- STAR Transit
- Tulane University and Tulane Shuttles
- Uber Louisiana
- University of New Orleans
- Xavier University

1.3 WHAT WE HEARD

Advisory Committee

- Plan with the Public
 - Build public support and improve the perception of transit in the region
 - Build trust through good communication, and educating in both directions (i.e. between the agency and the public)
- Plan for Excellence
 - Set an agenda that is visionary and progressive, and provide service that is equitable
 - Service should be efficient and should aim to maximize accessibility of jobs and services
- Plan Responsibly
 - Be realistic and pragmatic, and demonstrate that leadership can address “tough” questions like funding
 - Be sensitive to the context of different neighborhoods (e.g. historic versus suburban)
- Plan with Partners
 - Be consistent with other planning efforts and regional coordination, both within and outside of the metropolitan area
- Plan for a Better Quality of Life
 - Support economic development by improving the mobility of our workforce, making the region a more attractive place to live, and addressing public health

Stakeholder Interviews

- Create a seamless, high quality regional transit system
 - Regional boundaries need to be resolved
 - Provide reliable access to jobs, schools, and training
 - Good transit reduces worker tardiness
 - Good transit attracts talent and businesses to the region
- Change the public perception of transit
 - Make transit attractive
- Provide more late night bus and ferry service
 - Irregular hospitality shifts require more frequent service at off-peak times in certain areas
 - There is high demand between Downtown and outlying areas
- Make transit accessible for all
 - Promote sensitivity training for transporting people with disabilities
 - The aging population needs to be considered
- Opportunity areas
 - The Biomedical District, The proposed Trade District and other riverfront areas, Ochsner Main Campus, Avondale, and Airport/Airline Highway. redevelopment
 - Lower Ninth Ward, New Orleans East, and Arabi are growing affordable housing
 - High schools and colleges/universities are interested in partnering
 - Innovation with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) and other technology is just beginning

The Public

During engagement for the Listening and Learning phase, the project team asked the public what they value about public transportation and mobility in general and what big ideas should be considered.

Input received at the public meetings was consistent with input received from paper and online surveys during this phase. The charts on the following pages illustrate trends from this input.

The charts break down what we heard from the public into three types of survey respondents: frequent riders, occasional riders, and infrequent and non-riders. This information comes from the paper and online surveys completed during this phase of the project, where survey respondents were asked to self-identify as one of these rider types. Though the patterns do not change, it should be noted that 117 out of 870 survey respondents (13 percent) did not respond to this question and their responses are omitted from the graphs below.

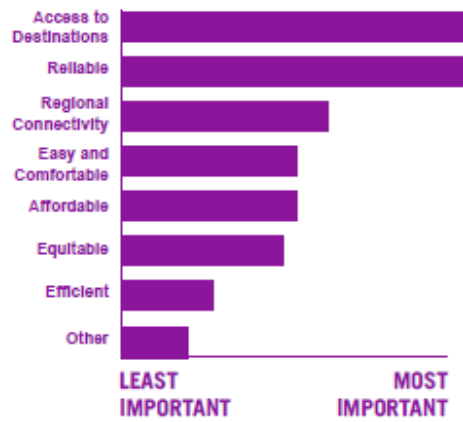
The width of the bars in the graphs correspond to the number of surveys that included that answer as a response. Survey respondents were limited in their number of responses to this question.

Values

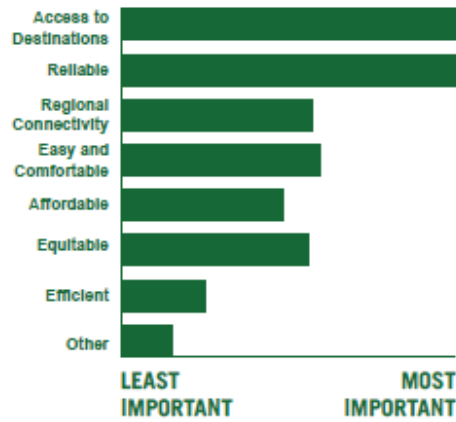
Riders and non-riders alike highly valued access to destinations and reliability for the future of public transportation and mobility in the region. All other values were moderately important to all rider types except for being efficient, which was least important by far for all rider types.

What four (4) values are most important for the future of public transportation and mobility in the region?

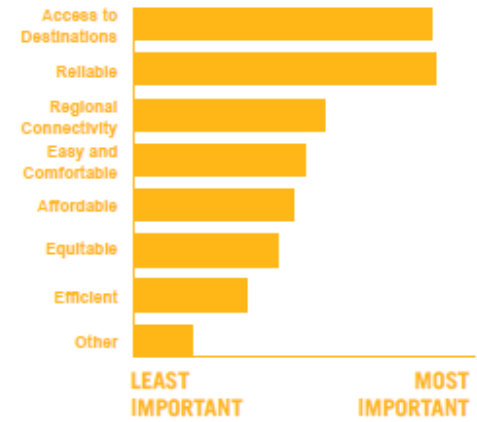
FREQUENT RIDERS



OCCASIONAL RIDERS



INFREQUENT AND NON-RIDERS

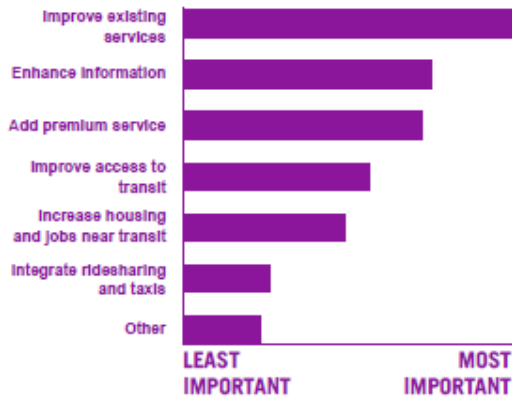


Big Ideas

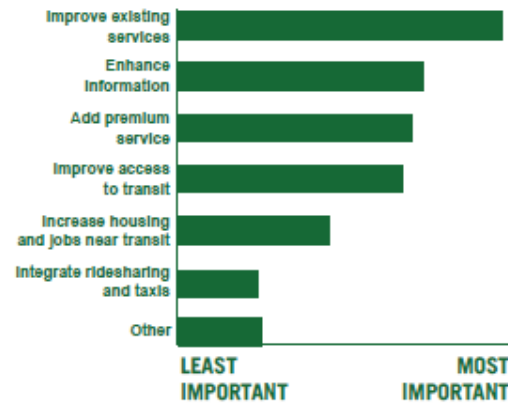
Improving existing services was the single most important big idea, for riders and non-riders alike, to improve mobility and public transportation in the region in the future. Enhancing information, adding premium service, and improving access to transit were of secondary importance to all rider types. All rider types were also similar in their low priority for increasing housing and jobs near transit and integrating ridesharing and taxis.

What are your four (4) big ideas to improve mobility and public transportation in the region in the future?

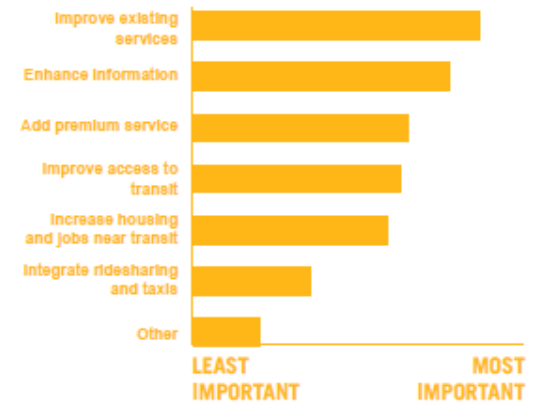
FREQUENT RIDERS



OCCASIONAL RIDERS



INFREQUENT AND NON-RIDERS



2.0 EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES

APRIL 2017

In the Exploring Opportunities phase of the planning process, key RTA staff participated in an internal Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) workshop that was informed by the results of the Listening and Learning phase and technical analyses conducted by the project team.

As this was an inward-focused exercise, there was limited public engagement in this phase.

3.0 VISIONING

MAY 2017 – JULY 2017

In the Visioning phase of the planning process, the project team asked stakeholders and the public for their input on RTA’s proposed Mission, Vision, Goals, and Objectives for the future

During this phase, the project team engaged with over 1,000 people across the region.

Table 2: Visioning Phase Outreach

Activity	People Engaged	Surveys Completed
Advisory Committee Meeting	39	0
Public Meetings (4)	72	0
Standing Community Meetings (14)	346	54
Pop-Ups (12)	461	116
Online Survey	222	222
Total	1,110	392

3.1 HOW INPUT SHAPED THE PLAN

The input from the Visioning phase helped the project team to refine the draft mission, vision, and goals for RTA. Specifically, it resulted in simplifying the draft mission statement and adding a new goal related to sustainability and public health.

3.2 HOW WE ENGAGED

Advisory Committee Meeting

About 40 stakeholders re-convened as an Advisory Committee during the Visioning phase of the project. There were two primary purposes for this second committee meeting:

- To allow the project team to present the results of the outreach in the Listening and Learning phase and the results of the technical analysis and internal SWOT workshop in the Exploring Opportunities phase.
- To allow committee members to review suggested revisions to RTA’s mission, vision, goals, and objectives and recommend additional modifications. The suggested revisions were developed by the project team using information from the first two phases.

This meeting took place on May 15, 2017 at the University Medical Center (UMC) Conference Center.

Public Meetings

Approximately 60 people attended two open house-style public meetings in June 2017. Similar to the first round of public meetings in the Listening and Learning phase, these meetings included several “station areas” with poster boards and one station with a narrated video. Some station areas were interactive and others were informational in nature. People from the project team staffed the sign-in area and facilitated activities at all station areas. The times and locations of these meetings were as follows:

- June 6, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the University Medical Center (UMC)
- June 7, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the MLK Community Center in Kenner

The primary purpose of this second round of public meetings was to introduce the proposed revisions to RTA’s mission, vision, goals, and objectives and to get public feedback on these revisions. There was also informational material to show how the demand for public transportation was being assessed (Exploring Opportunities phase) and to, once again, familiarize the public with emerging mobility options and traditional transit improvements.

Also during this phase, about ten people attended special public meetings targeted to hospitality and hospital workers. The intent of these additional meetings was to better understand these workers’ unique issues and ideas since they account for a large share of RTA’s ridership and have non-traditional commuting patterns. Similar to the other public meetings, these meetings were open house-style with station areas focused around poster boards. The times and locations of these meetings were as follows:

- July 12, 2017 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Windsor Court Hotel in New Orleans
- July 12, 2017 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Windsor Court Hotel in New Orleans

Standing Community Meetings

The project team reached back out to community organizations it engaged with in the Listening and Learning phase. It also maintained the policy of presenting at any organization that extended an invitation.

For this phase of the planning process, the team gave a project update, answered questions, recorded and addressed comments, and encouraged people to fill out paper surveys during the meeting or fill out the online survey on the project webpage.

The team was able to make presentations at the following 14 community organizations during this phase:

- Audubon Riverside Neighborhood Association
- Broadmoor Improvement Association
- Carrollton-Riverbend Neighborhood Association
- Coliseum Square Association
- Eastern New Orleans Advisory Commission (ENONAC)
- Edgewood Park Neighborhood Association
- Faubourg St. Roch Improvement Association
- French Quarter Business Association
- French Quarters Citizens, Inc.
- Irish Channel Neighborhood Association
- Marrero Commons Tenants' Association
- Mid-City Neighborhood Association
- Pontchartrain Park Neighborhood Association
- Walnut Bend Civic Association

Pop-Ups

The project team distributed information and paper surveys at 12 pop-up events in the Visioning phase. These pop-ups were again very useful in reaching transit riders.

Altogether, about 450 people were reached by pop-ups in Orleans and Jefferson parishes, including at:

- Canal Street & Elk Place
- East New Orleans Regional Library
- Wilty Terminal
- Delgado Community College
- MLK Library
- Canal Boulevard & City Park Avenue
- Algiers Regional Library
- Algiers Point Ferry Terminal
- Main Library
- Downman Road and Michoud area
- University Medical Center
- Veterans Boulevard near Lakeside Mall

Online Survey

In addition to paper surveys distributed at standing community meetings and pop-ups, an online survey was created to provide yet another alternative way of providing input. As with the paper surveys, the online survey replicated information and input opportunities at the public meetings.

The online survey lasted approximately six weeks from June 22, 2017 through the end of July 2017 and received over 200 responses.

3.3 WHAT WE HEARD

Advisory Committee and Key Stakeholders

The second Advisory Committee meeting was convened to review and refine the proposed mission, vision, goals, and objectives for RTA. Listening and Learning input was reviewed along with the trends analysis and market analysis findings, forecasts, trends, opportunities, and threats.

Advisory Committee members recommended the following revised mission, vision, and goals:

REVISED MISSION: Provide safe and dependable mobility services.

REVISED VISION: Become the preferred mobility provider in the region.

REVISED GOALS:

- Earn Trust
- Be Equitable
- Prioritize the Rider Experience
- Be Reliable
- Connect to Opportunities
- Support a Sustainable, Healthy Region

Hospitality and Hospital Workers

Safety was reported as an enormous concern during late-night trips, particularly during the first/last mile to and from transit stops. Most comments focused on the need for greater reliability and frequency of service, especially in the late evening.

The Public

During engagement for the Visioning phase, the project team asked the public to give input on RTA's draft mission, vision, goals, and objectives.

Input received at the public meetings was consistent with input received from paper and online surveys during this phase. The charts on the following pages illustrate trends from this input.

The charts break down what we heard from the public into three types of survey respondents: frequent riders, occasional riders, and infrequent and non-riders. This information comes from the paper and online surveys completed during this phase of the project, where survey respondents were asked to self-identify as one of these rider types. Though the patterns do not change, it should be noted that 47 out of 392 survey respondents (12 percent) did not respond to this question and their responses are omitted from the graphs below.

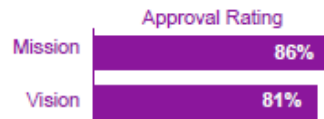
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Mission, Vision, and Goals

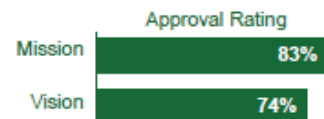
There were high approval ratings for the draft mission, vision, and goals, though occasional riders and infrequent and non-riders had less enthusiasm for the vision. All groups expressed similarly high levels of support for the proposed goals, with one exception: infrequent and non-riders had slightly lower approval ratings for the “Earn Trust” goal.

Do you like the proposed Mission and Vision?

FREQUENT RIDERS



OCCASIONAL RIDERS

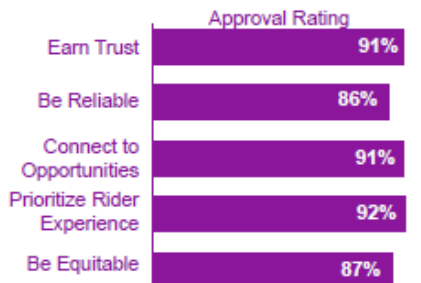


INFREQUENT AND NON-RIDERS

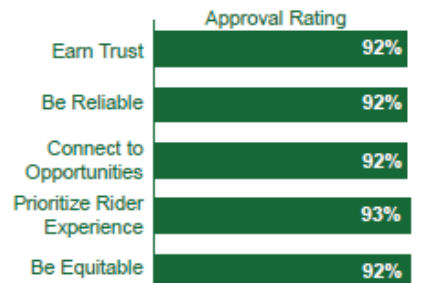


Do you like the proposed Goals?

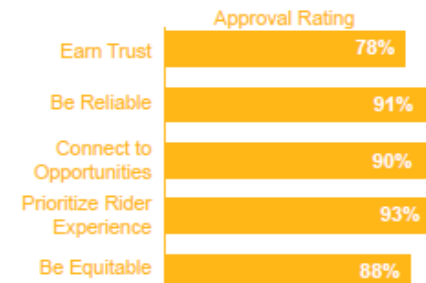
FREQUENT RIDERS



OCCASIONAL RIDERS



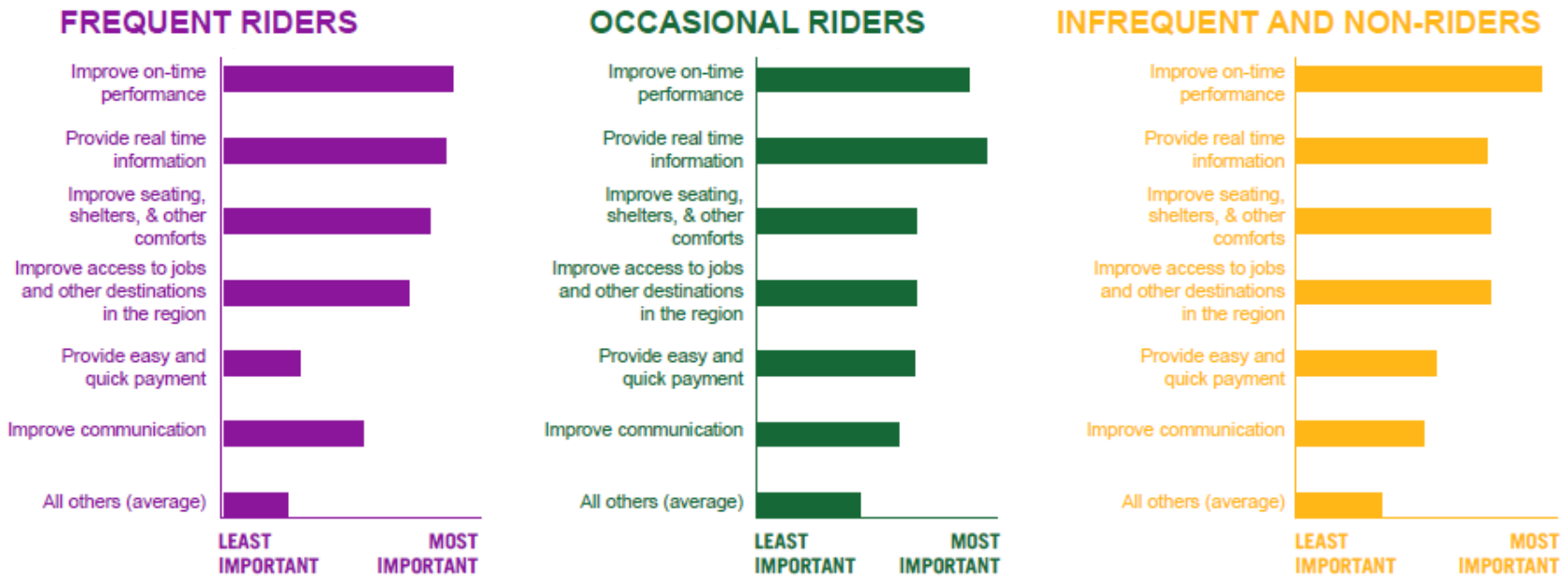
INFREQUENT AND NON-RIDERS



Objectives

When asked to prioritize specific objectives, all rider types indicated that improving on-time performance and providing real time information were the most important objectives for RTA to accomplish in the future. Improving seating, shelters, and other comforts and improving access to jobs and other destinations also ranked as important, though these objectives were less important for occasional riders.

What five (5) objectives would you most like to see RTA accomplish in the future?



4.0 EVALUATING OPTIONS

AUGUST 2017 – OCTOBER 2017

In the Evaluating Options phase of the planning process, the project team introduced high-level strategies that RTA could undertake to achieve the vision and goals developed in the Visioning phase and asked the public and stakeholders to prioritize these strategies, given limited resources.

The project team also sought input on potential High-Capacity Transit (HCT) corridors in the region, or major corridors where transit service would be the fastest and most frequent.

During this phase, the project team engaged with over 1,000 people across the region.

Table 3: Evaluating Options Phase Outreach

Activity	People Engaged	Surveys Completed
Public Meetings (5)	113	0
Pop-Ups (8)	324	214
Online Survey	736	736
Advisory Committee Meeting	25	0
Total	1,168	950

4.1 HOW INPUT SHAPED THE PLAN

The input from the Evaluating Options phase, along with input and technical analyses from other phases helped the project team to develop the draft version of the Strategic Mobility Plan.

Specifically, public input in this phase helped refine strategies and action items being considered by the project team, identify new strategies and action items, and refine High-Capacity Transit corridors, Select Service corridors, and other improvements.

4.2 HOW WE ENGAGED

Public Meetings

Over 100 people attended five workshop-style public meetings in September 2017. These meetings were more interactive than public meetings in previous phases, encouraging people to spend about 20 minutes in group exercises, in addition to one “station area” where participants were asked to prioritize major corridors in the region for High-Capacity Transit service. As in previous phases, people from the project team staffed the sign-in area and facilitated activities. The times and locations of these meetings were as follows:

- September 11, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at New Orleans East Regional Library
- September 12, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at North Kenner Library
- September 13, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Algiers Regional Library

- September 14, 2017 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at New Orleans Public Library – Main Branch
- September 14, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at New Orleans Public Library – Main Branch

In addition to reviewing and getting input on potential High-Capacity Transit corridors in the region, these meetings were intended to introduce the public to potential strategies that RTA could undertake to achieve the vision and goals of the plan. To do this, meeting attendees were asked to participate in a 20-minute group exercise called “Build Your Own Plan.”

In this exercise, facilitators worked with small groups of participants to review a menu of transportation strategies and choose a package of strategies with a \$100 budget. The total cost of implementing all strategies was \$230, so participants had to make tough decisions over which strategies were most important. Strategies fell into the following five categories:

- Increase Transit Service (5 strategies)
- Vehicles and Infrastructure (4 strategies)
- Customer Service and Communication (3 strategies)
- Fares (2 strategies)
- Local Regulations – Partner with Local Government (2 strategies)

Pop-Ups

The project team distributed information and paper surveys at eight pop-up events in the Evaluating Options phase. Once again, these pop-ups were especially useful in reaching transit riders.

Altogether, about 325 people were reached by pop-ups in Orleans and Jefferson parishes, including at:

- Canal Street & Elk Place
- Canal Street & Broad Street
- Wilty Terminal
- Lighthouse Louisiana
- Algiers Regional Library
- East New Orleans Regional Library
- RTA Operator's Lounge
- RTA Paratransit Lounge

Online Survey

In addition to paper surveys distributed at standing community meetings and pop-ups, an online survey was created to provide yet another alternative way of providing input. As with the paper surveys, the online survey replicated information and input opportunities at the public meetings.

The online survey lasted approximately six weeks from September 20, 2017 through the end of October 2017 and received over 700 responses.

Advisory Committee Meeting

25 stakeholders re-convened as an Advisory Committee during the Evaluating Options phase of the project. There were two primary purposes for this third committee meeting:

- To allow the project team to present the results of the outreach in the Visioning and Evaluating Options phase.
- To allow committee members to review a draft version of the Strategic Mobility Plan, in particular to review and recommend modifications to proposed strategies, action items, and phasing before

a draft was shared with the public in the next phase – Developing the Plan. It was also an opportunity to discuss any lingering concerns with the proposed mission, vision, goals, and performance measures.

This meeting took place on October 23, 2017 at the University Medical Center (UMC) Conference Center.

4.3 WHAT WE HEARD

Advisory Committee

During this phase, the advisory committee provided many comments on elements of the draft plan, in particular on the proposed strategies, actions, and phasing plan.

The following general recommendations were made to improve the plan:

- Create a mechanism for the agency to report implementation progress to the public, and for updating the plan at set intervals (e.g. 4 or 5 years)
- Detail what short-term actions will be taken, or move the timeframe for many medium-term objectives up to short-term
- Explain the funding needs for different strategies
- Remove emphasis on proposed streetcar extensions and loops
- Weave equity into all goals

Operators

RTA operators gave many comments to the project team, but the most consistent themes were that current schedules are too tight, more service is needed on existing routes during areas of high demand, and that RTA needs more reliable buses that don't break as frequently.

The Public

During engagement for the Evaluating Options phase, the project team asked the public to give input on RTA's potential strategies for RTA to undertake and on potential High-Capacity Transit corridors.

Input received at the public meetings was consistent with input received from paper and online surveys during this phase. The charts on the following pages illustrate trends from this input.

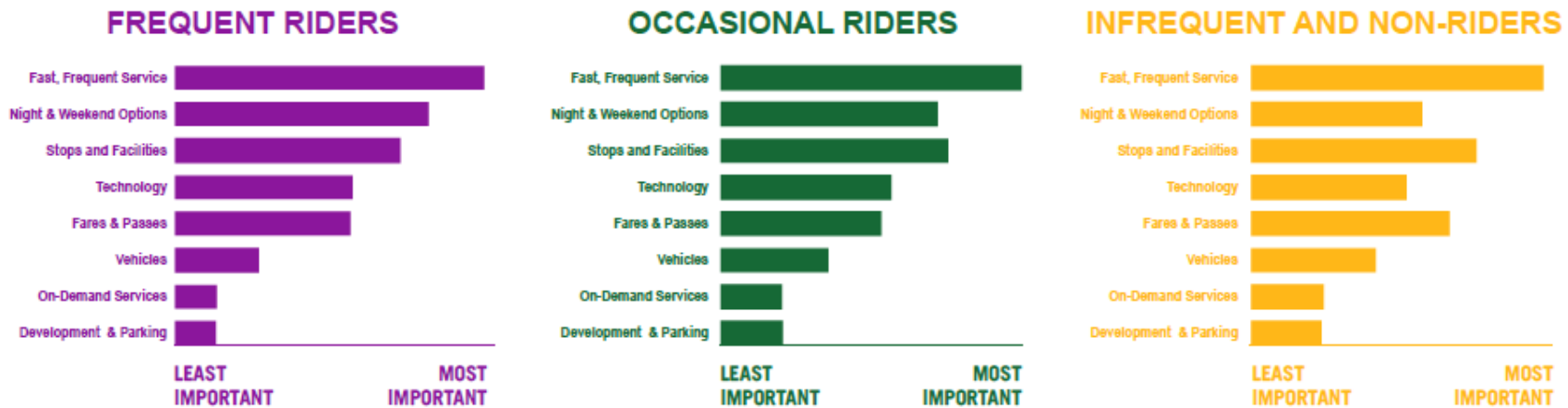
The charts break down what we heard from the public into three types of survey respondents: frequent riders, occasional riders, and infrequent and non-riders. This information comes from the paper and online surveys completed during this phase of the project, where survey respondents were asked to self-identify as one of these rider types. Though the patterns do not change, it should be noted that 119 out of 950 survey respondents (13 percent) did not respond to this question and their responses are omitted from the graphs below.

The width of the bars in the graphs correspond to the number of surveys that included that answer as a response. Survey respondents were limited in their number of responses to this question.

Strategies

When asked which high-level strategies were most important to improve public transportation in the region, all rider types indicated that fast, frequent service was the most important strategy. Improving night and weekend options and improving stops and facilities were also important to all rider types, though improving night and weekend options was somewhat less important for infrequent and non-riders.

What four (4) types of strategies are most important to improve public transportation?

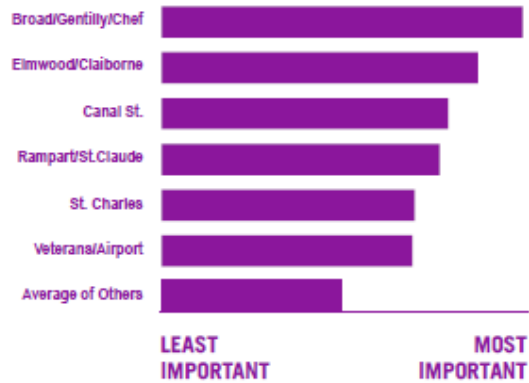


Corridors

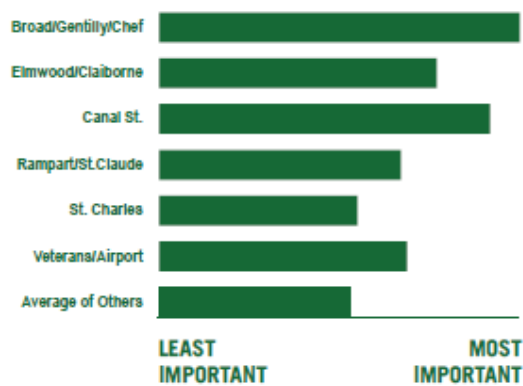
When asked which potential major corridors in the region should be prioritized for fast, frequent service (High-Capacity Transit), all rider types indicated that the Broad/Gentilly/Chef corridor was the most important. Beyond this corridor, five other corridors received high levels of support from all rider types: Elmwood/Claiborne, Canal Street, Rampart/St. Claude, St. Charles, and Veterans/Airport.

What five (5) major corridors should be prioritized for fast, frequent service?

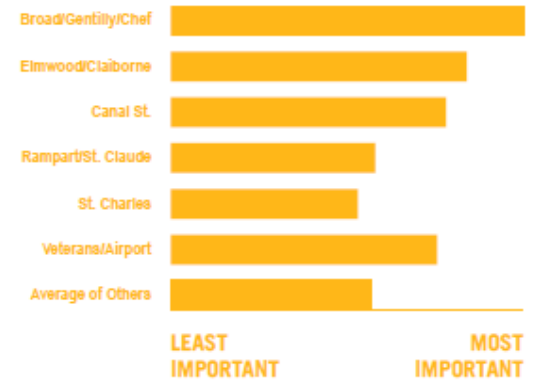
FREQUENT RIDERS



OCCASIONAL RIDERS



INFREQUENT AND NON-RIDERS



5.0 DEVELOPING THE PLAN

NOVEMBER 2017 – DECEMBER 2017

For the final phase of the planning process - Developing the Plan - RTA released a draft version of the Strategic Mobility Plan, based on input received throughout the planning process, and sought input during a two-week public comment period.

After the public comment period ended, the project team worked with the Advisory Committee to revise the draft plan, as needed, before asking the RTA Board of Commissioners to consider adopting the plan.

During this phase, the project team engaged directly with nearly 100 people across the region.

Table 4: Developing the Plan Phase Outreach

Activity	People Engaged	Comments Submitted
Public Meetings (2)	40	0
Online Review and Comment Period	17	17
Advisory Committee Meeting	6	0
Elected Official Briefings (18)	29	0
Total	92	17

5.1 HOW INPUT SHAPED THE PLAN

The input from this final phase of the planning process was used to revise the draft version of the Strategic Mobility Plan.

Specifically, the final plan was revised to start certain action items sooner than originally planned, add new performance measures and targets, make some existing targets more ambitious, and stay mode-neutral for High-Capacity Transit corridors and Downtown Mobility Improvements.

5.2 HOW WE ENGAGED

Public Meetings

40 people attended two open house-style public meetings in November 2017. For these meetings, the plan was broken down by goal area, with each “station areas” using poster boards to highlight the strategies and actions being proposed to achieve a particular goal. Additional station areas were included to highlight the proposed High-Capacity Transit corridors and other major transit improvements and to show the benefits and costs of implementing the plan. People from the project team staffed the sign-in area and floated around station areas for questions and comments. Meeting attendees were encouraged to place comments on sticky-notes and place them on poster boards.

The times and locations of these meetings were as follows:

- November 13, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at New Orleans Public Library – Main Branch

- November 14, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Kenner Senior Center

The primary purpose of this final round of public meetings was to introduce and get feedback on the draft plan and the benefits and costs associated with implementing the draft plan

Online Review and Public Comment Period

In order to provide an alternative to attending the public meetings for reviewing and commenting on the draft plan, the draft plan and the public meeting materials were posted on the project webpage. The webpage indicated the duration of the public comment period and directed people to email their comments to the project email address.

The online review and public comment period lasted two weeks from November 13, 2017 to November 27, 2017. During this time, the project team also accepted comments by phone, mail, or in-person. 17 comments were received during this period.

Advisory Committee Meeting

A revised draft plan, based on input from the public comment period, was emailed to all advisory committee members. For those members who had lingering issues or wanted to discuss the revised draft in more detail, an optional advisory committee meeting was held. Only six members attended this final advisory committee meeting.

This meeting took place on December 5, 2017 in the RTA Boardroom at 2817 Canal Street.

Elected Official Briefings

During this phase of the project, elected official briefings were designed to give elected officials an overview of the Draft Strategic Mobility Plan and discuss any lingering comments or issues.

The project team e-mailed updated project information to all elected officials in Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard, and St. Tammany parishes and again offered to arrange briefings with the project team. Newly elected, or incoming, elected officials in the City of New Orleans were included in these communications.

During this phase, the project team was able to conduct 18 elected official briefings and engage directly with 19 elected officials, including incoming elected officials.

5.3 WHAT WE HEARD

Public Meetings

- Comments on the “Earn Trust” goal
 - Enhance the role of RTA’s Riders Advisory Committee, make RTA board meetings more accessible, frequently report progress made on the SMP, and don’t just rely on the agency website to share information, given the city’s digital divide.
- Comments on the “Be Equitable” goal
 - Improve access for all neighborhoods in the region, make the website and app accessible to persons with visual disabilities, make the St. Charles streetcar accessible to wheelchair users, and encourage affordable housing in all parts of the city – not just those served by quality transit.

- Comments on the “Prioritize the Rider Experience” goal
 - Work more closely with neighboring parishes to make inter-parish trips easier, make real-time data available at transit stops, improve lighting at transit stops, create an 80-cent senior day pass, and brand routes by frequency,
- Comments on the “Be Reliable” goal
 - Facilitate transfers through better timing, create priority lanes and signals for vehicles, and make real-time data accessible to riders who are blind.
- Comments on the “Connect to Opportunities” goal
 - Add commuter bus service to Baton Rouge, partner with high schools and universities to encourage student ridership, and improve access to destinations in Jefferson Parish. Attendees expressed skepticism about streetcar extensions and about selecting any mode for a high-capacity route without further study.
- Comments on the “Support a Sustainable, Healthy Region” goal
 - Add low-emission vehicles to RTA’s fleet and reduce parking requirements for transit-oriented development.
- Comments on the High-Capacity Transit options
 - Mixed responses about BRT as a mode – some supported it for its relatively lower cost than light rail or streetcar, while others preferred streetcars due to their character and ability to navigate tight turns.
- Comments on the summary of Plan benefits and cost
 - Set more ambitious targets for the percentage of regional jobs accessible within 60-minute transit commutes.

Public Comment Period

During the comment period, the public provided letters, calls, and emails with comments. Feedback was generally positive, with comments highlighting what the public was most interested in seeing and asking for certain action items to be started sooner than originally planned. There was also recognition that the priorities that the community has weighed-in on throughout the project were clearly conveyed in the plan.

Advisory Committee

Feedback on the revised draft plan, after changes from the public meeting and comment period, emphasized the following:

- Start certain action items sooner
- Add more specific measures, where possible
- Consider other modal options for downtown mobility improvements
- Set a more aggressive target for connecting people to jobs

6.0 GETTING THE WORD OUT

6.1 PROJECT PHONE AND E-MAIL

To provide multiple ways to communicate with the project team, a project phone line and email address were set up for the duration of the project. This contact information was publicized on all public materials produced and all input received by phone or email was forwarded to the project team.

While the project phone line was terminated at the end of the project, RTA’s Rideline number is now used in its place. The project email (strategicplan@norta.com) continues to be in use as the plan is implemented.

6.2 PROJECT CONTACT DATABASE

A contact database was developed and managed for the project to promote outreach opportunities and share information. The database included neighborhood and community organizations, elected officials, RTA staff, economic development groups, educational institutions, local governments, churches, and people who provided their contact information at public meetings or on surveys...

The contact database grew to include over 1,300 contacts and was typically used for e-blasts.

6.3 PROJECT WEBPAGE

The project webpage (www.norta.com/StrategicPlan) featured informational materials and highlighted public input opportunities, including online surveys. During the final phase of the project, the webpage also stored the draft plan. Over the course of the project, over 3,000 users accessed the project’s webpage.

Table 5: Project Webpage Traffic

Phase	Months	Users
Listening and Learning	Jan-Mar	1,320
Exploring Opportunities	Apr	305
Visioning	May-Jul	647
Evaluating Options	Aug-Oct	698
Developing the Plan	Nov-Dec	565
Overall*	Jan-Dec	3,458

**Total is smaller than the sum of all phases because it does not count users more than once*

6.4 SOCIAL MEDIA

The RTA Marketing team regularly provided project updates and promoted outreach events on RTA’s Facebook and Twitter account.

6.5 ADVERTISEMENT

To notify the community about upcoming project meetings and to drive traffic to the project webpage, the project team placed paid advertisements in The New Orleans Advocate, RTA's newspaper of record, on the following dates:

- January 9, 2017
- January 12, 2017
- January 15, 2017
- May 18, 2017
- May 21, 2017
- August 24, 2017
- August 27, 2017
- October 27, 2017
- October 29, 2017

6.6 MEDIA OUTREACH

The project team focused on earned media opportunities in each phase of the planning process by providing the media with news releases and regular updates and by meeting with editorial boards of major news publications.

Earned media coverage (e.g. news articles, public service announcements, TV interviews, and calendar postings) was effective in exposing the public to the project and encouraging them to attend public meetings, especially for people without access to internet or who prefer to receive news through traditional media outlets. Most media activity took place in the 3-4 weeks prior to public meetings.

The project team also utilized RTA's partnership with WDSU TV and WBOK radio to give monthly project updates.

6.7 FLYERS AND INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

During each phase of the project with public outreach, 3,000 flyers were distributed at major transit stops, public libraries, community centers, churches, and elected official offices in the region. These flyers introduced the project, pushed people to the project webpage, and highlighted public input opportunities.

After the Listening and Learning, Visioning, and Evaluating Options phases, informational brochures were developed that highlighted "What We Heard" and upcoming public input opportunities. During each of these phases, 3,000 of these brochures were distributed at key locations and on buses and streetcars.

During the Visioning phase, the project team also created a brief report explaining how demand for public transportation in the New Orleans region was evaluated for the Strategic Mobility Plan. This report was distributed at public meetings, other events, and posted online on the project webpage.

6.8 TRANSLATIONS

The one-page project overview handout, announcements for public meetings, and surveys were provided in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Other translations were provided upon request, including sign language interpreters.

APPENDIX: SURVEY FORMS AND TOOLS

LISTENING AND LEARNING SURVEY



STRATEGIC MOBILITY PLAN LISTENING AND LEARNING SURVEY

The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) is developing a roadmap for improving public transportation in the region over the next 20 years. The planning process will wrap up at the end of 2017 and will include many opportunities throughout the year for you to learn about the plan and make your voice heard.

We are in the "Listening and Learning" phase. Your thoughts and input on the following brief questions will help build the foundation of this plan.

1. Values

What values are most important for the future of public transportation and mobility in the region? **CHOOSE UP TO FOUR (4)** that are most important to you and/or add your own.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Access to Destinations
I can quickly get to places I want to go, when I want I to get there. <input type="checkbox"/> Regional Connectivity
It is easy to travel between different parts of the region, like between New Orleans and Metairie. <input type="checkbox"/> Easy to Use and Comfortable
Public transportation is easy to use and an attractive alternative to driving. <input type="checkbox"/> Reliability
Public transportation is on-time and predictable. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Affordability
Minimizing the cost burden of transportation. <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency
Making the most of limited funding. <input type="checkbox"/> Equity
Adequately serving those that need it the most. <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
_____ |
|---|---|

2. Ideas and Opportunities

Imagine the region 10 and 20 years from now. What are your big ideas to improve public transportation and mobility in the future for the region? **CHOOSE UP TO FOUR (4)** that interest you the most and/or add your own.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Improve existing transit services by extending hours, increasing frequency, expanding service area, adding routes, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Add new premium transit service. Premium transit service is frequent (at least every 15 minutes) with fewer stops and larger vehicles that typically run in their own lanes making it very reliable. Examples include Bus Rapid Transit and Light Rail. <input type="checkbox"/> Improve access to transit with improvements to sidewalks, bicycle lanes, parking or drop-off facilities and connecting services like shared cars (Zipcar) and shared bikes. <input type="checkbox"/> Enhance information. This includes real-time information for transit vehicle location or arrival, trip planning assistance, maps and directions, information about different services and how to use them, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Integrate ridesharing and taxis. Ridesharing services include operations such as Uber and Lyft. Integrating with public transit can help to fill gaps between routes, better serve persons with limited mobility, and offer flexibility in time and routes. <input type="checkbox"/> Increase housing, amenities and jobs near to transit. Sometimes called "transit-oriented development", these walkable places include concentrations of housing, shops and jobs near to high-quality transit connections. <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
_____ |
|--|---|

For more information, please visit www.norta.com/StrategicPlan
Contact us via email at StrategicPlan@norta.com; text or call or 504-248-3900



STRATEGIC MOBILITY PLAN

The following questions are optional, however responding to them will help us ensure we engage a diversity of people from around the region.

- 3. In what ZIP code do you live? _____

- 4. What is your age?
__ Under 18 __ 18 to 24 __ 25 to 40 __ 41 to 64 __ 65 or over

- 5. Which race/ethnicity best describes you?
__ Black/African American __ White/Caucasian __ Asian/Asian American
__ American Indian/Alaskan Native __ Hispanic __ Multiple ethnicity

- 6. How often do you typically use public transportation?
__ Always/frequently __ Occasionally/sometimes __ Infrequently/never

- 7. What is your estimated total household income?
__ Under \$25,000 __ \$25,000-\$75,000 __ Over \$75,000

Please use the space below to provide any additional comments you wish to share.



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VISIONING SURVEY



STRATEGIC MOBILITY PLAN VISIONING SURVEY




The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) is developing a roadmap for improving public transportation in the region over the next 20 years. The planning process will wrap up at the end of 2017 and will include many opportunities throughout the year for you to learn about the plan and make your voice heard. We are currently in the "Visioning" phase.

Your participation in this brief survey is important and will help shape the Strategic Mobility Plan.

1. Mission, Vision, and Goals

Imagine the region 10 and 20 years from now. Do you think the Mission and Vision for RTA shown below are appropriate? Do the goals for the future shown below reflect your priorities?

CHECK THE BOXES BELOW AND PROVIDE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS to make your voice heard.

	Like 	Confusing 	Dislike 
Mission: Deliver mobility services that connect the people, places, and culture of the region in a safe, convenient manner and contribute to a sustainable and healthy future.			

Vision:			
Become the preferred mobility provider in the region.			

Goals:			
Earn Trust. Be a trusted public agency by communicating honestly and effectively and by providing meaningful opportunities to shape decision-making.			
Be Reliable. Be reliable with adequate financial resources to provide timely and predictable service.			
Connect to Opportunities. Provide the connections between people, jobs, schools, and other destinations.			
Prioritize the Rider Experience. Provide mobility services that are easy to use, safe, and comfortable.			
Be Equitable. Provide mobility services in a just and fair manner. Be accessible to all.			

Do you have any specific comments or suggestions for the Mission, Vision, and/or Goals?

For more information, please visit www.norta.com/StrategicPlan
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STRATEGIC MOBILITY PLAN

2. Objectives

What objectives would you most like to see RTA accomplish in the future? **CHOOSE UP TO FIVE (5)** that interest you the most and/or add your own.

- Improve communication with the public.
- Improve public involvement.
- Improve on-time performance.
- Provide real time information, including vehicle tracking.
- Improve access to jobs and other destinations in the region.
- Increase bike share stations, car share stations, and park and ride lots near transit.
- Provide easy and quick payment.
- Improve seating, shelters, and other comforts at transit stops.
- Ensure sidewalks leading to transit stops are in good condition and stops are accessible for people of all abilities.
- Other (please specify) _____
- Other (please specify) _____

The following questions are optional but help us ensure that we engage a diverse group of people.

- 3. In what ZIP code do you live? _____
- 4. What is your age?
___ Under 18 ___ 18 to 24 ___ 25 to 40 ___ 41 to 64 ___ 65 or over
- 5. Which race/ethnicity best describes you?
___ Black/African American ___ White/Caucasian ___ Asian/Asian American
___ American Indian/Alaskan Native ___ Hispanic ___ Multiple ethnicity
- 6. How often do you typically use public transportation?
___ Always/frequently ___ Occasionally/sometimes ___ Infrequently/never

Please use the space below to provide any additional comments you wish to share.

For more information, please visit www.norta.com/StrategicPlan
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EVALUATING OPTIONS SURVEY

Note that a paper version of this online survey was created for pop-ups and other occasions.

The screenshot shows a survey interface for the Strategic Mobility Plan. At the top, a navigation bar contains five numbered tabs: 1. WELCOME (selected), 2. STRATEGIES, 3. BUDGET ALLOCATION, 4. MAJOR CORRIDORS, and 5. WRAP UP. The main content area is titled "STRATEGIC MOBILITY PLAN" and includes a "WELCOME" sidebar. The central text reads: "HELP US PLAN THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION! The Strategic Mobility Plan will be a roadmap for improving public transportation in Greater New Orleans over the next 20 years. Share your thoughts on *Strategies* and *Major Projects* being considered." Below this text are "Español" and "Begin" buttons. An illustration of a city street with various transit modes (bus, car, bicycle, train) is shown. At the bottom, a "Did you know?" box states: "RTA's service area includes New Orleans and Kenner. RTA also regularly coordinates with other transit providers in the region." The RTA logo is also present in the bottom right corner.

2

PRIORITIZE STRATEGIES

What to do
Next Task

WELCOME
 STRATEGIES

Order your top 4 items
↑ above this line ↑

On-Demand Services

Fast, Frequent Service

Technology

Fares & Passes

Development & Parking

Night & Weekend Options

Vehicles

Stops and Facilities

? Suggest another


3
 BUDGET ALLOCATION

4
 MAJOR CORRIDORS

5
 WRAP UP

Review the types of strategies being considered in the Strategic Mobility Plan.

Rank the 4 strategies you think are most important for the region.



Please drag 4 of the items above the line in your preferred order.

3 **BUDGET ALLOCATION**
What to do
Next Task

WELCOME

2 STRATEGIES

3 BUDGET ALLOCATION

4 MAJOR CORRIDORS

5 WRAP UP

You have \$100 to spend on public transportation service in the region. \$50 is already dedicated to existing service. How would you spend the rest?

Increase existing services and add new types of service!

Drag coins to invest in the categories you prefer.

<p>Light Rail & Bus Rapid Transit</p> <p>Details</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>0</p> </div>	<p>Traditional Buses</p> <p>Details</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>25</p> </div>	<p>Traditional Streetcars</p> <p>Details</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>10</p> </div>	<p>Paratransit & Demand Response</p> <p>Details</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>10</p> </div>	<p>Ferries</p> <p>Details</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>5</p> </div>	<p>New Transit Options</p> <p>Details</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>0</p> </div>
--	--	---	--	---	---

50

← →

MAJOR CORRIDORS

5 WRAP UP

4 **PRIORITIZE MAJOR CORRIDORS** What to do Next Task

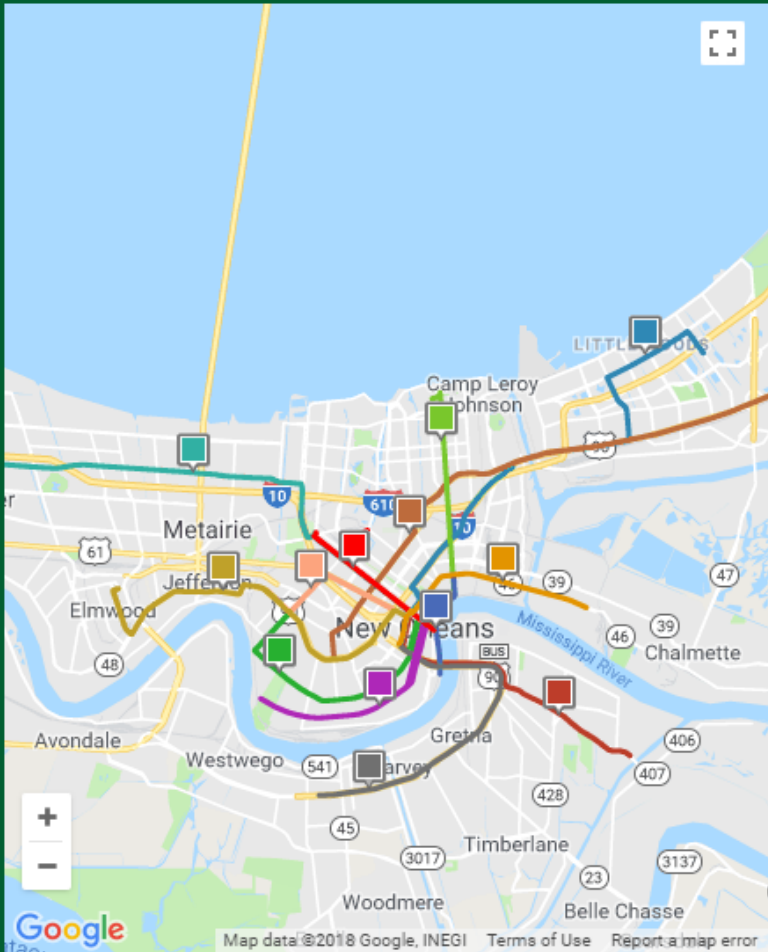
1 WELCOME

2 STRATEGIES

3 BUDGET ALLOCATION

4 MAJOR CORRIDORS

5 WRAP UP



There is limited funding to create a backbone of fast, frequent service in the region.

Which 5 major corridors would you prioritize for this type of service?

Approve any 5 projects on the map.

Item 1
Should this be a priority?
 Yes No
Add Comment

0 / 5 Projects Selected

5 WRAP UP What to do

1 WELCOME
2 STRATEGIES
3 BUDGET ALLOCATION
4 MAJOR CORRIDORS
5 WRAP UP

Final Questions (Optional)

How often do you use public transportation?

What is your home ZIP code?

What is your race/ethnicity?

What is your age?

E-mail address to stay informed

Additional Comments

Thank You!

Your input will help shape the Strategic Mobility Plan.

Stay involved and get more information by visiting:
www.norta.com/strategicplan

