



Streetcar Modernization Master Plan

Project Advisory Committee | Meeting #1

NORTA.COM

WELCOME

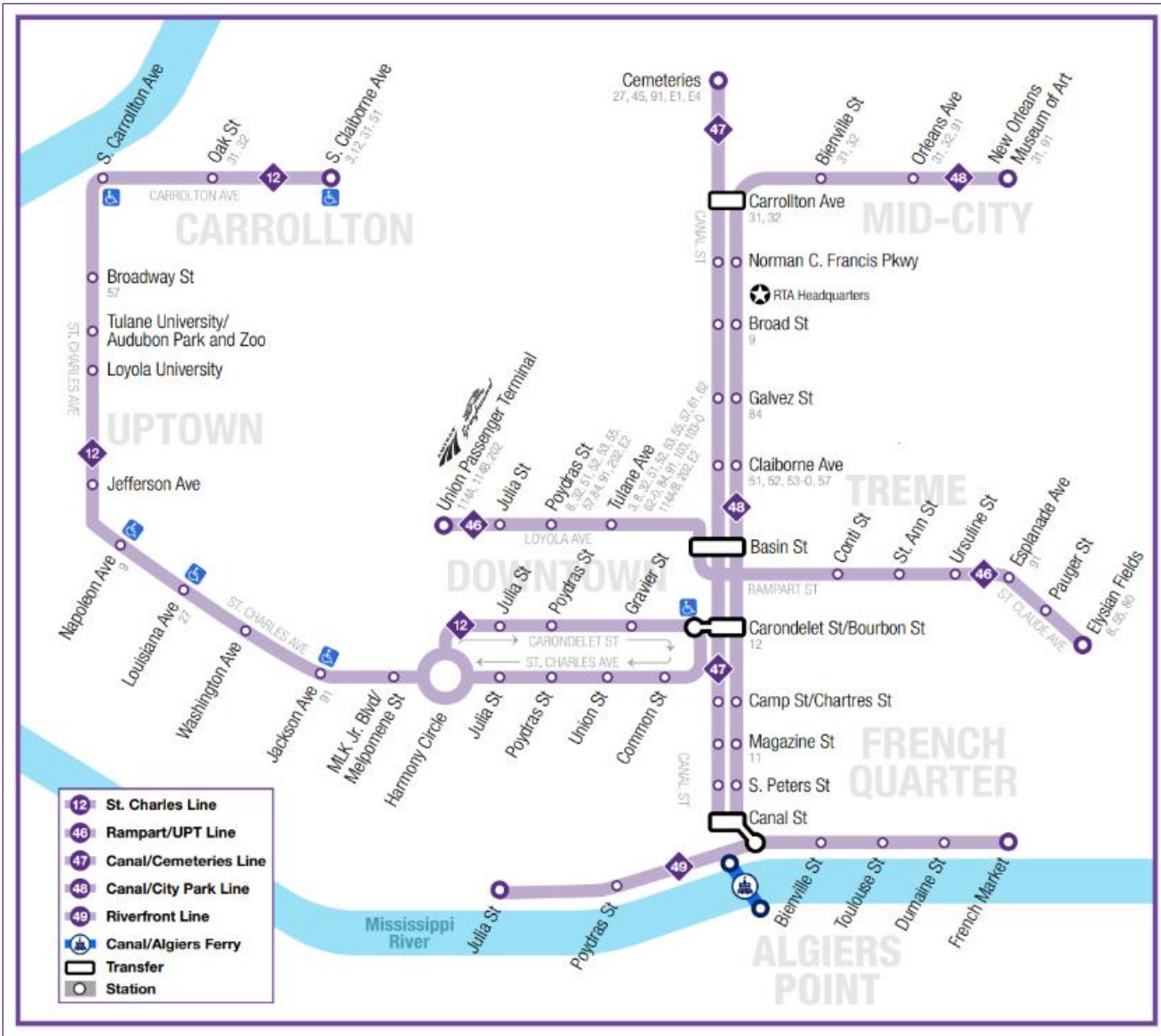
Dwight Norton, Chief Planning and Capital Projects Officer

ICE BREAKER

Yes, that's snow >>>

Name, Organization, &
A New Orleans Streetcar Memory





PROJECT OVERVIEW

WHY NOW?

O.E vs NORTA

“By November 3, 2026, the RTA shall submit the Board-adopted comprehensive plan... This plan must detail the steps required to achieve full wheelchair accessibility for all streetcars operating on the St. Charles Avenue Streetcar line”

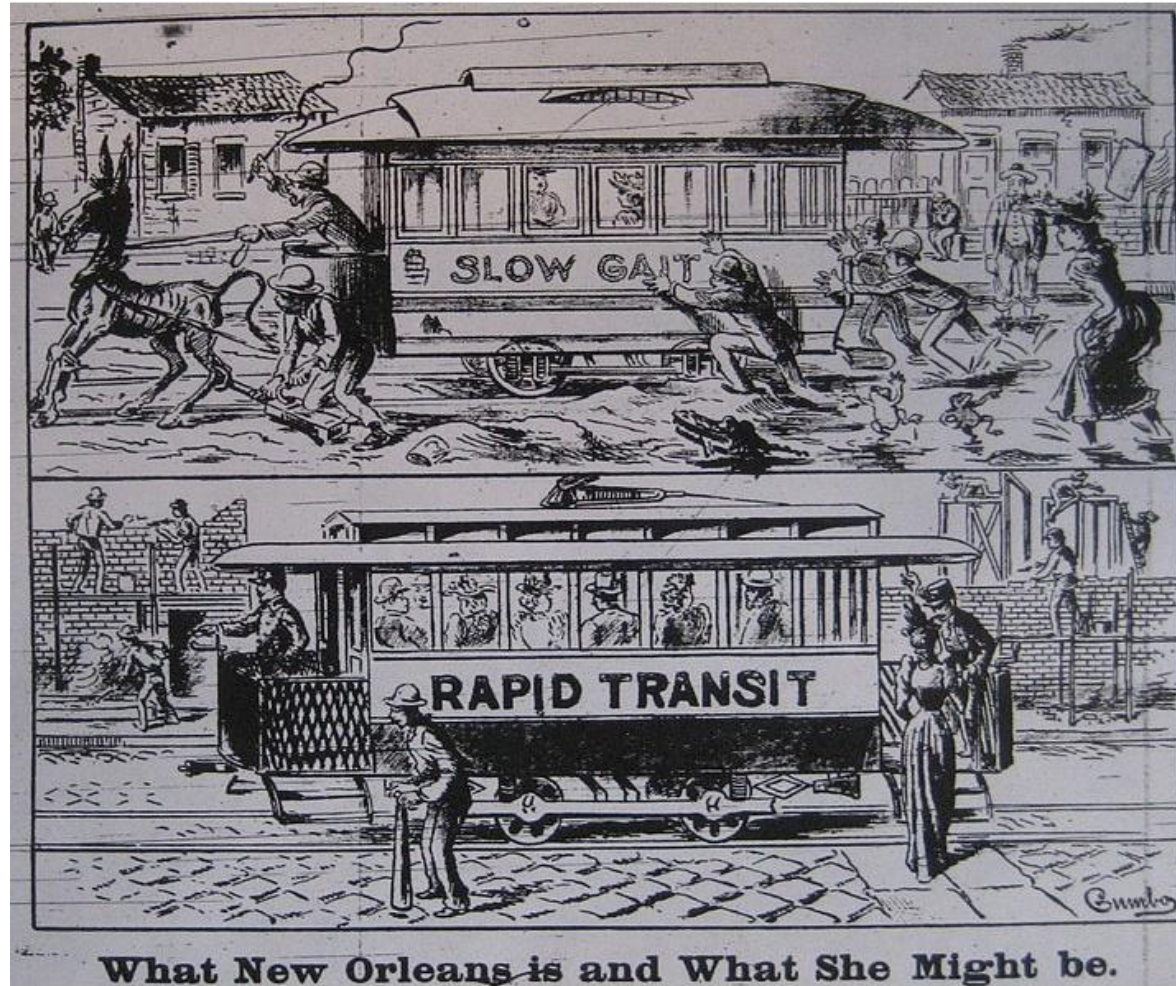
Persistent Safety Issues

Streetcars are in a crash with a passenger vehicle an average of once per week, usually as a result of those passenger vehicles not paying attention or trying to “beat the streetcar”

Stalled Ridership

Streetcar ridership was on a slight decline prior to the COVID-19 pandemic; after dropping significantly, it has only recovered to about 60% of 2019 levels

A LEGACY OF MODERNIZING



OVERARCHING GOALS



Accessibility

Ensure all riders can access the streetcar with ease.



Safety

Create a system where streetcars and automobiles navigate safely together.



Efficiency

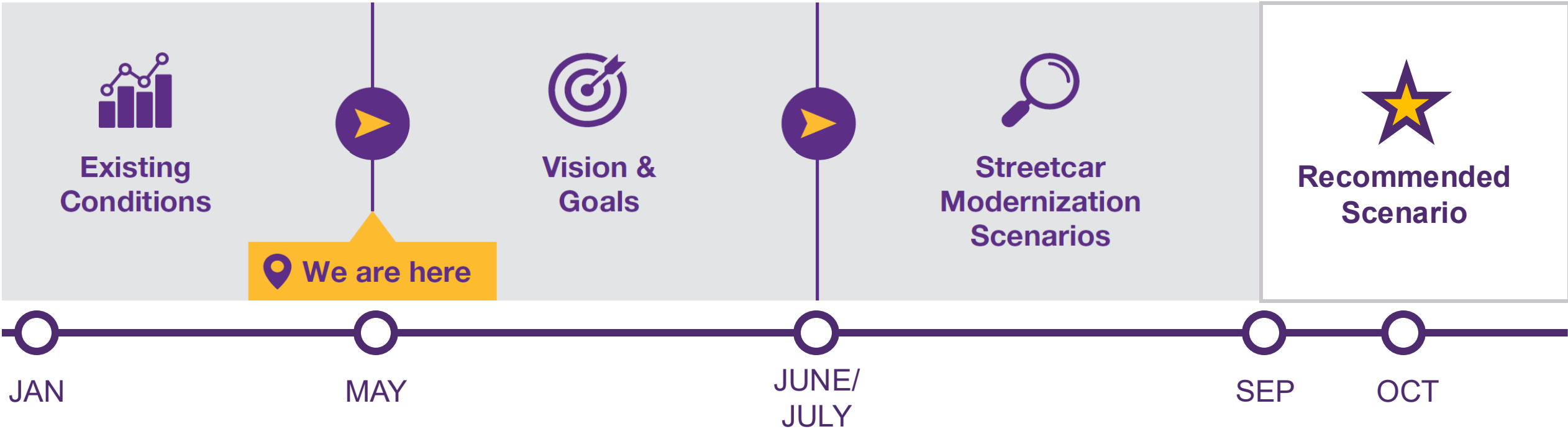
Shorten ride times for residents and tourists by increasing streetcar speeds.



Legacy

Continue to honor the legacy of our historic streetcar system.

TIMELINE



PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)

The Commitment:

- Represent a wide variety of civic perspectives
- Inform, guide, and advise this process
- Attend three (3) meetings
- Provide open and honest feedback
- Share information widely

The Role:

- **Establish trust in this planning process**
- Be a community voice
- Co-host or attend meetings and event(s)
- Support education through your organization's social media networks
- Encourage participation



**WHAT DOES OUR
COMMUNITY
KNOW ABOUT
THE STREETCAR?**

HOW LONG HAS THE STREETCAR SERVED NEW ORLEANS?

- 1835
- 1899
- 1920



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**DO WE RUN MODERN
STREETCARS ON ALL
ROUTES?**



DO WE RUN MODERN STREETCARS ON ALL ROUTES?

Yes!
400-series on St Charles
2000-series on all others



WHEN WAS THE STREETCAR FIRST DESEGREGATED?

- 1867
- 1923
- 1965



WHEN WAS THE STRETCAR FIRST DESEGREGATED?

- **1867**
- 1923
- 1965



WHEN DID THE STREETCAR RECEIVE ITS FIRST HISTORIC DESIGNATION?

- 1923
- 1973
- 2014



WHEN DID THE STREETCAR RECEIVE ITS FIRST HISTORIC DESIGNATION?

- 1923

- **1973**

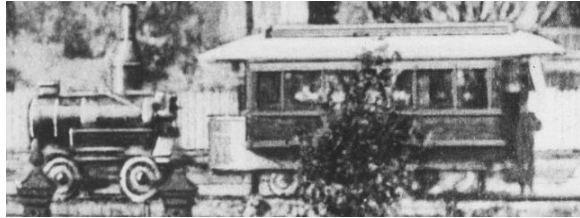
- 2014



WHY MODERNIZATION?

What Does It Really Mean?

TECHNOLOGY CHANGES OVER TIME



Lamm Thermo-Specific Locomotive Pulling a Streetcar



900-series "Perley Thomas" streetcars introduced



Riverfront Line 400-series "Red Ladies" introduced



Passenger info screens added to 900-series 400-series added to St Charles line

1831-1880's

1893

1928

1934-1964

2004

2017

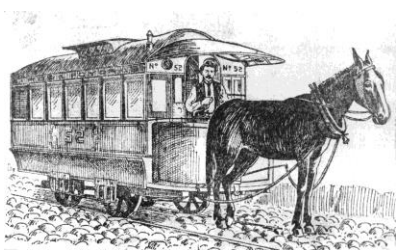
1870's - 1891

1923

1988

2020

Original Omni-Bus Streetcar Design



Electrification



1000-series introduced

The period of streetcar removal



Canal Street line re-introduced with 2000-series streetcars

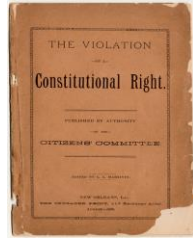


Cashless Ticket Scanners

SOCIAL JUSTICE OVER TIME



"Star-Car" System Protests.
Streetcar System Desegregated



Streetcar System Resegregated
due to Plessy vs. Ferguson Decision



Dr. William R. Adams and
Rev. A.L. Davis Jr. Sue to End
Streetcar Segregation in New Orleans



O.E vs NORTA Federal
Consent Decree for Full
Streetcar Accessibility

1867

1902

1929

1958

2017

2025

Po'Boy Strikes. 1100 Streetcar
Operators Strike for 4-months
for Union Protection



Miraglia vs NORTA
Consent Decree for Greater
Streetcar Accessibility

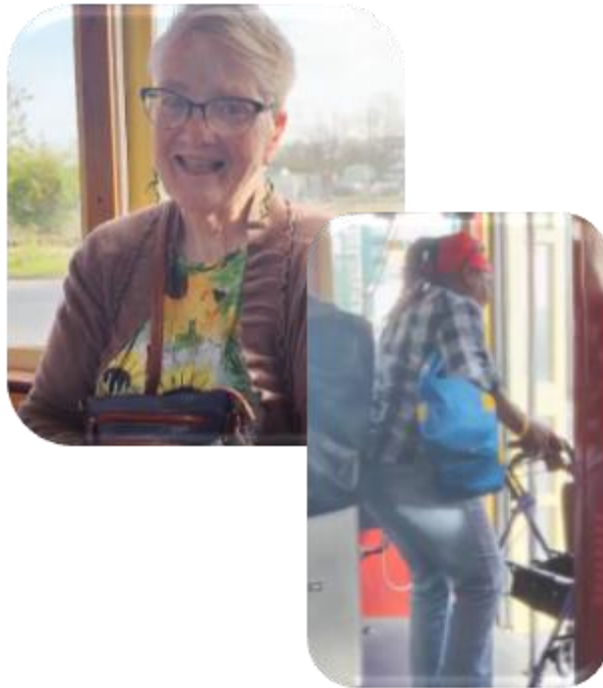


A BETTER SYSTEM FOR ALL

Daily
Commuter



Accessibility
Needs



Tourists



Vienna, Austria



Milan, Italy



Prague, Czech Republic



Melbourne, Australia



OTHERS HAVE DONE IT

Philadelphia, PA



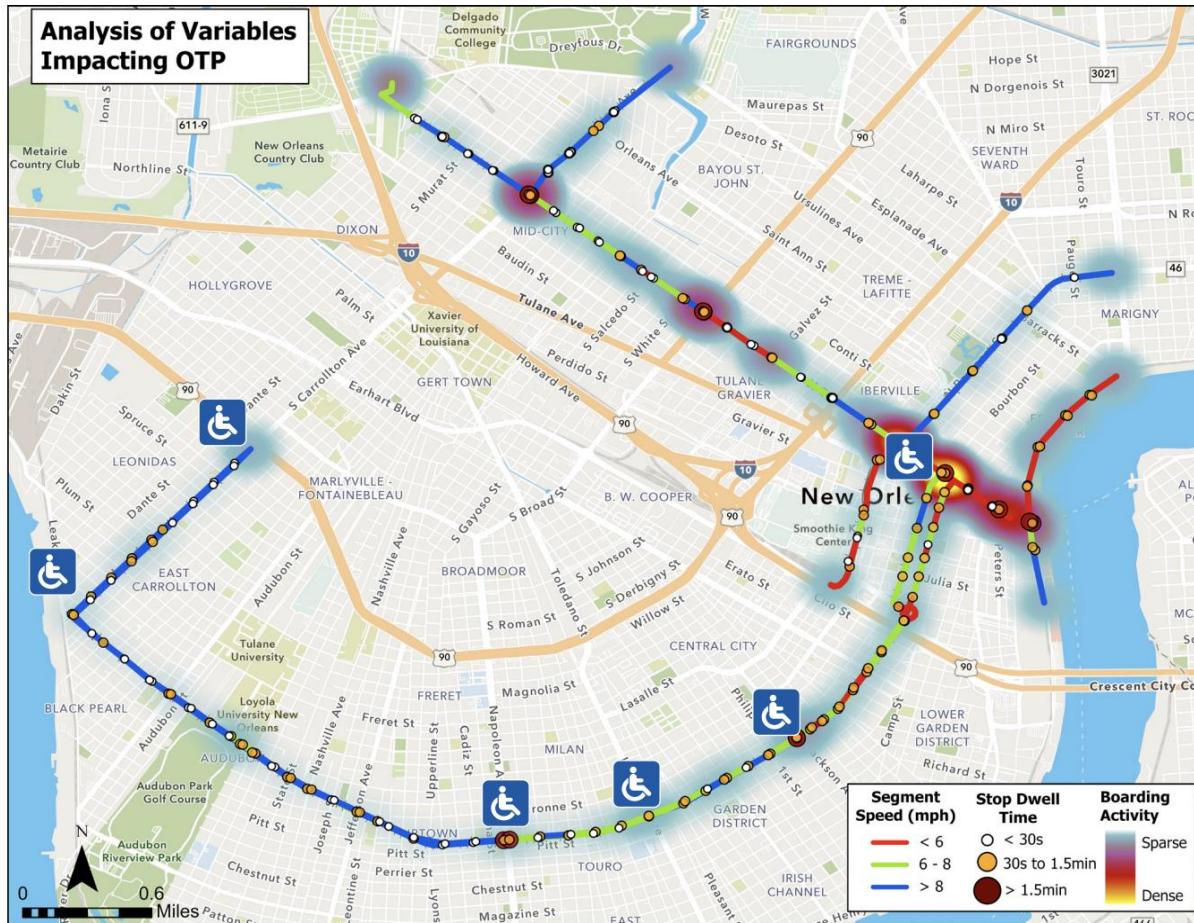
Toronto, Ontario, Canada



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Key Takeaways from Assessment

PERFORMANCE



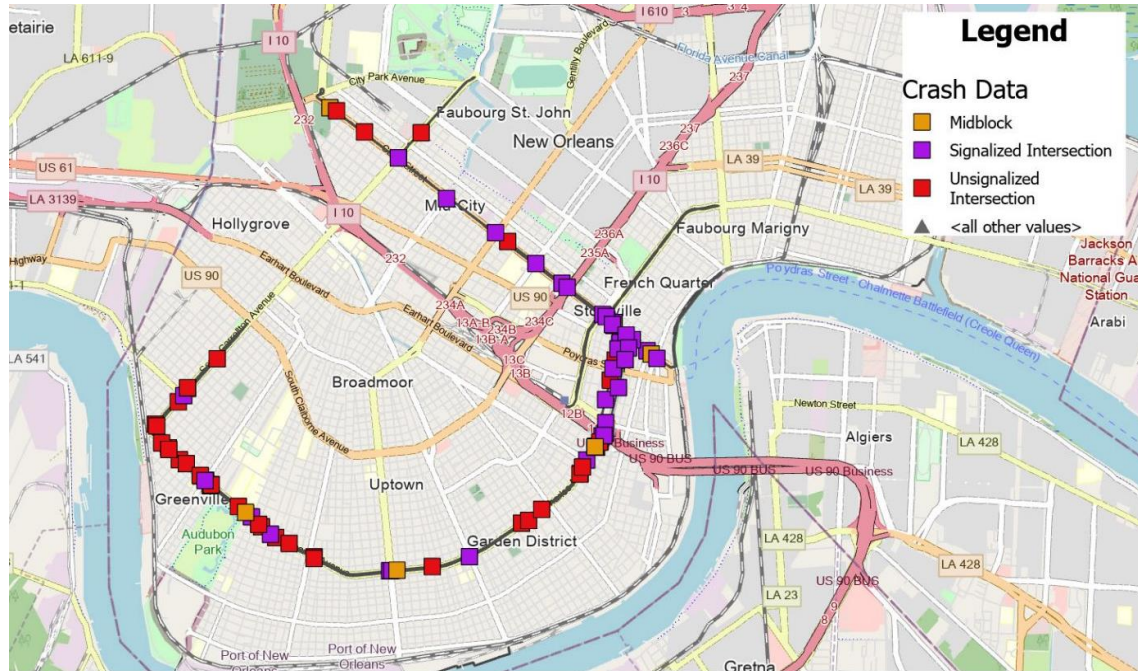
Source: RTA APC (Sept 2025-Jan 2026) & GTFS data (Sept 2025).
(Note: Underreported geographical boarding data available for St Charles – Few APCs on St Charles)

On-Time Performance: 73%
U.S. Average: 85%

Average Speed: 6.7mph
U.S. Average: 8-12mph.

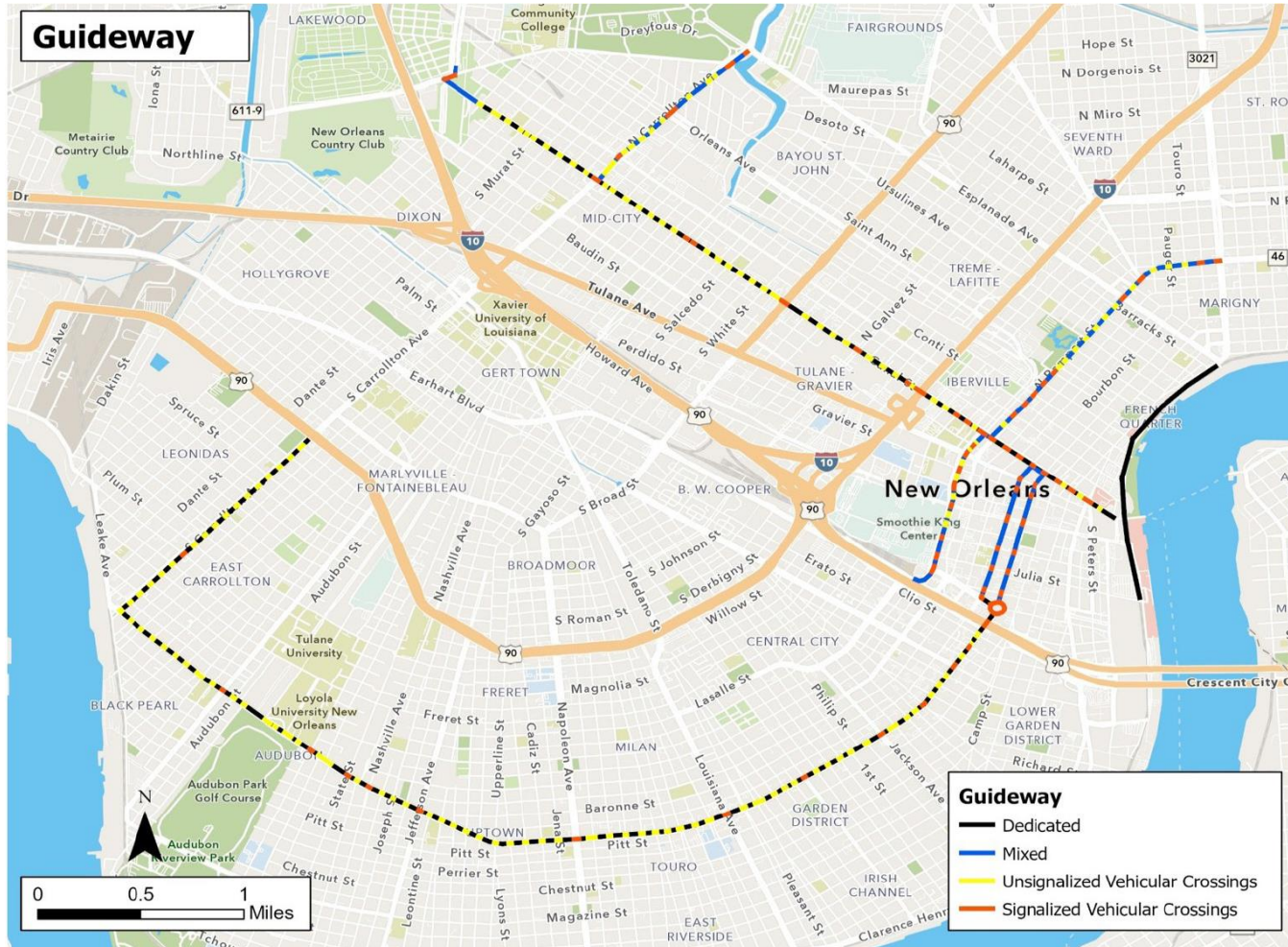
Average Boarding Time: 35 sec.
U.S. Average: 20-30 sec.

SAFETY



- 70% of crashed are on the St Charles line
- 48% of crashes are at unsignalized intersections.
- Unsignalized intersections force operators drive defensively, slowing service and affecting reliability.

TRACK, GUIDEWAYS, & SIGNALS



70% of streetcar service is in the neutral ground
30% is in mixed traffic

Streetcar does not have priority over vehicular traffic:

- Limited use of dedicated streetcar signals
- Significant unsignalized crossings allow vehicles to cross at will

STOPS & STATIONS



Route	Stop Spacing
St Charles	630 ft (<2 blocks)
Canal	790 ft
Riverfront	1,000 ft
Loyola-Rampart	1,060 ft
US Average	1,320 ft (~4 blocks)

- Close spacing of stops/stations likely impacting speed/reliability
- Insufficient space to deploy ramp throughout St Charles
- Limited and insufficient shelters
- Fully funded project (and consent decree required) to make all St Charles stops ADA compliant (8' deep)
 - Stop consolidation may be required

VEHICLES



	900-Series	400-Series	2000-Series
Total Fleet	35	7	24
Wheelchair lifts	0	7	24
Peak in Service, Current	6*	4*	13
Peak in Service, Max with repairs	17	5	18

- **Lack capacity for wheelchair accessible cars to serve all routes**
 - **2000-Series stretched to service Canal, Riverfront, & Loyola-Rampart lines.**
 - **Major repairs needed to maximize service**

*starting July 2026 will be 5 900-series and 5 400-series

OTHER COMPONENT ASSESSMENT

System	Assessment	Strengths	Issues / Recommendations
Overhead Contact System	Continued Detailed Review	Staff aware of issues and can address immediate concerns.	Overhanging foliage are immediate safety concern. Potential for pole failure. Recommend future transition to pantograph operation.
Traction Power Substations	Good	Substations are weather-protected. Substations have flexibility to increase capacity.	No major issues identified. TPSS Braker Replacements for St. Charles Substations are in progress.
Maintenance Facilities	Good	Robust in-house capabilities for fabrication, repair, and maintenance.	Specialized repairs need workforce development to ensure no loss of skills due to retirement of existing staff.
Track	Continued Detailed Review	In-house welders can address small emergency track repairs.	RTA Streetcars use unique track gauge. Recommend development of GIS-Map for completed track work.
Communications	Needs Improvement	OCC, IACS, and Secure Wi-Fi at facilities are well maintained.	OT network security review needed. Recommend developing centralized video management system at OCC. Recommend moving to off-board fare collection.

COMPLIANCE & LEGAL MANDATE

All stops on St. Charles are ADA-Compliant by August 2028
*(*requires some consolidation)*

RTA Board adopts plan for wheelchair accessibility on all streetcars running on St. Charles Avenue by Nov. 2026

National Historic Landmark Designation (2014)

WEIGHING PRIORITIES

RANK IN ORDER OF PRIORITY

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RANK IN ORDER OF PRIORITY

- _____  Safety (Fewer accidents)
- _____  Accessibility
- _____  Speed & Efficiency
- _____  Reliability
- _____  Historic Preservation

PREFERRED SCENARIOS

Ramps, Benches
and Covers at Stops

« OR »

More Pedestrian Space
on the Neutral Ground

Faster Routes:
Fewer Vehicle and
Pedestrian Crossovers

« OR »

Slower Routes:
More Vehicle and
Pedestrian Crossovers

Faster Routes:
Fewer Stops

« OR »

Slower Routes:
More Stops

Vintage Streetcar

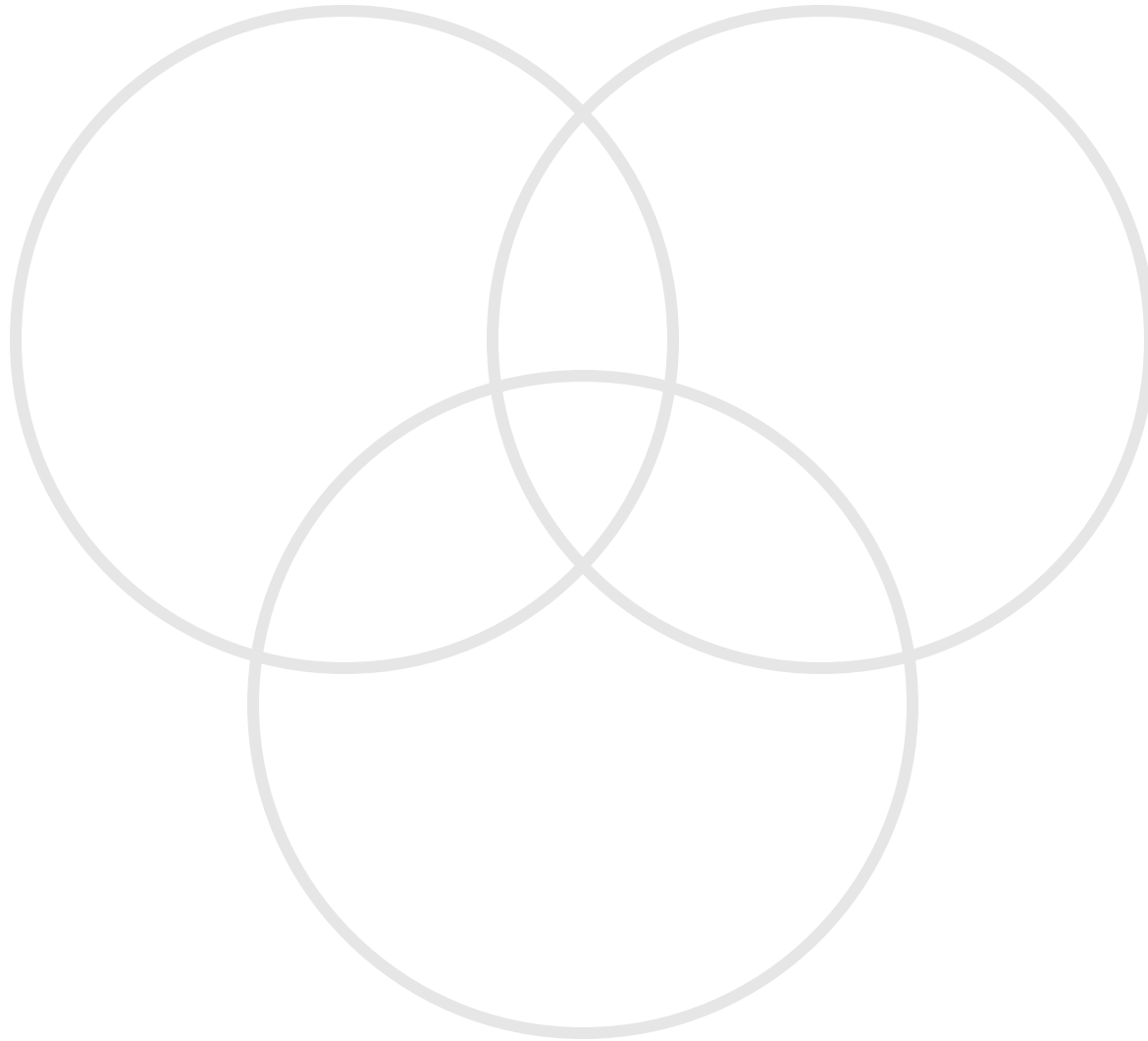
« OR »

New Modern Streetcars

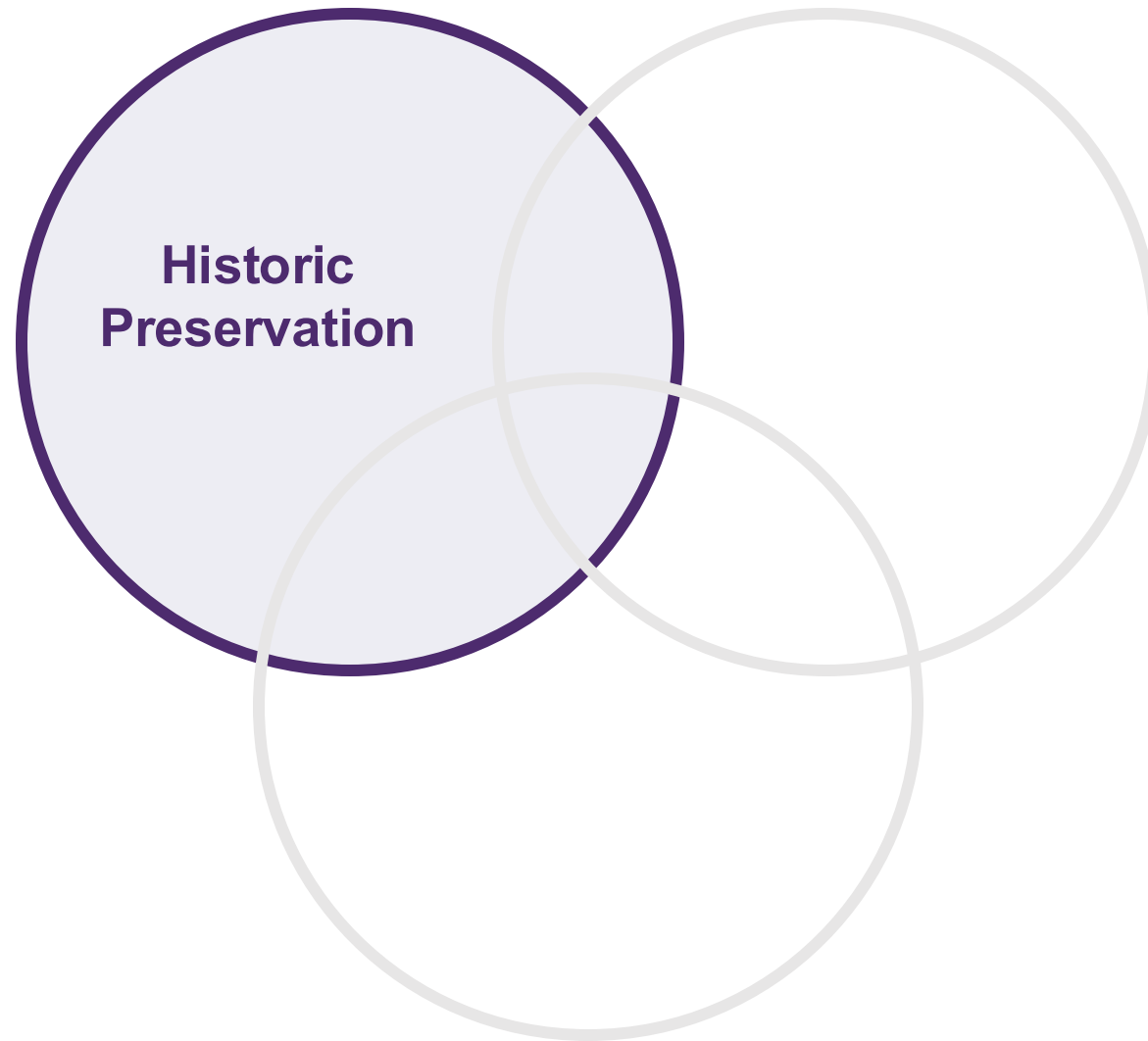
DECISION-MAKING

Considerations and Prioritization Framework

- Legacy
- Operations
- Streetcar Riders



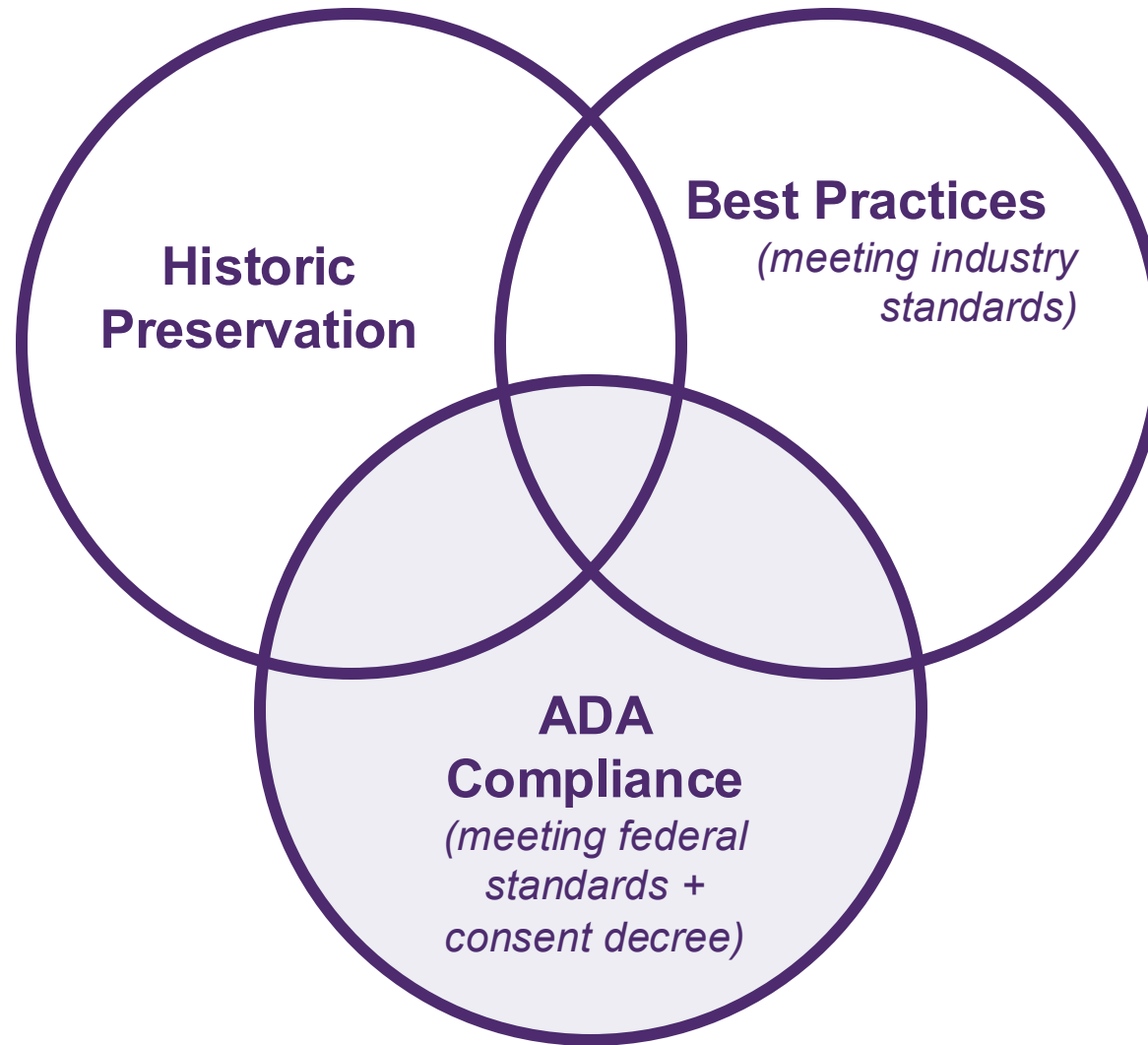
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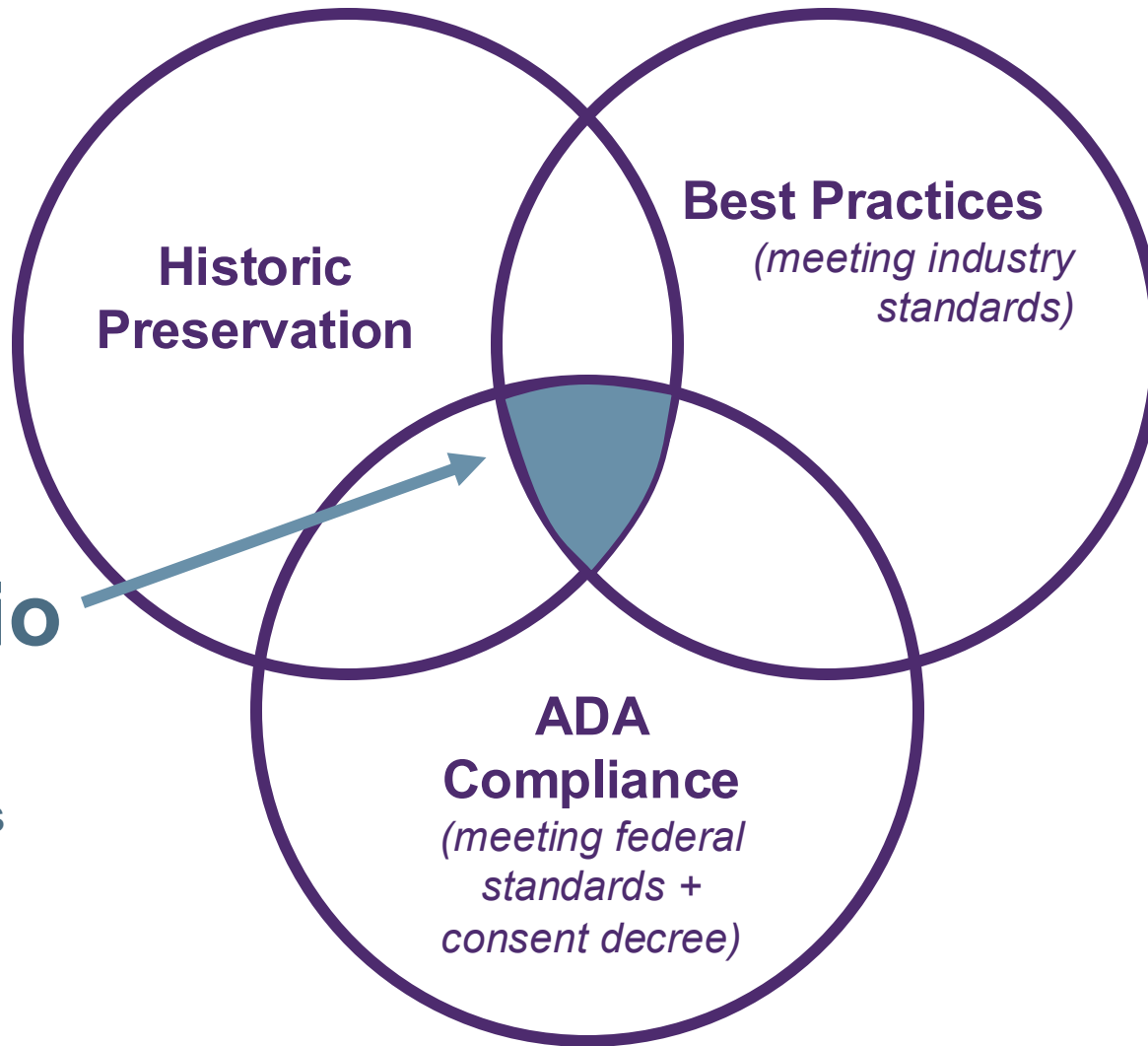
Considerations and Prioritization Framework



Considerations and Prioritization Framework



Considerations and Prioritization Framework



Ideal Scenario

The Challenge

Balancing fiscal conditions and competing priorities with historic preservation

An Informed Decision

Driven by expertise and public input

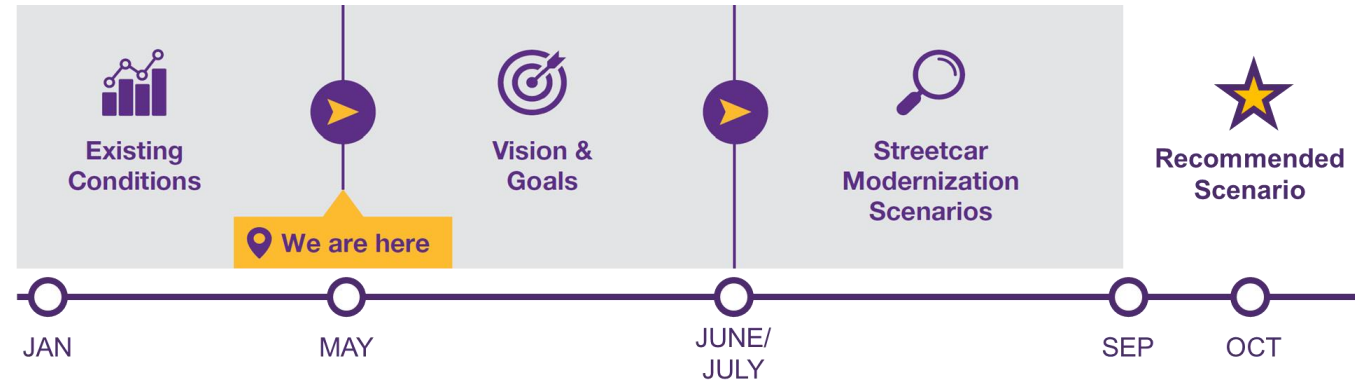


OUR NEXT STEPS

PUBLIC OUTREACH

May – June

- Key Stakeholder Outreach
 - PAC meetings
 - RTA Board of Directors
 - RTA staff + unions
 - Partner briefings
- Collaborate with you to host pop-up events/presentations



July & September

- Public meetings (*tentative, pending scenario progress*)

QUESTIONS / COMMENTS

THANK YOU!