



2817 Canal Street  
New Orleans, LA 70119

## **New Orleans Regional Transit Authority Operations & Administration Committee**

### **Meeting Minutes**

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**Thursday, March 10, 2022**

**9:00 AM**

**Virtual**

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The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority's Board of Commissioners hereby certifies that it will convene a meeting on Thursday, March 10, 2022 electronically via Zoom in accordance with the provisions of La. R.S. 42:17.1(A)(2)(a)-(c).

#### **1. Call To Order**

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 am.

#### **2. Roll Call**

#### **3. Consideration of Meeting Minutes**

[Operations and Administration Committee Meeting Minutes from  
February 10, 2022]

[22-054](#)

adopted

#### **4. Committee Chairman's Report**

Commissioner Neal thanked everyone for joining and pointed out the full agenda.

#### **5. Chief Executive Officer's Report**

Alex Wiggins reported that the impact of COVID considerably decreased with fewer than 20 employees affected.

Mr. Wiggins reported the TSA mask mandate may be lifted on March 18, 2022, and that if that turns out to be the case, employees would be allowed to take precautions with which they feel comfortable.

Regarding the Ukraine/Russia situation, Mr. Wiggins reported that one current and one retired employee each successfully transported a relative from the Ukraine to Poland. Mr. Wiggins reported the conflict has driven up fuel costs nationwide, the current price of Diesel impacted the operating budget, but the agency is able to absorb the increased costs short-term.

Ridership may increase as the public considers public transit, and the agency will make every effort possible to maintain operations and provide maximum mobility.

Commissioner Neal asked Mr. Wiggins if federal funding could be utilized for increased fuel costs, to which Mr. Wiggins replied that RTA has budgeted accordingly for such unforeseen circumstances -- short term. To Commissioner Neal's point regarding the need for equitable transit, Mr. Wiggins underscored RTA's commitment to provide transportation if fuel costs become a constraint for the public.

Commissioner Tillery asked if RTA could accommodate increased ridership, to which Alex Wiggins replied that the agency could indeed accommodate, given the New Links implementation and ridership numbers that remain below pre-COVID-19 numbers.

## **6. Chief Operations Officer's Monthly Status Report**

Gerard Guter presented the Chief Operations Officer's report for January 2022.

Mr. Guter reported 495K Total Monthly Ridership: System Wide for January 2022, and attributed the decrease from 610K for December 2021 to winter weather and the holidays.

Regarding On-time Performance (Fixed Route), Mr. Guter reported a positive increase for January 2022 for Bus and Streetcar service lines from December 2021. Construction on the commercial loop was completed the first week of March 2022, and both streetcar lines are now fully operational.

Regarding On-time Performance (Paratransit), Mr. Guter reported the agency exceeded the goal for January 2022.

Regarding Boardings per Revenue Hour (Bus), Mr. Guter reported an increase from December 2021 for January 2022 despite the ridership decrease.

Regarding Boardings per Revenue Hour (Streetcar), Trips Completed (Paratransit), and Total Passengers (Paratransit), Mr. Guter reported a decrease from December 2021, for January 2022.

Regarding Preventable Accidents, Mr. Guter reported Bus and Paratransit exceeded the goal for January 2022. Right-hand accidents continue to be a challenge for busses and will be addressed in first quarter safety training. Left-hand accidents continue to be a challenge for the St. Charles Streetcar given the number of intersections.

Regarding Road Calls per 100,000 miles, Mr. Guter reported the Streetcar and Paratransit goals were exceeded for January 2022. The Bus goal was narrowly missed due to an aging Bus fleet.

Mr. Guter reviewed the January 2022 results for Rideline and Paratransit Customer Service.

The Ferry Operations report followed the Chief Operations Officer's report per Commissioner Neal's request.

## 7. New Links Update

Dwight Norton provided an update regarding the New Links implementation, touched upon the timeline, budget, organization of implementation, network review, scheduling, communications, and advised the update will be provided until September 2022.

Mr. Norton reported that formal Title VI work continues to progress to ensure regulatory requirements are met and that the network redesign does not have a disparate impact. The team has been conducting a network review, is working on scheduling the series of changes, building out the infrastructure necessary to roll out said changes, establishing a communications strategy, and scheduling safety training that will carry the team through operational execution.

Mr. Norton reported a few changes to the initial budget, including sign blade replacement, annunciator recording, clever devices, printed outreach and training materials. Mr. Norton reported a total budget of \$892,860 for one-time implementation costs, including \$116,460 in contingency funds, summarized sources for the funds, and reported the project remains under budget.

Mr. Norton explained Network Review components, and underscored their importance as a framework to evaluate budget impact, operational feasibility of newly-planned routes, and to ensure access to jobs and services.

Regarding the New Links Plan - Algiers Network, Mr. Norton reported a request for RTA to not extend service into Gretna via Route 103, to which Mr. Wiggins added that he is working with the Mayor on this.

Regarding the finalized Algiers Plan, Mr. Norton reported the extension of branching lines 114, 114-A, and 105 to address access issues; adjustments to Operations to utilize safer roads for more consistent routing; and an investment in additional busses that will be offset with savings.

To Commissioner Neal's point regarding the need to address reduced headway, Mr. Norton confirmed that the more equitable allocation of funds/resources was taken into account when resolving the issue of headway.

Regarding Communications, Mr. Norton reported the Rider Survey Results indicated most users find out about permanent changes via the GoMobile app and word of mouth, and would prefer permanent changes be communicated via Text Message alerts and physical media. Only a quarter of those surveyed were aware of the bus route redesign, indicating the need to reintroduce upcoming changes particularly regarding transfers.

Commissioner Neal asked that the New Links update be forwarded to the Commissioners and that Dwight Norton schedule conversations with other transit agencies that have successfully implemented route redesign.

Commissioner Bryan asked if New Link updates will be relayed monthly at the Operations and Administration Committee meetings in addition to the RTA website. Mr. Norton confirmed and clarified the website would be updated in April 2022 to include easily digestible content for the public.

Resolutions for Consideration followed the New Links Update.

## 8. Ferry Operations Report

Jose Ruiz-Garcia reported that completed trips exceeded the goal in January 2022, for both services, missed trips were minimal, and over half of which were related to fog delays.

Mr. Ruiz-Garcia reported a decrease in Ridership for January 2022, most notably for the Canal Street Ferry. The reduced Ridership was reflected in the number of Passengers per Trip.

Regarding the RTA II vessel, Mr. Ruiz-Garcia reported that repairs were slightly ahead of schedule, and the vessel could return to service as early as mid-April 2022.

## 9. Public Safety Report

Robert Hickman reported that no Felonies took place in February 2022; and that Misdemeanors had considerably decreased compared to February 2021.

Mr. Hickman reported that 260 Boarding Inspections took place in February 2022 during the 10 days of Mardi Gras.

Mr. Hickman reported that one occurrence of contact with a Homeless person was referred to RTA's Crisis Intervention Coordinator Dominique Stuart in February 2022. Alex Wiggins underscored the challenge of homelessness across the nation and assured Commissioners that Ms. Stuart is working closely with social service providers to address underlying issues.

The New Links Implementation Update followed.

## 10. Resolutions for Consideration:

RTA Work Policies New and Amended

[22-045](#)

Commissioner Neal requested that Darwyn Anderson review the RTA Work Policies -- New and Amended during the March 22, 2022 Board of Commissioners meeting, to which Mr. Anderson agreed.  
referred to Consent Agenda

Enactment No: 22-017

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Amendments to Fixed Route Service Standards

[22-049](#)

Commissioner Neal asked if the amendments applied to Paratransit, to which Vivek Shah replied that the proposed amendments only apply to Fixed Route Service Standards.

Given the current average On-time Performance (OTP) goal of 85%, Commissioner Neal asked when the change to 90% would become effective. Mr Wiggins replied that based on industry standards, the Board of Commissioners established 90% as the goal for 2022, across service lines at the January Board Retreat, and that documents would be updated to reflect the revised standard of 90%. Commissioner Neal asked that it be expressly stated when the baseline goes into effect at the next meeting.

To Commissioner Neal's point, Mr. Wiggins stated that the five agency priorities would be incorporated in the April Operations and Administration Committee meeting.

Commissioner Bryan asked at what point after the entire Board of Commissioners has approved would the changes be implemented, to which Vivek Shah replied the changes would be applied to February 2022 reporting and reviewed at the April Operations and Administration Committee Meeting.

referred to Consent Agenda

Enactment No: 22-019

Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) Between the City of  
Kenner and the Regional Transit Authority (RTA)

[22-053](#)

Commissioner Bryan asked if the agreement was a standard agreement that RTA renews annually. Yolanda Rodriguez confirmed.

Commissioner Bryan asked if the same practice outlined therein would apply to Orleans Parish or the City of New Orleans, to which Mr. Wiggins replied that CEAs are in place with the City of New Orleans, as well as with the City of Kenner.

referred to Consent Agenda

Enactment No: 22-020

## 11. New Business

None.

## 12. Audience Questions & Comments

Jim Goodwin was called to speak.

Commissioner Neal answered one of Mr. Goodwin's questions, and Mr. Wiggins answered

four.

Mr. Goodwin asked if RTA is looking at the mask mandate. The TSA mask mandate dictates RTA's policy, and currently the TSA mask mandate remains in place.

### **13. Adjournment**

adjourned