

RTA staff are proposing the following text amendments to the agency's Fixed Route Service Standards policy.

Proposed to the RTA Board of Commissions Operations Committee March 10, 2022 for consideration and recommendation to the full Board.

The following text, "Access Metrics," will be added to Section 2.2 *Evaluating and Managing System Performance* (p. 9-13)

### **Access Metrics**

The effectiveness of a transit system is based, in part, on whether or not community members can access key destinations within a reasonable time frame. The RTA's 20-year Strategic Mobility Plan (adopted 2018) outlines several key destination categories for which transit access is to be measured. Transit access is a system-wide metric that measures the overall effectiveness of the networks ability to get people to and from destinations.

Transit access is defined as the ability to reach a particular destination type within a specified amount of time. The specified travel time is an average travel time based on scheduled service and includes estimated walk times to and from transit stops. Expected wait time between transfers is also included in travel time.

The following access metrics will be tracked on a quarterly basis:

- Percentage of jobs in Orleans and Jefferson parishes that the average household within RTA's service area can reach within 60 minutes by transit during peak and off-peak hours.
- Percentage of households in the service area within 60 minutes by transit of a major healthcare facility during typical office hours.
- Percentage of households in the service area within 30 minutes by transit of a community health center during typical office hours.
- Percentage of households in the service area within 30 minutes by transit of a major park or recreational facility during typical hours.
- Percentage of households in the service area within 30 minutes by transit of a public library during typical hours.
- Percentage of the service area population within one-half mile walking distance of a High-Capacity Transit (HCT) line.
- Percentage of regional jobs within one-half mile of frequent transit coming every 20 minutes or less.

- Percentage of household without access to a car within one-half mile of frequent transit coming every 20 minutes or less.
- Percentage of residents of color within one-half mile of frequent transit coming every 20 minutes or less.
- Percentage of residents in poverty within one-half mile of frequent transit coming every 20 minutes or less.

The following draft text, "Schedule Reliability," will replace the existing sections of the Service Standards: 2.2.4 *Schedule Reliability* and 2.2.5 *Trip Completion* (p. 11-12).

## **Schedule Reliability**

Passengers use published bus, streetcar, and ferry schedules to plan their trips on the RTA's fixed-route system. An important measure of the service quality and effectiveness is Schedule Reliability, or how well the service that is delivered matches the agency's published schedules. When vehicles are regularly early, late, or don't show up, passengers experience disruptions, which can range from a minor inconvenience to a total failure of the system to meet their needs. The two metrics the RTA uses to measure Schedule Reliability are On-Time Performance and the Percentage of Scheduled Revenue Service Delivered.

### On-Time Performance:

The RTA measures On-Time Performance (OTP) to track how well vehicles are adhering to the published schedules. Every route in the system has at least two designated "timepoints," at which OTP is measured, and which are published in customer-facing schedule and timetable materials. Each scheduled vehicle encounter with a timepoint is marked as on-time, early, or late, based on a comparison of the scheduled versus actual passing time. OTP is expressed as the percentage of timepoints that are hit on time.

To account for routine variation in traffic and passenger volumes while also striving for short wait times for passengers, there is a window of acceptable deviation from the scheduled time in which a timepoint encounter will still be counted as on-time. This range of acceptable deviation is called the "On Time Window," and is defined as follows:

**On time window:** A vehicle is on time if it passes a timepoint no sooner than one (1) minute before and no more than seven (7) minutes after the scheduled time.

There will always be factors outside of the RTA's control that cause larger deviations from the schedule. These include but are not limited to: police activity, road work, parades and sporting events, extreme weather, non-preventable accidents, unruly passengers, and other unexpected events causing severe traffic congestion. Taking into account the uncertainty and variability in conditions surrounding day-to-day operations, the agency has established targets for On-Time Performance for each mode that set a high standard for service, are operationally achievable, and are in line with industry standards. These are as follows:

Bus OTP Target: 85%

Streetcar OTP Target: 85%

In pursuit of these targets, the service standards establish thresholds to identify routes with chronic schedule adherence problems. If a route that is being operated normally (no major detours) regularly exceeds the thresholds, that route may be examined for investment or adjustment at the next schedule change. The RTA allows for a higher lateness threshold during peak hours to account for increased passenger demand and higher levels of roadway congestion experienced during these time periods.

| Time Period                | Lateness Threshold | Earliness Threshold |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Weekday average, off-peak  | > 15%              | > 5%                |
| Weekday AM/PM peak average | > 25%              | > 5%                |
| Weekend average            | > 15%              | > 5%                |

To account for the seasonal variability of ridership demand and roadway congestion, a route must exceed the lateness thresholds for two consecutive months to be considered a candidate for action. If identified as a candidate for action, the following actions will be considered first:

- Adjustment of schedules / running times
- Adjustment of routing
- Investment in speed and reliability improvements.

Additional actions may be considered based on an assessment of the route in question. The RTA will work with partner agencies to address external factors affecting reliability, such as construction delays and roadway design.

Revenue Service Delivered and Trip Completion

In addition to OTP, the RTA tracks vehicle revenue hours that were delivered (Actual Vehicle Revenue Hours) compared to the revenue hours that were scheduled for a given period, and reports the number as a percentage of scheduled revenue service delivered. While OTP measures whether a vehicle is early or late, it does not reveal when a vehicle is cut from service or does not show up at all. Therefore, the measurement of Actual Vehicle Revenue Hours supplements OTP as an indicator of schedule reliability by describing the actual service levels that were delivered compared to what was expected. This measurement is also intended to help identify persistent issues that may be preventing the delivery of service on a given route.

Trip Completion measures the percentage of scheduled trips that are completed and is used to assess the reliability of ferry services. Trip Completion not currently measured for bus and streetcar service.