**RTA**

2817 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70119

# New Orleans Regional Transit Authority
## Board of Commissioners
## Meeting Agenda - Final

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Friday, October 10, 2025** | **10:00 AM** | **RTA Board Room** |

### SPECIAL POST-RETREAT MEETING

The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) hereby declares that, in accordance with La. R.S. 42:17.1 (A)(2)(a)-(c), a meeting will be held in person on Friday, October 10 at 10:00 a.m.  Meetings start at the scheduled time, but may be delayed until a quorum of the Commissioners is present. The agency's website will stream the in-person meeting live, and wearing masks in the boardroom is optional.

Written comments on any matter included on the agenda will be accepted in the following ways: 1) Submission of a Speaker Card on meeting day; 2) Electronically by email sent to: rtaboard@rtaforward.org prior to the meeting; or 3) By U.S. Mail send to 2817 Canal Street, Attention: Office of Board Affairs, New Orleans, LA 70119.

This meeting is accessible to persons with disabilities. To help assure availability, modifications or accommodations linked to a disability must be requested 72 hours before the meeting or hearing. Please direct requests for public meeting accommodations to the Office of Board Affairs, 2817 Canal Street, NOLA 70119, or call 504-827-8341 or by email (rtaboard@rtaforward.org).

**1. Call to Order**

**2. Roll Call**

**3. Chair's Welcome**

**4. Recognition of Guests and Public Comments**

**5. An Overview of the Governance Retreat held by the Board**

　　[RTA Board of Commissioners Post-Retreat Report]　　　　　　　　**25-138**

**6. Discussion of Board's 2026 Work Plan**

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## 7. Next Steps and Adjournment

**File #:** 25-138     **Special Board of Commissioners**

[RTA Board of Commissioners Post-Retreat Report]

# NEW ORLEANS RTA ANNUAL RETREAT POST-RETREAT REPORT

Building a Governance Roadmap for a World-Class Transit Future for the Regional Transit Authority

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional Transit Authority (RTA) serves as the lifeblood of Greater New Orleans: a multifaceted public mobility network that connects residents and visitors through bus, streetcar, paratransit, and ferry services. As a critical driver of economic opportunity, social equity, and environmental sustainability, RTA's mission extends beyond simply moving people—it is about forging seamless connections between communities, local employers, and neighboring parishes.

**IN APRIL 2025, RTA PARTNERED WITH JD RUSSELL CONSULTING/MAROON TO** convene its annual Board of Commissioners retreat, with the goal of assessing governance strengths, aligning organizational resources, and charting a path toward a world-class transit system that is reliable, innovative, equitable, and regionally integrated. This report distills retreat insights and best practices into a clear action roadmap for the Board's next phase of leadership.

The New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) convened its annual board retreat on April 11, 2025, to align on strategic priorities, strengthen governance, and translate Commissioners' visions into actionable plans. Together, these recommendations align the Board's responsibilities with the agency's five priorities— **World-Class Rider Experience, Innovation, Equity, Workforce Development, and Regional Connection**—and establish a date-certain action plan to deliver measurable results. Grounded in the 2023 end of year retreat findings, Commissioners' one-on-one interview insights, and best practices from American Public Transportation Association (APTA), Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP), and leading global transit systems, this report presents:

- **A Strategic Governance Framework** that ties RTA's five vision-driven pillars to APTA board focus areas and embeds best-practice enablers.

- **Commissioner-Specific Implementation Plans** leveraging individual expertise and visionary goals.

- **Committee-Level Recommendations** distinguishing enhancements for standing committees and proposing new committees.

- **Next Steps & Governance Action Plan** with detailed context, deliverables, timelines, and owners.

This report, its finding, and its recommendations should inform the RTA's future strategic plans in terms of focusing on current inequities and direct prioritization of initiatives at the agency. This robust framework and action plan equip the RTA Board to secure funding, drive equity and innovation, and deliver a world-class transit system. The Board of Commissioners will receive the report's findings, internalize them, and determine what the next steps are to actively integrate an equity lens into the work of the RTA.
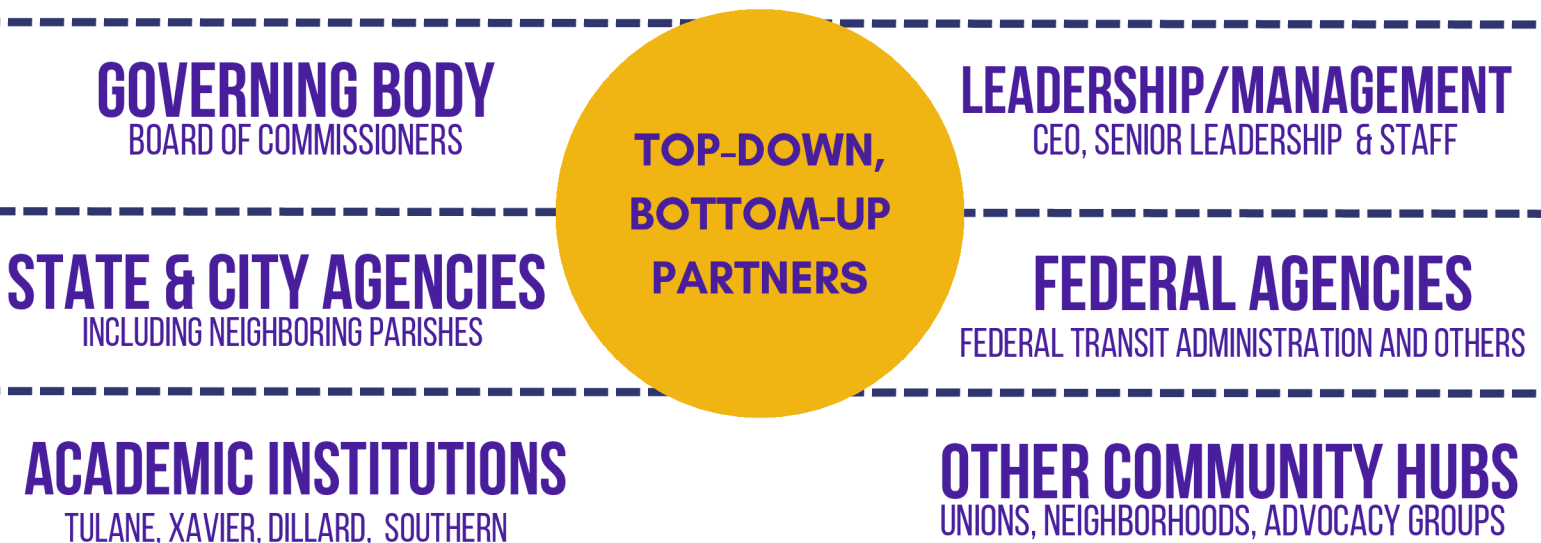
## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK PILLARS

**World-Class Rider Experience**

**Innovation**

**Equity**

**Workforce Development**

**Regional Connectivity**

### COMMITMENT
Consistent and persistent commitment to a top-down, bottom-up approach to continuous improvement

### TRANSPARENCY
A Board-led KPI Scorecard that will be exception-driven oversight tool the Board reviews each meeting to assess progress and accountability.

**4 CRITICAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

### STRUCTURE
Maintains an inventory of Commissioner expertise and identifies gaps for strategic recruitment.

### ALIGNMENT
Ensure Committee charges explicitly link responsibilities to vision and establish a biennial review cycle of all committees and workstreams.

## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK PARTNERS

### GOVERNING BODY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**TOP-DOWN, BOTTOM-UP PARTNERS**

### LEADERSHIP/MANAGEMENT
CEO, SENIOR LEADERSHIP & STAFF

### STATE & CITY AGENCIES
INCLUDING NEIGHBORING PARISHES

### FEDERAL AGENCIES
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION AND OTHERS

### ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS
TULANE, XAVIER, DILLARD, SOUTHERN

### OTHER COMMUNITY HUBS
UNIONS, NEIGHBORHOODS, ADVOCACY GROUPS

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK PRIORITIES

## VISION-DRIVEN PILLARS & ALIGNMENT WITH BEST PRACTICES

To translate Commissioners' "world-class" aspirations into concrete **governance priorities**, we map the RTA's five strategic pillars against the APTA's recommended areas of board focus. This ensures that RTA's highest-level oversight work mirrors industry best practices and positions the Authority to capture emerging funding, regulatory, and technology opportunities. The table below crosswalks RTA's priorities to industry-standard board roles recommended by APTA.

| Vision Pillar | APTA Board Focus Area | Rationale for Alignment |
|---|---|---|
| 1. World-Class Rider Experience | **Performance Oversight & Accountability** APTA urges boards to adopt clear performance metrics, review quarterly scorecards, and hold management accountable for service targets and safety benchmarks. | As federal infrastructure funding ramps up under Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) standards evolve, RTA must demonstrate tangible service improvements to unlock grants and build rider confidence. |
| 2. Innovation | **Technological Innovation & Standards** APTA's Standards Development Program calls on boards to champion the adoption of emerging technologies—from contactless fare systems to predictive maintenance. | In an era of micro-mobility, real-time passenger information is table stakes. Strong board support accelerates pilot programs and ensures interoperability. |
| 3. Equity | **Stakeholder Engagement & Advocacy** APTA recommends active board participation in public hearings, equity assessments, and legislative outreach to ensure underserved communities are heard. | Post-pandemic recovery has been uneven. The Board must lead on targeted paratransit agreements, community focus groups, and federal Title VI reporting to secure environmental justice (EJ) - focused grants. The Board must do this through advocacy, legislation, and setting public policy priorities. |
| 4. Workforce Development | **Financial Oversight & Funding Diversification** APTA encourages boards to monitor multi-year financial plans, explore innovative funding (e.g., public-private partnerships, "pay-for-success" models), and ensure audit comp. | With ridership still 15-20 percent below pre-COVID levels, RTA must strengthen balance sheets, diversify revenue, and transparently report to stakeholders to maintain local support. |
| 5. Regional Connection | **Intergovernmental Relations & Strategic Alliances** APTA urges board members to cultivate federal/state relationships and formalize MOUs with neighboring agencies to enable seamless, cross-jurisdictional service. | As South Louisiana's economic footprint expands, a truly regional transit network is critical. Board-led partnerships unlock FTA Section 5304 planning funds and drive integrated fare policies. |

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK PRIORITIES

## BEST-PRACTICE ENABLERS & THEIR CRITICAL IMPORTANCE FOR RTA

To translate strategic priorities into sustained governance excellence, the Board should institutionalize three (3) "**best-practice enablers**". Each is grounded in recognized nonprofit and transit-sector governance standards — and is essential for RTA as it navigates post-pandemic ridership recovery, competitive IIJA grant cycles, and demands for equity and transparency.

### Best Practice #1: Dynamic Skills Matrix & Proactive Succession Planning

A formal skills matrix catalogs each Commissioner's expertise—finance, legal, equity, technology, etc.—and highlights gaps against the Board's evolving strategic needs. Coupled with an annual succession plan, this tool ensures:

- **Continuity of Expertise**: Planned transitions avoid critical knowledge loss (e.g., if a long-serving finance expert's term expires mid-grant application). A succession plan should also acknowledge unplanned loss of expertise.
- **Strategic Recruitment**: Enables targeted outreach to fill emerging needs (e.g., marketing/PR or data science) rather than reactive, last-minute appointments.
- **Workforce Excellence & Inclusive Practices**: Embeds demographic and access goals directly into Board composition discussions.

This matrix would be a non-binding advisory tool to appointing authorities (i.e Governor, Mayor, Council). In addition to the matrix, include a capabilities brief to share with appointing authorities and a standing briefing cadence before each anticipated vacancy. The Board should consider a resolution encouraging use of the matric and ancillary tools during appointments.

*Why RTA Needs It Now*: With federal grant competitions under the IIJA demanding demonstrable governance capacity, a skills matrix signals to FTA reviewers that RTA has both the right expertise and the bench strength to deliver complex capital programs.

### Best Practice #2: Committee Workstreams

RTA using time-bound workstreams/ad hoc task groups chaired by the Executive Committee (EC) and the Operations Committee (OC). The best practice to consider for each workstream is to operate from a one-page scope (purpose, deliverables, decision rights, timeline) and report up through its reporting committee. The near-term deliverables for the Board to consider are the following:

- **Outcome Mapping**: Revising each charter to explicitly link its responsibilities to one or more vision pillars, annual work plans, and KPIs.

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK PRIORITIES

## BEST-PRACTICE ENABLERS & THEIR CRITICAL IMPORTANCE FOR RTA

- **Clear scope & authority:** For each workstream, define decision rights, escalation paths (CEO ⇄ Committee ⇄ Board), and due dates to prevent micromanagement and delays.

- **Quarterly review:** EC reviews progress quarterly and may extend or sunset workstreams based on outcomes.

*Why RTA Needs It Now*: It delivers the benefits of crisp mandates and measurable outcomes without increasing committee count, reducing mission creep and accelerating Board-level decision-making—key to securing and deploying discretionary funding.

Best Practice #3: **Board KPI Scorecard for Board Consumption**
A Board–led KPI Scorecard serves accountable for results by giving the Board a clear and repeatable oversight lens. The KPI Scorecard will be a one-page, exception-driven oversight tool the Board reviews each meeting to assess progress and accountability. Examples of KPI domains are:

- **Reliability**: *Examples*: Systemwide On-Time Performance (OTP).
- **Safety**: *Examples*: Preventable incidents, collisions with injury, etc.
- **Customer Experience**: *Examples:* Complaints per 100k boardings, real-time info uptime.
- **Equity & Access**: *Examples*: Paratransit OTP & missed trips, Title VI disparate-impact checks.
- **Financial Stewardship:** *Examples:* Operating budget variance %, capital projects on-time/on-budget %, fare revenue trend.
- **Service Delivery:** *Examples*: Operator availability/vacancy rate.

*Why RTA Needs It Now:* Post-pandemic recovery and competitive funding demand transparency. A Board KPI Scorecard provides a disciplined, lightweight mechanism to monitor results and hold the CEO accountable—without creating new committees or operational burden for the Board. This approach aligns with APTA/TCRP governance guidance: management executes; the Board sets policy, approves targets, and reviews results. It strengthens credibility, supports funding pursuits, and keeps attention on the RTA's 5 pillars.

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## On Transparency...

"We have to allow the public to see our progress or lack thereof. We need to communicate and broadcast what's happening and I'm thinking of some type of dashboard."

– Commissioner Colin

# COMMISSIONER-SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

The recommendations set forth in this section are informed by each Commissioner's professional background — as detailed in their bios — and the visionary goals and subject-matter expertise they articulated during our one-on-one interviews. These suggested roles and actions are advisory in nature and intended to leverage individual strengths for the collective advancement of RTA's strategic priorities.

| Commissioner | Core Expertise | Vision Highlights | Proposed Board Role & Actions |
|---|---|---|---|
| Louis Colin, Sr. | Operations, Management & Public Safety | "Convenient, reliable, safe…bus stops near homes, modern fleet, extend network regionally… leverage law enforcement & private sector partnerships for event transit and veterans' services." | Lead Board effort to advocate for CPA & PR experts; champion data-driven scorecards; co-chair Partnership Working Group for veteran, employer shuttles. |
| Flozell Daniels | Equity & Philanthropic Strategy | "Well-funded, talented, politically disciplined…with on-time performance requiring more buses, drivers, money." | Drive paratransit equity CEA implementation; secure grants for workforce development; monitor funding streams. |
| Mitchell Guidry | Data Analysis & Network Redesign | "Scaling fleet back to pre-Katrina, network redesign lessons…maximize coverage with constrained assets." | Oversee Network Performance Review; update fleet replacement plan; pilot dynamic routing in under-served corridors. |
| Moriah Moore | Equity Advocacy & Policy Development | "Fast, efficient, welcoming… capital improvements, fleet updates, staff retention, employee equity oversight." | Launch Employee Advisory Panel (CEO-led) to formalize a policy-development feedback loop so that Board decisions are informed by the lived experience of front-line; incorporate rider-employee feedback into quarterly board reviews; track operator training. |
| Fred Neal | Urban Planning & Community Engagement | "Truly regional system centered on New Orleans; diverse workforce; BRT & transfer center; equitable ferry investment." | Lead regional expansion taskforce; coordinate with neighboring parishes; oversee BRT completion and ferry equity projects. |
| Timolynn Sams | Community Engagement & Crisis Leadership | "Community-centred planning; inclusive crisis response; people-first investment." | Design quarterly focus groups with neighborhoods in collaboration with engagement staff; embed social mapping in planning; author "*Listening Report*" for each board cycle. |
| Art Walton | Intergovernmental Affairs & Legal Oversight | "Move people efficiently and on time; transparent oversight; sufficient fleet inventory." | Oversee lobbying strategy for federal funding; spearhead regulatory compliance reviews; ensure clear meeting Q&A for public transparency. |

# COMMITTEE-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Given capacity and quorum constraints, the Board will strengthen existing standing committees—not create new ones. Each committee will manage a few clearly scoped work streams with one-page scopes and an annual work plan tied to Board priorities. Oversight will use a concise KPI scorecard and exception log, keeping execution with management while the Board stays focused on policy, accountability, equity, and outcomes.

## STRENGTHENING EXISTING COMMITTEES

**Executive Committee**
- **Clarify decision thresholds**: delineate which matters require full-board votes versus committee sign-off.
- **Governance Scorecard Oversight**: review a quarterly dashboard aligned to strategic pillars and IIJA metrics.
- **Annual Governance Workshop**: will cover written annual work plan, consensus-building protocols among Commissioners, structured engagement with the local delegation, fiduciary duties, equity lens tools, and federal grant management.
- **Equity Impact Statements**: require for all major policies and capital investments.
- **Regular Focus Groups**: institutionalize bi-monthly listening sessions across diverse neighborhoods and rider segments.

**Finance Committee**
- **Develop a Work Plan**: include review of budgets, funding, diversification options permitted by law, transparent audit summaries, a cash-reserves policy and an investment policy.
- **Transparent Audit Summaries**: include audit findings with corrective action plans in meeting materials and on the public dashboard.

**Operations & Administration Committee**
- **Reliability KPI Targets**: set committee-specific goals (e.g., 90% OTP by Q4 2026) and maintain monthly performance reviews that include KPI targets/metrics that speak to monthly organizational performance and fleet availability, major service change reviews, policy development, annual strategic plan alignment, methodology for fixed-route/paratransit, comms disruption plan, and monitoring mitigations after service changes.

# NEXT STEPS & GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN

To translate recommendations into action, the steps below includes context, deliverables, timelines, and the responsible party that the Board should consider as the develop their action plan for the Board. Progress against the action plan should be reviewed periodically, as established by the Board. To avoid crossing into operations, each item below specifies the Board's role (policy/oversight) and Management's role (execution). Work is organized into five work streams and managed through the existing Executive (EC), Finance (FC), and Operations (OC) Committees. Cadence for reporting is set by the Board; management delivers the work. Again, these are sample next steps that the Board should further develop.

*Owners Legend: Board/Committee = Policy & Oversight • CEO/Management = Execution • BAO = Board Affairs Office Support*

**A. Internal Improvements & Oversight Work**

- **Action 1**: Finalize Board Skills Matrix and recruitment "*Capabilities Brief*".
    - ***Board/Committee***: *Approve content and intended use with appointing authorities.*
    - ***CEO/Management***: *Provide background data as requested.*
    - **BAO:** *Administer collection and packaging.*
    - Timeline: **TBD**

- **Action 2**: Board KPI Set and Reporting Cadence.
    - **Board/Committee**: Approve KPI list, definitions, thresholds, and review cadence.
    - **CEO/Management**: Produce monthly scorecard and exception/corrective-action log.
    - Timeline: **TBD** (soft launch), continuous enhancements thereafter

- **Action 3**: Develop a Board Self-Performance Evaluation process and annual effectiveness matrix.
    - ***Board/Committee***: *Approve tool; participate; review results and set improvements.*
    - ***BAO***: *Facilitate survey and compile results.*
    - Timeline: **TBD**

- **Action 4**: Publish a Board SOP (Operations Manual) covering meeting flow, consent agenda, materials cadence, escalation paths.
    - ***Board/Committee***: *Approve structure (meeting flow, escalation paths).*
    - ***BAO***: *Maintain and publish the SOP.*
    - Timeline: **TBD**

- **Standing Practices**:
    - Periodic Governance Scorecard review (EC → Board) •  Owner: EC
    - Board Self-Performance Evaluation (**TBD**) • Owner: Board and BAO
    - Board SOP (Operations Manual) (**TBD**) • Owner: Board and BAO

# NEXT STEPS & GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN

*Owners Legend: Board/Committee = Policy & Oversight • CEO/Management = Execution • BAO = Board Affairs Office Support*

**B. Advocacy & Community Engagement Work**

- **Action 1: Adopt an Advocacy/Legislative & Public Policy Priorities (aligned to agency-changing legislation).**
  - **Board/Committee:** *Adopt platform and annual priorities.*
  - **CEO/Management:** *Execute engagement with agencies/legislators; report outcomes.*
  - Timeline: **TBD**

- **Action 2: Establish a Community Listening Cadence (folded into existing committees; no new committee required):** quarterly neighborhood/rider touch points with aggregated insights to Board.
  - **Board/Committee:** *Define what insights are required and how they inform policy.*
  - **CEO/Management:** *Conduct outreach; provide aggregated findings to the Board.*
  - Timeline: Begin **TBD**; ongoing

- **Action 3: Public Performance Reporting Standards.**
  - *Board/Committee: Set expectations for what performance information is publicly reported and how often.*
  - *CEO/Management: Implement communications consistent with the standard.*
  - *Timeline:* **TBD**

**C. Policy & Planning Work**

- **Action 1**: Update Bylaws to: (1) require written Committee Charters; (2) require annual Committee Work Plans with KPIs.
  - **Board/Committee**: *Approve amendments requiring written charters and annual work plans with KPIs.*
  - **BAO:** *Draft and maintain documents once adopted.*
  - Timeline: **TBD**

- **Action 2**: Review/adopt updated Procurement Policy.
  - **Board/Committee (FC)**: *Approve policy updates.*
  - **CEO/Management**: *Implement; provide compliance reporting.*
  - Timeline: **TBD**

# NEXT STEPS & GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN

**D. Operations Work**

- Development of `Innovation & Technology Workstream and its charge.
- Development of Safety & Major Events Workstream and its charge.

**E. Financial Work**

- **Action 1**: Transparent Audit Summaries with corrective-action tracker in Board packets and online.
    - **Board/Committee**: Review summaries and monitor closure of findings.
    - **CEO/Management**: Deliver summaries and maintain the tracker.
    - Each audit cycle; first summary **TBD**

- **Action 3**: Approve Cash Reserves Policy and Investment Policy (consistent with state constraints).
    - **Board/Committee**: Approve policies consistent with state constraints.
    - **CEO/Management**: Implement and report compliance.
    - Timeline: **TBD**

- **Action 4**: Funding Diversification Policy Parameter
    - **Board/Committee**: Set guardrails for allowable mechanisms (e.g., eligible federal/local/P3 within state law).
    - **CEO/Management**: Bring forward options and analyses within those parameters.
    - Timeline: **TBD**

## On Community...

"Relationship with Community is critical. You can't be in a relationship if you don't know that you are in a relationship! We need to be better partners — we, as board members, we need to have the experience of riding a bus and that makes us so much more of an advocate and that's about building capacity."

– Commissioner Sams

# CONCLUSION

This post-retreat report translates the Board's priorities—World-Class Rider Experience, Workforce Development, Equity, Innovation, and Regional Connection—into a pragmatic, capacity-aware governance roadmap. It clarifies roles and organizes the work into clearly scoped work streams that are managed by the existing standing committees. The report emphasizes measurable KPIs, owner accountability, and recurring review. Each work stream carries defined deliverables and a simple oversight mechanism so Commissioners can see performance and outcomes while avoiding operational micromanagement.

Recognizing current quorum and capacity constraints, the report defers any expansion of committees. Where specialization is warranted in the future, the Board can adopt best-practice enhancements—such as bylaws-required committee charters and annual committee work plans—once capacity allows. Taken together, these adjustments strengthen accountability, reinforce transparency, and keep attention on outcomes that matter most to riders and communities, positioning RTA to deliver a dependable, equitable, and innovative transit system for Greater New Orleans.

## On Progress and Vision...

"In addition to where we are going, we need to show where we have come!"

– Commissioner Daniels