

New Orleans New Links Transit System Optimized Redesign

New Orleans modernized their transit network through extensive community engagement and service optimization with existing resources to rebuild public trust.

City: New Orleans

Purpose: Respond to citizen resident needs to restructure the New Orleans transit system, prioritizing reliability and efficiency while keeping costs low and increasing connectivity for riders.

Lead Stakeholders: The Regional Planning Commission, Regional Route Providers/Agencies (RTA, JET, SBUR), New Orleans Office of Transportation, Community Advocates

Process: After a decade of contracted agency management post-Katrina, New Orleans RTA hired a new public leadership team and began a comprehensive operations analysis in 2019. Each transit route was assessed to develop a new service map that balanced coverage and ridership and variable funding scenarios. Informed by more than 3,000 pieces of public input and collaboration with local advocacy groups, the RTA board approved a service redesign in March 2021 and implemented the new network in September 2022.

Outcomes:

- New transit service simplified coverage, improved route efficiencies, and optimized performance and frequency while keeping cost neutral.
- 38% of residents and 60% of the jobs in New Orleans are within a half-mile of transit routes that come every 20 minutes or better, compared to 19% and 35% under the previous network.

