

New Links Messaging – Updated 2019.04.09

April 4, 2019

General Talking Points

What is New Links?

New Links is a yearlong project to study and propose a *network redesign* of public transportation on RTA, JeT, and SBURT lines. The project team will study how bus, streetcar, and ferry lines connect people to jobs, school, healthcare, entertainment, attractions, and other opportunities. A successful network redesign is a joint effort with the public and transit agencies to understand what riders and stakeholders need from public transportation. The project team will work with these entities to define the needs of the public while using the available resources to prioritize recommendations. At the end of the project, the New Links team will propose a redesigned transit network with specific changes designed to make public transportation work better for riders.

What is a Comprehensive Operations Analysis?

A Comprehensive Operations Assessment (COA) is a system-wide analysis of a transit network that includes a detailed, line-by-line assessment of every transit route in a system. The RPC last completed a COA of RTA and JeT service in May, 2012, which can be viewed [here](#).

What is a Network Redesign?

A network redesign is a transit planning process that begins by wiping the slate clean and starting from scratch. Working together, planners and the public can decide where, when, and how transit should serve a region. Many cities, including Houston, TX and Columbus, OH, have successfully grown ridership, improved frequency, and increased the reliability of transit service by reallocating existing resources.

Why is New Links being done?

Where people live and work - and how we travel - has changed over the last 10–20 years. As a result, transit services need to be updated to better serve the community. Our goal is to make transit more reliable, more frequent, and to get people where they need to go in less time. In 2017, RTA completed a Strategic Mobility Plan (SMP) to improve its transit services over the next 20 years. Additionally, JeT is wrapping up its Strategic Plan of transit improvements this year. **New Links** is the next, important step to achieve the strategic planning goals. **New Links** will engage the public to understand the priorities of riders and potential riders, and determine the impacts of any changes to the services.

How does New Links connect to previous planning efforts?

The Regional Transit Authority (RTA) adopted its Strategic Mobility Plan (SMP) in 2017. This Plan is a roadmap for improving public transportation in the region over the next 20 years. Future decision-making and investments made by RTA will be driven by this Plan.

New Links is a key step in implementing the RTA's 2017 Strategic Mobility Plan, which called for the completion of a "Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) with recommendations for a network redesign" by 2020. **New Links** is a major step in implementing many of the goals and action items identified by the RTA including scheduling adjustments, fare integration, higher-frequency service, and the implementation of regional and high-capacity transit (HCT) corridors.

Who is doing the New Links project?

The **New Links** project is a partnership between the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) and Regional Transit Authority (RTA), in collaboration with Jefferson Transit (JeT) and St. Bernard Urban Rapid Transit (SBURT). The City of New Orleans is supporting this effort.

When will this project take place?

New Links started early this year. It is a year-long project that will be completed in early 2020.

New Links will be conducted in three phases:

- **Phase 1:** Data collection and analysis (Spring – Summer 2019)
 - Phase 1 will collect and review rider data, transit service data, and public input.
- **Phase 2:** Evaluation and development of draft recommendations (Summer – Fall 2019)
 - The project team will use information gathered in Phase 1 to develop draft recommendations to ask the public for their opinions.
- **Phase 3:** Final recommendations and design (Fall – Winter 2019 – 2020)
 - During the final phase the project team will inform the public of the resulting recommendations.

How can I participate or learn more about New Links?

The **New Links** team will meet with riders, community groups, neighborhood organizations, and other stakeholders to better understand transit needs. Over the next year the **New Links** team will hold public meetings, small group meetings, and attend community events to engage residents.

The New Links team will provide updates and take questions and comments on the project at the following meetings /events held each month:

- RIDE New Orleans [Coalition for Quality Transit](#) meetings.
- RTA [Operations Committee](#) meetings.
- RTA [Riders Advisory Committee](#) meetings.
- Tulane University's monthly [Elk Place Health Spot](#), tabling at Elk Place and Canal Street.

The New Links team will be holding a series of public meetings in Orleans and Jefferson parish during each of the three phases of the project. The Phase I kickoff meeting was held on April 9th, at University Medical Center (UMC) Conference Center, Room F. Additional will be held in May, and meeting schedules will be made available on our website, www.newlinksnola.com.

To provide feedback on the project, or subscribe to updates, please visit www.newlinksnola.com.

What will come out of this project?

New Links will develop recommendations to improve public transit to better meet riders needs and desires. These recommendations will provide service where people live and work today, provide better connections between parishes in the New Orleans area, and help implement the strategies developed by RTA and JeT over the last two years.

Will my bus or streetcar line change because of New Links?

Maybe. The New Links team goal is to make the system work better for everyone, which may cause some bus, streetcar or ferry lines to change to better meet riders' needs.