February 27, 2019

Regional Transit Authority

Transit Improvement Pilots:
Canal Streetcar and On-Demand Transit

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Canal Streetcar Improvement Study

Canal Street Pilot Summary

Goal: Create a High-Capacity Transit line on the Canal Streetcar line from Carrollton Ave to Harrah's by:

1. Consolidating stops
2. Closing uncontrolled crossings
3. Placing ticket-takers at high-boarding stops

Projected Impact:

- Save riders an average of 12 minutes or more per trip (35% of travel time)

- Reduce collision risk along Canal by 24%

- Average delay for motorists less than 1 minute (preliminary conclusion, pending fuller analysis)

Proposed Pilot Timeline: 6 months, starting after May 2019

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Why this Pilot?

1. The Strategic Mobility Plan (SMP) specifically calls for a study of high-capacity transit on the Canal Street corridor

2. Many stakeholders have requested prioritizing improvements for riders on the Canal Streetcar line. The routes (47 and 48) on this line:

   a. Carry 17% of passengers in the RTA system, 90% of which are local residents

   b. Provide essential connections to employment centers, health services and other transit lines

   c. Especially important for hospitality workers connecting to downtown jobs

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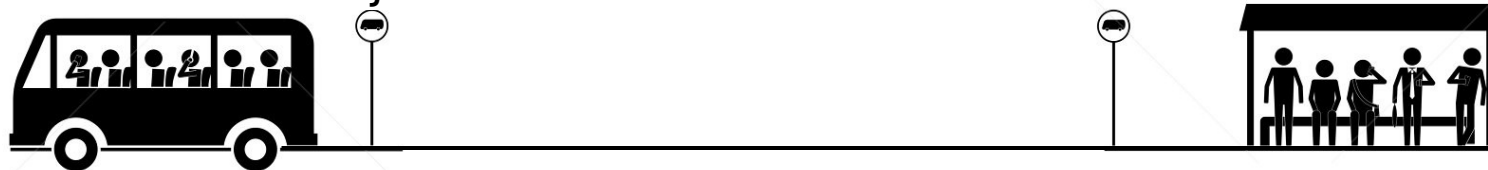
Methodology

Steps:
1. Identify Issues with Canal Streetcar Line
2. Evaluate ways to improve speed and safety
3. Build 4 options
4. Recommend pilot

Resources Used:
- Strategic Mobility Plan
- Conversations with riders, operations staff, safety oversight experts, elected officials, community organizations
- CleverDevices archived real-time data
- Local and international Transdev staff
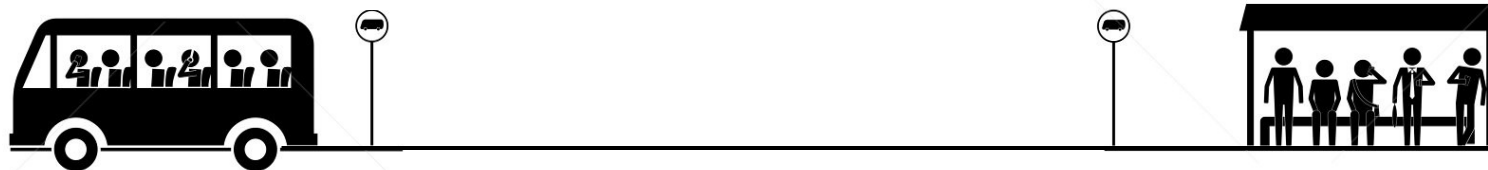
Canal Streetcar Pilot Goal

Create high-capacity transit on Canal Street Corridor

Characteristics

|					
High-Capacity Transit	Every 10-15 min	20-24 hour service	Stops every .25 - .5 miles	Pay before boarding	Extensive dedicated lanes and/or signal priority
Canal Streetcar	✅ Every 8.5 min (day) Every 20 – 30 min (overnight)	✅ 24 hours	❌ Stops every 0.11 miles	❌ Many passengers pay with cash	❌ Uncontrolled crossings contribute to frequent delays; no signal priority

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Pilot: Carrollton to the River
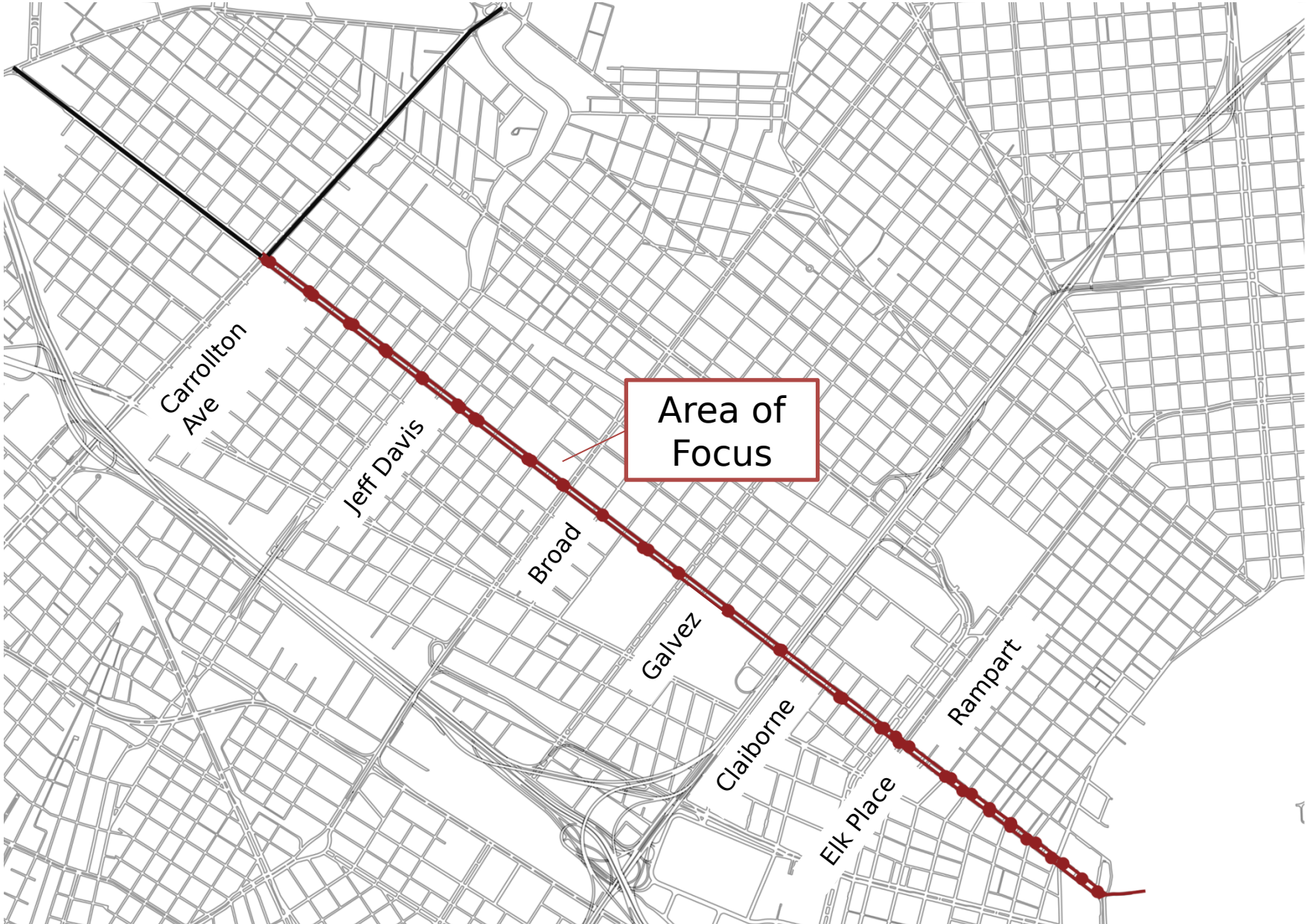
Three Main Improvements

1. Stop Consolidatio n

- The average Canal line stop adds 42 seconds in trip time
- Each consolidated stop would save 29-34 seconds
- Between Claiborne and the River, there is a stop nearly every block

2. Removing uncontrolled crossings

- **Non-signalized intersections** – uncontrolled cross streets. Automobiles use them to cross Canal Street or to make left turns or U-turns.
- **Auxiliary crossings** – uncontrolled crossings over Canal Street that do not connect with a cross street. These are used for left turns and U-turns, often near major intersections where left turns over Canal Street are not allowed.
- **Benefits of removal** – reduced chance of collision and 7-9 seconds savings

3. Ticket-Taker

- Adding a ticket-taker at high-boarding stops can eliminate payment complication to reduce dwell times

Pilot Impact

Route		Current	Proposed Pilot
Speed	**Average Total Trip**	0:34:15	0:22:03
	Time Savings	-	0:12:12
Safety: Reduction in Collision Risk		-	24%
Average Miles between Stops		0.11	0.28
Uncontrolled Crossings	**Auxiliary**	22	17
	Non-signalized	19	2

* Time savings from ticket taker not included in projected impact

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With Limited Space on Our Streets, Changes Always Come with Tradeoffs

Benefits

- Save over 12 minutes per trip for riders on the trunk of the Canal Streetcar line – the RTA's most important route for local residents
- Help our residents get downtown faster (and to work on time!)
- Improve reliability and attract ridership
- Reduce risk of collisions and cost to the RTA by 24%

Effects on traffic

Small delay for some drivers (pending larger traffic analysis). Preliminarily, we expect longest delay to be 2 minutes, during peak times and school hours. Most driving trips would be extended by less than 1 minute.

Acessibility

About 80% of the wheelchair deployments from the last 3 months were at stops that we would be kept in the pilot. Of the remaining 20%, more than half would be within 1 block of a remaining stop

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Measuring Success

Category	Measure
Travel times	Average travel time on the Canal St. trunk
	Travel times for slowest 10% of trips Canal St. trunk
Ridership	Total ridership for Oct-Dec 2019, compared to the same period for 2018
	Ridership trends on the 47 and 48 lines, compared with trends on other bus and streetcar lines
Accident rate	Number of accidents involving streetcars between Carrollton and Harrah's Casino

Next Steps

- **Traffic analysis on Canal Street**
- **Title VI Equity Analysis**
- **Coordinate operation changes**: starting between May and September
- **Pilot:** 6 months
- Consider similar analyses for Broad Street and other proposed high-capacity corridors
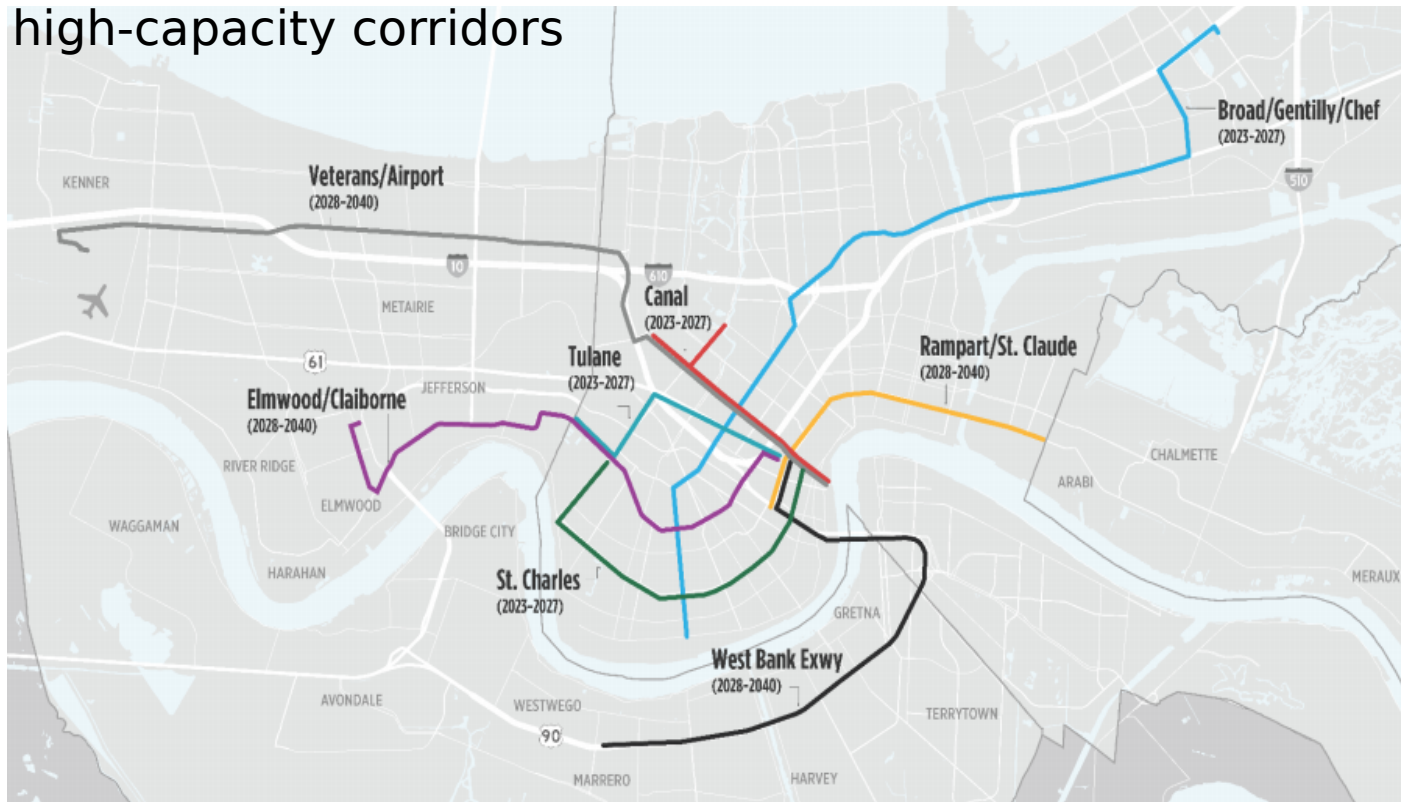
On-Demand Pilot for Late Night Transit

On-Demand Pilot Summary

Goal: Offer on-demand service from French Quarter to New Orleans East and the West Bank during overnight hours

Pilot Details:

- Request a ride through an app, pay by credit or debit card – or cash
- Use 7 or 8 pick-up points proposed around the French Quarter
- Drop off at any address in ENO or the West Bank
- Operating time of 8:00 pm – 4:00 am, 7 days a week
- $2 Fare (not finalized)

Proposed Pilot Timeline: 3 month pilot

Estimated Cost: $300,000

Background: Meeting a Need in the Strategic Mobility Plan

During the SMP process, riders and other stakeholders consistently asked for more late-night options – especially targeted at hospitality workers – and pilots of on-demand service:

STRATEGY:

Use on-demand services and flexible services for low-demand areas and times

- By 2020, pilot circulator service in the CBD using existing small vehicle fleet
- By 2019, pilot neighborhood circulators using small vehicles in New Orleans East, Algiers, and other areas where feasible
- By 2022, evaluate partnering with TNCs for subsidized late-night, early-morning, and weekend rides
- Evaluate how RTA can incorporate emerging transit options

Pilot Programs

- Microtransit
- On-Demand/flexible services
- Autonomous vehicles

More late night service for hospitality workers

Riders and Stakeholders

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Service Plan

- Pick ups only in the FQ/CBD area
- Drop-offs anywhere in defined service areas on WB or NOE
- 7-8 pick-up and drop-off zones can be refined
- Third-party provider of 12-person vans – for flexibility in pilot stage

Passenger Experience

- **Hours of operation**: 8:00 pm to 4:00 am, seven days a week (not finalized)
- **Cost**: $2 (not finalized)
- **Getting a ride**
  The main way to book and pay will be through the app:
  - Download the on-demand app (linked with GoMobile)
  - Request a ride, pay by credit or debit card
  - App directs you to pick-up point, gives pick-up time. Target of 10-15 minutes maximum wait time
  - Shared ride with up to 9+ other passengers. Algorithm directs driver on most efficient route
  - Drop off at any address in ENO or West Bank. App will not allow you to book rides to other addresses

  Customers without smartphones can call Transdev's 24-hour call center to book, then pay in cash on board.

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Projected Costs per Passenger

- Estimated per-passenger cost between $9 and $17, depending on ridership (a large unknown)
- Compare to about $12-$13 per passenger for existing Owl services to ENO and West Bank (100 and 63)

Cost per Passenger by Ridership
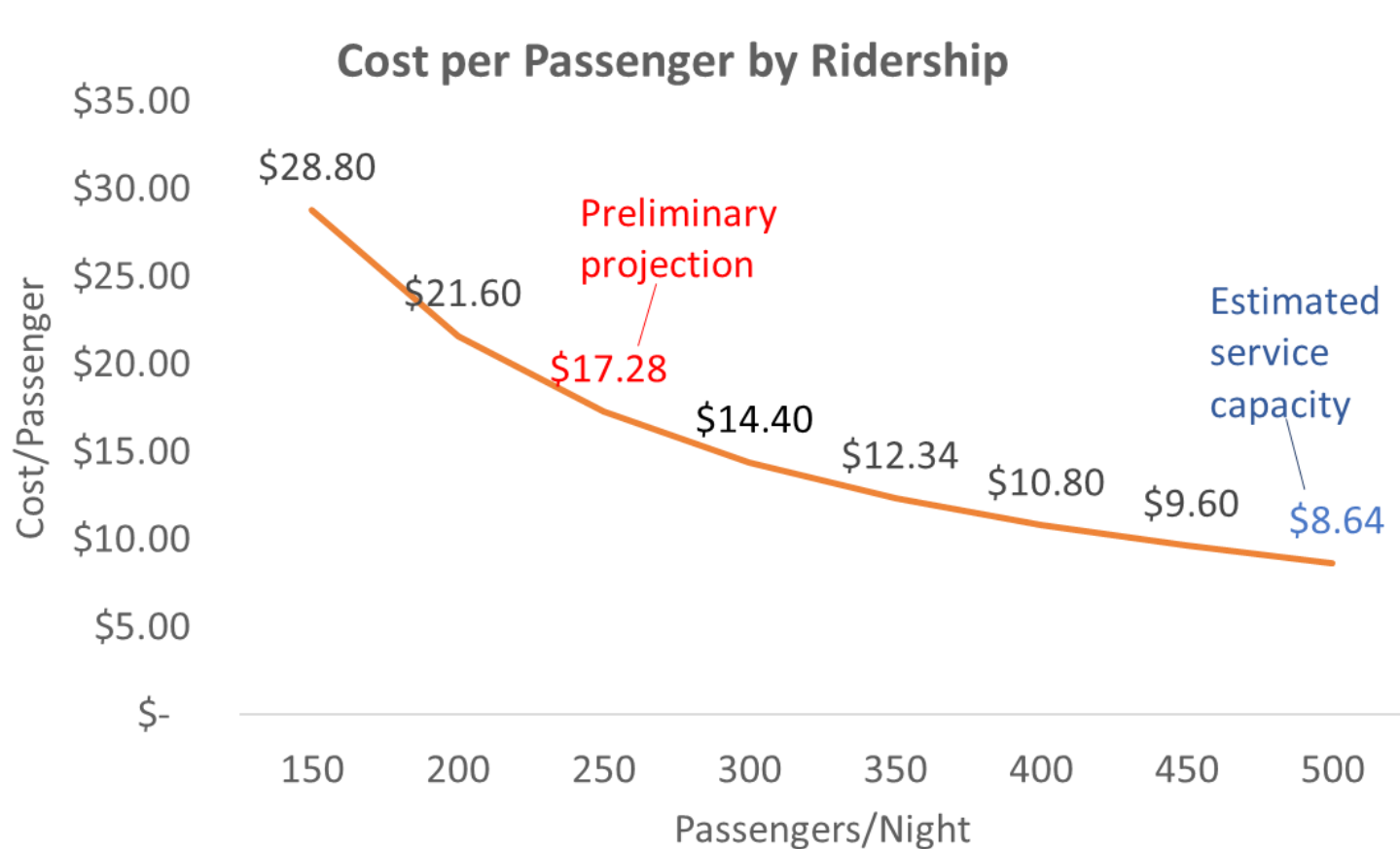
Conclusion

- Riders and residents want the RTA to pilot innovative, on-demand services to meet transportation needs in the West Bank and New Orleans East

- One option would be an on-demand pilot combining Transdev technology with a third-party transportation company. This would balance cost and flexibility

- The pilot would carry passengers on-demand from the French Quarter/CBD to either New Orleans East or the West Bank

- Staff estimates suggest this service could be cost-competitive with owl buses, and would give passengers better service quality. However, ridership is uncertain, and we won't know until we have tested the service

- A 3-month pilot would be the first step to test the concept and gather data

- There are other options too – the simplest would be to add additional late-night bus service