



**Reimagine RTS
Public Information Session #1
October 25, 2017 6:00PM-7:30PM**

**SUNY Brockport MetroCenter, 55 St. Paul St.,
Rochester, NY 14604**

Meeting Summary

I. Project Overview

RTS held the first Public Information Session of the Reimagine RTS process on Wednesday, October 25th at the SUNY Brockport MetroCenter. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project and gather information regarding issues and opportunities. As members of the public arrived, they were asked to connect to a live audience response system and respond to a test question, which was “How did you hear about this meeting?”

Bill Carpenter (RTS) welcomed meeting participants and provided a brief update regarding updates to RTS routes and signage.

Andre Primus (Highland Planning) presented on a number of aspects of the project:

- The circumstances that prompted Reimagine RTS including changes in demographics, centers of employment, technologies and transportation options and increased requests for service
- The scope of the study including addressing customer needs, the role of transit as one of many transportation options, best practices and route structure
- The 12-month timeline of the project including Phase I for setting goals and gathering input, Phase II for analyzing data and identifying options and Phase III for reimagining the system’s route structure
- Possible outcomes of the study including integration of the bus system with new mobility options and a change in the route structure in favor of frequency, coverage or a balance of the two
- Opportunities for public input including public information sessions, pop-up events, online surveys, meetings-in-a-box, focus groups, comment cards and social media posts using the #ReimagineRTS

Following the presentation, Christopher Dunne (Highland Planning) guided the audience through a series of Poll Everywhere questions, including:

- How often do you ride the bus?
- Where do you take bus?
- What is the most pressing problem that Reimagine RTS needs to address?

Following the poll, Christopher Dunne facilitated a brief question and answer session, responding to audience questions.

Comment forms were available for meeting attendees. Comments received at this meeting ranged from requests for changes to specific stops and routes to calls for system-wide change aimed at increasing ridership and moving away from the central hub structure of the current system. A transcription of comments is included as Appendix C.

II. Key Findings

Meeting participant feedback suggests that frequency of service was the highest priority for those in attendance. Frequency received the greatest allocation in the transit priority budgeting exercise, was the most frequently cited challenge in the mapping exercise (see note in Appendix C), tied for most cards in the cardstorming exercise and was among the top three “most pressing problems” selected by Poll Everywhere participants.

While expanding coverage was also a notable priority among some participants, connectivity and moving away from the Transit Center-oriented current system garnered more support in polling. Comments on land use both in the cardstorming exercise and on comment forms also suggested an aversion to building the system out further from the urban core.

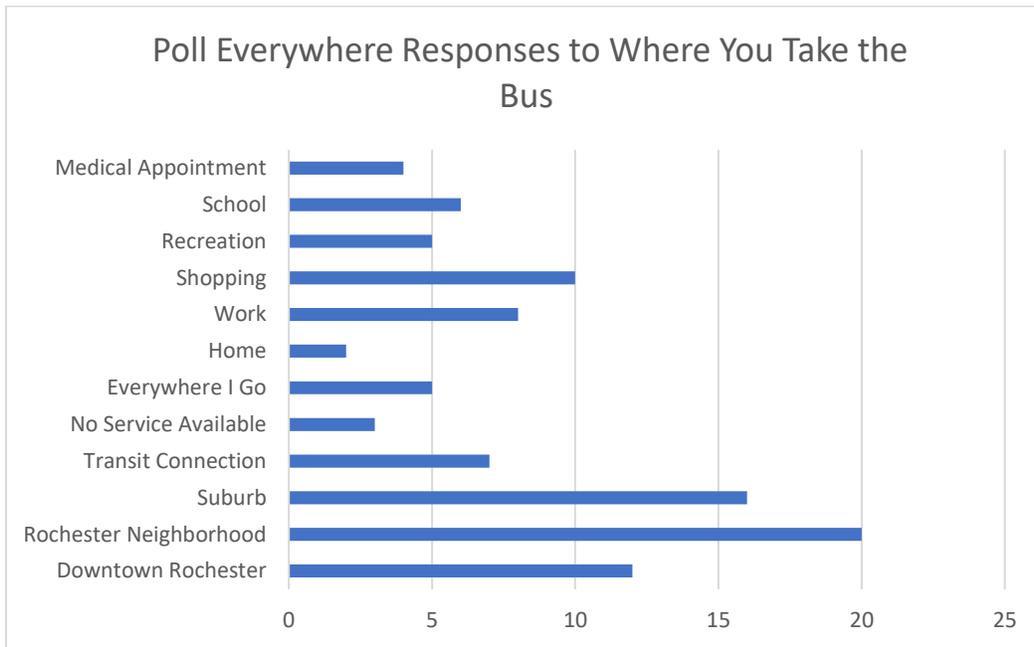
III. Audience Poll

The Poll Everywhere responses to the three questions polled are summarized below. Appendix B includes the unabridged responses.

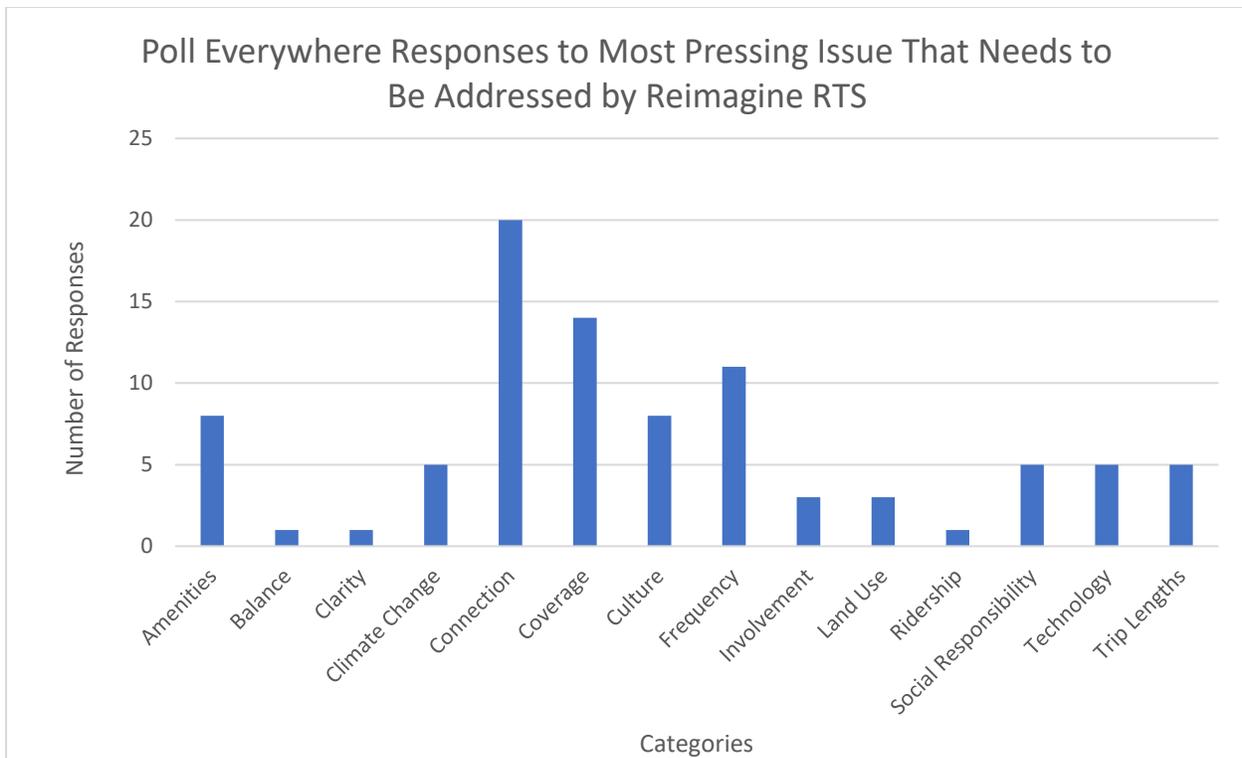
- How often do you ride the bus?
 - Based on audience responses, regular riders of the bus outnumbered those who ride the bus “seldom” or “never” only slightly, with the latter representing over 40% of those participating in the poll.

Response Options	Count	Percent
Every day	6	17.65%
3 - 5 times a week	10	29.41%
Once a week	1	2.94%
A few times a month	3	8.82%
Seldom	7	20.59%
I never ride the bus	7	20.59%
Total Responses	34	100.00%

- Where do you take the bus?
 - Respondents to this question provided a mix of reasons for use, including commuting to work and going shopping. They also included specific destinations. Of specific destinations, Rochester neighborhoods outside of downtown and specific suburbs were more frequently cited than Center City.



- What is the most pressing problem that needs to be addressed by Reimagine RTS?
 - Respondents stated connections to key destinations, coverage and frequency as the most pressing problems facing the transit system to address during the Reimagine RTS process. Other answers included a range of categories that encapsulated amenities, ridership, and social and cultural values, with comments about route structure and frequency topping the list.



IV. Questions and Answers

Questions asked at the meeting and answers regarding the project are summarized below.

- Can we see Poll Everywhere results?
 - Christopher Dunne responded that yes, the results would be made available in the meeting summary on the project’s website.
- Who will decide about the route changes?
 - Bill Carpenter responded that the process will include input from a Community Advisory Committee and the public. Ultimately, he will make a recommendation to the RTS Board, who is also engaged in the process.
- Linkages to rural communities need to be connected to the City of Rochester. The system should be more integrated. There is currently infrequent service.
 - Bill Carpenter responded that rural connections are expensive, but that RTS is making the effort to improve them. The dilemma is that people want more service throughout the entire system.
- How can my design firm on East Ave. in Rochester get involved? How can the Autism Community become involved?
 - Christopher Dunne responded that Meeting-In-A-Box is an option and that the individual should share his contact information with RTS or Highland Planning staff to facilitate that process.

- There needs to be a connection between Amtrak and inter-city buses and the schedules should be synced.
 - Christopher Dunne answered that improving multi-modal connections was a core element of the Reimagine RTS process.
- Is RTS looking to other cities for best practices?
 - Christopher Dunne answered that the consultant team is looking at national and international best practices, mentioning the discussion of Germany's transit system at the Community Advisory Committee meeting on October 11th.

V. Activity Stations

Following the presentation and Q&A session, attendees provided input using five stations around the room.

A. Cardstorming

This activity asked participants to respond to the prompt “In my opinion, the greatest opportunity and biggest priority for Reimagine RTS is to _____.” Participants made comments under the categories of amenities, climate change, clarity, connection, culture, frequency, involvement, land use, technology, ridership and social responsibility.

In the cardstorming exercise, participants responded to the prompt below by writing answers on Post-It notes of different colors and sticking them to a large board. During this process, the facilitator arranged the answers by category to reflect which ideas share common themes. The results of the exercise are included below:

Prompt: “In my opinion, the greatest opportunity and biggest priority for Reimagine RTS is to...”

- Amenities
 - Pre-board punch validators; boarding, validate/pay on board (as in Germany, Berlin, etc)
 - Roll on, low doors for bikes, not just in the front on the rack; It's safer and faster!
 - Do stops have to be only at signs?
 - System for where I want to get off and tell when I'm there – take the stress out of it (kind of like an elevator)
 - Police on bus
 - App includes trip information during ride (also wifi-on-bus and USB charging to facilitate connection)
 - Separate the school buses from the regular city travel
- Climate change

- Climate change big thinking
- Make a transit system in line with the challenges of our time, driving down GHG emissions and providing equal opportunity to all people in the community
- Reduce GHG emissions by switching to electric buses (as you're already doing) and making it easier for people to leave their cars at home
- Electric streetcars on most popular routes
- Clarity
 - Predictability of service; every 10-15 minutes for high frequency routes and every 30-60 minutes for low frequency; system is too complicated
 - Streamline your time tables year-round!
- Connection
 - Crosstown routes to connect neighborhoods (avoiding downtown); South/North Goodman
 - Expand commuter rail service from Batavia to Lyons on the CSX mainline
 - Be a catalyst to improve Amtrak and Greyhound
 - Crosstown Transit Center makes no sense
 - Bus or shuttle to Finger Lakes
- Culture
 - Make bus transit appealing to and practiced by Middle Class (a.k.a. those who can choose private car vs. public transit)
 - Create a community where people choose to live a car free or "car lite" lifestyle
 - Create a system that entices people to try the bus – it's scary to new users – have better utilization of social media
 - Promote health benefits of public transit; less pollution, more activity by riders
 - Constant influx of disruptive, loud, unruly kids
- Frequency
 - Match buses frequency to jobs, medical, shopping and where people live
 - More frequent service in dense, urban areas and less service in sprawling areas (+1)
 - Increase frequency to increase ridership
 - Stop bonus checks and put money towards frequency of buses
 - Increase frequency to make regular ridership easier
 - More frequency in urban core; county sales tax to fund suburbs
 - Stop the suburban focus. Makes no sense. Frequent service in the city.
- Involvement
 - How are Sr. citizens going to be engaged in the process?
 - Engage potential stakeholders who don't know how instrumental transit is to them
 - Catalyze rethought among others to create greater possibilities for ReimagineRTS #feedbackloop
 - Equal opportunity to all members of community

- Officially having all neighborhood resident based organizations [sic] are required to be at the table for all processes and decisions
- Land Use
 - Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) could steer new businesses and residential to locate near existing routes. Several communities are doing vision plans that include TOD. Work with them one-on-one. They have a lot to offer.
 - Greatest opportunity: help to end car dominance and shift the sprawl paradigm; priority: stop chasing sprawl and focus on the city and areas that can actually be served properly
- Ridership
 - Always try to look for more customers.
 - Figure out how to increase ridership = more \$ = improvements = more ridership
 - Start by reimagining that ridership can be increased! Increased public patronage enables increased frequency and coverage! Sell the public on the benefits of mass transit.
 - Try to create 2 or 3 “PODS” where people get to work and everywhere by RTS service
- Technology
 - Stream lining the technology used to find out where a bus is
 - Better utilization of social media (RTS social media presence right now is kinda sad...)
 - Look into wi-fi on buses to make trips more attractive
- Social Responsibility
 - Become mandated reporters
 - Protecting children from clear, frequent acts of physical abuse (domestic violence); become mandated reporters; more police presence on buses; disruptive unruly HS kids

B. Budgeting Exercise

Participants were asked to divide \$10 between eight transit system priorities. Participants allocated the most money to “Frequent service” and the least to “More service hours.”

Enhanced Rapid Bus	\$28
Expanded Coverage	\$17
Frequent Service	\$59
Faster, More Direct Trips	\$33
30 Min. or Less Wait Time	\$20
Access to Jobs Downtown	\$25
Additional Service Hours	\$11
Multi-Modal Connections	\$27
Total	\$220

- Needs extended service hours earlier or later (pink)**
- Poor amenities (orange)***
- Bus is always late (yellow)
- Other (black)****

*While red pins were intended to denote a location that has no service, based on the fact that many participants placed these pins along existing routes, we can infer that “Lack of service” was often interpreted as “insufficient service” or “infrequent service.” When grouped with the purple “Infrequent service” pins, roughly 40 of the 90 pins denote areas with infrequent service.

**Denoted by star icon for clarity in digital map

***Denoted by diamond icon for clarity in digital map

****Denoted by question mark for clarity in digital map

D. MetroQuest Survey

This station included eight laptops/tablets at which attendees could use to take an online survey. Seventy-six (76) participants took part in the survey on the day of the Information Session, nearly twice the average number of surveys taken per day since the site’s launch and through October 28th.

E. RTS customer service

This table staffed by Megan Morsch (RTS), and provided answers to questions for RTS customers and meeting attendees.

Appendix A: Meeting Participants

Abby McHugh-Grifa, Rochester People's Climate Coalition
Adam Smith
Alex Kone, Genesee Transportation Council
Allan Odell
Anita O'Brien, Rochester Accessible Adventures
Antonio Cruz
B. Connor, Deaf Community
B. Jores (illegible)
Bill Baum
Bill Collins, Maplewood Neighborhood
Bonnie Cannan, NorthEast Community Neighborhood Council
Brendan Ryan, Reconnect Rochester/RCA
Brian Padalino
Christine Corrado, Reconnect Rochester
Damon Mustaca, Medical Motors
Daryl Odhner
Deanna McManus
Debra Kosinsk
Douglas Fisher
Ed Cramp
Gary Bogue
George VanArsdale
Heather O'Donnell, Rochester People's Climate Coalition
J. Belli
J. Matthews (illegible)
James R. Hamblin
Janay Smith
Jason Belicove
Jason Haremza
Jason Partyka, Reconnect Rochester
Jay Lambrix, SUNY-ESF Student
Jeff C (illegible)
Dan Dean
Jennifer Sutherland
Jim Fraser, El Camino Community
Jim Roose, Monroe County
John Kreckel, Office of Congresswoman Slaughter
John Lam, Reconnect Rochester
Joseph Becker, Urbinnovations
Joshua Colon
Joshua Derrick
Justin Micillo

Karen Murray, Action for a Better Community
Karen R., Bailey (illegible)
Kate Richardson, University of Rochester
Kevin Bradford, US Security Associates
Kevin Johnson, Action for a Better Community
Kevin T. (illegible)
Lenora Kelly (illegible)
Lucinda Taltan, Lifetime Assistance
Luther Saint-Jay (illegible)
Mary Boyer
Mary Lupien, Rochester People's Climate Coalition
Melissa Baxter, Young Urban Preservationists
Michelle UlropNancy Middlebrook
Pam Bennett
Pamela Loughridge, Public Defender's Office
Shirley Bond, Rochester Alliance of Communities Transforming Society (Roc/ACTS)
Steve Newcomb, Monroe County Office for the Aging
Sue Farrell
Susan Levin, Reconnect Rochester
Theresa McGowan, Rochester People's Climate Coalition
Tom Kicior
Veronica Wilson
Vicki Smith
Vincent Tucker
Yosman Rucker

RTS Staff:

Bill Carpenter
Maggie Brooks
Tom Brede
Megan Morsch
Julie Tolar

Consultant Team:

Christopher Dunne, Highland Planning
Susan Hopkins, Highland Planning
M. Andre Primus, Highland Planning
Jen Topa, Highland Planning
Tanya Zwahlen, Highland Planning

Appendix B: Unabridged Poll Everywhere Results

1. How often do you take the bus?

Response Options	Count	Percent
Every day	6	17.65%
3 – 5 times a week	10	29.41%
Once a week	1	2.94%
A few times a month	3	8.82%
Seldom	7	20.59%
I never ride the bus	7	20.59%
Total Responses	34	100.00%

2. Where do you take the bus?

Total Responses	84
Unique Participants	33

Responses:

Downtown Rochester

- Downtown
- Main and exchange
- Downtown
- To work
- Downtown
- City hall
- Downtown
- Main
- Downtown festivals, Eastman School of Music, East End
- Downtown
- downtown
- To Downtown, Wegmans East Avenue, sometimes transfer to Monroe Avenue or South Avenue buses; Originating on Park Avenue #31And back.

“Everywhere”

- everywhere I have to go. i travel mostly along monroe, east and university. however i travel to most parts of the city
- nearly everywhere
- nearly everywhere
- i depend on the bus for everything including entertainment venues
- Everywhere in Monroe County, especially Henrietta, Fairport, Penfield, and Pittsford.

Home

- near seabreeze from henr
- Home(sw)-Work(dwntwn);wegmans-east ave

Medical Appointments

- To my Doctor's office just outside the city
- Strong ties
- Goodman & East Ridge, LaGrange & Ridgeway, RGH, Unity Hospital.

Lack of Service

- I live near Roberts Wesleyan College in Chili so I can't take a bus
- I'd like to go to Perinton Recreation
- It would amazing to have bus stops along Durand beach .

Recreational Opportunity

- I also frequently go to Ontario Beach Park during the summer months.
- Adams Street R Center
- Frederick Douglass R Center
- The beach

Rochester Neighborhood

- Southwedge
- Hungerford Building
- Swillburg
- Beechwood
- Friend's house off of St. Paul
- Maplewood neighborhood
- South Wedge
- West Ave
- Cascade district
- Highland Park neighborhood
- From home to monroe avenue, and park avenue line mainly . there needs to be regular schedule to brockport , including more stops in the village on main st
- Hungerford Complex

- Hungerford
- Monroe and highland
- Highland to south
- Culver/University
- Monroe and Park Av. In to downtown and out to Wegs and Pittsford

School

- South Avenue after transfer to Strong / University of Rochester Medical School
- Collegetown/U of R
- UR
- Price Rite University
- Teen takes it to/from SOTA every day
- RIT

Shopping

- Wegmans East Ave
- When I visit the malls.
- Wegmans
- To go shopping
- Wegmans East Ave
- Public Market
- Ride the bus to Henrietta for shopping
- Shopping perington.....fairly Egypt fair port

Suburb

- Chili Center
- Pittsford
- Erie Canal Boat Company in Fairport
- Victor
- Batavia
- Penfield 4 corners except I can't on Sunday
- East Rochester
- Fairport
- Pittsford Village

Transit Connections

- Amtrak
- The airport
- Airport
- RTS Transit Center
- I've taken it from the Rochester Greyhound station to RTS
- Transit Center

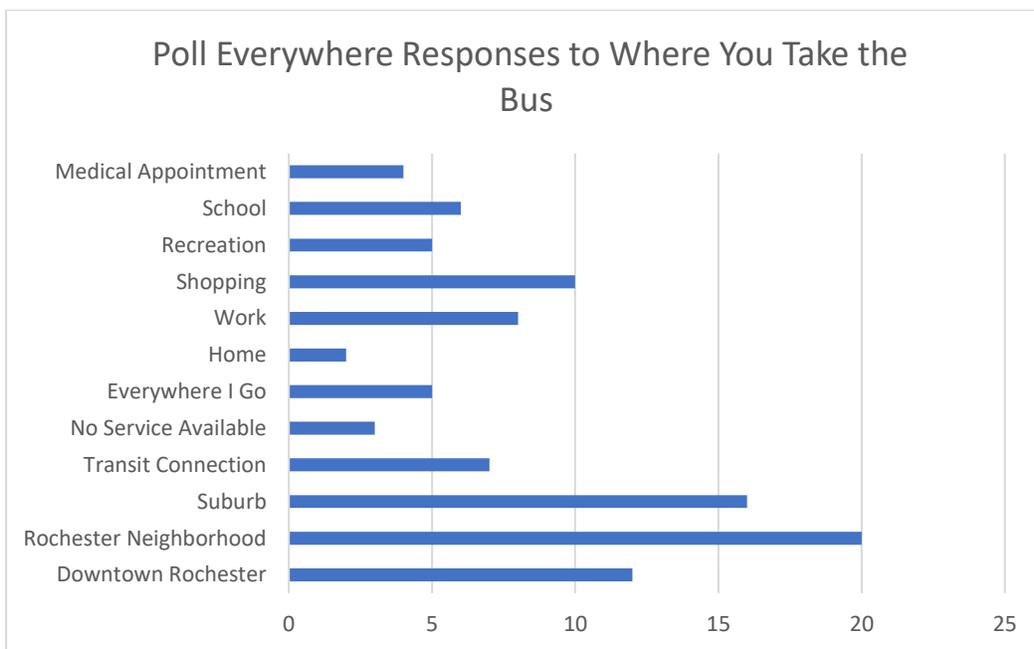
- Amtrak and Greyhound Bus Stations

Work

- Work
- Work
- Here representing those that take it to work
- Work (downtown)
- To work- 10 Gibbs street
- Ride the bus to Pittsford for work
- Work-Alleson Brighton Henrietta Townline rd

Miscellaneous

- All other use is essentially random
- Urmc



3. What is the most pressing problem that needs to be addressed by Reimagine RTS?

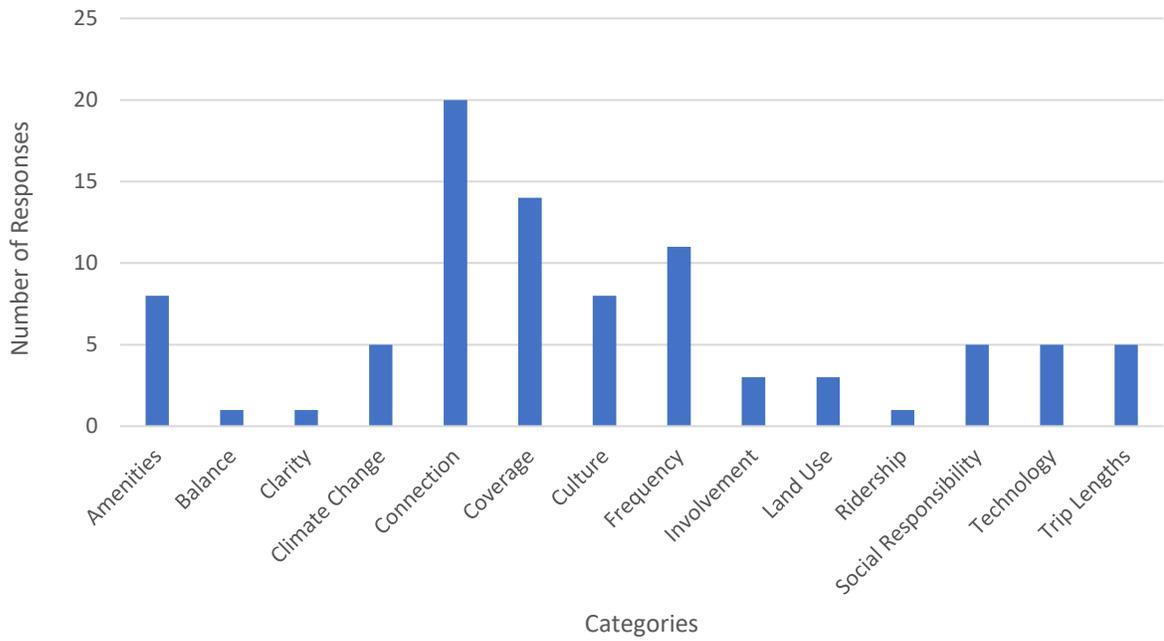
Total Responses	95
Unique Participants	35

- 7/10 mile to walk to stop when at the same time that bus goes right past where I started from-work
- ADA compliant bus stops
- Addressing overwhelmingly car-centric infrastructure here in Rochester.
- App is inaccurate
- Better bus pass options
- BRING BACK TRANSFERS!
- Bus drivers repeatedly will see me waving that I am headed to get on bus, and almost at bus, then drive right by while pretending not to see me
- Bus times should be no longer than 2x than taking a car.
- Buses arriving earlier than the app/text function tells you
- Buses do not run frequently enough!
- Child abuse incidents and mentally ill making threats on bus . if a man was hitting a woman or any combination of such, the bus would be stopped, cops
- Connecting RTS with Amtrak
- Connections to bike trails
- Consider community recreation centers and ensure frequency and coverage
- Coverage in the suburban areas—especially point-to-point routes rat
- Coverage is useless
- Coverage!!
- Creating a system that everybody, regardless of socioeconomic background, wants to use.
- Crosstown
- Crosstown routes
- Crosstown routes
- Crosstown routes! Every bus should not go downtown
- Cut service from Webster
- Dirty buses
- Do away with hub model
- East west crosstown
- East-West Routes on the north side of the city.
- Focus on areas where density supports transit
- Focus on the city instead of suburbs
- Frequency
- Frequency
- frequency
- Frequency
- Frequency
- Frequency frequency frequency
- Frequency of busses.
- Gas fumes

- Getting people to and from work
- Global warming and dependence on fossil fuels
- Good to have RTS meetings at 55 St. Paul instead of inaccessibly at RTS Garage on East Main
- Greenhouse gas emissions and climate change
- Greenhouse gas emissions. We need all electric buses.
- The bus storage, overcrowding, cleaning sidewalks, more buses at nights and on weekends, neighborhoods to be at the table for decision making,,,
- Henrietta, Greece and Irondequoit need better coverage
- I hate that I have to go ALL THE WAY TO THE TRANSIT CENTER
- I want to go to RIT
- If RTS does not focus on frequency this will be a waste of time
- Increasing ridership
- inflexible adaptation to construction
- Infrequent service
- Larger radius
- Less service south of Jefferson Road and Marketplace Mall in Henrietta.
- Loud music from people
- Low frequency of service
- Main
- Make the colleges more connected
- Making transit as /more convenient than driving car to drive up ridership= significant step towards reducing GHG emissions
- Meandering routes
- Meeting needs of those who depend on t
- misinformation and inaccuracy in Where's My Bus
- More amenities at stops! Shelters and benches.
- More service in Webster
- Need a balance of frequency and coverage throughout Monroe County. Especially in Henrietta, and for routes with less service, on the weekends and holidays!
- Need more service in Henrietta especially!!!
- No human interaction for addressing problems
- No transfer!
- Perhaps make hub transfer stations not just all the way downtown
- Return Clinton and highland. Stops both ways.!
- RIT
- RTS needs to link with its neighboring counties besides with Ontario, Wayne, and Livingston Counties. RTS Monroe needs to have a linkage with RTS Genesee
- Safety at all stops. Such as lighting and phones.
- Safety. If they threaten your life they can walk everywhere/
- Screw suburban
- Security officers at transit center profile

- Separate school bus timetables from regular time tables
- Sharing buses with unsupervised high school students
- Shorten length of trip
- Snow removal at bus stops
- South Avenue after transfer, to Strong / University of Rochester
- Stop focusing on chasing sprawl
- Talking on phone...loudly
- The APP and WMBTEXT are inconsistent
- The bus stops and how they aren't maintained, especially in winter. Bus stops with no coverage at all.
- The busses to Egypt, Perinton
- The seasonal change to the routes
- the spoke and wheel system is time consuming and doesn't work
- too much time spent in transit
- Training in high school for suburban students so they become comfortable with using bus system
- Transfer issues
- Transit center could be a lot more comfortable
- Transit times are absurdly long.
- Wegmans East ridge
- Where is customer service?
- Where the bus stops are on u of r is just ridiculous, it's WAY too far to walk from strong ER and even main part
- WiFi not offered at transit center

Poll Everywhere Responses to Most Pressing Issue That Needs to Be Addressed by Reimagine RTS



Appendix C: Comment Forms

Comment Card #1

- Run buses on major arterials more frequently
- Expand the network to create more connections that cross E-W w/out requiring a stop @ the terminal
- Make the suburbs more interconnected (e.g. more direct routes between 12 corners in Brighton to RIT in Henrietta)
- Connect the colleges on a circuit route
- Add a FREE shuttle between the terminal + the train/intercity bus station
- Outlets in the transit center for recharging devices – on buses too!
- Have “where’s my bus” app should be able to save favorite routes/destinations
- “where’s my bus” should also function as an electronic buspass, similar to ApplePay
- connect better w/ airport - link airport + train more directly w/ college campuses

Comment Card #2

- Please start by re-imagining that ridership can be increased – that the public can be convinced that mass transit is a viable and pleasant alternative.
- Increased patronage enables increased coverage and frequency.

Comment Card #3

- Bus from Amtrack (sic) station to Transit Center, an essential functional component for any metro public transit system
- Need more overt bi-lingual options re communications
- Need to have push-in meetings @ cmtly centers, places of worship, YMCA, libraries, shelters

Comment Card #4

- I lived in Brno, Czech Republic – lived and worked. Their system had 3 hubs rather 1 and I was able to get wherever I needed to go without backtracking as I often have to do having to go downtown to transfer. I could get anywhere I needed to go in a city about the size of Rochester in 20-30 minutes. The system was so easy to use I never even saw a bus (tram) schedule. Here I have to have ½ a day to go anywhere outside of my busline and plan at least a day ahead. This system is a massive stressor. Theirs was a delight. I loved not having a car.
- I also agree with a comment made about looking at statewide/countywide systems. In Europe I could go just about wherever I wanted on public transit. It encouraged me to travel more and participate in the community/events more as it was so easy to get

around. Good transit is good for the economy! I'd rather stay home in the evening than deal with the bus system.

Comment Card #5

- Extend service to Roberts Wesleyan College in Chili. It's the only college in the County not served by bus and I live along Buffalo Road so I can use the bus rather than drive to the Elmgrove/Buffalo stop.

Comment Card #6

- Meadowbrook Farms + Roberts Wesleyan College both want a bus to N. Chili. Use to have one to Churchville as well. Many new houses/apts/businesses

Comment Card #7

- (1) Other (push pins): Bus stop at goodman/highland – no sidewalk – just grass. No ADA access to our most popular park from Rte 53.
- (2) Crosstown routes goodman st. route connecting Brighton, Highland Park, Swillburg, Monroe, Park Ave, Nota Public Market, etc.
- (3) App and RTS TC gates are inaccurate. If you trust them you miss busses. Need heavier emphasis on GPS.
- (4) don't need stops every block
- (5) Increase ridership for people who "choose" to ride -> make more \$ -> improve system (freq/routes) -> Increase ridership -> repeate (sic)

Comment Card #8

- Better frequency (10 min. headways city and inner suburbs) less coverage
- Full weekend service to Penfield 4 Corners, Eastview Mall
- More frequent service between Downtown & RIT
- Make it possible to get to Geneseo by transit – there is no coordination between RTS Monroe & RTS Livingston.
- Stop crying poor – other regions have taxed themselves to fund better transit. Propose a quarter cent sales tax increase for better mobility.

Comment Card #9

- For transparency & trust in the process we should be able to see all those groups/individuals who are at the table for ReImagine RTS advisory committee/focus groups/consultants etc.
- This would also help identify gaps in groups not represented at the table.

Comment Card #10

- I think collaboration with all other transit options will be pivotal in how any structure can change. Also contacting other cities across the country who have already restructured to find out what worked well and what hasn't would prove most beneficial in how we can best move forward. Also keep a fine tuned (sic) ear to your long standing frequent customers and those that rely on RTS to get around.

Comment Card #11

- Re: wrapped buses – At night it's difficult to see out in order to identify my stop at night – especially with the darkened windows. This makes it very easy to miss my stop.

Comment Card #12

- Get people from the city out to the country. Meet each other. Don't be scared no more. If you can't do this, start up the train again. Transportation in any way possible w/ no money – the millennials are not the underprivileged. Make one route possible to get people out of isolation for starters. You get subsidized – create a path. Maybe Mr. Gosilano will help get the underprivileged out of isolation... thx.
- P.S. We are all good inside our hearts – we just forgot.