



# ENVISION ROUTE 7

Strategic Implementation Plan

## Better Bus Now:

### A New Approach to BRT on Route 7

## Executive Summary

The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) leads the planning process for Envision Route 7, a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system designed to connect the Mark Center in Alexandria to Tysons in Fairfax County via Bailey’s Crossroads, Seven Corners and Falls Church along the Route 7 corridor. NVTC seeks to expedite bus improvements on Route 7 to reflect the increasing ridership of WMATA’s Metrobus Route 28A and enhance transit service as a foundational step toward full BRT implementation.

To date, there are 10 capital projects that have been funded that have a direct link to improving bus transit service along the proposed Route 7 BRT corridor. These projects, and those identified in future planning activities, are key to providing better bus improvements to riders well in advance of the opening of the BRT line.

### Envision Route 7 Strategic Implementation Plan Objectives:

- Prioritize implementation of context sensitive bus priority treatments in each jurisdiction
- Transform Route 7 and Metrobus 28A into a “Better Bus Now” (Figure 1)
- Continue longer-term planning to realize a full BRT system along the corridor

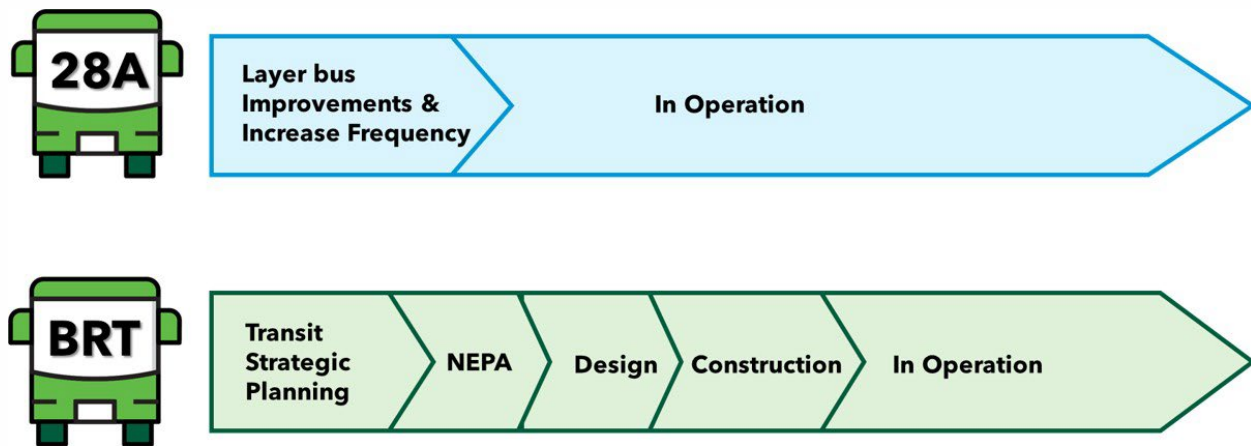


Figure 1: Proposed Strategy for Envision Route 7 BRT

### Envision Route 7 Corridor:

The corridor comprises a varied roadway and urban treatments within a 14-mile project corridor in four jurisdictions (Alexandria, Falls Church, Fairfax County, and Arlington County). Route 7 contains diverse communities, connects residents to jobs and opportunities, and is currently served by the 12-minute daytime frequency Metrobus service (Metrobus 28A). The next phase of planning work in the corridor is NVTC’s 4-2 Mobility Study, which will further planning towards eventual construction of a high-frequency, high-capacity bus rapid transit service that includes enhanced bus stops and boarding islands.

**Better Bus Now on Route 7:**

Rather than wait years for the long-term construction and build-out of a BRT system on Route 7, the Envision Route 7 Strategic Implementation Plan establishes a phased approach that accelerates the customer experience through targeted bus improvements that can be implemented while longer-term planning efforts continue (Figure 2). The Plan calls for jurisdictions and bus operators to implement smaller-scale, tactical capital projects and operational enhancements that will lay the foundation for the more extensive BRT construction and eventual service. These projects include smaller-scale, tactical projects such as transit signal priority (TSP), dedicated vehicles lanes for buses, and improved bus stops.

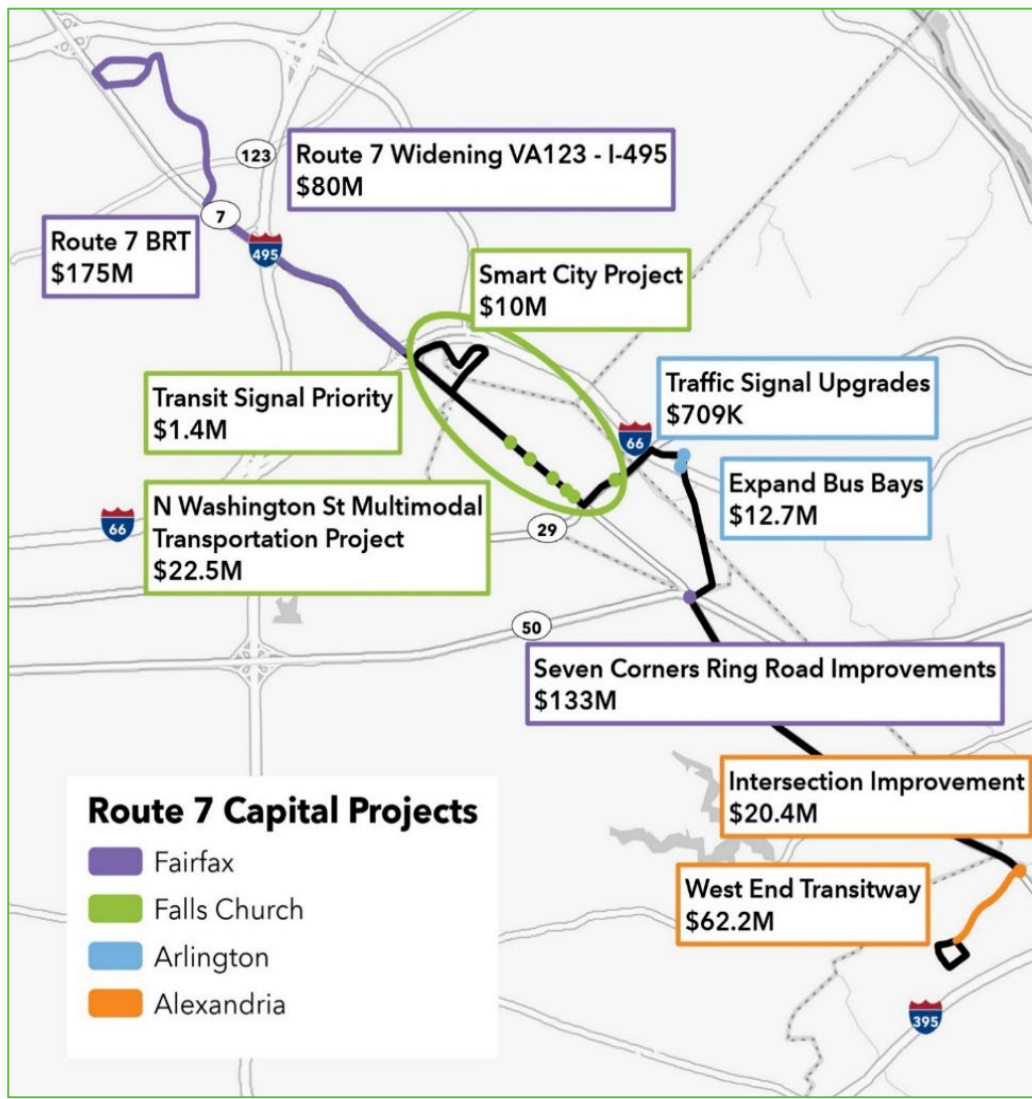


Figure 2: Planned and Funded Metrobus 28A Capital Projects





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# 1. Overview

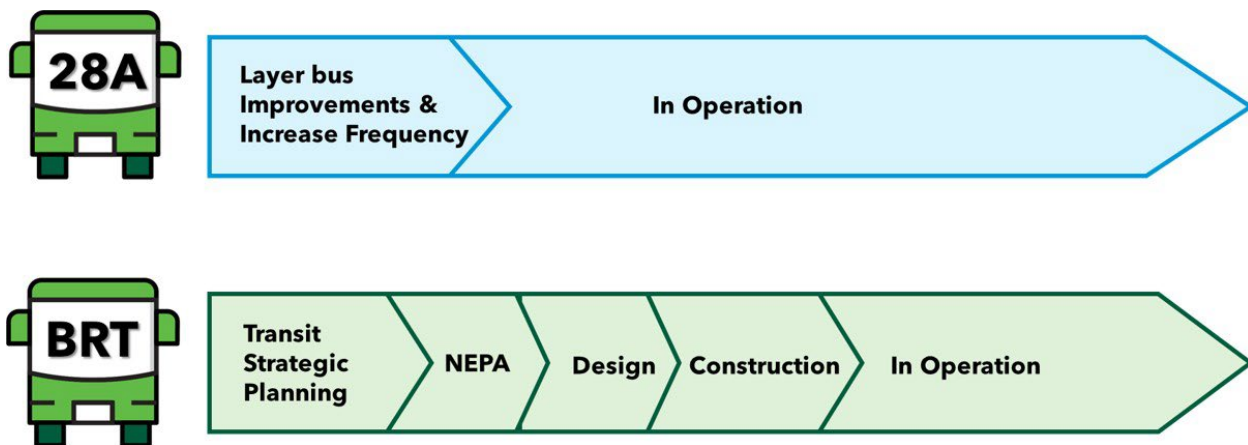
The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) leads the planning process for Envision Route 7, a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system designed to connect the Mark Center in Alexandria to Tysons in Fairfax County via Bailey’s Crossroads, Seven Corners and Falls Church along the Route 7 corridor. NVTC has identified the next steps for bus service improvements along the Route 7 BRT corridor that the jurisdictions are committed to delivering. This Plan documents tactical improvements to bus service that each jurisdiction and the Metrobus 28A bus operator (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority or Metro) are committed to delivering. With jurisdictional

agreement, context sensitive, multi-modal treatments that support local needs and expectations can be advanced to increase the efficiency of bus service and enhance passenger experience. These improvements will improve not only the current Metrobus 28A that runs along the corridor, but other Metrobus routes and those operated by Fairfax Connector and Alexandria’s DASH that intersect.



**Figure 3: Metrobus 28A in Falls Church**

By layering enhancements, bus service can improve with targeted improvements that deliver faster service in the near-term. These treatments include Transit Signal Priority, painted bus lanes, queue jumps, enhanced bus stops, and simplified routing that renders faster and more efficient bus service (see Figure 4). NVTC, working in partnership with WMATA and the local jurisdictions, can improve service on the existing Metrobus 28A route with a smaller cost and time footprint. Furthermore, NVTC, through its remaining Phase 4-2 Mobility Study noted below, will identify additional opportunities for near-term improvements, all while continuing to lay the groundwork for the more capital-intensive BRT service on Route 7.



**Figure 4: Proposed Strategy for Envision Route 7 BRT**

## NVTC's Role on the Corridor

Since 2010, NVTC has served as the primary planning agency for the Route 7 BRT project, overseeing and coordinating Envision Route 7 efforts from the outset. This leadership includes managing planning studies and stakeholder governance, particularly critical in the project's initial stages. Additionally, NVTC has successfully integrated the Route 7 BRT project into key regional and state plans, an essential step in securing and activating significant grant funding.

Because NVTC serves as a regional coordinator and advocate for the region's transit operators and jurisdictions, it is well positioned to ensure the Plan reflects the evolution on the corridor. As a result, NVTC has identified the next steps to both improve bus service in the short term and will work closely with key stakeholders to advance future BRT on Route 7. Accomplishing this requires identifying challenges and roadblocks and documenting steps to resolve them. The document will evolve as discussions continue with stakeholders and policy makers.

## 2. Envision Route 7 BRT Project

The Envision Route 7 BRT will be a high-capacity, high-frequency service that runs primarily along Virginia State Route 7 serving riders in four jurisdictions: Fairfax County, the City of Falls Church, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria (see Figure 5). Designed with rail-like features such as dedicated lanes, enhanced stations with off-board fare collection and branded vehicles, BRT will deliver fast, frequent and reliable transit service along a fixed route with the inherent flexibility of a bus.

Specifically, the planned Route 7 BRT service will operate from the Spring Hill Metro Station in Tysons through Falls Church, via the East Falls Church Metro Station and Seven Corners, down through Bailey's Crossroads to its proposed terminus at Southern Towers / Mark Center in Alexandria. It will integrate with the City of Alexandria's proposed West End Transitway BRT, fostering a seamless regional network. The project will upgrade bus transit service along the 14-mile corridor and connect to major job centers, multiple Metro stations and one future BRT service, serving more than 7,500 transit-dependent riders each weekday. By 2040, corridor population and job growth are expected to grow by 35%. As this area grows, BRT is expected to generate approximately 30,000 boardings each day, 25% of those are new trips and two-thirds of which will be for shopping and recreation.

Currently, this portion of Route 7 is one of the busiest transit corridors in Northern Virginia. Metrobus Route 28A, covering much of this route, has seen a 60% rise in ridership over pre-pandemic levels, defying nationwide trends towards telework and the resulting weakened demand for commuter-oriented transit. The corridor links essential services -- education, healthcare, goods and services -- while supporting the regional economy by connecting workers to employment hubs. Transit investments are critical to improving regional employment accessibility, which can lead to positive social equity by unlocking employment opportunities for the transit-dependent, and more generally the transportation-disadvantaged. BRT, with features similar

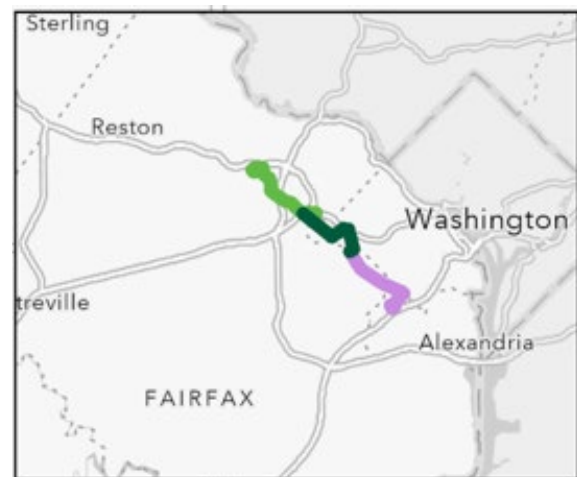


Figure 5: Project Corridor in the region

to light rail, offers a more reliable and faster alternative to traditional bus service, avoiding delays that can slow traditional service like traffic congestion or negative impacts from legacy route choices.

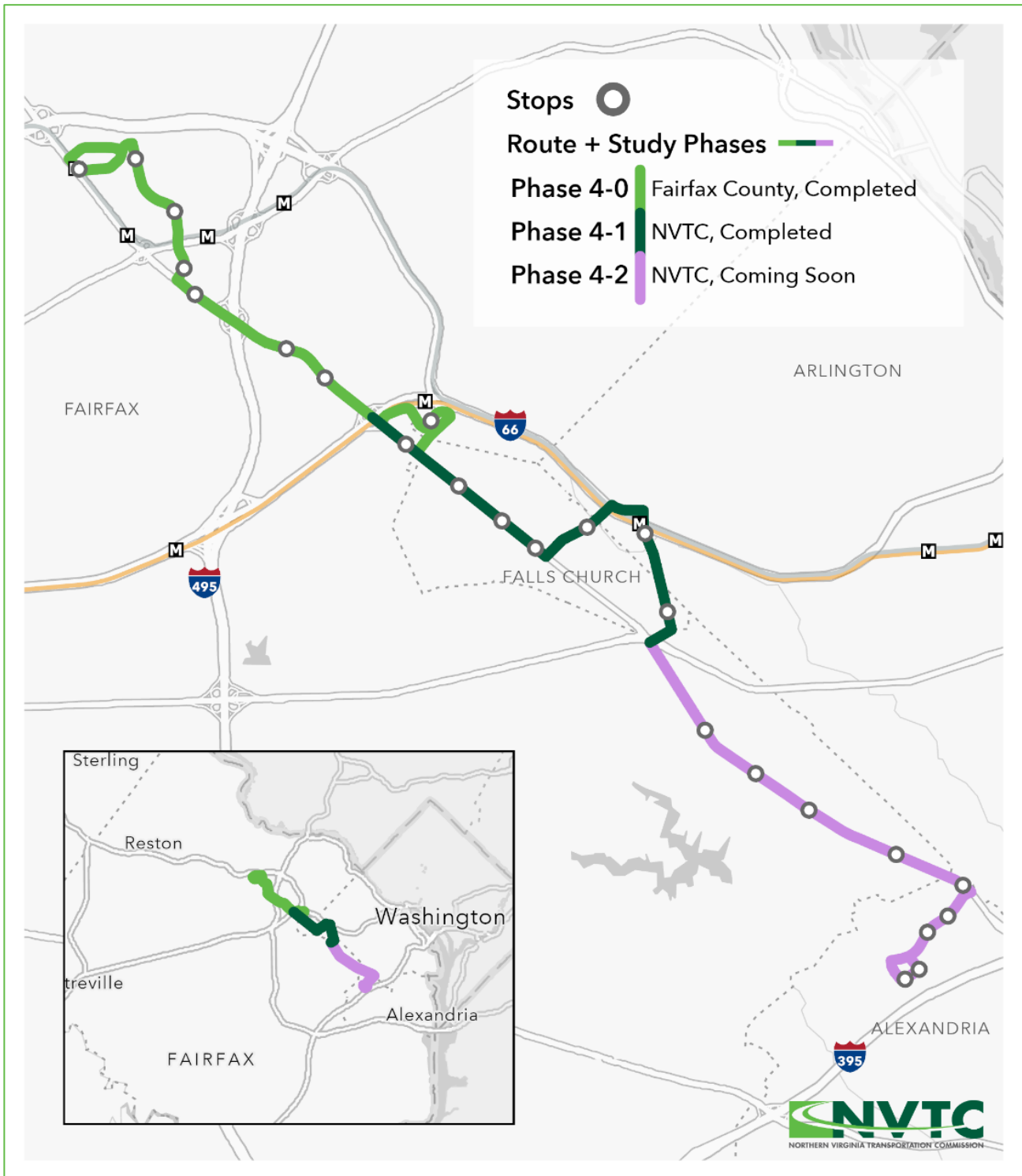
Given that the project spans multiple jurisdictions and requires approval from various local, state and federal entities, close coordination with key planning, funding and policy partners is essential. NVTC works with the following partners now and will continue to do so through the project development process:

- Fairfax County
- City of Falls Church
- Arlington County
- City of Alexandria
- Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
- Transportation Planning Board (TPB)
- Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)
- Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA)

Metrobus Route 28A, or the Leesburg Pike Line, currently serves the Route 7 corridor with some deviations, further detailed in the section: “Metrobus 28A Route Alignment.” The 28A provides 12-minute frequencies from 8am to 8pm, and 30-minute frequency at night, covering the entire route in approximately 90 minutes. With 78,730 riders in 2023, the 28A is the second busiest bus route in Northern Virginia, averaging 6,500 daily riders and demonstrating steady growth since 2020, indicating the corridor’s high demand.

### **3. Project Planning to Date**

Since the project’s inception in 2014, NVTC and its partners have made noteworthy progress. Phases 1 through 3 involved identifying the need for transit, selecting the mode of transit (bus or rail), determining the alignment of a transit facility, and assessing right-of-way requirements (see Table 1). Falls Church provided the initial impetus for Envision Route 7 and Fairfax County conducted its own traffic study related to the project’s implementation in Tysons, which is recognized as Phase 4-0 in NVTC planning documents (see Figure 6 and Table 2).



**Figure 6: Envision Route 7 BRT Phase 4 Mobility Study Segments**



**Table 1: Corridor Level Planning and Analysis**

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Phase 1 (2014) | Feasibility Study and Alternatives Analysis – Assessed the existing conditions and issues and identified a suite of potential transit options to improve mobility and accessibility along the Route 7 corridor. |
| Phase 2 (2017) | Mode and Alignment – Identified a preferred alignment for the project and selected BRT as the optimal transit mode for the corridor.  |
| Phase 3 (2019) | Conceptual Engineering – Developed planning level drawings, identified right of way needs, refined cost estimates, and documented planning considerations and challenges to be resolved.                        |

Phase 4 analysis divides the corridor into three geographical segments to define BRT’s mobility benefits, facilitate an understanding of the BRT project and assess its operational impacts along the study corridor. Using microsimulation, the analysis will evaluate and determine the benefits and impacts of the proposed BRT on the alignment. This phase contributes to the planning stage prior to design and construction in the implementation phase.

**Table 2: Segment Level Planning and Analysis**

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Phase 4-0 (2023)             | Spring Hill Metro Station in Tysons to the Intersection of Route 7 and I-66                          |
| Phase 4-1 (2023)             | Intersection of Route 7 and I-66 through the City of Falls Church to Seven Corners in Fairfax County |
| Phase 4-2 (Starting in 2025) | Seven Corners in Fairfax County to Southern Towers/Mark Center in Alexandria                         |

### Phase 4-0

In 2023, Fairfax County formally adopted Route 7 (BRT) in its Comprehensive Plan in 2023, endorsing bus priority infrastructure from Spring Hill Metro Station, via International Drive to Route 7, continuing south to I-66 and reaching the West Falls Church Metro Station. NVTC has recognized this work as Phase 4-0, allowing this work to be included in the ongoing planning efforts. In this portion of the corridor, BRT will operate in median running lanes on Route 7 and International Drive, operate in Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes on the Spring Hill Road and Tyco Road couplet and operate in mixed traffic in the remaining segments around Tysons Urban Center. This infrastructure plan will require the widening of Route 7 (from four lanes to six lanes) from Haycock Road to I-495 to maintain existing service commitments.

### Phase 4-1

Phase 4-1, led by NVTC and completed in fall 2023, provided a detailed mobility analysis of approximately 3.5 miles of the project corridor from just south of Interstate 66 (I-66) through the City of Falls Church and Arlington County to the Seven Corners area. The study developed three bus priority scenarios that document a range of improvements to bus operations along the segment. NVTC is working closely with the City of Falls Church and Arlington County to integrate the bus priority treatments identified in Phase 4-1 into their own jurisdictional plans. This Strategic Implementation

Plan includes additional future analysis and coordination efforts that will be covered in a later section of this document.

## Phase 4-2

In 2025, NVTC will launch the Phase 4-2 Mobility Analysis Study which will examine the segment from Seven Corners in Fairfax County to the Mark Center in Alexandria, completing the corridor's mobility analysis. This phase supports the Plan's strategy to identify near-term targeted enhancements to existing bus service on Route 7 and detail opportunities for funding those improvements, while continuing to lay the groundwork for the more capital-intensive work to implement true BRT service on Route 7 in the future. Phase 4-2 will build off previous analysis by NVTC and the Fairfax County Department of Transportation and include the following study objectives (preliminary):

- Define the mobility benefits of BRT and facilitate an understanding of the BRT project.
- Understand the operational impact of BRT along the study corridor.

NVTC is responsible for managing the Community Project Funding and DRPT grant that support this work and will include future scoping of Environmental Analysis work as part of the planning process. NVTC will undertake the Phase 4-2 mobility study and its subtasks:

1. Identify Alexandria BRT southern terminus (Southern Towers vs. Mark Center).
2. Investigate in Falls Church restricted vehicle lane treatments: Business Access and Transit (BAT) vs. HOV and queue jump layout/cross-section.

Additionally, during this work NVTC will work with its project partners by providing a coordination forum to resolve:

- a. Sycamore/Roosevelt bus priority in Arlington.
- b. 28A and BRT alignments in Fairfax County and Alexandria.
- c. Transit connectivity between Columbia Pike and Route 7 bus routes.

Determining the benefits and impact of the Envision Route 7 BRT on future roadway operations along the corridor is important for building consensus and support in the community. For the BRT to be a success, the communities impacted need to see the benefits. To better understand the operations and impacts, a traffic model will be used to determine a set of measure(s) of effectiveness that includes queue length and travel times. This data can be leveraged to identify existing pain points in bus operation and determine solutions. NVTC will initiate work on Phase 4-2 in early 2025 with an estimated completion date of summer 2026.

## 3. Project Planning Funding to Date

The project also has significant commitments and financial support from key stakeholders at all levels of government. The four involved jurisdictions — the City of Falls Church, the City of Alexandria, Fairfax County and Arlington County — have all put local contributions into the project's planning process. United States Congressional Representatives Don Beyer and Gerry Connolly awarded NVTC \$2 million from the fiscal year (FY) 2023 Community Project Funding Program, which was matched by a grant from Virginia's Department of Rail and Public Transportation. This federal funding will be allocated towards final planning and NEPA analysis.

**Table 3: Segment Planning Phase Funding Sources**

| Funding Source                    | Amount             | Fiscal Year Approved      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Federal Community Project Funding | \$2,000,000        | Fiscal Year 2023          |
| DRPT Technical Assistance Grant   | \$500,000          | Fiscal Year 2024          |
| Local Match                       | \$500,000          | Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>\$3,000,000</b> |                           |

#### 4. Metrobus 28A Alignment

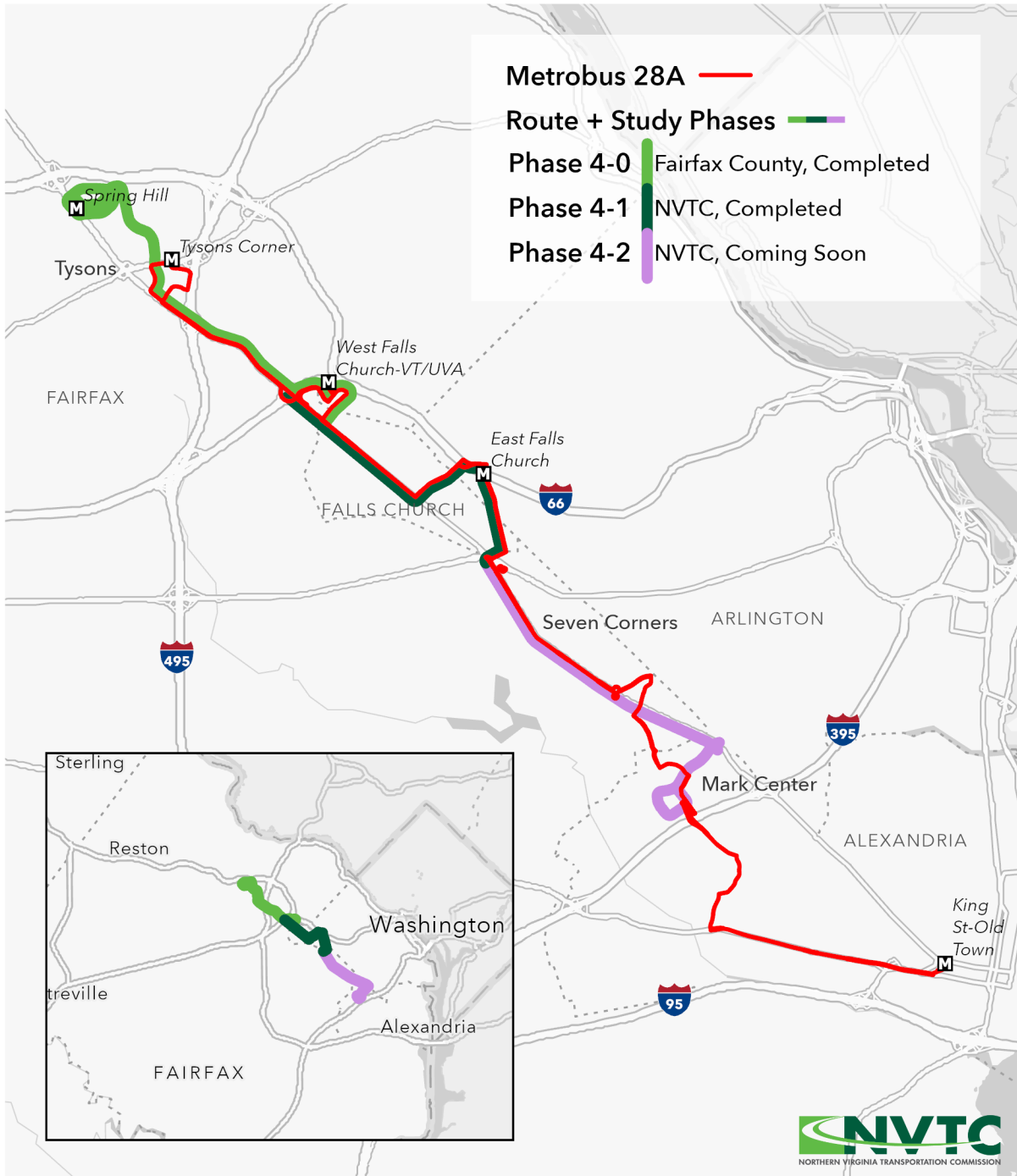
The current Metrobus 28A route does differ from the proposed BRT route that was identified as the preferred route in earlier NVTC studies. As noted in Figure 7, the Metrobus 28A route has two major deviations from the proposed BRT route at the northwest section. Fairfax County’s plan for BRT in the Tyson’s area extends service north of Tyson’s on International Drive and would connect two Metro stations. The service would begin at the Spring Hill Metro Station, while the current Metrobus 28A begins its service at Tyson’s Metro Station and proceeds south.

**WMATA Bus Network Redesign**

*The Better Bus Network Redesign is a WMATA initiative to rethink and modernize bus service to better serve the needs of customers in the region. As part of the 2025 Better Bus Network that reshapes the Metrobus system within existing (FY 2025) resource levels, the 28A will be renamed the F20 without any changes to the current route. NVTC is working with WMATA to develop solutions for the RT 7 corridor that will meet the region's current and future travel needs.*

In Alexandria, there are substantial differences between the Metrobus 28A route and proposed BRT route, beginning just east of Bailey’s Crossroads at the intersection of Rt 7 and Rt 244, or Columbia Pike. The Metrobus 28A runs briefly on Columbia Pike where it turns on Carlin Springs Roads and proceeds south, passing Rt 7, and following on Seminary Road east until it enters Alexandria. In Alexandria, the bus takes Filmore Ave to serve the residential complex at Southern Towers. The bus stops within the parking lot for the complex and then proceeds east on Seminary Road, taking North Howard Street south and eventually taking Duke Street east to terminate at the Old Town Metro Station. The BRT’s future alignment within

Alexandria will be decided in Phase 4-2, with the goal of finding a simplified route for the Metrobus 28A as well as leveraging the two planned high frequency bus corridors (Envision Route 7 and West End Transitway) to enhance the customer experience.



**Figure 7: Map of Envision Route 7 BRT versus the Route for Metrobus 28A**



## 5. Better Bus Now: Tactical Near-Term Improvements

To implement improvements more quickly to bus service on Route 7, NVTC proposes inverting the traditional transit capital project delivery model. This model entails multiple phases of planning, design and ultimately construction that can take decades to result in revenue service. While this purposeful approach ensures large infrastructure project delivery by progressing development and applying for federal funding, this comes at the risk of a lengthy period of planning leading to construction. This process may be circumvented by identifying the most challenging locations for bus service and delivering improvements that come at a smaller physical as well as financial cost. This is feasible and advisable due to multiple levers on cost, including coordination amongst four jurisdictions, variations in roadway design in different sections of the corridor, along with complications caused by legacy infrastructure.

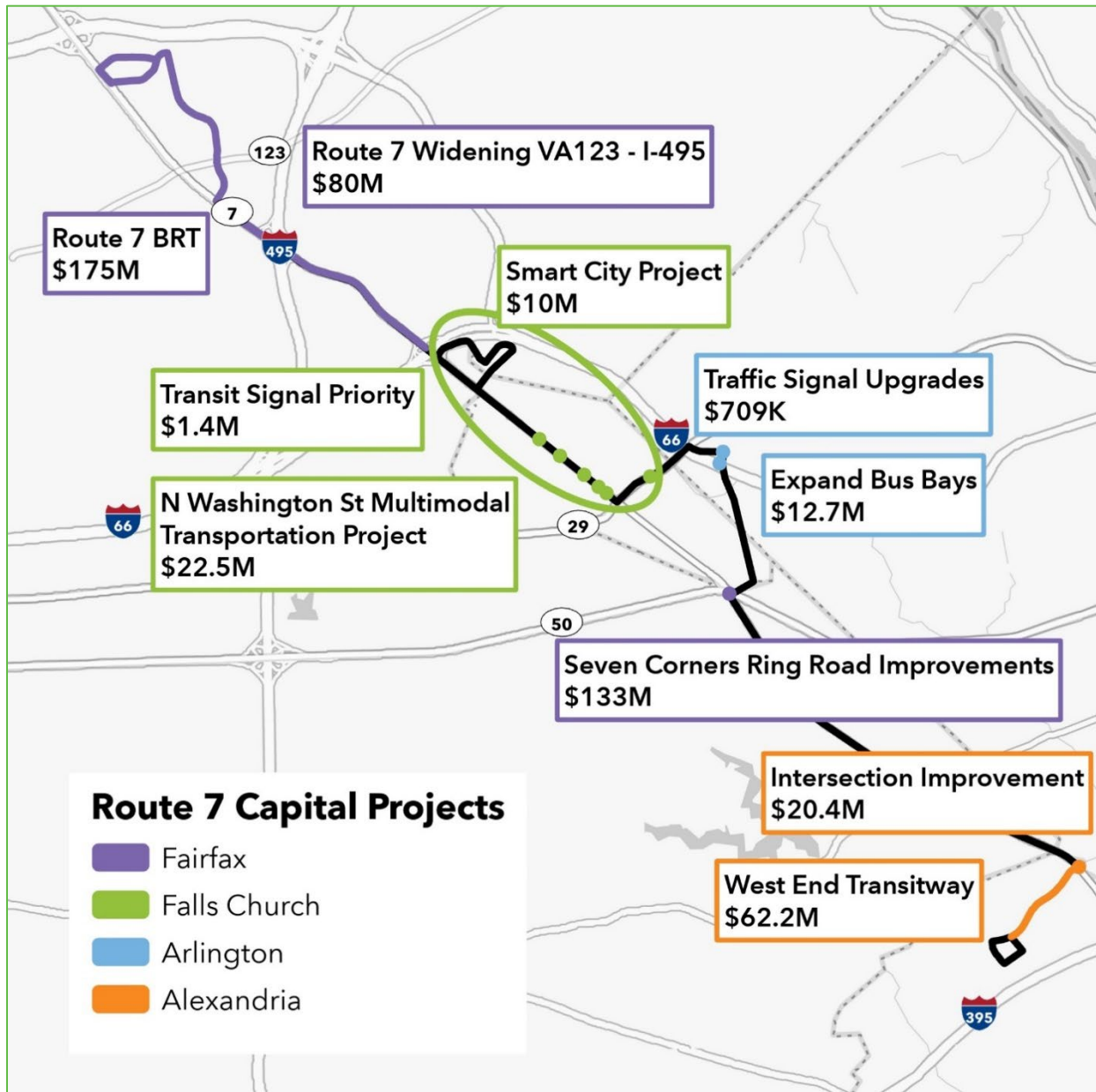


Figure 8: Map of Planned and Funded Metrobus 28A Capital Projects

Rather than funding improvements to bus service on Route 7 as a large-scale, single package that moves step-by-step through a detailed and lengthy capital project process, NVTC proposes that the jurisdictions and bus operators implement smaller-scale, tactical capital projects and operational enhancements to improve bus service on Route 7 such as transit-signal priority, queue jumps and bus stop amenities. Figures 8 and 9 deliver the same information, capital funding on the project corridor, with Figure 8 showing the projects by geographic location and Figure 9 providing details on when the funding becomes available for construction.

These projects are jurisdictionally sponsored and administered and were conceived to meet primarily local needs. However, together these individual projects form a program of projects that will create context sensitive improvements for bus services along the proposed BRT corridor. These projects reflect the different approaches of funding transportation infrastructure in the medium and long term for the region, comprising of a mixture of funding types (NVTA 70% and 30%, state and local) with some federal funding. This extensive list of capital projects shows that the region is not waiting for a larger capital project to improve bus service and is pursuing a more agile stance to transit improvements to provide bus improvements more quickly for the region.

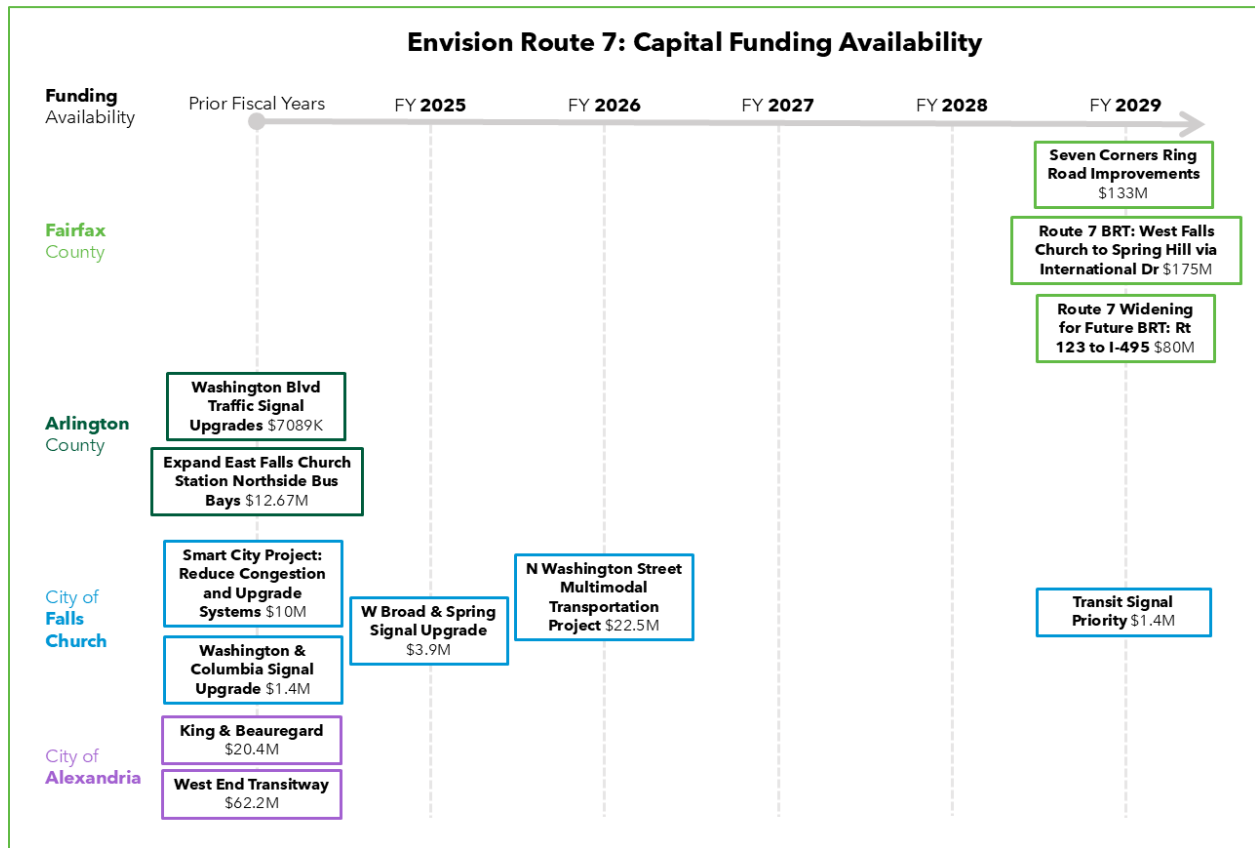


Figure 9: Planned and Funded Metrobus 28A Capital Projects by Funding Year

## 6. Projects by Jurisdiction

NVTC has identified specific capital and operational projects within each jurisdiction that will improve bus service on the corridor. The projects listed provide direct benefits to Metrobus 28A; some of the listed improvements with higher capital amounts also enable or deliver BRT along the corridor. NVTC, working with each jurisdiction, has identified next steps for escalation and resolution by the jurisdiction. By working across jurisdictional boundaries with the local governments that would be responsible for constructing the improvements identified below, NVTC aims to serve as a regional coordinating entity to advance individual projects on Route 7 that establishes a foundation for future BRT in the corridor while also improving existing bus service.

### Fairfax County

| Capital Funding Awarded  |         |                                 |
|--|---------|---------------------------------|
| Project  | Amount  | Source                          |
| Route 7 widening for Future BRT (Route 123 to I-495)   | \$80 M  | State, Local and NVTA 70% Funds |
| Route 7 BRT, from West Falls Church to Spring Hill, via International Drive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct median-running BRT along Route 7 and International Drive</li> </ul> | \$175 M | State, Local and NVTA 70% Funds |
| Seven Corners Ring Road Improvements   | \$133 M | State, Local and NVTA 70% Funds |

This data was compiled from the Fairfax County FY 2024 - FY 2028 Advertised Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and NVTA Transaction Plan and verified by jurisdiction staff:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2024-fy-2028-advertised-capital-improvement-program-cip>

Fairfax County has the following projects included in their respective area plans:

1. Coordinate with NVTC for environmental analysis of Phase 4-0 and analyze Right-of-Way impacts and lane configuration along the BRT corridor.
2. Advance transportation improvements in the Seven Corners area for all roadway users.

Fairfax County Department of Transportation’s (FCDOT) completion of their 10% conceptual plans for BRT from West Falls Church to Spring Hill Metro Station will provide a better understanding of right-of-way impacts and create a foundation for advancing the design into preliminary engineering and examining environmental impacts. For Seven Corners, a phasing analysis was completed in 2023 to determine the projected order in which transportation improvements should be implemented in the Seven Corners area to improve operations and mobility for all roadway users, including transit.

FCDOT staff have been focused on implementing the Richmond Highway BRT project (RHBRT), which is forecasted to be complete in 2031. Lessons learned from RHBRT will benefit the continued development of Envision Route 7 BRT, ranging from VDOT coordination to funding considerations.

Additionally, the completion of RHBRT will allow for additional staff resources to advance the Route 7 BRT into implementation.

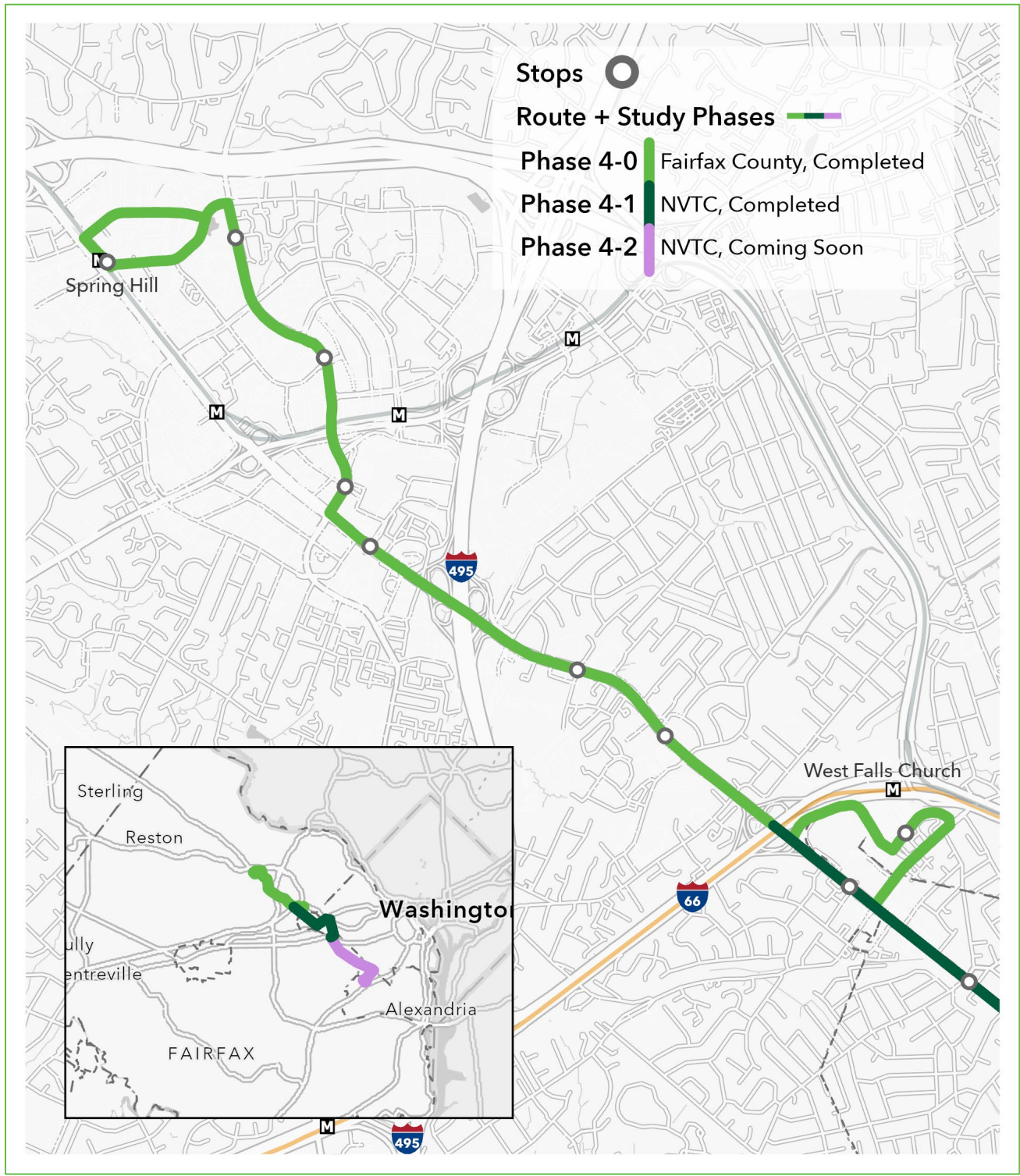


Figure 10: Envision Route 7 BRT within Fairfax County north and west of Falls Church



## City of Falls Church

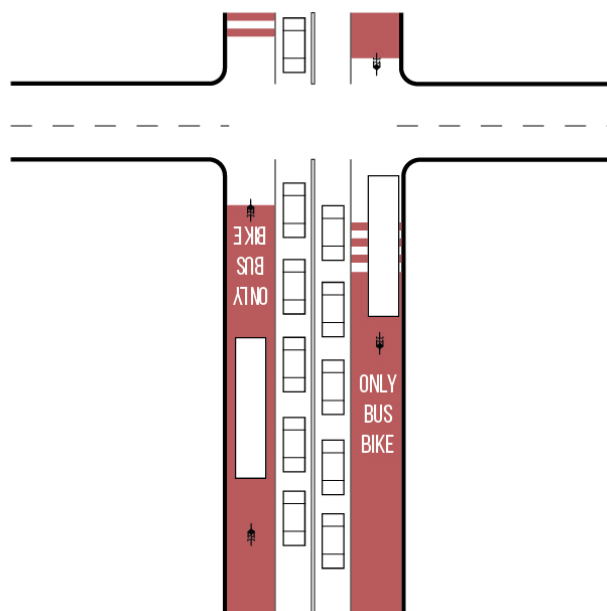
| Capital Funding Awarded                                    |          |                   |
|--|----------|-------------------|
| Project  | Amount   | Source            |
| Smart City Project - Reduce congestion and upgrade systems | \$10 M   | Federal and State |
| Transit Signal Priority                                    | \$1.4 M  | NVTA 70% Funds    |
| North Washington Street Multimodal Transportation Project  | \$22.5 M | NVTA 70% Funds    |
| Washington & Columbia Signal Upgrade                       | \$1.4 M  | State and Local   |
| W Broad & Spring Signal Upgrade                            | \$1.8 M  | State and Local   |

This data was compiled from City of Falls Church CIP and verified by jurisdiction staff:

<https://www.fallschurchva.gov/1519/Capital-Improvements-Program-CIP>.

Falls Church and NVTC are working together on a follow-up analysis to determine what form of restricted traffic lane could apply in the jurisdiction. This analysis will:

1. Coordinate with NVTC on analysis for Transit and Multi-modal improvements to benefit Metrobus 28A (BAT vs. HOV; layout for queue jump and feasibility for bike/bus lanes.
  - a. Note: Falls Church is evaluating options, including but not limited to HOV hours of operation, impacts of BAT lanes and potential for shared bike/bus lane.



**Figure 11: Artist Illustration of Shared Bus/Bike Facility, courtesy of National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)**

## Arlington County

| Capital Funding Awarded                   |           |                          |
|---|-----------|--------------------------|
| Project                                   | Amount    | Source                   |
| Traffic Signal Upgrades - Washington Blvd | \$709 K   | Local and NVTA 30% Funds |
| Expand bus bays by 75%                    | \$12.67 M | Local and NVTA 30% Funds |

This data was compiled from Arlington County CIP and verified by jurisdiction staff:

<https://susmo.org/cip-2024>

Arlington County and NVTC are collaborating with applicable partners to accomplish the following based on issues identified during the previous planning process:

1. Resolve bus slowdown at Washington Blvd. and N. Sycamore Street
2. Investigate short- and long-term bus bay capacity at East Falls Church Metro

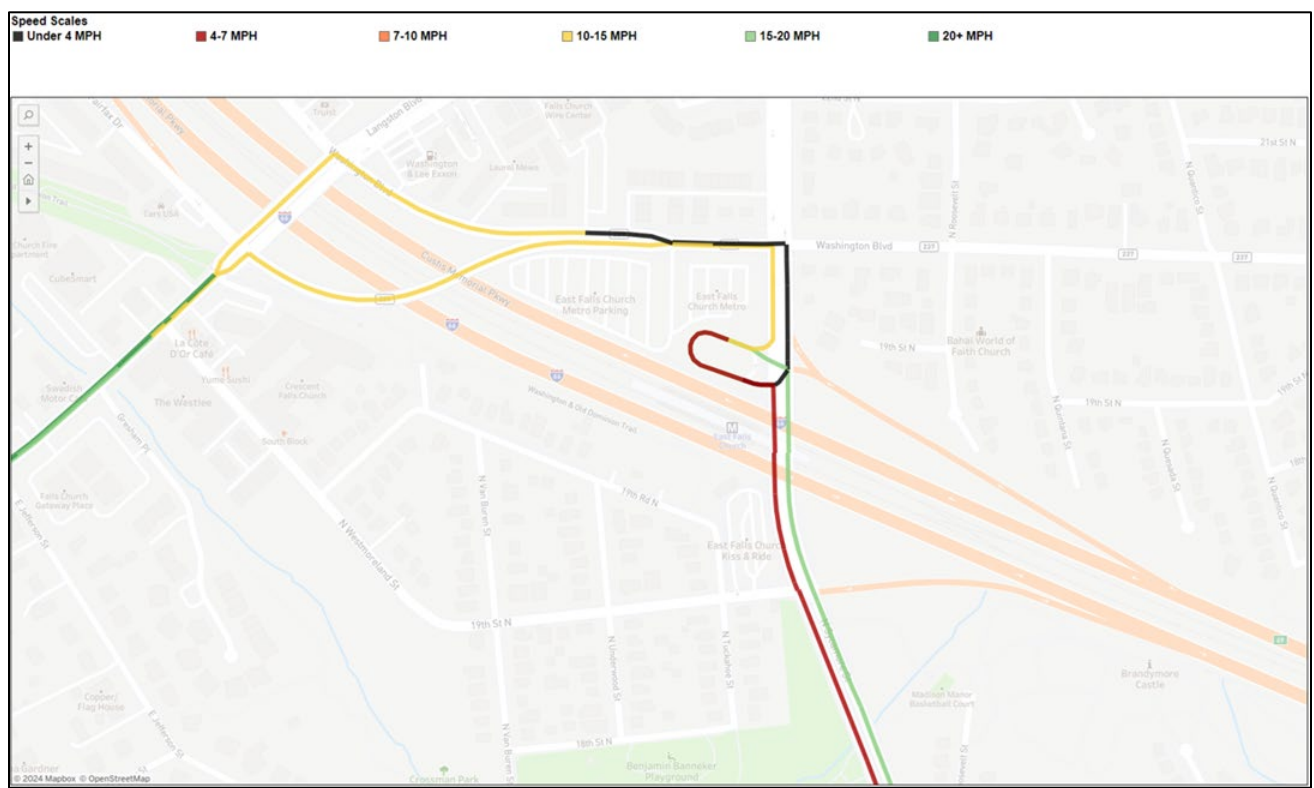


Figure 12: WMATA Map Utilizing Bus Speed Data to illustrate congestion around East Falls Church

## City of Alexandria

| Capital Funding Awarded                     |          |                                 |
|---|----------|---------------------------------|
| Project                                     | Amount   | Source                          |
| King & Beauregard Intersection Enhancements | \$20.4 M | Federal, State, and Local       |
| West End Transitway                         | \$62.2 M | State, Local and NVTA 70% Funds |

This data was compiled from the City of Alexandria CIP and verified by jurisdiction staff:  
<https://www.alexandriava.gov/budget/fy-2024-approved-operating-and-cip-budget-documents>

The City of Alexandria and NVTC are working together to resolve these identified concerns:

1. Identify the Northbound BRT station at intersection of King and Beauregard
2. Identify southern terminus for BRT (Southern Towers or Mark Center)

The West End Transitway BRT project is a 5.3-mile corridor running from the Van Dorn Street Metro Station in the south to the Pentagon Metro Station in the north. The project includes fifteen stations with stops at key destinations including the Shirlington Transit Center and the Mark Center. Currently in design, completion of the West End Transitway by 2027 will provide the Metrobus 28A riders with the benefits of enhanced transit service and amenities to improve service to the Mark Center. Important considerations are coordinating the Metrobus 28A route with other bus routes on the corridor and maintaining the level of service and coverage.

## 7. Funding Timeline

| Fairfax County  |         |                                 |          |        |         |        |       |        |
|---|---------|---------------------------------|----------|--------|---------|--------|-------|--------|
| Capital Funding Awarded   |         |                                 |          |        |         |        |       |        |
| Project   | Amount  | Source                          | Prior FY | FY 25  | FY 26   | FY 27  | FY 28 | FY 29  |
| Route 7 widening for Future BRT (Route 123 to I-495) Design of BRT and bike/pedestrian facilities | \$80M   | State, Local and NVTA 70% Funds |          |        |         |        |       | \$80M  |
| Route 7 BRT Route 7, from West Falls Church to Spring Hill, via International Drive               | \$175M  | State, Local and NVTA 70% Funds |          |        |         |        |       | \$175M |
| Seven Corners Ring Road Improvements  | \$133M  | State, Local and NVTA 70% Funds |          |        |         |        |       | \$133M |
| Falls Church  |         |                                 |          |        |         |        |       |        |
| Capital Funding Awarded   |         |                                 |          |        |         |        |       |        |
| Project   | Amount  | Source                          | Prior FY | FY 25  | FY 26   | FY 27  | FY 28 | FY 29  |
| Smart City Project - Reduce congestion and upgrade systems  | \$10M   | Federal and State               | \$10M    |        |         |        |       |        |
| North Washington Street Multimodal Transportation project   | \$22.5M | NVTA 70% Funds                  |          |        | \$22.5M |        |       |        |
| Washington & Columbia Signal Upgrade  | \$1.4M  | State and Local                 | \$1.4M   |        |         |        |       |        |
| W Broad & Spring Signal Upgrade   | \$3.9M  | State and Local                 |          | \$1.8M | \$1.8M  | \$328K |       |        |
| Transit Signal Priority   | \$1.4M  | NVTA 70% Funds                  |          |        |         |        |       | \$1.4M |



| Arlington County  |          |                                 |          |         |        |       |       |       |
|---|----------|---------------------------------|----------|---------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| Capital Funding Awarded   |          |                                 |          |         |        |       |       |       |
| Project   | Amount   | Source                          | Prior FY | FY 25   | FY 26  | FY 27 | FY 28 | FY 29 |
| Traffic Signal Upgrades - Washington Blvd                                 | \$ 709K  | Local and NVTA 30% Funds        | \$709K   |         |        |       |       |       |
| Expand bus bays from Four to Seven - East Falls Church Station north side | \$12.67M | Local and NVTA 30% Funds        | \$12.67M |         |        |       |       |       |
| City of Alexandria  |          |                                 |          |         |        |       |       |       |
| Capital Funding Allocated   |          |                                 |          |         |        |       |       |       |
| Project   | Amount   | Source                          | Prior FY | FY 25   | FY 26  | FY 27 | FY 28 | FY 29 |
| King & Beauregard   | \$20.4M  | Federal, State and Local        | \$19.9M  | \$1.5M  |        |       |       |       |
| West End Transitway   | \$62.2M  | State, Local and NVTA 70% Funds | \$24.5M  | \$32.6M | \$5.0M |       |       |       |

## 8. External Agency Coordination

Since the inception of the Envision Route 7 BRT project, NVTC has actively coordinated with many regional, state and federal partners to ensure the successful planning and eventually delivery of the Envision Route 7 BRT. In each of these instances, NVTC has included and will continue to include staff from the following partnering agencies on its technical advisory committees.

### *Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)*

NVTC is coordinating with WMATA to enhance Metrobus 28A service as well as any future skip stop or express service that could augment existing bus service on the corridor. This includes incorporating NVTC's BRT alignment into the Better Bus Network Redesign effort and investigating the feasibility of higher frequency bus service with an associated funding mechanism to enable additional service. While the Metrobus 28A has high ridership and frequent service, it makes frequent stops which causes delays as it moves through the corridor. NVTC and WMATA aim to address these and any other operational pain points to improve bus service and coordination with operations staff.

WMATA has undertaken the first comprehensive redesign of the entire Metrobus network since its creation. The proposed 2025 Better Bus Network represents WMATA's commitment to improving

service and connections using resources currently available. As staff considers where, when and how people travel in the region, there is an opportunity to align the Metrobus 28A (anticipated to be renamed the F20) as part of the overall effort. With a vision map released in May 2024 and community conversations ongoing, there is an opportunity to integrate Envision Route 7 within the redesign effort to deliver improved bus operations in the near term.

### ***Federal Transit Administration (FTA)***

FTA administers NVTC's \$2 million FY 2023 Community Project Funding grant for the Phase 4-2 planning efforts. Because of the potential for future federal funding, NVTC is actively engaged in discussion with FTA on additional funding opportunities and partnership models, including best practices for effective project management and regional coordination. Both the FTA and its parent organization, the Department of Transportation (USDOT), stand as critical potential partners for the implementation stages, with various funding pathways that require detailed planning and documentation to meet eligibility criteria.

### ***National Capital Area Transportation Planning Board (TPB)***

TPB has the Envision Route 7 Bus Rapid Transit included in the May 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) with TIP ID: T13608. The TIP establishes federal funding eligibility for Envision Route 7 and is required to activate the federal FY 2023 Community Project Funding.

### ***The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)***

DRPT is sponsoring the study for inclusion in TPB's TIP, alongside providing a local grant to leverage federal funding during the planning phases. DRPT not only serves as a crucial support partner in advancing this regional project but is also a potential funding partner for its implementation.

### ***The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)***

VDOT plays an integral role in the Envision Route 7 BRT project, as the Route 7 roadway is owned and maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) except through the cities of Falls Church and Alexandria.

### ***The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA)***

NVTA develops a long-range transportation plan for Northern Virginia, called TransAction, that outlines a vision to address traffic congestion and other regional transportation priorities. TransAction is updated every five years. Inclusion in TransAction is a prerequisite for future Authority funding, as noted below. The Route 7 BRT is currently included in NVTA's latest TransAction plan and is expected to be included in the future update to be developed in 2025. NVTA previously funded Phase 2 of Envision Route 7, the Travel Demand Analysis Mode and Alignment in 2017.

## **9. Future Funding Opportunities**

For future funding, there are multiple grant programs available to fund either design or construction work for each jurisdiction to fund their respective Envision Route 7 BRT features. Listed below are state and regional grant opportunities, however there are also federal sources, such as the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant that could provide additional resources to advance transportation in the region.

1. The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)'s Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program may be a candidate for future Envision Route 7 planning and/or capital project funding. The latest criteria were established by the Biden Administration to fund a diverse slate of communities with projects of local and regional significance. Funding is split equally between urban and rural areas, and a large percentage of grants support regions defined as historically disadvantaged or areas of persistent poverty. The eligibility requirements of RAISE allow project sponsors, including state and local governments, counties, Tribal governments, transit agencies, and port authorities, to pursue multi-modal and multi-jurisdictional projects that are more difficult to fund through other grant programs. The future of this program does depend on Congressional appropriations support as well as the administration's priorities.
2. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is a potential funding partner for engineering design and construction phases of the project, with the possibility of entering the Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program. While the CIG program funds transit heavy rail, commuter rail, light rail, streetcars and bus rapid transit, agencies seeking CIG funding to complete a series of steps over several years. The future funding available to this program does depend on the availability of Congressional appropriations.
3. The Department of Rail and Passenger Transportation (DRPT) operates the Making Efficient and Responsible Investments in Transit (MERIT) program. This is a statewide grants program that provides financial assistance to support public transportation services throughout Virginia. Within the grant program there are options for Operating Assistance, Capital Assistance, and Demonstration Project Assistance and Technical Assistance. DRPT also operates the Transit Ridership Incentive Program (TRIP), which provides funding for the purpose of creating more accessible, safe and regionally significant transit networks. TRIP funds four project categories: zero and reduced fare, regional connectivity, public safety, and passenger amenities and facilities. DRPT accepts applications for Capital Assistance on October 1<sup>st</sup> and other portions of the program on December 1<sup>st</sup>.
4. The Office of the Virginia Secretary of Transportation administers the SMART SCALE (System for the Management and Allocation of Resources for Transportation and SCALE referring to the six evaluation factors - Safety, Congestion mitigation, Accessibility, Land Use, and Economic development and environment) program that funds capital projects focused on capacity and operational improvements for roadways, transit, bicycle and pedestrian programs, and transportation demand management. The program is a tool that allows the state to balance transportation needs and prioritize investments by using a transparent and objective scoring system for planned projects included in Virginia's long-range transportation plan or VTrans. Project selection is based upon criteria associated with Safety, Congestion reduction, Accessibility, Land use, and Economic development and the Environment, with funding for projects approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). The Application window opens in April of even-numbered years through August. After the application window closes, submissions are screened by staff and scored with public hearings to follow, culminating in the CTB selecting projects by the summer of the odd-numbered year, with the cycle repeating the next even-numbered year.
5. Northern Virginia Transportation Commission (NVTC) operates the I-66 Commuter Choice program which funds transit and other transportation improvements that move more people,

enhance mobility, expand commuters' travel options, and increase travel safety and reliability along I-66 and parallel routes. Bus priority improvements – such as signal priority, dedicated lanes, and queue jumps – would be eligible for program support to the extent that they have a nexus to I-66 Inside the Beltway peak-period, peak-direction travel, and further program goals. This funding source can augment operation funding to provide more frequent service. Projects are selected through a competitive process and applications are anticipated to begin in the fall of 2025 and adhere to a two-year cycle.

6. Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) has two funding mechanisms which provide funding for both long- and short-range projects. “70% Regional Revenue,” is allocated by the Authority for regional transportation projects selected by a competitive process and “30% Local Distribution Revenue” is distributed to jurisdictions for eligible transportation projects and purposes. This financing source may only fund capital expansion projects that support congestion reduction; 70% funding cannot be used for operations. Either the 70% Regional Revenue funding stream or the 30% Local Distribution Revenue could be leveraged by local jurisdictions to construct improvements on Route 7.
7. Additionally, NVTA is responsible for recommending the allocation of federal funds from two key programs: The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program and the Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP). Both types of federal funds can be used on transit capital projects. Projects considered for funding under these programs come directly from the jurisdictions.

## 10. Strategic Implementation Plan: A Living Document

NVTC's Strategic Implementation Plan will continue to evolve with input from local jurisdictions regarding responsibilities for construction, operation and maintenance. NVTC's ultimate strategy is to have BRT operational on the corridor, with bus priority treatments constructed on the route on an independent timeline. The Plan helps achieve this by identifying near-term targeted enhancements to existing bus service on Route 7 and detail opportunities for funding those improvements, while continuing to lay the groundwork for the more capital-intensive work to implement true BRT service on Route 7 in the future. With multiple jurisdictions, it would be challenging to coordinate design, procurement and construction across the region as one project. The Plan allows for flexibility by respecting each jurisdiction's competing needs and priorities with an overall goal of improving bus service on the corridor.

NVTC will continue to update the NVTC Commission (including adoption actions), the NVTC Program Advisory Committee and the Management Advisory Committee along with city/county boards, as invited. Lastly, NVTC will oversee the execution of the Strategic Implementation Plan and its progress.