



# Bus Rapid Transit

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## Overview

According to the [Federal Transit Administration](#) (FTA), Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a high-quality bus-based transit system that delivers fast and efficient service that may include dedicated lanes, busways, traffic signal priority, off-board fare collection, elevated platforms and enhanced stations. BRT is considered by many transit planners as a cost-effective way to increase transit ridership, reduce wait times, and increase rider safety and comfort.

The FTA created the National Bus Rapid Transit Institute (NBRTI) in 2001, which released a [report](#) in August 2024. The NBRTI report emphasizes that BRT can match the quality of light rail transit with a considerable lower up front cost. The report details the movement towards alternative fuel powering BRT systems, noting that compressed natural gas and battery powered vehicles in particular may result in considerable lower ownership costs and offer environmental benefits over conventional diesel powered vehicles.

BRT has expanded dramatically in recent years. According to the [American Public Transit Association](#) (APTA), as of 2023, 16 fixed guideway BRT systems, operating at

least 50 percent of peak service in a separate right of way, operated in the United States, three times the number operating in 2011. The APTA has provided guidance on BRT systems as well as road and infrastructure design for planners, transit agencies, local governments, and developers.

## Bus Rapid Transit in Colorado

The Regional Transportation District (RTD) has operated BRT for many years, with the most popular being the Flatiron Flyer, an express bus between Boulder and Denver. RTD completed a BRT [feasibility study](#) in 2020 which evaluated future corridors within the RTD service area. The feasibility study applied parameters including high rider demand, traffic congestion, and viability for capital investment and identified multiple areas within the district's network where BRT projects may have appeal and may qualify for federal funding support through meeting these criteria.

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is working with RTD, the City and County of Denver, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), the FTA, and local partners to deliver BRT on state highways in the metro region.

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## Planned projects

There are currently multiple BRT projects in the metro area, referred to as the [Denver Metro BRT Project](#). Outside of the metro, Fort Collins, through the [West Elizabeth BRT project](#), aims to connect Colorado State University (CSU) Main and Foothills campuses.

## East Colfax

The East Colfax BRT project currently underway by the Denver Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) will bring a center-running BRT service from Broadway to Yosemite Street with a dedicated transit lane in each direction. Construction commenced in the fall of 2024 with expected completion in 2027. According to the city, the project was awarded federal grant funding in 2024 and additional funding for the project is sourced from general obligation bond program funds approved by voters in 2017.

## Federal Boulevard and Colorado Boulevard

The Federal Boulevard project route is planned from Westminster to Englewood and the Colorado Boulevard route from 40th to Southmoor Station, off of Highway 285. CDOT currently expects construction on these two projects to be completed by 2030.

## Boulder County and North Metro

Other planned BRT projects include Colorado Highway 119, known as the Diagonal Highway, from 47th Street in Boulder to Hover Street in Longmont. This project is planned to include two routes from downtown Boulder to Colorado Highway 66 north of Longmont, replacing existing routes with more frequent service. The current project design includes a bypass lane for buses at certain intersections, including a special traffic signal that allows a bus to proceed while the general traffic is still stopped at a red light.

Another BRT project currently in planning stages is a nearly 25-mile stretch of CO Highway 7 from Boulder to Brighton. The project received a \$10 million Regional Share Funding grant through DRCOG's Transportation Improvement Program used to encourage investment amongst municipalities, counties, agencies and developers along the corridor.

## West Elizabeth in Fort Collins

The City of Fort Collins and CSU initiated the final design phase for BRT service along the West Elizabeth Street corridor in 2023. The city states that the design phase should be completed in 2026. The city currently operates BRT on its MAX service along the Mason Corridor, which will connect to the proposed project.