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LinkUS
Moving our region >> Together

er Road Pedestrian
Bridge Project

COTA MORPC COLUMBUS COLUMBUS

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LINKUS PROGRESS REPORT

>> SEPTEMBER 2026

COTA

Franklin County
BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS

MID-OHIO REGIONAL
MORPC
PLANNING COMMISSION

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

COLUMBUS
PARTNERSHIP

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LinkUS Progress Report SEPTEMBER 2026

SINCE
NOVEMBER
2024



- **New Line 30** launched (Hilliard-OSU)
- **Line 1** expanded to Dublin
- **Midnight service** added on all frequent and standard lines
- **8 lines** with improved frequency:
Lines 6, 34, 45, 52, 71, 72, 102 and CMAX
- **15 lines** with expanded hours
- **97 more Operators** hired (735 total)
- **76 more CNG buses** purchased
38 arriving September and October 2026
- **37 sidewalk and trail projects** funded for design or construction in 2026, totaling \$29.9 million
- **Tap To Pay** launched
- **COTA Mainstream hours** extended to complement fixed-route service
- **COTA Mainstream app** launched, letting customers with mobility needs book trips and pay fares by phone, tablet or computer

New LinkUS Dashboard Strengthens Transparency and Accountability

COTA launched a new [LinkUS Dashboard](#) in September, giving the public a clearer view of how LinkUS is delivering on commitments made to Central Ohio.

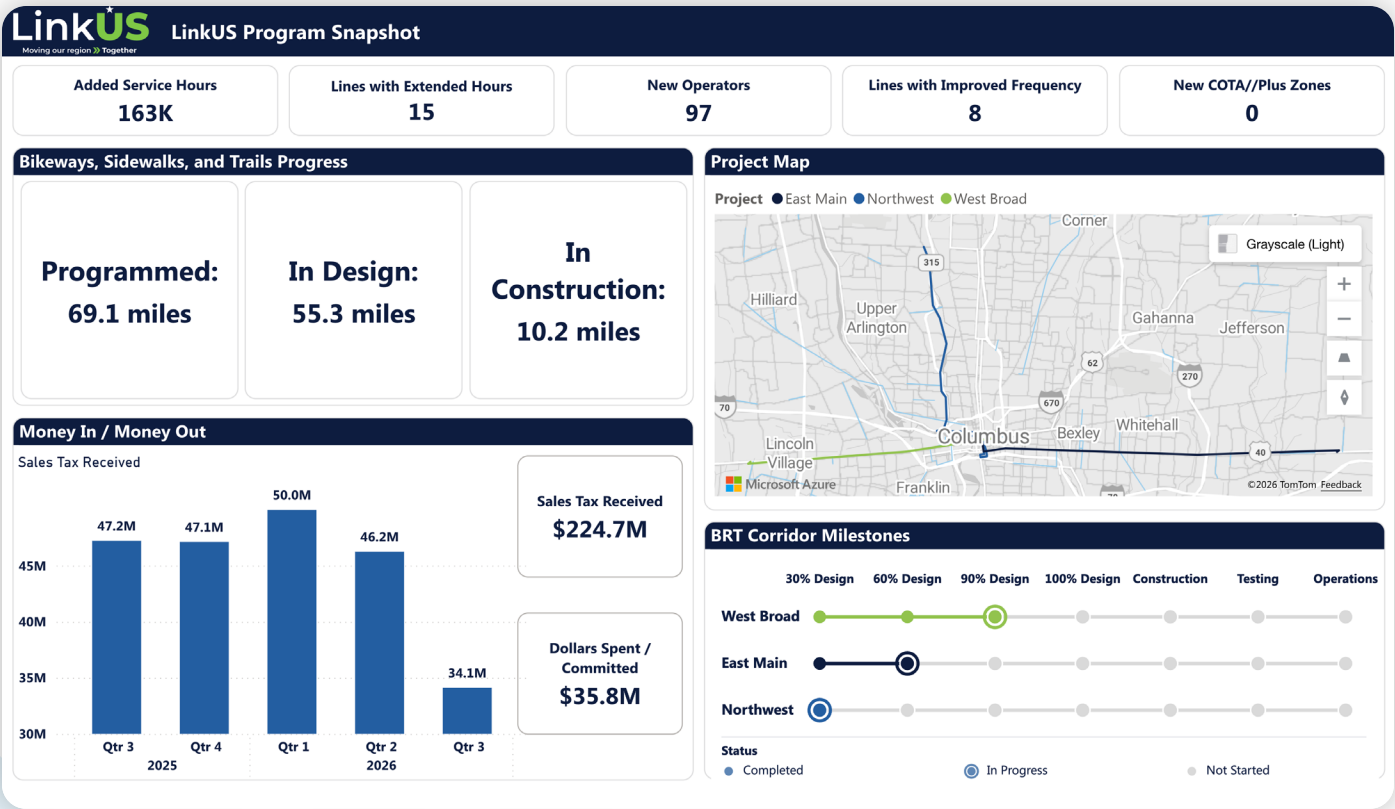
The online dashboard brings LinkUS investments, projects and progress into one place. Residents can see how voter-approved dollars are being invested and track progress on expanded transit service, rapid transit corridors and improvements to sidewalks, bikeways and trails.

The dashboard is designed to evolve alongside the LinkUS program, updating regularly as projects advance and investments are made, creating a clear line between LinkUS funding and the transportation improvements delivered across the region.

Launching the dashboard reflects COTA's commitment to keeping LinkUS progress measurable, accessible and transparent as the initiative moves from planning into implementation.



COTA President/CEO Monica Téllez-Fowler presents a check to Grove City Mayor Richard “Ike” Stage along with MORPC Executive Director William Murdock at the June 15 groundbreaking of the Hoover Road Pedestrian Bridge Project.



LinkUS Breaks Ground on Sidewalks, Bikeways and Trails Projects

LinkUS reached a major moment on June 15, as partners gathered in Grove City for the initiative's first groundbreaking ceremony, marking the start of construction on the Hoover Road Pedestrian Bridge improvements. The project is the first visible step toward one of LinkUS' most significant commitments: more than 500 miles of new and improved sidewalks, bikeways and trails across Central Ohio by 2050.

[COTA](#), the [Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission \(MORPC\)](#), [Franklin County Board of Commissioners](#), the [City of Grove City](#) and local business leaders celebrated the start of the \$2.2 million investment, which will make it safer and easier for people to walk, bike and travel between neighborhoods and destinations on both sides of Interstate 71.

The project will reconfigure the Hoover Road bridge to create a wider shared-use path for pedestrians and bicyclists while maintaining and improving mobility through the corridor. The improved connection will help residents safely reach schools, parks, churches, businesses and other community destinations.

Hoover Road is one of the first of 81 transit-supportive infrastructure projects receiving LinkUS funding commitments through 2030. Together, those projects are expected to deliver the first 150 miles of sidewalks, bikeways and trails toward the region's 500-mile commitment.



Rendering provided by the City of Grove City

Voters approved Issue 47 to support a transportation system that expands transit while making it easier and safer to reach transit and other destinations.

Construction is expected to be completed by the end of 2026.

» Other Projects Under Construction

Cooke Road, Clinton Township

In summer 2026, crews began building a new sidewalk and path for pedestrians and bicyclists between Karl Road and Cleveland Avenue, with better access to COTA Line 8 and CMAX.

See page 16 for funding details on these projects.

Shier Rings Road, Washington Township

Construction started in September on a path that closes a gap in the existing pedestrian and bike route near Dublin, fully funded by LinkUS and expected to be completed by fall 2026. This will provide better access to COTA Line 1.

Upcoming Construction Events

Cooke Road Improvement Project Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2026, 1 p.m.

Primary Sponsor: Franklin County Engineer's Office

Brooksedge Mobility Project Groundbreaking Ceremony

November 2026, Time TBD

Primary Sponsor: City of Westerville

Highlighted Projects Below are three additional projects programmed for 2026 and 2027.

Gender Road Sidewalk Connections

Project Type:

Sidewalks

This project will fill a gap in an existing shared-use path along Gender Road in Canal Winchester. Detailed design is underway in 2026 to ensure the project is ready for construction in 2027.

Primary Sponsor:

Canal Winchester

Connects To: COTA Lines 25 and 52

Funding: LinkUS will fully fund the project with \$45,000 committed for project development in 2026 and \$500,000 committed for construction in 2027.

Big Walnut Trail (Fairway Boulevard)

Project Type:

Shared-Use
Path/Trail

This project will construct 2.74 new miles along the Big Walnut Trail within the City of Whitehall to fill existing trail gaps and improve safety for all. Construction will begin in 2027 and help extend the Big Walnut Trail network throughout Central Ohio.

Primary Sponsor:

Whitehall

Connects To: COTA Lines 2, 10 and 24

Other Sponsors:

Columbus

Funding: LinkUS will fully fund the \$1.9 million construction phase.

Lane Avenue (North Star Avenue to Olentangy River Road)

Project Type:

Shared-Use Path
and Sidewalks

This newly identified project will build 1.3 miles of shared-use path and sidewalk on Lane Avenue where none exist today, improving connections across State Route 315 between neighborhoods, schools and job opportunities. It will also link directly to the future Northwest BRT Corridor, making it easier to reach rapid transit on foot or by bike. Preliminary design and pre-construction work will begin in 2027, with construction starting by 2031.

Primary Sponsor:

Columbus

Connects To: COTA Lines 1 and 30

Other Sponsors:

Clinton Township,
Upper Arlington

Funding: LinkUS will fund a portion of the total project cost by committing \$14.8 million in transit-supportive infrastructure funds for the design and construction phases.



COTA Service Improvements

» COTA Expands Service With New Connections in September

COTA expanded its transit network on Sept. 7 with service improvements that deliver new connections across its service area and advance commitments made through the LinkUS initiative.

The biggest change was the launch of [Line 30](#), a new route connecting Hilliard, Upper Arlington, The Ohio State University and Downtown Columbus. The line runs every 30 minutes, seven days a week.

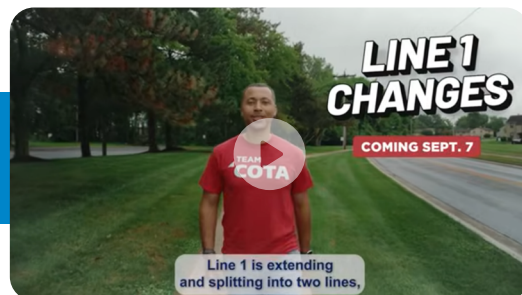
COTA also split the former Line 1 Kenny/Livingston route into two routes. [Line 1 Kenny](#) now runs between Downtown and Riverside Hospital, with every other trip extending north from Carriage Place to Ohio State Outpatient Care Dublin, giving Dublin a new direct connection.

[Line 1 Livingston](#) continues to serve communities south and east of Downtown Columbus through Reynoldsburg. Both routes run every 15 minutes along their main service areas, with the Dublin extension running every 30 minutes.

Other changes included adjustments to [Line 32](#) to coordinate with the new Line 30, and a [temporary Dublin Park and Ride for Zoo Bus and Line 73](#) customers while Bridge Park development continues.



Ride
Along
[Line 1 >>](#)

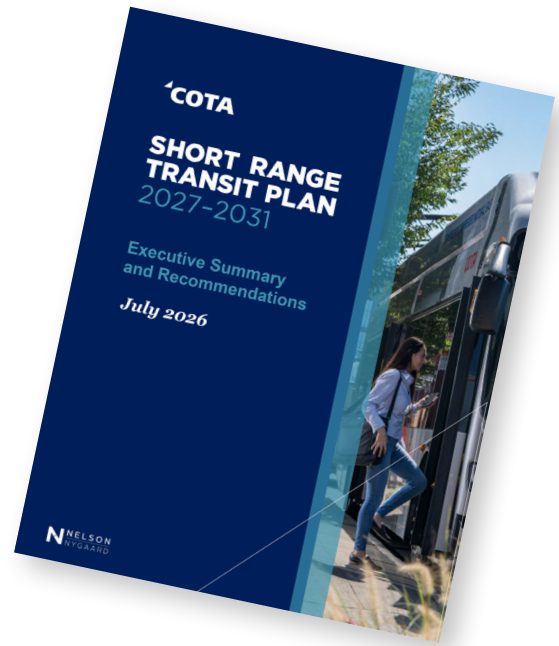


Together, the [September service changes](#) are another step toward a more connected regional transit network and the expanded mobility promised through LinkUS.

COTA Board Approves Five-Year Roadmap for Expanded Transit Service

The COTA Board of Trustees has approved the agency's Short-Range Transit Plan 2027-2031, a five-year roadmap for expanding and improving transit service across Central Ohio and delivering on the commitments of LinkUS.

The plan calls for 30% more transit service over the next five years, giving customers more options to reach jobs, education, healthcare and other destinations throughout the region. Planned improvements include expanded weekend service, stronger connections between communities and new service designed to meet Central Ohio's growth.



Among the future improvements is an express route connecting John Glenn Columbus International Airport with Downtown Columbus and The Ohio State University, creating a direct transit connection among three of the region's busiest destinations.

The plan also lays the groundwork for eventual 24-hour transit service on key routes, giving customers who work late-night, early-morning and nontraditional shifts greater mobility.

These investments are another step in delivering the LinkUS promise of more frequent, reliable and accessible transit service and a transportation network that supports Central Ohio's growth for decades to come.

The plan is final, but the proposed changes inside are not and can be modified as ridership continues to be evaluated. Any changes will happen through COTA's established service change process, with public feedback and engagement.



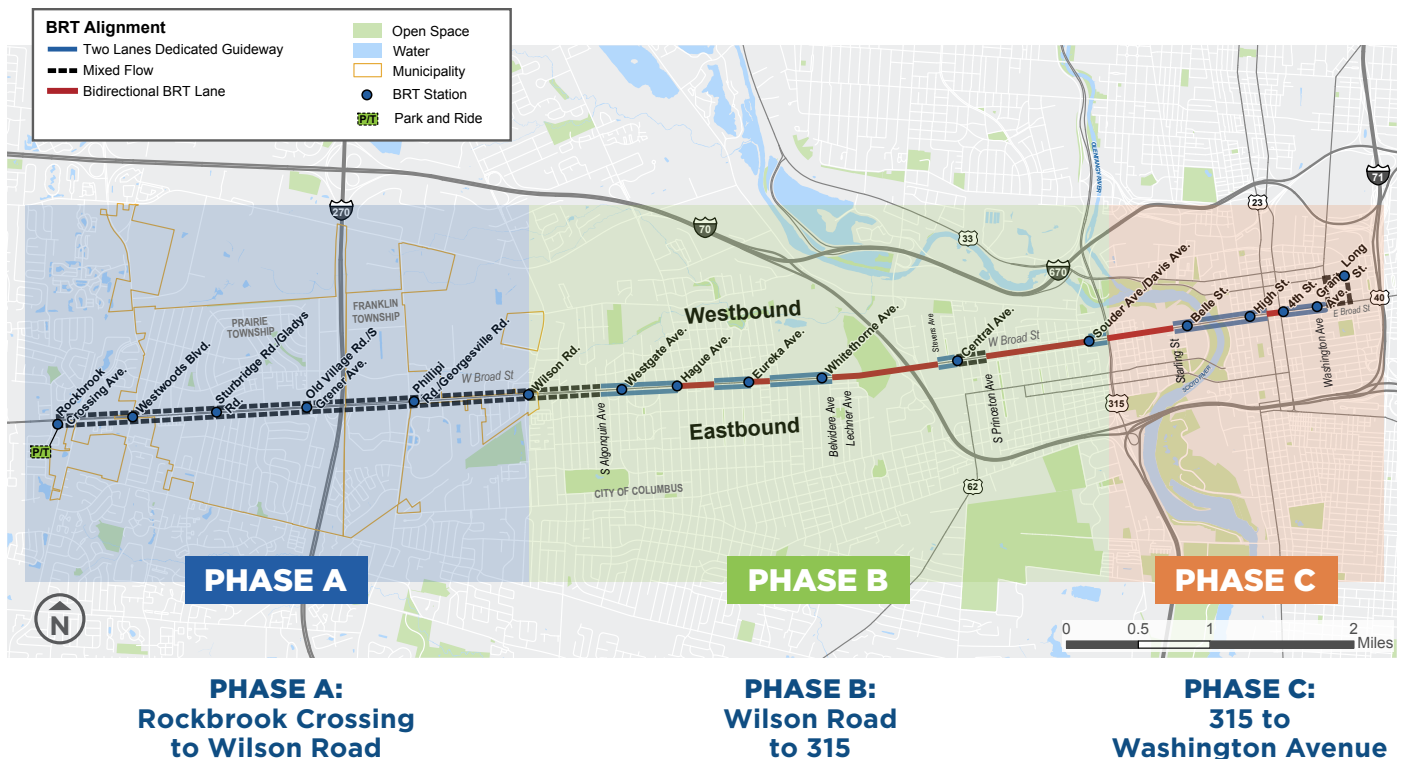


West Broad Street BRT

As the first of LinkUS' three Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors, West Broad Street BRT is helping build the region's rapid transit network. Work is advancing to make sure the corridor delivers long-term benefits for West Broad Street communities and Central Ohio.

West Broad recently cleared a key step in the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)'s Capital Investment Grant Risk Assessment process. Based on FTA's review, the corridor remains within Small Starts program limits and can continue moving toward a federal grant agreement.

Large federally funded projects often see changes in timing and scope, but COTA and its partners remain committed to bringing rapid transit to Central Ohio. COTA continues working with the FTA to advance the West Broad Street Corridor through the Capital Investment Grants Program.



» Connecting With the Community

This summer was packed with community engagement events. COTA's outreach team attended and tabled at 614 Day in Franklinton, the Westgate Farmers Market, Columbus Arts Festival and the Hilltop Hop. The team connected with community members, heard their thoughts and answered questions about the West Broad BRT.

The West Broad Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) engagement led to a productive conversation with Franklinton area business owners, who shared questions about business impact before, during and after construction. The BRT team shared project details specific to their businesses in response.

As fall begins, LinkUS will have even more opportunities to connect along the corridor. Come see us at:

OCT. 9:
Franklinton Fridays
With **Urban Scrawl 2026**
400 W. Rich St.

OCT. 10:
Hilltop Hop
W. Broad St. & S. Westmoor Ave.

OCT. 17:
Westgate Farmers Market
2925 W. Broad St.

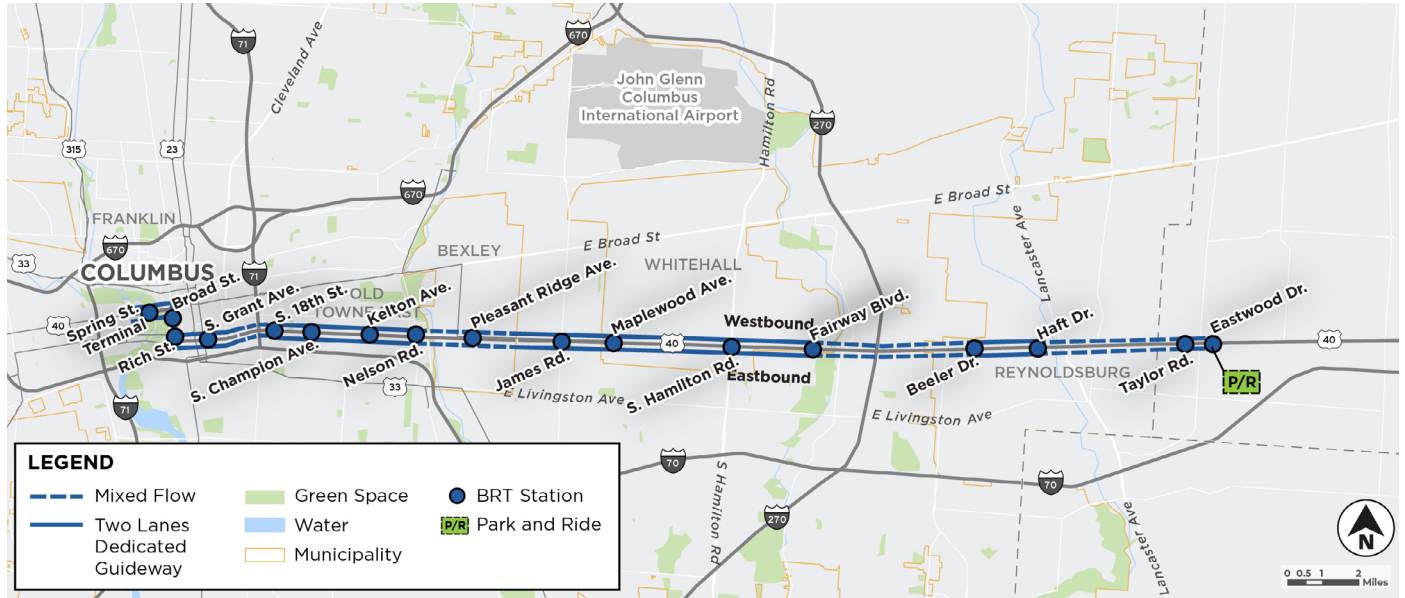
» Find upcoming West Broad Street BRT community events and meetings at linkuscolumbus.com/calendar



» For more information about the West Broad Street BRT line, visit linkuscolumbus.com/westbroad.

East Main Street BRT

The East Main Street Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project is nearing 90% design, and plans are becoming more detailed. Final design is expected to be complete in 2027, followed by planning for construction. As the project moves forward, the team will continue working closely with local cities, agencies and community partners to make sure the project reflects local needs and minimizes construction impacts.



Connecting With the Community

This summer, the East Main BRT engagement team connected with community members along the corridor at the Food Truck and Fun Fest, the Reynoldsburg Tomato Festival and the Franklin Park and Bexley Farmers Markets.

The team also walked in the Bexley Fourth of July Parade, engaging with about 7,500 people on all things East Main BRT.

As fall begins, LinkUS will have even more opportunities to connect along the corridor. Come see us at:

OCT. 3:
Diwali-Tihar Festival

Huber Park
1640 Davidson Dr.

OCT. 14:
Fall Forward Mingle
Capital One Shine Bright
Community Center
4590 E. Broad St.

OCT. 9:
Bexley Harvest Festival

Jeffrey Park
165 N. Parkview Ave.

OCT. 16:
Halloween in the BURG!
John F. Kennedy Park
7232 E. Main St.



Find upcoming East Main Street BRT community events and meetings at linkuscolumbus.com/calendar

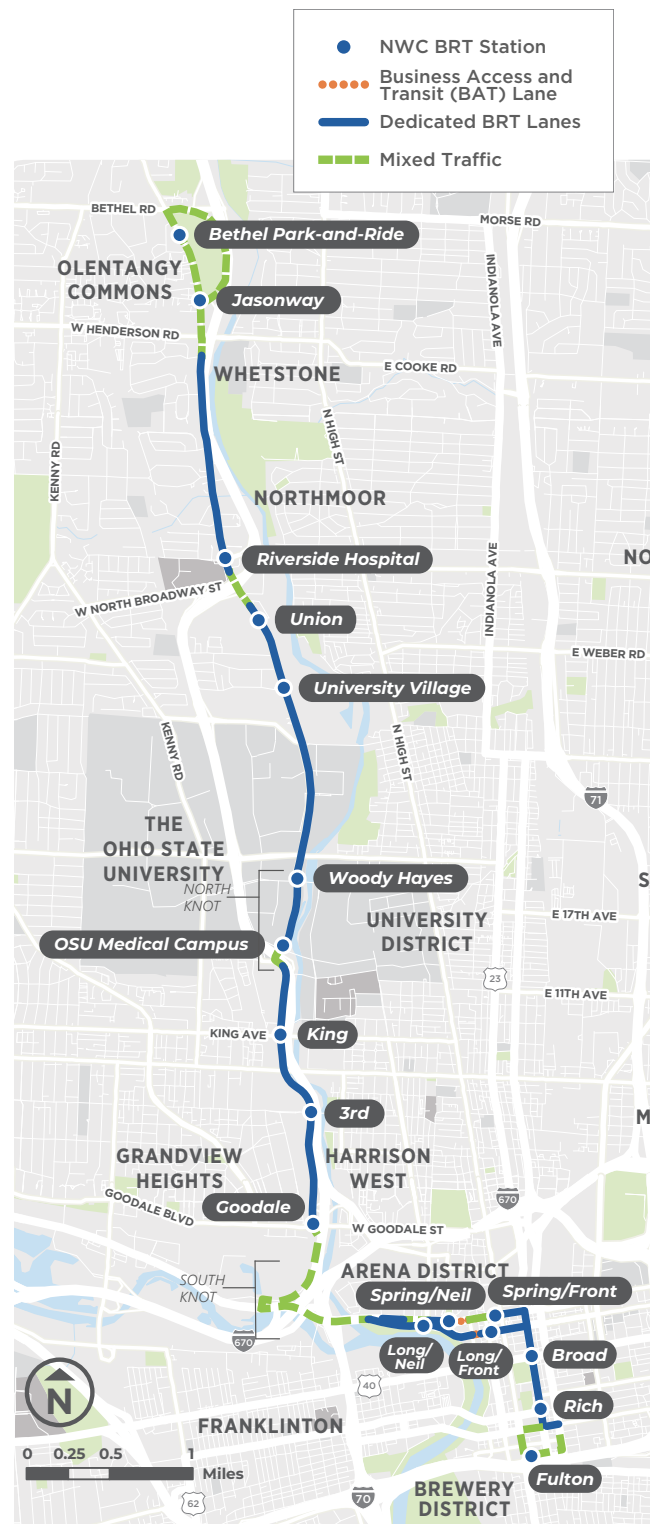
Northwest BRT

In September, Phase 1 of the Northwest Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor reached a major milestone with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) awarding the project a Medium-High rating. The rating reflects the FTA's assessment that the project has strong overall merit and qualifies to continue advancing through the federal Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program. This is an important step as we continue moving another LinkUS rapid transit corridor toward implementation.

Currently, the Northwest BRT corridor is at 30% design, and when the project reaches 60% design, COTA will create a preliminary construction timeline.



Design concepts are subject to change as planning, engineering and public engagement continue.



COTA also released a new rendering of a segment of the corridor at Olentangy River Road, looking south toward Lane Avenue near The Ohio State University. The rendering shows two dedicated BRT lanes, two vehicle lanes traveling south and one lane traveling north. Turn lanes onto Lane Avenue and high-visibility crosswalks will be added to promote a safe travel environment for all.

This design work is a collaboration between [COTA](#), the [City of Columbus](#) and [The Ohio State University](#).



For more information about the Northwest BRT line, visit linkuscolumbus.com/northwest.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

Community Input Shapes the Future of West Broad



The study included a public kickoff meeting, 10 station-area open houses, more than 250 survey responses and ongoing conversations with stakeholders across Central Ohio. The team collaborated with 19 Community Ambassadors, people who live or work within the corridor, to engage their neighbors. Community leaders played an important role in helping the project team reach residents and share information throughout the corridor.

Over the past year, residents, businesses, community organizations, developers and public agencies have worked together to shape a vision for the future of the [West Broad Street corridor](#), enhanced by Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). The project team engaged with these stakeholder groups through open houses, surveys, stakeholder meetings, focus groups and the Community Ambassador Program, sharing ideas about housing, jobs, small businesses, transportation and neighborhood investment along the future LinkUS corridor.



The public engagement phase has largely wrapped up, but the work continues. The project team is now using what it heard from the community to develop tools that support future development. These include a map-based development dashboard, a developer toolkit, station-area strategies and concepts showing the potential for future development along the corridor.

What's Next?

The project team is refining the TOD Plan and supporting tools, sharing draft materials with community partners, area commissions, local governments and implementation partners, and incorporating final feedback. The plan is expected to be complete by late November 2026.

The recommendations, tools and partnerships developed through this effort are meant to help communities, property owners, developers and public agencies work together to support housing, jobs, investment and neighborhood improvements around future LinkUS stations. COTA's partners will use these resources to guide growth and investment along West Broad Street in the years ahead.



Stay up to Date on LinkUS

Want to know what's happening with LinkUS, find an upcoming event or have a say in what's coming to your neighborhood? [Linkuscolumbus.com](https://linkuscolumbus.com) is your place to find the latest information, project updates and ways to get involved.

» What's new on the site:

- **Find events near you.** The interactive events calendar now includes more upcoming events, including groundbreakings. Find an event, see what's happening and RSVP — all in one place.
- **Find updates to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors near you.** The West Broad, East Main and Northwest corridor pages have been reorganized to make it easier to find the information most relevant to your neighborhood.
- **Track it all in one place.** The new LinkUS Dashboard gives a clear, ongoing look at how voter-approved dollars are being invested across transit, BRT corridors and infrastructure projects.

» More helpful tools are on the way:

- **Find the latest news and announcements.** A new press section will bring together press releases and media coverage.
- **Find what you need faster.** Improved search will help you quickly get to the right project information, contact or resource whether you're a resident, business owner or just looking for more information.
- **Communications toolkits for businesses.** Downloadable business toolkits will provide information and resources to help businesses stay connected with their customers while construction is underway.

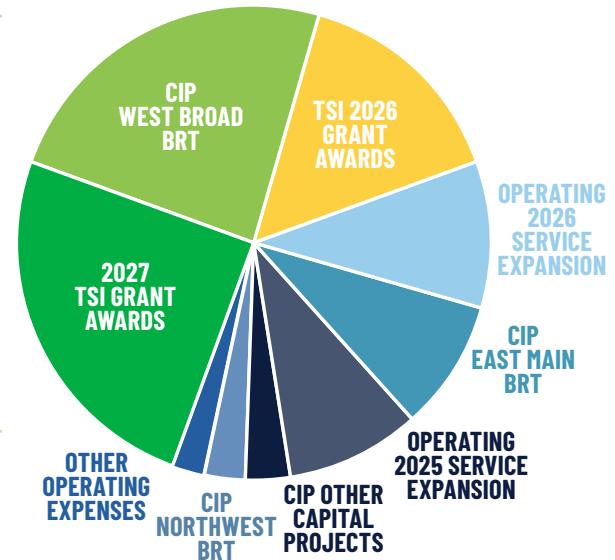


Keep checking back at linkuscolumbus.com for the latest LinkUS updates.

Financial Updates

LinkUS Sales Tax and Distribution to Date

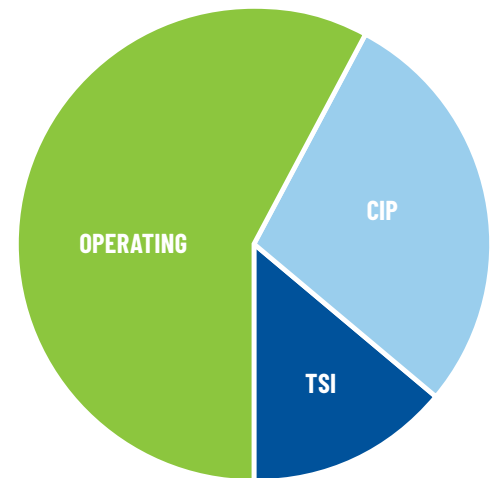
DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT (\$M)	ALLOCATION
TSI 2027 Grant Awards	\$51.4	25%
CIP West Broad BRT	\$49.0	24%
TSI 2026 Grant Awards	\$29.9	15%
Operating 2026 Service Expansion	\$20.5	10%
CIP East Main BRT	\$19.0	9%
Operating 2025 Service Expansion	\$17.3	9%
CIP Other Capital Projects	\$6.9	3%
CIP Northwest BRT	\$6.3	3%
Other Operating Expenses	\$4.7	2%
>> Total Sales Tax Projection		
	\$205 million	100%



2026 Operating Budget

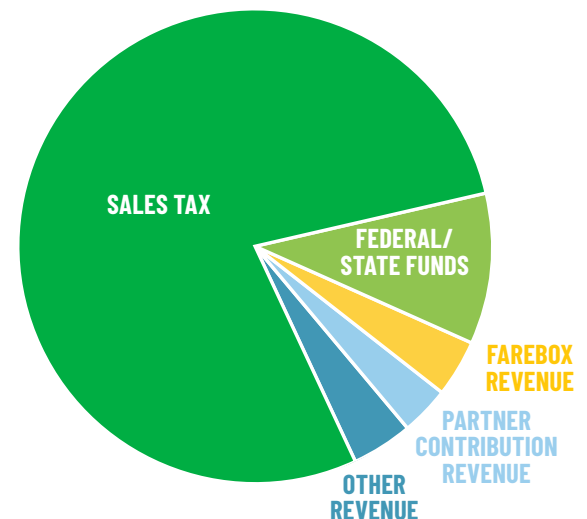
2026 COTA Annual Sales Tax Projection

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT (\$M)	ALLOCATION
Operating	\$216.9	58%
Capital Improvement Program (CIP)	\$105.2	28.2%
Transit-Supportive Infrastructure (TSI)	\$51.4	13.8%
>> Total Sales Tax Projection		
	\$373.5 million	100%



2026 Operating Revenue Projections by Source

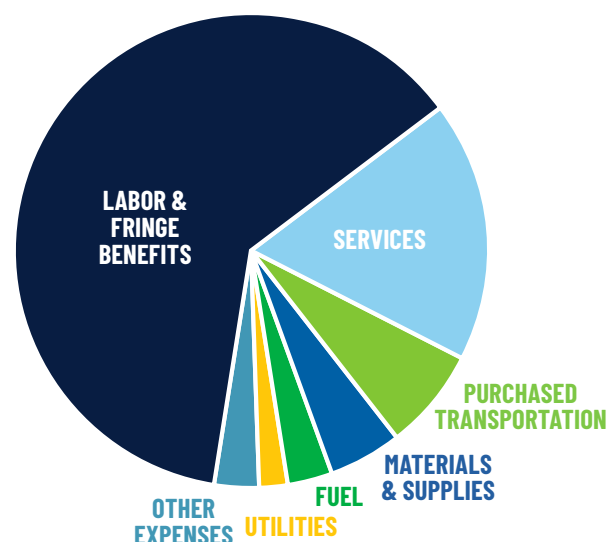
DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT (\$M)	ALLOCATION
Sales Tax	\$216.9	78.6%
Federal/State Funds	\$28.5	10.3%
Farebox Revenue	\$10.4	3.8%
Partner Contribution Revenue	\$9.0	3.3%
Other Revenue	\$11.2	4%
>> Total Revenue		
	\$276.0 million	100%



Financial Updates

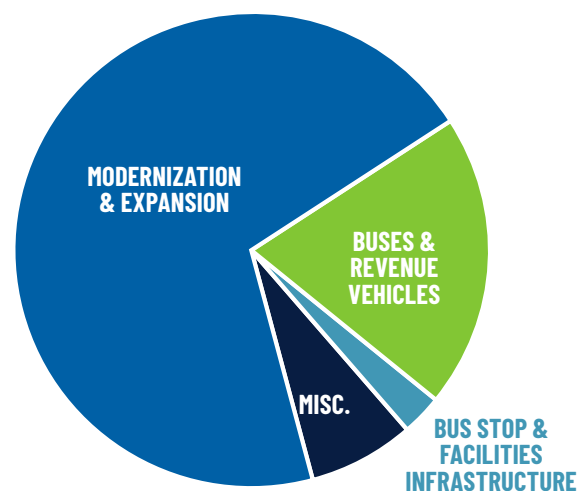
2026 Operating Expense Budget

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT (\$M)	ALLOCATION
Labor and Fringe Benefits	\$172.8	62.6%
Services	\$49.2	17.8%
Purchased Transportation	\$19.8	7.2%
Materials and Supplies	\$15.1	5.5%
Fuel	\$7.0	2.5%
Utilities	\$4.6	1.7%
Other Expenses	\$7.5	2.7%
>> Total Expenses	\$276.0 million	100%



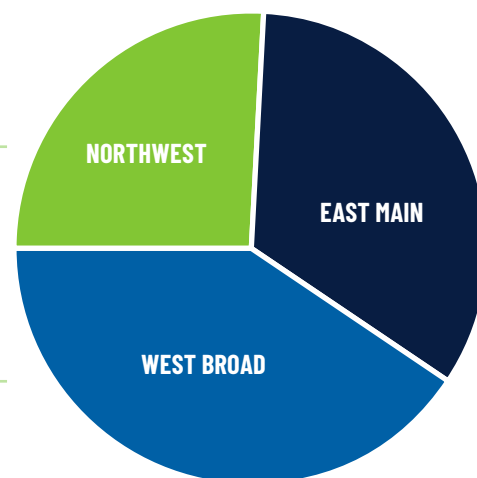
2026-2030 Capital Investment Plan

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT (\$M)	ALLOCATION
Modernization and Expansion (Including BRT)	\$1,030.0	70%
Buses and Revenue Vehicles	\$290.6	19.7%
Bus Stop and Facilities Infrastructure	\$49.3	3.4%
Miscellaneous	\$101.4	6.9%
>> Total Capital Investment	\$1.471 billion	100%



Bus Rapid Transit Project Expenses

PROJECT	ACTUAL 2023-2025 (\$M)	PROJECTED 2026-2030 (\$M)	TOTAL**** (\$M)
West Broad Street*	\$28.8	\$402.9	\$431.7
East Main Street**	\$15.7	\$339.5	\$355.2
Northwest***	\$4.9	\$268.6	\$273.5
>> Total Expense	\$49.4 million	\$1.01 billion	\$1.06 billion



*Source: SCC/PMOC Cost Estimate 4/10/26

**Source: 2026-2030 CIP

***Source: NWC Financial Plan 4/3/26

****Total cost estimates include infrastructure costs not factored into the Capital Investment Grant Program Small Starts Grant request.

2026-2030 Capital Improvement Program | By Primary Sponsor

LOCATION	TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT	AMOUNT
Canal Winchester	Gender Rd. Sidewalk Connections	\$45,000
Canal Winchester	Gender Rd. South Multi-Use Path	\$50,000
>> Total:		\$95,000
Columbus	E. Broad Capital Trail – East (Washington Ave. to Alum Creek Trail)	\$1,000,000
Columbus	Eastmoor Green Line	\$100,000
Columbus	Trabue Rd. (Buckeye Yard to I-270)	\$500,000
Columbus	Big Walnut Trail (Winchester Pike to Refugee Rd./Nafzger Park)	\$4,082,250
Columbus	Capital Trail (Broad St. from Scioto Peninsula to Washington Ave.)	\$2,300,000
Columbus	Nelson Rd. Sidewalks	\$1,000,000
Columbus	W. Broad St. Shared-Use Path	\$1,632,900
>> Total:		\$10,615,150
Dublin	Blazer Pkwy. Bike/Pedestrian Improvements	\$605,299
FCEO*	>> Cooke Rd. (Karl Rd. to Cleveland Ave.) — <i>currently under construction**</i>	\$672,755
FCEO*	Reynoldsburg-New Albany Rd./Morse Rd. (Clark State Rd. to Havant Dr.)	\$357,134
FCEO*	Dublin Rd. Shared-Use Path	\$500,000
FCEO*	Renner Rd. (Alton Darby Creek to Hilliard Rome Rd.)	\$270,481
FCEO*	Snouffer Rd. (Bride Water Blvd. to Smoky Row Rd.)	\$251,969
FCEO*	Heritage Trail (Arena District to Old Hilliard)	\$2,000,000
FCEO*	Groveport Rd. (Ebright/Corbett/Front to Canal Corp)	\$701,008
FCEO*	Winchester Pike (Gender Rd. to Shannon Rd.)	\$500,308
FCEO*	Galloway Rd. (Broad St. to O’Harra Rd.)	\$692,935
FCEO*	Grener Ave. Shared-Use Path on the West Side	\$473,388
FCEO*	McComb Rd. Sidewalks over I-270	\$243,377
>> Total:		\$6,663,355
Franklin Twp	Triangle Area Sidewalks (Brown Rd./Harrisburg Pike)	\$500,000
Grove City	Farmstead to Holton Rd. Shared-Use Path	\$90,000
Grove City	Grove City Connection to Camp Chase Trail	\$2,200,000
Grove City	>> Hoover Rd. Pedestrian Bridge — <i>currently under construction**</i>	\$2,200,000
Grove City	McDowell Rd. Diet	\$1,088,600
Grove City	Scioto Grove Metro Park to Great Southern Metro Park	\$300,000
>> Total:		\$5,878,600
Groveport	Groveport Madison HS Area Sidewalks	\$125,000
Hilliard	Leap Rd. South Improvements	\$300,000
Lockbourne	Lockbourne Rd. Shared-Use Path (Magnolia Trail to Collings Dr.)	\$350,000
Minerva Park	Cleveland Ave./Minerva Lake Rd.	\$550,000
Urbancrest	Centerpoint Transit Stop Upgrade	\$7,500
Washington Twp	>> Shier Rings Rd. Shared-Use Path — <i>currently under construction**</i>	\$544,300
Westerville	Brooksedge Mobility Project Phases 1 and 2	\$3,265,800
Worthington	E. Wilson Bridge Rd. Shared-Use Path	\$175,000
Worthington	SR 315 Crossing (Olentangy Trail to SR 161)	\$180,000
Worthington	Worthington Miscellaneous Sidewalk Gaps	\$100,000
>> Total:		\$455,000
>> Total:		\$29,955,004



Learn more, submit a question
or request a presentation at
linkuscolumbus.com

*Franklin County Engineer's Office

**Projects listed in BLUE denote
that construction is underway
as of September 2026.