BAILEY AVE BRT

PROJECT UPDATE

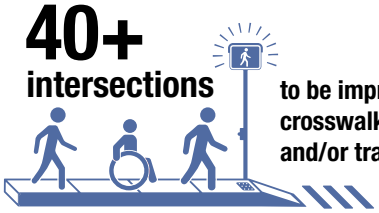
JUNE 2025

PROJECT BY THE NUMBERS

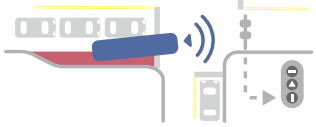
13 stations with well-lit and heated shelters, real-time travel information, heated sidewalks, unique branding, and opportunities to display public art

8 mobility hubs with opportunities for bike parking and bike sharing stations

40+ intersections to be improved with new crosswalks, pedestrian ramps, and/or traffic signals

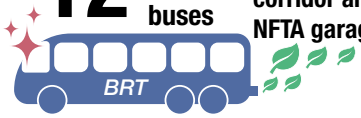


4 queue jump lanes **3 bus lane segments** to help buses move faster and avoid congestion at signals



2.5 miles of streetscape rehabilitation and reconstruction between stations (e.g., repairing / replacing sidewalks, fixing curbing, planting new street trees, etc.)

12 battery electric buses to operate along the corridor and charge at NFTA garages



10 minute headways during peak periods in the mornings and early evenings, and 30/60 minute headways for peak/off-peak local buses

35% reduction in travel time compared to existing local service

This "Project by the Numbers" infographic summarizes many of the potential improvements and benefits of the Bailey Ave BRT Project.

NFTA-METRO

Overview

This document summarizes the planning, engagement, concept development, analysis, and consultation efforts to advance the pre-engineering design and operational elements of a bus rapid transit (BRT) system along a 7.5-mile section of Bailey Avenue. The project extends from South Park Avenue in the south to University Station in the north (Figure 1). The base feasibility assumptions and elements of this project stem from the "Alternative C" scenario of the 2021 Bailey Avenue Corridor Improvement Study conducted by the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) in collaboration with NFTA-Metro and the City of Buffalo. This BRT system will bring high quality transit service to Bailey Avenue with features such as shorter wait times, dedicated bus lanes, upgraded shelters and stations, and improved customer amenities. The project will also result in widespread roadway, traffic, and pedestrian infrastructure upgrades throughout the corridor.

Currently, over 100,000 residents reside in neighborhoods along or around Bailey Avenue. These neighborhoods are served by the NFTA Route 19, which boasts some of the highest ridership in the system and connects to thirteen other fixed route bus lines and the Metro Rail light rail line. Ridership along Route 19 was 798,000 in the 2024 fiscal year, and the route provides vital connections to major job centers like the University of Buffalo South Campus, Veteran's Hospital, and many local commercial centers. Population metrics are currently increasing across the city and along Bailey Ave itself, with some tracts in neighborhoods like Genesee-Moselle and Emerson Playground growing by over 20% since 2010. As such, this corridor is an ideal candidate to upgrade into a BRT line.

Overall, the Bailey Ave BRT project will provide better transit service and repair public infrastructure in ways that will support further investment in the communities along the corridor.

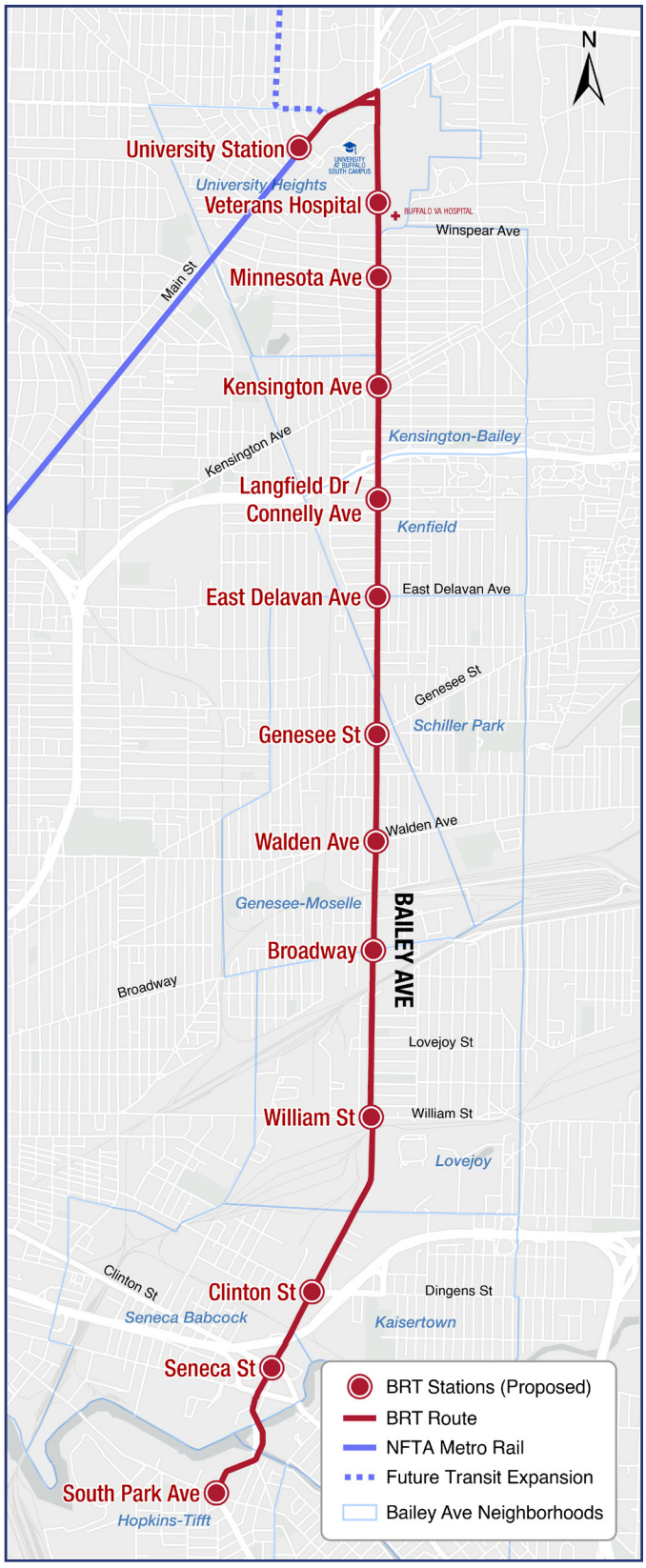
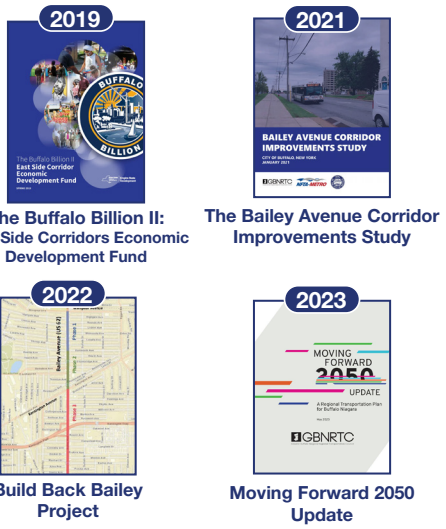


Figure 1. A map of the proposed Bailey Ave BRT corridor, including station locations.

Study Process & Engagement

The study process consisted of several parts, including a review of previous studies; an existing conditions assessment; an analysis of operations, ridership, and other factors; concept design of roadway improvements and stations; and an extensive public outreach and engagement effort.



The Buffalo Billion II: East Side Corridors Economic Development Fund

The Bailey Avenue Corridor Improvements Study

Build Back Bailey Project

Moving Forward 2050 Update

Figure 2. Four examples of prior plans that helped inform the Bailey Ave BRT project.

Previous Studies

Several related projects and studies were conducted prior to the initiation of the Bailey Ave BRT project (Figure 2). These studies generally focused on developing solutions to address disinvestment and improve transportation in and around Buffalo's East Side. The results and outcomes of these studies have helped inform the current Bailey Ave BRT project.

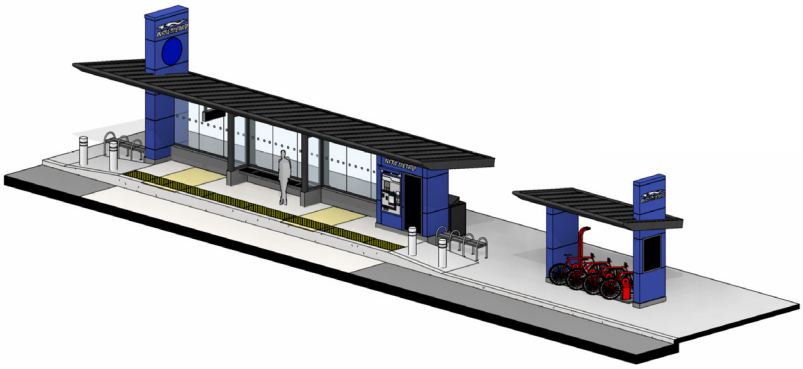
Existing Conditions Assessment

Existing physical and operational conditions throughout the corridor were assessed as part of the project. Elements like sidewalks, bus facilities, curb ramps, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and pavement conditions were cataloged and analyzed to better understand current and future needs within the study area (Figures 3, 4).

Figures 3, 4. Examples of non-compliant and deteriorating sidewalks and roadway conditions along Bailey Ave. These photographs were taken as part of a corridor-wide existing conditions assessment.

Operational & Infrastructural Analysis

A series of analyses were developed to model ridership projections, estimate energy demands from low-emission vehicles, and better understand impacts to traffic and travel times throughout the corridor. Some of these analyses, like energy demand estimates and traffic analysis, were performed to inform infrastructure planning at NFTA facilities and support the implementation of transit priority features, like bus lanes and TSP. Additionally, NFTA operations and maintenance staff were invited to a workshop to consider the policy implications of implementing various BRT elements (e.g., near-level boarding and fare collection). The results of these analyses and meetings were critical in advancing the project, including informing the conceptual design of BRT stations (Figure 5).



Figures 5. An early example of a BRT station concept with a mobility hub.

Public Engagement & Outreach

A robust public engagement process was conducted in tandem with the existing conditions assessments. This work included the development a public engagement plan to guide the efforts, the establishment of several key committees and focus groups comprised of local leaders and residents, extensive in-person outreach and events, surveys, and a prominent digital information campaign (Figures 7–9). The combined results of these efforts informed the overall decision-making process around all aspects of the project, including station locations, vehicle types, station layouts and amenities, traffic signal priority measures, and roadway improvements.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

57% of respondents use NFTA-Metro a few times a week or more

Community members listed accessibility for those with mobility limitations as very important

The top three improvements desired for Bailey Ave are faster buses (20%), calmer traffic (20%), and more buses (19%)

WHAT WE HEARD

"Buses are too infrequent, especially at night and on weekends."

"Sometimes it takes a long time to wait for a bus and there aren't enough seats at the bus stops, so you have to stand for long periods of time."

"Please bring more trees, plants, and art to Bailey along with garbage cans and less litter."

Figures 6. Examples of insights, information, and opinions from public surveys.

Figures7–9 Photos from open house events (top, middle) and of community ambassadors (bottom).

Figure 10. This conceptual rendering of a BRT station at Delavan Ave highlights various station and intersection improvements like a mobility hub, ticket vending machines, sidewalk improvements, and new stations.

Figure 11. This conceptual rendering of the Minnesota Ave BRT station showcases features like real-time passenger information and near-level boarding.

BRT Stations & Intersections

The Bailey Ave BRT project includes a suite of station and intersection upgrades. These upgrades are intended to enhance the station areas, improve the safety and experience of pedestrians, and encourage better access to business and community institutions on Bailey Ave.

Planned station improvements include:

- **Weather protected shelters** – Specially designed shelters will provide better protection from weather, including rain and snow.
- **Heating elements** – Stations will feature heating elements to keep shelters warm and comfortable in cold weather conditions.
- **Integrated lighting** – Integrated lighting fixtures will make shelters brighter, safer, and more inviting.
- **Near-level boarding** – Raised nine-inch bus platforms will allow doors to open nearly level to the bus station which makes boarding faster, easier, and safer.
- **Heated sidewalks** – Special heating elements embedded within the sidewalk will melt snow and prevent ice build-up during winter months.
- **Real-time passenger information** – Digital screens will display real-time information for passengers, including bus arrival times, alerts, and schedules.
- **Interactive maps** – Interactive maps will allow customers to easily find where they need to go while waiting for the bus.
- **MetGo vending machines** – Customers will be able to purchase and refill their MetGo cards at vending machines at the BRT stations.
- **Mobility hubs with opportunities for bike parking and bike share stations** – Mobility hub stations will provide enhanced multi-modal transit connectivity with features like bike parking and bike share facilities.
- **Opportunities for local art** – New BRT stations will provide opportunities for local artists to showcase their work and enhance the sense of place at and around stations.
- **Opportunities for landscaping** – BRT stations will have opportunities for landscaping and street beautification.

Figure 12. This map depicts which BRT stations will also serve as mobility hubs.

Station area/intersection improvements include:

- **Pedestrian ramps** – Pedestrian ramps create a smooth and safe transition from the sidewalk to the roadway. New curb ramps must comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act.
- **Pedestrian signals** – Pedestrian signal improvements will make crossing the street easier and safer.
- **Crosswalks** – High-visibility crosswalks will improve the safety and ease of crossing the street.
- **Bump outs** – Bump outs are sections of sidewalk that bulge out at intersections. These features provide more room for pedestrians, reduce the distance a person needs to walk to cross the street, and help pedestrians be more visible to oncoming drivers.
- **Sidewalk repair/replacement** – The Bailey Ave BRT project calls for the repair or replacement of over 2.5 miles of sidewalk along the corridor.
- **Roadway pavement improvements** – The project also calls for repaving all asphalt at the intersections with BRT stations.

Figure 13. This BRT station rendering at William St highlights transit priority features like a bus only queue jump with a specialized LRT signal.

Figure 14. This conceptual rendering of the Kensington Ave BRT station shows a BRT bus moving through a bus only lane.

Transit Priority Features

BRT systems boast unique elements designed to move buses faster, avoid delays, and create a more reliable and convenient transit system, thereby improving overall mobility and attracting additional riders to transit. BRT features can include dedicated rights-of-way such as bus lanes and queue jumps, off board fare collection, level boarding, special branding and technology improvements such as transit signal priority and enhanced customer information. Key BRT elements for Bailey Avenue include:

- **Queue jump lanes** – Queue jump lanes are bus lanes paired with specialized signals that allow buses to move past congestion at an intersection, thus giving buses a "head start" to merge into travel lanes when traffic lights change.
- **Transit signal priority (TSP)** – TSP is a special feature added to traffic signals that can detect when a bus is nearby, thus changing the traffic signal and giving the bus a time advantage at intersections.
- **Bus only lanes** – Bus lanes are clearly marked lanes restricted only to buses (or buses and right turning traffic) allowing buses to avoid traffic and achieve higher speeds.
- **Increased service** – NFTA is evaluating BRT buses every 10 minutes during peak periods and between 15 and 20 minutes during off-peak periods.*
- **Branded buses** – Special branding will make BRT buses stand out from other NFTA vehicles

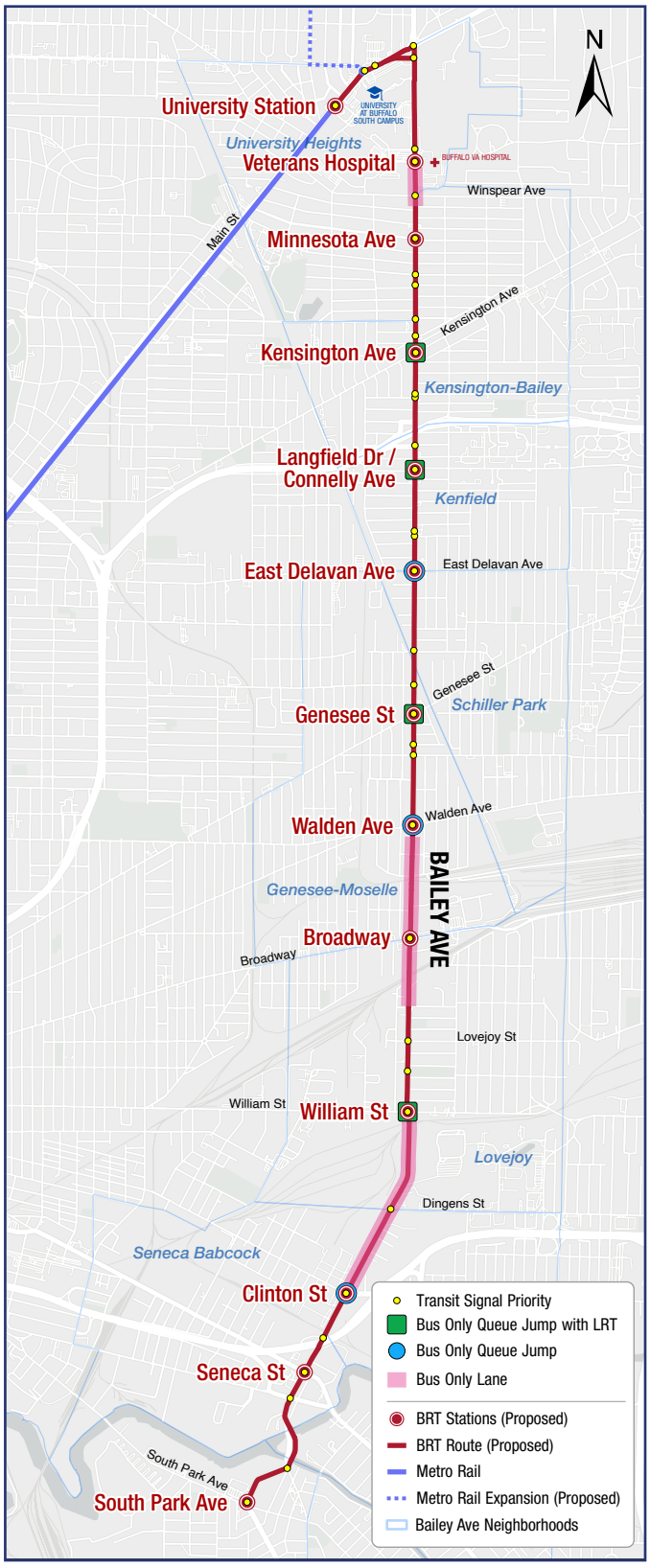


Figure 15. This map highlights the various transit priority features proposed throughout the Bailey Ave BRT corridor.

* Local bus service on the existing Route 19 will continue but frequency may be modified.

Figure 16. This conceptual rendering depicts a BRT station at the intersection of Bailey Ave and Genesee St. Note the sidewalk and streetscape improvements, such as sidewalks, curb ramps, street trees, and landscaping.

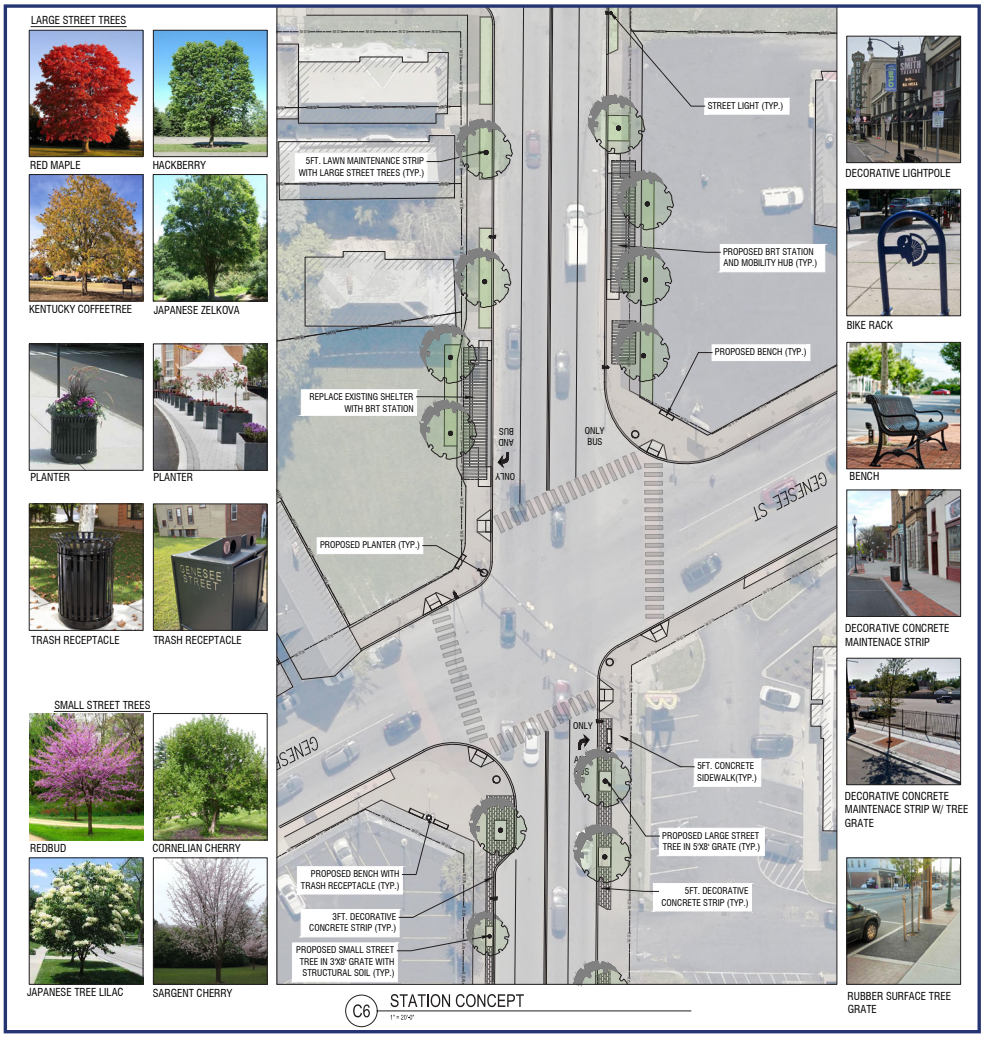


Figure 17. A landscape architecture plan is critical to establishing a consistent, efficient, safe, and aesthetically pleasing streetscape across the entire corridor. This plan example outlines recommendations for the Genesee St BRT station and mobility hub.

Sidewalks & Streetscape Improvements

The Bailey Ave BRT project will also include upgrades to streetscapes and sidewalks throughout the Bailey Ave corridor, especially at interesctions near BRT stations. NFTA has also identified selected segments of the corridor in between the BRT stations where sidewalk–and, when possible, streetscape–improvements will be made.

Overall, the Bailey Ave BRT project calls for sidewalk and pedestrian infrastructure improvements at over 40 intersections along Bailey Ave and over 2.5 miles of streetscape improvements.

- **Sidewalk improvements** – Improvements to sidewalks and curbs will be made at and near BRT stations. Additional upgrades to select segments between BRT stations may be included. The exact treatments will be determined during design phases based on land use typologies (Figure 17) and in coordination with the City of Buffalo. The City is overseeing a multi-phase streetscape and roadway redesign called Build Back Bailey (Figure 18).
- **Streetscaping** – Street trees provide shade, help cool the corridor, manage stormwater, clean the air, and look nice. The exact locations and types of street trees to be planted will be determined in coordination with the City of Buffalo.

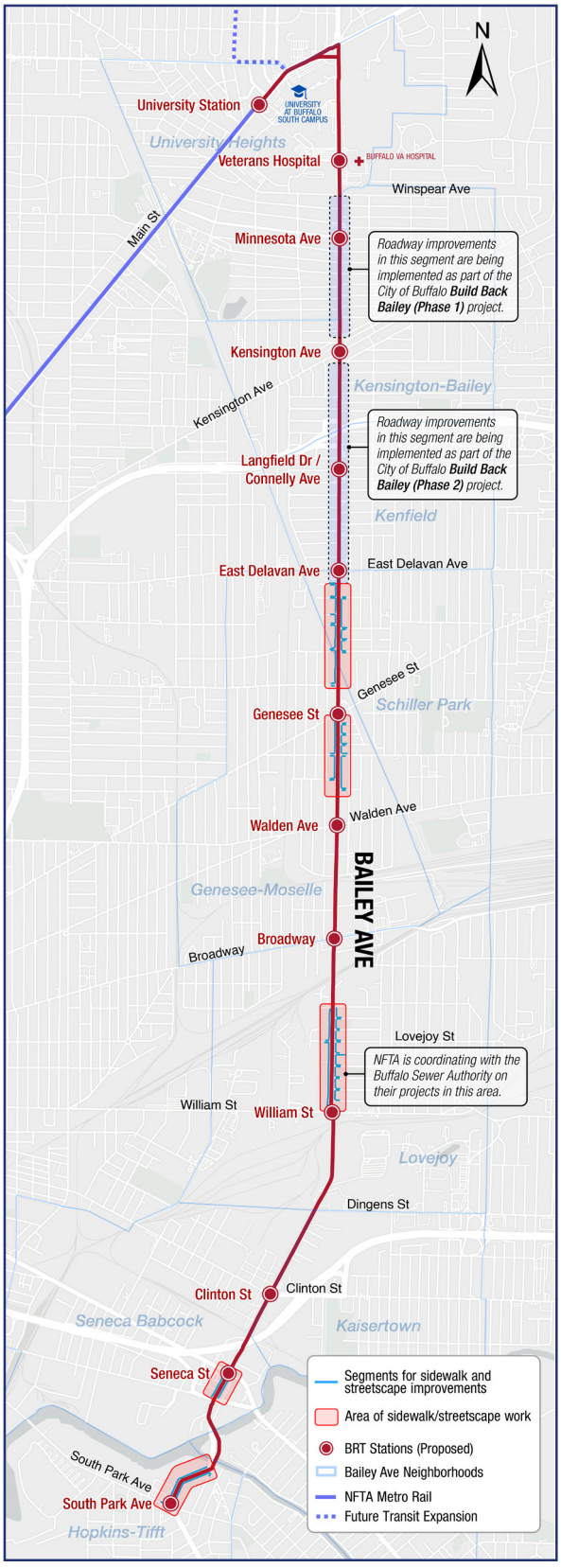


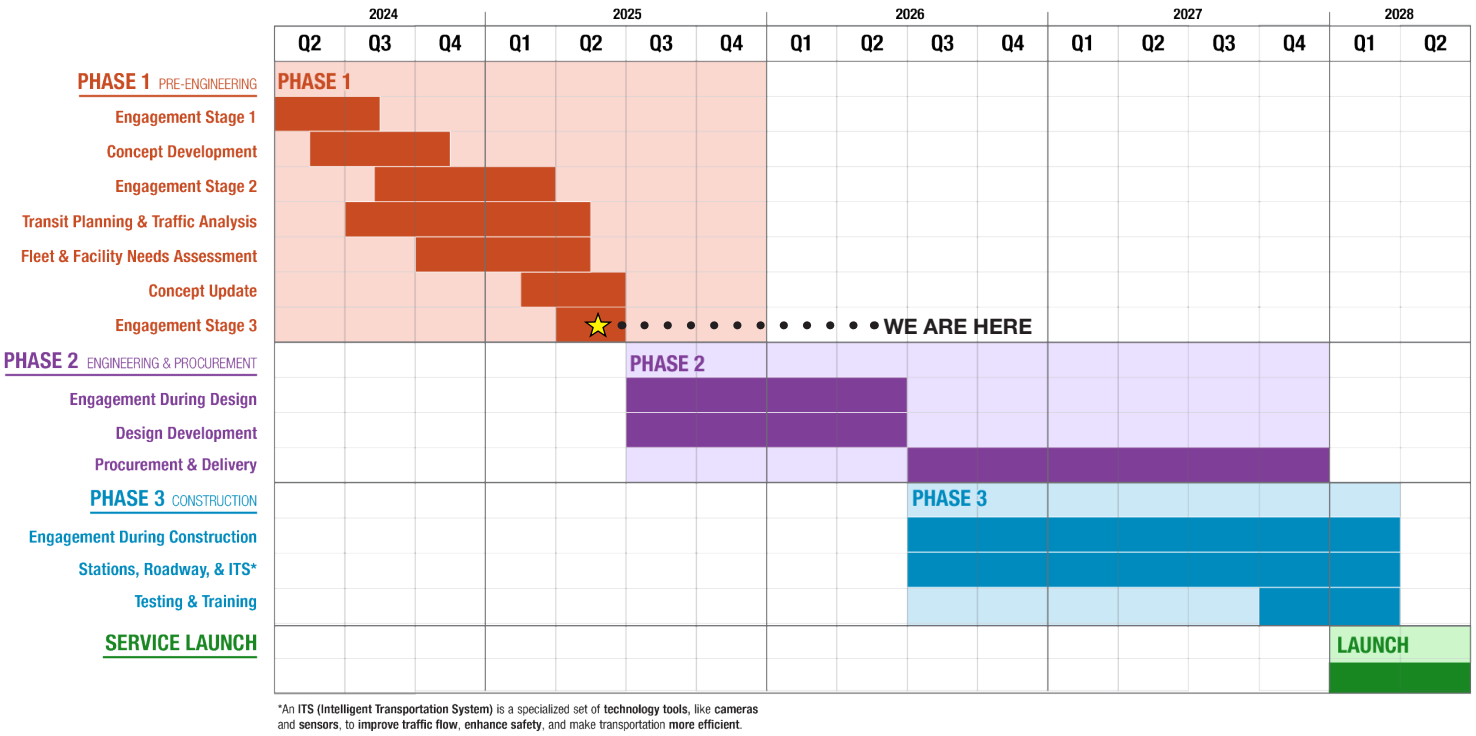
Figure 18. The map above shows the planned extent of sidewalk and streetscape improvements along the corridor.

Next Steps

What is presented in the Project Update was the work conducted during Phase I of the project, “Pre-Engineering”. Now that NFTA has defined the project elements and extents, they will begin Phase II, “Engineering”. During this period, NFTA will be focused on developing the designs of the stations, traffic signals, roadway, sidewalks, and streetscapes, in the areas shown in the maps above. This process will require coordination with the City of Buffalo. In Phase II there will be ongoing outreach to the general public and transit riders about the project and dedicated engagement with property owners, businesses, and community groups anticipated to be directly impacted by the project. During this phase, NFTA will also work on further refining the schedule for the new bus service and complete some related studies on things like a brand for the new service.

Once the design work is done, NFTA will advertise contracts for Phase III, “Construction”. Again, NFTA is committed to continuing to keep the public informed about the project during construction, especially to communicate any impacts that might be expected from the work. Some construction will start in the middle of 2026 and other elements won’t start construction until closer to 2027, but all work is planned to be complete by 2028.

See below for a basic schedule for the rest of the project.



*An **ITS (Intelligent Transportation System)** is a specialized set of **technology tools**, like **cameras** and **sensors**, to **improve traffic flow**, **enhance safety**, and make transportation **more efficient**.

Please check the project website regularly for more information on the projects progress.

https://baileyavebrt.com/