



Northern Virginia Transit Consolidation Feasibility Study

Leadership Roundtable

October 21, 2026



Roundtable Overview

Opening and Safety Briefing

Welcome from DRPT Director

Study Context

Presentation of Study Findings

Agency, ATU & Elected Officials Remarks

Closing Remarks

Primary Objectives

- **Present Findings:** Share key findings and analysis
- **Facilitate Dialogue:** Encourage questions and perspectives from agency leaders and elected officials.
- **Document Input:** Capture perspectives to inform the study

Welcome

Mariia Zimmerman

Director

Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Input Opportunity



Public Input

**Scan to visit the website
and submit your comments**



Legislative Direction

“The Department of Rail and Public Transportation shall evaluate the feasibility of consolidating DASH Alexandria Transit, Fairfax Connector, ART Arlington Transit, and CUE Fairfax City into a single, unified regional bus system.

As part of this evaluation, the Department shall prepare and submit a comprehensive report assessing:

- (i) potential cost savings and long-term financial impacts;*
- (ii) operational efficiencies and service improvements;*
- (iii) rider and community input, including public feedback and consumer sentiment;*
- (iv) potential challenges, implementation considerations, and legal or governance implications associated with consolidation; and*
- (v) a review of comparable consolidation efforts in other states or metropolitan regions.*

The Department shall submit a report to the Chairs of the Senate and House Transportation Committees by December 15, 2026.”

Source: [Virginia State Budget HB 30 – Approved 6/29/2026; Item 433.H](#)



**The study is intended to inform
decision-making, not make a recommendation
for, or against, consolidation**

Process

July - August

August

August-October

October-December

Foundations

Agency Questionnaire

Existing and Planned
Routes and Service

Perspectives from
One-on-One
Conversations

National Case Studies

Previous Public
Perception Research



Scenario Development

Identify Options and
Assumptions for Potential
Consolidation

- Governance
- Funding
- Operations and Maintenance
- Labor/Workforce
- Administrative and Legal
- Service
- Fleet & Facilities
- Safety & Security
- Technology



Evaluate Scenario

Qualitative Screening
of Governance, Labor,
and Administrative
Options

Identify Potential for
Operational Efficiencies

Identify Potential for
Financial Efficiencies



Present and Refine Findings

Staff Working Group

Leadership Roundtable

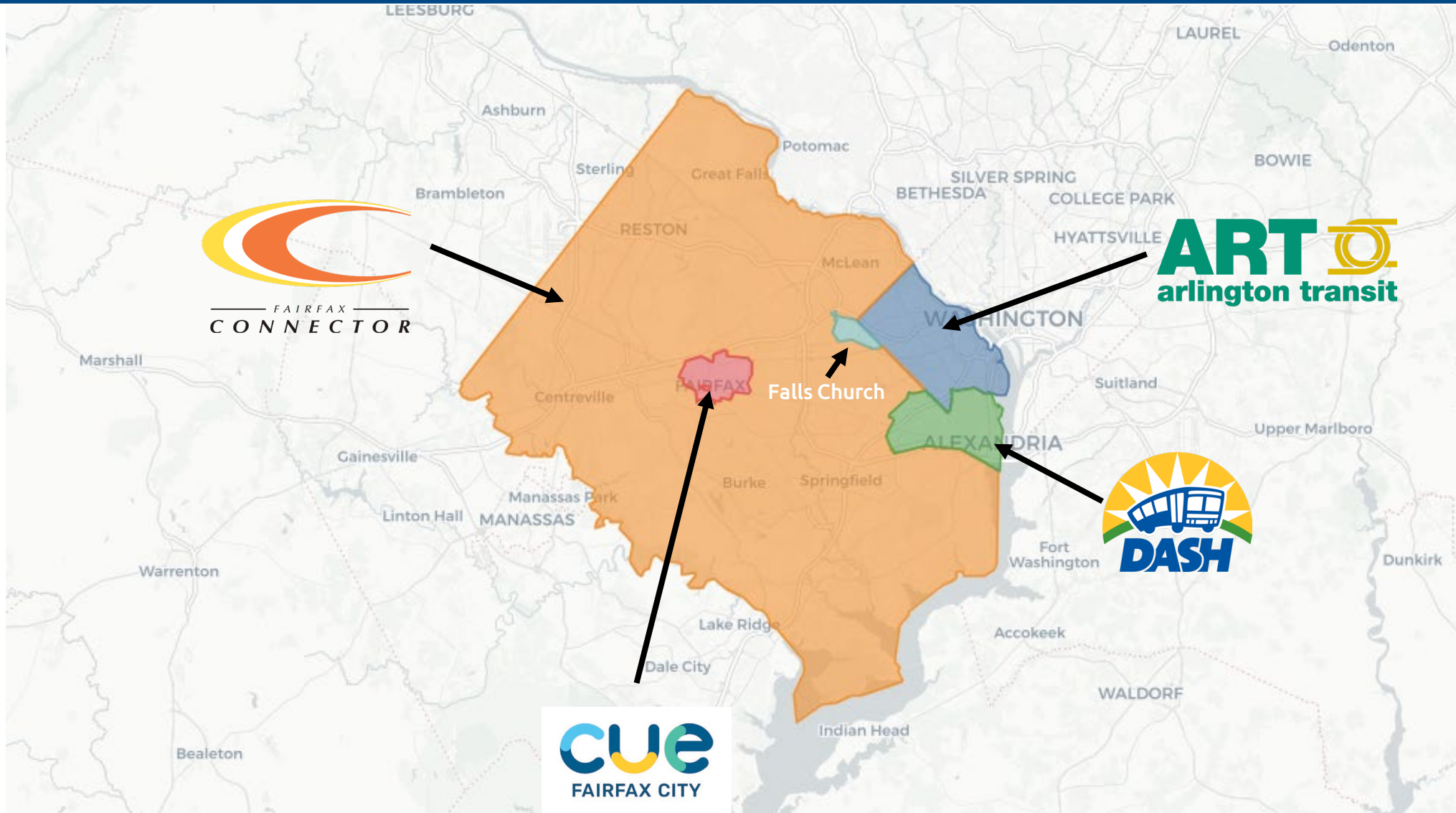
Draft Report/
Executive Summary

Final Report

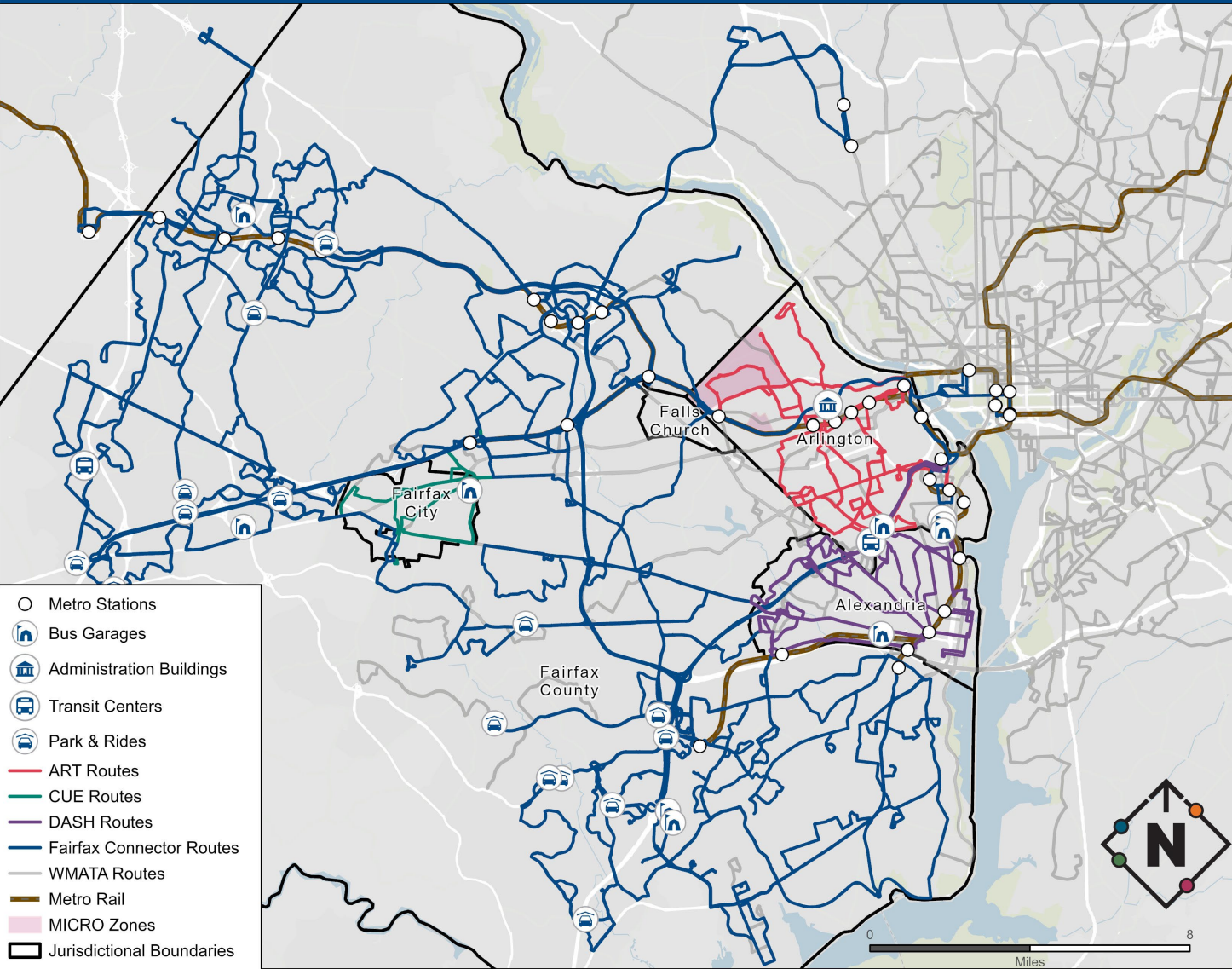


Stakeholder Engagement

Study Transit Agencies



Service Overview – Four NOVA Agencies & WMATA



112

fixed routes

19.2M

annual ridership

17.5M

annual revenue miles

1.46M

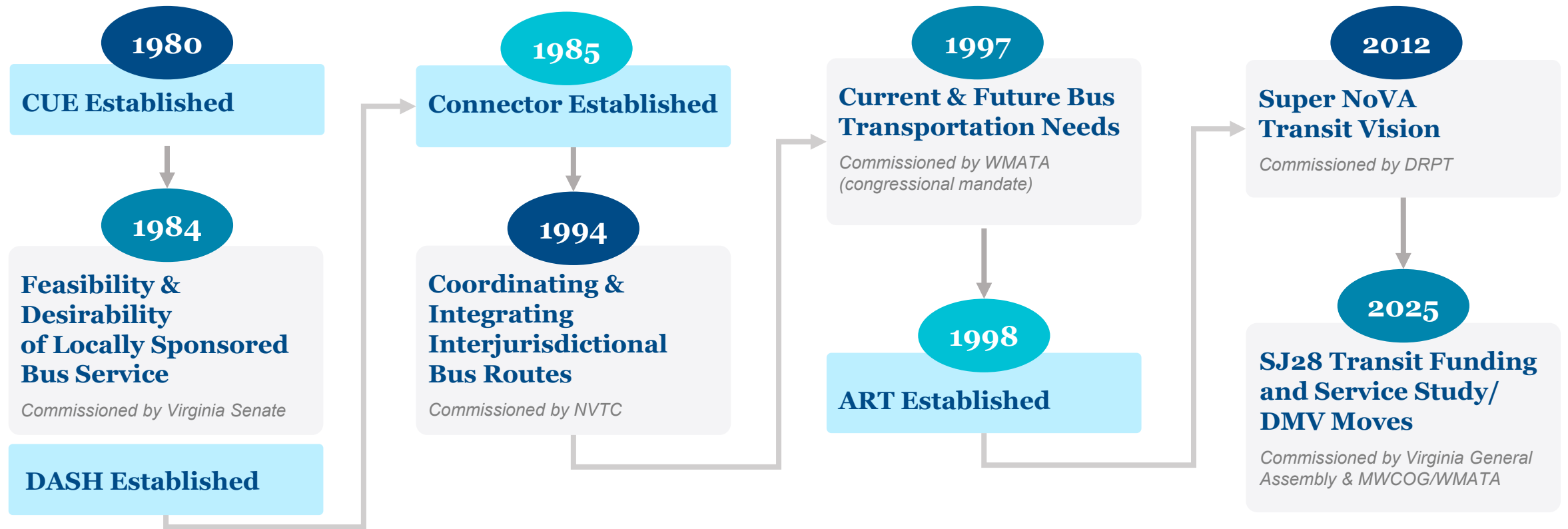
annual revenue hours

Data timeframe: June 2025 to June 2026

Service Types Provided

- Fixed Route Bus
- Express/Commuter Bus
- Rail
- Microtransit
- Paratransit
- Human Service Transportation

Coordination of Transit in Northern Virginia is not a new topic



Key Takeaway: All studies urged greater coordination through regional coordination bodies; Local control and responsiveness has been the strongest consistent theme

While agencies have some elements in common, some key differences make potential consolidation complex

Fare Policy

Zero Fare



Fares & Discount Programs



Organizational Structure

Within Local Government



Separate Entity



Operations

Use Third-Party Contractor



Directly Employed



Jurisdictions pride themselves on being responsive to local needs; Results are supported by high satisfaction rates

How riders feel

75-95%
of riders satisfied
with agency services

*Source: local transit agency
customer satisfaction surveys*

What riders want

Across agency surveys and respondent groups (riders and non-riders) desired improvements included:



**Efficient
service**

“Is it fast and
frequent?”



**Reliable
service**

“Can I rely on it?”



**Accessible
service**

“Is it close to where I am
and where I need to be?”

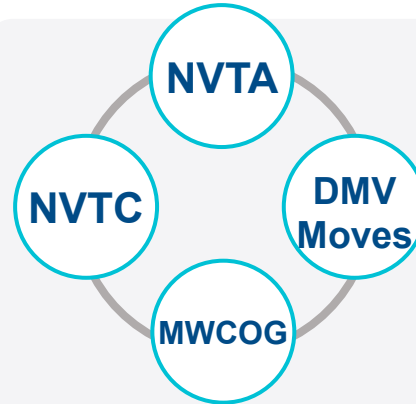
Interagency coordination, statewide, and regional support exists in many formats today



Service



**Facilities
and Fleet**



**Coordination
Committees**



**Rider
Information**



**Workforce
Development**

Examining consolidation discussions around the Country can inform Northern Virginia

Selected Case Studies



- 📍 Studied and didn't pursue
- 📍 Increased regional coordination
- 📍 Implemented consolidation



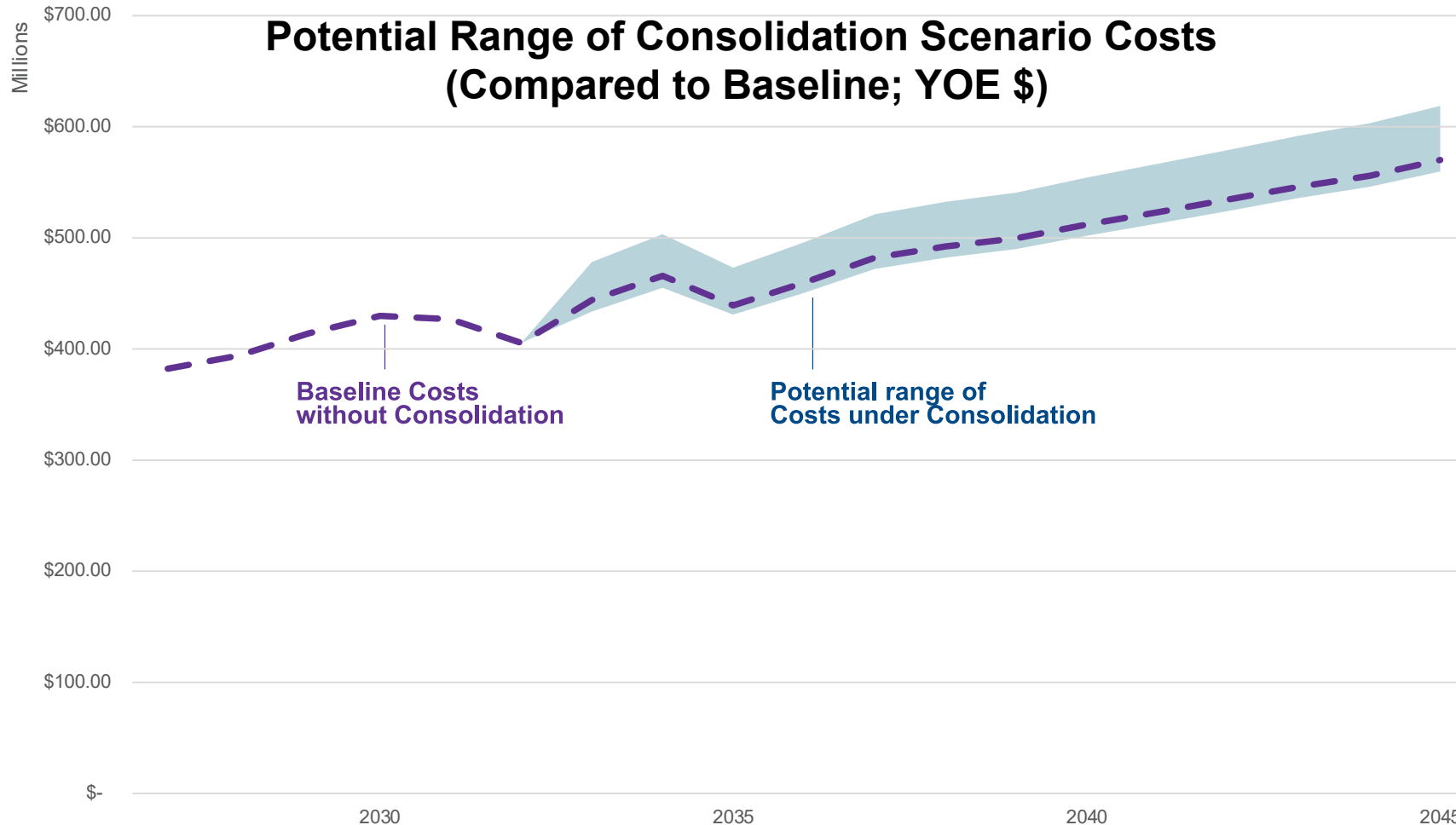
Key Takeaways:

- Consolidation requires a high level of trust among all parties
- Political will is needed for consolidation advancement
- Most consolidation occurs with one larger entity incorporating another smaller one
- Northern Virginia is unique
- Increased coordination can create rider-facing benefits while retaining back-end structures

Cross-jurisdictional connections are largely served today; efficiencies are limited without full system redesign

- Analyzed possible one-seat rides across jurisdictional boundaries
 - Express bus service provided to key destinations
 - Connections primarily served by Metro Bus, Metro Rail, or transfers between systems
- May be able to save some “deadhead” resources by agencies sharing bus garages
 - Would require extensive upgrades to accommodate differing vehicle propulsion methods
- Network redesign and potential incorporation of Metro Bus routes could identify additional changes
 - Would require additional analysis (1-2 year effort)

Operating a consolidated service could be more or less expensive than the four agencies operating separately



Notes

- Baseline Scenario is four agencies operating independently and based on their financially constrained plans
- Assumes no changes to WMATA service
- One-time transition costs not shown

Transitioning is an extremely complex process that requires significant costs and organizational investment

People



Assets



Contracts/ Technology



Key Takeaway: Most of these activities would need to parallel existing transit operations

There are complex key drivers in consolidation, in terms of cost and timeline



Update legislation and regulatory framework



Labor negotiations



Technology integration/changeover



Federal reporting and analysis requirements



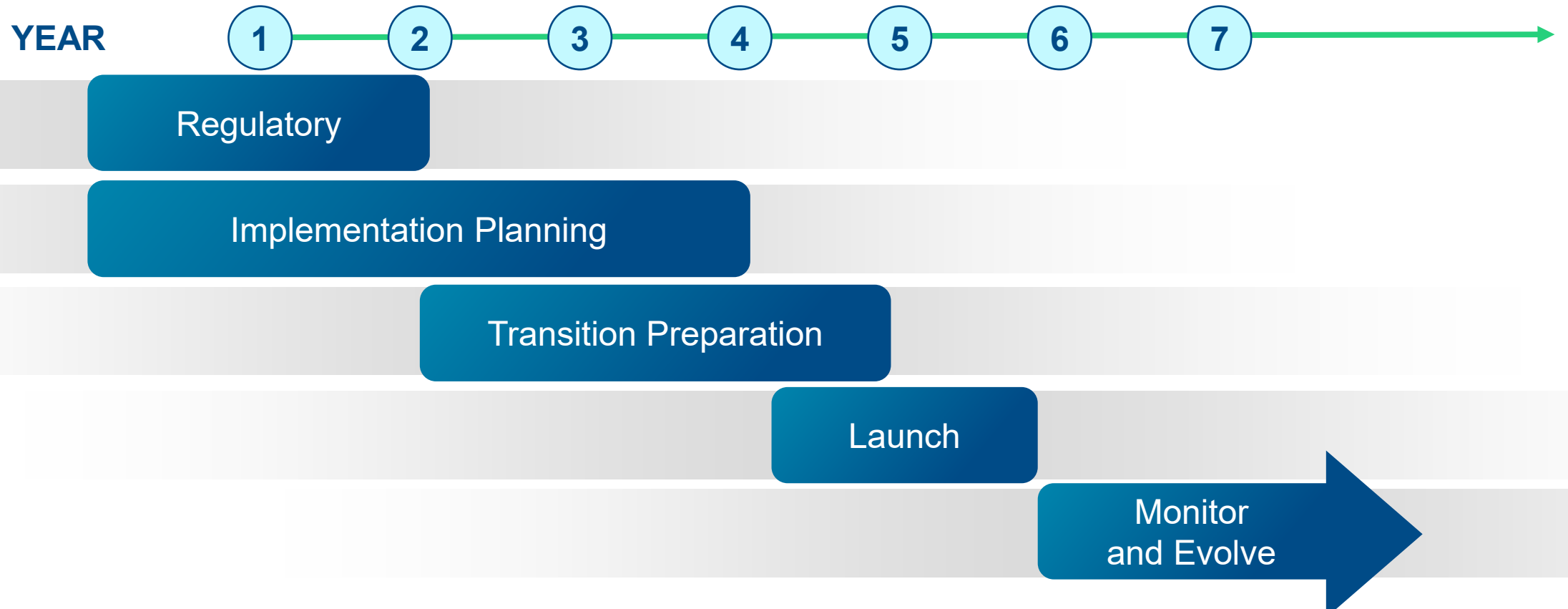
Staff onboarding and training



Maintain existing operation until changeover

“Day 1” of service for a new agency could be a minimum of four to six years from the time the decision is made to consolidate.

Potential Implementation Timeframe



If consolidation were not to occur, there is value in strengthening and accelerating existing coordination efforts

**Service and
Project
Delivery**



**Joint
Procurement**



**Workforce
Development**



**Customer
Experience**



Input Opportunity



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Agency and Union Comments

City of Fairfax



Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)

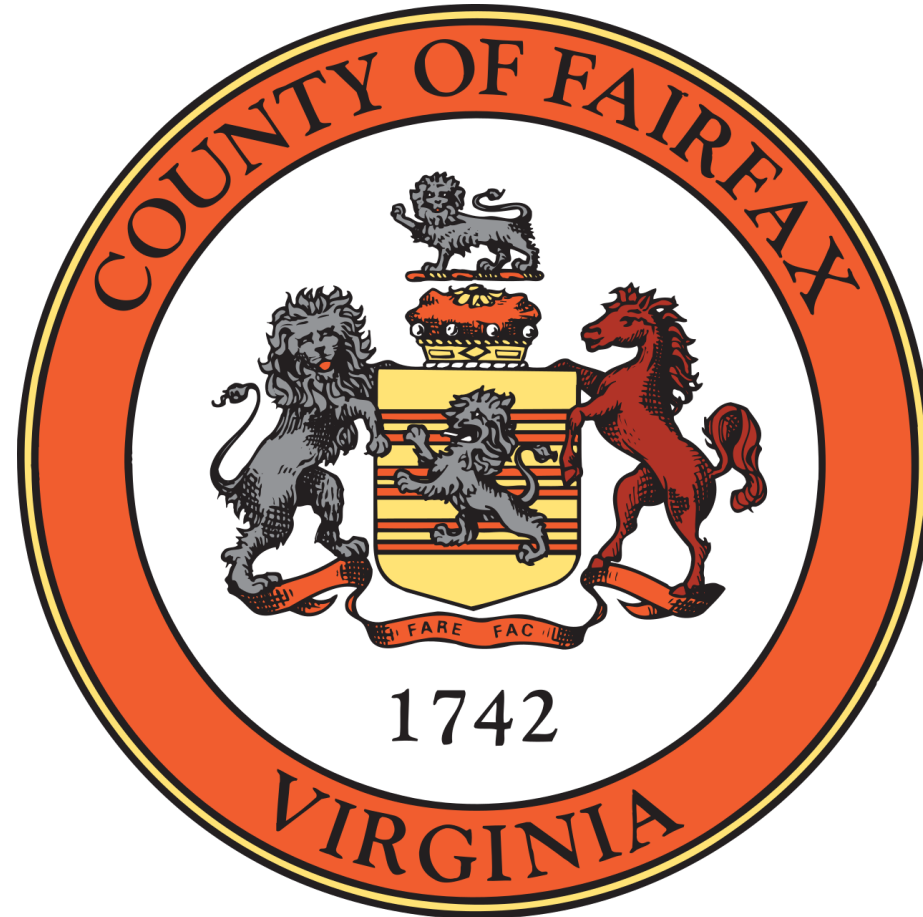


Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689

City of Alexandria



Fairfax County



Arlington County



ARLINGTON
VIRGINIA

Elected Official & Organizational Leadership Q&A and Discussion

Wrap Up & Input Opportunity



Public Input

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