



Staff Report
City of Richmond, Virginia



Urban Design Committee

UDC 2021-37	Final Review	Meeting Date: 10/18/2021
Applicant/Petitioner	Dironna Clarke, City of Richmond Department of Public Works	
Project Description	Final location, character, and extent review of a Temporary GRTC Transfer Station	
Project Location		
Address: 808 E. Clay Street		
Property Owner: City of Richmond		
<p>High-Level Details:</p> <p>In coordination with the City of Richmond, GRTC plans to relocate the Temporary Transfer Plaza to the surface parking lot at 8th Street and Clay Street from its current location next to the Public Safety Building along 9th Street. The proposed improvements are planned to be temporary, as GRTC and the City will continue to work together to identify and construct a permanent transfer facility in the vicinity of Downtown Richmond</p>		
UDC Recommendation	Approval, with Conditions	
Staff Contact	Alex Dandridge, alex.dandridge@richmondgov.com , (804) 646-6569	
Previous Reviews	<p>This application was conceptually reviewed by the Urban Design Committee Meeting held on July 8, 2021. The Urban Design Committee recommended that the Planning Commission approve the application with the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant consider alternate fencing material; if chain-link fencing is utilized it be coated in a black vinyl finish. • Applicant consider additional pedestrian access points from all sides of the lot. • Applicant consider additional bus shelters and shade structures with in the space. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant include specifications on site features such as bus shelters, benches, and bike racks with the final submission • Applicant consider locating restrooms for the transfer station in existing, nearby, public buildings <p>The Planning Commission subsequently reviewed the application with UDC recommendations at their July 19, 2021 meeting. The Planning Commission deferred the application to allow the applicant time to provide alternate locations for the temporary transfer center.</p> <p>The application was then reviewed by the Planning Commission at their August 2, 2021 meeting where the item was continued to the September 7, 2021 meeting of the Planning Commission.</p> <p>The application was reviewed by the Planning Commission at their September 7, 2021 and was approved.</p>
Conditions for Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff recommends that the applicant further study the need for a chain-link fence between the parking lot and the temporary Transfer Center, and consider the feasibility of its removal - Public Art opportunity be incorporated into the design of the exterior of the temporary restroom facility - Final color selection for site furnishings be submitted to staff for review

Findings of Fact

Site Description	The current parking lot is located in downtown Richmond bound by E. Leigh Street to the north, 9 th Street to the East, E. Clay Street to the south, and 8 th Street to the west. The parking lot provides approximately 64 public parking spaces, including 3 ADA spaces, and approximately 199 spaces for use by government employees. The parking lot sits several feet below street level, and has a stair case and a ramp at the E. Clay Street entrance which allow pedestrians and vehicles access into the space.
Scope of Review	The project is subject to location, character, and extent review under section 17.05 of the Richmond City Charter
Project Description	GRTC currently occupies the right of way adjacent to the City of Richmond Public Safety Building on 9 th Street between Marshall Street and Leigh Street as their Temporary Transfer Plaza. The Public Safety Building property was recently sold by the City and is anticipated to be demolished and redeveloped, with demolition beginning as soon as December 2021. In coordination with the City of Richmond, GRTC plans to relocate the Temporary Transfer Plaza to the surface parking lot at 8th Street and Clay Street to make room for the construction along 9th Street.

The proposed improvements are planned to be temporary, and include site amenities such as bush shelters, planters, temporary restroom facilities for drivers, new bus bays and striping and increased access into the site.

The applicant has responded to the UDC's recommendations, responding with the following:

Condition 1: Applicant consider alternate fencing material; if chain-link fencing is utilized it be coated in a black vinyl finish.

Response: Plan has been updated to call out black vinyl finish on fence.

Condition 2: Applicant consider additional pedestrian access points from all sides of the lot.

Response: The fence has been reduced on the east side to allow access from the south east corner of the site. There will be an accessible curb ramp in this location.

Condition 3: Applicant consider additional bus shelters and shade structures with in the space.

Response: The plan has been updated to show larger bus shelters (12).

Condition 4: Applicant include specifications on site features such as bus shelters, benches, and bike racks with the final submission

Response: Design specifications for amenities have been added to the plans. The bus shelters on-site will be the UDC approved city-wide design with lighting and enclosed by glass on three sides.

Condition 5: Applicant investigate connectivity from the transfer center portion of the lot to the parking area of the lot

Response: Fence limits have been reduced to add additional connectivity between the transfer center and the parking lot. An accessible curb ramp will be located in this location.

Condition 6: Applicant consider a more permanent restroom facility design that is accessible, and open to bus drivers and bus patrons

Response: A restroom facility is proposed for the site that is temporary in nature. The restroom facility will be accessible and open to operators only.

Condition 7: Applicant consider the inclusion of a drinking fountains on site

Response: The temporary bathroom proposed is temporary in nature and will not have permanent utility connections; therefore, the site will not be able to support water drinking fountains due to the lack of a water service connection.

Condition 8: Applicant consider the inclusion of large-scale planters for the site, partnering with an entity that can actively maintain them.

Response: The design team is coordination with Venture Richmond to provide planters to the site in three locations adjacent to the new bus bays.

Urban Design Guidelines and Master Plan

	TEXT	STAFF ANALYSIS
Richmond 300 Master Plan	<i>Objective 8.4.j – Increase Transit Service. Work with GRTC, evaluate the need for transfer centers at critical points where of the bus system and if a transfer center is needed, design the center so it supports walkable urban design. (pg. 118)</i>	The length of chain-link fence has been reduced from the previous submission which allows for connectivity on the east side of the site between the parking lot and temporary transfer center. <u>Staff recommends that the applicant further study the need for a chain-link fence between the parking lot and the temporary Transfer Center, and consider the feasibility of its removal.</u>
Chain Link Fencing	<i>In most instances, chain link fencing is not an appropriate fencing material. It is the policy of the City Zoning Administration not to accept chain link with blinds as an appropriate screening material. The blinds are not durable and often disappear. If chain link is required, however, for safety or security purposes, the entire structure (fabric, posts and railings) should be coated with a dark colored vinyl, preferably black, and supplemented with sufficient evergreen landscaping. Barbed wire and razor wire are not appropriate fencing materials in most situations.</i>	The application proposes the installation of black vinyl coated chain-link fence between the temporary transfer center and parking lot.
Community Character, Placement.	<i>Site furnishings should be conveniently located for the pedestrian, but should not obstruct pedestrian circulation. Furnishings should be located where people congregate, such as at bus stops, in front of major attractions, and in parks and plazas. The placement of furnishings should not create visual clutter on the streetscape.</i>	The plans submitted do not indicate that there will be 12 15'x3' city standard bus shelters on the site. The bus shelters are enclosed with glass on three sides and a roof covering. There will be additional benches and trash receptacles on the site. <u>Staff recommends that final color specification be submitted to staff for review.</u>

		<p>The applicant has indicated that Venture Richmond will be providing and maintaining three large scale planters on-site.</p>
<p>Pedestrian Facilities.</p>	<p><i>All transportation projects should have adequate provisions to address the needs of the pedestrian in a safe and efficient manner. Streetscape elements, such as street trees and street lighting, should be used to encourage pedestrian activity. Striped crosswalks, pedestrian crosswalk signals, and other improvements that enhance safety should be installed as a standard amenity at all signalized intersections.</i></p>	<p>As submitted, the plan propose striped crosswalks at pedestrian crossings.</p>