



## **GRTC Temporary Transfer Center**

*October 14, 2021*

**Site Address:** 808 E Clay Street

### PROJECT NARRATIVE:

GRTC currently occupies the right of way adjacent to the City of Richmond Public Safety Building on 9<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Clay Street to make room for the construction along 9<sup>th</sup> 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. Currently, the City's draft City Center small area plan includes considerations for a permanent transit facility. The current expected life of the new temporary center in the 8<sup>th</sup> and Clay parking lot is 4-6 years. Therefore, proposed improvements are intended to be only what is necessary to meet GRTC's needs for safe and efficient transfers without added cost for temporary enhancements.

Should construction of the former Public Safety Building commence prior to these improvements being completed, GRTC will operate the transfer center in an "interim" location which will consist of a combination of bus stops on 9<sup>th</sup> Street south of Clay Street, Clay Street between 8<sup>th</sup> Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Street, and 8<sup>th</sup> Street between Leigh Street and Clay Street. The scattered nature of these "interim" bus stop locations is undesirable for bus patrons who will be required to walk longer distances to make transfers between routes and have to learn new route patterns and stop locations. Additionally, communicating the relocation of transfer locations by GRTC to patrons also adds additional complexity in the "interim" condition. Therefore, timely approval of the plans and construction of the improvements is vital to limit (if not eliminate) the time that GRTC will operate in this interim condition

The existing site provides approximately 64 public parking spaces, including 3 ADA spaces, and approximately 199 spaces for use by government employees. Because the proposed configuration provides 31 parking spaces, 2 ADA spaces (including 1 van space) will be provided on site, consistent with the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. Kimley-Horn has confirmed that the proposed site grading at the proposed ADA spaces meet the required slopes. It is likely the existing driveway ramp into the site is not ADA accessible, therefore consideration for ADA access to the site entrance on 8<sup>th</sup> Street may be required to provide an accessible route from the parking lot to the public right-of-way.

On-street parking spaces are typically considered to be 18-22' long, per the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Additionally, the following clearances were assumed to keep a clear sight triangle; 30' from crosswalks upstream of intersections, 20' from crosswalks downstream of intersections, and 10' from driveways. The project focuses on 3 areas of on-street parking: north side of Clay Street between 8<sup>th</sup> Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Street, the east side of 8<sup>th</sup> street between Leigh St and Clay St and the west sides of 8<sup>th</sup> street between Leigh St and Clay St. In these three locations there are 22 existing spaces. During the interim condition the 12 spots along north side E Clay and west side of 8<sup>th</sup> street will be temporarily removed to provide space for interim bus stops. In the



final condition, the spaces temporarily removed will be restored to parking spaces and 6 spaces on the east side of 8<sup>th</sup> street between the existing driveway and Clay Street intersection will be permanently removed to accommodate bus turning movements out the transfer center.

Due to the existing site being lower than the surrounding street grade, entrance to the transfer center is limited to the western boundary along 8<sup>th</sup> Street where the lot is at grade with the Street. The transfer center will provide 12 bus bays in a sawtooth design that allows arrival and departure at each bay independent of whether the adjacent bays are occupied by buses. The 12 bus bay layout can accommodate 10 standard buses and 2 articulated buses that GRTC has secured funding to add to their fleet in the near future. Additionally, 2 parking spots are proposed within the transfer center for GRTC maintenance vehicles.

Due to the existing site walls and slopes, pedestrian access to the transfer center is limited to in three areas: multiple points mid-block along 8<sup>th</sup> Street where there are no walls, the existing staircase on the south east corner of the site, and a proposed pedestrian ramp in the northwest corner of the site near the intersection of Leigh Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Street. This ramp will be constructed to be consistent with ADA Standards.

Amenities for bus patrons on site include several bus shelters, benches, and trash cans. All will utilize the specific models previously approved by UDC. Additionally, a restroom facility is proposed for use by GRTC bus operators. Options for the restroom are still be explored but include a temporary “trailer style” restroom with self-contained utilities or a permanent prefabricated facility with underground utility connections for water, sanitary, and power. The exhibit included in this application demonstrated a few options for operator restrooms that are currently being explored.

Existing site lighting will be improved for the transfer center portion of the site to provide visibility for patrons and buses alike during night hours. The two existing lights in the parking portion on the southern end of the lot are proposed to remain.

Fencing is proposed along the curb between the parking portion of the lot and the transfer center to limit bus patron access to the parking lot with exception for an opening in the fence in the southeast corner closest to the existing staircase. GRTC is open to different fencing options in order to meet the preferences of City reviewing commissions. These options are included for review. GRTC requests for any fencing to provide clear sightlines for safety and security purposes, particularly since the transfer center is frequently used in nighttime hours and is located below the grade of the adjacent streets.

#### RESPONSES TO UDC REQUESTS FROM CONCEPTUAL REVIEW on 7/8/2021:

**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. Other black fencing options are included for consideration.

**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.

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

*Response:* Plan has been updated with additional bus shelters.

**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.

**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.

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

*Response:* Direction from the Planning Commission is to make site improvements as temporary as possible and minimalistic in nature to prioritize development of a permanent location. Additionally, GRTC is not supportive of a restroom that is open to the public for the safety, security, and comfort of their operators.

**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

#### RESPONSES TO UDC REQUESTS FROM FINAL REVIEW on 10/7/2021:

**Condition 1:** Staff recommends the applicant further study the need for chain-link fence between the parking lot and the temporary Transfer Center and consider the feasibility of its removal.

*Response:* The fencing proposed along the curb between the parking portion of the lot and the transfer center is at the request of CAO to appease security concerns of the judges who will utilize the lot for parking for the John Marshall courts building. GRTC is open to different fencing options in order to meet the preferences of City reviewing commissions. These options are included for review. GRTC requests for any fencing to provide clear sightlines for safety and security purposes, particularly since the transfer center is frequently used in nighttime hours and is located below the grade of the adjacent streets.

**Condition 2:** Public Art opportunity be incorporated into the design of the exterior of the temporary restroom facility.

*Response:* The restroom exterior has the ability to wrapped with custom designs. GRTC will explore incorporating the work of an artist into the wrap if desired.



**Condition 3:** Final color selection for site furnishings be submitted to staff for review.

*Response:* The proposed fencing, shelters, benches, and trash cans are all proposed to have a black finish to match surrounding public infrastructure, including: the existing handrails around the site; the existing bus shelters, benches, and trash cans along the current transfer center on 9<sup>th</sup> Street; the existing trash cans around the Bio+Tech Park at 800 E Leigh Street; and the decorative light fixtures in the 900 block of E Leigh Street.