



To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
Date: January 16, 2018
RE: **Conceptual Location, Character, and Extent review of Richmond Transit Network Plan bus shelters at 500 N. 9th St. and 4110 Hull St.; UDC No. 2018-1**

I. APPLICANT

Amy Inman, Multimodal Transportation

II. LOCATION

500 N. 9th Street
4110 Hull Street

Property Owner:

City of Richmond

III. PURPOSE

The application is for Conceptual Location, Character, and Extent review of new, enhanced bus shelters to replace existing shelters as part of the Richmond Transit Network Plan.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

This conceptual plan proposes to temporarily replace existing bus shelters at 500 N. 9th St. and to install a new, permanent bus shelter at 4110 Hull St. The design of the proposed shelters will consist of three transparent walls, acrylic sides, benches, trash receptacles, and an aluminum roof; the shelter on Hull Street will have an additional windscreen. These shelters will provide riders more protection from inclement weather while providing the same amount of coverage, if not more, than the existing shelters.

Staff finds the design of the proposed shelters will better serve the riders of the GRTC bus system by providing more shelter and will not significantly detract from the neighborhood character in which they will be located.

Therefore, the Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission approve the conceptual design with the following conditions:

- That the applicant coordinate with the Urban Forestry division to ensure the installation of the new bus shelter and sidewalks at 4110 Hull St. do not negatively impact the existing landscape elements such as trees or shrubs
- That the applicant consider incorporating the use of solar panels to better illuminate the bus shelters
- Provide specifications for benches, paint color, and other finishes for final review
- That GRTC coordinates with DPW to ensure better pedestrian connectivity between the bus shelter, the neighborhood, and the Southside community overall

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The subject right-of-way (ROW) on the east side of the 500 block of N. 9th Street, is located between E. Marshall and E. Leigh Streets. The ROW is adjacent to the City of Richmond Public Works building and a privately held building that houses City of Richmond operations. To the north, across E. Leigh Street, VCU is constructing their new School of Allied Health Professions building, approximately 154,000 square feet that will house approximately 11 VCU Health programs. To the west of the 500 block of N. 9th Street is a surface parking lot and to the south is the Library of Virginia and Richmond City Hall. The surrounding area lies within the B-4 (Central Business) zoning district. N. 9th street, flanked by bus bays on the eastern side and on-street parking on the western side, carries one-way traffic north-bound toward E. Leigh St.

The subject ROW located at 4110 Hull Street is located approximately 200 feet southwest of Greystone Ave. The location abuts Southside Plaza, a shopping center that consists of several retail and commercial operations. The closest commercial building is a McDonald's with a drive-thru component. The surrounding area lies within a B-3 (General Business) zoning district but abuts an R-2 (Single-Family Residential) zoning district to the west, an RO-2 (Residential-Office) zoning district to the south, and an R-4 (Single-Family Residential) zoning district to the east. Hull Street, spanning seven lanes, including a northwest-bound turning lane, carries northeast and southwest bound, two-way traffic. The proposed location is flanked by two vehicular-centric entrances. There is currently no sidewalk adjacent to the proposed location but there is existing sidewalk to the southwest of the location.

b. Scope of Review

The project is subject to location, character, and extent review as part of a "public structure" in accordance with Section 17.07 of the Richmond City Charter.

c. UDC Review History

Regarding review of bus shelters, Staff found "neighborhood use" bus shelter designs that differ in their square footage capacity. These shelters were originally reviewed and approved by the Urban Design Committee and the City Planning Commission in 1997. The design was revised and considered consistent with the previously approved designs and did not require further review. These approved bus shelters (4'8" X 8') do not meet the required square footage provided by the existing shelters at the temporary transfer plaza (5' X 16'). Additionally, the neighborhood use shelters are cost prohibitive for this mission of this project.

Staff was unable to identify any previously UDC reviewed projects along the subject ROWs.

d. Project Description

The City of Richmond and GRTC Transit System have collaborated since January 2016 to develop a new bus network known as the Richmond Transit Network Plan (RTNP) that restructures the existing transit routes in a manner to provide seamless connectivity to the GRTC Pulse Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and provide the citizens of Metro Richmond with service that will allow them to travel

farther faster while maintaining service in areas that have low density and less population.

The existing transit amenities at the Temporary Transfer Plaza (TTP) do not provide adequate shelter from the wind and rain. There will also be a new stop placed along Hull Street in the Southside Plaza area that is proposed to have a three-sided shelter. The City of Richmond and GRTC would like to replace the existing shelters at the TTP and add the new shelter on Hull Street adjacent to the Southside Plaza area.

The construction program will consist of the removal of the nine existing shelters at the TTP. Existing signage will be removed at Bays K and L at the TTP. After removal of existing amenities, the TTP site will be prepared and six new shelters installed.

At Southside Plaza, along Hull Street in front of the McDonalds, the construction program consists of removal of the existing bench, installation of new sidewalk, curb cuts, and shelter pad. After site preparation, a new transit shelter will be installed.

The estimated construction start date for both the TTP work and Southside Plaza work is May 2018. The Hip Slimline Shelter by Brasco International is proposed. The specific proposed shelter is the Classic hip with standing seam aluminum roof and 2.5" fascia with full side walls. A front windscreen panel is proposed for the shelter on Hull Street, and acrylic sides will be installed for every shelter.

These shelters will be used in the interim until a permanent transfer facility can be built. The city of Richmond has sent out a Request for Proposals for the redevelopment of the coliseum which will include a transfer facility.

The project scope and estimated cost breakdown is as follows for the two locations:

Downtown Temporary Transfer Plaza (TTP)

- Removal of 9 existing custom shelters at TTP = \$92,500 (under separate contract);
- Removal of signage at Bays K & L (street markings and bollards will remain to indicate bus staging locations) = \$600;
- Purchase of 6 new manufactured shelters w/acrylic sides and rear wall (\$6,825 each) = \$40,950;
- Installation of 6 new shelters = \$24,000
- Site prep for shelters - \$1,000 each x 6 = \$6,000
- Removal of 3 benches (\$636) + removal of 3 trashcans (\$522) = \$1,158;
- Total: \$165,208

Southside Plaza

- Southside Plaza - at Hull Street location – remove existing bench - \$212;
- Three curb cuts - \$1,000;
- One new trashcan - \$258;
- Construction of sidewalk and new shelter pad = \$15,000;

- Purchase of 1 new manufactured shelters w/acrylic sides and rear wall with front windscreen panel = \$7,825;
- Installation of one new shelter w/front windscreen panel - \$3,960
- Total = \$28,255

e. Master Plan

Regarding rider amenities and facilities, the master plan states that “Providing a comfortable and quality environment for the transit rider is an important factor in capturing and retaining all transit patrons, particularly those with other transportation options.” At the time, the plan further stated that deficiencies were a result of limited shelters or benches at bus stops, lack of route information in transit areas, and an overall negative impression of transit facilities particularly at transfer points downtown (page 35).

The subject ROW for 500 N. 9th Street is located in the City Center Focus Area, as defined by the 2008 Downtown Master Plan, and is placed in the “City Center” Downtown District (page 1.7).

The subject ROW for 4110 Hull Street is located in the Midlothian District Plan.

The plan advocates for an Express Bus Service in close proximity to the proposed bus shelter (page 218). Additionally, the plan calls for a “Town Center Strategy” with roadway and transit connections to Downtown and the rest of the City and metropolitan area, “...the Town Center has easy access to Downtown, to major transportation arteries, and can easily be served by future public transit and new roadways (page 220).”

The plan further states that “Abundant landscaping should also be provided to encourage pedestrian usage and complement adjacent uses (page 221),” and that “Design standards should be used to guide all development to ensure adherence to an established design theme which reinforces the Town Center as an attractive, pedestrian oriented environment for residents, workers, and visitors (page 222).”

f. Urban Design Guidelines

The Guidelines contain several recommendations applicable to the proposed stations, noting that “a comfortable, safe, and quality environment should be created at transit stops (page 6).

The Guidelines note that “site furnishings, such as benches and trash receptacles, should be appropriately styled and scaled to complement building architecture” (page 24). The Guidelines also note that “site furnishings should be durable, both in construction and finish, and be easy to maintain and to install” (page 25).

VI. ATTACHMENTS

- a. Vicinity Map**
- b. Application**
- c. Plans**