



To: Planning Commission
From: Urban Design Committee
Date: December 17, 2018
RE: **Final section 17.05 review of new GRTC Bus Shelters, citywide; UDC 2018-50**

I. APPLICANT

Dironna Clarke, Department of Public Works

II. LOCATION

Citywide within rights-of-way and on the grounds of public facilities

Property Owner:

City of Richmond

III. PURPOSE

The application is for final approval of the replacement of bus shelters within the City of Richmond by GRTC with a new design that increases cover in inclement weather.

IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION

The City of Richmond and GRTC Transit System (GRTC) worked collaboratively since January 2016 to develop a new bus network known as the Richmond Transit Network Plan (RTNP) that restructured the existing transit routes in a manner that would provide seamless connectivity to the GRTC Pulse Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Since the RTNP launched, GRTC has been monitoring the system identifying bus stop locations that need improved amenities, especially shelters.

This application suggests the city-wide use of a bus shelter design that was previously site-specifically approved for the Temporary Transfer Plaza on 9th and Marshall and for Southside Plaza. However, since the approval of these site-specific shelters, Staff was notified of other plausible, contemporary bus shelter designs that share similarities to the new BRT stations in terms of character and materials.

Staff believes there is an opportunity to improve existing shelters with a more modern, improved aesthetic which will help unify the transit network. Therefore, the Urban Design Committee recommends that the Planning Commission grant a deferral for resubmission.

Staff Contact:

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V. FINDINGS OF FACT

a. Site Description and Surrounding Context

The applicant is requesting that the bus shelter design being proposed be installed city-wide, replacing existing shelters. This bus shelter design currently exists at two locations: 4110 Hull Street, and the Temporary Transfer Plaza at 500 North 9th Street.

b. Scope of Review

The proposed bus shelters are subject to design review under Section 17.05 of the Richmond City Charter as “public appurtenances”.

c. UDC Review History

Conceptual Location Character and Extent review of Richmond Transit Network Plan bus shelters at 500 N. 9th Street and 4110 Hull Street (UDC 2018-1) was recommended for approval by the Planning Commission at the regular January 2018 meeting of the Urban Design Committee 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. does not negatively impact the existing landscape elements such as trees or shrubs.

Final Location, Character and Extent review of Richmond Transit Network Plan bus shelters at 500 N. 9th Street and 4110 Hull Street (UDC 2018-9) was recommended for approval by the Planning Commission at the regular February 2018 meeting of the Urban Design Committee with the following conditions:

- That the applicant shift the proposed bus shelter at 4110 Hull Street east approximately 1'-2' to accommodate pedestrian “shy distance,” the space between the edge of the sidewalk and any fixed object.

d. Project Description

The City of Richmond and GRTC Transit System worked collaboratively since January 2016 to develop a new bus network known as the Richmond Transit Network Plan (RTNP) that restructured the existing transit routes in a manner that would provide seamless connectivity to the GRTC Pulse Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). The RTNP and the Pulse were launched June 24, 2018. GRTC has been monitoring the system, identifying bus stop locations that need improved amenities, especially shelters.

GRTC and the City of Richmond would like to install three-sided, clear tempered glass shelters that will better protect bus riders from inclement weather more than the current custom and neighborhood shelters. The new proposed shelter design has already been approved by UDC and Planning Commission at two site-specific locations:

- Temporary Transfer Plaza on 9th and Marshall
- Hull and South Side Plaza

GRTC and the City of Richmond would like to receive approval for this design citywide. This will allow GRTC to re-use the shelters that will be temporarily installed at the Temporary Transfer Plaza at other locations. The shelter design has width and depth ranges which provides footprint flexibility, dependent on the width of the sidewalk and frequency of use of the bus stop.

The structure will be black (powder-coated aluminum) with a matte black roof and black benches.

e. Master Plan

Both the citywide Master Plan and the Downtown Master Plan are supportive of decreasing the use of automobiles by creating a more comfortable and pedestrian-friendly public transit system. This includes functional and comfortable bus stations. The City Master Plan mentions, "Providing a comfortable and quality environment for the pedestrian is an important component in capturing and retaining all transit patrons" (pg. 27).

The Downtown Master Plan states that there is a need in Downtown Richmond to, "prioritize pedestrian needs on Downtown Streets" which would include quality bus shelters that are safe, appealing, and complement the pedestrian realm and streetscape (pg. 151).

The City of Richmond's Pulse Corridor Plan, adopted July 24th, 2017, which focuses mainly on the development of Bus Rapid Transit along the pulse corridor, implies that additional improvements to existing bus shelters and stations will need to be implemented in order to create a successful and seamless public transportation system throughout the city.

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).

VII. ATTACHMENTS

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