



City of Richmond, Virginia
Department of Planning and Development Review
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To: Urban Design Committee
From: Planning and Preservation Division
Date: March 7, 2019
RE: **Final section 17.05 review of new GRTC Bus Shelters, citywide; UDC 2019-12**

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.

In a survey to determine design preferences and user needs, such as lighting and route/schedule information, respondents expressed the desire to have continuity amongst the new shelters with the PULSE stations. The majority of respondents preferred a modern design, with a slanted roof and dark metal features. Additionally, the survey showed a preference for both solar lighting and better time table information, among the elements that would improve the new shelters.

Staff believes the applicant has proposed a shelter design that addresses survey respondents' concerns with a design that adapts to various sidewalk widths, seating, maps, and solar panel options. Therefore, it is Staff's position that the Urban Design Committee should recommend that the Planning Commission grant final approval.

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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.

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

Final location, character, and extent review of new GRTC Bus Shelters, citywide was recommended for deferral for resubmission at the regular December 2018 meeting of the UDC. It was believed there was an opportunity to improve the existing (and proposed) shelters with a more modern, improved aesthetic, similar to that of the new Pulse stations, which would help unify the transit network. The Urban Design Committee added the following condition:

- That the applicant provide a list of projected user needs in addition to alternative design options for recommendation of approval.

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 their regular February 2018 meeting with the following condition:

- 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.

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 their regular January 2018 meeting with the following condition:

- 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.

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 conducted a survey to gather feedback on design preferences from the public on what they believe would be an improved bus shelter for the City of Richmond. The survey was conducted online via SurveyMonkey and in-person. The results of the survey were used in the shelter selection process.

Survey respondents selected the desire to have continuity amongst the new shelters with the PULSE stations. The majority of respondents preferred a modern design, with a slanted roof, and dark metal features.

GRTC has selected the Brasco Eclipse series with sloped roof in matte black. The shelter design has width and depth ranges which provide footprint flexibility dependent on the width of the sidewalk and frequency of use of the bus stop.

Shelters will include a matching bench with armrests, and advertising/map case and solar panel lighting options.

Design Summary

Structure Material: Aluminum

Structure Color: Black (powder coated)

Roof Style: Sloped

Roof Color: Matte Black

Panel Material: Tempered Glass

Bench: Black with Armrests

Add-ons: Map Case, GRTC Advertising Display, Solar-Lighting

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 that “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