

URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE and PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW GRTC Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project Cover Letter

City of Richmond
Urban Design Committee
c/o Ms. Andrea Almond, PLA, ASLA
900 East Broad Street
Room 510
Richmond, VA 23219

1) Current Status

The GRTC BRT conceptual design was completed in May 2015. The project subsequently received conditional approval from Urban Design Committee (UDC) and Planning Commission (PC) in August and September, respectively. Since then, the project team has been responding to UDC and PC comments and making necessary revisions to the conceptual plans and associated technical documents.

Recently, the project's funding partners decided that the project would be delivered via a Design-Build method as opposed to a traditional Design-Bid-Build method. The key difference in this delivery method is that in a Design-Build project delivery method the contractor and the designer will be working concurrently as one team to deliver the GRTC BRT project in a shorter timeframe. Design-Build can be more cost effective as the contractor has opportunities for innovation in both design and construction and construction can begin while design process is still being developed potentially reducing the overall project duration.

VDOT will be managing the delivery of the Design-Build project on behalf of GRTC, the City of Richmond, and Henrico County. VDOT has a proven track record of successfully implementing Design-Build projects on-time and within budget.

2) Design-Build Project Schedule

The Design-Build schedule for the GRTC BRT project is as follows:

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| • Statement of Qualifications Submission Date | 11/4/2015 |
| • Notification of Shortlist | 11/18/2015 |
| • Anticipated Request for Proposal (RFP) Release Date | 11/24/2015 |
| • Anticipated Award Date | 03/16/2016 |
| • Final Project Completion | 08/16/2017 |

3) Urban Design Committee and Planning Commission Comments and Approval

All UDC and PC comments are being addressed through definitive responses to each comment. The GRTC BRT Project team has addressed each comment and requests that the UDC and PC provide clear final design requirements, if any, that VDOT can convey to the Design-Build team.

The UDC/PC requirements will be included in the RFP so that the Design-Build contractor has the necessary information to construct the BRT project in accordance with any final requirements. The Design-Build team plans to update the project stakeholders throughout the delivery of the project. This will ensure that the most efficient and cost effective design that meets the specifications of the BRT project is delivered to the public. In the event that any major changes are made to the station architecture and

urban design components of the project, the Design-Build team will be required to submit a final plan for UDC/PC approval. If there are no significant changes to the station and urban design plans, project construction will commence with the approved UDC/PC approval conditions

The project team is requesting that the UDC and PC provide final approval with any amendments to the approval conditions so that a clear and detailed scope of work can be presented to the potential Design-Build teams. Revising the plans to implement the agreed upon changes will come through the efforts of the Design-Build team in implementing the agreed upon scope of work.

Item	UDC/PC Comment	Stakeholder Response
1	That the BRT planning team investigates utilizing a median-running operation from N. Foushee Street to N. 9th Street and what potential impacts not doing so would have on plans for a future light-rail system, fully recognizing the need for two general purpose lanes and the addition of left turn lanes and local transit stops as needed.	A technical memorandum addressing this comment has been prepared and will be submitted to UDC/PC. Utilizing curb running BRT will not preclude a light rail system from being constructed in the median of Broad Street at a future time. Median-running BRT will also have negative impacts on the downtown Broad Street corridor.
2	That the BRT planning team investigates utilizing Governor Street as opposed to N. 14th Street to make the connection to E. Main Street.	A letter from the Department of General Services, the Virginia State Police, and the Division of Capitol Police addressing this comment will be submitted to UDC/PC. These departments do not support the use of Governor Street for BRT service.
3	That the BRT planning team continues to study opportunities to provide additional left turn movements from Broad Street, particularly at N. Boulevard and N. Lombardy Street, fully recognizing the impact to parking totals and the important role that parking provides as a buffer for pedestrians from moving travel lanes.	A technical memorandum addressing this comment has been prepared and will be submitted to UDC/PC. Of the left turns requested, project stakeholders have agreed to provide only the westbound left turn at Boulevard. Conceptual plans will be updated and submitted to UDC/PC.
4	That the final plans include details for each station showing the dimensions, materials and finishes of all structural components and amenities.	A technical memorandum and renderings addressing this comment has been prepared and will be submitted to UDC/PC. Design-build bridging documents and technical requirements will be prepared to stipulate station dimensions, materials, and finishes.
5	That the final plans show the location of each station and the businesses/buildings adjacent to them to determine the impact of the station on the adjacent private properties.	A technical memorandum addressing this comment has been prepared and will be submitted to UDC/PC. The memorandum documents the location of each station and the businesses/buildings adjacent to them. Conceptual plans have been completed and are attached to the technical memo.

Item	Comment Text	Stakeholder Action Items
6	That the BRT planning team and applicable City agencies develop a plan to provide a buffer (planters/street trees/bike racks, etc.) in areas along the corridor where on-street parking will be removed in order to enhance the streetscape for pedestrians.	This will be accomplished via a separate Capital Improvement Project that will be developed by the City of Richmond.
7	That the City Department of Public Works coordinates with GRTC to examine areas where curb cuts could be closed or reduced in width to allow for additional on-street parking.	A technical memorandum addressing this comment has been prepared and will be submitted to UDC/PC. A parking mitigation plan will be prepared as part of the BRT Project to examine management of on-street parking and the potential closure of existing curb cuts.
8	That the final plans include a tree survey, showing the location, size and species of all trees that will be removed along the project corridor as a result of this project.	Design-build bridging documents and technical requirements will be prepared. The BRT planning team has coordinated with City Department of Urban Forestry as requested.
9	That the City Department of Public Works Urban Forestry Division coordinates with GRTC to provide deciduous, shade-producing street trees in areas adjacent to those where existing trees will be removed, or, if space is not available in the vicinity, in order areas along the BRT corridor.	Design-build bridging documents and technical requirements will be prepared. The BRT planning team has coordinated with City Department of Urban Forestry as requested, and a tree survey will be completed that shows the location, size, and species of all trees that will be removed along the project corridor as a result of this project.
10	That the final plans include a signage package, to include signs placed upon or adjacent to the roadway as well as station identifying signage. This package should include materials, finishes and dimensions of the signs.	Design-build bridging documents and technical requirements will be prepared. Wayfinding guidance will be added. The design-build firm will be required to provide submittals including materials, finishes and dimensions of the signs.

Item	Comment Text	Stakeholder Action Items
11	That the final plans include a lighting plan for the stations, to include make, model and finish of any light fixture; light source and light color temperature. LED lights with a color temperature of 3000k are recommended. The lighting plan should also include a representative photometric diagram for at least one of the stations.	A representative photometric diagram will be prepared and submitted to UDC/PC for a typical station. No ornamental light replacements will be needed per the City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities. Design-build bridging documents and technical requirements will be prepared to specify these lighting requirements.
12	That the BRT planning team provide a plan showing how the existing bus stops along the BRT route will be impacted and how they connect into the BRT stations.	The City of Richmond and GRTC will conduct a Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) that will evaluate the entire GRTC system. The COA will provide system-wide recommendations that will more fully address the questions and concerns regarding local route connectivity to the BRT system.
13	That the plant palette is adjusted to include more drought tolerant and native species.	Design-build bridging documents and technical requirements will be prepared. The BRT planning team has coordinated with City Department of Urban Forestry as requested to identify an acceptable plant palette.
14	That the BRT planning team considers an alternate design for the walk-through stations that would provide better pedestrian flow.	A technical memorandum addressing this comment has been prepared and will be submitted to UDC/PC. The design team considered alternate station configurations and has identified an alternative that provides better pedestrian flow.
15	That the BRT planning team ensure that the totem design does not block views.	A technical memorandum addressing this comment has been prepared and will be submitted to UDC/PC. The design team has documented how visual obstruction by the totem will be minimal.

Item	Comment Text	Stakeholder Action Items
16	That the BRT planning team considers more options to uplift the BRT stations.	The design team has worked out details for how to provide uplift to the ceiling of the stations. Design-build bridging documents and technical requirements will be prepared to stipulate these lighting designs.
17	That the BRT planning team seeks to reduce the mass of the station roof form, particularly for the three downtown curb-running locations.	A technical memorandum and renderings addressing this comment has been prepared and will be submitted to UDC/PC. The design team has refined the station design to reduce the overall thickness of the roof by 4". Design-build bridging documents and technical requirements will be prepared to stipulate station roof mass.
18	That the BRT planning team considers providing higher capacity bike racks at stations.	A technical memorandum and renderings addressing this comment has been prepared and will be submitted to UDC/PC. The design team will ensure that the design-build technical requirements call for bike racks that are of a design approved by the City.
19	That the BRT planning team and the City considers locating bike share stations near the BRT stations.	The design team will include instructions in the technical requirements for the design-builder of the BRT project that coordination on bike share locations with the City shall continue.
20	That the BRT planning team investigate providing better connectivity and service to communities in the east end.	The City of Richmond and GRTC will conduct a Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) that will evaluate the entire GRTC system. The COA will provide system-wide recommendations that will more fully address the questions and concerns regarding local route connectivity to the BRT system.

Item	Comment Text	Stakeholder Action Items
21	That a 10' vehicular lane width is maintained except for bus lanes.	A technical memorandum addressing this comment has been prepared and will be submitted to UDC/PC. A 10-foot vehicular lane width will be maintained along the GRTC BRT project corridor with the exception of travel lanes that will carry local buses or BRT buses.
22	That the BRT planning team investigate using adaptive technology for left turn movements.	The design team has investigated the use of adaptive technology for left turn movements and documented findings in a technical memorandum to be submitted to UDC/PC.
23	That a review at the 60% design stage include connectivity to the neighborhoods, access to the Scott's Addition particularly at Summit Avenue, and the median running design of the system	A technical memorandum addressing this comment has been prepared and will be submitted to UDC/PC. An eastbound left-turn lane is not recommended at Summit Avenue due to the location of the adjacent BRT station. Conceptual plans will be updated and submitted to UDC/PC.