



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Melvin Carter, Mayor

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Date: July 26, 2021
To: Heritage Preservation Commission
From: George Gause
Re: CLG comment for Metro Transit's Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit: Station Design

As part of the Certified Local Government (CLG) contract, the HPC can choose to comment on the potential affects a federally funded project may have on historic resources and allow for public comment. The HPC does not take any approval/denial action but will compile comments on possible affects or project suggestions for the applicant and SHPO.

City Station Area Plans

In April 2014, the Saint Paul Planning Commission initiated a planning and zoning study for station areas along the proposed Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line. The Station Area Plans' study area contains several known historic resources.

The Station Area Plans address historic resources in three main ways:

- Confirms that work should conform to the program for preservation.
- Ara Plans call for buildings with historic character to be preserved.
- Avoiding impacts to locally designated historic buildings in choosing an alignment.

In July 2015, the HPC reviewed the Station Area Plans and issued a resolution:

1. Assessment of historic resources within the area of potential effect (APE) should be conducted prior to any decisions being made regarding BRT alignment, station locations, and station design.
2. Property impacts to all historic properties should be avoided in choosing a BRT alignment, not just impacts to locally designated historic properties.
3. Buildings with historic character should be preserved in all station areas, including Sun Ray.
4. Future recommendations and implementation should be consistent with the Historic Preservation chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and Chapters 73 and 74 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code.

Background

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in cooperation with Metro Transit and the Metropolitan Council is proposing the Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project that is a proposed 10-mile bus transit route with stations between Union Depot in Saint Paul and downtown Woodbury.

Dedicated bus rapid transit, or BRT, is often considered the transit technology that is most like light-rail transit. Dedicated BRT includes a package of transit enhancements that deliver fast, comfortable, and cost-effective services using special roadways or lanes dedicated to the exclusive use of buses.

The FTA initiated the consultation process under the regulations for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The HPC requested consulting party status in 2015 to participate in the determination of effect, if any, the project will have on locally designated Heritage Districts, National Register of Historic Places properties or those properties determined to meet the criteria for listing on the National Register.

February 8, 2021 HPC Meeting

Heritage Preservation Commission concurred with the assessment of no adverse effect with updated conditions on the proposed shelter/platforms area locations at the February 2021 meeting. The HPC requested that the proposed shelter/platforms design return for review and comment.

STAFF COMMENTS

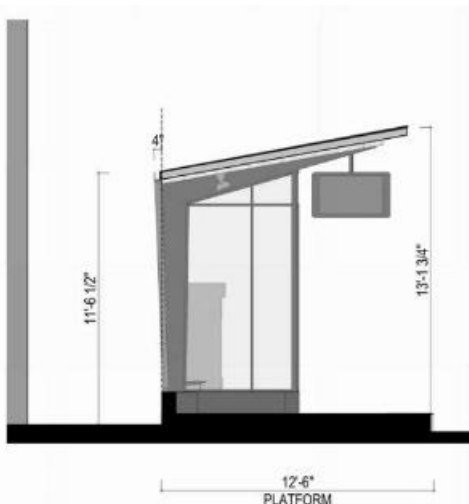
For this discussion comments are focused on the proposed shelter/platform designs. Shelter/platforms will be a metal frame with glass. Signage and departure/arrival displays will be a standard design common to public transportation in the city. Other amenities such as ticket machines will be located on the platform. Shelter/platform will be predominantly open and located within the public right-of-way. Sidewalk widths will be maintained around the shelter/platforms.

The shelter/platforms design should have little to no effect on historic resources. It is not unusual to have street amenities such as bus shelters in the ROW. The shelter/platforms will be next to the street with the standard sidewalk acting as a buffer from buildings. Views could be affected; however, the shelter/platforms are primarily transparent.

There may also be minor alterations to the plans between 60% plans and 100% plans. Staff asks that the commission delegate to staff the ability to comment on any minor issues that may arise with the project and represents the HPC at future stakeholder meetings. Any major changes would return to the HPC for an opportunity for public comment.

SUGGESTED MOTION

I move that the HPC concurs with the assessment of no adverse effect with updated conditions for the Gold Line BRT proposed shelter/platform designs and will forward a listing of comments and suggestions expressed during the deliberation and public comment period of the meeting. We delegate City of Saint Paul HP staff the ability to comment on any minor issues that may arise with the project.



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