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December 19, 2012

Steven Stepniak, Commissioner
City of Buffalo
Department of Public Works, Parks & Streets
502 City Hall
Buffalo, NY 14202

Re: Cars on Main Street
500 Block Station Designs

Dear Commissioner Stepniak:

The following are NFTA's comments regarding the proposed Station Designs for the 500 Block of Main Street. As a preferred alternative is developed NFTA expects to have a continuing role in the design review process. Most of the comments address general needs and concerns of the station and can be applied to all of the design options (A, B and C); however there are limited comments that specifically address the spilt station design of Options B and C.

General –

1. As noted by the Federal Transit Administration ("FTA") in their letter dated May 5, 2008, the City and the NFTA are responsible to ensure that the proposed station enhancements is completed and executed in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") and all applicable guidance. Attached are three letters that discuss the scope for the stations that was agreed to at the time by all of the parties in order to help ensure that the stations enhancement complies with the ADA in a manner that fits within the project budget. The NFTA will require that the City provide a certification by the project designer that the station design complies with the ADA, including the criteria considered and the rationale behind the decision. The design must permit Metro operations to continue as they are at present.
2. NFTA staff will provide the City with a draft design and construction agreement for the 500 Block in January 2013 in order to facilitate the project schedule.
3. Please be advised that the NFTA is retaining a consultant to evaluate proposed station enhancements and compliance of the design with the ADA. It is therefore imperative that the City provide the NFTA with all design documents/submittals in a timely fashion to expedite the completion of these reviews. The NFTA requests an initial meeting with the City and your project designer to review the design details for conformance with the ADA.

4. As set forth in the FTA's May 5, 2008 letter, the design submittals must be provided to the FTA as the process is ongoing and at some point prior to final design a formal submittal must be made for FTA review.
5. FONSI Requirements –
    a. Roof replacement - the FONSI noted that the existing roof structures will be replaced, preference was identified to more "modern" green products to be incorporated. Elaborate on what products would be explored to meet this criterion.
    b. Panels – The FONSI emphasized the use of clear "transparent" panels to allow for more natural lighting, from the drawings themselves it appears that this criterion has been incorporated. Panels must remain transparent.
    c. Structural elements – The drawings did not indicate which of the structural element would be covered with stainless steel. For consistency with the FONSI, this information should be identified within the "schedule of materials".
6. Current capacity projection of 17 is not enough. Station capacity should be approximately 30 individuals. This is based on observations during peak time, consolidation of outbound waits at both Theater and Fountain Plaza stations, the existing projection of a 7 sq. ft. per person and consideration of future ridership grown.
7. Ticket Vending Machines (TVM) must be visible and under shelter.
8. Designs are oriented to the track only. They should address the sidewalk as well.
9. Raised curb in the middle is a concern for pedestrian access; will it be easy to walk across the street?
10. The one-way vehicular cut through on the 500 Block at Theodore Roosevelt Square ruins what could be a potentially great downtown civic space.
11. As preferred alternate is developed, NFTA will provide additional comments regarding the specific location of amenities such as but not limited to: cameras, lighting, LED screens, TVMs, and benches.
12. Every attempt should be made to standardize the size and design of the glass roof and shelter panels for ease of replacement. Where possible, avoid rounded panels.
13. NFTA must receive, review and provide comment on the detailed schedule of materials.
14. NFTA requires that there be radiant celling heat in all sheltered areas for public.
15. Heat for snow melting is required on all platforms, ramps and steps. System components including in slab radiant system must be accessible through sides of platforms as appropriate for maintenance/replacement.
16. Shelter glass needs to have a gap between the ground and the glass frame for air for circulation, cleaning and drainage.
17. Run-off must be rerouted from all pedestrian access areas, provide details on the proposed method to accomplish this requirement.
18. The drawings do not show any type of roof drainage or gutter system. Will the station be fitted with a gutter system or will it be pitched and graded for water runoff to flow towards or away from the track bed? Will at grade drainage then be supplied?

19. Rail station rooftops must provide fall protection hard points installed in compliance with current OSHA specifications.
20. Gaps between the train and the platform must be less than 3 inches.
21. All wire routing must be in unexposed wire ways.
22. All landscaping shall be designed in accordance with Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to ensure there are no sight obstructions designed into this that would provide cover for someone to conduct activities that are blocked from the sight of others.
23. All stair railings should have vertical spindles vs. horizontal to suppress children from climbing on them.
24. The use of glass for station walls provides for better sight lines and eliminates or reduces areas that provide cover. Therefore, the design criteria for the glass detail should ensure that the glass is clear and does not have a dark tint to it. Tinted glass should be avoided. However, from an Antiterrorism standpoint, the use of glass is problematic. In the case of an explosion (IED or VBIED) glass would provide additional material for secondary fragmentation thus significantly increasing the effectiveness of the device. Secondly, using glass for roofing material allows for the shards of glass to be pulled back into the station after the primary blast wave extends out. The design criteria for the glass components of the structure should be coated to reduce the amount of fragmentation to somewhat mitigate this concern.
25. Trash receptacles that are used should be blast resistant and placement of those receptacles needs to be carefully considered for each station. Since blast resistant receptacles focus the blast wave upwards consideration needs to be given to each location based on what buildings are near the location and the construction, layout, and proximity of each building. You do not want to mitigate the effects of a blast in the station while increasing the effects of the blast to the adjacent buildings and their occupants. These receptacles should not be placed inside the stations.
26. The drawings do not provide any information on lighting. Adequate lighting in the stations during nighttime operations is important from a CPTED viewpoint, and adequate lighting near the communications cabinets during nighttime operational and non-operational periods is important as a safety and security requirement.
27. The drawings do not provide any information on CCTV camera coverage. The number of cameras and their placement (viewing area) is important for security operations. All three of the previously listed items (landscaping, lighting, and CCTV coverage) need to be evaluated for this project; NFTA will provide continuous input on these items as the designs progress.
28. Replacement of the TC/C cabinets will affect operations when they are moved. Will the project use existing cable or will new cable be installed and the systems cut over? If existing cable is utilized there is not enough slack to relocate to new desired locations. Electrical cabinets should be NEMA 4 Fiberglas or stainless steel and powdered coated for longevity.
29. Stations signage should be located on the station roof supports. No signage should be located in-between the shelters. We should consider using only digital signage for all information and advertising in these stations. The benches and trash receptacles should be removable.
30. The triangular shaped hollow area behind the platform seating at the curve of the station ramp must have access to be cleaned or modified.

Options B and C –

1. Separation of shelters should be maximized within the constraints of the requirements of the ADA Grandfather Criteria. Boarding areas are too close, second shelter should be at the 2nd and 3rd car, located 135 ft. from the front center of the coupler on the first car.
2. Stations "B" and "C" center sections should be designed for ease of snow removal. Orientation of second shelter in Option B is preferable for snow removal. Second shelter should be aligned in a way to prevent snow being plowed in front of the entrance.
3. Station "B" Canopy could be extended to both sides of the shelter to provide more capacity and a covered area for the 2nd and 3rd railcar in the consist.

We thank you for the opportunity to collaborate on this project for the mutual benefit of your constituents and our riders. Please continue to provide design development submittals for our review to allow regular correspondence and schedule compliance. If you have any questions or require clarification, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Tom George, PE
Director, Surface Transportation

Attachments