



Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board

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<https://mn.gov/caapb/>

Date: March 24, 2025
To: Members of the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB)
From: Peter Musty, Principal Planner and Administrator of the Zoning and Design Rules, CAAPB

RE: Approval of Locations and Design of four Metro G Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Stations

BRT Serving the Capitol Area: Metro Transit's METRO Network

Metro Transit is developing a network of arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) lines. Several BRT lines already exist across the metro and several more lines are in the planning and design phase.

Check out Metro Transit's [Network Now Overview](#): *"The METRO network, which includes arterial BRT, highway BRT, guideway BRT, and light rail transitways, represents a significant portion of Metro Transit's planned investment in regional transit service. The Network Now concept plan includes frequency and span-of-service improvements on existing transitways, as well as the implementation of four new BRT transitways and extension of one light rail corridor by 2027."*

Three of the METRO Network lines would serve the Capitol Area:

- [METRO Purple Line](https://www.metrotransit.org/purple-line-project) - <https://www.metrotransit.org/purple-line-project>
Guideway BRT Line: traveling north from Saint Paul towards White Bear Lake (See [alignment update](#))
- [METRO B Line](https://www.metrotransit.org/b-line-project) - <https://www.metrotransit.org/b-line-project>
Arterial* BRT Line: Minneapolis (Lake Street) – Saint Paul (Marshall/Selby)
- [METRO G Line](https://www.metrotransit.org/g-line-project) - <https://www.metrotransit.org/g-line-project>
Arterial* BRT Line: Saint Paul (Robert/Rice)

**Arterial BRT service runs on existing streets, usually in mixed traffic. BRT service is a cost-effective way to improve the transit network. Arterial BRT lines are proven to attract more regular transit riders.*

Metro Transit is seeking approval of design and location of four new G Line stations.



The project is currently in the planning phase. Project design will occur in 2025-2026 with construction expected in 2026-2028. Attached to this memo from staff are letters from

Ramsey County and City of Saint Paul in support of the proposed framework plan going before Met Council for approval in the coming month(s).

Metro Transit G Line planners and project managers Laura Greteman and Kyle Burrows will be present at the March 24th Board meeting to present project information and answer questions.

Summary Status of BRT planning serving the Capitol Area.

CAAPB staff is monitoring the planning through attendance on multi-jurisdictional planning and/or technical teams.

	METRO B Line	METRO G Line	METRO Purple Line
Type of BRT Line	“Arterial BRT”	“Arterial BRT”	“Guideway BRT”
Cities (<i>Major Corridors</i>) Served	Minneapolis, Saint Paul (<i>Lake Street, Marshall / Selby to Downtown</i>)	Little Canada, Roseville, Maplewood, Saint Paul, West Saint Paul, Inver Grove Heights (<i>Robert Street / Rice Street</i>)	Saint Paul northward, Maplewood, (<i>see route modification studies</i>)
Route through Capitol Area	Marshall Ave John Ireland Blvd W. Kellogg Blvd	Rice St. 11th/12th St. (by 94/35E) Robert St.	Jackson St. 14th St. Robert St.
# Stations in Capitol Area	One	Four (proposed)	Two
Station Locations in Capitol Area	#1) Marshall & John Ireland (adjacent to/serving Saint Paul College, Cathedral, Cathedral Hill Park, Summit Hill Apartments)	#1) Como & Rice #2) University & Rice #3) Sears/DOT & Rice #4) 11 th /12 th (see following pages)	#1) Mt Airy (Winter) & Jackson #2) 14th Street between Jackson and Robert
Planning	complete	2022-2024	2022-24
Engineering and Design Development of Stations	complete	2024-2025	2024-25
Construction	Expected to open for service in June 2025	2026-2027	2026-2028 (Some construction will be coordinated with street reconstruction projects led by others starting in 2025)
Opening (Projected)	2024	2027	2027

	METRO B Line	METRO G Line	METRO Purple Line
Approvals Before Board on January 27:	Station design approved by CAAPB in 2023. @ John Ireland and Marshall	Four station locations and design under consideration by CAAPB January 28. @ Como & Rice @ University & Rice @ Fuller (Sears/DOT) & Rice @ 11th / 12th	Station locations approved by CAAPB in 2023. @ Mt Airy/Winter @ 14 th Street

Table 1: Information in the table is subject to change and was drawn from www.metrotransit.org and Transit staff review.

The Metro G Line will serve several communities.

The G Line is proposed to operate along an 11.5-mile corridor (Figure 1) from Little Canada and Roseville down Rice Street to the Capitol Area, Downtown and then continuing southward on Robert Street to West Saint Paul and Inver Grove Heights.



G Line

June 2024

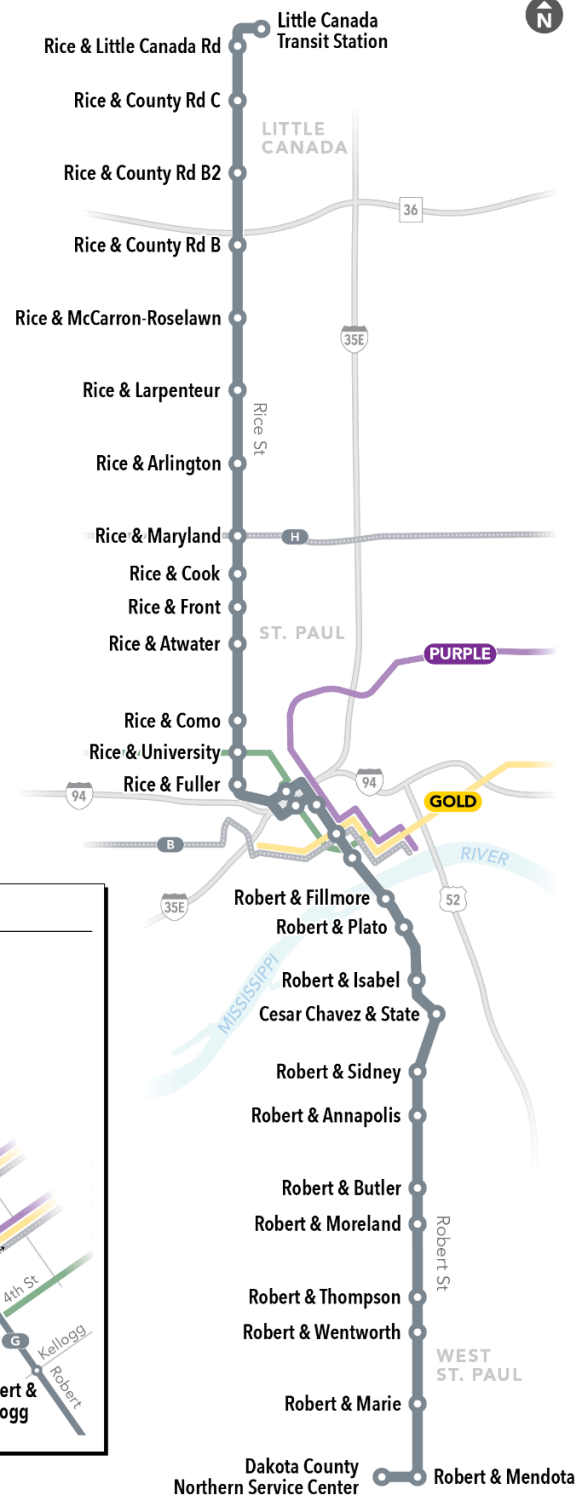
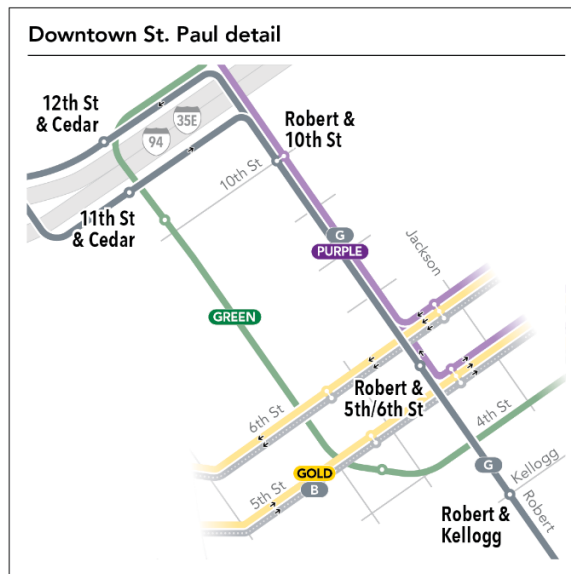
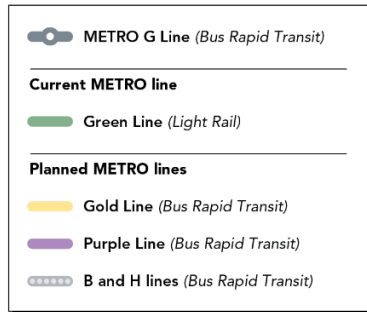


Figure 1: Map of METRO G Line arterial BRT corridor

Today the Board is requested approval:

- 1) location and,
- 2) design of transit shelters.

[MN Statute 15B.08](#) requires the written approval of the Board of all substantial changes or improvements to public building or public lands in the Capitol Area. Further, the Rules Governing Zoning and Design in the Minnesota State Capitol Area specifically state in [General Regulations 2400.2625](#):

“Street and landscape elements. Exterior structural elements such as benches, transit shelters, vending equipment, and similar elements in the public right-of-way must be approved by the board for both design and location.”

The Rules do not require the Board to approve the location of a new shelter if it replaces an existing shelter at the same location; the Board would only need to approve the station design.

The Metro G Line BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) will serve the Capitol Area at four new stations.

The METRO G Line corridor planning process identifies station and platform locations (Figure 3). Corridor planning for the G Line began in 2022 and is expected to end in early 2025. During the last two years, Metro Transit collaborated closely with CAAPB and other partner agency staff on the proposed station and platform locations within the Capitol area. The planning phase of the project included two public engagement periods in September 25-November 6, 2023, and September 25-October 25, 2024. Feedback received during these two engagement periods shaped the station and platform locations.

(1a) Proposed Station Location: Rice & Como

- The intersection of Rice Street and Como Avenue is a signalized intersection with marked pedestrian crossings.
- This station is within the Rice Street Capitol Redesign project. Metro Transit is collaborating with Ramsey County, the City of Saint Paul, and CAAPB staff to include G Line platforms in the street design.
- The G Line will serve multi-family housing and various healthcare and commercial destinations at this intersection.

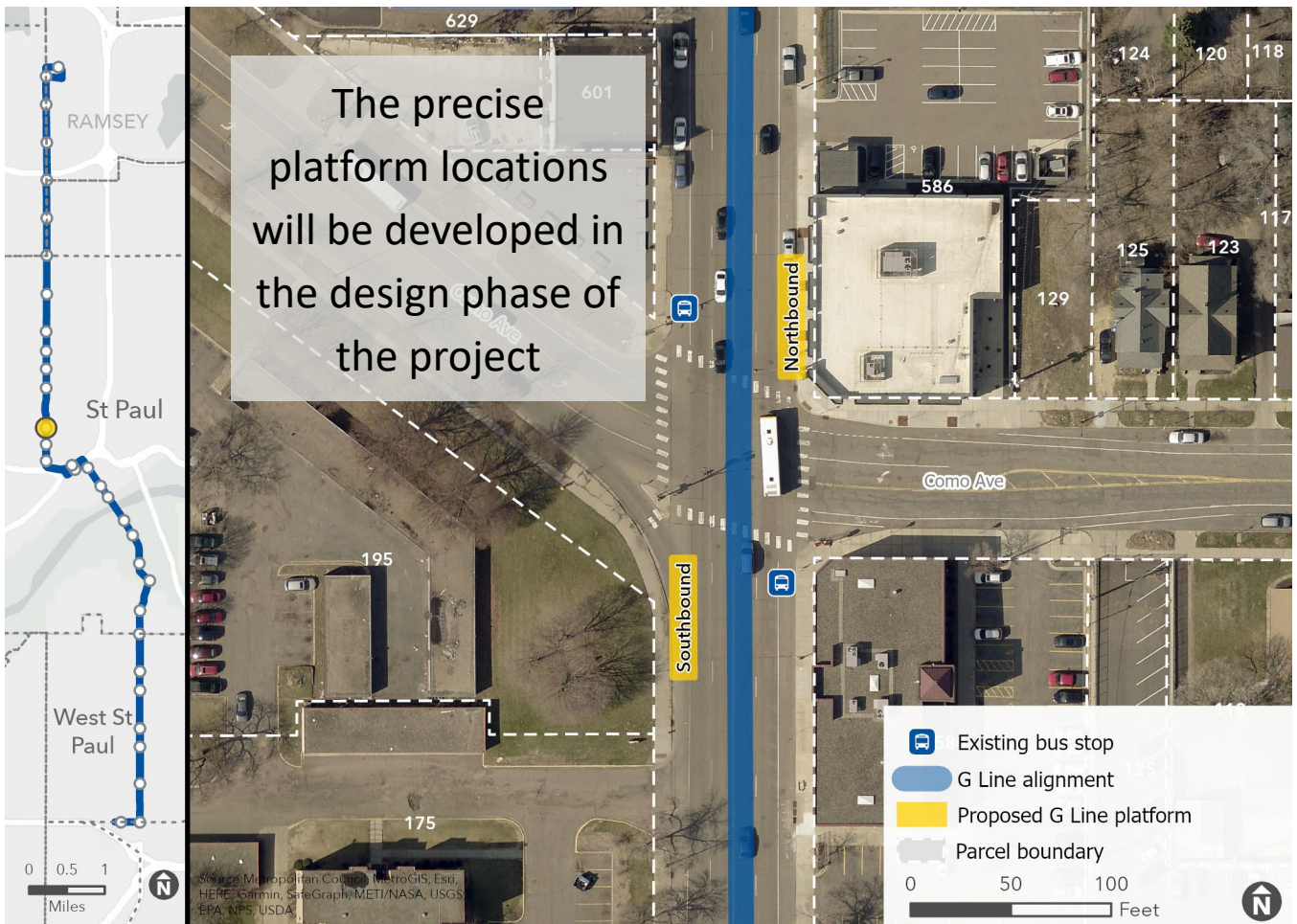


Figure: Proposed platform locations at Rice & Como

(1b) Proposed Station Location: Rice & University (serving Capitol Rice LRT Station, and planned Visitor/Mobility Hub)

- The intersection of Rice Street and University Avenue is a signalized intersection with marked pedestrian crossings.
- This station is within the Rice Street Capitol Redesign project. Metro Transit is collaborating with Ramsey County, the City of Saint Paul, and CAAPB staff to include G Line platforms in the street design.
- The G Line will serve the Minnesota State Capitol at this intersection. This is also expected to be a major transfer point between the G Line and the METRO Green Line.

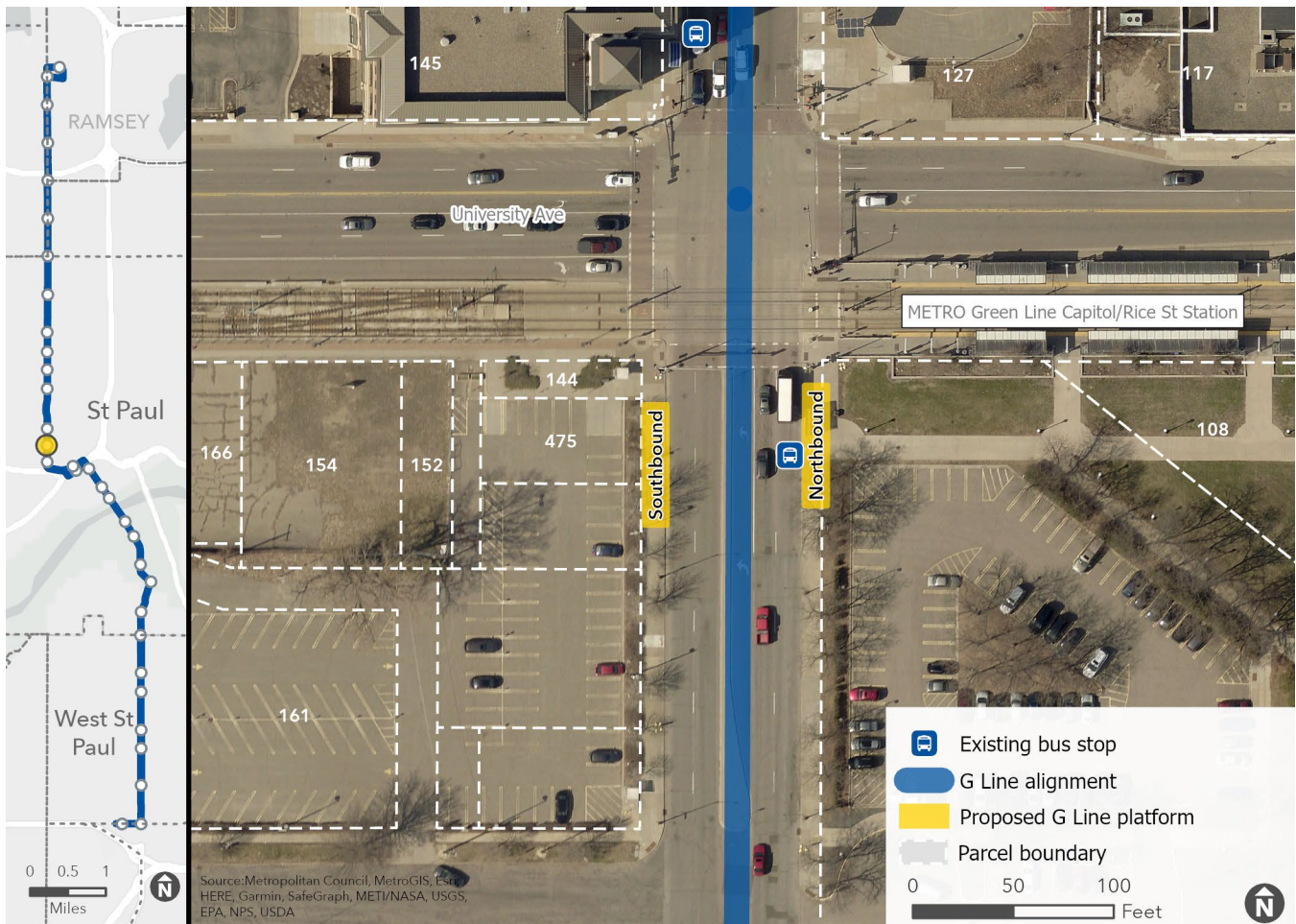


Figure: Proposed platform locations at Rice & University

(1c) Proposed Station Location: Rice & Fuller (*Technically, south of old Fuller, near proposed 'New Central'*)

- There is a mid-block striped pedestrian crossing near the proposed platform locations.
- This station is within the Rice Street Capitol Redesign project. Metro Transit is collaborating with Ramsey County, the City of Saint Paul, and CAAPB staff to include G Line platforms in the street design.
- The G Line will serve future redevelopment at the Sears site and State office buildings at this location.
- Additional note: The site owner and design team rep signed off on this location as being the most practical for future redevelopment of former Sears.

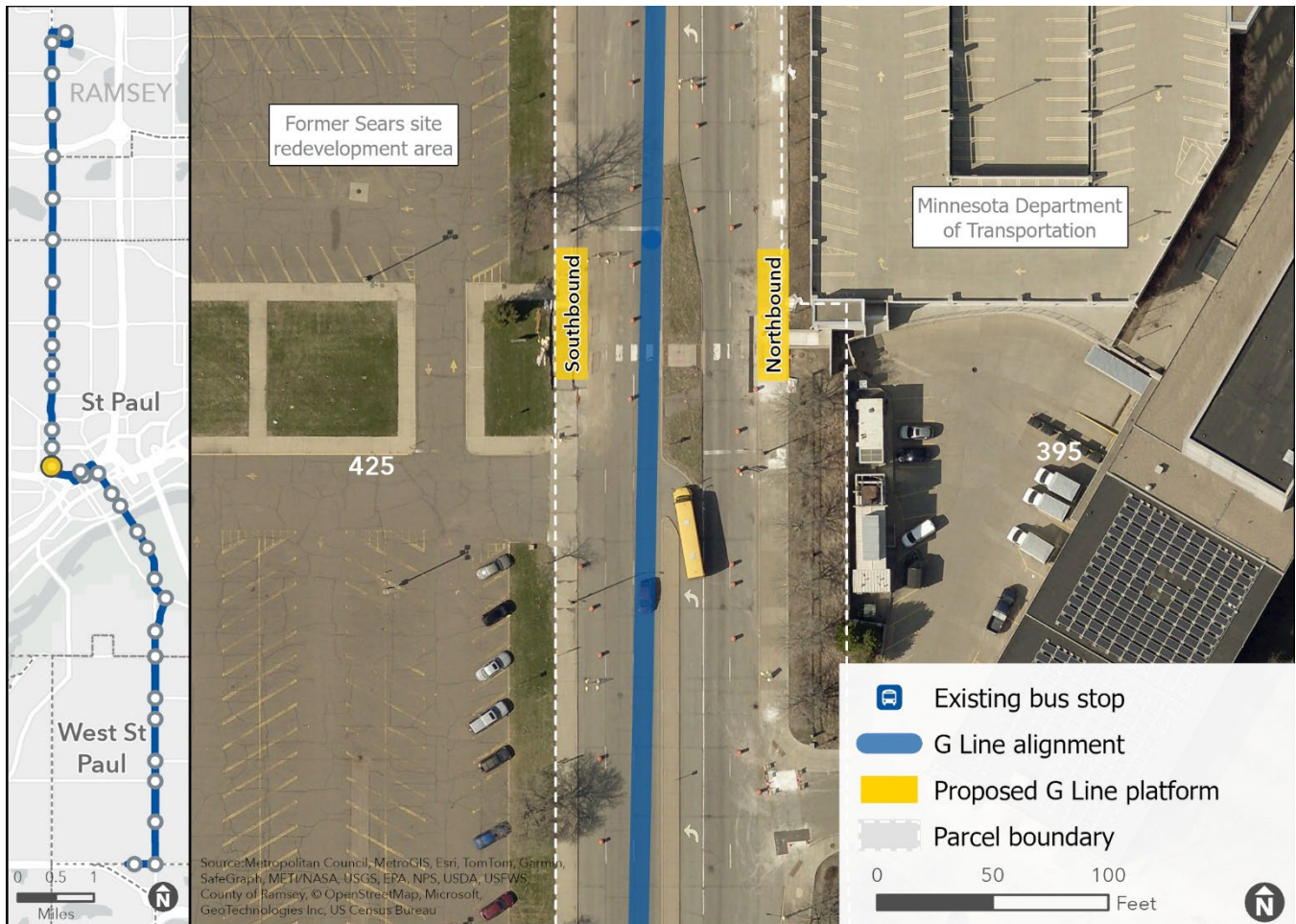


Figure: Proposed platform locations at Rice & Fuller

(1d) Proposed Station Location: 11th/12th and Cedar

- 11th Street & Cedar is a signalized intersection with marked pedestrian crossings.
- 12th Street & Cedar is a signalized intersection with marked pedestrian crossings.
- This station will serve Saint Paul Public Housing Agency, Ramsey County Public Health Center, Human Services Building, Cedar Street Armory (Minnesota National Guard), Centennial Office Building, and various healthcare and commercial destinations. It will provide a transfer to the Green Line 10th Street Station.



Figure: Proposed platform locations at 11th/12th Street & Cedar

(2) Proposed Design of BRT Stations

The standard design elements of an arterial BRT station are identified in Figure 8. In some situations, platforms also include trees and additional lighting. Trees require space for engineered soil and a tree grate on the platform and a partner willing to plant and maintain them. Additional lighting is added when lighting in the area is not enough to meet our standards.

Each arterial BRT platform includes a shelter. A photo of an existing BRT platform with a small sized shelter is shown in Figure 9. This is the size of shelter that is installed at the B Line station at John Ireland & Marshall (Figure 10). A platform with a medium sized shelter is shown in Figure 11. Metro Transit expects that the G Line stations at Rice & Como, Rice & University, Rice & Fuller, and 11th/12th Street & Cedar will have standard arterial BRT platform designs.

Platforms at Rice & Como, Rice & Fuller, and 11th/12th Street & Cedar are expected to have small shelters. Platforms at Rice & University are expected to have medium-sized shelters.

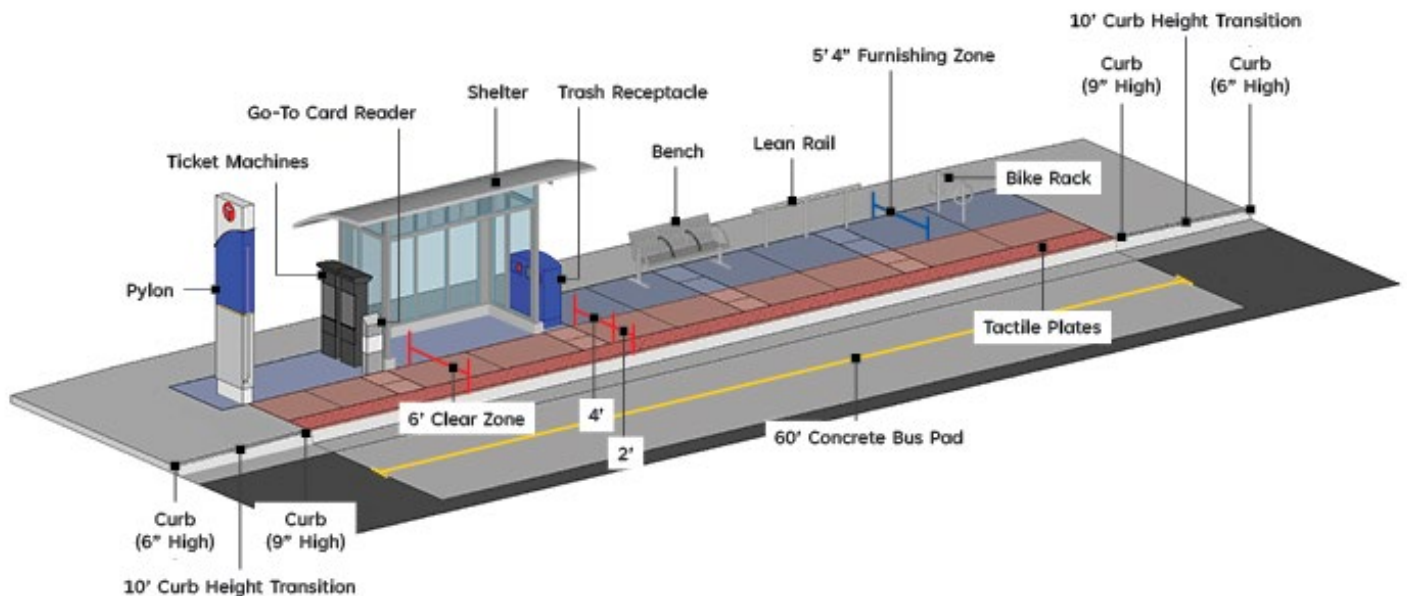


Figure 8 (above):
Standard arterial BRT platform layout showing typical elements at small shelter (and medium shelter) arterial BRT stations.

Figure 9 (left):
Built example of a 'small arterial' BRT shelter, expected to be used at (1a) Rice & Como, (1c) Rice & Fuller, and (1d) 11th/12th Street & Cedar



Figure 10 (left):

CAAPB approved near identical station 'small arterial' BRT station design for B Line on John Ireland Boulevard near Marshall (by St Paul College and the Cathedral).

Figure 11 (below):

Medium arterial BRT shelter, expected to be used at proposed location (1b) Rice & University



FAQ: Site Planning, Design, and Implementation

Is there a regional standard for arterial BRT platform and shelter designs?

Yes. All arterial BRT stations have standard design details (see Figure 8). Exact platform and shelter designs and dimensions are developed in the engineering phase of the project. Rare situations may make it infeasible to construct a standard platform. Standard platforms and shelters provide a consistent experience for our riders and allow for easier maintenance.

What amenities are included in arterial BRT platforms and vehicles?

Arterial BRT corridors have amenities at stations and on buses that improve the customer experience.

- **Shelters:** Nearly every arterial BRT station has a bus shelter. Shelters protect customers from the weather while waiting for the bus. Standard shelters include on-demand heaters, seating, and built-in lighting.
- **Transit Information:** Each BRT station has screens with real-time NexTrip departures. Schedules, route maps, and connecting routes are posted at each station. Transit information is also provided in accessible formats.
- **Comfortable Stations:** Stations are designed for customers to wait for the bus comfortably. There is space to get on and off the bus safely. Stations are well lit and have security cameras and emergency telephones. Benches, trash and recycling bins, and bike parking are available for customer use.
- **Off-board Fare Payment:** Like on other METRO lines, customers will pay fares before boarding the bus. Customers may board through any bus door. Ticket vending machines and fare card validators are located at each station. Off-board fare payment speeds up the boarding process and helps keep the bus moving. Fare payment will be encouraged through on-board education and inspection efforts led by Metro Transit staff.
- **BRT Vehicles:** Arterial BRT vehicles are designed for a comfortable ride. Wider aisles make it easy to move around the bus. Buses have wide doors and low floors to make it easy to enter and exit. Customers using mobility devices are still able to board using an accessible ramp. Buses have bicycle racks on the front of the vehicle.

Is the design of new BRT stations a chance to incorporate art or commemorative expressions of history or culture?

Factors around the customization of station designs include:

- Light rail stations have been designed unique to context in many cases throughout the region, however BRT and other bus shelters throughout the Capitol Area typically follow regional standards.
- New FTA requirements exclude inclusion of art and commemorative expressions of local history or culture: “Beginning in FY 2013, federal transit law no longer included art as an eligible project expense.” – FTA website January 2023
- Requests for unique design, if possible, typically increase the design and construction cost and planning time necessary, increasing implementation timelines and drawing resources away from other investments.

It is true that the three light rail transit station platforms in the Capitol Area all incorporate designs that were unique to their context, often incorporating placemaking elements and/or local art and expressions of nearby history or culture. However, to this point, CAAPB Staff has not made any requests of Ramsey County nor Metro Transit design teams that the design of BRT stations in the Capitol Area be adjusted for the design context of the Capitol Area, or that there be art or other unique information of any kind integrated directly into the station

facilities themselves. We have shared in comments for BRT station designers that accommodation should be made where possible to create (or to not preclude) future opportunities for art or other permanent, unique civic expressions nearby to stations. CAAPB staff also plans to address the question with community members during Metro Transit’s planned public engagement activities planned for both the G Line and Purple Line starting in 2023.

Will the proposed shelters or benches incorporate advertising or other signage?

No. According to Rules Governing Zoning and Design for the Minnesota State Capitol Area (“Rules”) 2400.2925 Prohibited Signs; all signage is prohibited on transit shelters and on benches in the Capitol Area, “..., with the exception of signs providing passenger information at transit stations;...”, The same section of the Rules specifically allows changeable copy and electronic messages in passenger signs at transit stations.

Suggested Board Action: Approve the *location and standard design* for four new BRT stations

A single combined action is proposed.

Suggested Language:

“The Capitol Area Architectural & Planning Board (CAAPB) approves the locations and standard designs of four proposed METRO Purple Line Bus Rapid Transit station facilities identified and specified in the staff memo for the Board meeting held on March 24, 2025. This approval applies to stations proposed for the arterial BRT line proposed at Como Avenue and Rice Street, University Avenue and Rice Street, near old Fuller and Rice Street, and at 11th and 12th.”

Attachments:

1. **Ramsey County Staff Letter**
2. **Saint Paul Staff Letter**