



PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

June 2, 2025

PREPARED FOR THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION

Project: Madison North-South Bus Rapid Transit
Regarding: CLG Consulting Party Comments for FTA Undertaking
Legistar File: [88465](#)
Prepared By: Heather L. Bailey, Ph.D., Preservation Planner

Background

As a Certified Local Government, the City of Madison's Landmarks Commission and Historic Preservation Program are included as consulting parties for any Federal undertakings that may have potential effects on historic properties. Staff responds to most project reviews administratively. However, the proposal for the North-South route for the Bus Rapid Transit system in Madison and the resulting new stations to service this route has the potential to have impacts to several National Register listed or eligible properties. As such, staff has referred the formal comments to the Landmarks Commission for their input prior to submitting comments on the proposed undertaking.

36CFR800

The chapter of the Code of Federal Regulations commonly referred to as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires assessments of a Federal undertaking to first determine if there are any historic properties within the Area of Potential Effect (APE). The submittal materials include a document that specifies the APE for this undertaking and identifies the historic resources that the project team believes could have impacts. The consultant completed assessments of properties within 150 feet of a proposed new station.

The second step is to determine if the proposed undertaking will have an Adverse Effect on those properties. Per 36CFR800.5(a)(1):

"Criteria of adverse effect. An adverse effect is found when an undertaking may alter, directly or indirectly, any of the characteristics of a historic property that qualify the property for inclusion in the National Register in a manner that would diminish the integrity of the property's location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association. Consideration shall be given to all qualifying characteristics of a historic property, including those that may have been identified subsequent to the original evaluation of the property's eligibility for the National Register. Adverse effects may include reasonably foreseeable effects caused by the undertaking that may occur later in time, be farther removed in distance or be cumulative."

The project is utilizing the previous documentation and conclusions of the previous BRT undertaking for the East-West corridor for this proposed new route in the areas where the two routes overlap.

Conclusion

The station designs will read as a product of their time and not create a false sense of history. Initial analysis is that they do not seem to obscure significant viewsheds or alter historically significant street designs.

The Landmarks Commission needs to determine if

- The proposal would meet the criteria for an Adverse Effect
- The commission needs additional information to make a determination
- There are methods to mitigate the visual impacts, which the commission may suggest

Staff will submit the Landmarks Commission's comments to the FTA designee.