



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**MEMO**

**DATE:** May 11, 2016

**TO:** Historic Preservation Commission

**FROM:** Shelley Caltagirone, Preservation Staff, (415) 558-6625

**REVIEWED BY:** Tim Frye, Historic Preservation Officer, (415) 575-6822

**RE:** **May 18<sup>th</sup> Review and Comment Hearing**  
**Van Ness BRT Shelter Design for Civic Center Landmark District**  
**Case No. 2014-001204CWP**

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project is construction of shelters for the proposed bus stations along Van Ness Avenue at the intersection with McAllister Street as part of the approved Bus Rapid Transit project (BRT). The shelters would be installed on the two station platforms located to the north and south of the McAllister intersection. The shelters would be constructed primarily of steel framing and glass panels and would accommodate information panels and bench seating. The framing would be finished with a medium dark gray coating to match the finish of the platform fencing and railings.

## BACKGROUND

Van Ness Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a signature Project of the San Francisco County Transportation Authority's (SFCTA) Proposition K transportation sales tax program. The Project represents the culmination of years of multi-agency collaboration at the local, state, and federal levels to develop BRT along Van Ness Avenue, which also operates as Highway 101 through the city. The Project calls for dedicated bus lanes separated from traffic from Lombard to Mission streets that will be used by Muni's 49 and 47 lines and Golden Gate Transit. The dedicated lanes will flank center landscaped medians along Van Ness Avenue. All-door boarding, elimination of most left turns, transit signal priority, and traffic signal optimization will help reduce travel time on the corridor by as much as 33 percent. In addition, pedestrian improvements, signal upgrades, new streetlights, new landscaping, and roadway resurfacing will be implemented throughout the corridor.

The Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the section of the BRT Project that falls within the Civic Center Landmark District at its November 18, 2015 hearing and approved most of the Project components. However, the bus shelter design was excluded from the approval to allow additional time to refine the design. Additionally, a decision on the future treatment of the existing trolley poles was also deferred for further study.

## PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The Civic Center Landmark District comprises a roughly 58-acre and 15-block part of San Francisco that has multiple historic designations. It was designated locally as a San Francisco Landmark District in December 1994 (1994 SFLD), which followed a listing in the National Register of Historic Places on

October 10, 1978 (1978 NR) for state and national levels of significance and a designation as a National Historic Landmark on February 27, 1987 (1987 NHL), which is the highest designation for a historic property in the United States.

The historic district is located just north of Market Street between Franklin Street and 7th Street. It extends north to McAllister Street and Golden Gate Avenue. It is surrounded by several neighborhoods, including South of Market, Western Addition, Tenderloin, Nob Hill and the Financial District. Properties in the Civic Center are primarily public in nature, but owned and managed by several different city, state and federal agencies.

Most of the city's major government and cultural institutions are located in the Civic Center Landmark District including City Hall, San Francisco Public Library, War Memorial Complex including the Veterans Building and Opera House, Exposition (Civic) Auditorium, United Nations Plaza, Asian Art Museum, Civic Center Plaza, San Francisco Superior Court, Supreme Court of California, Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall, Federal Building at United Nations Plaza, Edmund G. Brown State Office Building, Hiram W. Johnson State Office Building and several educational institutions, including the University of California, Hastings College of the Law. Multi-modal transportation networks that run through Civic Center are overseen by the City of San Francisco, State of California, Bay Area Rapid Transit, and San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency.

The Civic Center Historic District is significant for its association with events and architectural styles connected to the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, the Beaux Arts Civic Center Plan, the formation of the United Nations, and the United States peace treaty with Japan.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

On December 20, 2013 the Federal Transit Administration issued a Record of Decision (ROD) for the Van Ness Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project, determining that the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) have been met through the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) document and process.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

The shelter design previously reviewed and rejected by the HPC was consistent with the "Seismic Wave" bus shelter design currently installed throughout the City. The Commission found that the framing system for this shelter was too industrial in appearance and that the roof form and material did not reflect the formal character of the district.

The revised design provides a minimal framing system with fewer components and exposed bolts. It is capped by a flat glass roof supported by cantilevered steel arms. The roof is placed slightly higher than in the earlier design, giving the structure more gracious proportions. The shelter is also designed as a single structure rather than three side-by-side shelters, further unifying and simplifying the design. The overall effect of these changes is an elegant and simple design with maximum visual transparency that reduces the visual clutter on the platform. The shelter design is similar enough to the shelters proposed for use outside of the district to maintain visual consistency within the BRT system while allowing the station at Civic Center to have a distinctive quality suited to the significance of the site.

The MTA has provided two slightly different options for the shelter design: The preferred design (Graphics Pages 6-11, 17, 21-22) places the information panels at either end of the shelter leaving the intervening space clear. The alternative design (Graphics Pages 12-16, 18-20) places information panels perpendicular to the rear shelter wall at 3 intervals.

The alternative design has the advantage of providing more perceived protection from the wind and rain and providing more panel spaces that could be utilized for interpretive historical displays. The preferred design has the advantage of more visual transparency and increased space for wheelchairs. Staff finds that both options are appropriate designs for the district, but slightly favors the preferred option because it has fewer components and a simpler, more transparent appearance.

### **REQUESTED ACTION**

The Department seeks general feedback to the above staff analysis with recommendations for design revision in advance of the Certificate of Appropriateness hearing.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Plans and Renderings

# BRT VAN NESS AVENUE | PROPOSED BUS SHELTER @ MC ALLISTER STREET

SF HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
MAY, 2016





**RELATIONS TO THE EXISTING CONTEXT**

**VISUAL CONSISTENCY WITH THE REST OF THE BRT LINE**

**REUSE AND OPTIMISATION OF EXISTING SHELTER'S ELEMENTS**



RELATIONS TO EXISTING CONTEXT - DIAGRAMS



EXISTING AND NEW



RELATED HORIZONTAL ELEMENTS



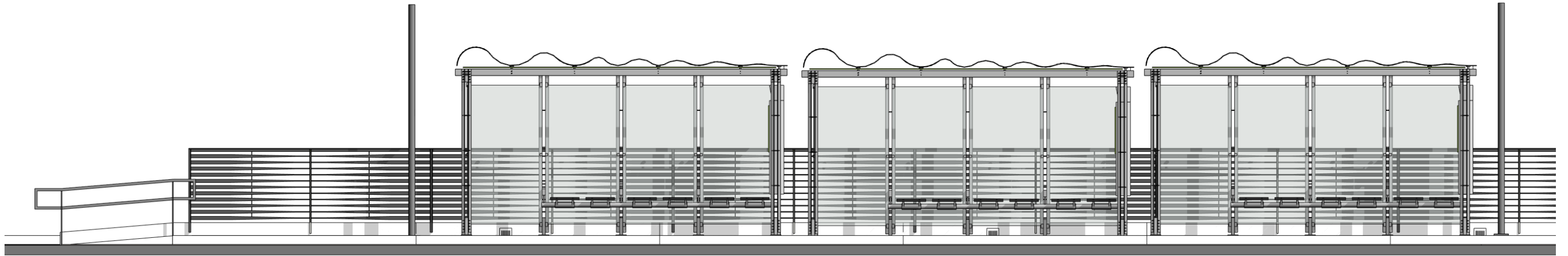
RELATED VERTICAL ELEMENTS



RELATED PATTERNS



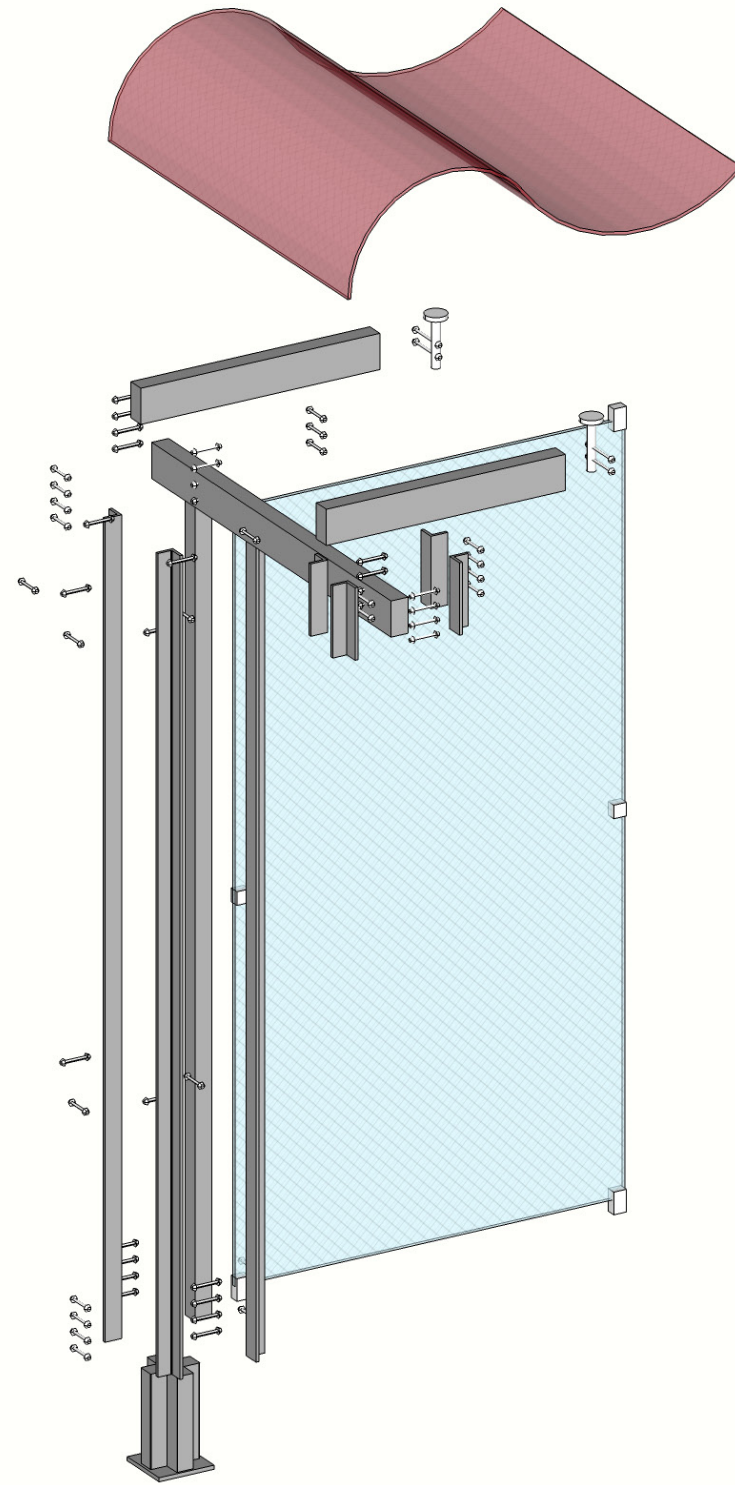
TYPICAL SHELTER CONFIGURATION



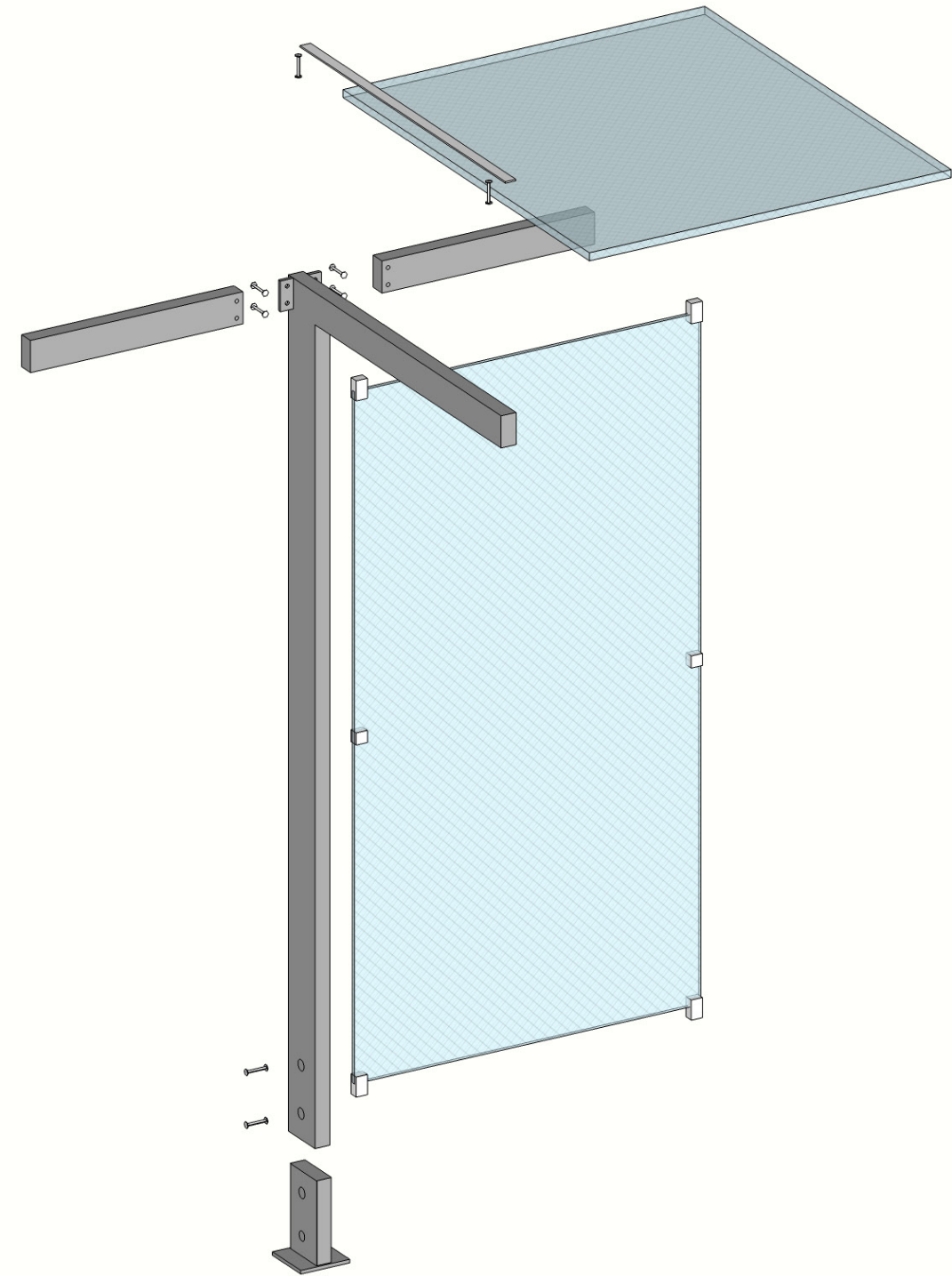
PROPOSED SHELTER CONFIGURATION



**ASSEMBLY OF SHELTER ELEMENTS**



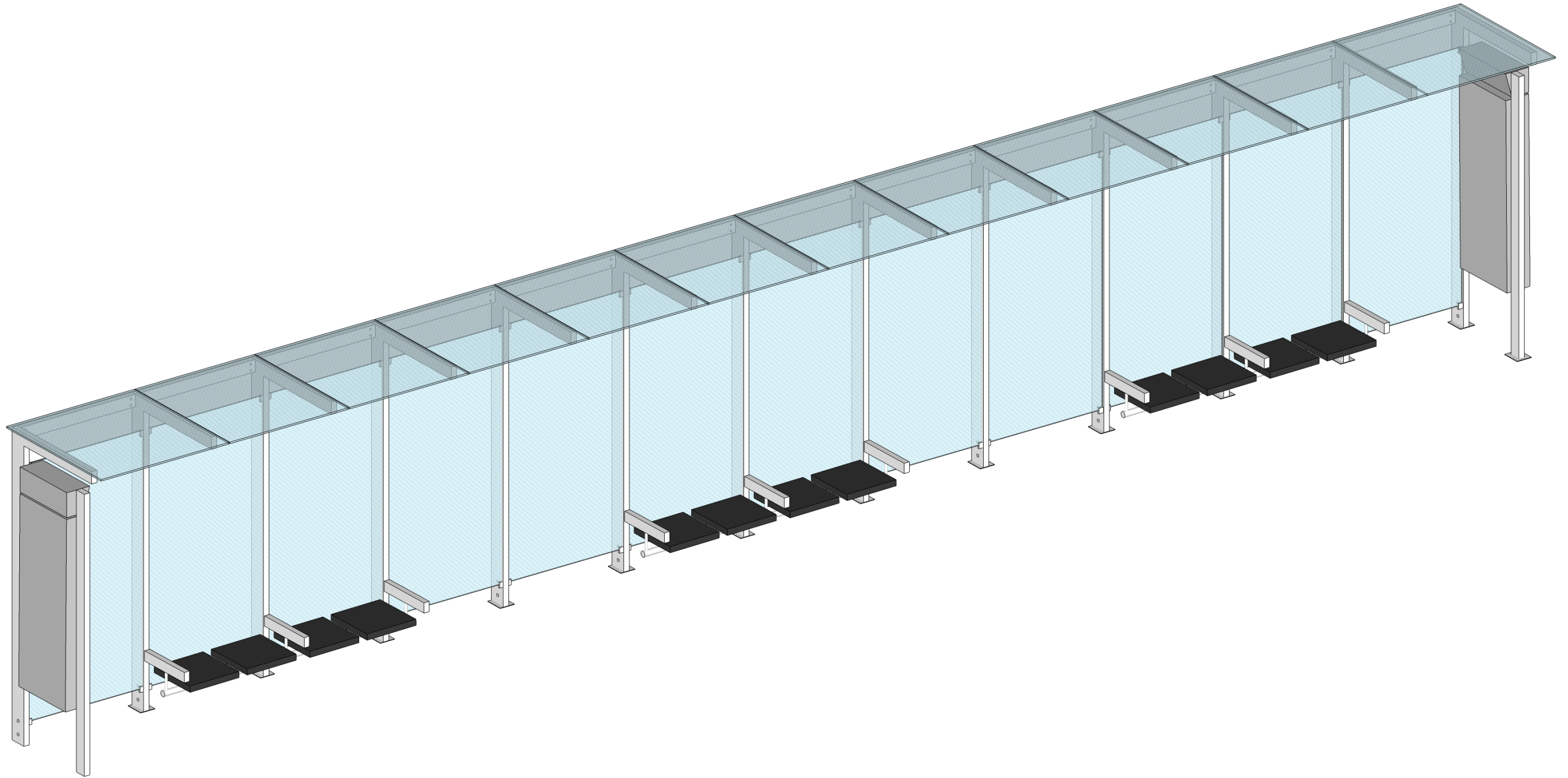
**TYPICAL SHELTER ASSEMBLY**



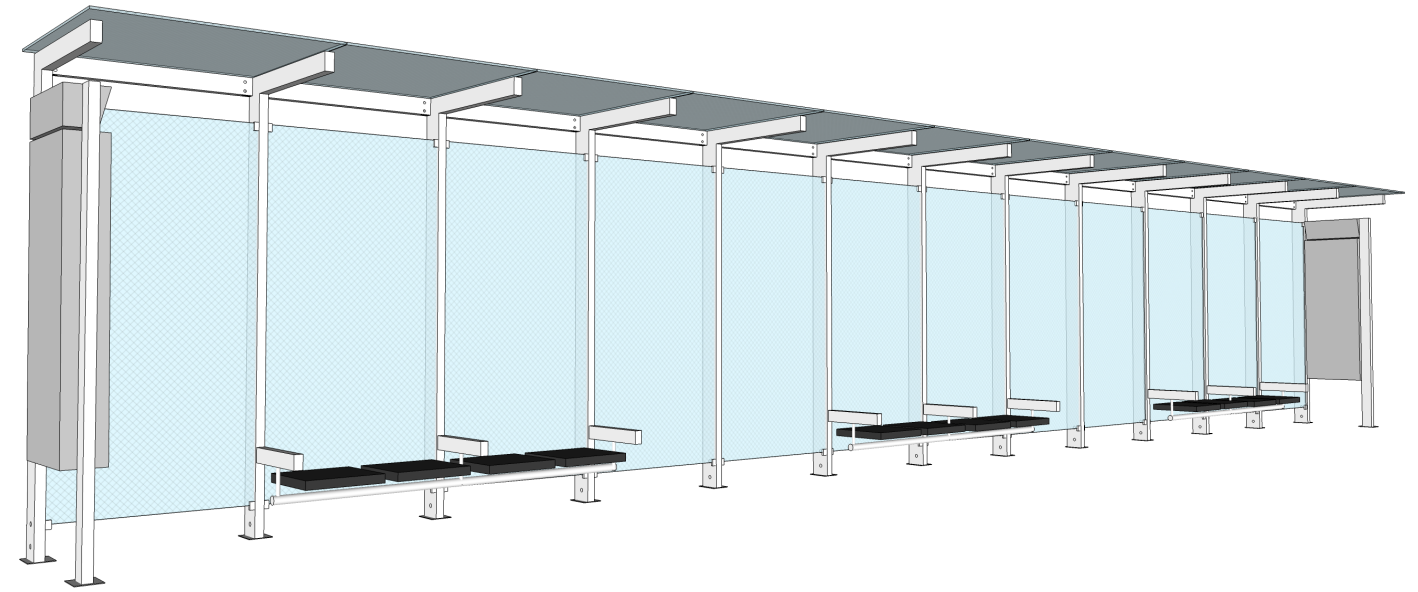
**PROPOSED SHELTER ASSEMBLY**



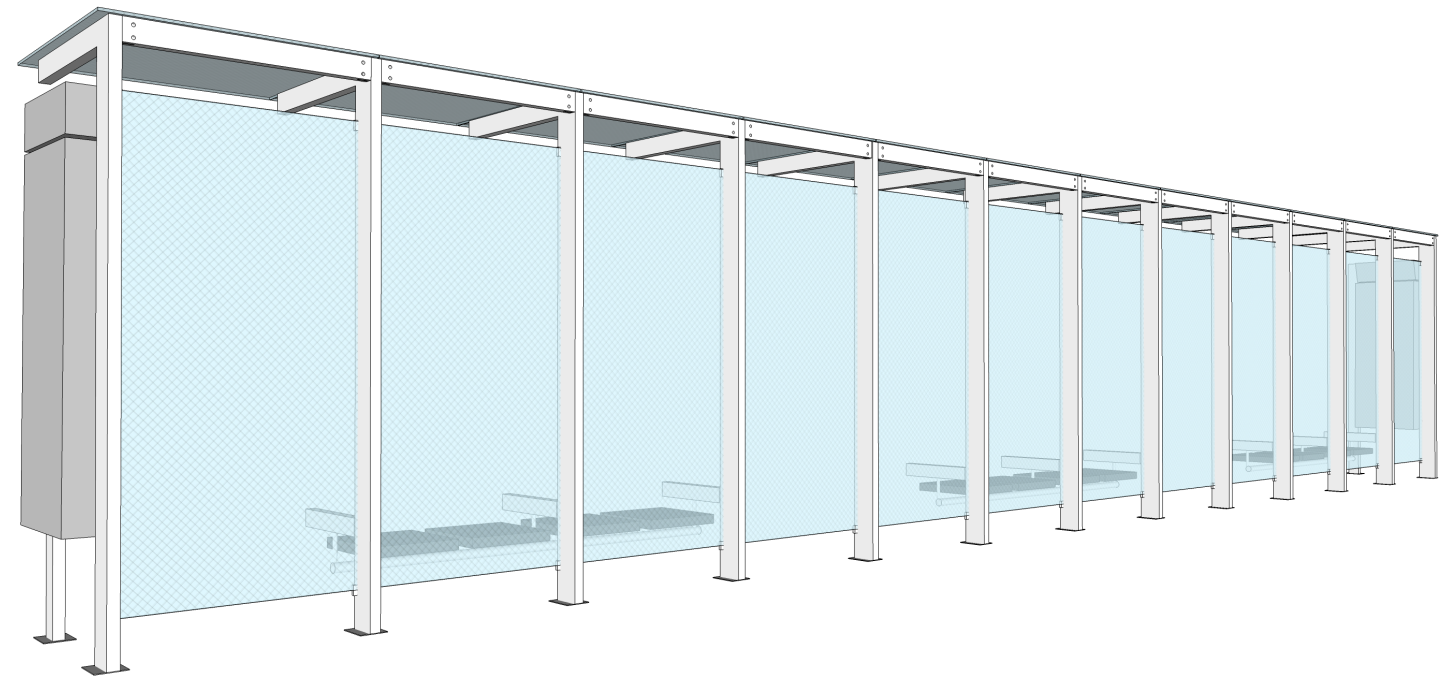
AXONOMETRIC VIEW



**PERSPECTIVE VIEWS**



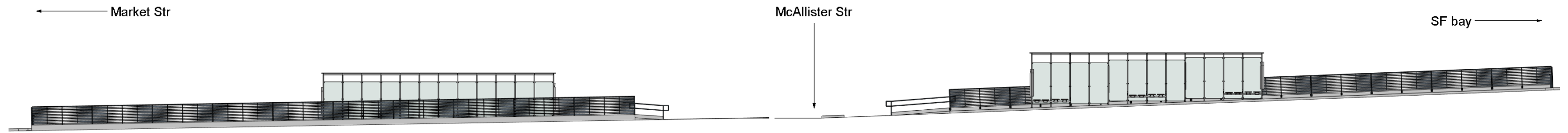
**FRONT**



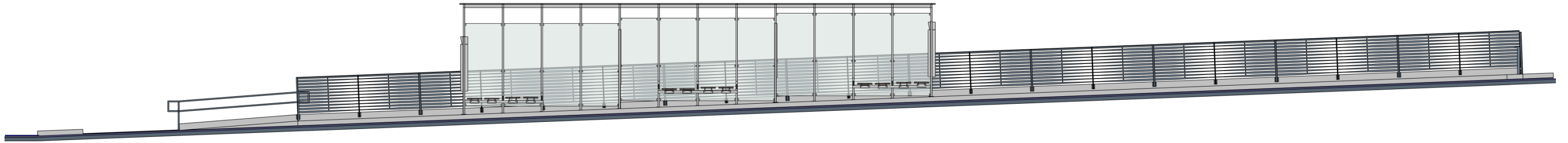
**BACK**



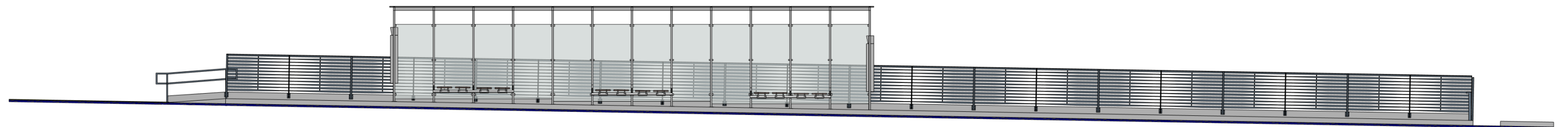
PLATFORM ELEVATIONS



**PLATFORM ELEVATIONS**



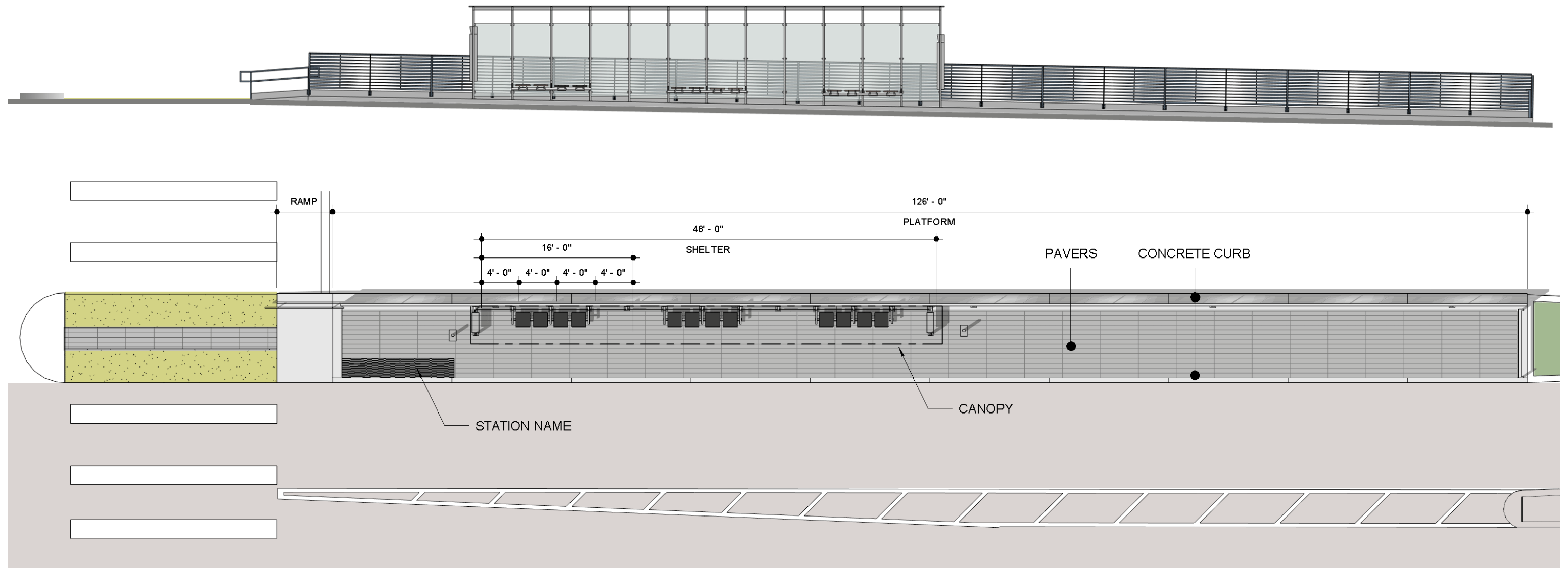
**SOUTHBOUND PLATFORM**



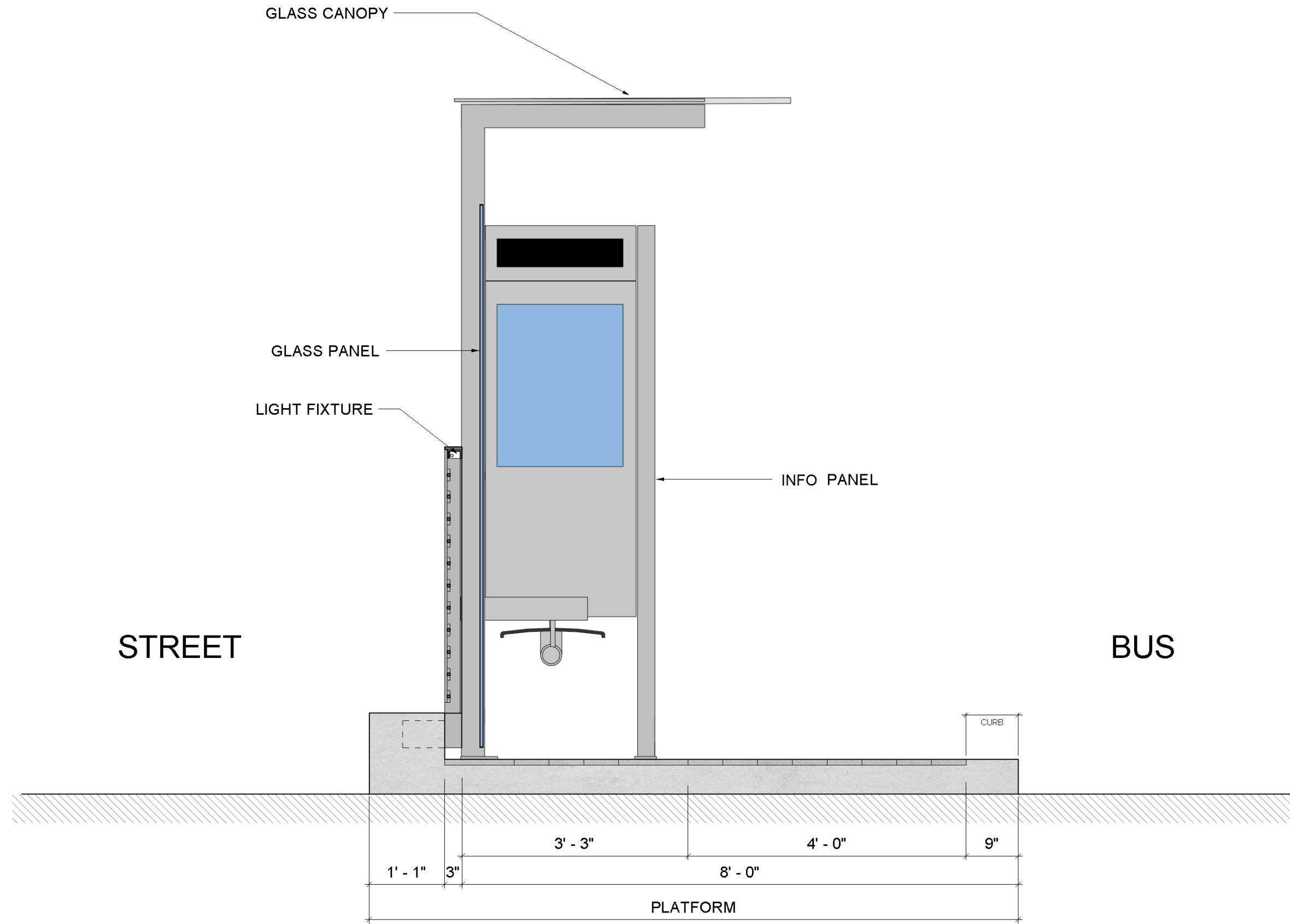
**NORTHBOUND PLATFORM**



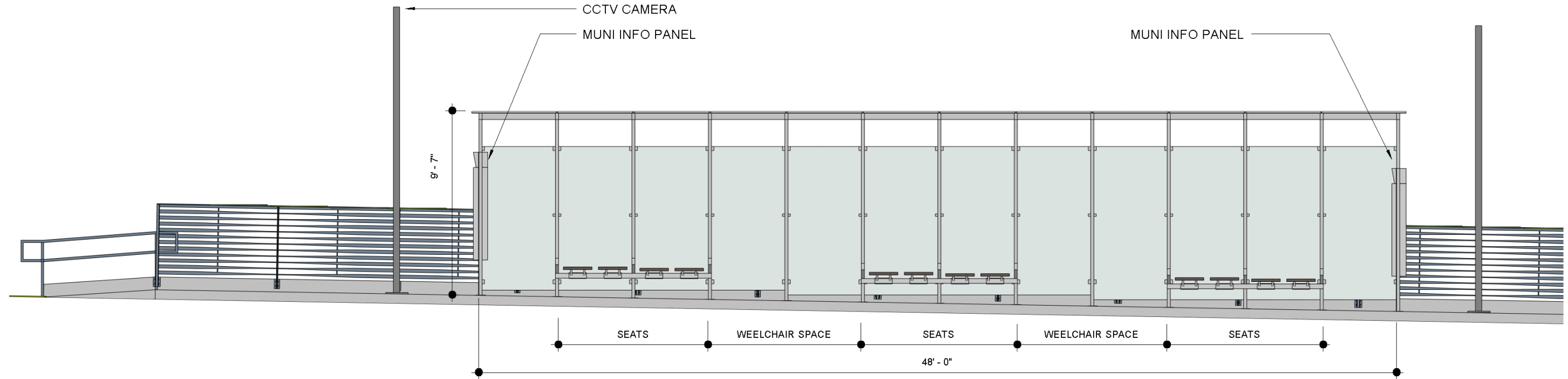
# TYPICAL PLATFORM PLAN



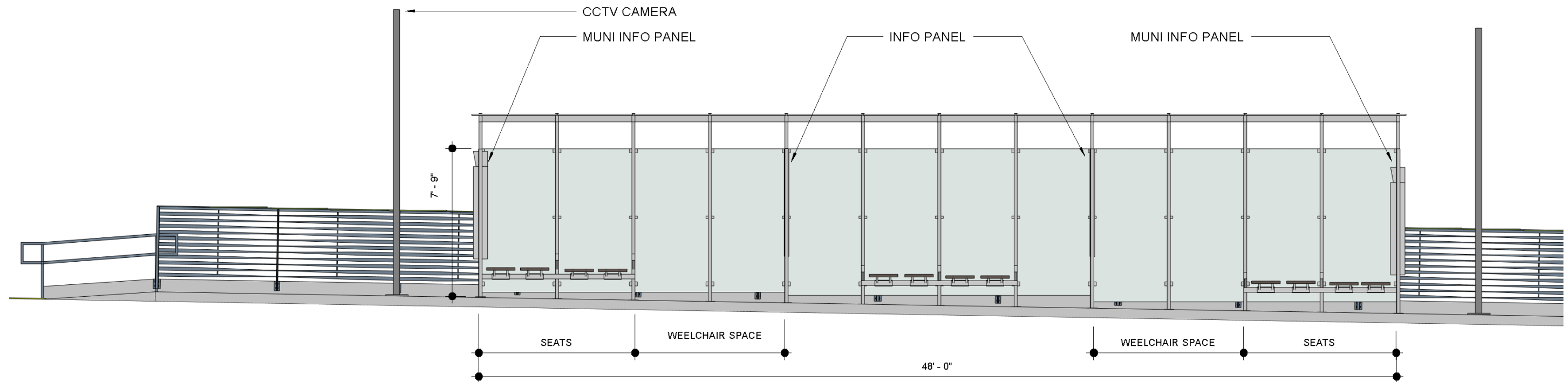
PLATFORM SECTION



PLATFORM NORTHBOUND\_ELEVATION

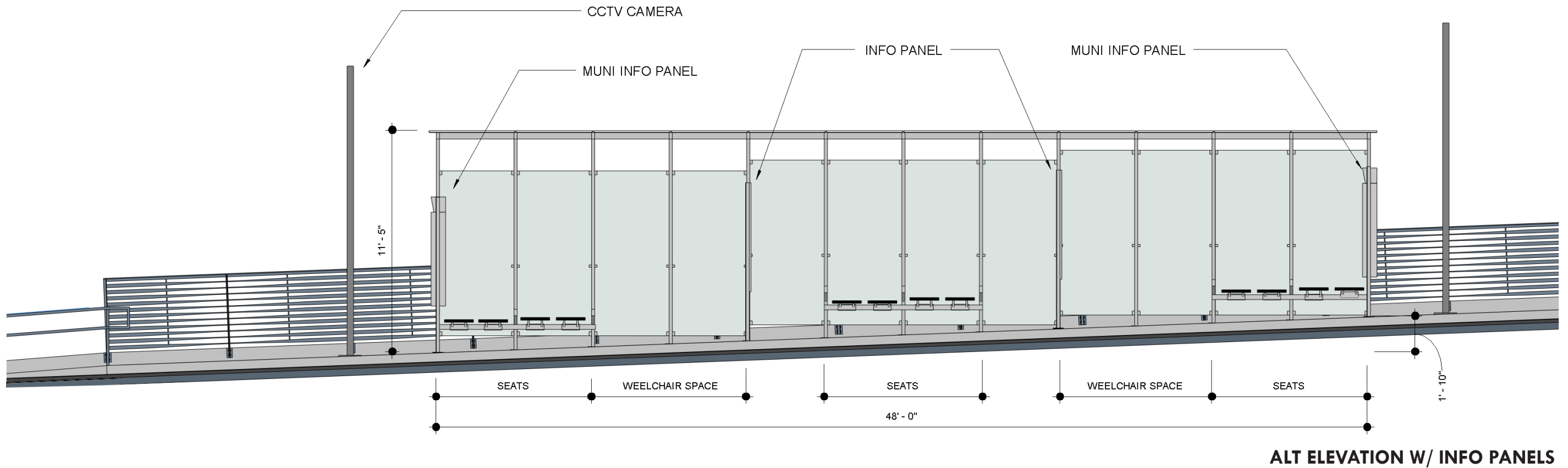
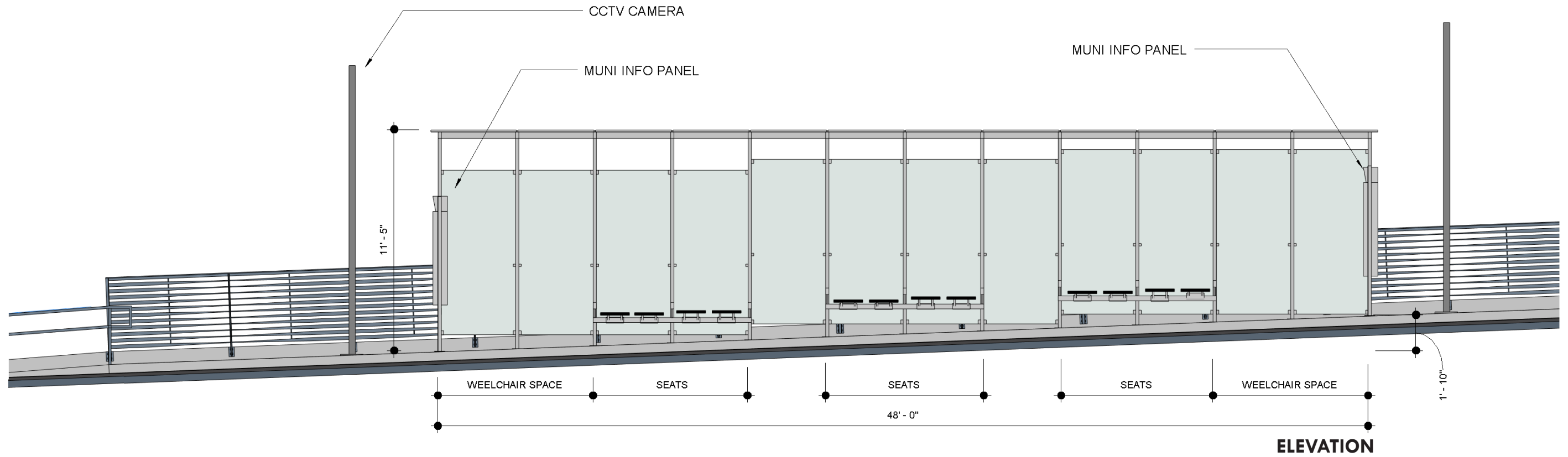


ELEVATION



ALT ELEVATION W/ INFO PANELS

**PLATFORM SOUTHBOUND\_ELEVATIONS**



**AXONOMETRIC VIEWS**

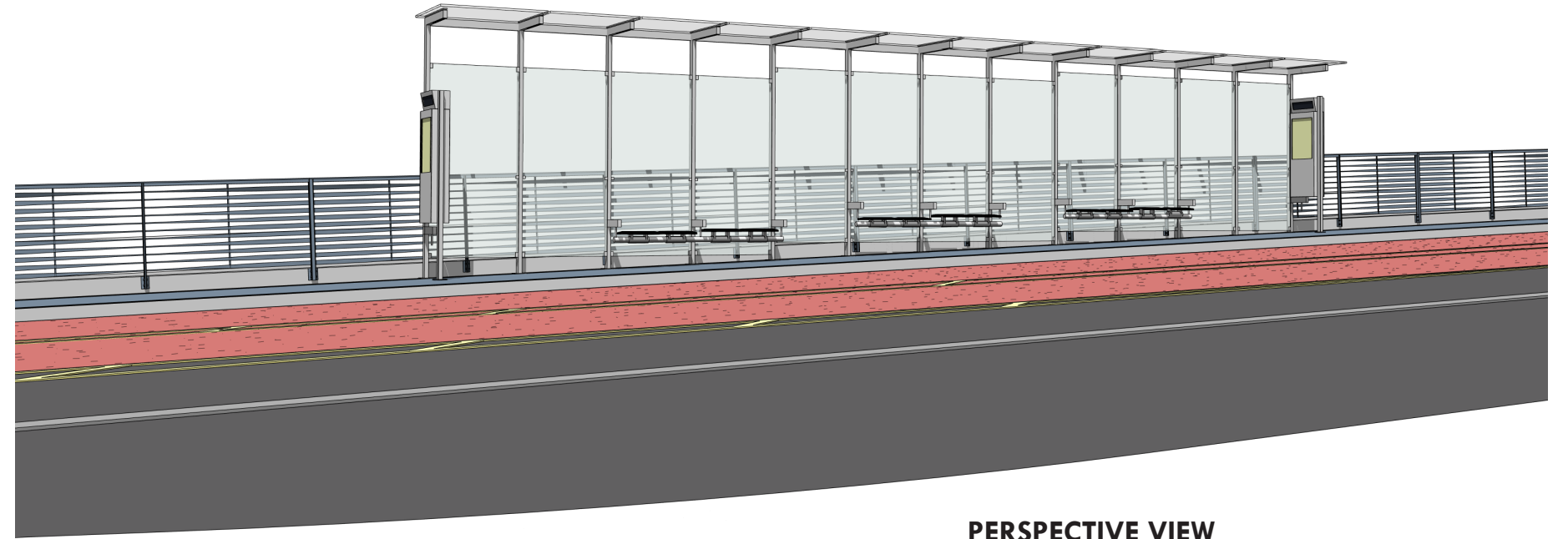


**AXONOMETRIC VIEW**

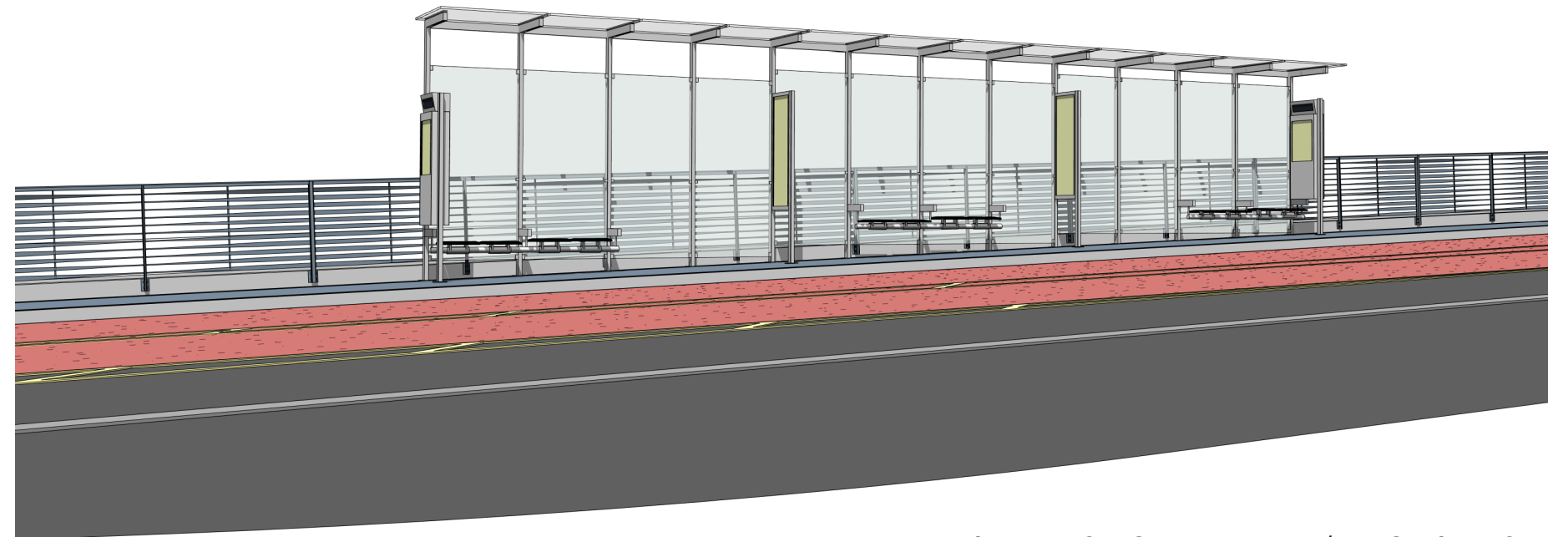


**ALT\_AXONOMETRIC VIEW W/ INFO PANELS**



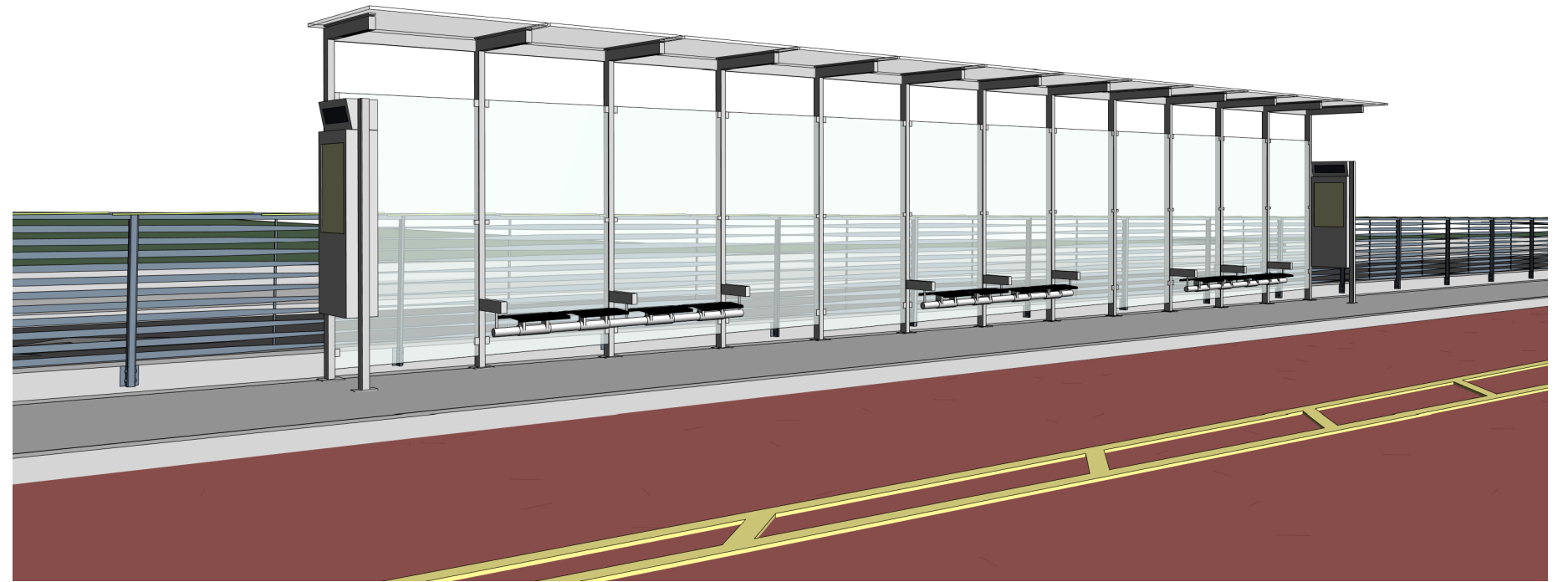


PERSPECTIVE VIEW

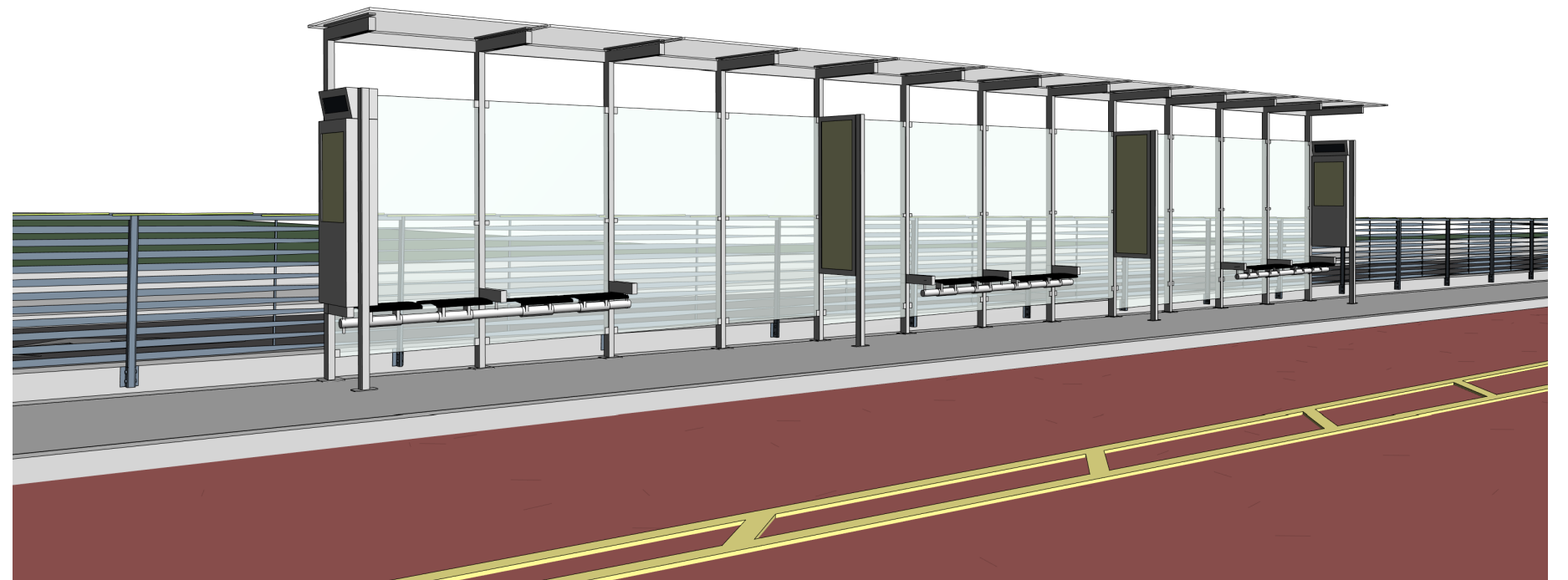


ALT\_PERSPECTIVE VIEW W/ INFO PANELS

PERSPECTIVE VIEW\_NORTHBOUND



PERSPECTIVE VIEW



ALT\_PERSPECTIVE VIEW W/ INFO PANELS



RENDERED PERSPECTIVE VIEW





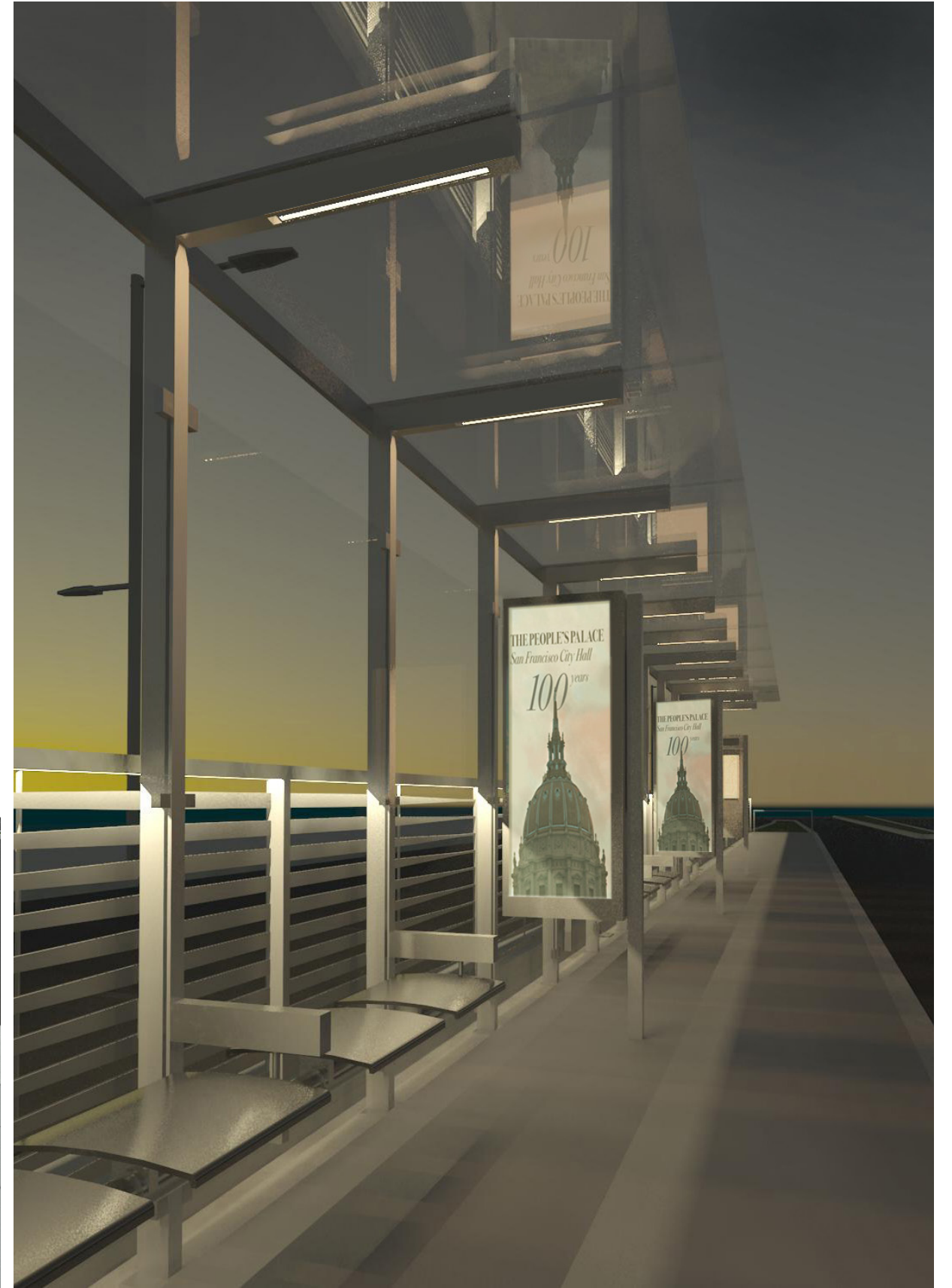








RENDERED PERSPECTIVE VIEW\_ALT





RENDERED PERSPECTIVE VIEW





RENDERED PERSPECTIVE VIEW

