



**Van Ness BRT Community Advisory Committee**

Thursday, May 19, 2016

6:00-7:30 p.m.

One South Van Ness, 7<sup>th</sup> floor, Union Square Conference Room

**MINUTES**

1. Meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.
2. Public comment (see policy on reverse): Members of the public may address the Van Ness BRT Community Advisory Committee on matters that are within its jurisdiction and are not on today's calendar.
  - a. Tim Donnelly:
    - i. Mr. Donnelly said committee members should represent the neighbors on Van Ness and shouldn't be cheerleaders for the project. He also expressed that the project will have impacts on residents and businesses. Having traffic on the curb, he said, will be very impactful. He cited the recent transit-only lanes installed on Mission Street and the Bus Rapid Transit project in San Jose as examples of how the project will harm businesses on Van Ness. He also said that any improvements in transit travel time for the project will be gained from bus stop consolidation and that center-running transit-only lanes will not improve these further. Mr. Donnelly also said that bulbouts are dangerous and will place pedestrians too close to traffic. He believes Van Ness is too compact for these to be installed and cited complications on Bosworth Street as an example. He also argued that proper outreach couldn't have been done during the environmental review phase because the Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report was conducted pre-online. In his experience, more people ride commuter shuttles than they do Muni on Van Ness. Therefore, the project will negatively impact more buses and bus riders than those that will benefit.
  - b. Lynne Newhouse Segal:
    - i. Ms. Newhouse Segal is supportive of the project overall, but is concerned about the project's impact on the existing lamps. She feels they are one of the few things that are beautiful about Van Ness. She agrees that the concrete poles are in poor condition and are less important, but believes the teardrop lamp fixtures should be preserved. She expressed that Van Ness Avenue is more than the Civic Center District and that its history extends beyond the historic district boundaries. She also said that Van Ness Avenue is a divider between the districts and therefore doesn't belong to a supervisor.
  - c. Chris Parkes:
    - i. Mr. Parkes felt hampered in his ability to speak about his concerns on the project. The way the agenda is currently structured, he said, does not allow enough time for the public to comment on individual items. He suggested changes that would allow for more opportunities for the public to speak and ask questions. Mr. Parkes also said the Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report should have included photographs instead of only drawings. He also said discontinued bus stops should be marked now for customers.
3. April 28, 2016 minutes were approved by a voice vote.
4. Committee Logistics.
  - a. Van Ness BRT Community Advisory Committee Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

- i. The committee chairperson is responsible for reviewing and commenting on the agenda each month. They will work with project staff to finalize the agenda items at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting. They will also facilitate the meetings each month, with assistance from project staff.
    - ii. The vice chairperson will handle these responsibilities should the chairperson be unavailable.
    - iii. Nominations and election.
      - 1. Alex Wilson and Mark Moreno were nominated for committee chair.
      - 2. William Crissman was nominated for committee vice chair.
      - 3. Nominees addressed the committee to express their interest in the positions before members voted by ballot.
  - b. Establish ground rules for committee meetings.
    - i. Only one person speaks at a time.
      - 1. Raise your hand when you want to speak and wait to be called on before speaking.
      - 2. Listen quietly when others are speaking.
    - ii. Be respectful of others, even when you disagree.
    - iii. Stay focused and keep cell phones silent.
    - iv. With a voice vote, members approve these rules with one amendment.
      - 1. Staff will add an item to the agenda to provide committee members an opportunity to make comment on matters not on the agenda.
  - c. The attendance policy was updated out of respect for committee members' time and that of staff and the public.
    - i. If a member is unable to attend a meeting, they are asked to notify Sean Cronin, Public Relations Assistant, by noon the day before the meeting. He can be reached at sean.cronin@sfmta.com.
- 5. SFMTA staff updates.
  - a. Project schedule.
    - i. Before construction can begin, project staff must resolve the tree permit with the Board of Appeals, amend the existing contract with the SFMTA Board of Directors, and secure an encroachment permit from Caltrans.
  - b. Contract amendment.
    - i. The existing contract with Walsh construction must be amended to include a Guaranteed Maximum Price and construction-related language.
      - 1. Current contract covers pre-construction services.
    - ii. This is a normal step in the Construction Manager General Contractor contract model adopted by this project.
      - 1. This is not a typical Design, Bid, Build capital improvement project.
      - 2. This contract model moves more of the risk to the contractor.
        - a. Makes it more difficult for contractor to issue change orders, which raise costs.
    - iii. Project staff anticipates going before the SFMTA Board in June.
  - c. Finalizing permits.
    - i. Before Caltrans issues its Encroachment Permit, staff must resolve any outstanding design variance requests and submit final plans and specifications.
      - 1. Example of design variance requests include traffic signal mast arms.
        - a. Caltrans standards dictate placement of traffic signals cannot be on the median of major thoroughways like Van Ness Avenue. Instead, they must be on mast arms mounted on the sidewalk.
      - 2. Must also secure utility and right-of-way certifications.
      - 3. Project staff anticipates receiving the Encroachment Permit by the end of June.
  - d. Outreach update.
    - i. Interactive text message campaign update.
      - 1. Current campaign is posted at bus stop locations between Lombard and Mission streets on Van Ness Avenue.
        - a. Phone number is also on bus stop consolidation informational posters.

2. Goals of the campaign were to notify people about the project and collect their contact information for future updates.
  3. More than 200 people have responded to the survey so far.
    - a. 75% of respondents had not heard of the Van Ness Improvement Project.
    - b. 80% of respondents signed up to receive future updates through text messages or email announcements.
  4. The next campaign will launch next week in Muni vehicles in four languages, English, Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino
- ii. Recent public engagement activities.
    1. Meet the Experts – Experts and location ideas welcome.
      - a. May event was attended by about 30 people at Village Pizzeria, where Jay Simms from Walsh Construction discussed the construction sequencing plan.
      - b. Topic for June event will be bus stop consolidation.
      - c. Future events will be Van Ness-related and/or project-specific.
      - d. Series is currently scheduled on the first Wednesdays of each month from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
      - e. Members are encouraged to share with staff their ideas on topics, experts, or locations.
  - iii. Outreach Calendar.
    1. Bus stop consolidation will occur June 4.
      - a. Nine bus stops will be discontinued on Van Ness Avenue.
        - i. Southbound at Greenwich, Pacific, Pine, and Grove.
        - ii. Northbound at Greenwich, California, Post, Turk, and Grove.
        - iii. Three Golden Gate Transit stops will also be impacted.
      - b. Consolidation will improve traffic circulation and transit reliability before and during construction.
        - i. Under current scheduling, a bus should arrive every 4 to 8 minutes. Improved reliability aims to target this schedule.
        - ii. Consolidating bus stops before construction also allows Muni Operators to become familiar with the new route prior to construction activity.
      - c. Remaining locations will be as near as possible to locations where BRT platforms will be located after construction.
      - d. Completed outreach includes email announcements, press releases, website updates, and a blog article.
        - i. Additional email announcements will be sent before consolidation occurs.
      - e. Signs will be posted at the discontinued stops on May 20.
        - i. Standard Muni Service Alert signs will be posted above a project informational sign that includes a text message number, hotline phone number, and project email address.
      - f. Ambassadors will be deployed at discontinued stops on May 23.
        - i. Will distribute a multilingual handout with project information and stop location graphic.
        - ii. Will also distribute palm cards with project staff contact information to people with questions.
      - g. Due to flexibility of the fleet to serve multiple routes, focusing handout outreach to customers at stops rather than on-vehicle distribution.
      - h. Project staff has built relationships with the blind and low vision communities through work on a Wayfinding Report. Will use these relationships to disseminate information to these communities.

- i. Will also update NextBus alerts and push-to-talk notifications at shelters.
  - i. Project staff has asked operators to make announcements, particularly to seniors and people with disabilities.
  - j. Stop locations have been legislated.
    - i. Stops were evaluated and selected in the project's environmental phase based on spacing, street grade, passenger usage, and transfer routes.
    - ii. Since the stops have been legislated, if a member of the public wishes to protest the discontinuation of their stop, they may contact their district supervisor.
  - k. When construction starts, stops will have to be temporarily and slightly adjusted, depending on the work being done on that block.
    - i. Outreach will be done to notify passengers when these changes happen.
- 2. Historic Preservation Commission Certificate of Appropriateness Hearing: July 6, 12:30 p.m., City Hall Room 400.
  - a. Date moved to July 6 following Architectural Review Commission Hearing on May 18, 2016.
  - b. Project staff will present commissioners with two design options for the transit shelters at McAllister Street.
    - i. Commissioners asked for a unique design at this BRT platform that would compliment the architecture and design of the Civic Center Historic District, specifically that of City Hall.
    - ii. Clear Channel will not maintain the unique shelters.
- 3. Board of Appeals Hearing: June 22, 5:00 p.m., City Hall Room 416.
  - a. A tree permit was issued by Public Works for the removal and replacement of 86 median trees and 4 sidewalk trees as part of the Van Ness Improvement Project.
    - i. This permit has been appealed and is suspended until the Board of Appeals issues a ruling.
    - ii. Board of Appeals may rule in the project's favor, rule in the appellant's favor, or outline next steps.
      - 1. If found in the project's favor, construction could possibly begin 30-45 days from the ruling.
      - 2. If found in the appellant's favor, construction could not begin as currently designed. Project staff would present next steps at the June meeting.
      - 3. If next steps are outlined, staff will proceed with them as directed.
- 4. Meet the Expert: June 1, 6:00-7:30 p.m.
  - a. Will discuss the effects of bus stop consolidation on transit and traffic flow.
- 5. Sunday Streets Tenderloin: July 10, 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
  - a. Project staff was at Mission Sunday Streets in April with one of the agency's new 60-foot hybrid buses, project information displays, and a scavenger hunt for children.
    - i. Tenderloin event will include these as well as a new SFMTA activity book for children.
- iv. Project Frequently Asked Questions.
  - 1. Members were asked to bring questions they had heard in the community about the Van Ness Improvement Project. Staff will post responses to these questions on the project website.
    - a. What is the Van Ness Improvement Project?
    - b. What will be the hours of construction?
    - c. What will be the duration of construction?

- d. How do I submit a public comment?
  - e. How much faster will it be to travel Van Ness?
  - f. When will the project be done?
  - g. Will the project remove all parking on Van Ness?
  - h. How do you justify the lane removal?
  - i. How is this different from the transit-only lanes on Mission or Market?
  - j. What will be the impacts on Broadway? Geary? Polk?
  - k. When and why will left turns be restricted?
  - l. Were there considerations made for stop locations near schools?
  - m. What are the recommended alternate routes during construction?
  - n. Who thought of this plan and design?
  - o. What will the impacts be to 101 traffic?
  - p. How much noise will this project generate?
  - q. What will the long-term traffic impacts be to neighborhoods?
  - r. Will the commuter shuttles be allowed to use the bus lanes?
  - s. Where will commuter shuttles operate during and after construction?
  - t. What support exists for businesses during construction?
  - u. What is planned to enforce illegal and double parking?
    - i. What are the plans for loading zones?
  - v. What are the benefits of this plan?
- 2. A member of the public expressed appreciation for collecting the questions to post on the project website.
- 6. Van Ness Business Advisory Committee Report postponed to June 23.
  - 7. Next meetings.
    - a. June 23, 6:00-7:30 p.m.
    - b. July 28, 6:00-7:30 p.m.
    - c. August 25, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Every agenda shall provide an opportunity for members of the public to address the Committee on items of interest to the public that are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Committee.

Public comment will be taken for each agenda item after discussion of the item by the Van Ness BRT CAC.

Privilege of Floor and Public Participation. The privilege of the floor shall be granted to any member of the public or officers of the City and County of San Francisco, or their duly authorized representatives for the purpose of commenting on any question before the Committee. Each person wishing to speak on an item at a regular or special meeting shall be permitted to be heard once per item for up to three minutes. The presiding officer shall be the judge of the pertinence of such comments, and have the power to limit this privilege if in the presiding officer's opinion the comments are not pertinent to the question before the Committee or the comments are merely reiterative of points made by previous speakers.

Presentations. After a presentation, the Van Ness BRT CAC Chair will ask committee members if they have any questions and then will open the meeting to public comment. When members of the public ask a question of the presenter, presenters should not respond, nor engage in any conversation. First, the commenter should finish their commentary. After which, if the Van Ness BRT CAC Chair or any committee member wants the presenter to respond to that question, the presenter will then respond to the Committee and not to the public.