



**Van Ness BRT Community Advisory Committee**

Thursday, September 22, 2016

6:00-7:30 p.m.

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

**MEETING MINUTES**

1. Meeting was called to order at 6:01.
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. No public comment.
3. Member comment. Members of the Community Advisory Committee may address the Van Ness BRT project staff on matters not on today's calendar.
  - a. Bill Crissman said that he was concerned with lighting between Davies Symphony Hall and the San Francisco Unified School District building. He said the area is poorly lit because the existing wattage is low and blocked by trees. The poor lighting leads to safety concerns such as people tripping over the garden boxes/fencing or being robbed.
  - b. Bob Anderson said he was also concerned with lighting on Van Ness Avenue. He said the integrity of Van Ness would be lost if it were lit as brightly as Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles.
  - c. Bob Lockhart told staff that bus drivers on Van Ness were giving poor directions and information. He also was curious whether the traffic modeling in the Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report would be updated. He said he was concerned about the lane removals as well.
  - d. Susie Criscimagna said she was still concerned with the distance between Sutter and Clay for bus stops on Van Ness. She also asked when left turns would be removed from Van Ness.
  - e. Bob Bardell acknowledged that the construction schedule had been accelerated since the August meeting. At that meeting, the construction start date was expected to be November 28, but it is now October 24.
  - f. Mark Moreno asked whether there would be a place to review the construction phasing online. Staff is currently working on a video series and animation for the Construction Open House on October 5. When those projects are complete, they will be posted on the project website.
4. As part of its Title VI Program submission to the Federal Transit Administration, the SFMTA must provide a table depicting the racial breakdown of the membership of any transit-related, non-elected planning boards, advisory councils or committees for which the SFMTA selects the membership.
  - a. A form was circulated to members asking them to identify the racial category to which they belong. Categories included Caucasian, Latino, African American, Asian American, Native American, and Other. If Other, members were asked to specify.
5. Minutes from the [August 25, 2016, meeting were approved by a voice vote](#).
  - a. Public Comment: Chris Parkes said he sent an email last month to clarify his comments on the lighting. He said he opposed the project and asked that the minutes be updated to reflect his opposition. The minutes were updated and distributed to CAC members in advance of the September meeting.
6. SFMTA staff updates.
  - a. Project schedule.
    - i. Construction is expected to begin October 24.

1. Management had asked for construction to begin in October instead of November.
- ii. The first impacts of construction will include reducing the lanes of travel from three to two in each direction, removing left turns, and temporarily removing and repaving the median.
  1. A second dedicated left turn lane will be put in place southbound at Broadway.
    - a. Bob Anderson asked for more details on the changes at Broadway. Staff said the road will be restriped and a new signal will be installed for a second controlled left-turn lane. The southbound bus stop at Vallejo will also need to be temporarily relocated and some parking will need to be removed to make room for the additional left turn lane.
  2. Left turn signals will be bagged and other signals will be retimed over the course of a few nights.
    - a. Bob Lockart asked when the lane reduction would take place. Staff said to expect it within the first 4-6 weeks. The median work will begin at Sutter and extend outward in 8-block segments in both directions. The lane closures will continue throughout construction.
    - b. Catherine Tran asked about the typical hours of construction for the initial work. Staff said most work will be done Monday through Friday, starting between 7 and 8 in the morning and ending between 3 and 4 in the afternoon. Some night work is required due to tree branches hanging over the roadway.
- iii. Utility work is expected to begin in early 2017.
- b. Contract amendment.
  - i. The amended contract is currently with Walsh Construction for signing. Staff expects the fully-executed contract to be in place next week.
- c. Finalizing permits.
  - i. Before construction can begin, a few milestones must be completed.
    1. The construction contract between Walsh Construction and the SFMTA must be signed so that a Notice to Proceed can be issued for the project.
    2. Staff is working with Walsh Construction on details of a traffic control plan. A new version is expected next week.
      - a. This is required before Walsh can seek an Encroachment Permit from Caltrans (as a companion to the Encroachment Permit the SFMTA received last month).
    3. The public must be notified about the start of construction before Public Works can issue a referral to begin work.
- d. Lighting on Van Ness Avenue.
  - i. Since last month's CAC meeting, staff learned the lights on Van Ness will not be as similar to the lights on Castro as was presented. The proposed pole is similar, but the fixtures and lighting elements will be different.
    1. Similar lamp heads can be found at 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Taraval Street.
  - ii. San Francisco Public Utilities Commission has requested the LED lights on Van Ness to have a color temperature of 3000K. For comparison, the LED lighting on Castro has a color temperature of 4300K.
    1. Color temperature refers to the amount of yellow (1900K) or blue (10000K) in the light. It is not the same as brightness.
  - iii. Bill Crissman asked whether the brightness will be able to be adjusted after installation. The standards for brightness are set by Caltrans and cannot be adjusted. However, caps will be installed on the lamps to redirect light if there are problems.
  - iv. Catherine asked whether the same lights would be used on future Bus Rapid Transit projects in the city. Although similar poles could be chosen, the poles for Van Ness were designed to accommodate the Overhead Contact System, which is not necessarily a concern on other corridors like Geary.

1. The new poles will be 50 percent taller so the Overhead Contact System can be relocated to the center lanes.
  - v. The Historic Preservation Commission has issued a draft report on the existing street poles, which staff has reviewed and provided feedback on. A meeting must be scheduled to resolve some issues.
    1. Once the report is finalized, the Historic Preservation Commission will determine next steps for the four poles in Civic Center.
  - vi. Supervisor Aaron Peskin introduced a resolution at the September 20, 2016, Board of Supervisors meeting that urges the SFMTA to make all efforts to preserve the historic character of Van Ness through reuse and replication of the existing street lamps.
    1. A feasibility report will be drafted by staff that includes the budget, scope of work, and timeline for reuse and replication.
      - a. This conflicts with earlier direction and approvals from the Historic Preservation Commission and San Francisco Arts Commission. Any design changes would require approval from both bodies.
    2. Bob Anderson asked how long this would take and whether it would impact the project schedule. Staff said it would need to be done soon based on the October 24 start date. Sup. Peskin and supporters of the resolution at Tuesday's meeting all spoke in support of the project and said they did not want to delay construction.
    3. The impact on the construction schedule is an outstanding question.
7. Outreach update.
- a. Recent public engagement activities.
    - i. Federal Transit Administration presentation and walking tour.
      1. Staff provided a project overview and walked through existing conditions and identified project benefits.
    - ii. San Francisco Chamber of Commerce presentation.
      1. Staff presented a project overview.
    - iii. Summer newsletter release.
      1. Summer newsletter was distributed August 24 to more than 1,700 digital subscribers. Also posted on the project website and sent to public officials and their staff.
      2. Fall newsletter will be printed and mailed and will include information on getting through construction.
    - iv. Meet the Expert: Bus Rapid Transit.
      1. Paul Bignardi from the SFMTA spoke about Bus Rapid Transit systems around the world, including how it was selected for Van Ness Avenue.
  - b. Outreach Calendar.
    - i. Construction is Coming campaign.
      1. Van Ness Improvement Project and Polk Streetscape Project Open House: October 5, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Tenderloin Community School, 627 Turk Street.
        - a. Approximately 35,000 postcards were mailed to addresses between Beach and Howard, Gough and Hyde.
        - b. About 14,000 door hangers will be distributed on Van Ness and Polk between Beach and Howard. They will also be distributed on cross streets between Franklin and Larkin.
        - c. 750 posters will be hung at bus stops and each corner of the 132 intersections throughout the project corridors.
    - ii. Construction is Here campaign.
      1. Will announce the start of construction and expand on previous campaigns.
        - a. Will include regional newspaper ads, signs in Muni Metro stations/kiosks, posters on Muni vehicles, and more.
        - b. Catherine Tran suggested reaching out to companies like Uber, Lyft, and Sprig to announce the start of construction and the traffic changes expected on Van Ness. She also asked whether Golden

- Gate Transit had been included in communications and suggested reaching out to mapping services like Google and Waze.
- c. Alex Wilson asked how staff was planning to reach occasional visitors throughout the region. Staff said they will have Variable Messaging Signs located as far north as San Rafael for these visitors.
    - i. Dell Brooks suggested also utilizing space near the Golden Gate Bridge toll plaza.
    - ii. Randy Uang asked how long the Variable Messaging Signs would be posted. Staff said they will be up throughout construction. He suggested making sure signs were up at the 280/101 split and using existing Caltrans signs.
    - iii. Susie Criscimagna asked what the Variable Messaging Signs would say. Staff will bring this information to a future meeting.
    - iv. Bob Anderson suggested reaching out to BART and the ferry companies, too.
  - d. Alex Wilson asked how the project team was working with other construction in the city. He mentioned that construction on Broadway could result in too many detours and complicate traffic routing.
    - i. The project team is working closely with the Polk Streetscape Project team to manage east-west connections throughout construction.
  - e. Several members suggested warning drivers specifically about the left turn removals on Van Ness. Staff will be providing businesses with text they can use on their website to direct customers without left turns.
    - i. Bill Crissman asked whether there would be any exceptions to the left turn removals on Van Ness. He cited turn restrictions in other locations where Muni and taxis are still allowed to make left turns.
      1. Some exceptions will be in place for Golden Gate Transit and non-revenue Muni service.
  - f. Bob Anderson suggested reaching out to hotels throughout San Francisco, the Moscone Center, and car rental agencies.
  - g. Catherine Tran suggested a social media campaign to alert drivers.
  - h. Bob Lockhart suggested using traffic reports on radio and television to alert drivers. Staff will be briefing the media on the project next week.
  - i. Susie Criscimagna asked whether staff would reach out to businesses to relocate their loading zones to reduce double parking on Van Ness. Staff has begun this work and has converted discontinued Muni stop locations into temporary loading zones for construction.
8. Van Ness Business Advisory Committee Report for September 15 meeting.
    - a. Staff provided an update on the project schedule and the ongoing collaboration with the Polk Streetscape Project.
  9. Next meetings.
    - a. October 27, 6:00-7:30 p.m.
    - b. November 17, 6:00-7:30 p.m. (*with Van Ness Business Advisory Committee*)
    - c. No December meeting.

## 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.

## MEMBER COMMENT

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

Privilege of Floor and Public Participation. The privilege of the floor shall be granted to any member of the Committee. Each person wishing to speak shall be permitted to be heard 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.