VAN NESS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

SPRING 2017 | ISSUE 5

Street Smarts on Van Ness

By Sean Cronin

The Van Ness Improvement Project aims to bring the aging avenue into the future with miles of new water and sewer networks and San Francisco's first Bus Rapid Transit system. While work on these major upgrades continues, the SFMTA is using smart technology and advanced technological equipment and communications initiatives through its SFgo program to start making some seemingly small changes that will have a big impact on how people get around.

SFgo, a program that began in early 2000, aims to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors moving around the city by using technology that can identify, analyze and respond to transportation challenges.

For Van Ness Avenue, that means a safer, more efficient way of getting around for everyone, whether they drive, take transit, bike or walk.

Some of the on-street infrastructure on Van Ness — like traffic signals — in San Francisco dates back to the mid-20th century. While it may not seem like new technology is necessary to change a light from green to red, upgrades can improve traffic flow and relieve congestion on our streets.

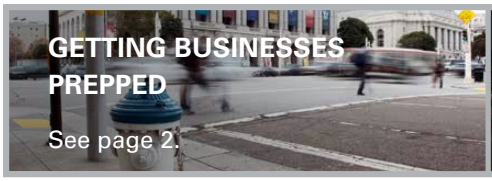
The upgrades coming to Van Ness Avenue include closed circuit television traffic cameras with the ability to monitor traffic in real-time on city streets. When combined with advanced traffic signal controllers, which allow for remote operations, like alternate signal timing, plans can be implemented to keep traffic moving.

Other upgrades include transit signal priority (see page 3), which allows city vehicles to communicate with traffic signals as they approach an intersection. If a signal is about to change to yellow as a bus approaches, it will stay green for a few extra seconds to let the vehicle through. Despite its name, fire engines are also equipped with this technology.

While it may not seem like new technology is necessary to change a light from green to red, upgrades can improve traffic flow and relieve congestion on our streets.

Electronic informational displays are also part of the SFgo program. Sometimes referred to as variable message signs, these provide people information such

SEE TECH, PAGE 2

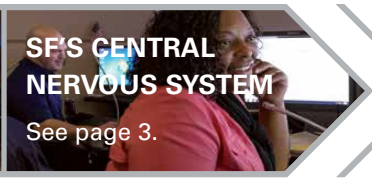


GETTING BUSINESSES PREPPED

See page 2.

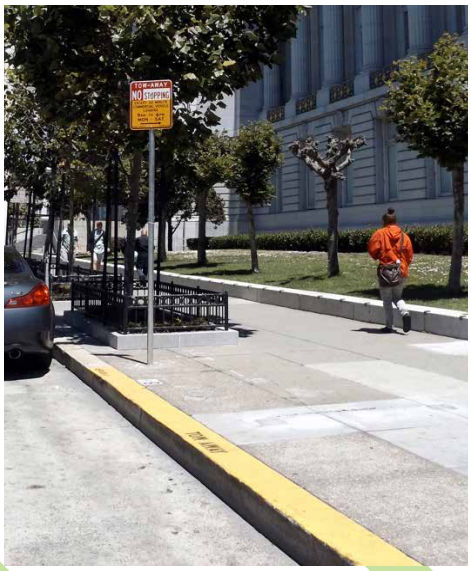
TRANSIT-FIRST TECHNOLOGY

See page 3.



SF'S CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

See page 3.



Loading zones on Van Ness Avenue will need to be temporarily relocated while crews replace utilities at the curb.

FROM PAGE 1

TECH: Building a Smarter City

as road closures or traffic delays. These can also be linked to the SFMTA's parking program that uses innovative technology and advanced pricing strategies, SFPark, to show real-time availability in nearby garages. This helps reduce the number of vehicles circling to find street parking.

A centralized Transportation Management Center (see page 3) houses these smart technologies, which rely on a fiber optic and wireless communication network that extends through all of San Francisco along major corridors such as Van Ness, Franklin and Gough.

The technologies included in the SFgo program, combined with the work happening beneath the street, will make Van Ness a smarter street that works for everyone.

To find out more about about how smart technology is being used on San Francisco streets, join us at our our monthly Meet the Expert speaker series on Wednesday, May 3 (see back cover).

VAN NESS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

NEWSLETTER IS PRODUCED BY
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
One South Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94103

415.646.2310
vannessbrt@sfmta.com

Working Together to Keep You Moving

By Sean Cronin

Later this spring, construction of the Van Ness Improvement Project will move from the middle of Van Ness Avenue to the curb so that major utility replacement can begin. In order to maintain the flow of traffic and ensure businesses receive their necessary shipments, there will be some necessary adjustments to loading zones on Van Ness.

As described in Issue 2 of the Van Ness Improvement Project newsletter, Van Ness will be divided into two active construction areas for utility replacement: Lombard to Sutter and Sutter to Mission. Utility replacement will start on the east side of Van Ness at Lombard and the west side at Sutter. Both construction areas will expand south until they reach the end of the segment. Then, construction will move back to the top of the segment and begin on the opposite side of Van Ness.

During this phase of construction, crews will be digging trenches and laying new sewer and water pipelines. While parking will still be available on the opposite side of the street, loading zones will need to be relocated.

As construction approaches a given block, the contractor and the city will work with business owners and merchants to find suitable nearby locations on side streets off Van Ness.

Relocating these loading zones ensures businesses continue to receive their deliveries. It also provides dedicated space outside an active construction area for delivery companies to reduce double parking on the corridor.

As construction continues, these changes will keep everyone safely moving on Van Ness.

You Asked!

What are you doing to keep traffic moving on neighboring streets during construction?

In preparation for the Van Ness Improvement Project, Gough and Franklin streets were upgraded with new traffic signals and controllers. These were connected with fiber optic communications to the SFMTA's network and Transportation Management Center. Traffic monitoring and quick incident response is supported by intersection cameras while new Variable Message Signs are providing traveler information. These improvements are helping to ensure safe and orderly traffic flow during construction. Lombard Street and Bush Street, already fiber-equipped, were also connected to the network to allow better management of neighborhood traffic during construction.

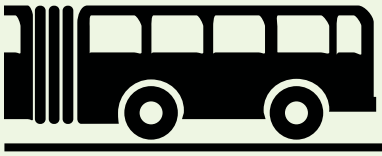
Ken Kwong, ***transportation engineer with over 10 years of experience in transit engineering, started as an intern with the SFMTA and is involved in the traffic signal design for the Van Ness Improvement Project. He is excited to see San Francisco's first Bus Rapid Transit go from design into construction and eventually revenue service.***

This civic improvement project on Van Ness Avenue from Aquatic Park to Mission Street provides transportation upgrades, including San Francisco's first Bus Rapid Transit system, a globally proven solution to improve transit service and address traffic congestion; utility maintenance, including street repaving, and sewer, water and emergency firefighting water system replacement; and civic improvements, including streetlight replacement, new sidewalk lighting, landscaping and rain gardens.

All images by SFMTA unless otherwise noted.

311 Free language assistance / 免費語言協助 / Ayuda gratis con el idioma / Бесплатная помощь переводчиков / Trợ giúp Thông dịch Miễn phí / Assistance linguistique gratuite / 無料の言語支援 / 무료 언어 지원 / Libreng tulong para sa wikang Filipino / การช่วยเหลือทาง ด้านภาษาโดยไม่เสียค่าใช้จ่าย / خط المساعدة المجاني على الرقم

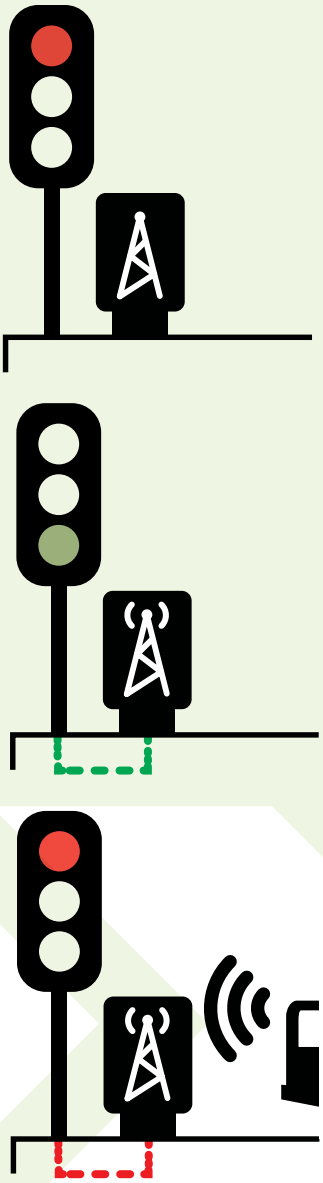
What is "Transit Signal Priority"?



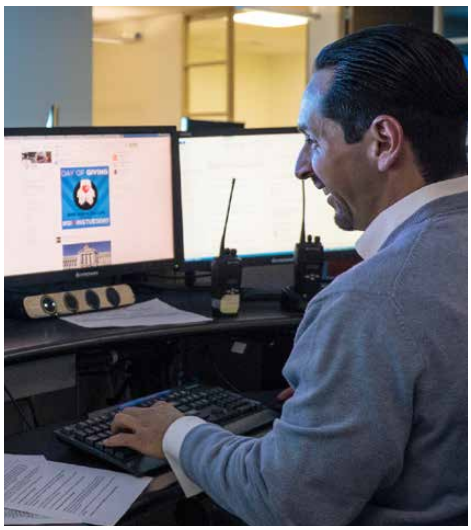
Transit Signal Priority is a way for city vehicles like Muni to talk to traffic signals and move smoothly through intersections.

As a bus approaches an intersection, it sends a message to the traffic signal to either make the light turn green earlier or hold the green light for the vehicle to clear the intersection.

This technology allows city vehicles to safely keep moving. For Muni customers, that means less delay at red lights and more reliable service.



The Brains Behind Transportation in SF



The Transportation Management Center, pictured here, will integrate SFMTA teams and technologies in one location.

The Transportation Management Center, also referred to as the TMC, will serve as a modern hub for streamlined real-time management of traffic and Muni service in San Francisco when it is complete later this summer.

At the TMC, which is partially operational today, various live data, camera and dispatch systems will be integrated to keep traffic and Muni service running smoothly and safely. The center will allow staff to more efficiently identify issues and coordinate and deploy resources, especially during rush hours and major events. This includes areas such as traffic and parking enforcement, security and police coordination, and maintenance.

By Aaron Bialick

Much of SFMTA's bus fleet is already managed with the TMC's new dispatch and monitoring system, and the rest of its vehicles are being phased in from the outdated Operations Central Control system.

Today, the TMC is where the SFMTA sends alerts and Twitter responses to Muni customers, and where parking enforcement and transit security teams are hosted. When completed, the TMC will also serve as the nerve center for the smart traffic signal system.

Once fully operational, the TMC will be a major component of the SFMTA. By having a central, integrated location, the agency will be more able to oversee the city's surface transportation network.