

VAN NESS

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

WINTER 2017 | ISSUE 4

Neighborly Advice

By Sean Cronin

Small business owners Terry Asten Bennett and Daniel Bergerac know firsthand how city construction projects affect the way businesses operate, having worked through the Castro Street Improvement Project in 2014. While construction on the Van Ness Improvement Project is larger and will take more time, both business owners had some helpful advice for getting through the next three years.

According to Terry, whose family owns Cliff's Variety, it is important for the contractor to make commitments to the neighborhood before construction begins.

"I know keeping an active construction site clean is hard," she said, "but it goes a long way to maintaining an inviting environment for customers."

Walsh Construction, the contractor for the Van Ness Improvement Project, has committed to being a good steward of the neighbors since their early meetings with neighbors and businesses in 2015.

"We have already begun talking with neighbors and businesses," said Lisa Toso, project manager with Walsh Construction, "and we will be keeping work areas tidy and making it possible for everyone to get in and out of their homes or businesses. Walsh is excited about being a good neighbor."

Daniel, owner of Mudpuppy's Tub & Scrub and president of Castro Merchants, said businesses can also prepare themselves for construction by slowing down and looking at their staffing or inventory decisions.

"Hunker down, take some time and look at everything," he said. "But remember this will pass. There is an end to construction."

Daniel and Terry agreed that accurate information and access to the project team were crucial for business owners to make smart decisions throughout construction.

"It was one of the reasons the Castro project went well," Daniel said. "Businesses had cell phone numbers and email addresses for the project manager and construction foreman. Supervisor [Scott] Weiner and the Castro Community Benefit District were actively involved, too. Everyone worked together to help."

Residents and merchants affected by construction of the Van Ness Improvement Project can expect similar access to

SEE NEIGHBORS, PAGE 2

PLANNING A VISIT TO VAN NESS

See page 2.

THE FIRST PHASE OF CONSTRUCTION

See page 3.

TIPS TO PREPARE

See page 3.



The Van Ness Business Advisory Committee has asked the Van Ness Improvement Project staff to help businesses by providing directions for navigating traffic changes on Van Ness Avenue.

FROM PAGE 1

Neighbors: Helpful Words of Wisdom

project staff. In addition to direct contact through a project hotline and email, staff has begun hosting drop-in office hours twice a week (see back cover). Additionally, anyone is welcome to attend monthly events including Van Ness Business Advisory Committee or Van Ness BRT Community Advisory Committee meetings and the more casual Meet the Expert speaker series.

The next three years will be tough as crews make improvements for the community on Van Ness. By replacing water and sewer lines from the 1800s, installing new street and sidewalk lighting, and building San Francisco's first Bus Rapid Transit system, Van Ness Avenue will be a premier street for the future.

For more construction-related advice, see page 3. To find out about upcoming project events and meetings, go to sfmta.com/vanness#events.

Visiting Van Ness During Construction

By Sean Cronin

When construction on the Van Ness Improvement Project began, the way people used Van Ness Avenue to get around changed almost immediately. Most left turns were eliminated from Van Ness onto cross streets in November. Soon, the number of traffic lanes will be reduced from three to two in each direction. As drivers continue to adjust to these new conditions, it's important that customers know how to best access their favorite businesses.

Earlier this year, the Van Ness Business Advisory Committee addressed some of these concerns when they began developing resources for businesses to handle construction.

Last month, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency published the first part of these resources on the Van Ness Improvement Project website at sfmta.com/vanness. There, one can find driving directions to parking garages near Van Ness including the Performing Arts Garage, the Civic Center Garage and the Polk-Bush Garage without turning left from Van Ness.

Businesses are encouraged to visit sfmta.com/vanness and use these tips for their website, newsletters or emails to customers. As construction of the project continues over the next three years, destinations may be added or changed to reflect the needs of neighbors and merchants.

Construction is going to be trying for everyone, but the SFMTA is committed to helping businesses endure the work. When construction is complete, a safer and more vibrant Van Ness will be enjoyed for years to come.

Have a concern or issue your business would like addressed? Contact the project team at vannessbrt@sfmta.com, or come to a Business Advisory Committee meeting, third Thursdays, 3:00-4:30 p.m. Please see sfmta.com/vanness for details.

You Asked!

Why do the trees in the median have to be replaced?

San Francisco's first Bus Rapid Transit system on Van Ness Avenue will totally change the design of the street, including the installation of new boarding islands and medians (the raised center islands). Once construction is completed, 210 trees will be planted in the median — twice as many trees as there are now, creating a beautiful green urban forest down the center of Van Ness.



Martha Ketterer, Landscape Architect at Public Works, has over 28 years of experience in urban design, parks and streetscape including the Van Ness Improvement Project.

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

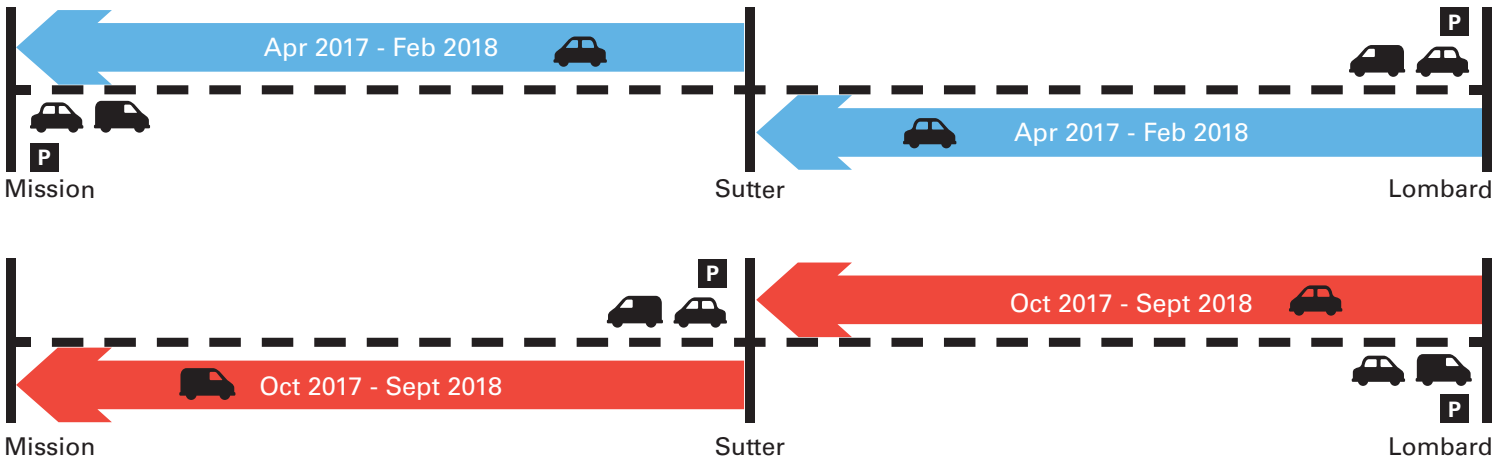
This civic improvement project on Van Ness Avenue from Aquatic Park to Mission Street provides transportation upgrades, including San Francisco's first Bus Rapid Transit system, a globally proven solution to improve transit service and address traffic congestion; utility maintenance, including street 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

Utility Construction

Utility replacement, the first of three phases of construction, is expected to last two years. During this phase, construction work will move south on one side of the street while preserving parking on the opposite side. Once the first side of the street is completed, parking will be restored and the utility work will begin on the opposite side. For a more detailed look at how construction will progress, check out the videos and construction animation at sfmta.com/vanness.



Surviving Construction

By Dadisi Najib



Stay informed.

Make an effort to attend public meetings and sign up for mailing lists. Stay informed through the project webpage and social media. Invite project staff to give presentations and provide updates to your neighborhood groups.

Spread the word.

Keep a positive attitude by reminding neighbors and customers about the benefits the area will receive once construction is complete.

If you take taxis, Uber, Lyft or other ride service, remind your driver to pull onto a cross street or parking space for pick-up or drop-off so they don't get ticketed for double parking on Van Ness.

Inform customers in advance so they can maneuver construction and access your business. Examples can include putting

up signs or adding directions to webpages and outgoing voicemail messages.

Have a phone script so that employees know what to say when customers ask for directions.

Keep delivery people informed about detour routes and alternate entrances. Encourage delivery from cross streets during non-peak traffic, and remind drivers that double parking laws will be enforced on Van Ness Avenue.

Plan ahead.

Crews will tidy up work areas on the street, but consider stepping up cleaning schedules to keep the inside of your home or business clean during construction.

Gather customer contact information.

Collect customers' contact information so you can keep them apprised of road conditions, best routes and promotional

specials during the construction period. Consider sending monthly emails to customers. If you stay in touch with them, they won't be as likely to change their buying habits during construction.

Extend business hours.

Consider being open later in the evening after construction crews are finished for the day.

Stay visible.

Directional signs driveway signs are used to direct people using a side street toward your business. Driveway signs can also help to tell drivers where to turn since construction can make it difficult for them to find the driveway. For project-related signs, please contact the team at vannessbrt@sfmta.com.

VAN NESS

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

ONLY
GGT

MAINTAIN • RESTORE • MODERNIZE



OFFICE HOURS

Community Drop-In Office Hours

Tuesdays, 2:00-4:00 p.m

Fridays, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

(Excluding holidays)

**180 Redwood Street, Suite 300
(near Van Ness and Golden Gate)**

Have a question about construction or the Van Ness Improvement Project? Stop by our Community Drop-In Office Hours at our Field Office to get assistance from project staff Tuesday afternoons from 2:00 to 4:00, or Friday mornings from 10:00 to noon. You may also contact project staff directly by emailing vannessbrt@sfmta.com or calling 415.646.2310.

To find out more and sign up for updates about the Van Ness Improvement Project, go to sfmta.com/vanness.

For questions or comments, contact us at vannessbrt@sfmta.com or 415.646.2310.

如有疑問或需要免費語言協助，請發電子郵件至 vannessbrt@sfmta.com 或致電415-646-2310。

Si tiene preguntas o para servicio gratis para el idioma, póngase en contacto con vannessbrt@sfmta.com o 415-646-2310.

sfmta.com/vanness