

A holistic approach for improving transit

By Bianna Nguyen

The first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system was built in Curitiba, Brazil, in 1974, pioneering a different way of looking at public transportation in cities. According to BRTdata.org, more than 170 cities currently have a BRT system in place, averaging 33 million passengers a day riding on roughly 3,300 miles of BRT lanes. Curitiba's transit lanes allowed for buses to operate like a subway for improvements in travel time and connections to different parts of the city. This paved the way for other Latin American countries to implement BRT systems of their own, and soon their influence spread around the world.

BRT systems result in:

- Faster travel times – dedicated lanes mean buses can move much faster where traffic gets backed up.
- Shorter commutes – passengers spend less time on the bus.
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions – more efficient operations.
- Traffic safety - buses have their own lanes away from vehicle traffic.
- Increased physical activity - spaced stops encourage walking.

Van Ness Avenue has been a critical thoroughfare for San Francisco since the city's founding. Initially surveyed in 1856 to serve as San Francisco's spine in the late 1800's,

once Van Ness BRT is operational, it will again serve as a spine of the Muni Rapid network, as a north-south connector to San Francisco's east-west Muni lines like the 5 Fulton and 38 Geary.

In 1906, it served as a firebreak after the earthquake, saving the western part of the city. The opening of the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937 significantly increased traffic on Van Ness Avenue, and by the 1900s San Francisco saw the need for establishing rapid transit service on the congested corridor. Voters agreed, approving a sales tax in 2003 to plan for the BRT, and the San Francisco County Transportation Authority approved the Van Ness Improvement Project in 2013.

As San Francisco has grown, the city has set goals to ease congestion, and one way of doing so is the implementation of the BRT system along Van Ness. With the BRT, travel times for riders will improve up to 32%, and the reliability of buses arriving on time will improve by up to 50%. Additionally, the new system will save up to 30% of daily route operating costs. As transit needs for San Francisco evolve and grow, the BRT system will continue to meet the needs of the city by providing efficient transportation and increasing benefits for all passengers.

NORMALCY RETURNING TO VAN NESS AVENUE

See page 2.

FINISHING TOUCHES COMING ALONG THE CORRIDOR

See page 3.

SCHEDULE UPDATE

See page 3.

Normalcy returning to Van Ness Avenue

As San Francisco emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, residents and visitors are returning to normalcy on Van Ness Avenue. Live performances have returned to the War Memorial Opera House, Davies Symphony Hall and Bill Graham Civic Auditorium. Increased foot traffic and the return of many workers to City Hall and other government buildings in the area has also provided a boost in business for Van Ness restaurants and shops.

The SFMTA in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development has also been able to support businesses affected by construction through the Directed Business Support Program. Grants totaling \$185,000 have been disbursed to 23 corridor businesses.



You Asked!

"When is the public art scheduled to be installed on Van Ness?"



Jackie von Treskow is an Oakland-based artist and arts advocate with more than a decade of experience implementing innovative, site-specific and community-responsive projects and programs in the public realm. Jackie joined the San Francisco Arts Commission as a Public Art Project Manager in 2018.

Because of the nature of the Van Ness Improvement Project, the public art is going to be installed in two phases. The first phase of installation happened in mid-October. This entailed having the bases, or poles, for the light sculptures put in place. These will be securely wrapped and await the finishing touches for when the project is completed. Then, later this year, the electrical elements and spheres will be installed. The light sculpture, as designed by Cuban-American sculpturist Jorge Pardo, is expected to be illuminated at the completion of all major work for the Van Ness Improvement Project.

This example of public art in San Francisco will hopefully encourage discussion, reflection and support for all of the wonderful pieces on display throughout the city.

VAN NESS

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

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

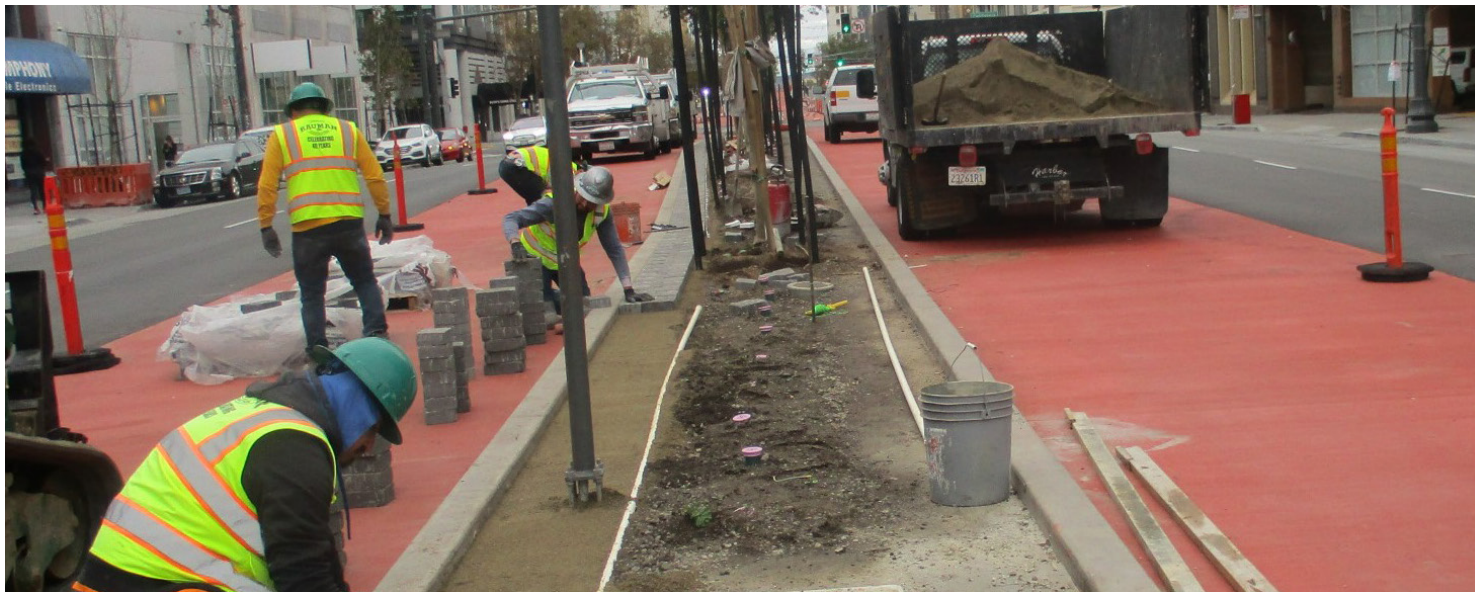
415.646.2310
VanNessBRT@SFMTA.com

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, 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

Finishing touches coming along the corridor



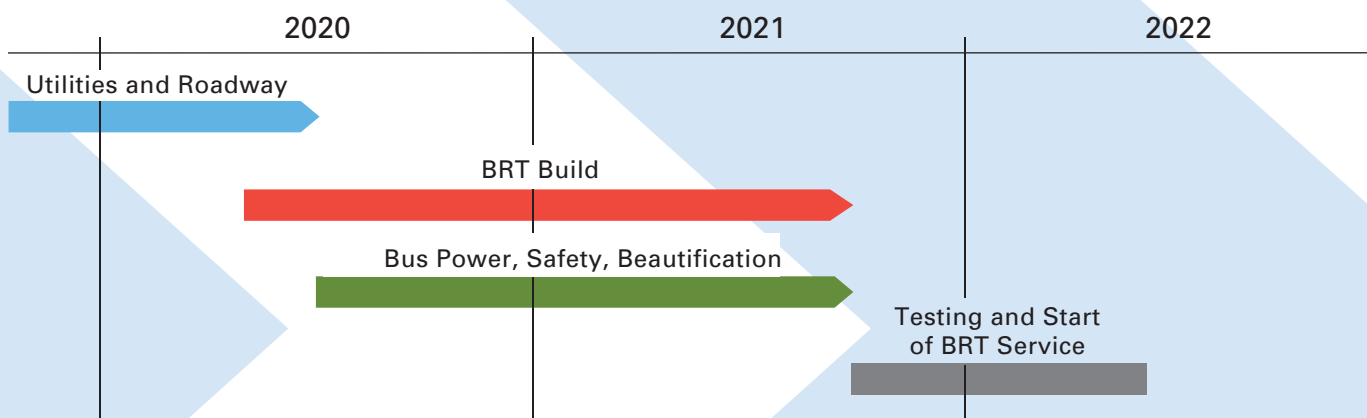
Crews install pavers at Van Ness Avenue and Pine Street

With just a couple months until the Van Ness Improvement Project is completed, construction crews are putting on the finishing touches. Curb ramps are being installed at bulb-out locations at intersections along the corridor to improve safety by reducing crossing distances for people walking. A lot of work is being done in the median. You may have seen

trees being planted and installation of brick pavers on the bus platforms. New overhead wires, which power our zero-emissions fleet of trolley buses, are being installed. New railings installed on the bus platforms is another visible sign that construction will soon be complete, and that buses will soon be running in the new red transit lanes.

Project schedule

At press time, construction on Van Ness Avenue is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2021. Muni and Golden Gate Transit service is expected to begin on the Bus Rapid Transit corridor in early 2022. The graphic below shows additional details about the remaining phases of the project.



The Van Ness Improvement Project schedule above shows each phase of construction: Utilities include installing an electrical duct bank and replacing underground sewer and water systems, as well as a segment of the emergency firefighting water system to ensure reliable operation, new street and sidewalk lighting, sidewalk and roadway restoration; BRT Build includes building red center-running Bus Rapid Transit lanes, station platforms and medians; Bus Power includes building new sidewalk extensions, installing new overhead bus-power wires, painting crosswalks and training operators. Project staff is working to reduce delays in the schedule.



Information Gladly Given

Van Ness Improvement Project staff may be contacted directly by calling 415.646.2310 or emailing VanNessBRT@SFMTA.com.

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

