



Van Ness BRT Community Advisory Committee

Thursday, August 25, 2016

6:00-7:30 p.m.

One South Van Ness, 7th floor, Union Square Conference Room

MEETING MINUTES

1. Meeting was called to order at 6:05 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. No public comment was heard.
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 asked whether the Van Ness Improvement Project would include improved street lighting in the area of the San Francisco Symphony and War Memorial Opera House buildings. The new street and sidewalk lighting will be installed at the end of the first phase of construction. The contractor expects these to be installed at the Symphony in summer 2017.
 - b. Bob Lockhart has seen several people waiting at old bus stops on Van Ness because shelters have been replaced with ad kiosks. He suggested posting signs at these locations and asked whether it would be possible to put posters on buses to show passengers where the stops for the 47 and 49 are. Staff agreed that signs at the kiosks could be helpful, but it would be logistically difficult to put posters on buses due to driver/route changes. Bob also asked about the design of the railing at boarding platforms and whether a child could fit underneath it. Staff confirmed that the clearance between the platform and bottom rung is only a couple inches and will prevent this.
 - c. Alex Wilson is still hearing complaints about the elimination of the bus stop at California. Bill Crissman said the distance between Sutter and Clay is about a half-mile and asked whether it would be possible to move the Clay stop to Sacramento. Staff said the project is fully designed and legislated as-is, but that the team is researching whether any viable options exist that might address the concerns at this location.
4. Minutes for the July 28, 2016, meeting were approved by a voice vote.
5. SFMTA staff updates.
 - a. Project schedule.
 - i. The latest project schedule has a tentative construction start date of November 28. The initial work will include preparing the roadway and removing the existing median. If this prep work begins on November 28, the prep work is expected to last through February.
 1. Bob Anderson asked whether the roadway would consist of six lanes during construction. Staff said the changes for drivers will happen almost immediately as the roadway will consist of four lanes and most left turns will be eliminated at the start of construction. Some left turns will be phased out in the first few months of construction, such as left turns at Van Ness and Hayes.
 2. Bill Crissman asked whether construction was still expected to end in 2019. Staff confirmed this is the current expectation.
 - b. Contract amendment.

- i. The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors approved a contract amendment at their August 16, 2016, meeting that allows the project to begin construction.
 - c. Finalizing permits.
 - i. The project received its encroachment permit from Caltrans this week. The contractor will also need to receive an encroachment permit once the construction contract has been signed.
 - d. Staff showed members the locations of the 86 median trees to be removed at the start of construction, the 12 trees that will be preserved throughout construction, and the 210 trees that will be planted when construction is complete. This document was included in the [supporting documents for the San Francisco Board of Appeals hearing on June 22, 2016](#) (PDF). The diagrams begin on page 258. Printed copies are available by request.
 - i. Public Comment:
 - 1. Chris Parkes asked staff to provide a count for the trees that will be removed and an anticipated schedule. Staff said 86 median trees will be removed as part of the initial construction work. The current construction schedule, which begins November 28, shows these trees being removed throughout the months of December and January. Based on feedback from last month's Van Ness Bus Rapid Transit Community Advisory Committee, neighbors will be notified again before trees are removed.
 - e. Staff showed members the locations of existing bus stops on Van Ness and how they may be relocated during construction to better reflect the locations of future boarding platforms and to shorten distances between some stops.
- 6. Outreach update.
 - a. Recent public engagement activities.
 - i. Meet the Expert: Green Infrastructure.
 - 1. On August 3, Vincent Mazzaferro from San Francisco Public Utilities Commission discussed green infrastructure and how the city is trying sustainable methods to keep our bay and ocean clean with neighbors at Sushi Hana.
 - ii. San Francisco Symphony workshop.
 - 1. Staff presented a project overview and draft construction sequencing plan to San Francisco Symphony employees on August 3.
 - a. The groups established lines of communication to kick off ongoing collaboration efforts and begin planning around construction activity and events.
 - iii. Appropriations Committee walking tour.
 - 1. Members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations joined staff for a tour through existing conditions on Van Ness Avenue and how the Van Ness Improvement Project will benefit all users of the street.
 - a. Members of the Federal Transit Administration will be given a similar tour in September.
 - iv. Civic Center Community Benefit District presentation.
 - 1. Staff presented a project overview and draft construction sequencing plan to members of the Civic Center Community Benefit District on August 18.
 - a. San Francisco Symphony, San Francisco Ballet, San Francisco Unified School District, and American Buddhist Cultural Society were represented.
 - v. Summer newsletter.
 - 1. Newsletter focuses on the much-needed utility work that comprises the first two years of construction. This digital-only issue will be distributed to project contacts and posted online August 26.
 - b. Outreach Calendar.
 - i. Meet the Expert: September 7, 6:00-7:30 p.m. at R-O-H Bar & Restaurant, 1500 Van Ness (in Holiday Inn).
 - 1. Paul Bignardi will discuss Bus Rapid Transit and why it is a system used in cities around the world.
 - ii. Staff showed members conceptual designs for construction site signage.

1. Signage will cover construction work zones and will face the sidewalk and roadway, depending on the activity being done. Considerations were made for graffiti, wind and safety.
 2. Signage facing the roadway will be kept simple so drivers are not distracted. Possibilities include the project logo and tagline.
 3. Signage facing pedestrians will be more detailed. Possibilities include renderings, diagrams, wayfinding for businesses, project slogans and more.
 4. Staff is working with the Van Ness Business Advisory Committee to determine additional signage opportunities.
- iii. Construction is Coming Open House and Polk Streetscape Project collaboration.
1. Polk Streetscape Project has been issued its notice to proceed and expects to begin construction in September. Although the two projects have been meeting together for years, efforts are now being made to consolidate construction-related communications for neighbors impacted by both projects.
 - a. Consolidated communications will include a shared open house series and mailers, construction forecasts, and ongoing outreach efforts such as newsletters.
- c. Status of existing light / trolley poles on Van Ness Avenue.
- i. Staff distributed a memorandum (see attached p. 6) regarding the status of the existing light/trolley poles on Van Ness. Members were given copies of the memorandum at the meeting.
 1. The memorandum outlines the history of the streetlamps, the work currently being done to assess the poles and establish a plan for possible reuse.
 - a. The Historic Preservation Commission hired a preservationist to assess four of the existing poles (two in front of City Hall and two in front of War Memorial Plaza). Results are expected in September.
 - b. The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency is evaluating whether pieces of the existing poles can be reused on the modern poles approved by the Historic Preservation Commission and SF Arts Commission. These include the cast iron lighting brackets and bases.
 - i. Staff is currently taking inventory of the existing poles and their fixtures (including original cast iron and replacements).
 - c. Staff has approached several groups to establish a salvage plan, but no group has expressed interest to date.
 - ii. Poles similar to the approved modern design are currently installed elsewhere in SF. Staff will provide locations to committee.
 - iii. Bob Bardell asked staff whether it would be possible to reuse the existing fixtures on modern poles. Staff said any changes in the project's design would need to be approved by the SF Arts Commission and Historic Preservation Commission.
 - iv. Bob Lockhart asked whether it would be possible to add a shield or cover to the modern lights if residents find them shining into their homes. Staff confirmed this is a possibility.
 - v. Bob Anderson asked how bright the new LED lighting will be on Van Ness Avenue. Staff will provide this information at a future meeting.
 - vi. Chris Parkes acknowledged plans for changing the lighting on Van Ness, particularly in the area near the Opera. He mentioned he has heard complaints from some of his neighbors in the Castro regarding the new street lights there. He asked staff where the request for reuse was coming from and requested an update on the results of the Textizen campaign.
 1. Staff said the request for looking into reusing the existing fixtures has come from the Coalition to Save the Historic Streetlamps of Van Ness and Supervisor Aaron Peskin.

2. Since the last update on the Textizen campaign, staff has expanded it to include signs posted in Muni buses and additional languages. This expansion has made data reporting more cumbersome, but the data continues to trend similar to what was reported at the May meeting.
 - a. As of the August meeting, 75 percent of respondents had not heard of the Van Ness Improvement Project and 73 percent registered for project updates.
 - b. Staff has grown its list of contacts by 12 percent in 3 months due to the Textizen campaigns and continues to draw new audiences to outreach events.
7. Van Ness Business Advisory Committee Report for August 18 meeting.
 - a. Staff provided an update on the project schedule and showed conceptual designs for construction-site signage. Members were interested in the additional marketing and advertising opportunities this signage could present.
8. Next meetings.
 - a. September 22, 6:00-7:30 p.m.
 - b. October 27, 6:00-7:30 p.m.
 - c. November 17, 6:00-7:30 p.m. (*with Van Ness Business Advisory Committee*)
 - d. As a reminder, members voted in June to cancel the 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.