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Transportation
Agency

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****PRESS RELEASE****

SFMTA Board Approves Contract to Start Construction of Van Ness Improvement Project

San Francisco—The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) Board of Directors yesterday approved a contract amendment that will allow the Van Ness Improvement Project to take the next step towards starting work on the project this fall. This action extends the current contract between the agency and Walsh Construction.

“This is another important step in improving our transportation network for everyone,” said Chairman of the SFMTA Board of Directors Tom Nolan. “This project is an essential bus rapid transit option for customers that will create rail like service on a major corridor in the city.”

“This project is a critical step in realizing our goals of improving transportation from the ground up,” said SFMTA Director of Transportation Ed Reiskin. “Van Ness will see better transit, safer streets and strengthened infrastructure that will improve the transportation network and keep our city in a state of good repair.”

The Van Ness Improvement Project is a major civic improvement project on Van Ness Avenue from Aquatic Park to Mission Street. The anticipated three-year construction schedule will include transportation upgrades like San Francisco’s first Bus Rapid Transit system, a globally proven solution to address traffic congestion and transit reliability. The project is expected to cut travel times for the 49 and 47 Muni routes by 32 percent saving Muni customers an estimated 1,887 hours of travel time every day.

The project will also include enhanced traffic signals optimized for north-south traffic with Transit Signal Priority that keep buses moving by extending a green light and high quality boarding islands at consolidated transit stops located at key transfer points. These features will complement the quicker boarding already brought by Muni’s systemwide all-door boarding policy and new low-floor buses.

The project also includes replacing the aging water and sewer lines beneath Van Ness. These networks are more than 100 years old and were not built to withstand a major earthquake, nor the impacts of climate change such as intense rainstorms.

More

Safety enhancements that support the agency's Vision Zero policy to end all severe traffic injuries and fatalities by 2024 will also be installed along the corridor. These will include protected median refuges, Accessible Pedestrian Signals, high-visibility zebra-striped crosswalks, and sidewalk extensions that shorten crossing distances for people walking. For the first time on Van Ness, sidewalk lighting will be installed, making it safer for people to walk at night.

With the new contract in place, construction is expected to start this November, with revenue service beginning in late 2019.

Funding for the core Van Ness BRT project comes from a variety of sources including FTA Small Starts, San Francisco Prop K funds through the San Francisco County Transportation Authority, and developer contributions.

For more project details or to sign up to receive project updates, please visit www.sfmta.com/vanness.

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Established by voter proposition in 1999, the SFMTA, a department of the City and County of San Francisco, oversees the Municipal Railway (Muni), parking and traffic, bicycling, walking and taxis. With five modes of transit, Muni has approximately 700,000 passenger boardings each day. Over 1 million people get around this city each day and rely on the SFMTA to ensure safe and reliable travel by transit, walking, bicycling, taxi and driving.

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