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****PRESS RELEASE****

Van Ness Left Turn Restrictions, Lane Removals Begin this Weekend for Street's Overhaul

San Francisco— Starting this weekend, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), which manages all surface transportation in the city including the Municipal Railway (Muni), will reduce traffic lanes and remove all but three left turns on Van Ness Avenue for construction on the Van Ness Improvement Project.

The project, a major overhaul of Van Ness between Lombard and Mission streets, will bring safety enhancements, utility replacements and transportation upgrades including San Francisco's first Bus Rapid Transit system.

On the evening of Friday, November 11, lanes on southbound Van Ness will be reconfigured at Broadway to provide two left-turn lanes and two southbound lanes. The southbound bus stop at Van Ness and Vallejo Street was temporarily relocated to Van Ness and Green on October 27 in advance of this change.

Beginning Saturday, November 12, the only left turns allowed from Van Ness will be northbound at Lombard Street and southbound at Broadway. For the first six months of construction, a left turn will also be allowed from northbound Van Ness on to Hayes, but is planned to be removed in April 2017. These removals will allow the SFMTA to re-time traffic signals on Van Ness and neighboring streets to improve traffic flow. The left turn removals will also create safer conditions for people walking. Van Ness is part of San Francisco's High-Injury Network – the 12 percent of city streets that see 70 percent of collisions that result in serious injuries or fatalities. Left turns are one of the leading causes of these collisions.

Starting Monday, November 14, after left turns have been removed, traffic lanes on Van Ness will be gradually reduced from three to two lanes in each direction. This work will begin on the northbound side of Van Ness between McAllister and Pine, and on the southbound side of Van Ness between Broadway and Geary. All of Van Ness between Mission and Lombard streets will be reduced to two lanes in each direction before Thanksgiving. Construction crews will work through the rest of 2016 to remove and pave the existing median.

In early 2017, traffic will be moved to the center of Van Ness and utility work will begin at the curb. Crews will begin by replacing the 1800s-era water and sewer systems beneath Van Ness, reducing their vulnerability to damage from earthquakes and minimizing potential service outages. Portions of the emergency firefighting water system, which supplies more than 1,200 fire hydrants through San Francisco, will also be overhauled and new street and sidewalk lighting will also be installed. This work is expected to continue through October 2018.

By the end of construction, in 2019, the median will be rebuilt, and 210 trees will be planted to replace the 86 that are being removed. When construction is complete, Van Ness will be a greener, safer, and more efficient street everyone can enjoy for years to come.

For more project details and to sign up for construction updates, please visit sfmta.com/van Ness.

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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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