



**Van Ness BRT Community Advisory Committee**

Thursday, August 27, 2015

6:00-7:30pm

One South Van Ness, 7<sup>th</sup> floor, Union Square Conference Room

**Minutes**

1. Introductions. Welcomed Tim Chan Manager of Planning, BART, and Justine Topfer, Project Manager, SF Arts Commission
2. Approval of June minutes by voice vote.
3. Plans for Civic Center BART Station: Presentation by Tim Chan, Manager of Planning, BART
  - a. BART is aging and needs maintenance and BART is looking for opportunities to modernize while doing so.
  - b. Major goals fall into three goal areas: Make transit work, connect to community, and create place
  - c. The modernization project began with Powell and Civic Center and now includes Embarcadero and Montgomery stations, and is seeking additional funding
  - d. Improvements will be geared towards safety and sightlines (visibility), issues with security and cleanliness, as well as fare evasion (one idea is to move the elevator at Civic Center into the paid area), and proposing a connection between BART and Muni without having to go to the mezzanine
  - e. Project has no funding—only planning was funded. Looking to Prop 1B and SF Prop A to fund Phase 2.
  - f. Looking into closing the corridor on the west side at Civic Center due to huge security and safety issues
    - i. This is an idea being studied, not a proposal—looking for pilots to test that could address concerns
    - ii. Closing the western entrances would reduce incidents
    - iii. Looked at emergency implications for evacuation if western entrances were closed—not an issue
    - iv. Testing announcements with frequency to discourage loitering
  - g. Discussion of presentation
    - i. Luggage can be difficult at Civic Center and it is an important airport transfer point
    - ii. Will there be public restrooms?
      1. Restrooms have issues with drug use, prostitution, vandalism, flooding issues

2. Looking at using “[Pit Stop](#)”-type facilities for BART (staffed portable toilets and sinks with cleaning services), currently testing effectiveness.
3. How is the cost projected to be \$4 million/entrance?
  - a. Phase 1 includes required canopies for BART entrances, each canopy came to nearly \$2 million
  - b. Escalators are another challenge because only one company will provide BART escalators without also providing maintenance.
  - c. There are many other design requirements that add cost including federal, state and local requirements.
  - d. Once the design is completed in a month and a half, project team hopes the bids will come in lower
4. How will design compared to what was done in Oakland
  - a. A design contest was held at the request of the city
  - b. Canopies globally are typically glass
  - c. There is concern about gates that could malfunction
5. What about using enforcement, cameras, personnel?
  - a. Cameras are great after a crime to collect evidence but don’t prevent crime
  - b. Personnel for enforcement and cleaning has increased but still could use more
6. Why not allow people to access stations with payment cards at entrance
  - a. Issues about access if limited by gates at entrance.
  - b. Issues with MTC and 28 operators with different payment methods
  - c. Could potentially close entrance part time like NYC stations
  - d. Look for functional solution because people use western entrance
4. Jorge Pardo’s conceptual public art design: Presentation by Justine Topfer, Project Manager, SFAC
  - a. Pardo is known for doing work that bridges art, design and architecture, renowned for craftsmanship using texture and space
  - b. Past works
    - i. 4166 Sea View Lane exemplifies his practice. It came about as an emerging artist exhibit and Pardo decided to build a house that people were then taken on tours of that challenged notions of art
    - ii. Penelope is a monument to the present for passersby to enjoy space
    - iii. Pier in Germany is a serene place in a lake
    - iv. LACMA Pre-Colombian Gallery redesigned an art gallery as a landscape
    - v. Solares in Mexico is an architectural lighting sculpture
    - vi. LACMA9 is an outdoor theater space

- vii. Portland Streetcar is public art in Portland that is also a streetcar station
    - viii. Tecoh is a series of buildings in the Yucatán jungle
  - c. Proposed conceptual art
    - i. Steel sculpture structure and lighting
    - ii. Three of the same structure placed on boarding platforms
    - iii. Structures would measure 22' tall, with a 7' by 5' base
    - iv. Next month a proposal board will be on display at the public library and information will be on the SF Arts Commission website for public comment
  - d. Discussion of presentation
    - i. How will bad behaviors around the art be deterred? A railing will be installed at the end of boarding platforms to limit access to art
    - ii. Will it be lighted at night?
      - 1. Yes, looking into a timer
      - 2. Concern about light pollution near residences
- 5. SFMTA staff updates
  - a. 100% Design package in progress, due September
  - b. Final Design task meetings underway: Traffic management, Overhead Contact System (OCS), Scheduling, Utilities, Cost Estimation, Communications and Outreach
  - c. Historical Preservation Commission informal review meeting
    - i. Concerns about sightlines from Opera
    - ii. Concern station does not fit historical look of corridor
  - d. Tree removal hearing
    - i. Held by Public Works on Monday, August 24, 5:30-8:00 p.m., City Hall, Room 416
    - ii. 26 attendees; 5 testimonies in support of project, 5 testimonies in support of project with concern for tree-related issues, 16 testimonies against project
      - 1. Residents along corridor
      - 2. Civic Center CBD
      - 3. SF Transit Rider Union members
      - 4. Telegraph Hill Dwellers
    - iii. General tone was passionate
    - iv. Opposition comments included:
      - 1. Concerns about why specific trees were identified for removal
      - 2. Concern about lack of project outreach, or that the outreach was not tree-focused enough
      - 3. Concern for construction period length and disruptions
      - 4. Concern for Locally Preferred Alternative rather than a side-running BRT system
      - 5. Habitat/environmental concerns (climate change, concerns for bird habitat, butterfly and bee habitat, threatened species)
    - v. Favorable comments included:
      - 1. Transit improvements on Van Ness needed
      - 2. Project has been in planning for a long time

- 3. Plenty of opportunities for input through the planning phases
- vi. No language issues or interpreter needs
- vii. Lots of media present including SF Chronicle, ABC7 News, KTVU, NBC and CBS/KPIX
- viii. Hearing follow-up
  - 1. Sending email to hearing attendees with survey gathering input on future public outreach
  - 2. Follow-up with Farrell's office on tweet of support for the project and reaffirming SFMTA's support of his Neighborhood Noticing legislation that creates a 311 portal for community members to sign up for public notification of city projects
- ix. Comments from CAC
  - 1. The lead poisoning in the soil may quell some of the disapproval of the tree removal
- x. Public Comment
  - 1. Peter Straus: Please do not waiver over the trees. Do not return to the side-running BRT option as there is too much friction from double-parking, right turns. When project opponents say commuters will only save a few minutes, that is when traffic is flowing, but when traffic is stopped the buses will be able to continue flowing.
  - 2. Deanne Delbridge: We all care about the City, the public has good ideas. Don't care for the arrogance of people who support project. Listen for the kernel of truth in opponents. The public information provided has not been enough as the public is not getting the full story about why the project has to be done. Why can't the project be side-running? There will be more traffic from reduced lanes. Should get something on the ground like metro. Trees have grown on Van Ness for 50 years.
  - 3. Chris Parkes: Resident of San Francisco, works on Van Ness Avenue. Did not know about project until saw tree postings. Appreciates, supports, and uses transit almost daily, but does not support this project. While project includes replacement trees to mitigate the loss of trees but EIR fails to convey the expanded number of trees to be removed, the impact on the character of Van Ness Avenue and the City from the loss of many mature trees that define Van Ness. Presented a slide on Public Works Code 810A that represents the criteria that Public Works must follow when making a decision to remove a protected tree. Concluded that the Van Ness BRT tree removal plan should either be modified to incorporate an alternative tree removal request that preserves the median and trees or continue to allow proponents to seek approval from the Board of Supervisors for an exception from Public Works Code 810A for removal of a limited number of specific, protected trees.

6. Yearend meetings schedule
  - a. November 26 rescheduled to November 19
  - b. December canceled, resume January 28, 2016
7. Next meetings – September 24 and October 22