



Memorandum

Date: February 22, 2019
To: Transportation Authority Board
From: Eric Cordoba – Deputy Director for Capital Projects
Subject: 03/19/2019 Board Meeting: Progress Report for Van Ness Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Project

RECOMMENDATION ☒ **Information** ☐ **Action**

None. This is an information item.

SUMMARY

The Van Ness Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project incorporates a package of transportation improvements along a 2-mile corridor of Van Ness Avenue between Mission and Lombard streets, including dedicated bus lanes, consolidated transit stops, and pedestrian safety enhancements. The cost of the BRT project is \$169.6 million. The BRT project is part of an overall larger Van Ness Improvement Project, totaling \$309.3 million, which combines the BRT project with several parallel infrastructure upgrade projects. The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) and their contractor Walsh Construction are leading the construction phase effort. Utility construction is the current critical work activity. In January, the project team intensified construction along the northeast side of Van Ness Avenue between Filbert and Bush streets. Utility upgrade efforts are continuing in other sections as well, such as between Market and Mission streets. Peter Gabancho, Project Manager for the Van Ness BRT project will provide the update at the Board meeting.

- ☐ Fund Allocation
- ☐ Fund Programming
- ☐ Policy/Legislation
- ☐ Plan/Study
- ☒ Capital Project Oversight/Delivery
- ☐ Budget/Finance
- ☐ Contract/Agreement
- ☐ Other:

DISCUSSION

Background.

The Van Ness Avenue BRT aims to bring to San Francisco its first BRT system to improve transit service and address traffic congestion on Van Ness Avenue, a major north-south arterial. The Van Ness Avenue BRT is a signature project in the Prop K Expenditure Plan, a regional priority through the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Resolution 3434, and a Federal Transit Administration Small Starts program project.

The construction of the core Van Ness Avenue BRT project, which includes pavement resurfacing, curb ramp upgrades, and sidewalk bulb outs, is combined with several parallel city-sponsored projects for cost, construction duration, and neighborhood convenience. These parallel projects, which have independent funding, include installing new overhead trolley contacts; street lighting and poles

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replacement; SFgo traffic signal replacement; sewer and water line replacement; and storm water “green infrastructure” installation.

Status and Key Activities.

In January, the construction team intensified work along the eastern side of Van Ness Avenue between Sutter and Filbert streets. Ranger Pipeline (Ranger) completed sewer upgrades between Pacific Avenue and Clay Street in previous months and is now working between Sacramento and Pine streets. Ranger also continues to connect adjacent sewer lines to the newly installed sewer line. In locations where Ranger completed sewer installation, Bauman Landscape and Construction (Bauman) is replacing sidewalks, parking strips, curbs, and street base, as well as installing storm water bioretention infrastructure. Bauman focused work between Filbert Street and Broadway. At these locations, the construction zone may encompass an entire block; however, Bauman is providing driveway access for businesses and residents and maintaining sidewalk access also. The construction team also removed existing overhead contact system (OCS) support poles/streetlights in order to replace the sidewalk and curbs. SFMTA anticipates installation of new OCS support poles/streetlights in late spring. In the meantime, the project team has provided temporary street lighting along the corridor. Construction crews also continued upgrading the Auxiliary Water Supply System.

Along the southern half of Van Ness Avenue, Ranger continues sewer and water upgrades. Ranger started trenching between Mission and Market streets after potholing this block earlier. Phoenix Electric continues to install joint-utility duct bank and Muni overhead infrastructure between Market and Grove streets. Bauman started sidewalk and street base replacement between O’Farrell Street and Geary Boulevard. The project team continues to maintain the construction zone between McAllister and Ellis streets due to curb replacement and new street light installation.

Van Ness Avenue continues to accommodate two lanes of northbound and southbound traffic along the corridor project limits. The contractor restriped the median along Van Ness Avenue at these locations to accommodate the utility work and to shift traffic to the median at these locations. The project team is using temporary traffic control measures, such as channelizer traffic cones and variable message signs to direct traffic. Temporary bus stop platforms have also been installed as needed. Due to both the Van Ness Improvement Project construction and private developments along the corridor, traffic is expected to be congested, particularly between Market and Mission streets.

To help local businesses maintain visibility, the project team installed additional signs where necessary. Businesses are also displaying banners and temporary standalone signs. The SFMTA continues to host business advisory committee meetings to provide project updates and answer questions. The SFMTA has offered advertising space on buses at no charge to affected merchants. However, the construction zone’s long duration will continue to negatively impact businesses, particularly small businesses that rely on parking and foot traffic.

Project Schedule, Budget and Funding Plan.

Major construction is projected to finish in fall 2021. As previously reported, the original late 2019 BRT service start date has been revised to late-2021 (Attachment 1) due to construction difficulties. The funding plan is unchanged from last month and still includes a \$9.8 million funding need, which currently falls within the approximately \$27.5 million contingency for the project. SFMTA intends to

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address this funding gap during its next Capital Improvement Program update planned for mid-2020. Meanwhile, the SFMTA is seeking additional sources of funds and considering deferring uninitiated projects to fill the anticipated Fiscal Year 2020/21 budget need, toward the end of construction and project closeout.

Current Issues and Risks.

The project is currently about two years behind schedule due to challenges securing a utility subcontractor and the extent of utility conflicts encountered in the field. The SFMTA and San Francisco Public Utilities Commission staff are working with Walsh Construction and Ranger Pipeline to accelerate utility work where possible, including water work resequencing; performing construction at night with noise dampening equipment; and relining sewer line connections instead of installing new sewer lines. The project team is also seeking Caltrans permission for weekend daytime partial traffic lane shut downs and possibly increasing staff capacity for 6-day work weeks. The team is also improving identification of major construction delays before they occur, such as exploratory potholing, mapping subsurface conflicts, and project design updates. As construction increases in the northern half of Van Ness Avenue, which is mainly residential and small businesses, there will be a need for more intense construction coordination to accommodate local activities, such as driveway access, parking, delivery access, and night noise.

In addition to needing to address the \$9.8 million funding gap described above, the SFMTA team is currently evaluating and negotiating three certified claims submitted to date (totaling approximately \$24.39 million), the majority of which are for water and sewer work.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

None. This is an information item.

CAC POSITION

None. This is an information item. The CAC was briefed on this item at its February 27 meeting. CAC member Peter Tannen provided a summary of the CAC discussion as part of the CAC Report at the March 12 Transportation Authority Board meeting (see Item 2 in the draft minutes for the March 12 Board meeting included as a separate item in this agenda packet).

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Attachment 1 – Project Schedule

Attachment 1: Van Ness Avenue BRT Project Schedule

Activities	2013				2014				2015				2016				2017				2018				2019				2020				2021			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
1. Conceptual Engineering + Environmental Studies*																																				
2. Preliminary Engineering (CER)																																				
3. Final Design																																				
4. Construction Manager-General Contractor (CMGC) Process																																				
5. Construction																																				
6. Revenue Operations Begin																																				
* Conceptual Engineering and Environmental Studies began in 2007				Key:				Currently Scheduled				Late Start since last report				Late Finish since last report																				

Date: Feb 10, 2019