



# **Van Ness Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Project Business Construction Mitigation Program Update**

**San Francisco County Transportation Authority  
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**Jorge Rivas, Director, Invest in Neighborhoods  
Jada Jackson, Project Manager, Invest in Neighborhoods**



# Construction Mitigation Program

## Services Offered to Merchants

An MOU was signed in 2018 by SFMTA, DPW, SFPUC and OEWD to create the partnership that adds a business support services component to projects.

- The objective of the business support component led by OEWD's Invest In Neighborhoods (IIN) Division is to support business owners as they navigate through construction projects.
- IIN will serve as a business liaison and point of contact for business support services, including
  - technical assistance,
  - corridor specific-marketing campaign (Open For Business)
  - business support
  - Directed Business Support grant program when applicable
- This suite of services has been put together to support both the short-term and longer-term needs of businesses and some of these are available to impacted zones when determined and funded by the lead project department.

# Construction Mitigation Program

## Van Ness Marketing Campaign

The Van Ness Open for Business (OFB) campaign worked closely with the Van Ness Business Advisory Committee in 2017 to develop marketing priorities for the corridor, including selecting the marketing package and the accompanying graphics and messaging to remind people that this corridor is still open for business while construction improvements are taking place.

- A small business survey was administered to 160 businesses with 115 responses provided to give input on the marketing direction and priorities for the corridor.
- A unique color palette was developed along with the “Connect with Van Ness” branding.

The Open for Business campaign for Van Ness included a suite of marketing materials including:

- Photography
- Posters – distributed door-to-door
- Retail directories – distributed door-to-door
- Wayfinding signage

# Construction Mitigation Program

## Van Ness Directed Business Support

- The Van Ness Improvement Project met the criteria for a Directed Business Support grant program, which was launched on September 21, 2020 and the application deadline is October 31, 2020.
  - The Van Ness Improvement project is a major-impact project which was originally slated to be completed in 2019.
  - In January 2019, it was announced that unexpected and significant delays caused for the construction completion date to be extended to the end of 2021.
  - It is understood that businesses have been adversely affected by traffic and pedestrian disruptions during this construction project beyond what was expected and planned for in addition to the impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Construction Mitigation Program

## Van Ness Directed Business Support

When OEWD implements a directed business support element it is due to the lead agency determining that significant delays to the major-impact project have occurred and caused for a new construction timeline and completion date. A key component to the directed business support element is **defining affected businesses** within a qualifying project area. SFMTA worked closely with the construction contractor to analyze block by block construction impacts in the construction zone to identify:

### Businesses with **Direct Impacts**:

- Businesses located directly facing work areas
- Can also include staging and storage areas
- 6 months or more of continuous impact

### Businesses with **Indirect Impacts**:

- Businesses located within the same city block of direct work areas
- Can also include staging and storage areas
- 12 months or more of continuous impact

# Construction Mitigation Program

## Van Ness Directed Business Support Eligibility Criteria

- To be eligible, businesses must be within the Van Ness construction impact zone, must be an active storefront business, and must have been established with no change in ownership on or after March 3, 2017 (date when construction began).
- Businesses that were established with no change in ownership within the Van Ness impact zone on or after March 3, 2017 and have either moved from the Van Ness impact zone to another location in San Francisco or permanently closed on or after January 1, 2019 may still be eligible for an award and can apply for this grant.
- Impact zones are located on Van Ness Avenue between Market Street and Chestnut Street.
- 64 businesses are projected to qualify for directed business support
  - 36 eligible for direct impact - \$10K award
  - 28 eligible for indirect impact - \$5K award

# Construction Mitigation Program

## Van Ness Directed Business Support

- Businesses that meet eligibility criteria can qualify to receive a \$5,000 - \$10,000 grant based on level of construction impact at their location within the construction zone. Businesses that are impacted also continue to have access to business support, technical assistance and existing programs offered by the City and County of San Francisco.
  - Phase 1 awards are 75% of the total grant award with the purpose of helping to stabilize business operations. Use of funds can be designated for rent, utilities or wages.
  - Phase 2, remaining 25% of award, can be designated for the reimbursement of eligible expense or tools that can be utilized to increase revenue.
- Award letters will start going out the week of November 9<sup>th</sup> to businesses that meet eligibility criteria and that have submitted a complete application with supporting documents. Businesses can expect to receive check disbursements via regular mail 7-10 days thereafter.

# Construction Mitigation Program

## Lessons Learned from Central Subway

- The Central Subway construction project was the first project to initiate a Directed Business Support grant program due to significant delays. Grant awards were provided from \$5,000 - \$10,000 per qualified business in the established impact zone.
- SFMTA used the Central Subway Directed Business Support grant program eligibility criteria as a point of reference for the development of the Van Ness grant program. Impact zones were established for directed and indirect impacts along the Van Ness corridor between Market Street and Chestnut street, eligible businesses must be ground-level, active storefronts facing Van Ness with no change in ownership after construction began on the corridor (March 3, 2017).
- For the Van Ness grant program, construction delays and impacts along with COVID-19 related impacts were taken into consideration for expanding the eligibility criteria to include businesses that have closed or relocated on or after January 1, 2019 (the revised timeline for the construction project was announced in mid- January 2019).



# Construction Mitigation Program

## Lessons Learned from Central Subway

- For the Van Ness grant program, construction delays and impacts along with COVID-19 related impacts were taken into consideration for expanding the eligibility criteria to include businesses that have closed or relocated on or after January 1, 2019 (the timeline for the construction project was announced in mid-January 2019).
- The use of funds for the phase 2 disbursement was expanded for the Van Ness grant program, which allows for a more efficient plan for processing disbursements.

# Construction Mitigation Program

## Van Ness Directed Business Support Outreach

- OEWD and SFMTA websites have posted information about the launch of the Van Ness Directed Business Support grant program.
- SFMTA sent information out via the Van Ness Improvement Project Construction Forecast and will continue to do so until the application deadline of October 31, 2020.
- Phone calls were made on September 22, 2020 to approximately 64 businesses in the impact zone.
- E-mails were sent to 89 businesses in the construction zone.
- SFMTA interns went door-to-door on September 9, 2020 to provide a merchant letter regarding the grant program and resource guide to storefront businesses on Van Ness Avenue between Market Street and Chestnut Street.
- Deadline for submitting applications is October 31, 2020.

# Construction Mitigation Program

## Van Ness Directed Business Support Outreach

- It is estimated that 10% - 15% of businesses on a corridor will utilize free to low-cost one-on-one business counseling services for business support and technical assistance.
- Small Business technical assistance and support is provided through the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) which is housed under OEWD. Assistance for Van Ness businesses included access to financing and capital, lease negotiations, legal issues, government contracting, relocation services, public safety concerns and sales/marketing.
- The OEWD team provides access to many resources and often leverages other City programs and services as well as City Sponsored grant and loan programs.
- There are approximately 200 counseling hours for businesses on Van Ness.
- 10 applications for the Van Ness Directed Business grant program have been received as of October 13, 2020.

# Construction Mitigation Program

## Van Ness Directed Business Support

- For more information about the Van Ness Directed Business Support grant program visit **[www.oewd.org/vanness](http://www.oewd.org/vanness)**. **The deadline to apply is October 31, 2020.**
- All inquiries related to the Van Ness Directed Business Support grant program and/or application can be sent via email to **[CMPgrant@sfgov.org](mailto:CMPgrant@sfgov.org)** or phone at **415-554-6477**.
- Businesses can sign up for project updates and stay in the know as to what's happening and when by visiting [sfmta.com/van-ness](http://sfmta.com/van-ness) or contact SFMTA Van Ness project staff directly via email at **[VanNessBRT@SFMTA.com](mailto:VanNessBRT@SFMTA.com)** or phone at **415-646-2310**.



QUESTIONS?

