

## **Appendix B**

# **State of California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 Forms**

State of California — The Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #  
HRI #  
Trinomial  
NRHP Status Code 6L

Other Listings  
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

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\*Resource Name or #: Map Reference #1

**P1. Other Identifier:** Van Ness Avenue and portion of South Van Ness Avenue; Section U.S. Highway 101

**\*P2. Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

\*a. County: San Francisco

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: San Francisco North, Calif. Date: 1956, photorevised 1968

c. Address: Van Ness Avenue and South Van Ness Avenue City: San Francisco Zip: 94102 and 94109

d. UTM: Zone: 10 ; mE/ mN (G.P.S.)

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate) Elevation:

Van Ness Avenue between Market Street and North Point Street and South Van Ness Avenue between Mission Street and Market Street.

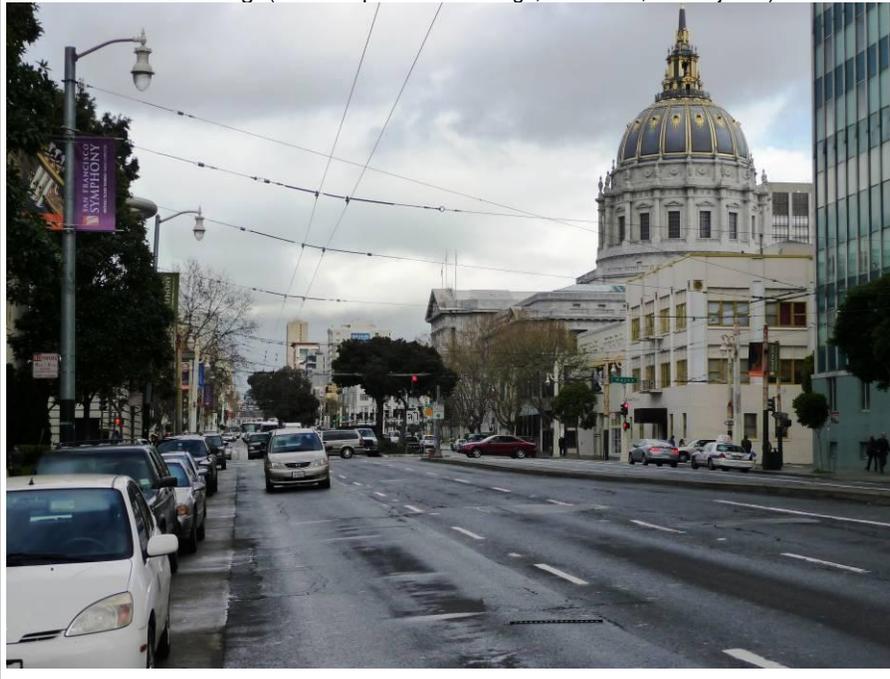
**\*P3a. Description:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

Van Ness Avenue is one of San Francisco's primary north-south transportation corridors. Extending from Market Street at the south to Fort Mason at the north, the thoroughfare runs approximately two miles along the valley between Nob and Russian Hills and Pacific Heights (see Continuation Sheet).

**\*P3b. Resource Attributes:** (List attributes and codes) HP37: Highway/Trail

**\*P4. Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)  
Roadway and ancillary streetscape features

P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



**P5b. Description of Photo:** (View, date, accession #) Southern beginning of Van Ness Avenue, looking north from Market Street, March 9, 2009.

**\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:**  Historic  Prehistoric  Both  
Established in 1858 under Van Ness Survey, ongoing infrastructural alterations and construction.

**\*P7. Owner and Address:**  
Van Ness Avenue is under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Transportation from Golden Gate Avenue northward and the City of San Francisco from Golden Gate Avenue southward.

**\*P8. Recorded by:** (Name, affiliation, and address)  
Polly S. Allen; Meta Bunse, JRP Historical Consulting LLC, 1490 Drew Avenue Suite 110, Davis, CA 95618

**\*P9. Date Recorded:** March, 2009

**\*P10. Survey Type:** Intensive

**\*P11. Report Citation:** (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.") JRP Historical Consulting, LLC, "Historic Resources Inventory and Evaluation Report for San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) Van Ness Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Study," 2009.

**\*Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):

**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

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\*NRHP Status Code 6L

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Map Reference #1

B1. Historic Name: Marlette Street

B2. Common Name: Van Ness Avenue

B3. Original Use: Transportation Corridor

B4. Present Use: Transportation Corridor

\*B5. Architectural Style: Utilitarian

\*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations) Van Ness Avenue was platted in 1858 under the Van Ness Survey. The roadway was originally dirt and was subsequently macadamized until the early twentieth century when modern asphalt pavement of the roadway and sidewalks was extended up the avenue. Asphalt paving was complete by the early 1910s. Municipal Railway tracks were installed in 1914 in the middle of the street from Market to Bay streets, remaining in service until 1950, and then removed in the early 1950s (see Continuation Sheet).

\*B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: Original Location:

\*B8. Related Features: Sidewalks, median, trolley/light poles, miscellaneous transportation infrastructure and street furniture including traffic signals, bus shelters, fire hydrants, and vegetation.

B9a. Architect: None

b. Builder: Assorted agencies under the aegis of the City of San Francisco, and the U.S. Highway System

\*B10. Significance: Theme: n/a Area: n/a

Period of Significance: n/a Property Type: n/a Applicable Criteria: n/a

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

This intensive survey and evaluation finds that neither Van Ness Avenue, nor the studied portion of South Van Ness Avenue, appears eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), or local designation because they lack integrity. This evaluation is consistent with San Francisco Preservation Bulletin 5, "Landmark and Historic District Designation Procedures," which directs that historic properties be evaluated for local designation using the California OHP Recordation Manual (as per San Francisco Landmarks Board Resolution No. 527, June 7, 2000). The corridor has been evaluated in accordance with Section 15064.5(a)(2)-(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, using the criteria outlined in Section 5024.1 of the California Public Resources Code, and is not an historical resource for the purposes of CEQA. (See Continuation Sheet).

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes)

**B12. References:** San Francisco Department of Buildings Building Permits; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for the City of San Francisco; San Francisco Chronicle; San Francisco History Center; Online Archive of California; San Francisco Municipal Reports; James Rolph Papers (California Historical Society); *San Francisco Chronicle*; *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*; Tobriner, *Bracing For Disaster* (2006); Richards, *Historic San Francisco* (1991); Lau and Lieber, *The Last Great World's Fair* (2004); Perles, *The People's Railway* (1981); Clarke, *Trust and Power* (2007); Bean, *California* (1968); Caltrans Archives, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Archives.

B13. Remarks:

\*B14. Evaluator: Meta Bunse and Polly S. Allen

\*Date of Evaluation: April 2009

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)

See Continuation Sheet 25 for Sketch Map.

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**\*P3a. Description: (Continued)**

Established under the Van Ness Survey of 1858, which incorporated the Western Addition into the burgeoning city of San Francisco, the avenue is wider than the adjacent streets, and was surveyed to a width of 125 feet. It currently contains six traffic lanes, divided by discontinuous medians of varying dimension and composition. In addition to being a major San Francisco Street, Van Ness Avenue is part of U.S. Route 101, which runs from Los Angeles to Olympia, Washington. The 101 alignment extends up South Van Ness from Mission Street, and meets Van Ness at Market Street, following the avenue until it turns toward the Golden Gate Bridge at Lombard Street.

The southern end of Van Ness Avenue is anchored by Market Street and the Civic Center National Historic Landmark District (see Figure 1, Continuation Sheet 18). Moving northerly along the avenue, Van Ness has a dense mixed-use character, with residential, entertainment, and commercial construction flanking its length. Scored concrete sidewalks, approximately ten feet in width, line both sides of the street and are punctuated by various types of infrastructure, including light standards/trolley poles, fire hydrants, call boxes, traffic signals, bus shelters, and benches. The infrastructure dates from throughout the twentieth century, with a variety of fire hydrants dating from the early to late twentieth century, as well as call boxes from 1915, and the trolley poles most of which date from 1914, with 1936 brackets and modern luminaires (see Map Reference #2).<sup>1</sup>

In 1914 Municipal Rail tracks were constructed in the median of the street and subsequently removed in the 1950s as public transportation moved away from rail toward bus service. No track remains from the original rail system, but approximately 259 trolley poles (discussed above ) still line the avenue, extending from Market to North Point Street. Wiring associated with the modernized MUNI Bus Service is affixed to the poles. After the rails were removed medians of various widths with various hard and soft landscaping were installed.

South Van Ness Avenue, which extends in a southerly direction from Market Street was constructed at a later date than Van Ness Avenue. The portion within the study area, extending from Market to Mission, was a new alignment completed in the early 1930s as a means of relieving congestion and better connecting the northern and southern portions of the city. The road is the same width as Van Ness Avenue, however it does not have any median and does not contain the same early Municipal Rail associated trolley poles. Modern sidewalks, street furniture, and other infrastructure are similar to that of Van Ness Avenue.

**\*B6. Construction History: (Continued)**

An elevated concrete median of varying widths was constructed in segments along the avenue in the years following removal, with some portions wide enough to accommodate vegetation and others only narrow raised ribbons. Several types of ancillary structures line the roadway, most notably approximately 259 trolley poles erected with the original rail tracks in 1914 that have subsequently been utilized as both streetlight poles and mounts for modern electric traffic signs, as well as support for other decorative features such as planters and signage. Other infrastructural equipment and resources include medians, fire hydrants, MUNI bus shelters, and vegetation. Virtually all of these

<sup>1</sup> A 2007 HRER and HPSR discusses some of these elements, but only those found along Van Ness within the Civic Center Historic District: Architectural Resources Group, "Historic Resources Evaluation Report: Van Ness Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project, City of San Francisco, California," prepared by Bridget M. Maley, prepared for Caltrans District 4 and San Francisco Department of Public Works, March 2007; Architectural Resources Group, "Historic Property Survey Report: Van Ness Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project, City of San Francisco, California," prepared for Caltrans District 4 and San Francisco Department of Public Works, October 2007.

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

features were constructed and planted in the modern period, although some hydrants, as well as police/fire call boxes date to the early twentieth century. The basic grade and width of the right-of-way has not changed since original construction, with one alteration in 1936 that widened the roadbed and narrowed the sidewalk. This work necessitated the relocation of all of the trolley poles, hydrants, and call boxes further toward the road's periphery. As a heavily travelled transportation corridor, Van Ness Avenue has undergone continuous basic maintenance including paving, sidewalk repair, traffic signal installation, and other miscellaneous infrastructural work.

South Van Ness Avenue has a distinct construction history, beginning when it was completed in the early 1930s to ease traffic congestion and provide a direct link between the northern and southern portions of the city. Initially constructed on condemned land from Market to Mission, South Van Ness was extended several years later further south to Howard, where it overlay the existing Howard Street corridor through the southern portions of the city.

## **B10. Significance:** (Continued)

### **Historic Context**

Van Ness Avenue has served as one of the primary arteries in the City of San Francisco throughout its historical development, and this span of time can be broken into four potential periods of significance as both a transportation and aesthetic civic corridor. The first is the original platting of the avenue in 1858 and early urban expansion accompanying its development. The second is the earthquake and fire of 1906 and the subsequent redevelopment and urban reconceptualization of the avenue as an increasingly commercial thoroughfare. The third period revolves around the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915 and the role of Van Ness as a nexus between the City Beautiful aims of both the Exposition and the newly reconstructed City Hall and Civic Center. The final potential period of significance is the increasingly central automobile-related role of Van Ness Avenue as a booming "Auto Row" and a modern highway transportation corridor.

#### The Van Ness Survey and Nineteenth Century Urban Expansion

The 1858 completion of the Van Ness Survey extended the city's original 50-*vara* land division of San Francisco to include the dune covered valley formed between present-day Nob and Russian Hills and Pacific Heights.<sup>2</sup> City officials envisioned the spine of the substantial acquisition as a comparable north-south arterial that would match Market Street in civic importance. The avenue was thus surveyed to a width of 125 feet, markedly wider than typical San Francisco streets. Originally named Marlette Street after Seneca Hunt Marlette, who had surveyed portions of the Western Addition, the avenue was quickly renamed Van Ness Avenue in honor of the mayor and sponsor of the pivotal urban ordinance. Despite becoming an official part of the city, development was initially slow along Van Ness Avenue, which remained little more than a dirt track through undeveloped swaths of the city. In the 1860s the avenue fell under the gaze of noted landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, who had been commissioned by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to develop a major urban park that would lend the burgeoning city of San Francisco the same stature as eastern cities such as New York with its Central Park. Olmsted envisioned a greenbelt that would center upon Van Ness Avenue rather than a large park. The greenbelt would extend roughly from Duboce Park to Aquatic Park through the protected valley, with small naturalistic areas and enclaves along the way. The plan was rejected by city officials who sought a more traditional park setting in the manner of Central Park; a desire which

<sup>2</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, "Van Ness Avenue Area Plan," (San Francisco, c.1989). Available online at [http://www.sfgov.org/site/planning\\_index.asp?id=41410](http://www.sfgov.org/site/planning_index.asp?id=41410).

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ultimately was expressed by the design of William Hammond Hall and John McLaren.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the 1860s Van Ness Avenue was slow to develop. Far from the city core, the area was relatively isolated and there was little demand for the lots.<sup>4</sup> The area's underdeveloped infrastructure may have contributed to the slow pace of settlement along Van Ness: it was not until the early 1870s that portions of Van Ness were macadamized or in some cases graded, and planking of sidewalks and corners only existed in isolated pockets.<sup>5</sup> By 1872-1873, Van Ness was graded between Sutter and Post streets, Geary and Turk streets, and California and Pine Streets. The boulevard was macadamized at the crossing with Fulton Street, at the crossing of McAllister Street, and at the crossing of Tyler Street. In general, street improvements occurred in segments, with grading, macadamizing, and sidewalk planking undertaken on a largely block-by-block basis. Well into the 1870s, much of Van Ness Avenue to Lombard Street was ungraded and there were but a few buildings located outside of the immediate periphery of Market Street.<sup>6</sup>

As the population of San Francisco soared from a mere 35,000 in 1852 to nearly 300,000 in 1890, a pressing need for additional housing drove housing demand into the Western Addition, including Van Ness Avenue. Speculative builders constructed middle and upper class residences, primarily of wood frame construction with prominent bays, cornices, and elaborate moulded detailing in the popular Italianate and Queen Anne style. Interspersed among this relatively modest middle-class construction were a number of grand residences designed for the city's elite. By the mid-1880s, the wide avenue had evolved into a bastion for many of San Francisco's wealthiest, whose large homes typically occupied several lots on a block. Although Van Ness itself did not have a dedicated cable car line in the nineteenth century, many lines traversed the area, both from east-to-west and north-to-south along portions of Polk Street, parallel and one block east of Van Ness.<sup>7</sup>

Although the avenue was home to many of the city's elite, a striking number of diverse uses flanked the corridor, particularly within its upper reaches. The Fort Mason military reservation was located at the northern terminus of the avenue, on the west side of Van Ness, while the Fontana Company Canned Fruit Warehouse, the former San Francisco Woolen Factory, and the Spring Valley Water Company's Black Point Pumping House stood on the east side at its northern terminus. In the closing years of the nineteenth century, a large greenhouse occupied nearly the entire block between Lombard Street and Chestnut Street along the avenue. Civic and public buildings occupied the middle stretches of Van Ness, transitioning from the residential blocks in the north to the busier central city. Saint Mary's Cathedral filled the corner at O' Farrell Street. Saint Ignatius Church and College stood at Grove Street, established by Jesuits who had arrived in California to minister to gold miners. The Mercantile Library filled the entire block between Golden Gate and Elm Avenue. The extreme southern portion of the avenue was also home to an array of functions, with an animal feed and sale yard at the northeastern corner of Market Street and Van Ness Avenue and other business and clubs radiating throughout the southern blocks of the avenue.<sup>8</sup>

By the turn of the twentieth century Van Ness Avenue stood at far remove from the blowing dunes of the 1858 survey. With the highest echelon of residential wealth bracketed at either end with churches, schools, and industry, the avenue was one of the city's most prominent. San Francisco had expanded up and around the avenue, absorbing

<sup>3</sup> San Francisco Board of Supervisors, *San Francisco Municipal Reports 1867-68*, (San Francisco, California: John H. Carmany and Company, 1868), 560-564; Robert Cherny and William Issel, *San Francisco 1865-1932* (Berkeley, California: UC Berkeley Press, 1986) 102-116.

<sup>4</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, "Van Ness Avenue Area Plan."; Anne Bloomfield, "The Real Estate Associates: A Land and Housing Developer of the 1870s in San Francisco," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. XXVII (1978), 15.

<sup>5</sup> San Francisco Board of Supervisors, *San Francisco Municipal Report, 1872-1873*, 586, 589, and 595.

<sup>6</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Maps for San Francisco, California* (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1886, vol. 2 and 1893, vol. 4).

<sup>7</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, "Van Ness Avenue Area Plan"; Bloomfield, "The Real Estate Associates," 17.

<sup>8</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *Fire Insurance Maps for San Francisco, California* (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1899, vol. 1 and 1899 vol. 3).

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vast tracts of land and promoting urban expansion through infrastructural improvement and corresponding speculation. Much of this urban expansion was driven by the private sector, with private horse car and cable car interests servicing adjacent streets, private residential developers constructing the flats, and the city's wealthiest building urban enclaves. Civic sponsored improvements largely focused upon grading, paving, cisterns, sewers, and gas lamps, all of which occurred in a largely piecemeal manner. San Francisco Municipal Reports and Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors from the time period contain little reference to the avenue outside of basic infrastructural accounting. The sole exception to this was an 1896 ordinance by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors declaring Van Ness Avenue to be an official city "Boulevard." The Board passed the ordinance in response to a petition from the Van Ness Avenue Improvement Club, and the measure largely served to forbid heavy traffic upon the avenue. Although the Club also sought civic-sponsored trees, shrubs, and plantings in the median and along the sidewalks, historical photographs of the avenue and municipal records indicate that the planting did not occur.<sup>9</sup> Thus, while the original wide survey of the avenue and the "Boulevard" declaration expressed a continued civic desire for a distinct thoroughfare, the development of the corridor largely occurred within the chaotic context of rampant late-nineteenth century with little or no holistic civic design intent.

### The Earthquake of 1906: From Fire Break to Commercial Hub

The substantial width of Van Ness Avenue proved significant both during and just after the Earthquake of 1906. Within fifteen minutes of the shocks, scores of fires caused by lanterns, boilers, gas mains, electrical wires, and damaged chimneys broke out across the city. On Van Ness Avenue, a 30-inch gas main running under the street burst, reportedly sending bituminous pavement flying high into the air. Although the scope and ferocity of the conflagration across the city was unprecedented, San Francisco's Fire Chief, Dennis Sullivan, had laid the foundation for establishing Van Ness Avenue as a fire line even before the earthquake. In the wake of Baltimore's disastrous 1904 fire, the chief had established that the wide expanse of Van Ness Avenue and Market Street as firebreaks in the event of a citywide outbreak.<sup>10</sup> Volunteers, city fire fighters, and troops under the leadership of General Frederick Funston took a consolidated stand along Van Ness Avenue. The fire primarily burned up to the east side of the avenue, with only the lower portions near Market catching fire on both sides. To prevent the flames from spreading, undamaged buildings along the east side were blasted by the army, reducing mansions to smoldering piles. The desperate measures proved effective, and the fire was stopped on April 20<sup>th</sup> in this part of the city, having jumped the width of Van Ness Avenue in only isolated areas.

Although much of the avenue lay in ruins, Van Ness emerged from the four day inferno relatively intact in comparison to the ravaged Market Street corridor. The western side of Van Ness and the upper northeastern portion of the thoroughfare near present-day Fort Mason and the Aquatic Park remained untouched by the fire.<sup>11</sup> Because much of Van Ness escaped severe damage it was immediately targeted for new residential and commercial development as the city quickly sought to rebuild. The area was the center of a speculative boom in the weeks and months following the disaster, as businesses sought temporary quarters and commercial interests sought profits from a frenzy of leasing activity.<sup>12</sup> Between 1906 and 1909, a striking number of residents and businesses moved to Van

<sup>9</sup> "Designs for the City's Building," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 10, 1896; "Developing the Outside Districts," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 13, 1896.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Tobriner, *Bracing For Disaster: Earthquake-Resistant Architecture and Engineering in San Francisco 1838-1933* (Berkeley, California: Heyday Books, 2006), 136-138.

<sup>11</sup> San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection, "St. Brigid's Church, on Van Ness Ave., after the 1906 earthquake," black & white photographic print, 1906; 1899 Sanborn Insurance Map, vol. 3, 262; Tobriner, *Bracing for Disaster*, 142-146.

<sup>12</sup> "Speculation Stops in Buying Real Property," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 27, 1909.

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Ness Avenue and along with Fillmore Street to the west, Van Ness became San Francisco's premier commercial and economic hub, supplanting the devastated areas of downtown.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to a burgeoning retail trade, Van Ness also became a central entertainment venue for the dislocated city. The Van Ness Theater was erected at Van Ness and Grove in 1907 and was one of the city's most prized entertainment venues until its demolition in 1910. Other more prosaic uses also clambered to the area, including Eddie Graney's blacksmith shop and Samuels Lace House, both of whom rapidly established quarters following the earthquake.<sup>14</sup> Numerous refugee shacks also appeared in the new commercial center as those made homeless by the disaster moved to Van Ness and its surrounding streets, often causing consternation amongst surrounding property owners.<sup>15</sup>

Notable infrastructure improvements accompanied the wave of commercial and new residential settlement along the avenue. The intensive reconstruction following the earthquake highlighted the need for uniform paving, which had only existed in isolated pockets and was a mixture of cobble, stone, and macadam prior to the earthquake. This varied paving material was damaged by the earthquake, and observers noted that parts of the avenue were, "cut up like a country road, the dust being very deep and horses having to strain to pull loads over it."<sup>16</sup> Asphalt paving occurred in segments, with portions paved by an assortment of contractors on a block-by-block basis. The paving of Van Ness was largely complete by 1911. Contracts had also been completed for reinforced concrete fire cisterns along the avenue, located underground at the Van Ness intersections of Golden Gate Avenue, Washington Street, Octavia Street, Laguna Street, and Market Street. Improvements in the 1910s also included the extension of underground sewer lines and telephone conduit up the avenue, as the increased business and residential population required these increasingly standard metropolitan amenities.<sup>17</sup> Although Van Ness Avenue was a locus of redevelopment and infrastructural improvement, the changes done on the avenue mirrored developments occurring all over the city, as officials oversaw a massive rebuilding campaign that included the extension of grading, paving and sidewalk work, as well as installation of fire hydrants, street lights, rail lines, sewers, and telephone conduits.

The emergence of Van Ness Avenue as a central economic and social hub was short-lived. Much of the commercial development along the avenue was considered a temporary expedient, and as conditions in the traditional business and retail core of the city improved, many businesses flooded back to newly constructed or repaired quarters. The local press commented on the exodus, noting that "although for a time it was believed the retail district would remain permanently in the Western Addition," the force of the "Downtown Movement" proved too great.<sup>18</sup> In several short years, the identity of Van Ness Avenue had been dramatically uprooted and changed again, leaving a broad avenue in flux. "What Van Ness may become in the future can probably not be imagined," wrote the *San Francisco Chronicle* echoing a widespread sentiment, "it has been deserted by retail trade and will not regain any of it in the near future."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Online Archive of California Photograph Collection, Bancroft Library Photograph Collection "Temp Quarters, Hobart Res. - Van Ness and Washington. City of Paris Dry Goods Company," 1906; "Retailers Leasing on Van Ness Avenue," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 6, 1906.

<sup>14</sup> "Van Ness Theater is Soon to be a Memory," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 27, 1910; "Van Ness Now a Busy Street," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 3, 1906.

<sup>15</sup> Journal of Proceedings of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors 1907, 454.

<sup>16</sup> "Van Ness Now a Busy Street," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 3, 1906.

<sup>17</sup> *San Francisco Municipal Reports, 1910-1911*, 821; *San Francisco Municipal Reports, 1911-1912*, 984 and 990.

<sup>18</sup> "Expansion of Retail Business an Example of City's Enterprise," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 17, 1909.

<sup>19</sup> "The Future of Van Ness Avenue," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 30, 1909.

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\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Map Reference #1\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen\*Date: March 2009 Continuation UpdateForward San Francisco: Connecting the San Francisco Civic Center and Panama-Pacific Exposition

In the autumn of 1911, “Sunny Jim” Rolph swept the San Francisco mayoral election with the campaign slogan “Forward San Francisco.” A noted businessman and Vice-President of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition Company, Rolph promoted a number of major infrastructural developments including the water system, Municipal Railway, bridges, tunnels, and major civic construction. Foremost in this array of improvements was a new Civic Center and City Hall, as well as a venue for a world’s fair—The Panama-Pacific Exposition. The projects were located in two large tracts of prime land, one near the southern base of Van Ness and the other near its northern terminus, and were at the center of major urban redevelopment schemes that would occupy San Francisco for the large part of the decade. As the corridor that connected the two, Van Ness became a link that served to physically, and aesthetically, connect the two major civic undertakings.

City leaders were contemplating massive civic expansion within the area surrounding City Hall even before the destruction wrought by the earthquake. In 1904, the Society for the Improvement and Adornment of San Francisco invited prominent landscape architect Daniel H. Burnham to draw sweeping plans for the city. Embedded in this plan was a design for an expanded Civic Center that would be a monumental focal point surrounded by radiating boulevards extending across the city. Although these grandiose plans were approved by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors before the earthquake, in the aftermath of the disaster the lofty ambitions of the Burnham Plan fell before the immediate necessity of rebuilding. With city leaders, merchants, and citizens focused upon the basic infrastructure of redevelopment, the drive for beautification underpinning the massive Burnham scheme eroded.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the dismissal of the Burnham Plan, however, the need for a new City Hall remained, and by the time of Mayor Rolph’s election, the redevelopment of City Hall and the Civic Center were at the forefront of municipal affairs. The City solicited proposals for development and received sixty proposals in 1912. The winning plan was that of architect B.J.S. Cahill, who had long served as an architectural advisor to the city, and advocated redevelopment on the same site as the old City Hall rather than the Market Street location proposed by Burnham. An The Mayor formed an advisory commission composed of John Galen Howard, Frederick W. Meyer, and John Reid, Jr., and voters approved an \$8.8 million bond in 1912. The final design consisted of a central plaza bounded by City Hall to the west, the State Building to the north, the Public Library and Opera House to the east, and the Exposition Auditorium to the south. Additionally, corner lots between the buildings were designed to contain secondary civic functions including a Health Building, a Fire and Police Building, and a Power House. Narrow portions of land fronting the complex were reserved for arcades and peristyles.<sup>21</sup>

With only three years remaining until the Panama-Pacific Exposition, construction of the new Civic Center was rushed toward completion. Mass excitement over the construction of the Panama Canal and the celebratory honor of hosting the Panama-Pacific Exposition spurred development, as leaders and citizens sought a grand civic identity that matched the monumental design of the exposition.<sup>22</sup> Despite the urgency generated by the pressure of hosting such an extravaganza, however, much of the construction was incomplete at the time of the Exposition, and the Civic Center was dotted with wood signs depicting where the buildings were to be. Only the Exposition Auditorium, Power House, and Central Plaza were completed by the opening day. Ultimately, the creation of the Civic Center would take more than twenty years. City Hall was completed in 1916 – a decade after the original’s destruction. In

<sup>20</sup> William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley, California: UC Berkeley Press, 1986) 110.

<sup>21</sup> United States Department of the Interior, “National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form, San Francisco Civic Center,” October 10, 1978.

<sup>22</sup> Rand Richards, *Historic San Francisco: A Concise History and Guide* (San Francisco: Heritage House Publishers, 1991) 194-195; United States Department of the Interior, National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form, San Francisco Civic Center, October 10, 1978.

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1922, the City acquired and began development of the War Memorial complex, but another decade passed before the War Memorial Opera House and Veterans Building were finished. Some thirty years after the 1906 disaster, the War Memorial Court – located on what had been Fulton Street – was completed according to landscape architect Thomas Church's vision.<sup>23</sup>

Construction of the Panama Pacific International Exposition at the northern end of Van Ness Avenue was far more rapid. The Exposition filled 635 acres, extending from Van Ness Avenue to the Presidio. With a five-acre reproduction of the Panama Canal, a “central city” filled with exhibition palaces, lush landscaping and verdant grottos, drill fields, livestock exhibits, amusement concessions, and unparalleled electrical illumination, the Exposition proved a dizzying design feat that was accomplished to acclaim in only six years. Many of the nation's most prestigious firms were represented at the Exposition, with Mckim, Mead, and White designing the Court of the Universe, Thomas Hastings creating a 43-story Tower of Jewels, and Bernard Maybeck conceiving his ancient ruin-inspired Palace of Fine Arts. Other more prosaic marvels lured the crowds, with a 65 acre playland called “The Zone” filling several blocks between Van Ness Avenue and Laguna Street at the Exposition's eastern edge.<sup>24</sup>

The Exposition was largely built in the ephemeral plaster manner of world's fairs, and was dismantled soon after closing. The massive amounts of fill that created the site from the Bay, however, largely forms the present-day Marina District.<sup>25</sup> Only a few structures remained after the closing, with ultimately only the Palace of Fine Arts and a few street alignments serving as the only surviving reminders of the Exposition. The infrastructure needed to move people to the site also proved an important legacy of the event, however, particularly along Van Ness Avenue. As the corridor that connected much of the visiting and local population of the city to the exposition as well as the most prominent linkage between the permanent City Beautiful edifices of the Civic Center and the transient beauty of the Panama-Pacific, Van Ness Avenue played a prominent role. The city pushed to complete the second line of its new Municipal Railway up the avenue in time to carry throngs of visitors to and from the site.

The drive for municipal rail fortuitously coincided with the planning of the Exposition. The motivations behind city sponsored rail service stemmed from a broader demand for progressive civic reform, efficiency, and urban consolidation. Prior to the city's foray into rail service, San Francisco was served by ten private companies, with cable cars criss-crossing the city. In the social and political climate steeped in the Progressive Movement of the early twentieth century, this complicated network of for-profit ventures was derided as corrupt and regressive. The first Municipal Railway line was completed on Geary Street in 1912 to great fanfare. A crowd of 50,000 gathered to commemorate the opening as Mayor Rolph proclaimed that the line was, “but the nucleus of a mighty system of streetcar lines which [would] someday encompass the entire city.”<sup>26</sup>

The next phase of the new system was the track installed along the length of Van Ness from the Civic Center to the Exposition grounds. Although several of the early, private cable car lines ran in the vicinity of the street, none traversed its length, and this transportation void presented a major threat to the success of the Exposition. In a 1913 report, City Engineer M.M. O'Shaughnessy predicted that during days of maximum attendance it would be necessary to transport up to 60,000 people per hour on rail, a staggering number that far outstripped the city's capacity. Work

<sup>23</sup> Bridget M. Maley, “Historic Resources Evaluation Report: Van Ness Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project, City of San Francisco, California,” California Department of Transportation District 4, Prepared for City and County of San Francisco, Department of Public Works, March 2007, 7.

<sup>24</sup> Sarah Lau and Robert Lieber, *The Last Great World's Fair: San Francisco's Panama-Pacific International Exposition 1915*. (San Francisco, California: Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, 2004) 34, 50.

<sup>25</sup> Lau and Lieber, *The Last Great World's Fair*, 34, 50, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service. “National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Palace of Fine Arts,” 2004.

<sup>26</sup> Anthony Perles, *The People's Railway: The History of the Municipal Railway of San Francisco*. (Glendale, California: Interurban Press, 1981), 27.

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\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Map Reference #1\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen\*Date: March 2009 Continuation Update

began on the Van Ness track April 6, 1914, and was finished in less than five months, with the tracks and electrical work completed by August 15. In return for their haste, the city granted the contractors, The Mahoney Brothers, a bonus of \$15,000.<sup>27</sup> The track was flanked by 259 trolley poles to support the overhead wires that powered the cars. The columns of the poles were composed of reinforced concrete, with a slender, tapered square form, a decorative finial, and cast iron footings with a modest foliated design and square base. The poles were initially erected without attached streetlights, but the city ultimately found the resources to install light fixtures and by the time of the Exposition's opening, pairs of electric streetlights were hung on each trolley pole, making Van Ness Avenue the, "best lit thoroughfare in the city."<sup>28</sup>

The substantial infrastructural improvements advanced by the mandate of the Exposition were a boon for the business community and merchants of Van Ness, as well as for the general economic recovery of the city. Further, the overflowing crowds of people travelling to and from the Exposition and the accompanying festivities and parades brought attention and business to the avenue itself. The Van Ness Avenue Improvement Association, successor to the Van Ness Avenue Improvement Club, was an ardent supporter of the railroad extension because its members saw it as vital to ensure they benefitted from the Exposition. Unlike the aesthetic aims of the nineteenth century club, who primarily sought boulevard status and civic-sponsored greenery, the twentieth century association was focused upon stimulating business activity, the opening and improvement of streets, sewers, railways, and gas mains. This increasingly pragmatic philosophy reflects Van Ness's transition from an upper-class residential corridor to an increasingly busy commercial thoroughfare. Seeking, "factories, foundries, workshops, warehouses, banks, and stores of all kinds," the civic leaders of the Van Ness Avenue Improvement Association utilized the excitement over the Exposition as a means to highlight the avenue's dynamic business potential.<sup>29</sup> Thus, even while the avenue connected the palaces of the Exposition with the as-yet incomplete civic palaces of government, it was increasingly becoming less of a city beautiful boulevard and more of a busy and diverse business and transportation corridor.

### The Age of the Automobile: Auto Row and the Rise of Car Culture Along Van Ness Avenue

Following the exodus of post-earthquake retail establishments and during the frenzied planning of the Exposition, another transition was also rapidly shaping Van Ness Avenue. The mixed use character of the avenue persisted, with residences predominating in the upper reaches, and commercial and industrial institutions dominating its middle and lower reaches, but increasingly the avenue came to be defined by a burgeoning sector in both the economy and psyche of America: the automobile. The nascent auto industry and its array of support sectors including sales, repair, and manufacturing found an ideal home in the spaces left by the vacating retail sector along Van Ness. Close to the urban core, yet endowed with more land and more moderate lot and rent prices, the Van Ness corridor quickly became one of the west's largest Auto Rows. The industry first appeared in the vicinity of Market Street, but scores of auto related businesses traveled steadily north, flanking the broad Van Ness Avenue from Market to the San Francisco Bay. By 1920, grand showrooms such as the Paige Motor Company Building accompanied scores of more modest salesrooms, garages, and repair shops (Map Reference #14). Along with New York, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles, San Francisco proved one of the most prominent distribution centers for the growing auto industry.<sup>30</sup> With California leading the country in automobile sales and ownership throughout the 1910s and 1920s, the state proved a ready market for the increasingly standardized and reliable automobiles shipped largely from the middle-western industrial belt. As an early Auto Row, Van Ness Avenue housed hundreds of auto firms throughout the 1910s and 1920s, with Hudsons and Hupmobiles, Cole Aeros and Cadillacs filling glassy showrooms. As a burgeoning sales

<sup>27</sup> James Rolph Papers 1911-1930, California Historical Society, MS 1818, Box 67, Folder 4; Perles, *The People's Railway*, 38.

<sup>28</sup> "Hundreds of Lights on Van Ness Avenue," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 20, 1915.

<sup>29</sup> *Constitution and By-Laws of the Van Ness Avenue Improvement Association*, (San Francisco, California: Pernau Publishing Company, December 1912), 3-4. A pamphlet housed at UC Berkeley Bancroft Library.

<sup>30</sup> Sally H. Clarke, *Trust and Power: Consumers, the Modern Corporation, and the Making of the United States Automobile Market* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3.

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corridor, the avenue became a nexus between the productive capacities of the automotive industry and the American consumer. In many senses, the showrooms were a face for the increasingly powerful auto industry, and the array of buildings erected represented an evolving conception of the automobile's central role in the city, state, and nation.<sup>31</sup>

Initially, many of the shops and display rooms were housed in small wood frame buildings, however as the clout of the industry grew, and the importance of branding escalated in a competitive market, larger auto palaces quickly sprung up along the avenue. Throughout the 1910s, 1920s, and to a lesser degree the 1930s, large corner lots along the avenue were developed as automobile showrooms and smaller frontages in between were filled with modest repair shops and used car sales facilities. Undeveloped lots doubled as open air car lots, with bright banners and signs. At the eastern corner of Van Ness and Market Street, the White Garage boasted an auto show room, supplied auto and motorcycle parts, and offered repairs (Map Reference #5). The intersection of Van Ness Avenue and O'Farrell was an anchor for the district, with the Weeks and Day designed Don Lee Building; the Earl C. Anthony Packard Showroom, designed by Bernard Maybeck in 1926; and a 1937 Art Moderne Chevrolet showroom designed by John E. Dinwiddie (Map Reference #8). At the southwest corner of Sacramento Street and Van Ness, the Paige Motor Car Company housed Max Arnold's "high grade automobiles," with the building doubling in size to accommodate increased business in 1924 (Map Reference #14). In the northern stretches of the Row, several looming dealerships designed by engineering firm Macdonald and Kahn expressed a factory-like form reminiscent of the major auto plants of the Midwest (Map Reference #13, 15, 20, 21). Numerous other auto shops lined the street, specializing in everything from upholstery to wood working for the ornate fleet of new autos flooding the growing California market. As the wares within the showrooms evolved, so too did the architectural styling of their surrounds and the Van Ness corridor became defined by the breakneck commercial developments of the industry. The three decades were characterized by remarkably different architectural forms, from simple brick garages to classical pilasters and sweeping Art Moderne curves. Beginning in the 1920s, bright neon signs filled the streetscape, with rooftop billboards and bright signs framing the buildings.

As the popularity and ubiquity of the automobile grew, new requirements and pressures altered the roadway of Van Ness itself. It was one of the busiest roads in the city, with scores of pedestrians, cars, and a rail line, and was soon at the center of growing concerns over transportation safety and standardization. Gruesome accidents involving car wrecks, pedestrian fatalities, and street car injuries regularly filled newspapers, and authorities increasingly sought standardized traffic signaling mechanisms and speed enforcement. In 1915, the city began experimenting with small multi-colored lanterns at the street corner. By 1921, painted white curbing, motorcycle police, and red lights at some intersections were simultaneously implemented to curtail growing numbers of traffic hazards and accidents.<sup>32</sup>

When the long-awaited span of the Golden Gate Bridge united San Francisco with the Marin headlands to the north, Van Ness' central arterial identity was sealed. Previously, travelers on the Sausalito Ferry had used the avenue to reach the ferry slips west of Fort Mason, however the construction of the bridge, and the Bay Bridge before it, ushered in the modern era of connectivity in the previously geographically isolated northern peninsula. Van Ness Avenue and Lombard Street became integral auto corridors carrying U.S. 101 and its growing local and regional commercial, commuter, and recreational travel. Aware of the surge of traffic that would accompany the bridge completion, the San Francisco Department of Public Works, in conjunction with the Works Progress Administration (WPA), widened the Van Ness roadway, narrowing the broad sidewalks to 16 feet on both sides of Van Ness in 1936. To accomplish the widening, all of the trolley poles were moved back from the roadway, a process which required many of the adjacent property owners to relinquish basements under the original sidewalks and to build new basement walls under the new narrower sidewalks. Accompanying the widening, the San Francisco Public Utilities

<sup>31</sup> Peter J. Ling, *America and the Automobile: Technology, Reform, and Social Change* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 13, 96-97.

<sup>32</sup> "New Traffic Signal System To Be Tried," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 21, 1915; "Supervisors Join in War on Speeding," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 21, 1921.

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Commission undertook the relighting of the poles, affixing a single tear-drop luminaire to each. The uniform lighting standards replaced the small electric lights from the Exposition era, which had largely been considered a temporary expedient for the occasion, and many of which had already been taken out of service. Other infrastructure was moved as well, including fire hydrants, fire/police call boxes, sign posts, and traffic signals.

In addition to the changes along Van Ness, the area of South of Market was reconfigured in the years before the completion of the bridge, with the South Van Ness extension connecting Van Ness to the southern portion of the city. Transportation planners had long criticized the abrupt termination of Van Ness at Market, stating that the “blind” street caused a central bottleneck. Carved from existing city blocks to cross Mission and overlay the southbound course of Howard, the “Van Ness Avenue Extension” was completed in the early 1930s and was vital in connecting the southern regions of the Peninsula with the northern reaches opened by the bridge several years later.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, with the widened traffic lanes, modernized lighting fixtures, and increased through-traffic generated by the bridge, Van Ness Avenue continued to evolve as a city boulevard. Mayor Angelo Rossi praised the changes when he spoke to the Board of Supervisors in 1936, stating that they, “convert[ed] the historic San Francisco boulevard into a thoroughfare second only to Market Street in importance, property values, and beauty.”<sup>34</sup> This evaluation represented yet another recasting of Van Ness Avenue, from staid residential boulevard, to local commercial corridor, and ultimately to a busy segment of a growing network of city and state roads connecting the Bay area to the state and region beyond.

This new role also posed significant transportation planning dilemmas throughout the mid-twentieth century. As both a prominent city thoroughfare and a portion of the preeminent north-south U.S. 101, Van Ness Avenue became central in highway development conflicts between citizens of San Francisco and transportation planners. The state embarked upon ambitious highway development plans in the Bay area in 1940, most notably with the massive expansion and modernization of the Bayshore Highway in the South Bay. Because U.S. 101 was transformed into a modern freeway system along the Peninsula the urban portion of the road in San Francisco increasingly came to be viewed as a congested chink in the new system. In 1952, initial construction on the Central Freeway was promoted by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as a rational solution to the bottleneck created by the path of U.S. 101 through the city. The proposed freeway would extend from the Bayshore Freeway at the south, to the approach to the Golden Gate Bridge at the north, cutting a swath through the city and resting largely on elevated piers. In 1955, slightly under a mile of the route was constructed from Thirteenth Street to Mission Street. The second unit was opened four years later from Mission to Turk Street, several blocks west of the Civic Center.<sup>35</sup>

Accompanying the explosion in post-war highway planning was a disinvestment and disavowal of the city’s rail-based streetcar system. Across the city, rail lines were removed and paved over for use by motor buses. The coaches still ran on electric wires and were often strung on the original trolley poles. The H Line, running up Van Ness since the 1915 Exposition, was abandoned in March of 1950, replaced by motor coach service. The tracks were quickly removed, with a concrete median replacing the rail and the power supply for the bus coaches (also known as trolleys) strung to the original concrete poles.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Bion J. Arnold, *Report on Transportation Facilitation, City of San Francisco*; City and County of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Electric Power Bureau Contract No. 19: For Street Lighting Construction on Van Ness Avenue, October 1936, Archival Records on File at San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.

<sup>34</sup> City and County of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Electric Power Bureau Contract No. 19: For Street Lighting Construction on Van Ness Avenue, October 1936, Archival Records on File at San Francisco Public Utilities Commission; *Proceedings of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, 1936*. 555, 604-605; “Supervisors Have Economy Streak,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 7, 1915.

<sup>35</sup> “District IV Freeways make Great Strides,” *California Highways and Public Works*, March-April 1955. 1-7; “US 101 in San Francisco,” *California Highways and Public Works*, March April 1955. 20-21.

<sup>36</sup> Perles, *The People’s Railway*, 180.

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The state poured millions of dollars into highway modernization, such as the construction on the Central Freeway and its sister roadway the Embarcadero Freeway, but these projects faced simmering citizen protest over road construction in San Francisco that exploded into a full-scale “Freeway Revolt.” Local anger at the seeming indifference of transportation planners to the condensed architectural fabric of the city left the San Francisco Board of Supervisors torn between appeasing the local constituency and realizing statewide transportation goals. Mirroring other urban protests such as that against the Robert Moses led freeway plans in New York City, San Franciscans railed against neighborhood destruction caused by rampant road construction. Ultimately successful, the furor led to a 1959 vote in which the Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to terminate construction on most freeways throughout the city. Work on both the Central Freeway and the Embarcadero Freeway halted, and the massive corridors remained incomplete stubs that fell far short of their intended form. One of the results of this controversy was that the congested urban corridor of Van Ness Avenue retained the mantle of U.S. 101. In contrast to the 1955 depictions of a freeway connecting U.S. 101 to the Golden Gate Bridge, Caltrans reports in 1961 are strikingly modest, stating that, “construction and design activities, except for landscaping and minor projects, are confined at present.” The yearly report noted instead that, “bids were opened for resurfacing Van Ness Avenue,” and the avenue was once again San Francisco’s answer to U.S. 101.<sup>37</sup>

Paradoxically, as highway construction transformed much of California and millions of automobiles filled the multi-lane roads, the fortunes of Auto Row fell into decline. The freeways, winding outward from urban cores to their sprawling peripheries, allowed rampant population dispersal and commercial interconnectivity. An auto showroom on Van Ness Avenue, with high rent and land values, and compressed space, often proved no match for the cheap rents, convenient parking, and proximity of surrounding suburban dealers. Further, as the romance and mystique of the automobile ceded to a comfortable familiarity and utilitarian ubiquity, the palaces of the earlier era seemed increasingly anachronistic and outdated. By the 1950s, and escalating through the 1960s and 1970s, auto dealers left Van Ness Avenue. Old showrooms stood vacant or were filled with bakeries, restaurants, laundromats, movie theaters, even gymnasiums. Although some prominent dealers remained, with several sales rooms remaining today, the cohesive strip of diverse architectural palaces eroded and Van Ness Avenue once again assumed a new urban character. A targeted plan developed by the San Francisco Planning Department in the late 1980s acknowledged the transitional challenges facing the avenue, citing the need for an increased mixed-use and residential character as well as the necessity of creative adaptation of many of the distinctive auto showrooms along the avenue. The plan also encouraged the planting of trees and greenery along the street and in the median, an echo of the boulevard plans of the late nineteenth century.<sup>38</sup>

Thus from the 1858 survey to today’s mixed use avenue, a number of distinctive epochs have shaped Van Ness Avenue: residential settlement accompanying the tumultuous nineteenth century San Francisco population boom, the profound impact of the dislocation of the 1906 conflagration and the ensuing commercial rush, the infrastructural mandate and progressive City Beautiful aims of the Panama-Pacific Exposition and Civic Center, and the rise and hegemony of both the automobile and the modern highway in city and regional life. Throughout these periods the avenue has served as a constantly evolving corridor, altered successively to suit the urban aims and motivations of the period. The avenue bears layers from each period, with several pre-earthquake residences in its upper portions, trolley poles dating from the Exposition era, some remaining auto showrooms, as well as modern highway improvements and residential high-rises. These layers indicate a successive re-conceptualization of the corridor that has allowed it to remain a viable and dynamic component of San Francisco’s street system.

<sup>37</sup> Walton Bean, *California: An Interpretive History*. (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1968) 529; Genevieve Giuliano and Susan Hanson, *The Geography of Urban Transportation*. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2004) 400; “Bay Area Freeways,” *California Highways and Public Works*, May-June 1961. 1-9.

<sup>38</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, “Van Ness Avenue Area Plan.”

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**Evaluation**

As discussed, the historical development of Van Ness Avenue has four potential periods of significance: the 1858 Van Ness Survey, the earthquake and fire of 1906, the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition, and the rise of San Francisco's Auto Row. In its primary role as a central urban transportation corridor, the avenue lacks specific associations to significant events in local, state, or national history during each of the periods, except for its role as one of the fire breaks during the 1906 fire, which is discussed below. This lack of specific association is specifically addressed in National Register guidance for evaluation, which cautions that, "mere association with historic events or trends is not enough, in and of itself, to qualify under Criterion A" because "the property's specific association must be considered important as well."<sup>39</sup> As one of the city's major thoroughfares the avenue displays a general association with important events and trends in the city; however, as the guidelines state these broad associations are not in and of themselves basis for consideration under Criterion A. Like other major corridors in the city, such as Market Street, Potrero Avenue, Mission Street, or Geary Boulevard, Van Ness Avenue served to connect both everyday activities and notable citywide events through its general role as a transportation link. It did not, however, as a city street, have a specific important role within its initial survey, the 1915 Exposition, or the development of Auto Row.

The road was a basic component of the Van Ness Survey, and while illustrative of San Francisco's steady expansion, was not directly associated with significant events or trends that shaped the city and lacks specific significance under Criterion A or 1. Similarly, the transportation role the avenue played during the 1915 Panama Pacific Exposition does not rise to individual significance under Criterion A or 1. The avenue was not a central feature of the exposition undertaking and was instead pressed into service by practical need as the city grappled with accommodating the throngs of visitors to the site. The avenue was not associated with significant events or trends during the event, and upon the exposition's close Van Ness emerged once again as an eclectic residential and commercial corridor. Lastly, the role of the avenue within the development of San Francisco's Auto Row is not significant under Criterion A or 1. Auto Row was characterized by the evolving architectural styles and forms of the row of buildings erected from the 1910s to the 1930s, but the role of the street itself was not an important characteristic. As dealers sought to differentiate themselves and gain market share in the rapidly expanding industry, the architectural form of the auto "palaces" gained extreme importance and prestige. The Van Ness corridor itself does not convey this important architectural and social legacy, which is instead embodied in the buildings that line the avenue.

In its role during the 1906 Earthquake, however, the avenue does have potential significance under Criterion A or 1. The wide avenue served as one of the fire breaks that allowed the city to check the advancing flames and halt the fire that devastated much of downtown. Although the avenue was not originally designed as a fire break, the local fire department recognized that the width of the road could make it useful for this purpose. Subsequently, the course of the fire and the utter inferno of the blaze along the Market Street corridor, thrust the road into service during the days following April 18, 1906, and the avenue itself ultimately did play a central role in the transformative event. This potential significance is undercut by a lack of integrity to the period because the avenue does not retain physical elements or characteristics that could convey significance within the context of the fire event. While the avenue retains the overall outside width, the entirety of the corridor has been altered since the earthquake, including the infrastructural elements of the street itself and the surrounding setting. The character defining features of the road, including its paving, curbing, medians, planting, signage, streetcar equipment, bus shelters, and various utilities have all been substantially altered over time. The original lower commercial area, the grand residential buildings along the mid section, and the more modest residences and business of the north end have been dramatically altered through the construction of the Civic Center, modern high-rise buildings, and construction of predominantly commercial buildings throughout the mid section of the street. As such, the avenue does not convey feeling or association to the

<sup>39</sup> NPS, "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," *National Register Bulletin 15* (NPS, GPO: 1991, and updated various years), 12.

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time of the disaster or the early days of recovery, but instead displays buildings, landscaping, and street furniture from many time periods throughout the twentieth and twenty-first, centuries. This lack of integrity undermines the avenue's ability to convey potential significance under Criterion A or 1 because its design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association no longer bear a relationship to the 1906 context.

Van Ness Avenue is not directly associated with persons significant in local, state, or national history (Criterion B or 2). Although the avenue was surveyed under the auspices of, and is named for, the influential and Mayor James Van Ness, this is a tangential and commemorative association that does not convey a direct or important historical connection that merits recognition. Again, National Register guidance offers this clarification, "A resource that has a non-commemorative primary function," does not meet Criteria Consideration F for commemorative properties.<sup>40</sup> Innumerable streets in San Francisco, the state, and the nation bear the names of prominent citizens and sometimes significant persons, and this type of memorialization is common, but the avenue does not have direct associations with Van Ness, or any other prominent figures in history. The development of the transportation corridor was not furthered by any one individual any significant person's civic aims.

Lastly, Van Ness Avenue lacks architectural, design, and engineering significance and does not display particular characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. The avenue and its accompanying street features do not illustrate the work of a master or demonstrate a significant design standard (Criterion C or 3). As a prominent arterial component within the overall street system of San Francisco, a densely settled corridor supporting commercial, civic, and residential activities, and a component of U.S. 101, the avenue's design and planning reflect a myriad of public and private design intents, none of which are significant in local, state, or national history and none of which reflect a sustained or cohesive architectural or engineering program. The avenue was surveyed to a substantial width to promote its development as a comparable thoroughfare to its east-west counterpart Market Street, but this design choice primarily indicated a pragmatic solution for the need for a prominent transportation corridor for what was then the city's northwestern outskirts, rather than a comprehensive architectural or design goal. No coherent design aims accompanied the decisions regarding its width, grading, paving, curbing, or landscaping, which occurred in fragmented segments without overarching coordination. Throughout the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s, as the avenue slowly consolidated into an upper-class residential corridor and little municipal attention was given to a cohesive design strategy for the avenue. The 1896 declaration of Van Ness Avenue as a "Boulevard" had little lasting effect, as the primary attributes of the declaration: increased landscaping and decreased traffic, largely failed to come to fruition. With the disruption of the earthquake and the subsequent redevelopment of the avenue as an increasingly commercial corridor, virtually all vestiges of the original concept of the "boulevard" nature of the avenue faded.

In the same sense, the relationship of Van Ness Avenue to the early twentieth century City Beautiful boosterism surrounding the development of the Civic Center and the Panama-Pacific Exposition lacks significance under Criterion C or 1. Although the avenue passes through the Civic Center, Van Ness preceded the creation of the center by fifty years and neither it nor its basic streetscape features are a significant design element of the Civic Center plan. The avenue and its street features are instead simply basic arterial components. The Civic Center complex largely extends east from Van Ness Avenue, with its pedestrian elements and plazas concentrated along Polk Street, Larkin Street, and Hyde Street. As the 1987 National Historic Landmark documentation states, the "San Francisco Civic Center is a group of monumental buildings around a central open space (Civic Center Plaza), and additional buildings that extend the principal axis to the east and west." Van Ness Avenue plays a peripheral role in this monumental assemblage that does not merit consideration as a individual contributing element of the district.

Additionally, Van Ness lacked a significant architectural or design role as a transportation corridor between the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition and the Civic Center and the rest of the city. Van Ness had been in place for more than 55 years as an existing roadway and although it was pressed into temporary service as one of the transportation

<sup>40</sup> NPS, *National Register Bulletin 15*, 39.

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corridors serving fair goers, it had long been planned as the location of one of the city's new municipal streetcar lines. Other than the streetcar, Van Ness received little direct attention as part of the Exposition design and layout. The avenue was not considered a promenade upon which to linger or loiter and was instead a necessary infrastructural element outside of the wonders of the Exposition grounds. The streetcar system's trolley poles, while of a pleasant design in keeping with the general aesthetic of the classicism of the fair, were also relatively simple and expedient infrastructure. In contrast to the light standards envisioned by Walter D'Arcy Ryan in his "Total Illumination Plan" for the Exposition, the electric lights added to the trolley poles in February 1915 were installed with great haste and little design consideration, and were quickly partially shuttered following the event (See DPR 523 for Trolley Poles/Light Standards Map Reference # 2). Additionally, other streetscape elements, including fire hydrants and call boxes from this period, some of which still remain on the corridor, were not part of a significant design or city engineering program but instead representative ubiquitous utilities and infrastructure during the period. Essentially, within the context of the fleeting grandeur of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition and the substantial monumentality of the Civic Center, Van Ness Avenue played a secondary support role that was dwarfed by the design and artistry of both undertakings.<sup>41</sup>

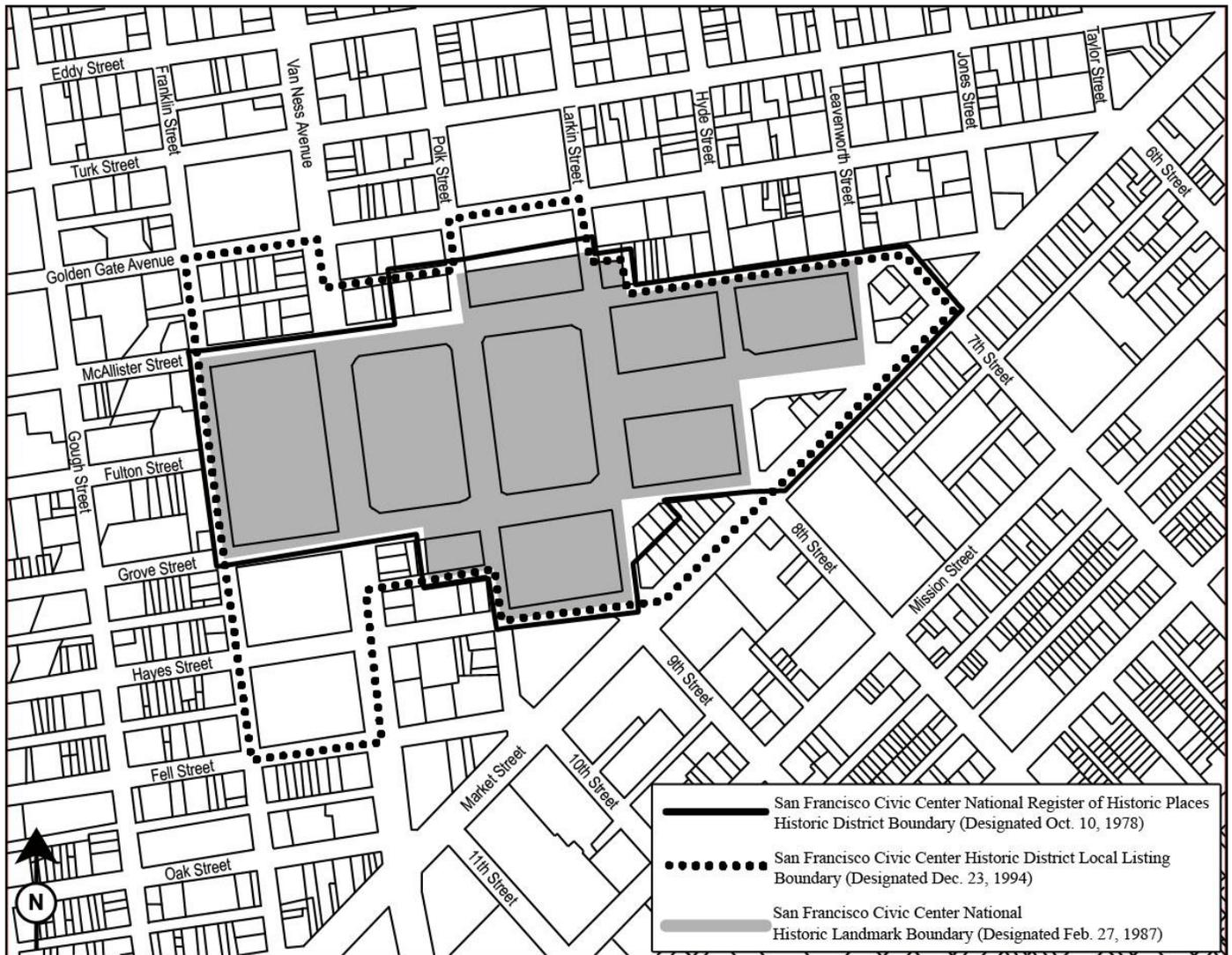
Within the context of "Auto Row" development, Van Ness Avenue also lacks architectural or engineering significance. Although many of the buildings flanking the avenue were, and are, architecturally distinguished and the programmatic cohesiveness of the avenue's surrounding building types may constitute a historic district, the streetscape does not rise to a level of significance as an important example of such infrastructure. As a transportation corridor that linked the thriving businesses of Auto Row to local and regional markets, the avenue played a secondary and largely utilitarian role that was not singularly important or significant under Criterion C or 3. Similarly, as an undistinguished urban component of U.S. 101, adopted into the highway system with the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge, Van Ness Avenue does not embody any architectural or engineering significance as a transportation corridor. The road, and its ancillary infrastructure features, serve as a general arterial connecting the city with the region and are of a basic design and form.

Further, as discussed above, in addition to a lack of significance, the corridor does not retain physical integrity to any one historic period but is instead characterized by overlapping infrastructural layers. All of the features of the roadway have changed substantially over time, with new paving and curb cuts, and installation of medians, modern fire hydrants, street lights, and various other infrastructural elements added throughout the last century. Municipal Railway tracks once coursed the center of the road, only to be removed and replaced with concrete medians, landscaping, and traffic signals. Similarly, the character of the workmanship, materials, setting, feeling, and association of the avenue have changed greatly over time, with residential development ceding to commercial buildings and this in-turn giving way of late to modern high-rise residential. The original uninterrupted street surface has been incised with rails and medians strips, and the sidewalks reduced in width. This steady alteration undermines all of the aspects of integrity excepting location, which is not sufficient in and of itself for NRHP or CRHR consideration.

In rare instances structures themselves can serve as sources of important information about historic construction materials or technologies, but the existing street surface, sidewalks, medians, and other street furniture are otherwise well documented and do not appear to be a principal sources of information in this regard (Criteria D and 4).

<sup>41</sup> For more information on lighting at the Panama Pacific International Exposition, see Laura Anne Ackley, *Innovations in Illumination at the Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915*, (2002), a UC Berkeley Master's thesis on file at UC Berkeley Environmental Design Library.

**Figure 1: San Francisco Civic Center Historic District Boundaries**



**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 2:** South Van Ness Avenue, camera facing south from Market Street, 3/9/09.

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Map Reference #1  
\*Date: March 2009       Continuation       Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 3: Van Ness Avenue, camera facing south toward War Memorial Complex, 3/9/09.**

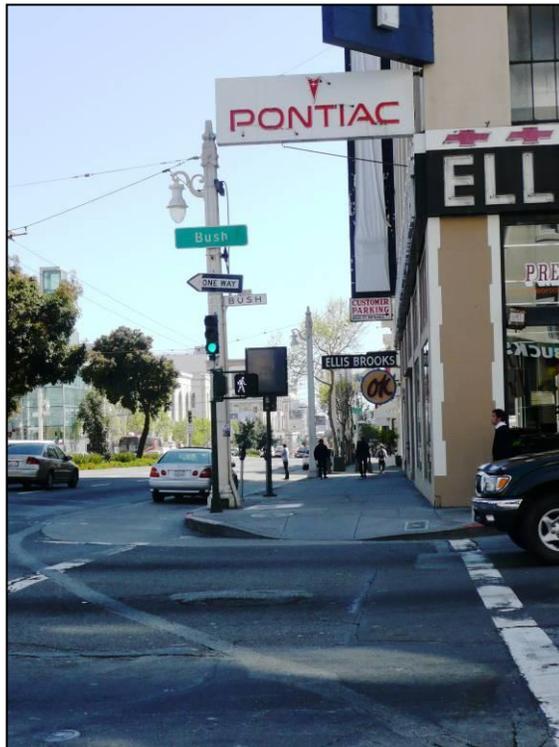


**Photograph 4: Van Ness Avenue, camera facing south from California Street, 3/9/09.**

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 5: Van Ness Avenue, camera facing south from Pine Street, 3/9/09.**



**Photograph 6: Van Ness Avenue, camera facing south from Bush Street, 3/9/09.**

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 7: Van Ness Avenue, camera facing northwest From Lombard Street, 3/9/09.**



**Photograph 8: Van Ness Avenue, camera facing south from North Point Street, 3/9/09.**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Map Reference #1

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 9: Hydrant at Van Ness Avenue and Green Street, 3/9/09.**



**Photograph 10: Bus Shelter at Van Ness Avenue and Bay Street 3/9/09.**

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

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\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Map Reference #1

\*Date: March 2009

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**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 11: Trolley poles and modern poles at Van Ness Avenue and Greenwich Street 3/9/09.**

**Sketch Map:**



State of California — The Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #  
HRI #  
Trinomial  
NRHP Status Code 6L

Other Listings  
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

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\*Resource Name or #: Map Reference #2

**P1. Other Identifier:** Van Ness Avenue Trolley Poles / Light Standards

**\*P2. Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

\*a. County: San Francisco

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: San Francisco North, Calif. Date: 1956, photorevised 1968

c. Address: Van Ness Avenue, Market Street to North Point Street City: San Francisco Zip: 94109

d. UTM: Zone: 10 ; mE/ mN (G.P.S.)

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate) Elevation:

See Area Map

**\*P3a. Description:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The resource evaluated herein includes 259 original trolley poles and modern replacement light standards that run from Market Street to North Point Street on the edge of the eastern and western sidewalks of Van Ness Avenue. The majority of the poles are reinforced concrete construction, however a small number are replacement metal poles with cobra type heads. The concrete poles are reminiscent of the Corinthian order and have a slender, tapered form with a decorative foliated finial and base (photograph 1, replacement pole photograph 2) (see continuation sheet).

**\*P3b. Resource Attributes:** (List attributes and codes) HP28 (Street Furniture)

**\*P4. Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (multi component resource.)

P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



**P5b. Description of Photo:** (View, date, accession #) Representative pole (#271, NW corner of Greenwich and Van Ness), camera facing northeast.

**\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:**

Historic

Prehistoric  Both

1914, 1936 light standards, and ongoing alterations (SFPUC)

**\*P7. Owner and Address:**

County of San Francisco

**\*P8. Recorded by:** (Name, affiliation, and address)

Polly S. Allen; Meta Bunse  
JRP Historical Consulting LLC  
1490 Drew Avenue Suite 110  
Davis, CA 95618

**\*P9. Date Recorded:**

March-April, 2009

**\*P10. Survey Type:** (Describe)

Intensive

**\*P11. Report Citation:** (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.") JRP Historical Consulting, LLC, "Historic Resources Inventory and Evaluation Report for San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) Van Ness Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Study," 2009.

**\*Attachments:**  NONE  Location Map  Sketch Map  Continuation Sheet  Building, Structure, and Object Record  Archaeological Record  District Record  Linear Feature Record  Milling Station Record  Rock Art Record  Artifact Record  Photograph Record  Other (List):

**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

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\*NRHP Status Code 6L

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Map Reference #2

B1. Historic Name: same

B2. Common Name: none

B3. Original Use: trolley poles with wire support for electric streetcars, streetlight standards

B4. Present Use: light standards, wire support for MUNI, signage and traffic signaling

\*B5. Architectural Style: utilitarian with Classical ornamentation

\*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations) The poles were erected in 1914 to support electrical wiring for the Van Ness Avenue Municipal Railway (see continuation sheet).

\*B7. Moved?  No  Yes  Unknown Date: 1936 Original Location: Six feet in toward street center

\*B8. Related Features: n/a

B9a. Architect: unknown, although periodicals state that City Engineer M.M. O'Shaunessy prepared initial drawings

b. Builder: Original construction by San Francisco Municipal Railway / Mahoney Brothers, Joshua Hendy Iron Works; replacement cast iron bases constructed by Steiger and Kerr Stove and Foundry Company.

\*B10. Significance: Theme: n/a Area: n/a  
Period of Significance: n/a Property Type: n/a Applicable Criteria: n/a

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

This intensive survey and evaluation finds that the Van Ness Avenue Trolley Poles/Light Standards do not appear eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), or local designation because they lack integrity. This evaluation is consistent with San Francisco Preservation Bulletin 5, "Landmark and Historic District Designation Procedures," which directs that historic properties be evaluated for local designation using the California OHP Recordation Manual (as per San Francisco Landmarks Board Resolution No. 527, June 7, 2000). The trolley poles/light standards have also been evaluated in accordance with Section 15064.5(a)(2)-(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, using the criteria outlined in Section 5024.1 of the California Public Resources Code, and are not historical resources for the purposes of CEQA (see continuation sheet).

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) n/a

**B12. References:** San Francisco Department of Buildings Building Permits; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for the City of San Francisco; City and County of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Files; City Planning Files; San Francisco Architectural Heritage files; *San Francisco Chronicle*; James Rolph Papers (California Historical Society); Perles, *The People's Railway* (1981); Brignall, *The Last Great World's Fair* (2004); Todd, *The Story of the Exposition* (1921); see footnotes for additional referencts.

B13. Remarks:

\*B14. Evaluator: Meta Bunse and Polly S. Allen

\*Date of Evaluation: April 2009

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)

**See continuation sheet, Map 1.**

## CONTINUATION SHEET

\*Recorded by: P. Allen; M. Bunse\*Date: March 2009 Continuation Update**P3a. Description:** (Continued)

The finial is of cast iron and features a tapered square crown cradled by an abacus and medallions terminating in volute detailing. While all of the finials are original, the bases are a mixture of original cast iron and replacement fiberglass. Some poles are missing the base altogether, and many of those that do remain are very deteriorated (photographs 3, 4, 5, and 6). On the original bases, the north and south sides each feature a removable cast iron door that allow access to the mechanical equipment within. The original doors are stamped "Joshua Hendy Iron Works S.F. CA", a Bay Area foundry commissioned to make the base (photograph 7). Several poles feature cast iron doors stamped "Steiger and Kerr Stove and Foundry Company S.F. CAL" (photograph 8) and were early replacements for the original Hendy products. The modern replacement fiberglass bases do not bear any makers mark and do not have any access doors, as did the cast iron originals (photograph 9).

Tear drop light fixtures project from the upper portion of the pole, slightly beneath the decorative finial. These bracket fixtures were 1936 additions to the pole that replaced the pairs of globe lights hastily installed in preparation for the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition (photograph 10, historic photographs 16 and 18). The 1936 tear drop fixture is mounted on a foliated spiraling cast iron bracket. The brackets are attached to the poles by cinch anchor bolts made by the National Lead Company. The luminaires installed on these brackets in 1936 were General Electric Company's Form 81 pendant ornamental luminaire, accompanied by the same company's No. 193 light alabaster rippled globe, however all of these have been replaced, most recently with the conversion to high pressure sodium vapor lamps (HPSV) (photograph 10). The majority of the poles are painted with buff colored paint. This color is similar to the original installation; however the bases and finials were originally darker in color, in contrast to the body of the pole (see photographs 4, 16, and 20). The sole exception to this is within the Civic Center Historic District, where some of the bases have been painted gold. There is no indication that this was part of the original design (photograph 11).

The overall integrity of the poles is quite low, and the condition is also poor as many of the shafts are spalling and deteriorated (photograph 12 and 19). More than one-half of the bases of the remaining original poles are modern replacement fiber glass without access doors. Of the remaining original cast iron bases, many have replacement or missing access doors without any maker's mark. Both original and replacement bases are very damaged and deteriorated. The cast iron bases exhibit substantial corrosion (photograph 3). The fiberglass replicas are also chipped and broken, pushed askew from the base, and often missing major portions or fasteners (photographs 15a and 15b). Further, although the poles run from Market Street to North Point Street, the uniform aesthetic of the network has been diminished by the insertion of modern support poles (photographs 12, 14, 17). Throughout the entire avenue, modern poles have been introduced to support MUNI wires, traffic signals, and other infrastructural elements, often directly abutting the concrete poles. These insertions greatly alter the visual cohesiveness of the network (see Section B10). For detailed information on the integrity of individual poles, please refer to the attached pole maps (Map 3).

**B6. Construction History:** (Continued)

In 1915, light brackets were added in preparation for the Panama Pacific Exposition. In 1936, the original lights were removed and new light fixtures and brackets were added. At this time the poles were moved to accommodate a 12-foot road widening. New tear-drop pendant lights and brackets were added to the original concrete poles when they were relocated as part of street widening. Throughout the twentieth century, many of the cast iron bases were removed or destroyed by deterioration or impact damage, and over half of the bases are fiberglass replicas installed in about 1997. Before the insertions of the fiberglass replicas, many of the original bases were missing or replaced with plywood or sheet metal. Similarly, deterioration of the light standards and functional obsolescence led to replacement of many of the lamps and surrounding fixtures at some point after 1997. In addition to components of

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\*Recorded by: P. Allen; M. Bunse

\*Date: March 2009

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the original poles, a number of modern metal poles have been introduced as infill support structures to carry wires and MUNI lines that cannot be supported by the deteriorated concrete poles (source: City and County of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, correspondence files).

**\*B10. Significance:**

The Van Ness Avenue trolley poles and light standards were documented in a 1982 San Francisco Downtown Inventory undertaken by San Francisco Architectural Heritage and were found to merit a level “B” (major importance) in their rating system. According to San Francisco Preservation Bulletin 16: “City and County of San Francisco Planning Department CEQA Review Procedures for Historic Resources,” this rating does not qualify as an adopted local register for the purpose of CEQA and requires further consultation and review, which is provided herein. The poles are also referenced in the Van Ness Avenue Area Plan component of the San Francisco General Plan (Policy 8.8: Street Lighting); however, they are not listed as a significant or contributing historical resource in this Area Plan. Some of the poles located in the Civic Center National Historic Landmark District (NHLD) were referenced in a 2007 Historic Resources Evaluation Report (HRER) prepared for the Van Ness Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project undertaken by the San Francisco Department of Public Works (SFDPW). As a local agency project undertaking under Section 106, the project was conducted under the auspices of the Programmatic Agreement (PA) among the Federal Highway Administration, the Advisory Council on Preservation, the California State Preservation Officer, and Caltrans. Sixteen poles are located within the boundaries of the NHLD, on both sides of Van Ness between Grove Street and McAllister Street (See Map 2). These sixteen poles were among eleven elements described in the HRER as proposed character-defining features of the streetscape of the Civic Center NHLD.<sup>1</sup> The HRER/HPSR did not include evaluation analysis of these proposed character defining features, has not resulted in a determination regarding the eligibility of the trolley poles or other features, and the proposed amendments have not been listed as contributing elements of the Civic Center NHLD. The poles have never been fully evaluated under NRHP or California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) criteria and this analysis is provided herein. For evaluation of the sixteen poles located within the NHLD, please see the update sheets for the Civic Center NHLD (Map Reference #3).

Historic Context

The Van Ness Avenue Municipal Railway line was completed August 15, 1914, after a construction project of less than five months. The City established the streetcar in anticipation of the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition and the millions expected to flock to the 635 acre marvel. City officials hastily commissioned the rail line as a means to efficiently transport Exposition attendees to and from the site, and although several private cable car lines ran in the vicinity of the street, none traversed its length, and local businessmen and Exposition promoters felt that this transportation void presented a major threat to the success of the event. In a 1913 report, City Engineer M.M. O'Shaughnessy predicted that during days of maximum attendance it would be necessary to transport up to 60,000 people per hour by rail, a staggering number that far outstripped the city's capacity.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Architectural Resources Group, “Historic Resources Evaluation Report: Van Ness Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project, City of San Francisco, California,” prepared by Bridget M. Maley, Prepared for California Department of Transportation District 4 and City and County of San Francisco, Department of Public Works, March 2007; Architectural Resources Group, “Historic Property Survey Report: Van Ness Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project, City of San Francisco, California,” prepared for California Department of Transportation District 4 and City and County of San Francisco, Department of Public Works, October 2007.

<sup>2</sup> James Rolph Papers 1911-1930, California Historical Society, MS 1818, Box 67, Folder 4; Anthony Perles, *The People's Railway: The History of the Municipal Railway of San Francisco*. (Glendale, California: Interurban Press, 1981), 38.

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\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Map Reference #2\*Recorded by: P. Allen; M. Bunse\*Date: March 2009 Continuation Update

On a broader level, however, the two miles of rail line on Van Ness Avenue represented an even larger civic undertaking, as San Francisco both rebuilt itself into a modern city in the wake of the devastating earthquake and fire of 1906 and overcame the corruption and graft of the privately owned streetcar services. With a city nearly destroyed by physical disaster, the years following the event proved a frenzy of development, innovation, and widespread boosterism. In the autumn of 1911, "Sunny Jim" Rolph swept the San Francisco mayoral election with the campaign slogan "Forward San Francisco." The slogan crystallized the broad progressive momentum undergirding civic drives for physical development, social reform, and major infrastructural projects including water systems, bridges, tunnels, and momentous civic construction. Foremost in this array of improvements were the white palaces of the new Civic Center and City Hall, which were envisioned as a permanent embodiment of both San Francisco's rebirth and reform and the City Beautiful ideals extolled by the Exposition.

Thus, although the drive for municipal rail coincided with the planning of the Exposition, the motivations behind city sponsored rail service stemmed from a broad impulse for progressive civic reform, efficiency, and urban consolidation. Prior to the city's foray into rail service, San Francisco was served by ten private companies, with cable cars criss-crossing the city. In a social and political climate steeped in Progressivism, this complicated network of for-profit ventures was derided as corrupt and regressive. The first Municipal Railway line was completed on Geary Street in 1912 to great fanfare. A crowd of 50,000 gathered to commemorate the opening as Mayor Rolph proclaimed that the line was, "but the nucleus of a mighty system of streetcar lines which [would] someday encompass the entire city."<sup>3</sup>

The next major addition to this system was the line that ran the length of Van Ness from the Civic Center to the Exposition grounds. Work began on the Van Ness Avenue alignment on April 6, 1914, and was finished in less than five months, with the tracks and electrical work completed by August 15. In return for their haste, the city granted the contractors, Mahoney Brothers, a bonus of \$15,000.<sup>4</sup> The track was flanked by 259 trolley poles that held the overhead electrical power supply wires and guy wires in place. In contrast to the Geary Street poles, which were basic designs of tubular steel produced by the United States Steel Products Company, the Van Ness trolley poles were of a more refined and ornamental aesthetic. Reflecting the linking role the system played between the Exposition site and the Market Street and Civic Center area, the design conformed to the stylistic mandate of these major Beaux Arts developments.<sup>5</sup> The restrained Corinthian elements, coated in a pale buff paint and contrasting finials to match the color scheme of the Exposition, the otherwise utilitarian infrastructure was reflective of important stylistic overtones. From the abacus adorning the finial, to the elegant cast iron base designed by Joshua Hendy Iron Works, the poles were emblematic of the rail line's association with the larger general aesthetics of the Exposition and other Beaux Art projects in and around Market Street and the Civic Center. Although they were emblematic of this stylistic milieu, however, the poles were not specifically part of the design plan for the Civic Center, and were markedly different in form from the light standards being developed within the Civic Center cross streets and plaza (historical photograph 25). In fact, the poles along Van Ness were erected without attached streetlights, but by the time of the Exposition pairs of electric streetlights were hung on each trolley pole, making Van Ness Avenue, "the best lit thoroughfare in the city."<sup>6</sup> The lights were provided by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company and consisted of "two high-candle power tungsten lamps," a popular and common form of incandescent lighting at the time (historical photographs 16 and 18 depict original lighting fixtures).<sup>7</sup> The importance of lighting

<sup>3</sup> Perles, *The People's Railway*, 27.

<sup>4</sup> James Rolph Papers 1911-1930; Perles, *The People's Railway*, 38.

<sup>5</sup> "Plans Ready for Track on Market," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 8, 1912; "Van Ness Avenue Municipal Road," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 24, 1912.

<sup>6</sup> "Hundreds of Lights on Van Ness Avenue," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 20, 1915.

<sup>7</sup> "Many Lights for Van Ness Avenue," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 5, 1915.

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mirrored the Exposition's attention to illumination and throughout the event, the Exposition grounds were aglow in an array of modern lighting that was "absolutely unique and unequaled."<sup>8</sup>

Only three days after the official closing of the fair grounds, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted to turn off every other one of the Van Ness trolley pole lights. With the departure of the throngs visiting the Exposition, the need for the extensive lighting system along Van Ness dissipated and the Board undertook the measure as a symbol of civic economy.<sup>9</sup> Simultaneously, however, the city was embarking upon ambitious lighting schemes in other parts of San Francisco. The "Path of Gold" and "Golden Triangle" lighting systems were both directly inspired by the aesthetic and technological model provided by the Exposition. These much-touted lighting systems featured the high current luminous arc lamps employed at the Exposition, lighting technology that was already in effect in other major cities yet new to the business districts of San Francisco. The 1916 Path of Gold standards (San Francisco City Landmark #200) boasted design work by preeminent sculptor Arthur Putnam, with an intricate depiction of the "Winning of the West" at their base. The 1918 Golden Triangle standards (San Francisco City Landmark #233) held glass fixtures of San Francisco Golden Carrarra Glass and intricate Corinthian detailing. Funded by a mixture of public and private monies, these lighting systems garnered much praise both locally and from afar, with electrical engineer Walter D'Arcy Ryan stating that, "San Francisco has shown the country how a city's business district should be illuminated to best advantage."<sup>10</sup>

Paradoxically, in order to fund these downtown lighting ventures, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors further cut expenditures for Van Ness lighting. Thus, by the late 1910s, the light standards along Van Ness provided uneven illumination, with some lights missing, dark, or broken.<sup>11</sup> The original ribbon of light, stretching from the Civic Center to the Exposition, proved fleeting as economic concerns and the secondary status of the Van Ness Avenue business district undermined the impetus of the Exposition aims.

Fifteen years passed before any significant attention was given to the Van Ness Avenue poles and lights. When city officials were preparing for the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge, Van Ness Avenue once again emerged as a critical transportation corridor for San Francisco. Although the avenue was originally surveyed to an enormous width of 125 feet, the avenue's broad sidewalks, center trolley track, and bustling traffic flow caused congestion and traffic hazards that officials feared would be exacerbated by the opening of the new bridge. Under a project funded by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the traffic lanes within the existing avenue were widened by six feet by narrowing the sidewalks on both sides of the street.

The WPA project included excavation, relocation, and re-installation of all 259 trolley poles, which proved a substantial undertaking that required adjacent property owners to reconfigure any existing basements that extended underneath the sidewalks. Contracting firm Macdonald and Kahn undertook the project and completed the work in March of 1937. In addition to moving the poles, the firm coated each in a wash of "concreta," a sealant that gave the surface a stone-like texture.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Hallie Brignall, *The Last Great World's Fair: San Francisco's Panama-Pacific Exposition 1915* (San Francisco: Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, 2004), 12; Frank Morton Todd, *The Story of the Exposition* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1921), 342-349; Ackley, Laura Anne, "Innovations in Illumination at the Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915," (an unpublished thesis submitted to University of California Berkeley, 2002. On file at the Bancroft Library.

<sup>9</sup> "Supervisors Have Economy Streak," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 7, 1915.

<sup>10</sup> "San Francisco's Path of Gold," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 26, 1925; "The Path of Gold Light Standards: Final Case Report Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board," February 20, 1991, on file at San Francisco City Planning; "Golden Triangle Light Standards Case Report (Case No. 1999.481L)," September 6, 2001, on file at San Francisco City Planning.

<sup>11</sup> "Bright Lights Will Make A Path of Gold," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 15, 1916.

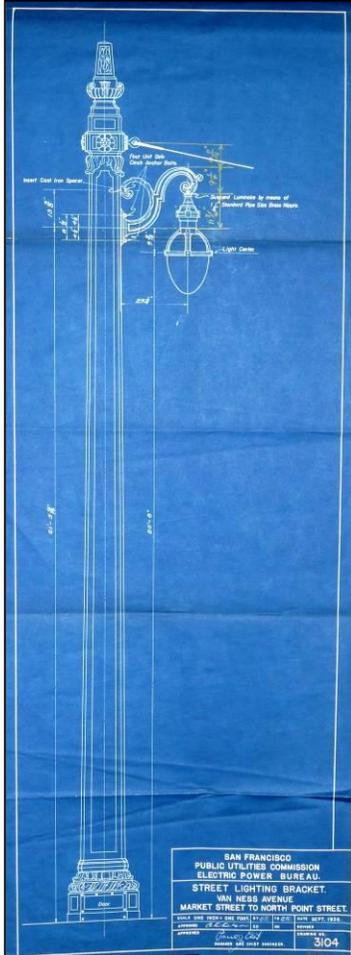
<sup>12</sup> Information relating to the movement of the poles is on file at the City and County of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission in the Van Ness Avenue correspondence file, (Municipal Railway Contract No. 173); "Street Widening Project Started," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 24, 1936; "Wider Street Plans Studied," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 16, 1936. The DPR 523L (1/95)

\*Recorded by: P. Allen; M. Bunse

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*Detail of typical trolley pole showing new bracket and light fixture added to each pole. Plans signed by Chief Engineer Ost, September 1936. (Plans on file with SFPUC).*

Under a separate contract, the newly moved poles were adorned with new lighting standards, developed by the City and County of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. Manager and Chief Engineer Paul J. Ost designed the spiraling brackets and tear drop luminaires. Unlike the original light fixtures, which consisted of modest pairs of globes projecting from the poles on metal conduit a few feet below the top, the new lights were hung singly from the top of the pole on brackets (photographs 1, 10, 20). The bracket design alluded to the same classical imagery as those developed in the wake of the Exposition, but the hardware and lighting elements were standardized components provided by General Electric. The lighting of the avenue received little of the fanfare that accompanied the Path of Gold and Golden Triangle light systems, with only a brief media mention of the street's new lighting on April 15, 1937. Attended by officials of the Van Ness Avenue Improvement Association and the Downtown Association, the small ceremony reflected the relatively prosaic status of the updated light system.<sup>13</sup>

The relocated poles and new light standards remained in place even as the San Francisco Municipal Railway underwent significant transitions in the mid-twentieth century. As early as 1917, the city had ordered five motor coach buses from the White Motor Company, the first foray in a conversion from track based transit to motor coach transit that would span a number of decades.<sup>14</sup> By the 1930s, many were advocating the transition from the track-based rail to trackless trolley coaches along Van Ness Avenue. Citing concerns over noise and overcrowding, the rail based system was derided by Van Ness business interests as regressive and backward. City officials appeared to agree, with Mayor Angelo Rossi requesting a budget appropriation for the conversion in 1936.<sup>15</sup> Although the Van Ness Avenue tracks remained in service for another fifteen years, the move away from rail was part of a

wider transition toward automobile-based solutions for public transportation. As the automobile rose in popularity in the early twentieth century, the technological developments of the auto industry were translated to municipal transportation efforts. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, operations of the Municipal Railway were increasingly supplanted by motor coach service, with the trolley car increasingly seen as a curious relic.

By the close of World War II, the decline in streetcar ridership was marked. In the years that followed, nationwide declines in passenger ridership indicated the growing power of the automobile, as better roads and highways and increased auto ownership altered transportation patterns across the country. The fall in ridership and corresponding

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WPA project also included installation of new light standards (light poles) on the cross streets adjacent to City Hall and the new Opera House and War Memorial buildings. The cross street light poles installed in 1936 were not part of the Van Ness trolley system and were not surveyed for this project.

<sup>13</sup> "Van Ness Avenue Lamps Turned On," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 15, 1937; "City and County of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Electric Power Bureau Contract. No. 19," October 1936, on file at City and County of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Van Ness Avenue correspondence file.

<sup>14</sup> Perles, *The People's Railway*, 89.

<sup>15</sup> "Mayor Urges Railless Cars on Van Ness Avenue," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 15, 1936; "Trolley Track Removal From Van Ness Urged," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 14, 1936.

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increases in municipal operating costs led to the abandonment of many lines, as service was consolidated. To address the fundamental shift in transportation patterns, Mayor Roger Lapham sponsored a \$20 million bond issue in 1947, calling for the complete overhaul and modernization of the antiquated transportation system. Between 1947 and 1952 the Van Ness Avenue rail line, as well as the Market Street rail line and Muni's D, E, and F lines were all abandoned and converted to motor coach use, with tons of trackage ripped from the center of busy urban streets (photograph 27).<sup>16</sup> The removal of the Van Ness line took six months and involved the construction of a 14-foot concrete median where the tracks had run. The contract was given to Charles L. Harney, and the project cost the city \$400,000.<sup>17</sup> Soon after the removal of the tracks, 54 red eucalyptus trees were planted in the median, with citizen groups and transportation planners heralding the plantings as a tribute to Van Ness' boulevard history.<sup>18</sup> Although all of the trackage was removed, the 259 trolley poles remained in place to support the overhead wiring for the new fleet of Muni buses. Despite the massive conversion of the entire system, the poles remained a component of the bus service, with a basic infrastructural role.

Van Ness Avenue became an increasingly congested artery for both local traffic and through traffic on U.S. Route 101 and the poles came to carry a wide array of signage and traffic signals (photographs 13 and 17). The bracketed luminaires shared the poles with road signs, traffic signals, caution signs, and an array of tourist and directional material affixed to and/or bolted on the poles. With such continued intensive use and alteration, the concrete poles also suffered notable deterioration, including spalling of the concrete and corrosion of both the base and brackets. Largely to augment the overloaded poles, Muni and other city agencies installed a number of modern metal poles into the system, designed to support Muni wiring and vehicular traffic signals. Period photographs from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s indicate the varying integrity of the 259 original poles. Many missed various original elements, supported new additions, and stood back-to-back with modern support poles (photograph 23).<sup>19</sup> By the mid-1980s, internal correspondence of the City and County of San Francisco repeatedly expressed concerns, such as: "many are in such deteriorated condition that they no longer can support overhead trolley wires." By this time, the ad-hoc remedy of installing metal poles immediately adjacent to the original poles was increasingly seen as unsatisfactory, as the insertions "added to the visual clutter of the sidewalk."<sup>20</sup>

In addition to the visual clutter, authorities worried about the cast iron bases because many were missing access doors or were missing bases completely and public safety required covering the exposed wiring with "sheet metal, plastic, and plywood."<sup>21</sup> Records indicate that a lack of funding and consensus over the appropriate course of action precluded any holistic replacement or rehabilitation of the poles and their bases until the late 1990s. Letters on file at the Public Utilities Commission indicate that a bid for replacing all damaged or missing cast iron bases with fiberglass replicas was received from fiberglass manufacturer W.J. Whatley, Inc. on June 15, 1997. Similarly, correspondence relating to the replacement of the 1936 luminaires extends from the early 1980s to the 1990s.

<sup>16</sup> Perles, *The People's Railway*, 175

<sup>17</sup> "Van Ness Avenue Track Removal Starts Monday," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 21, 1952.

<sup>18</sup> "Van Ness Decoration," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 11, 1953; "Dividing Strip Proposed for Van Ness," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 24, 1950.

<sup>19</sup> Three photographs from the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection reflect this condition: "Heald College - School of Architecture at Sutter Street and Van Ness Avenue," [graphic], 1964 Aug. 11, Photo ID Number: AAB-5719, Folder: S.F. Streets - Van Ness Ave - 1950-1980s; "Two unidentified people in a car at Fulton Street and Van Ness Avenue," [graphic], n.d, Photo ID Number: AAB-5579, Folder: S.F. Streets-Van Ness Ave-1950-1980s; "Hippopotamus restaurant and bar, Pacific and Van Ness," [graphic], 1964 Aug. 11, Photo ID Number: AAB-2685, Folder: S.F. Restaurants-Hippopotamus.

<sup>20</sup> Information relating to the movement of the poles is on file at the City and County of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission in the Van Ness Avenue correspondence file

<sup>21</sup> All information relating to the Van Ness Avenue trolley poles is on file at the City and County of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission in the Van Ness Avenue correspondence file. The modern correspondence is in an undifferentiated file folder "Van Ness Avenue."

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\*Recorded by: P. Allen; M. Bunse

\*Date: March 2009

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Although the files do not indicate exactly when the cast iron bases and luminaires were replaced, field work in March of 2009 found that over half of the bases were fiberglass replacements for the original, and all the luminaires are modern replacements of the originals.

Evaluation

As discussed in the historic context, the construction history of the 259 Van Ness Avenue trolley poles dates from two distinct historic periods: 1914 and 1936. For clarity, this evaluation will address potential significance in relation to the two periods separately.

*1914: Development of the Municipal Railway / Panama Pacific International Exposition*

The concrete shaft, decorative finial, and if it remains, the cast iron base of each pole date from 1914 and are associated with both the overall development of the Municipal Railway and San Francisco's targeted infrastructural preparation for the Panama Pacific International Exposition (historical photographs 16 and 18 show poles with original 1914 light fixtures). Within the overall context of the development of the Municipal Railway, the Van Ness municipal transportation corridor itself is not significant, as it was one of many such rail lines developed by the city and does not have individual significance within that context. As a link between the Exposition grounds and the newly reconstructed City Hall and Market Street, however, the network of trolley poles reflected an aspect of the carefully honed design sensibility of the City Beautiful and Beaux-Arts ideals undergirding the Exposition, as well as the Civic Center and other public works construction of the period. This association, as a physical link between the temporality of the Exposition and the permanence of Market Street and the civic construction, merits consideration under Criterion A (Criterion 1) because the poles are an example of the profound impact that City Beautiful design and social ideals had on even the most mundane of urban infrastructural construction. However, the poles have lost substantial integrity and no longer convey this civic association, either within the San Francisco Civic Center Historic District or along the length of the avenue (see "Integrity Discussion" section, below).

The relatively ornate Van Ness poles, especially in comparison to the utilitarian poles in the first municipal line on Geary Boulevard, also reflected the elevated design mandate of the Exposition and the Beaux Art classicism of public works like the Civic Center and other large-scale commercial buildings along Market Street, such as the rebuilt Palace Hotel and the 1914 Call Building. The trolley poles once embodied distinctive characteristics of this type and period of construction under Criterion C (Criterion 3), but have since lost historic integrity, both within the San Francisco Civic Center Historic District and along the length of the avenue. While the overall San Francisco streetcar system itself was not significant in its architecture or engineering, the network of poles along Van Ness provided a linear architectural connection with the white palaces of the Exposition, those of city governance at the Civic Center, and those of commerce along Market Street. Records indicate that the poles were designed by the Office of the City Engineer, who was responsible for basic construction all over the city. As an infrastructural element, the poles possessed the artistic values of vaunted Beaux-Arts classicism that related the otherwise utilitarian streetcar line to this overarching architectural language. Although the poles did not represent any significant advances in concrete construction or technology, the aesthetic language of this part of the streetcar system was a significant design expression. The elevated appearance of the poles was an important statement about the status of urban public transport and the artistic value inherent in civic construction in a city that was newly engaged in municipal transportation. The substantial loss of integrity discussed below, however, impairs the ability of these poles to convey this potential significance.

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*1936: Widening and WPA Lighting*

The second period of potential significance relates to changes to both Van Ness Avenue itself, and the trolley poles lining its sides, in 1936. The traffic lanes of Van Ness were widened and the sidewalks were narrowed in 1936 as part of a joint municipal and WPA project conducted in preparation for increased traffic expected with the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge. Construction crews not only moved the poles outward to new locations, they also removed the Exposition-era light fixtures (pairs of globes) and installed new light fixtures (historical photograph 20 and photographs 1 and 10 showing poles with 1936 light fixture). Thus, the current light fixtures attached to the 1914 trolley poles date from this period, and are not related to the Panama Pacific International Exposition. Thus, as “light standards,” the poles relate to a Depression era WPA and Golden Gate Bridge infrastructural context that is entirely unrelated to the evaluation of significance for the 1914 period. This 1936 context differs markedly from that relating to other San Francisco light standards, most notably the Path of Gold standards and the Golden Triangle standards, which were direct antecedents of both the design ethos and illumination standards of the Panama Pacific International Exposition.

*Integrity Discussion*

Evaluation for eligibility for listing in the NRHP and CRHR requires that a property have both historic significance and historic integrity. Although the poles may have once possessed significance under Criteria A and C, they display a marked loss of physical integrity that undercuts their ability to convey significance from either the 1914 or 1936 potential periods of significance. The deterioration, infill, and widespread replacement of major design features undermines nearly all aspects of integrity of the poles, as recognized by the National Register: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Without basic physical integrity, the poles cannot convey historical significance to their period of significance.

The design, materials, workmanship, association, feeling, and setting of the poles was substantially degraded when the rails of the original streetcar system were completely removed in the early 1950s. The 1914 rails that ran up the center of Van Ness Avenue were replaced by concrete medians with landscaping and trees as “Muni” adopted modern wheeled electric buses or trolleys (photograph 27). While the original design of the poles is still evident overall, many individual poles were replaced outright with modern metal poles (photograph 2, and Map 3). About 13% (33 of the original 259 poles) of the poles have been replaced by metal poles and an additional 16% (46 of the original 259 poles) are immediately flanked by a modern metal pole installed to support MUNI wires, street lights, and/or signage. This widespread replacement and installation of new metal poles adjacent to the original poles diminishes the integrity of the group of original poles. As constructed, the 259 poles presented a uniform aesthetic that ran the length of the street (photograph 24). This setting has been compromised by the removal of original poles and installation of replacement poles, leaving the pole network visually cluttered and eroding integrity of design, setting, feeling, and association (photograph 5).

The integrity of the slender, unadorned shaft of most of the original poles has been compromised by insertions cut into the pole for the installation of modern traffic signals, utility conduits, and signage (photograph 13). Approximately 20% (52 poles), have traffic signals affixed. About 64% (165 of the original 259 poles) have some sort of street signage affixed to them with bolts or metal bands. In the same manner that the addition of modern poles alters the original design intent, so too do these modern physical alterations diminish the integrity of design, setting, feeling, and association of the group of poles.

The replacement of 117 of the original cast iron bases (45%) with fiberglass replicas profoundly diminishes the integrity of workmanship and materials of the original poles. The original cast iron bases bore maker’s mark “Joshua Hendy Iron Works S.F. CA” on the access doors. Some of those doors were replaced by cast iron doors

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made by “Steiger and Kerr Stove and Foundry Company S.F. CAL.” Both the expression of workmanship, and the access doors themselves, are completely lacking in the fiberglass replacement bases (photographs 7, 8, 9). Further, because many of these fiberglass replacements are chipped, cracked, and broken, the lightweight nature of the modern material is evident and differs markedly from the heavy cast iron mass of the original bases. Although the bases do retain some integrity of feeling and association, much of this association is not from the historic period, but instead derived from replicated modern materials. According to the National Register, the retention of feeling and association alone is never sufficient to support eligibility of a property for the National Register, particularly when much of this association and feeling is maintained by historic re-creation.<sup>22</sup>

The replacement of the 1914 light fixtures with 1936 fixtures also diminishes the integrity of original design, materials, and workmanship within the Panama Pacific context. Neither the 1936 brackets, nor the 1936 pendant luminaires constitute changes to the poles that have gained significance in their own right. The brackets and luminaires, while pleasant, did not have a specific important role within the context of local WPA projects, the larger Golden Gate Bridge project, or within the ongoing construction of the adjacent Civic Center or other public works in this part of San Francisco. The poles do not convey a significant relationship to important events or broad patterns in local, state, or national history (Criteria A and 1). Viewed in relation to the major undertakings of the WPA and the infrastructural development of the Golden Gate Bridge, the brackets and lights were a minute component of vast public works construction projects and do not embody significant characteristics. Neither the 1914 or 1936 light standards on Van Ness Avenue matched those designed and installed within the Civic Center area, nor was the design of the Van Ness poles directly related to the design standards or development of other construction projects in the area (photographs 25 and 26). Like the original standards, patterns for the work were drawn by a city official, in this case PUC Chief Engineer Paul J. Ost. The project was one of thousands spearheaded by the WPA, and the relatively simple insertion of the lighting fixtures was not a significant design or engineering feat that is an important representative of a type, period, or method of construction, nor are they the work of a master (Criteria C and 3). The insertion of the 1936 light standards in many ways replicated earlier City Beautiful designs for other lighting standards in the city, including the Path of Gold and Golden Triangle Standards. The incandescent lamps were not advanced in design, but rather represented standard best practice seen across San Francisco and the nation. Incandescent luminaires of that type had been in use for decades, and were largely selected because of General Electric’s ubiquity and standardization. These elements have since been removed as well.

The poles are not significant under Criterion B (Criterion 2) or Criterion D (Criterion 4) under either potential period of significance. The 1914 trolley poles, their 1936 alterations, and their subsequent changes and modern alterations do not have a direct or important association with any historically significant individuals. Similarly, the poles are not likely to yield any significant information in their physical construction technology or material. The simple reinforced concrete poles were moved in 1936, and that project, along with their continued alteration ever since, are otherwise well documented. They are not important sources of historical information in and of themselves.

With a history relating to two historic periods, the Van Ness Avenue trolley poles represent the major changes that have continually shaped the avenue as a transportation corridor. The poles have long functioned as an infrastructural and streetscape element along Van Ness Avenue, but the poles have lost historic integrity through a series of changes to the poles themselves, and most importantly, to the system they once served. (For illustrations of these changes see comparative photographs 16 and 17, 18 and 19, and 20 through 22, which depict conditions from the historic period and those of today). The poles we see today are, in fact, an amalgam of undifferentiated modern and historic materials. More than half of the poles have modern signs or traffic lights affixed to or bolted to the shaft. Approximately one-half of the original poles are missing their maker’s mark, access doors, and base, and instead have

<sup>22</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Register Bulletin: How To Apply The National Register Criteria For Evaluation, 1995. Accessed online at <http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/pdfs/nrb15.pdf>, April 15, 2009.

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a modern fiberglass replica base without doors or maker's mark. A number of the poles have been removed and replaced, and many more are flanked by, modern metal poles. Although the poles as a group, extending from Market Street to North Point Street, might otherwise have potential historic significance under NRHP Criteria A and C (CRHR Criteria 1 and 3) from the 1914 period of significance, as resources lacking integrity to this period they are not eligible for listing in either the NRHP or the CRHR because they cannot convey their potential significance through physical integrity to their potential period of significance.

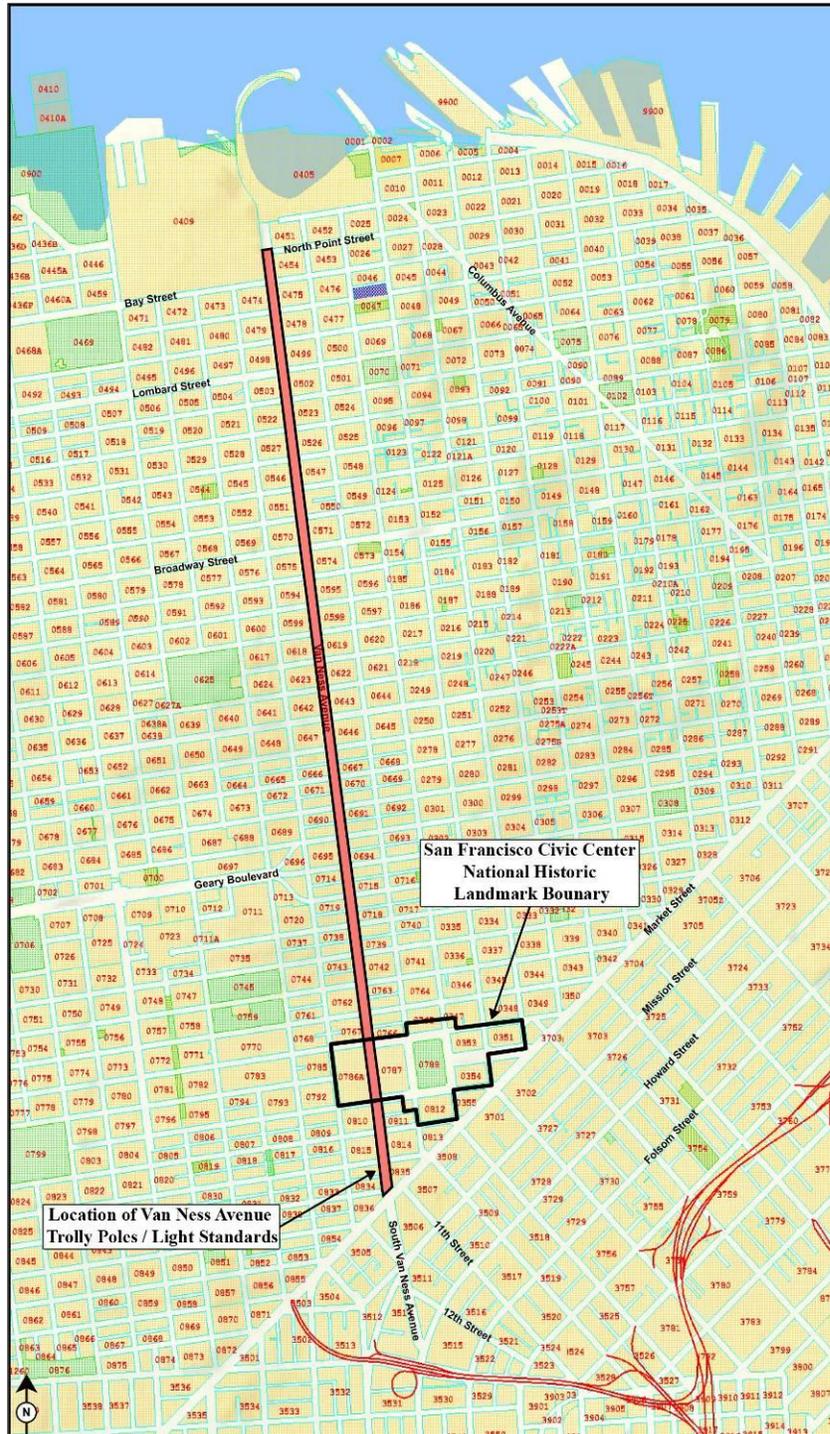
\*Recorded by: P. Allen; M. Bunse

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### Map 1: Location of Van Ness Avenue trolley poles/light standards



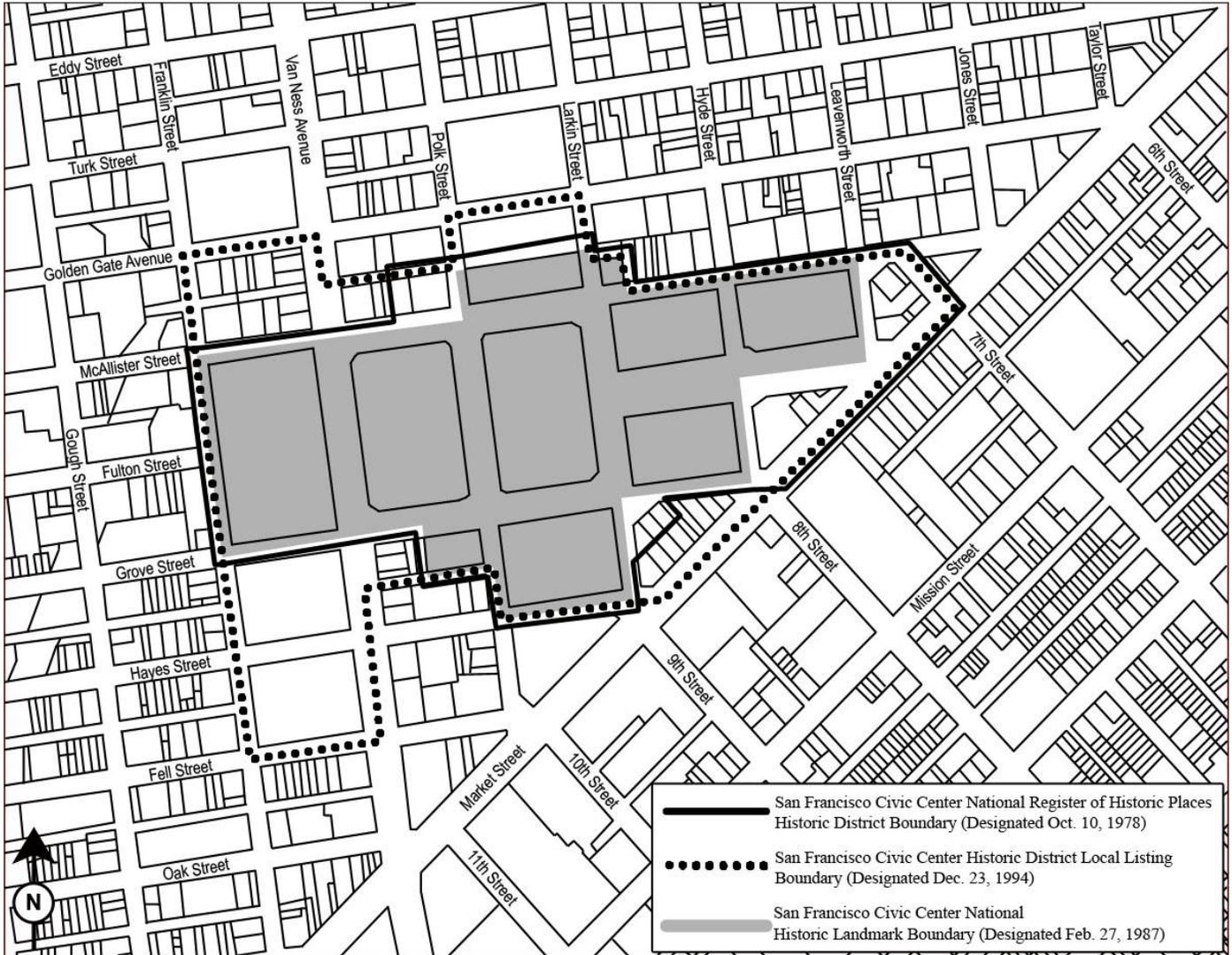
\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

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### Map 2: Civic Center Historic District Boundaries



\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 2: Replacement modern metal pole, Pole 67,  
southwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and Turk Street, 4/1/2009.**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 3: Original pole and base, missing access door, Pole 196, east side of Van Ness between Jackson and Washington, 4/1/2009.**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 4: Part of base missing, Pole 265, between Greenwich Street and Filbert Street, 4/1/2009.**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 5: Electric traffic signal and MUNI signal equipment inserted and signage added to Pole 287, southwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and Chestnut Street, 4/1/2009.**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 6: Partial base, traffic signal equipment inserted, and signage on Pole 227, southwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and Vallejo Street, 4/1/2009.**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

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**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 7: Mark of "Joshua Hendy Iron Works, S.F., Cal." on original base access door on Pole 298, southeast corner of Van Ness Avenue and Francisco Street, 4/1/2009.**

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\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

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**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 8:** Mark of “Steiger & Kerr Stove & Foundry Co., SF CA,” on iron replacement base access door on Pole 211, northwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and Pacific Street, 4/1/2009.

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 9: Replacement fiberglass base without foliated details or access doors, Pole 228, southeast corner of Van Ness Avenue and Vallejo Street, 4/1/2009.**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 10: Detail showing exterior wiring inserted in Pole 264, with original finial and 1936 bracket and modern luminaire, Van Ness Avenue between Greenwich and Filbert streets, 4/1/2009.**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 11: Exterior wiring, signage, and flower baskets on Pole 41, showing gold paint on original base, between McAllister Street and Grove Street, 4/1/2009.**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 12: Alterations to Pole 157, including insertion of traffic signal equipment, signage added, base removed, and modern metal pole installed adjacent. Located southwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and California Street, 4/1/2009.**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 13: Pole 137, alterations include insertion utility conduit and exposed wiring, southwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and Bush Street, 4/1/2009.**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 14:** Block between Sutter Street and Post Street, showing missing poles replaced by modern metal poles, 4/1/2009.

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

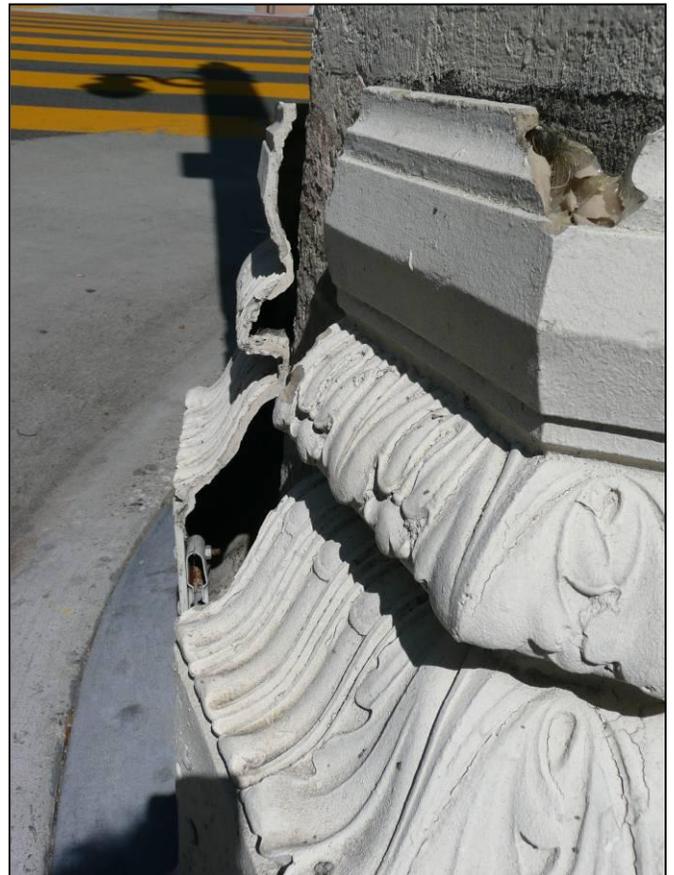
Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 15a and 15b:** Example of fiberglass replacement base (this one with foliated detailing), no access doors, Pole 308, at the southeast corner of Van Ness and Bay, 4/1/2009.



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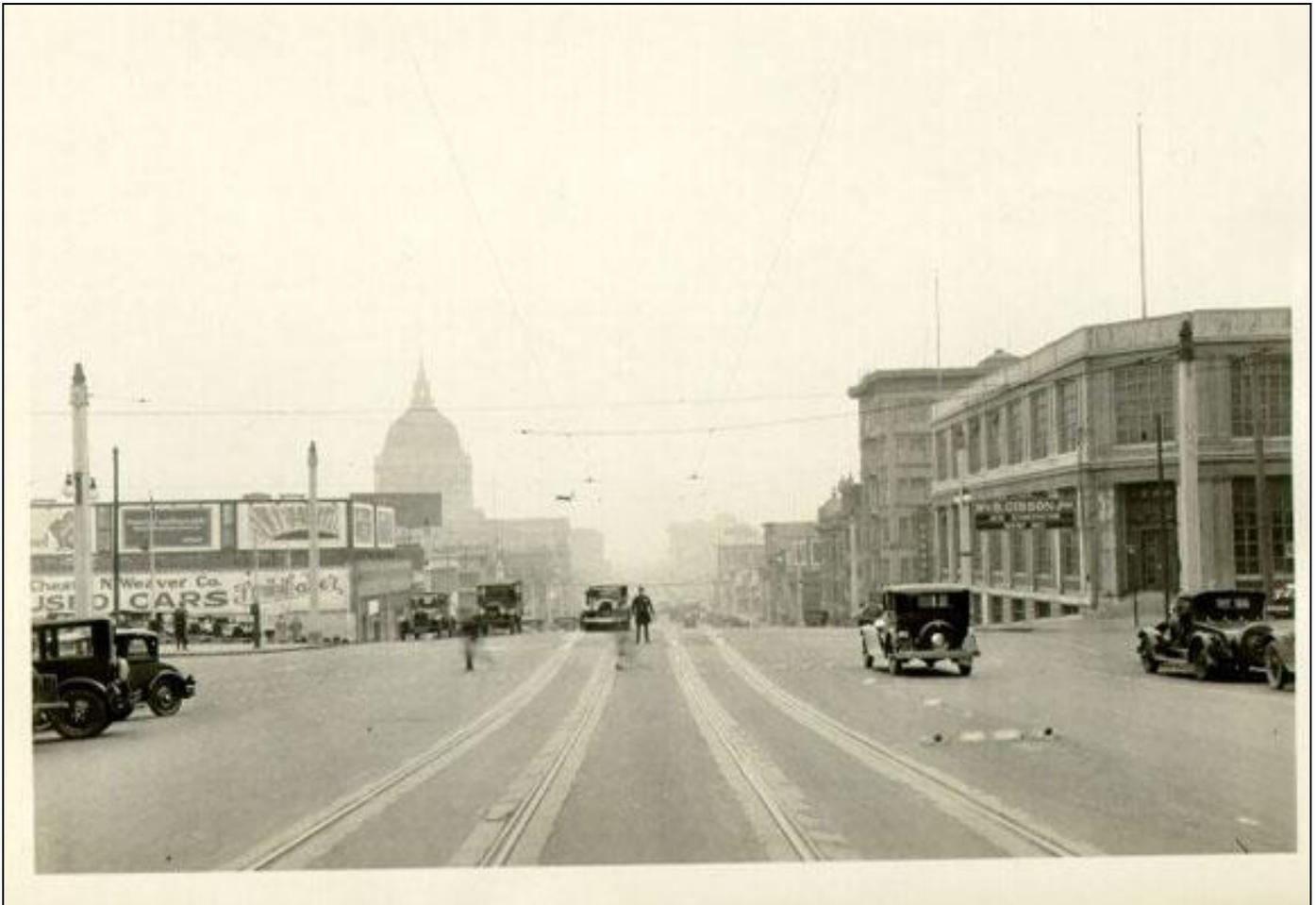
\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:**



**Photograph 16: Trolley Poles with original light fixtures at Van Ness Avenue and Eddy Street, 1929 (Pole 82 at east and Pole 81 at west, camera facing south). Photograph courtesy of San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection. See current condition of Pole 82 in Photograph 17 below.**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:**



**Photograph 17: Pole 82 with insertion of traffic signal equipment, signage added, and modern metal pole installed adjacent, Van Ness Avenue and Eddy Street, 4/1/2009 (shown in Photograph 16 above).**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 18: Trolley Pole with original light fixture at Van Ness and Hayes Street, 1910s (Pole 17, camera facing south). Photograph courtesy of San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection. See current pole condition in Photograph 19 below.**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 19: Pole 17, with insertion of traffic signal equipment, signage added, and installation of adjacent modern metal pole, Van Ness Avenue and Hayes Street, 4/1/2009 (shown in Photograph 18 above).**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 20: Trolley Poles with 1936 light fixtures at Van Ness Avenue and O'Farrell Street, as of 1943, (Pole 101 in foreground and Pole 98 in background at diagonal, camera facing southeast). See current pole condition in Photograph 21 below. Photograph courtesy of San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 21: Replacement metal pole in location of Pole 101, Van Ness Avenue and O'Farrell Street, 4/1/2009 (shown in Photograph 20 above).**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 22: Traffic signal equipment inserted in Pole 98, Van Ness Avenue and O'Farrell Street, 4/1/2009  
(also shown in Photograph 20 above).**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 23: Pole 127, Van Ness Avenue and Sutter Street, as of 1964.  
Traffic signal equipment has been inserted in the pole and a modern metal pole installed immediately adjacent.  
Photograph courtesy of San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 24: Van Ness Avenue looking north from Fell Street in 1935. This photo was taken just before the 1936 WPA project and the original pairs of lights are still in place. The poles line the corridor with their original and uniformly uncluttered aesthetic. Photograph courtesy of San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 25: Original Civic Center light standards along Grove Street in 1915. Photograph courtesy of California State Archives (Department of Public Works, Architecture (Durkee Collection), State Buildings, San Francisco, Photo F 3253: 242B (27)).**

\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 26: Another iteration of Civic Center light standards, in 1945.  
Photograph courtesy of San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.**

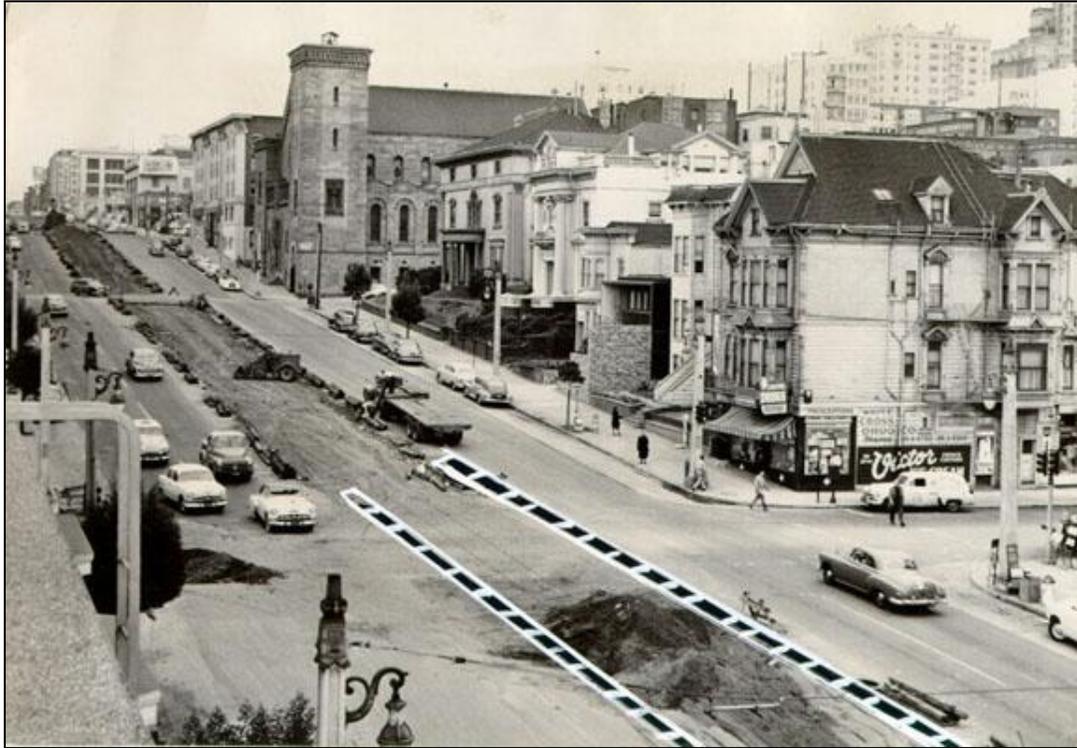
\*Recorded by: Polly S. Allen

\*Date: March 2009

Continuation

Update

**Photographs:** (Continued)



**Photograph 27: Track removal on Van Ness Avenue at Vallejo Street in 1952. Note contrasting color of finials and brackets. Also, the result of the WPA street widening (sidewalk narrowing) project is still visible in different color of pavement along sidewalks. Photograph courtesy of San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.**

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**Attachment 1: Oversize Pages Follow Below**

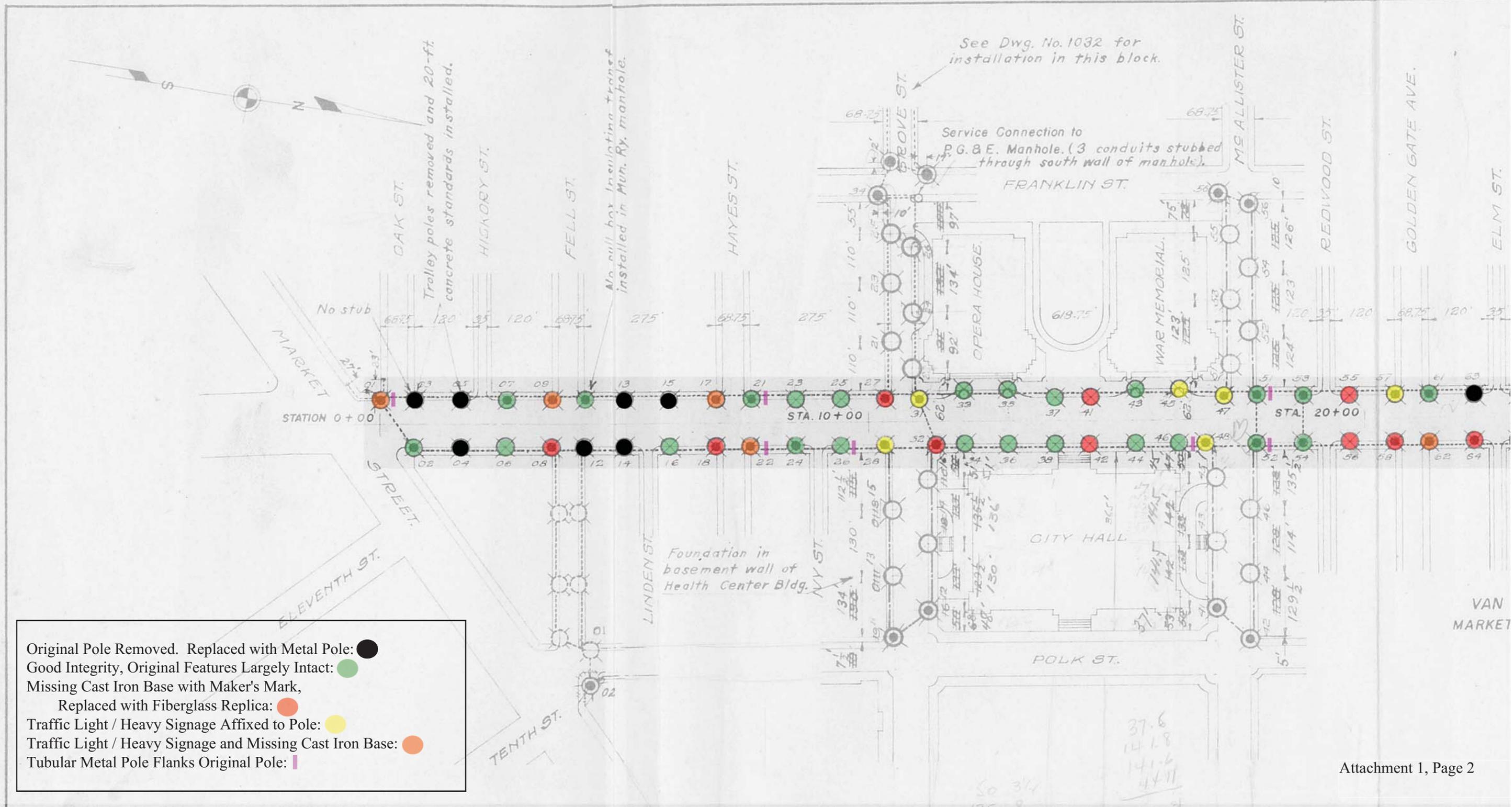


SAN FRANCISCO  
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
ELECTRIC POWER BUREAU

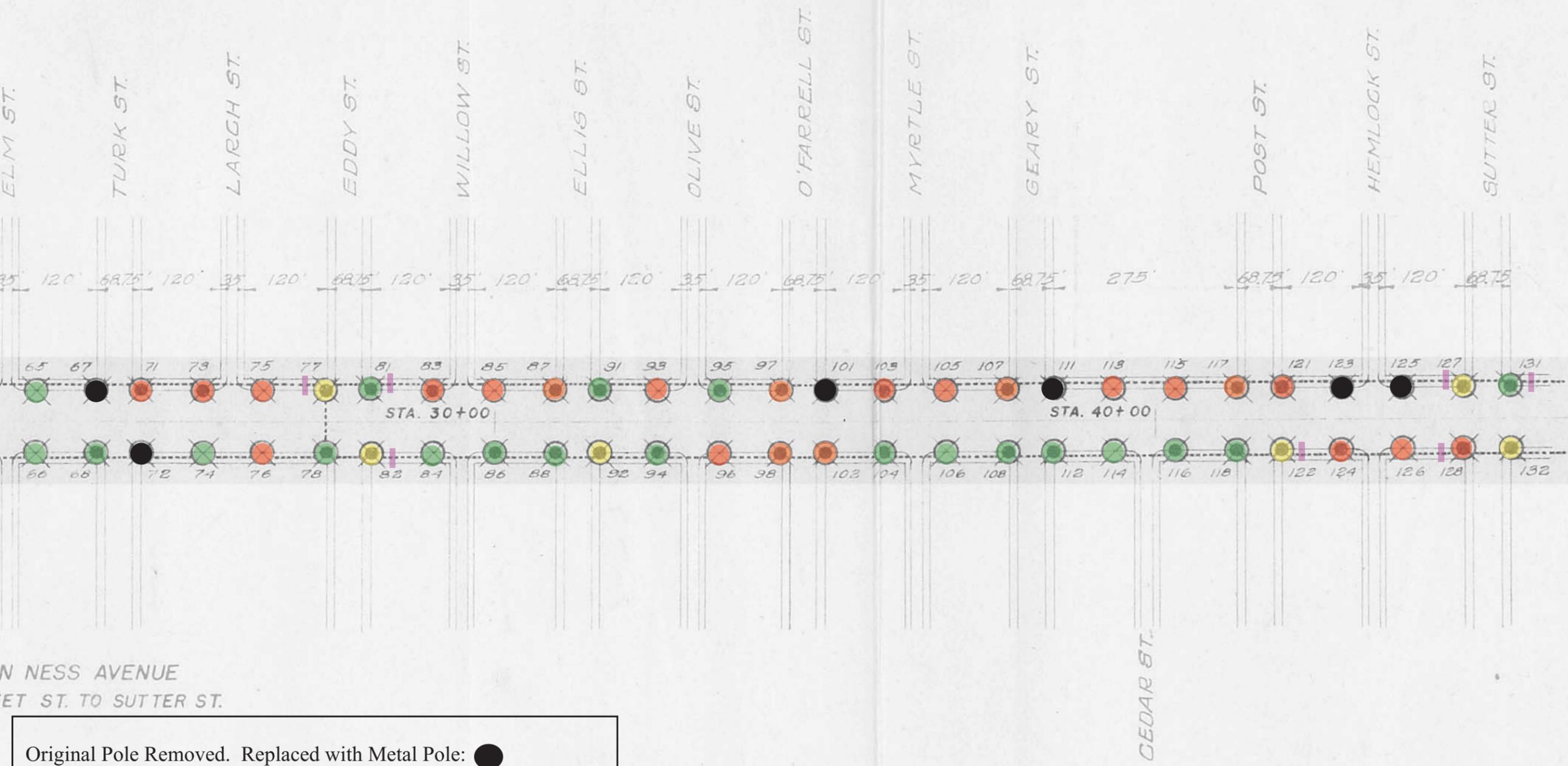
STREET LIGHTING SYSTEM

VAN NESS AVENUE  
MARKET STREET TO NORTH POINT STREET.

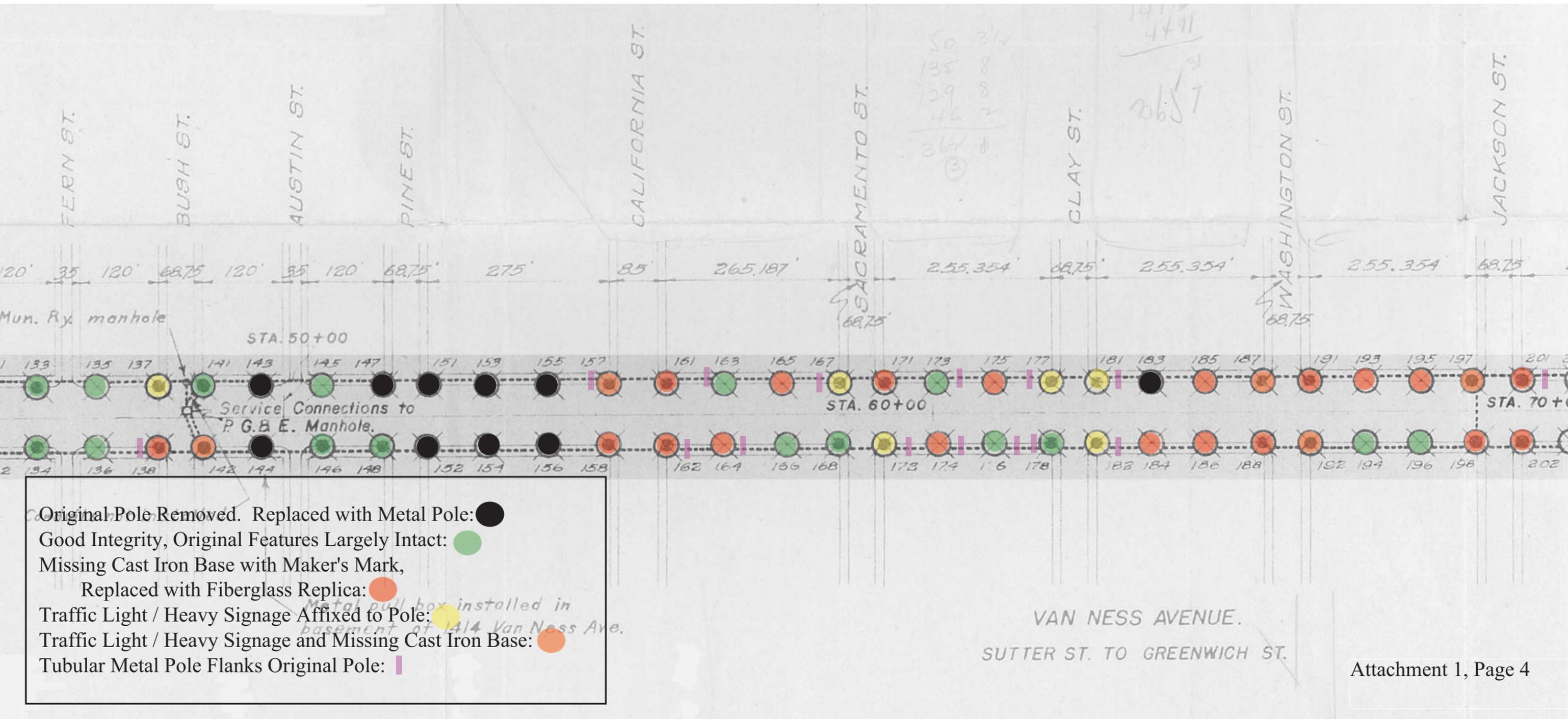
SCALE	1 INCH = 200 FEET.	BY <i>ER</i>	TR. <i>ER</i>	DATE	SEPT. 1936.
APPROVED	<i>A. C. Olsen</i>	CH.	OK	REVISED	Nov. 1936. <i>Aug. 1937</i> <i>B.W.G.</i>
APPROVED	<i>Paul D. V.</i> MANAGER AND CHIEF ENGINEER.			DRAWING NO.	3100



- Original Pole Removed. Replaced with Metal Pole: ●
- Good Integrity, Original Features Largely Intact: ●
- Missing Cast Iron Base with Maker's Mark, Replaced with Fiberglass Replica: ●
- Traffic Light / Heavy Signage Affixed to Pole: ●
- Traffic Light / Heavy Signage and Missing Cast Iron Base: ●
- Tubular Metal Pole Flanks Original Pole: |



- Original Pole Removed. Replaced with Metal Pole: ●
- Good Integrity, Original Features Largely Intact: ●
- Missing Cast Iron Base with Maker's Mark,  
Replaced with Fiberglass Replica: ●
- Traffic Light / Heavy Signage Affixed to Pole: ●
- Traffic Light / Heavy Signage and Missing Cast Iron Base: ●
- Tubular Metal Pole Flanks Original Pole: |



Original Pole Removed. Replaced with Metal Pole: ●

Good Integrity, Original Features Largely Intact: ●

Missing Cast Iron Base with Maker's Mark,  
Replaced with Fiberglass Replica: ●

Traffic Light / Heavy Signage Affixed to Pole: ●

Traffic Light / Heavy Signage and Missing Cast Iron Base: ●

Tubular Metal Pole Flanks Original Pole: |

