

**CHAPTER SUMMARY:** This chapter describes the public outreach and interagency consultation undertaken to develop the proposed project, beginning with the initial Feasibility Study, continuing through release of the Draft EIS/EIR and completion of this Final EIS/EIR. Public involvement is an integral component of the project development and environmental review process, and input from the public and other agencies has significantly shaped the alternatives, LPA selection, and environmental impacts studied. During the Feasibility Study undertaken in 2006, SFCTA worked closely with other agencies and sought input from the public to understand transit needs in the Van Ness Avenue corridor and identify alternative BRT improvements. Upon conclusion of the Feasibility Study, SFCTA conducted a formal NEPA/CEQA scoping process to identify the range of actions, alternatives, environmental effects, and mitigation measures to be analyzed in the EIS/EIR for the Van Ness Avenue BRT Project. During the scoping period, SFCTA gathered information from agencies and interested members of the public regarding their questions and concerns related to the proposed project. Comments received during the scoping process assisted SFCTA and FTA in their review and evaluation of possible BRT alternatives evaluated in the EIS/EIR. Other agencies and members of the public continued to provide input to SFCTA during the alternatives evaluation process and in preparation of the Draft EIS/EIR. During the Draft EIS/EIR circulation period, the Authority developed a comprehensive outreach program to obtain public and agency input. The Authority conducted additional outreach as part of the LPA selection process and completion of the Final EIS/EIR.



## CHAPTER 8

# Coordination and Public Participation

## 8.1 Interagency Consultation

SFCTA has coordinated closely with an array of local, regional, State, and Federal agencies to develop the Van Ness Avenue BRT Project.

### 8.1.1 | Technical Advisory Committee

Based on agency interest expressed during the project scoping period, SFCTA established the Van Ness Avenue BRT Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), composed of technical staff from primarily local participating and responsible agencies with interest in the proposed project, including:

- San Francisco Department of Public Works (SFPDW)
- San Francisco Planning Department
- Golden Gate Bridge, Highway, and Transportation District (GGBHTD)
- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC)
- San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA)
- San Francisco Mayor's Office on Disability

Two TAC subgroups have also held meetings to focus on specific topics. One subgroup focused on topics related to the OCS support poles/streetlights replacement. The Circulation Team, another TAC subgroup consisting of staff from SFCTA and MTA, including the City traffic engineer, reviewed circulation modeling methods and preliminary results as the demand modeling and traffic simulation were ongoing. SFCTA also met separately with GGBHTD staff to discuss the integration of GGT transit operations in the BRT facility.

### 8.1.2 | Caltrans Project Development Team

Caltrans established an interdisciplinary Project Development Team (PDT), which met periodically during development of the EIS/EIR and conceptual engineering. Topics covered by the PDT included project purpose and need; engineering designs and design exceptions; and circulation (travel demand forecasting, operations, and microsimulation). In addition, Caltrans historic preservation staff provided input into the cultural analysis.

### 8.1.3 | FTA Quarterly Progress Review Meetings

The project team provided updates to FTA at quarterly progress review meetings and held monthly coordination calls with FTA staff starting in 2012.

## 8.2 Community Involvement

**During preparation of the Van Ness Avenue BRT Feasibility Study, SFCTA conducted extensive outreach, including briefings to neighborhood organizations, publicity on Muni vehicles and in bus shelters, press releases, public hearings, and five public workshops.**

Community involvement in development of the Van Ness Avenue BRT Project has a long history, beginning with outreach around the 2003 Proposition K Expenditure Plan reauthorization and adoption of the 2004 Countywide Transportation Plan. During preparation of the Feasibility Study (adopted by the SFCTA and SFMTA Boards in 2006), SFCTA conducted extensive outreach, including briefings to neighborhood organizations, publicity on Muni vehicles and in bus shelters, press releases, public hearings, and five public workshops at three stages of the process. The details of those workshops and comments received are included in the Feasibility Study.

Throughout the scoping period and circulation of the Draft EIS/EIR, the project team utilized a variety of public outreach strategies to identify and engage stakeholders. The stakeholder and public participation process included community meetings, key stakeholders meetings, and briefings with elected officials, as well as development and dissemination of informational materials through multilingual mailings, e-mail, flyers, a project website (<http://www.sfcta.org/content/view/306/152>), a project information phone line (415-593-1655), social media networks (Facebook), and media relations (press releases and press advisories). The intent of the public involvement process during circulation of the Draft EIS/EIR was to obtain input on the findings in the Draft EIS/EIR and proposed mitigation measures, as well as input on the relative benefits and impacts of the project alternatives that could inform the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) selection process. Following the Draft EIS/EIR circulation period, the public involvement process continued through the development and selection of a LPA. The community involvement components of the proposed project are described in greater detail in the following subsections of this chapter.

During the public meetings conducted to obtain input on development and selection of the LPA, considerable concern was expressed by local residents regarding the lack of transit stations proposed in the vicinity of the Van Ness Avenue and Vallejo Street intersection, which has higher grades than other parts of the corridor. In response to these public comments, the LPA design was modified to include a SB station at the intersection of Vallejo Street and Van Ness Avenue. A NB transit station in this same location was incorporated as a design variant in this Final EIS/EIR and could also be implemented. Referred to as the Vallejo Northbound Station Variant, implementation of this NB station would be decided at the time of project approval.

### 8.2.1 | Public Information Meetings and Hearing

#### 8.2.1.1 | SCOPING MEETINGS

The scoping process included a comprehensive round of outreach that sought to raise awareness of the project and gather input on actions, alternatives, environmental effects, and mitigation measures to be analyzed in the environmental review process. A copy of the

NOP was sent to the State Clearinghouse and to local, regional, and State agencies on September 14, 2007. A Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the *Federal Register* on September 24, 2007. The NOP and NOI are provided as Appendix F. The public notice effort included local newspapers; a mailing to 20,000 residential and commercial occupants of buildings along the Van Ness Avenue corridor, as well as to the outreach database of interested parties developed during the Feasibility Study; online announcements on the SFCTA and SFMTA Web sites; and an announcement poster installed at bus stops along Van Ness Avenue. The public meetings were held at the following times and places:

- Tuesday, October 2, 2007  
Holiday Inn Golden Gateway on Van Ness Avenue at Pine  
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- Thursday, October 4, 2007  
SFCTA offices on Van Ness Avenue at Fell  
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

A summary of the scoping meetings is available on the Web site.

### **8.2.1.2 | DRAFT EIS/EIR CIRCULATION PUBLIC HEARING AND OPEN HOUSE**

As part of the NEPA and CEQA process, the Draft EIS/EIR was circulated for a public review and comment period between November 4 and December 23, 2011. A public hearing was held during the circulation period. The purpose of the hearing was to give interested parties an opportunity to formally submit written or verbal comments on the proposed project and the analysis contained in the Draft EIS/EIR, though attendance was not required to submit comments, as comments could be submitted in writing through e-mail or traditional mail, and through the Van Ness Avenue BRT Project website. The public hearing was held on November 30 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Holiday Inn, 1500 Van Ness Avenue. SFCTA provided a notice of the public hearing in compliance with NEPA and CEQA. A comprehensive effort to inform the public of the hearing was made through e-mail; direct mail postcards; print advertisements in multilingual newspapers, as well as on buses and in shelters; multilingual flyers posted throughout the corridor; presentations at community meetings; social network websites (i.e., Facebook, Twitter); and the project website. The public hearing began with an open house, with more than 15 SFCTA and SFMTA staff on hand to answer clarifying questions at stations with visual aids, followed by a formal presentation and concluding with another open house. Throughout the evening, the public was able to provide written comments, as well as verbal comments, to a court reporter that was present. More than 40 community members attended, yielding 10 written comments and 6 verbal comments. The public hearing comments received, as well as all other comments received during the circulation period, and responses to them are included in Appendix I.

### **8.2.1.3 | WEBINAR**

The Authority held an online webinar on December 5, 2011, with a total of 19 attendees. Attendees were permitted to submit questions and discussion topics during the webinar following the presentation portion. The webinar host explained to attendees that formal comments on the Draft EIR/EIR had to be submitted via e-mail or letter, not as part of the webinar discussion, and be received no later than the close of circulation.

## **8.2.2 | Citizens Advisory Committee**

SFCTA established the Van Ness Avenue BRT Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), comprised of nine citizens living in or near the project area. Members of the committee were selected by SFCTA's Board of Commissioners to represent various interests of community and business stakeholders throughout the corridor. Between September 2007 and December 2012, the CAC held 25 meetings to provide community input concerning the proposed

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project. All CAC meetings are open to the public. They are publicized on the SFCTA Web site, as well as through mailings and e-mails to the project outreach database, which now contains more than 700 contacts.

### 8.2.3 | Meetings with Local Groups and Organizations

**SFCTA has met with more than 35 local community and business groups during preparation of the feasibility study and during the environmental review process.**

SFCTA has met with more than 35 local community and business groups during preparation of the Feasibility Study and during the environmental review process. These groups include (in alphabetical order):

- Alliance for a Better District 6
- California Pacific Medical Center
- Cathedral Hill Neighbors Association
- Chinatown Community Development Center
- City Hall Preservation Advisory Commission
- Civic Center Community Benefit District
- Cow Hollow Association
- Friends of the Urban Forest
- Galileo High School
- Geary BRT Citizens Advisory Committee
- Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association
- Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan Organizing Committee
- La Voz Latina
- Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Livable City
- Lower Polk Neighbors
- Mayors Disability Council Physical Access Committee
- Middle Polk Neighborhood Association
- Mission Neighborhood Centers
- Muni Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Notre Dame Apartments
- Pacific Heights Chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons
- Pacific Heights Residents
- Polk District Merchants Association
- Rescue Muni
- Russian Hill Neighbors
- San Francisco Bicycle Coalition
- San Francisco Planning and Urban Research (SPUR)
- San Francisco Transit Riders Union (SFTRU)
- San Francisco Towers
- Sierra Club
- Tenant Associations Coalition of San Francisco
- Tenderloin Futures Collaborative
- TransForm
- Urban Forestry Council
- Van Ness Corridor Association
- Vietnamese Community Center
- WalkSF

Local merchants were also contacted through door-to-door outreach.

### 8.2.4 | Outreach during Draft EIS/EIR Circulation

The Draft EIS/EIR was circulated to the public and state agencies for the minimum 45-day comment period, as required by NEPA and CEQA, between November 4 and December 23, 2011. Leading up to and during this circulation period, the SFCTA and SFMTA

implemented public outreach activities designed to raise awareness of the project and solicit public input on the relative benefits and impacts of the proposed alternatives, as well as the proposed measures to mitigate potential project impacts. The Authority held a public hearing on November 30, 2011, and a webinar on December 5, 2011. The public hearing, described in Section 8.2.1, provided the opportunity for attendees to submit comments on the Draft EIS/EIR, either verbally or in writing. A copy of the Draft EIS/EIR was mailed to the parties included in the document distribution list in Appendix E. In addition, the Draft EIS/EIR was made available on the project website for viewing and download, and multiple CD and hard copies were available throughout the public review period at the following locations:

- SFCTA Office  
100 Van Ness Avenue
- SFMTA Office  
1 S. Van Ness Avenue
- San Francisco Planning Department  
1660 Mission Street
- San Francisco Main Library  
100 Larkin Street
- Golden Gate Valley Branch Library  
1651 Union Street
- Marina Branch Library  
1890 Chestnut Street

Additionally, free CD copies of the Draft EIS/EIR were available upon request as noted on outreach materials and the project website.

In addition to the public hearing, the webinar, and the availability of the Draft EIS/EIR document itself, the project's outreach program to support public circulation of the Draft EIS/EIR included online and multilingual print media notices, a radius mailing, presentations to neighborhood organizations, and multilingual notifications on transit vehicles, shelters, and poles throughout the corridor to raise awareness of the project and Draft EIS/EIR availability among the local community and GGT riders and drivers, as described in greater below. In addition, the SFCTA provided an informational table at the Sunday Streets event on October 23, 2011.

#### **8.2.4.1 | PROJECT FACT SHEETS**

Project fact sheets have been used throughout the project, and an updated version describing the availability and locations of the Draft EIS/EIR, the methods for providing comment, and the LPA selection process was prepared to support public circulation of the Draft EIS/EIR. The fact sheets, including illustrative maps and visual simulations, discussed the proposed transit improvements under the four alternatives (a "no build" and three build alternatives). The team distributed the fact sheets to interested stakeholders at public meetings. The fact sheets were also made available on the website at [www.vannessbrt.org](http://www.vannessbrt.org).

#### **8.2.4.2 | MAILINGS AND FLYERS**

During the public circulation period, various e-mail and direct mail efforts were used to raise awareness of the project, the availability of the Draft EIS/EIR, and to invite public comment. The Notice of Availability/Notice of Completion (NOA/NOC) was posted along Van Ness Avenue in three languages (English, Spanish, and Chinese). The NOA/NOC served as a flyer containing a basic project description, announcing the availability of the Draft EIS/EIR and how to view it, the dates of the public review period, how to submit comments, and the date/time/place of the public hearing and webinar. This notice was posted in English, Spanish, and Chinese on bus shelters of Muni bus lines 47 and

49, and Golden Gate Transit Lines 10, 70, 80, 101, and 101x to reach out to transit patrons. On blocks on Van Ness Avenue within the project study area where there were not shelters, NOA/NOC posters were affixed to poles along the sidewalk. Posters containing information on the availability of the Draft EIS/EIR and the project website were also displayed on SFMTA and Golden Gate Transit buses. A postcard NOA/NOC was also mailed to properties within a 500-foot radius of Van Ness Avenue within the project limits and to properties fronting Gough and Franklin streets in the project corridor (i.e., Market Street to Lombard). This radius mailing included approximately 17,000 properties, which included various residential and commercial properties. The postcard NOA/NOC provided information on where the Draft EIS/EIR was available for review and how to obtain an electronic copy, hard copy, or CD copy of the document.

#### **8.2.4.3 | WEBSITE, SOCIAL NETWORKING, AND MEDIA OUTREACH AND COORDINATION**

The project website ([www.vannessbrt.org](http://www.vannessbrt.org)) serves as a central point where stakeholders can obtain information about the project via the Internet. Website content includes a project overview; information about public meetings; collateral materials, such as fact sheets in English, Spanish, and Chinese; information about CAC meetings; briefings to neighborhood and other local organizations; and information about the public hearing and webinar. The Draft EIS/EIR was available for download from the website and provided a vehicle for people to submit formal comments during the public circulation period. The SFCTA also announced the availability of the Draft EIS/EIR on the agency's Facebook page and Twitter feed. Additionally, the Authority maintained a telephone informational hotline (415-593-1655), with information in English, Spanish, and Cantonese, that was advertised on project notices, informational materials, and the project website, and people could leave messages in any of those languages.

#### **8.2.4.4 | PRESS RELEASES AND DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENTS**

SFCTA put out press releases to the media and to the general public and placed display advertisements in the following publications that included Chinese and Spanish media:

- *Central City Extra*: November 2011
- *El Mensajero*: November 12, 2011 (NOA/NOC in Spanish)
- *The Examiner*: November 9, 2011
- *Marina Times*: November 2011
- *Sing Tao*: November 7, 2011 (NOA/NOC in Chinese)

### **8.2.5 | Outreach to Support LPA Selection**

The project team conducted significant outreach pertaining to the staff recommended LPA, presenting at more than 15 public and stakeholder meetings prior to the SFCTA Board meeting on June 26, 2012, to select the LPA for inclusion in the Final EIS/EIR. Additional presentations regarding the LPA have been made since June 26, 2012, and the project team continues to perform outreach with numerous stakeholders. The project team made presentations on the staff-recommended LPA at the following public meetings and commissions:

- San Francisco Environment Commission's Policy Committee: Monday, April 30, 2012, 5:00 p.m.;
- Van Ness Avenue BRT CAC\*: Tuesday, May 1, 2012, 5:30 p.m.;
- SFMTA Citizens' Advisory Council: Thursday, May 3, 2012, 5:30 p.m.;
- San Francisco Planning Commission: Thursday, May 10, 2012, 1:00 p.m.;
- SFCTA Plans and Programs Committee: Tuesday, May 15, 2012, 10:30 a.m.;
- SFMTA Board\*: Tuesday, May 15, 2012, 1:00 p.m.;
- Geary BRT Citizens Advisory Committee: Thursday, May 17, 2012, 6:00 p.m.;
- SFCTA Plans and Programs Committee\*: Tuesday, June 19, 2012, 10:30 a.m.; and

- Transportation Authority Board\*: Tuesday, June 26, 2012.  
\*Included action item on recommended LPA

The project team made LPA presentations at the following stakeholder meetings before the June 26, 2012, SFCTA Board meeting:

- Van Ness Corridor Association: Thursday, April 9, 2012, 5:30 p.m.;
- Pacific Heights Residents Association: Monday, April 30, 2012, 7:30 p.m.;
- Friends of the Urban Forest: Tuesday, May 8, 2012, 11:00 a.m.;
- Walk San Francisco: Wednesday, May 9, 2012, 4:00 p.m.;
- Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan Organizing Committee: Wednesday, May 9, 2012, 5:30 p.m.;
- Lower Polk Neighbors: Wednesday, May 9, 2012, 7:00 p.m.;
- Civic Center Community Benefits District: Thursday, May 10, 2012, 10:00 a.m.;
- San Francisco Transit Riders Union: Monday, May 14, 2012, 7:00 p.m.;
- Chinatown Community Development Center, Chinatown Transportation and Research (TRIP): Wednesday, May 16, 2012, 6:00 p.m.;
- Polk District Merchants Association: Thursday, May 17, 2012, 9:00 a.m.;
- Alliance for a Better District 6: Tuesday, June 12, 2012, 6:00 p.m.; and
- Middle Polk Neighborhood Association: Monday, June 18, 2012, 7:00 p.m.

In addition to public and stakeholder meetings, two e-mail updates translated into Spanish and Chinese that outlined the staff-recommended LPA were sent to the project e-mail list on April 27 and June 5, 2012; a postcard containing similar translated information was mailed to constituents without e-mail addresses. A media advisory sent on May 9, 2012, and a press release sent on May 14, 2012, announced consideration of the LPA at the SFMTA Board and the SFCTA Plans and Programs. Both the media advisory and the press release were sent to multilingual media organizations. Information about the staff-recommended LPA was also posted in multiple languages on the Authority's project website ([www.vannessbrt.org](http://www.vannessbrt.org)). Information about the proposed project and public meetings continue to be featured on the Authority's Web site and social media sites.

## 8.2.6 | Cultural Resources Community Consultation

As part of preparation of the Historic Resources Inventory and Evaluation Report (HRIER) and Archaeological Sensitivity Study, local historic preservation groups, as well as Native American tribes, groups, and individuals, were contacted and provided the opportunity to review these reports and provide input. Additional information is provided in Section 4.5, Cultural Resources.

## 8.2.7 | Current and Future Public Outreach Efforts

Information about the upcoming formation of the Final Design and Construction Period CAC and TAC, in addition to briefings to neighborhood and other local organizations, is made available on the project Web site: [www.vannessbrt.org](http://www.vannessbrt.org).

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