WCCTC | WEST CONTRA COSTA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

El Cerrito | Hercules | Pinole | Richmond | San Pablo | Contra Costa County | AC Transit | BART | WestCAT

SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE AND AGENDA

DATE & TIME: **Wednesday, January 8, 2025 • 9:00 AM – 1:00 AM**

LOCATIONS: **Multiple** – *(Meeting is in person only at locations listed below.)*

- **El Cerrito del Norte BART, 6400 Cutting Blvd., El Cerrito, CA 94530, Station Agent's Kiosk, approximately 9:00 AM;**
- **Civic Center BART, 1150 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94102, street level on the southeast corner of Market and 7th Streets, San Francisco, CA, approximately 10:00 AM;**
- **SFMTA Headquarters, 1 S Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94103, approximately 10:10 AM;**
- **Van Ness BRT, Van Ness Avenue between Market and Bay Streets, San Francisco, CA; and**
- **Geary Rapid, Geary Street between Union Square and Laguna Street, San Francisco, CA**

REMOTE ACCESS: **Remote access is not available for this Special Meeting**

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Tour of Van Ness Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Geary Rapid Lines.** Staff from San Francisco's Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA) will provide a tour of its Van Ness BRT and Geary Rapid lines.

   Recommendation: Information only

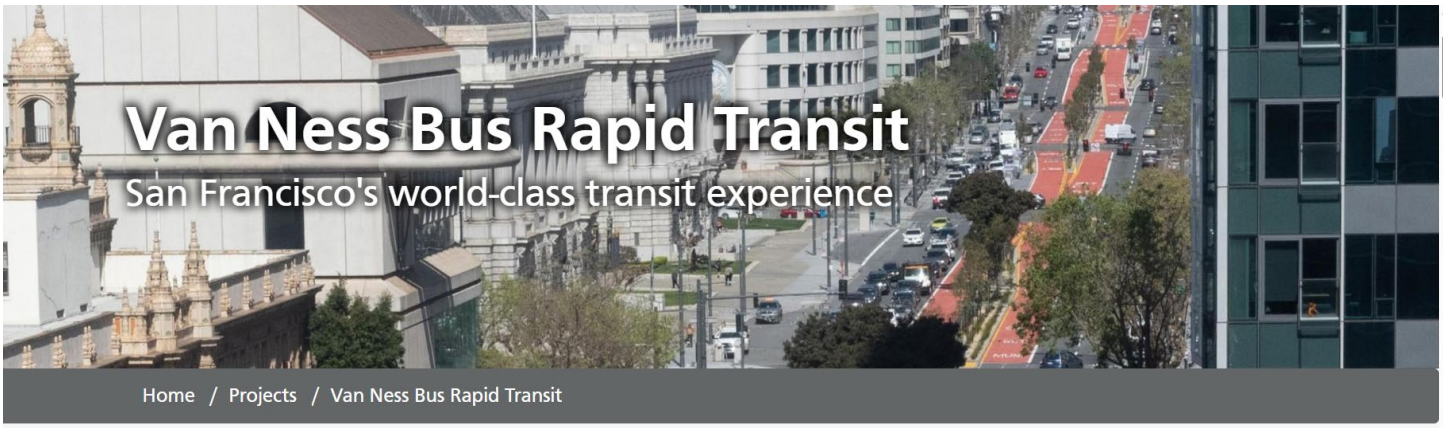
   Attachments: Yes: Information on MUNI Forward, Van Ness Bus Rapid Transit and Geary Rapid Projects

   Presenter/Lead Staff: Leah Greenblat, WCCTC Transportation Planning Manager & SFMTA Staff

   Estimated Time:* **9:15 AM,** (3.5 hours)

3. **Adjournment.** Next regular Transportation Commission meeting is January 24, 2025 at 8:00 AM

- In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, if you need special assistance to participate in the WCCTC Board meeting, or if you need a copy of the agenda and/or agenda packet materials in an alternative format, please contact Mia Carrasco at 510.210.5930 prior to the meeting.
- If you have special transportation requirements and would like to attend the meeting, please call the phone number above in advance to make arrangements.
- Handouts provided at the meeting are available upon request and may also be viewed at WCCTC's offices.
- Please refrain from wearing scented products to the meeting, as there may be attendees susceptible to environmental illnesses. Please also put cellular phones on silent mode during the meeting.
- A meeting sign-in sheet will be circulated at the meeting. Sign-in is optional.



Project Introduction

World-class Bus Rapid Transit on Van Ness Avenue

Muni, Golden Gate Transit and PresidiGO buses used to crawl along Van Ness Avenue —part of US 101— through some of the Bay Area's densest neighborhoods at an average of just 8 mph. Its highway-like conditions also made it one of San Francisco's most dangerous streets for fatal crashes.

Now, with implementation of transit priority improvements on San Francisco's first full-scale Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor, those who depend on transit to travel regionally and locally to jobs and schools, like Tenderloin Community Elementary School, Galileo High School and City College, spend less time waiting at bus stops and stuck in traffic. Bus travel is up to 36% faster and 45% more reliable, and injury traffic collisions are down by 54%.

Van Ness BRT is now the fastest way to travel north-south through the heart of San Francisco, with room to expand frequency and capacity by as much as 500%, supporting our growing population and climate action goals.

With the completion of the Van Ness Improvement Project, San Francisco now has its first **Bus Rapid Transit** corridor, a much-needed and globally-proven solution to improve transit service on Van Ness Avenue.

Along with the most visible change, the project also included some much-needed work underground, extensive utility maintenance, civic art improvements and safety enhancements, all revitalizing this historic corridor.

Do a deep dive into some of the new features of Van Ness BRT and get to know some of the people that make this historic corridor so special by taking a virtual tour on our StoryMap.

VAN NESS BUS RAPID TRANSIT FEATURES

Bus Rapid Transit on Van Ness is a part of Muni Forward, prioritizing frequency and reliability for customers.

Some features of Bus Rapid Transit on Van Ness include:

1. Dedicated transit lanes that are physically separated from the other traffic lanes, for use by public transportation buses and emergency vehicles only.
2. Enhanced traffic signals optimized for north-south travel with Transit Signal Priority that gives buses the green light as they approach an intersection.
3. Low-floor vehicles and all-door boarding, that make it quicker and easier for passengers to load and unload at each stop (features that Muni has across its system).
4. Safety enhancements for people walking, like corner sidewalk extensions, median refuges, high visibility crosswalks and audible countdown signals.

Fully furnished boarding platforms that include shelters, seating and NextMuni prediction displays located at key transfer points.

Project Status

1. Completed

Cost Estimate

$345.9 million (including utility replacement, repaving, replacement of the Muni overhead contact system, and other project scope that is not limited to transit enhancements)

Current Phase or Stage

Construction

Predicted Completion

April 2022

Bus Routes and Rail Lines

49 Van Ness/Mission

90 San Bruno Owl

Neighborhoods

Western Addition

Pacific Heights

Marina

Russian Hill

South of Market (SoMa)

Downtown / Civic Center

Nob Hill

Streets

Van Ness Avenue, Lombard Street, Mission Street

VAN NESS BUS RAPID TRANSIT STOP LOCATIONS

The new Van Ness Bus Rapid Transit corridor features nine northbound and nine southbound boarding islands along the red, center-running transit lanes served by Muni's 49 Van Ness/Mission, 90 San Bruno Owl, and Golden Gate Transit buses.

- Union Street (Connect to the 45 Union/Stockton)
- Vallejo
- Jackson (Connect to the 12 Folsom, 27 Bryant)
- Sacramento (Connect to the 1 California, California Cable Car)
- Sutter
- Geary-O'Farrell (Connect to 38 Geary, 38R Geary Rapid)
- Eddy (Connect to the 31 Balboa)
- McAllister (Connect to the 5 Fulton, 5R Fulton Rapid)
- Market (Connect to the J Church, KT Ingleside Third, L Taraval Bus, M Ocean View, N Judah, 9 San Bruno, 9R San Bruno Rapid, 14 Mission, 14R Mission Rapid)

VAN NESS BUS RAPID TRANSIT FEATURES

Bus Rapid Transit on Van Ness is a part of Muni's Rapid Network, prioritizing frequency and reliability for customers. The planned improvements are expected to cut travel times for Golden Gate Transit and Muni's 49 Van Ness/Mission and 90 San Bruno Owl buses by 32%.

Some features of Bus Rapid Transit on Van Ness include:

1. Dedicated transit lanes that are physically separated from the other traffic lanes, for use by Muni and Golden Gate Transit buses only.
2. Enhanced traffic signals optimized for north-south travel with Transit Signal Priority, which gives buses the green light as they approach an intersection.
3. Low-floor vehicles and all-door boarding, that make it quicker and easier for passengers to load and unload at each stop.
4. Safety enhancements for people walking like sidewalk extensions, median refuges, high visibility crosswalks and audible countdown signals.
5. Fully furnished boarding platforms that include shelters, seating and NextMuni prediction displays located at key transfer points.

Project Details, History or Features

FUNDING

Funding for the core Van Ness Bus Rapid Transit project came from a variety of sources including FTA Small Starts, San Francisco Prop K funds and development fees.

Projects associated with Van Ness BRT, including repaving Van Ness Avenue, new traffic signals, hardware and software, new transit vehicles and streetlight/pole replacement were funded by FTA Formula Funds, San Francisco Prop K funds and regional and statewide sources.

VAN NESS AVENUE HISTORY

When it was first surveyed in 1856, Van Ness was intended to be the City's spine. Mansions of prominent families populated the northern end while the southern had dense working-class housing. Serving as a firebreak after the 1906 earthquake, Van Ness saved the western part of the city. By the 1920s, grand auto showrooms peppering the corridor made Van Ness the west coast's largest Auto Row. Once the Golden Gate Bridge was built, it shifted toward regional auto travel. Since the '90s, transportation plans prepared by the San Francisco County Transportation Authority and Muni recognized the need to establish rapid transit service on Van Ness Avenue. In 2003, 75 percent of voters approved the sales tax to plan rapid transit service on Van Ness Avenue. In September 2013, the Board of Supervisors, acting as the San Francisco County Transportation Authority Commission, unanimously approved the Van Ness Bus Rapid Transit Project, the core of the Van Ness Improvement Project. Construction of the project began in October 2016.

Today, the Van Ness Avenue corridor serves as a vital connector of neighborhoods and a regional link for travel between Marin, San Francisco and San Mateo Counties. Van Ness Avenue is one of the busiest north-south corridors in the city, serving over 16,000 Muni customers daily on the 49 Mission/Van Ness and 90 San Bruno Owl bus routes as well as Golden Gate Transit customers. It is part of the California State Highway System and of US Route 101, a primary artery that connects Interstate Highways 280 and 80 with the Golden Gate Bridge.

Geary Rapid Project

SFMTA.com/GearyRapid

Project Introduction

The Geary Rapid Project was completed in fall 2021. We thank our community partners and all residents and merchants along the corridor for your support throughout construction. This three-year capital project, completed on schedule and on budget, has upgraded one of San Francisco's busiest corridors between Market and Stanyan streets with safety improvements, more reliable bus service and utility upgrades. We're excited to share the many ways it has made traveling on Geary a safer, more accessible experience for everyone.

Geary has long been one of San Francisco's busiest arterials, connecting the heart of the city to the ocean. Vibrant Japanese and African American communities in the Western Addition were torn apart in the 1960s when Geary Boulevard was converted into an eight-lane expressway. This change made Geary a less safe street: a person walking on Geary was eight times more likely to be involved in a serious collision than the average San Francisco street.

Designed with local input, this Muni Forward project has upgraded three miles of Geary from Market to Stanyan with new bus lanes and crosswalks, calming the Geary Expressway and helping to reconnect long-divided communities. Pedestrian countdown signals let people know how much time they have left to cross. Median refuges and sidewalk extensions help shorten crossing distances.

Thanks to new transit lanes, transit signal priority, optimized bus stop locations and bus bulb-outs, the 38 Geary is faster than ever with up to 18% shorter bus travel times and a 37% improvement in reliability. Learn more about the Geary Rapid Project evaluation results.

A second phase of Geary improvements is underway to bring similar transit and safety benefits west of Stanyan Street to 34th Avenue, with quick-build improvements already complete.

Learn more:

- Review block-by-block design details
- Learn about pre-construction transit and safety treatments, including bus stop changes
- Frequently asked questions

Project Status

1. Completed

Cost Estimate

$36 million SFMTA scope + $30 million coordinated infrastructure upgrades

Current Phase or Stage

Substantially Completed

Predicted Completion

2021

Project Success

On budget; On schedule

Improvements

 **Dedicated transit lanes to reduce unpredictable delays**

 **Transit bulbs to decrease bus delays by allowing buses to remain in the travel lane when passengers load and unload**

 **Bus stop changes to improve efficiency**

 **Upgraded Transit Signal Priority to increase the likelihood buses get the green light at intersections**

 **Calming the Geary Expressway by decreasing the number of travel lanes from four to two general-purpose lanes and one bus-only lane in each direction**

 **Accessible pedestrian signals and curb ramps allow people with disabilities to safely travel on the corridor**

 **Pedestrian bulbs at intersections to shorten crossing distances, make people walking more visible to motorists and reduce vehicle turning speeds**

 **Pedestrian countdown signals to let people walking know how much time they have to safely cross the street**

New crosswalks and enhanced medians to provide safe opportunities for people to get across Geary

Improvements for bicyclists crossing Geary on streets within the bike network that intersect the corridor

Bus Routes and Rail Lines

38 Geary

38R Geary Rapid

Neighborhoods

Presidio Heights

Western Addition

Financial District

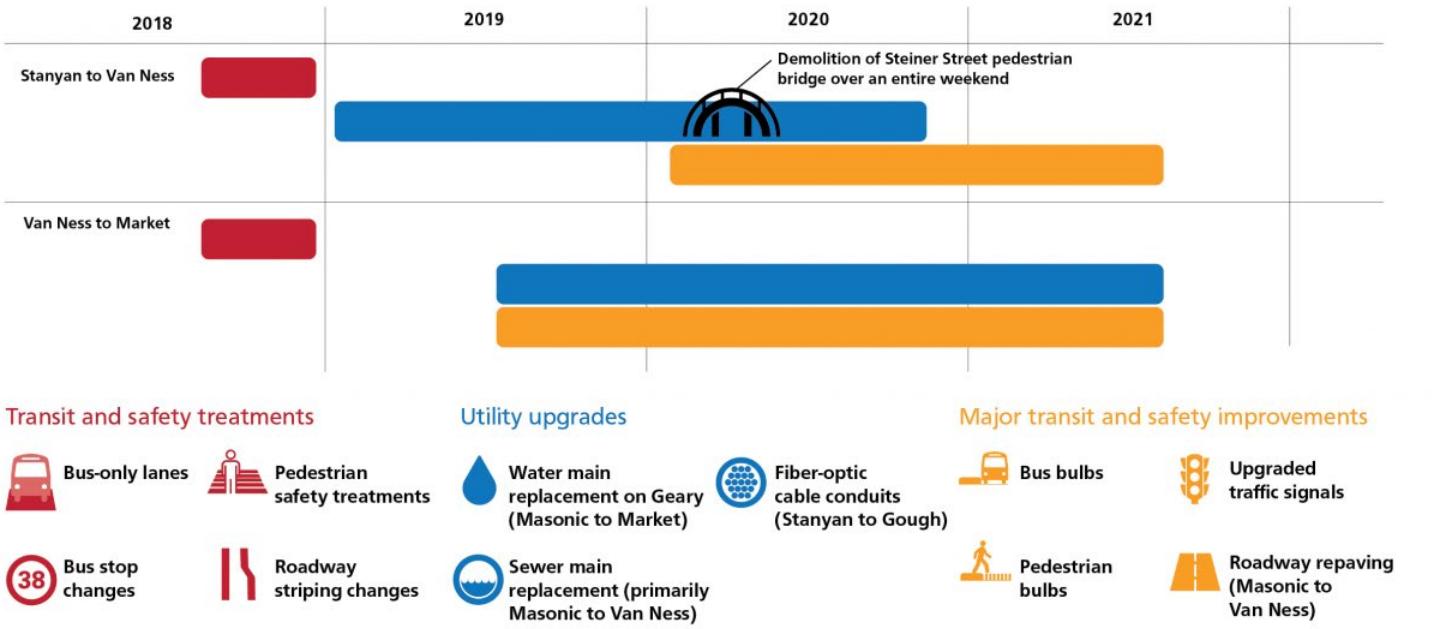
Inner Richmond

Downtown / Civic Center

Project Location

The Geary Rapid Project included transit and safety improvements on Geary and O'Farrell between Stanyan and Market streets. Plans are also underway for the Geary Boulevard Improvement Project to bring improvements west of Stanyan to 34th Avenue.

Project Timeline



Coordinated Work Sponsored by Partner City Agencies

To minimize the impact of construction on our streets, San Francisco has established a City policy requiring the coordination of construction projects in the public right-of-way. Repairs alone are not enough to keep pace with our aging and seismically vulnerable infrastructure.

The Geary Rapid Project partnered with other City agencies to bring much-needed improvements to Geary, including:

- San Francisco Public Works-sponsored roadway repaving upgraded 1.5 miles of deteriorated streets to provide you with a smoother ride.
- San Francisco Public Utilities Commission-sponsored work replaced or rehabilitated 1.5 miles of aging sewer lines and two miles of water lines, ensuring residents and businesses will continue to receive high quality and reliable services around the clock. Many of these sewer and water lines under Geary were over 100 years old!
- Department of Technology-co-sponsored installation of 1.75 miles of underground conduits for fiber optic cables to provide internet services and connect traffic signals.

Photo shows new crosswalk at Geary and Buchanan with median waiting area and decorative panels highlighting the neighboring communities. Previously, the closest crosswalks were two long blocks apart. This new crossing provides a direct connection between Japantown, the Fillmore and St. Francis Square.

Photo of improved Geary and Steiner streets, with the Steiner Bridge removed and improved crosswalks and medians.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What changes and amenities are coming to bus stops?

There are two types of bus stop changes:

- Some closely spaced bus stops have been removed or consolidated to improve travel time reliability.
- One bus stop will be moved from the near side of the intersection to the far side so that buses aren't delayed by red lights as often.

You can learn more about bus stop changes by visiting the bus stop changes webpage.

Bus stop amenities within the project limits will be upgraded to include new easier-to-read bus stop signs and, where possible, real-time information displays and shelters at stops that do not already have them. Decorative brick edging will also be installed at new transit bulbs.

2. Are cars allowed to enter transit-only lanes?

San Francisco's transit-only lanes are generally only for buses, taxis and emergency vehicles, but people driving are allowed to enter side-running transit lanes to make right turns, enter driveways or enter and exit curbside parking spaces next to the lane. Red transit lanes are often dashed approaching intersections to make it easier to identify a good location to enter the lane before making a turn. Learn more about how to safely navigate transit-only lanes.

3. How will new transit-only lanes be enforced?

Muni buses are equipped with dashboard cameras that can cite parked vehicles in transit-only lanes. However, moving violations cannot be cited due to state law, so enforcement will rely on traditional methods.

4. Could Geary be upgraded to rail service in the future?

Geary's high-transit ridership makes it suitable for rail. In fact, rail under Geary Boulevard and 19th Avenue is identified as a priority in San Francisco's ConnectSF Transit Strategy and SFMTA is currently partnering with the San Francisco County Transportation Authority on a Geary/19th Avenue Subway Study. However, major obstacles to Geary rail include the high capital cost, a scarcity of funding sources, and the scale of disruption during construction.

Photo shows improved crosswalk and medians at Geary and Webster.

5. How does the Geary Rapid Project improve safety and accessibility for people walking?

Prior to project implementation in 2018, a person crossing Geary was eight times more likely to be hit by a vehicle than the city average. The Geary Rapid Project aims to improve safety for people walking by redesigning intersections to make them safer, introducing new crosswalks and reducing the number of travel lanes in some parts of the corridor to calm traffic speeds.

In addition, traffic signals will be retimed and coordinated throughout the corridor to provide more time for people of all abilities to cross safely. Pedestrian countdown signals will also be added for crosswalks that do not already have them, and accessible pedestrian signals will be installed at all upgraded traffic signals. Learn more about Geary Rapid Project accessibility improvements.

6. Won't reducing travel lanes increase traffic?

Currently, the Geary corridor has discontinuous traffic lanes. Some segments have two or three lanes, while other segments have four lanes. Cars weaving in and out of lanes contributes to congestion. A travel lane will be removed in each direction between Scott and Gough to match the number of lanes upstream and downstream, making for smoother overall traffic flow. Traffic signals will also be upgraded and retimed for improved progression.

During the environmental review process, future travel demand was estimated in order to study the impacts of removing these travel lanes. The results vary by intersection, but overall the study found that fewer total intersections would experience high levels of delay with the project than without. Many people driving would continue to drive along Geary, while a small number of drivers may choose to divert to other parallel streets.

7. What are the overall parking impacts?

Parking loss is a trade-off for better bus service and safer streets for people walking. These goals are accomplished mostly by:

- "Bus bulbs", which are sidewalk extensions at bus stops, and "pedestrian bulbs," which extend the sidewalk at the corner of the street to shorten crossing distances for people walking.
- “Daylighting” to make people walking more visible to drivers by converting the parking space closest to the intersection to a red painted curb.
- Dedicated bus lanes along the frontage roads on Geary near Fillmore Street and Masonic Avenue.

In total, more than 98 percent of parking within one to two blocks of the corridor will be retained. Parking removal varies by block, but more than 60 percent of block faces will have no parking removal. On block faces where parking is removed, it is typically one to three spots in order to improve safety for people walking by implementing sidewalk extensions. More parking removal is necessary where there are technical constraints, but these locations are close to off-street parking garages that typically have excess capacity, such as near the Fillmore and Masonic underpasses.

11. Are there any benefits for people riding bikes?

Geary is a wide street and serves high traffic volumes, therefore parallel corridors (such as Post Street) are better for east-west bike routes. Geary Rapid Project bicycle improvements focus on people biking across Geary along north-south bike routes including Masonic Avenue, and Webster and Steiner streets. These improvements include green-backed sharrows in the intersection that signal the best path for cyclists to cross the street; bike traffic signals that give people biking a head start; and painting the existing sharrows on Geary between Masonic and Presidio green.

12. Will trees be removed or additional trees planted?

Within the project limits between Stanyan and Market streets, there will be three (3) trees removed throughout the entire corridor to make space for some of the improvements. However, 31 trees will be added in the vicinity where the trees will be removed, for a net addition of 28 trees. Existing trees not planned for removal will be protected-in-place during construction activities.