

Van Ness Avenue BRT

San Francisco, California

(November 2009)

The San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) is proposing to implement a two mile exclusive guideway bus rapid transit (BRT) facility on Van Ness Avenue. The system would be operated by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA). The dedicated transit lane originates at the intersection of Van Ness Avenue and Mission Street and extends north to Union Street near Fort Mason and the Fisherman's Wharf area. In addition to guideway construction, the Van Ness Avenue BRT project includes traffic signal pre-emption, pedestrian crossings, nine stations, and 60 new vehicles. Service would operate at five-minute headways during weekday peak periods in 2011, the opening year of the project.

Summary Description

Proposed Project:	Bus Rapid Transit 2 Miles 9 Stations
Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):	\$118.60 Million
Section 5309 Small Starts Share (\$YOE):	\$74.72 Million (63.4%)
Annual Operating Cost (\$YOE):	\$27.00 Million
Opening Year Ridership Forecast (2014):	52,400 Average Weekday Boardings 1,600 Daily New Riders
FY 2011 Local Financial Commitment Rating:	Medium
FY 2011 Project Justification Rating:	High
FY 2011 Overall Project Rating:	Medium-High

Project Development History and Current Status

In 2005, the SFCTA, in conjunction with the SFMTA, began an alternatives analysis to evaluate transportation capacity strategies along Van Ness Avenue, which is one of the most significant north-south arterials in San Francisco. The study evaluated options for improving SFMTA routes 40 and 49, Golden Gate Transit express service, and other transit in the corridor. In early 2007, the SFCTA selected BRT with a dedicated right-of-way, reduced station spacing, signal pre-emption, and low-floor buses as the locally preferred alternative. FTA approved the project into project development in December 2007. In July 2008, the San Francisco Metropolitan Planning Commission adopted a new long range plan that identified the Van Ness BRT as a Small Starts priority project for the region. SFMTA plans to complete a Draft Environmental Impact Statement in June 2010.

Significant Changes Since FY 2010 Evaluation (November 2008)

The capital cost estimate increased slightly from \$118.2 million to \$118.6 million to reflect changes in the project scope includes increasing the number of buses from 46 to 60 and a reduction in the number of stations from eleven to nine. The capital cost will be further refined during the environmental review and project development processes. SFCTA will manage the project through completion of the environmental review process and preliminary engineering. SFMTA will manage final design, construction, and operation of the proposed BRT service.

Project Justification Rating: High

The project justification rating is based on the weighted average of the ratings assigned to each of the following criteria: the cost-effectiveness criterion is weighted 33 percent; the transit supportive land use criterion is weighted 33 percent and the economic development criterion is weighted 33 percent.

Cost Effectiveness Rating: High

The rating is based on the level of travel-time benefits (3,700 average weekday hours) relative to the project’s annualized capital and operating costs based on a comparison to a baseline alternative.

Cost Effectiveness	
	<u>New Start vs. Baseline</u>
Cost per Hour of Transportation System User Benefit	\$ 5.13*
Incremental Cost per Incremental Trip	\$ 17.52

* Indicates that measure is a component of Cost Effectiveness rating.

Transit-Supportive Land Use Rating: High

The land use rating reflects the population and employment densities within ½-mile of proposed station areas.

- Population density is approximately 110,000 people per square mile in the corridor, and total employment in project station areas is approximately 92,000.
- The San Francisco CBD is the densest and most transit accessible downtown on the west coast. The Civic Center area is a major destination area in the city with dense pedestrian and transit-oriented development.

Economic Development Rating: High

The economic development rating is based upon the average of the ratings assigned to the subfactors below.

Transit-Supportive Plans and Policies: Medium-High

- While the city and entire Bay Area have a number of physical constraints to growth such as topographical limitations, it does not have a unified or enforceable growth management policy.
- San Francisco’s General Plan has long encouraged higher-density and transit-oriented development. The city is undertaking additional planning initiatives to focus higher-intensity growth in transit corridors. The city is considering zoning changes that would require residential community-oriented retail development near transit nodes.
- The city’s zoning regulations are intended to maintain a medium to high-density profile and scale, with a mixture of land uses in many areas. The city’s plan generally supports transit-supportive densities. There are no minimum parking requirements or off-street parking provisions in the CBD and other major employment areas.
- San Francisco’s existing land use pattern includes dense development along major transportation corridors. The objective of the City Planning Department and directing codes and ordinances is to reinforce this pattern of development along corridors that have high transit capacity.

Performance and Impacts of Policies: High

- The existing high-density development and pedestrian accessibility in the City of San Francisco demonstrates the strength of city policies and market forces at achieving transit-oriented intensities and urban design. The number of jobs in the San Francisco CBD has doubled since the 1970s, with no increase in the volume of traffic entering the area.
- The corridor is very dense and is largely developed, with little room for additional development.

Local Financial Commitment Rating: Medium

The local financial commitment rating is based upon SFMTA's acceptable financial condition; a reasonable plan for funding for the non-Small Starts share of capital costs; and evidence that the operations and maintenance cost of the project is less than five percent of the agency's operating budget.

Locally Proposed Financial Plan		
<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Federal: Section 5309 Small Starts	\$74.72	63.4%
Local: Proposition K Sales Tax	\$20.46	17.3%
Other (Parking Revenues, Bridge Tolls, Development Impact fees)	\$23.43	19.7%
Total:	\$118.60	100.0%

NOTE: The financial plan reflected in this table has been developed by the project sponsor and does not reflect a commitment by DOT or FTA. The sum of figures may differ from total as listed due to rounding.

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