Visual Impact Assessment Memorandum for the Van Ness Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Project

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San Francisco County Transportation Authority

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1. Project Description and Alternatives

The San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA or Authority), in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), proposes to implement bus rapid transit (BRT) improvements along Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco. Van Ness Avenue is one of San Francisco's key north-south arterials that is also designated as US 101, connecting freeway entrances and exits to the south of the City with Lombard Street and the Golden Gate Bridge that provide access north of the City. Van Ness Avenue is a six-lane arterial that carries a mix of cars, trucks, transit, pedestrians and bicycles. The proposed BRT would be implemented along a 2.2 mile stretch of Van Ness Avenue (including a one-block portion of South Van Ness Avenue) in San Francisco, from Mission Street at the south to Lombard Street at the north. The existing overhead contact system (OCS) and supporting poles/streetlights would be replaced from Mission Street in the south to North Point Street in the north. Figure 1 provides a map showing the project location and limits. Project improvements would be confined largely within the right-of-way along Van Ness Avenue.

As part of the environmental review process four alternatives have been defined for the proposed project, including one no-build alternative and three build alternatives. The project alternatives are described below.

1.1 ALTERNATIVE 1: NO BUILD (BASELINE ALTERNATIVE)

Alternative 1, the No Build Alternative, would not include BRT service and assumes that the existing roadway and transit services in the 2.2-mile-long Van Ness Avenue corridor would continue and be supplemented by funded improvement projects planned to occur within the near-term horizon year of 2015. These transportation system and infrastructure improvements are planned to occur regardless of implementation of any proposed BRT build alternative. The following transportation system and infrastructure improvements are included in the No Build Alternative:

- **Pavement Rehabilitation**. Repair and replacement of failed areas on Van Ness Avenue between Golden Gate Avenue and Lombard Street as part of the Caltrans 2007 Ten-Year State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) Plan for 2011/2012.
- **OCS and Support Pole/Streetlight Replacement.** The SFMTA, together with the San Francisco Department of Public Works (SFDPW) and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), plans to replace the existing overhead wire contact system and supporting

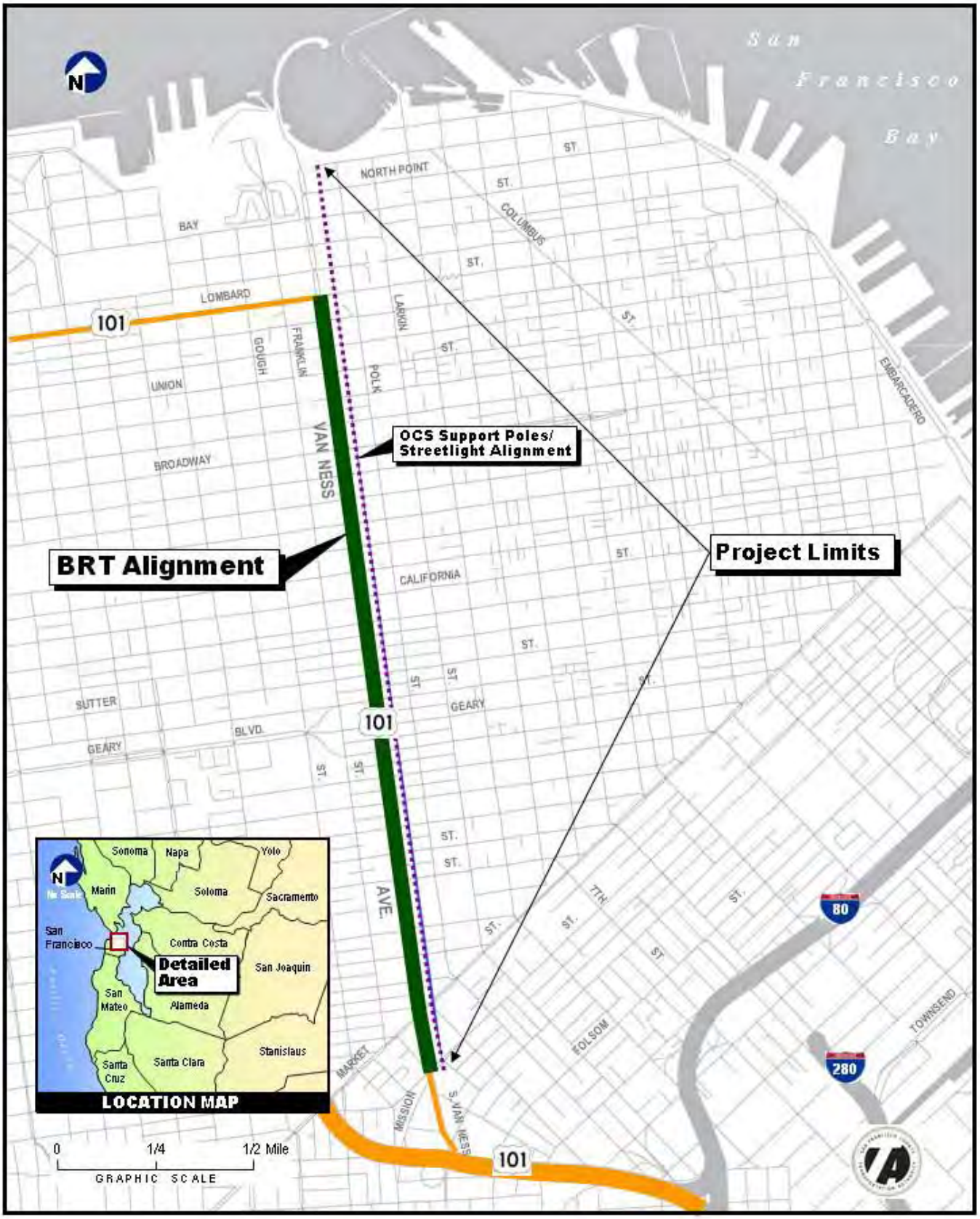


Figure 1. Project Location Map

poles/streetlights along Van Ness Avenue from Market Street to North Point Avenue to address the failing structural condition of the system. Replacement of the support poles has been on SFMTA's list of desired Capital Improvement Projects since 2003 (City of San Francisco, 2010). Improvements would include removal and replacement of existing poles and light fixtures. This effort may be implemented as a comprehensive replacement project or as a phased maintenance program that would replace poles on a priority basis, with the most structurally compromised poles prioritized for replacement. Poles would be replaced in approximately the same locations on the sidewalk, within approximately 3 feet to 5 feet of the existing poles. The replacement poles would be designed to handle modern loads as required by the BRT. These poles would also provide street and sidewalk lighting. New lighting would be energy efficient, require low maintenance, and meet current lighting requirements for safety. A new duct bank would be constructed within the sidewalk area to support the streetlights and traffic signal interconnect conduits.

- **Traffic Signal Infrastructure for Real-Time Traffic Management**. The SFgo Program led by SFMTA is a package of technology-based transportation management system tools that would implement the following in the Van Ness corridor by 2012:
  - **Traffic Signal Replacement**. Existing traffic signal heads and poles will be upgraded to mast armed poles (arched to hang over traffic lanes) at all intersections along Van Ness Avenue.
  - **Pedestrian Countdown Signals**. Pedestrian countdown signals will be installed on all crosswalk legs at all signalized intersections along Van Ness Avenue.
  - **Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS)**. APS would likely be installed at some additional signalized intersections in the project corridor.
- **Curb Ramp Upgrades**. Curb ramps that meet current City and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements would be installed at all intersections on Van Ness Avenue.
- **High-Quality Bus Vehicles with Low Floor Boarding.** SFMTA is gradually converting its fleet to low-floor buses to provide near level boarding and reduce dwell times.
- **On-Bus Proof of Payment/All-Door Boarding**. SFMTA expects to implement all-door boarding on by 2015, allowing passengers with proof of payment to board through any door.
- **NextMuni Real-Time Passenger Information.** SFMTA is installing real-time bus arrival information displays (NextMuni) at major bus stops with shelters along Van Ness Avenue.

Implementation of the aforementioned transportation system and infrastructure improvements is assumed under the No Build Alternative. These improvements would not result in changes to the basic sidewalk, intersection crossing, and median configurations; therefore, under the No Build Alternative, it is assumed that Van Ness Avenue would maintain the existing physical configuration, and median widths, sidewalk widths, crosswalk

dimensions, crossing distances, and provision would be the same as today. Existing Muni 47 and 49 buses would continue to serve curbside stations; existing parallel parking and all existing traffic turning movements would be maintained.

1.2 BUILD ALTERNATIVES

Three build alternatives are proposed. The three build alternatives propose differing lane configurations and associated station placement at the intersections. In summary, Build Alternative 2 proposes dedicated transit lanes along the side of the roadway, adjacent to the curbside parking area. Under Build Alternative 2, curb extensions would provide curbside BRT stations. Build Alternative 3 proposes dedicated transit lanes in the center of the roadway, with two medians separating bus lanes from mixed-flow traffic. Build Alternative 3 BRT stations would be located in the center medians. Build Alternative 4 proposes dedicated transit lanes in the center of the roadway along both sides of a single center median. Build Alternative 4 BRT stations would be located in the single center median. Figure 2 presents cross sections of the build alternatives. Figure 3 depicts the differing lane, median and station location configuration for each build alternative.

Each build alternative proposes BRT operating along a dedicated transit lane, or transitway, for the 2.2-mile-long project corridor. Under each build alternative, two mixed-flow traffic lanes (one southbound and one northbound) would be removed to accommodate the creation of two dedicated transit lanes (one southbound and one northbound). In other words, the existing mixed-flow traffic lanes would be reduced from three lanes to two lanes in each direction to accommodate the BRT transitway. The build alternatives would occur entirely within the existing street ROW, and no property acquisition would be required. None of the build alternatives would require reduction in sidewalk width. Curbside parking would generally be maintained under each build alternative, although some loss of street parking would occur at locations throughout the project corridor under each of the three proposed build alternatives. Existing left-turn pockets for mixed-flow traffic would be eliminated at seven intersections to reduce conflicts with the BRT operation. In addition, right-turn pockets for mixed-flow traffic would be introduced at certain intersections to reduce conflicts with the BRT operation. The locations of left-turn pockets proposed under the build alternatives are illustrated in Figure 3, as well as the existing left-turn pockets that would be removed.

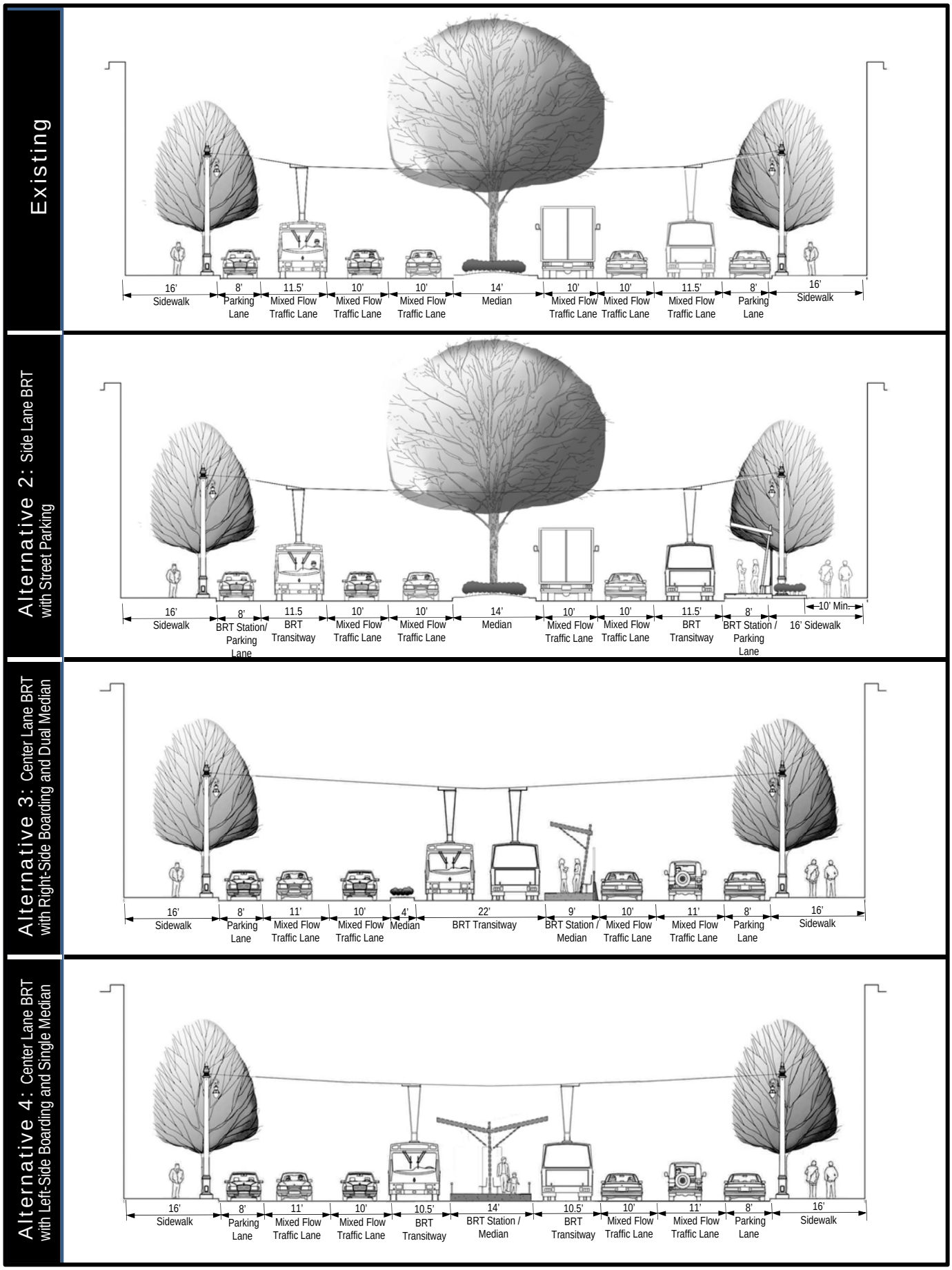
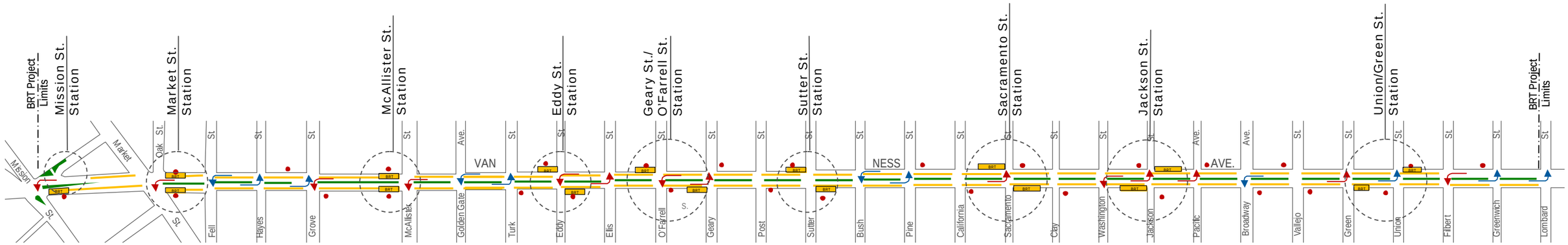
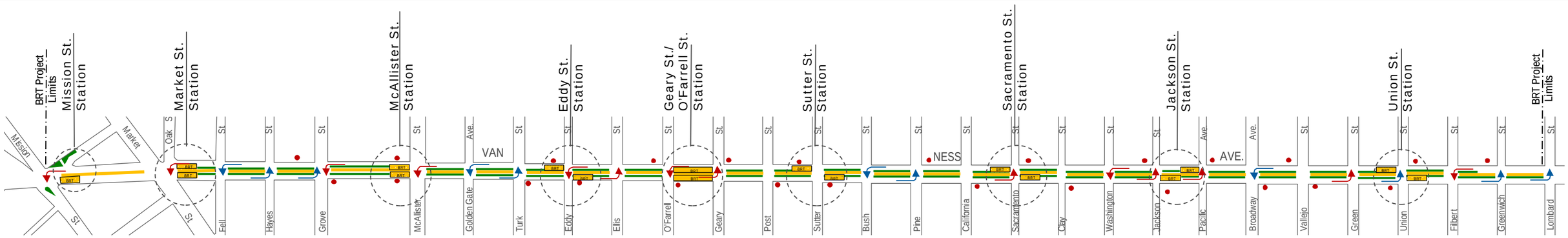


Figure 2-1. Typical Cross-Sections of Proposed Build Alternatives

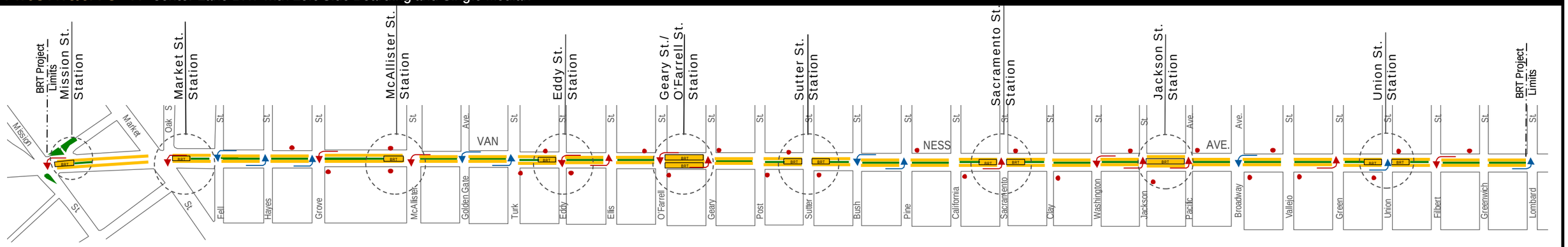
Alternative 2: Side Lane BRT with Street Parking



Alternative 3: Center Lane BRT with Right-Side Boarding and Dual Median



Alternative 4: Center Lane BRT with Left-Side Boarding and Single Median



Legend

- Proposed BRT Station
- Proposed BRT Transitway
- Proposed Landscape Median
- Existing Muni Bus Stops
- Proposed Turn Pocket
- Existing Turn Pocket to be Eliminated

N

0 500 1000 FT.
GRAPHIC SCALE

Figure 2-2
BRT Station and Left-Turn Pocket Locations for Proposed Build Alternatives

Under the build alternatives, the existing Muni bus stops along Van Ness Avenue would be removed and replaced with BRT stations. Figure 3 depicts the existing Muni stops that would be discontinued and the proposed replacement BRT stations. Stations would be placed within the existing street ROW at 10 intersections, depicted in Figure 3.

Project features common to each of the alternatives are summarized in Table 1, and described in the bulleted text to follow. Certain project features are common to all alternatives; however, features may be realized to different extent – or achieve a different performance level - dependent on the alternative. Project features common the build alternative include the following:

- **High-Quality Bus Vehicles with Level Boarding**. As described for the No Build Alternative, the build alternatives would involve an upgrade from the existing buses to higher capacity, higher performance bus vehicles. The design vehicle would be low–floor, and the bus station platform design would provide level boarding from bus to station platform.
- **Dedicated Bus Lanes (Transitway)**. BRT buses would operate in an exclusive, dedicated bus lane on the street surface. The bus lane would be distinguished from mixed-flow traffic lanes by colored pavement or other special markings. A curb or other physical means of separation from the mixed-flow traffic lanes may also be utilized in some locations to be determined during final project design.
- **Pavement Rehabilitation and Resurfacing**. Under the build alternatives, Van Ness Avenue would undergo curb-to-curb rehabilitation and resurfacing.
- **High-Quality Stations**. The BRT stations proposed under each build alternative would include a platform, canopy, landscaped planter, and station amenities. Visual simulations of stations are provided in Chapter 4.4, Visual Resources. The station would sit upon a concrete bus pad elevated above the sidewalk curb height of 6 inches, to 10 inches to 12 inches above the street grade. Stations would be approximately 150 feet in length, with a platform length of 130 feet to accommodate two 60-foot articulated BRT vehicles. The platform provides the area for passenger waiting, boarding, and station amenities. The station platform would range from 10 feet to 25 feet in width, depending on the project alternative and the need for a platform to accommodate single-direction travel, or both southbound and northbound travel. The station canopy would provide shelter from sun and rain, and it would be approximately 10 feet to 15 feet in height, depending on the incorporation of decorative architectural features and/or solar paneling, which would be determined during final design. Station amenities would include ticket vending machines (TVM), seating, lighting, a canopy and wind screens, garbage receptacles, and wayfinding information (maps/signage). In Build Alternative 2, a landscaped

Table 1: Major Project Features

Project Feature	No Build Alternative	Build Alternatives*
High-Quality Bus Vehicles with Low-Floor Boarding	x	x
High-Quality Bus Vehicles with Level Boarding		x
Dedicated Bus Lanes (Transitway)		x
High-Quality Stations		x
On-Bus Proof of Payment/All-Door Boarding (swipe pass on bus)	x	
Platform Proof of Payment/All-Door Boarding (swipe pass on platform prior to bus arrival)		x
NextMuni Real-Time Passenger Information	x	x
Pavement Rehabilitation	x	x
Pavement Resurfacing		x
Pedestrian-Scale Lighting		x
Landscaping	x	x
Overhead Contact System (OCS) support pole /streetlight replacement	x	x
Curb Ramp Upgrades	x	x
Curb Bulb Upgrades		x
Median Upgrades/Nose Cones for Pedestrian Safety		x
Traffic Signal Infrastructure, including Upgrade to Mast Arm Signals	x	x
Real-Time Traffic Management (upgraded controllers and fiber-optic signal interconnects)		x
Global Positioning System (GPS)-Based Transit Signal Priority		x
Automatic Vehicle Location		x
Pedestrian Countdown Signals	x	x
Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS)	x**	x

*The Build Alternatives would include indicated project features with or without incorporation of the Center Alternative Design Option B (see Sections 1.4 and 1.5).

**The No-Build Alternative would likely include some additional Accessible Pedestrian Signals at key intersections. The Build Alternatives would include these signals at all intersections.

planter would be incorporated to beautify the stations and buffer bus patrons from adjacent pedestrian or vehicular traffic. Stations would be designed to comply with ADA requirements. The stations would feature active data display and audio capability to indicate bus arrival time as required by ADA. Protective railings would be incorporated as appropriate for safety requirements.

- **Platform Proof of Payment/All-Door Boarding**. As described for the No Build Alternative, the build alternatives would operate with all-door boarding BRT service, allowing passengers with proof of payment, such as a Clipper Card, to board through any door. In the build alternatives, SFMTA would have the BRT platforms function as proof-of-payment areas, and passengers would swipe their fare cards on receptors before the buses arrive, further helping to reduce dwell time.
- **NextMuni Real-Time Passenger Information**. As described for the No Build Alternative, the BRT stations under the build alternatives would be equipped with

NextMuni, providing real-time bus arrival information displays.

- **Transportation System Management (TSM) Capabilities**. The proposed BRT service under each build alternative would utilize advanced traffic and TSM technologies, like those proposed under SFgo, including:
  - **Traffic Signal Infrastructure for Real-Time Traffic Management**. Traffic signal poles would be upgraded to mast armed poles. Signal controllers and interconnects would be upgraded with technology to allow for active monitoring and adjusting of traffic signal timings.
  - **GPS-Based Transit Signal Priority (TSP)**. Under the proposed build alternatives, TSP hardware would be installed on the traffic signal masts to provide advance and extended green light time for buses approaching signals to reduce bus delay caused by red lights.
  - **Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL)**. AVL would be utilized under the build alternatives to manage transit route operations in real time.
- **Median Upgrades/Nose Cones for Pedestrian Safety**. Median refuges would be modified and widened where feasible to reduce the distance that pedestrians must cross during one light cycle. Nose cones would be installed where feasible to provide a protective buffer between pedestrians and automobile traffic. All upgrades to intersections would comply with ADA standards.
- **Curb Ramp Upgrades**. Curb ramps would be installed at all intersections along Van Ness Avenue. Curb ramps would meet current City standards and ADA requirements to provide access by people in wheelchairs, as well as providing easier travel for those with strollers, carts, and the like.
- **Landscaping.** Medians would be landscaped to promote a unified, visual concept for the Van Ness Avenue corridor. BRT stations would include landscaped planters, and landscaping would be incorporated as feasible to provide a buffer between bus patrons and adjacent auto and pedestrian traffic. In addition, the discontinuation of existing Muni bus stops and removal of bus shelters as proposed under the build alternatives would open up additional sidewalk space at these locations. This would enhance the pedestrian environment at these locations and offer opportunities for tree planting, landscaping, or streetscape features.
- **Curb Bulbs**. Curb bulbs are proposed at most signalized intersections to improve pedestrian safety by improving visibility between motorists and pedestrians, shortening the crossing distance across Van Ness Avenue, and reducing the speed of right-turning traffic.
- **Pedestrian Countdown Signals**. Pedestrian countdown signals would be installed on all crosswalk legs at all signalized intersections in the project corridor as part of the proposed build alternatives.
- **Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS)**. APS would be installed at all signalized intersections in the project corridor as part of the proposed build alternatives.
- **OCS Support Pole/Streetlight Replacement**. Under the proposed build alternatives, the OCS overhead wire and support pole system would be replaced and

upgraded, as described in Section 1.1, along with the associated street lighting. The BRT system proposed under the build alternatives would require a new pole network to support the OCS load for the new BRT system, and to provide roadway and sidewalk lighting that meets current standards (City of San Francisco, 2009).

1.3 BUILD ALTERNATIVE 2: SIDE-LANE BRT WITH STREET PARKING

Build Alternative 2 would provide a dedicated bus lane, or transitway, in the right-most lane of Van Ness Avenue located adjacent to the existing curbside street parking area. The transitway would extend from Mission Street to Lombard Street in the northbound and southbound directions. The transitway would be traversable for mixed-flow traffic that would enter the transitway to complete a right turn or to parallel park. Under Build Alternative 2, BRT stations would be located within the curbside parking area as curb extensions, eliminating the need for buses to exit the transitway to pick up passengers. A planter with trees and shrubs would be located along the sidewalk side of the BRT station platform to serve as a buffer between bus patrons and sidewalk pedestrians. Build Alternative 2 would include all project features described above under Section 1.2 and listed in Table 1. Build Alternative 2 would involve minimal modification to the existing median; therefore, existing trees and landscape plantings would not require removal. Figure 2 presents the typical cross section for Build Alternative 2.

1.4 BUILD ALTERNATIVE 3: CENTER-LANE BRT WITH RIGHT-SIDE BOARDING AND DUAL MEDIANS

Build Alternative 3 would provide a transitway comprised of two side-by-side, dedicated bus lanes located in the center of the roadway in between two medians. The transitway would be separated from mixed-flow traffic by a 4-foot-wide median and a 9-foot-wide median. BRT stations would be located on the 9-foot median, allowing right-side boarding. Build Alternative 3 would include all project features described above under Section 1.2. Build Alternative 3 would require removal of much of the existing medians, including existing trees and landscaping, to construct the dual-median, center-lane transitway; therefore, opportunities to preserve existing trees and landscape would be limited and the most constrained among the build alternatives. New tree planting is proposed along the 9-foot-wide right-side medians and at locations of former curbside bus stops. Figure 2 presents the typical cross section for Build Alternative 3.

Center-Lane Alternative Design Option B

Both center-running alternatives contain a design option referred to as the Center-Lane Alternative Design Option B. This design option would eliminate all northbound left turns and all but one southbound left turn (at Broadway Street) in the project corridor. Center-

Lane Alternative Design Option B would reduce conflicts at intersections with turning vehicles and increase the green light time available to BRT buses for through movement. The removal of left-turn pockets would allow more street parking at certain locations.

1.5 BUILD ALTERNATIVE 4: CENTER-LANE BRT WITH LEFT-SIDE BOARDING AND SINGLE MEDIAN

Build Alternative 4 would provide a transitway in the center of the roadway comprised of a single, 14-foot-wide median flanked by dedicated northbound and southbound bus lanes. Station platforms would be located on the single center median, requiring left-side passenger boarding and alighting. Thus, Build Alternative 4 would require BRT vehicles with left side doors to allow for left-side boarding and alighting. All stations would be of this single-median design, with the exception of BRT stations proposed at Geary/O'Farrell, which would utilize a dual-median configuration as proposed under Build Alternative 3 to accommodate Golden Gate Transit which would also utilize this station. Build Alternative 4 would include all project features described above under Section 1.2. Build Alternative 4 would require some modification of the existing median landscaping, including removal of some existing trees and landscaping, to construct the center-lane transitway. Existing trees would be retained where feasible, and new trees would be planted in the median and at former bus stops. Figure 2 presents the typical cross section of the left-side boarding, single-median design for Build Alternative 4.

Center-Lane Alternative Design Option B

As explained in Section 1.4, the Center-Lane Alternative Design Option B, or Design Option B, is under consideration for Build Alternatives 3 and 4. The design variation would eliminate all northbound left turns and all but one southbound left turn (at Broadway Street).

2. Methodology

Visual impacts were identified by evaluating plan drawings and landscape plans in consideration of the existing project setting, and analyzing visual simulations of project features at key viewpoints. Interpretation of existing visual character and land use of the corridor was based on field visits conducted by Parsons staff in the summer and fall of 2010, and available land use plans. Additionally, the findings of the Van Ness Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Historic Resources Inventory and Evaluation Report (JRP, 2009) were considered. Research to identify the regulatory setting for the project corridor was undertaken, including review of all city plans and polices pertaining to the Van Ness Avenue corridor and streetscape and urban design.

Aesthetics and urban design are subjective fields, and visual changes that are favored or accepted by one person may be disliked by another. For this reason, the effects of visual changes are open to interpretation. Generally a visual change is considered adverse if the project introduces obtrusive elements substantially out of character with existing land uses or substantially obscures a scenic view or vista available to sensitive receptors (Caltrans, 2006). Also, visual change is considered adverse if it would damage scenic resources like trees, historic buildings, or other features of the visual environment that contribute to a scenic public setting. . This visual analysis characterizes the visual setting of the corridor and identifies important visual features and resources in it, in addition to scenic vistas experienced from within it. Viewer groups are identified, including sensitive viewer groups, in order to understand the potential visual changes that could be experienced with implementation of a proposed build alternative.

The following section describes the existing visual and aesthetic environment of the Van Ness Avenue BRT Project corridor. Avoidance and minimization measures to address visual effects are described in Section 6.0.

3. Regulatory Setting

NEPA establishes that the federal government use all practicable means to ensure all Americans safe, healthful, productive and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings (42 USC 4331[b] [2]). In its implementation of NEPA (23 USC 109 [h]), the U.S. Department of Transportation directs that final decisions regarding projects are to be made in the best overall public interest, taking into account adverse environmental impacts, including the destruction or disruption of aesthetic values (USDOT. 1988).

Likewise, CEQA establishes that it is the policy of the State to take all action necessary to provide the people of the State "with…enjoyment of aesthetic, natural, scenic and historic environmental qualities." [CA Public Resources Code Section 21001 (b)].

On the local government level, the City of San Francisco has established policies and regulations regarding visual resources in the following planning documents applicable to the project corridor: San Francisco General Plan, San Francisco Planning Code, Section 146, and the San Francisco Better Streets Plan. The San Francisco Planning Department Initial Study Checklist has slightly modified the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist to better apply to San Francisco, and adding consideration of shadow effects.

3.1 REVIEW OF SCENIC/VISUAL RESOURCE PLANS AND POLICIES

This section provides a review of scenic/visual resource plans and policies applicable to development of BRT in the Van Ness Avenue corridor.

San Francisco General Plan, Urban Design Element (City of San Francisco, 1990)

Land use planning goals and policies are guided by the San Francisco General Plan. The Urban Design Element of the San Francisco General Plan concerns the physical character and order of the city, and the relationship between people and their environment (City of San Francisco, 1990). The Urban Design Element sets forth objectives and supporting policies that cover the following major areas: city pattern, conservation, major new development, and neighborhood environment.

Policies supportive of the aforementioned major urban design objectives that are relevant to a transportation project, such as the proposed project, are listed below:[1]

- Objective 1, City Pattern: Emphasis of the characteristic pattern which gives to the city and its neighbors an image, a sense of purpose, and a means of orientation.

[1] Polices to support Major New Development urban design objectives are not relevant to the proposed transportation project and thus are not discussed further.

  - Policy 1.1: Recognize and project major views in the city, with particular attention to those of open space and water.
  - Policy 1.5: Emphasize the special nature of each district through distinctive landscaping and other features.
  - Policy 1.6: Make centers of activity more prominent through design of street features and by other means.
  - Policy 1.7: Recognize the natural boundaries of districts, and promote connections between districts.
  - Policy 1.8: Increase the visibility of major destination areas and other points for orientation
  - Policy 1.9: Increase the clarity of routes for travelers.
- Objective 2, Conservation: Conservation of resources which provide a sense of nature, continuity with the past, and freedom from overcrowding.
  - Policy 2.4: Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural, or aesthetic value.
  - Policy 2.6: Respect the character of older development nearby in the design of new buildings.
- Objective 4, Neighborhood Environment: Improvement of the neighborhood environment to increase personal safety, comfort, pride and opportunity.
  - Policy 4.3: Provide adequate lighting in public areas.

San Francisco General Plan, Van Ness Area Plan (City of San Francisco, 1995)

The information provided in the San Francisco General Plan Urban Design Element is made more precise in individual area plans that cover designated geographic areas of the City. The City adopted the Van Ness Area Plan in 1986 and created a Van Ness Avenue Special Use District of the Planning Code in 1988 to implement the plan. The plan was last amended in 1995. The plan is intended to promote Van Ness Avenue as the City's most prominent north-south boulevard, lined with high-density mixed-use development and including design features that support a transit-served pedestrian promenade. The Van Ness Area Plan identifies the following objectives and corresponding policies that pertain to aesthetics and the visual environment:

- Objective 3: Transform the area between Bay Street and the Municipal Pier into an attractive gateway to the residential boulevard (Van Ness Avenue) and a transition from Fisherman's Wharf and the GGNRA.
  - Policy 3.1: Create a tree-lined and landscaped median strip within the Van Ness Avenue street space and plant rows of trees in the sidewalk space.
- Objective 5: Encourage development which reinforces topography and urban pattern, and defines and gives variety to the avenue.
  - Policy 5.4: Preserve existing view corridors.

- Objective 8: Create an attractive street and sidewalk space that contributes to the transformation of Van Ness Avenue into a residential boulevard.
    - Policy 8.5: Maintain existing sidewalk widths.
    - Policy 8.6: Incorporate uniform sidewalk paving material, color, pattern and texture throughout the length of Van Ness Avenue. Sidewalk and median strip paving materials should be concrete, light grey-tone in color, with a plain, brushed surface texture, except for a darker grey 12-inch curbside trim which should add richness in color and texture to the Avenue.
    - Policy 8.7: Trim sidewalk curbs with hydraulically pressed, pre-cut four-inch square stone paving blocks to a horizontal depth of 12 inches. Replace median pavements with grey tone interlocking paving blocks. The stone pavers should be of a complementary medium grey-tone color (e.g. Hanover Prest Paving R.D. No.4).
    - Policy 8.8: Assure a uniform architectural style, character and color in the design of street lights and poles.

      Painting all the light poles along Van Ness Avenue a blue and gold color scheme, similar to that of the Civic Center light poles, would contribute to this special identity. If feasible, existing street light poles should be maintained and enhanced in order to contribute to the special identity of the Avenue. The angle and color of illumination on existing and new street lights should be designed to minimize glare to nearby residential uses. Lighting should not damage adjacent landscape plantings and should provide safe and attractive lighting for pedestrians.
    - Policy 8.9: Provide attractive street furniture at convenient locations and intervals throughout the length of the street. New bus shelters or replacement shelters should be placed between the trees along the tree line of the sidewalk. Benches should be attached to the ground and located between the trees along the tree line of the sidewalk adjacent to bus stops.
    - Policy 9.12: Unify the design of trash bins, benches news racks, street lighting fixtures, sidewalk surface treatment, canopies, awnings and bus shelters throughout the length of the street.
    - Policy 11.4: Encourage architectural integration of new structures with adjacent significant and contributory buildings.

The Civic Center Area Plan

The Civic Center Area Plan, adopted in 1989, outlines a series of policies to guide development in and around City Hall and the surrounding government offices and cultural performing arts facilities. The plan provides a comprehensive program of street and pedestrian improvements in the area, including improvements to Van Ness Avenue. The plan intends to reinforce the identity of the Civic Center as the focus of government and culture in San Francisco through the use of common design elements such as sidewalk and street paving, lighting fixtures, landscaping, and street furniture. The plan calls for the use of color and texture of materials to be used throughout the area to reinforce the overall unity and formalism of the Civic Center.

The plan is oriented to guide new development; however, the following policy relates to aesthetics of streetscape:

- Policy 1.4: Provide a sense of identity and cohesiveness through unifying street and Plaza design treatments.

San Francisco General Plan, Market and Octavia Area Plan (City of San Francisco, 2007)

The Market and Octavia Area Plan, adopted in 2007, is a community plan that grew out of the Market and Octavia Neighborhood Plan. The plan calls for new residential development centered around transit and provides land use, urban design, and transportation policies to support development. Polices regarding aesthetics that are relevant to the proposed project include:

- Policy 4.3.3: Mark the intersections of Market Street with Van Ness Avenue…with streetscape elements that celebrate their particular significance. The designs for these principal intersections should include streetscape elements such as special light fixtures, gateways and public art pieces that emphasize and celebrate the special significance of each intersection.

  The Van Ness Avenue intersection will be provided with pedestrian-oriented additions on the north side and major improvements on the south, associated with the introduction of the Van Ness Avenue Transitway, [2] described in this plan. The intersection should be designed with prominent streetscape elements that signify the crossing of two important streets. This will break up the width of the street into three separate sections, thereby humanizing it and providing pedestrian refuges for people crossing Van Ness Avenue. Widened sidewalks can do the same at the corners, as can extended streetcar platforms on Market Street.

- Policy 1.2.5: Mark the intersection of Van Ness Avenue and Market Street as a visual landmark.

  Although this policy is primarily concerned with form and height of buildings, it nonetheless speaks to the City's interest in the visual context of this intersection.

Final Draft San Francisco Better Streets Plan (July 2010)

The San Francisco Better Streets Plan provides a comprehensive set of guidelines to improve San Francisco's streetscapes to make them universally accessible to all, more attractive, safe, and comfortable. It describes a vision, provides design guidelines, and identifies next steps to create streets that are publicly accessible and support multi-modal use with a particular emphasis on pedestrians and transit. The plan recognizes that Van Ness Avenue moves significant volumes of people across town in a variety of travel modes, and that it serves as a commercial and cultural hub that attracts people from across the city to come shop, eat, and play. For this, the plan calls for a comfortable pedestrian realm with significant pedestrian amenities and public spaces that

[2] The Van Ness Avenue Transitway described in the market and Octavia Area Plan is referring to the Van Ness Avenue BRT Project (City of San Francisco, 2007).

include: curb ramps, marked crosswalks, pedestrian signals, corner bulbs/extensions, street trees, tree grates, sidewalk planters, stormwater controls, pedestrian lighting, special paving, and site furnishings. The San Francisco Better Streets Plan explains that streetscapes should be designed to encompass a wide range of features and amenities; however, this does not mean that projects should contain all potential elements or not be built at all—rather, it suggests coordination of streetscape-related projects to make improvements simultaneously and look for opportunities to build additional low-cost elements into existing capital projects.

Currently, the Final Draft San Francisco Better Streets Plan is pending adoption by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. The following policies of the San Francisco Better Streets Plan relate directly to aesthetics and are applicable to the proposed project:

- Policy 1.2: Provide distinctive design treatments for streets with important citywide functions. The following policy guidelines apply:
  - On streets identified as "Important to the City Pattern," use consistent rows of single species street trees, distinctive, consistent street lighting and site furnishings, special signage, and public art;
  - On streets that are identified as priority pedestrian corridors or zones, provide enhanced pedestrian amenities, facilities, and signage;
  - Define special locations such as civic or commercial centers, entries to major open spaces, or community facilities with special streetscape treatments.
- Policy 2.1: Design streets with comfortable spaces for casual interaction and gathering. The following policy guideline applies:
  - Create new spaces for social interaction, such as wide street furnishing zones, corner or mid-block bulb-outsand the like.
- Policy 7.3: Design transit waiting areas for comfort, accessibility, and ease of use. The following policy guideline applies:
  - Improve existing transit waiting areas to improve attractiveness and remove barriers.
- Policy 7.6: Create convenient, safe pedestrian conditions at transfer waiting areas and transfer points.
  - Create clear wayfinding and directionality at transit transfer points.
- Policy 10.1: Maximize opportunities for street trees and other plantings. The following policy guideline applies:
  - Locate street trees first in available locations before laying out other street furnishings.
  - Allow tree plantings as near to corners for visibility of pedestrians, signs, and signals in order to slow traffic and visually narrow the street and intersection.
  - Allow trees and plantings to be as near as practicable to utilities and other objects

in the right-of-way while still maintaining appropriate clearances.

- Policy 10.3: Provide an orderly and efficient streetscape environment that minimizes visual clutter. The following policy guideline applies:
  - Minimize the number of traffic signs, street light, catenary, traffic signal, and other utility poles, and share poles wherever feasible.
- Policy 10.5: Ensure adequate light levels and quality for pedestrians and other sidewalk users; minimize light trespass and glare to adjacent buildings.
  - Select palette of streetlight poles based on criteria including aesthetics, light quality and color, long-term maintenance, and energy efficiency.
  - Emphasize lighting for pedestrians and include pedestrian lighting in street improvement projects as appropriate
- Policy 10.7: Include and integrate public art improvements into street improvement projects.
- Policy 10.8: Balance desired design treatments with the ability to provide adequate maintenance.

The Van Ness Corridor Initial Land Use and Urban Design Needs Assessment (April 2004)

In support of the Van Ness Avenue BRT Feasibility Study completed in 2006, the Van Ness Corridor Initial Land Use and Urban Design Needs Assessment was undertaken with the intent to identify the need for revision to existing land use plan and zoning codes, and assess the corridor from an urban design perspective. The assessment also evaluated the pedestrian experience along Van Ness Avenue. The Needs Assessment concluded that while Van Ness Avenue is functional as an automobile corridor, it lacks many of the basic amenities necessary to make it an attractive space for pedestrian use. The assessment found placement of tree plantings, lighting, and street furniture to be discontinuous and disorganized. Transit shelters were found to be inadequate to meet passenger needs, and noteworthy conflicts between pedestrian and vehicles were noted. The assessment found that the large automobile traffic volumes and lack of pedestrian amenities and urban design features contribute to a setting that discourages pedestrians from using Van Ness Avenue longer than is necessary. The report concluded that the wide sidewalks, roadway median, and land uses of Van Ness Avenue hold the potential for it to become one of the City's grand boulevards. The report recommends the following urban design improvements to support a transformation of Van Ness Avenue into a more pedestrian-friendly, aesthetically pleasing environment:

- Continuous street tree plantings;
- Transit shelter improvements;
- Comprehensive street furniture;

- Comprehensive street lighting.

The report concludes that the historic elements to Van Ness Avenue's design, including light standards, signage and interspersed tree plantings, can become integrated into a contemporary design that improves pedestrian amenities and emphasizes the avenue's role as a grand thoroughfare.

3.2 RELEVANT REGULORY BODIES & APPROVALS

San Francisco Planning Department and Commission

As described above, land use planning goals and policies are guided by the San Francisco General Plan and subarea plans. General Plan Amendments and General Plan Referrals are approved by the City Planning Department to ensure a project is consistent with the San Francisco General Plan. Modifications to street medians and sidewalks require a General Plan Amendment and General Plan Referral.

Per Article 10 of the Planning Code, a Certificate of Appropriateness is required from the Planning Department for projects located within a landmark site, such as the San Francisco Civic Center. This process requires a hearing with and approval from with the Planning Commission. As needed, the Planning Commission may consult with civic groups, public agencies, and interested citizens in consideration of a Certificate of Appropriateness application. The design, architectural style, arrangement, texture, materials, and color of project features is considered.

San Francisco Arts Commission, Civic Design Review Committee

The Civic Design Review Committee is a body within the San Francisco Arts Commission that is responsible for reviewing and approving the architectural design of structures on city property. Their review is required for any structure or landscaping on or over city property, including transit structures such as station platforms, bus shelters and station canopies, landscaped medians and planters. Their review consists of the following three phases which each include a presentation to the committee: 1) schematic design; 2) design development; and 3) construction documents. Any associated reviews (i.e. Environmental Impact Reports or Certificate of Appropriateness) must be certified or otherwise resolved before a final Phase 3 approval can be granted (SFAC, 2010).

The San Francisco Arts Commission defers to the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission for review and approval of the design of structures located in a historic district.

San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission, Architectural Review Committee

The Architectural Review Committee of the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission is responsible for review and approval of the architectural design of structures located within a historic district.

City Hall Preservation Advisory Commission

The City Hall Preservation Advisory Commission advises the San Francisco Mayor, Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, City Administrator, and the Historic Preservation Commission on budgetary issues and matters relating to the operation, maintenance, repair, preservation and public awareness of the San Francisco City Hall. San Francisco's City Hall is located along Van Ness Avenue within the project corridor, and within the Civic Center Historic District. The San Francisco City Hall is a National Historical Landmark, and it is the mission of the commission to: (1) to ensure that the maintenance and operation of City Hall is consistent with its stature and dignity as a national landmark and as the seat of City government, (2) to assure that the building is a welcoming place for all people and (3) to promote the understanding of its history and cultural values (SFGSA, 2010).

The Planning Commission, Planning Department and the Advisory Board shall review applications for Certificate of Appropriateness for proposed work in a landmark site or in a historic district. Section 1006.7(c) Standards for Review of Applications states that applications pertaining to property in historic districts and new construction shall be compatible with the character of the historic district as described in the ordinance designating the historic district, and in the case that a property is not already compatible with the character of the district, reasonable efforts shall be made to produce compatibility and in no event shall there be a greater deviation from compatibility.

4. Affected Environment

4.1 VIEWSHED

The viewshed for the proposed project consists of the project corridor along Van Ness Avenue and its adjacent land uses; in addition to distant areas with views of and from the project area. Essentially, the project viewshed consists of the actual area in which project features would be visible. All project features would be located within the Van Ness Avenue roadway and sidewalk.

The project viewshed consists of urban landscape that varies in land use, topography and character throughout the project limits. The proposed project crosses near the low point, along a valley, of an east-west trending ridgeline that connects the neighborhoods of Nob Hill to the east with Pacific Heights to the west. Further north, the project crosses near the western toe of Russian Hill. Thus some of the project area is relatively flat, while some is sloped. The changing slope along Van Ness Avenue provides differing viewsheds, and offers scenic vistas at some locations. At the same time, the neighboring hills and ridges of Nob Hill, Russian Hill, and Cathedral Hill provide scenic views that include Van Ness Avenue. The width of the avenue and dominant visual elements of the corridor like City Hall are easily identified from not only these hilltops, but the distant hilltops of Twin Peaks and Potrero Hill, and from downtown skyscrapers.

4.2 VIEWER GROUPS

Viewers of project features can be categorized in the following viewer groups:

1) Pedestrians – pedestrians walking to/from and along Van Ness Avenue within the project limits, or on other streets that offer views of the project area.
2) Cyclists – cyclists riding to/from and along Van Ness Avenue within the project limits, or on other streets that offer views of the project area.
3) Transit Patrons – bus patrons waiting at bus stops and traveling on buses through the project area.
4) Motorists – automobile and truck drivers and passengers traveling through the project area, or on other streets that offer views of the project area.
5) Residents – residents who live along Van Ness Avenue within the project limits, or who live in nearby buildings with views of the project area.
6) Commuters – workers who commute to jobs located along Van Ness Avenue within the project limits, or to nearby or distant buildings with views of the project area.
7) Tourists – visitors/tourists who have traveled to and through the Van Ness Avenue corridor with the intention of experiencing and viewing the cultural and visual resources of city-wide importance that are focally located within the project limits (i.e. Civic

Center, Market Street, Fort Mason). Several hotels offer scenic views that encompass the Van Ness Avenue Corridor.

Sensitive Viewer Groups

Viewers that experience regular, consistent, or extended views of the project corridor are considered sensitive viewer groups because they would be most sensitive to changes in the viewshed. Residents and commuters are sensitive viewer groups for the proposed project because they experience frequent, extended, and consistent views of the project area, and they may experience these views not simply from within buildings, but also as pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and transit patrons. These viewer groups are part of the local community through which the proposed project passes. Residents and commuters would be most sensitive to changes in the viewshed introduced by the proposed project. Tourists are also a sensitive viewer group because much of their purpose in being present in the Van Ness Avenue corridor is to enjoy the scenic quality of the avenue, and/or particular visual resources in the corridor.

4.3 VISUAL CHARACTER

The visual character of the project corridor is dense, mixed-use, and urban. Van Ness Avenue is the major, north-south, arterial thoroughfare in downtown San Francisco. In addition to being one of San Francisco's major thoroughfares it is part of U.S. Route 101, which runs from Los Angeles to Olympia, Washington. Thus the project corridor carries high volumes of automobile traffic making it one of the noisier and busier streets in the City. The project corridor also intersects with multiple other major thoroughfares, like Mission, Market, and Geary Streets. These roadways and intersections are wide and busy, and there is a thick network of OCS wires above them that is a character defining feature of the Van Ness Avenue corridor, and the identity of San Francisco. There are few vacant parcels in the project vicinity, and the overall Van Ness Avenue corridor is built-out in character.

Van Ness Avenue is one of the widest streets in the City, and is notably wider than adjacent streets. The avenue generally supports six mixed-flow traffic lanes (three southbound and three northbound lanes) and a parallel parking lane. Northbound and southbound traffic is divided by a median, which varies in dimension and composition throughout the corridor. Some blocks of Van Ness Avenue feature a landscaped median with mature trees up to 9 ft in canopy width, while some blocks feature a narrow, concrete median without landscaping or tree plantings. In addition to featuring landscaping and trees, the medians hold traffic signals, signage, and pedestrian refuge areas including nose cones (thumbnail islands). An eight-foot, curbside parking lane is present along most street blocks. The sidewalks of Van Ness Avenue are wide by city standards, measuring approximately 16 feet wide throughout the corridor except in the Civic Center where they are wider, measuring up to 32 ft wide in front of City Hall. Trees of varied species and age are planted along most sidewalks. The wide sidewalks and roadway, and

landscaped medians are unique features for San Francisco streets, and create a feeling of prominence about the avenue. Buildings of architectural significance located along Van Ness Avenue further contribute to this feeling of prominence, as described in Section 4.4.

The architecture and infrastructure of Van Ness Avenue dates from historic periods up to the present time. As explained in the Historic Resources Inventory and Evaluation Report prepared for the proposed project, the visual character of Van Ness Avenue reflects its history as a corridor in which "development and infrastructural improvements have occurred largely in a piecemeal manner since it was established in 1858," and the design and planning of Van Ness Avenue "reflect a myriad of public and private design intents, none of which reflect a sustained or cohesive architectural or engineering program (JRP, 2009)." Sidewalk and median trees, news racks, signage, call boxes, garbage receptacles and other street furniture are interspersed in an ad hoc fashion throughout the corridor. The only continuous design element on Van Ness Avenue are the OCS support poles/streetlights, which line both sidewalks of the street between Market and North Point Streets (City of San Francisco, 2004). Due to this history of development the architecture, landscaping, and streetscape of Van Ness Avenue and its viewshed vary substantially, giving the project corridor an eclectic feel.

This eclectic feel is present throughout the project corridor, although the overall character of the corridor changes slightly as influenced by land use pattern. The corridor is predominantly lined with multi-story buildings featuring commercial establishments on the ground floor. Van Ness Avenue is one of the City's major commercial corridors. However, the northern portion of the corridor is more residential in feel, and the southern portion of the corridor features the Civic Center District which is a major center for civic resources, as well as art and entertainment activities. The changing character of the corridor is described below, broken down into corridor segments from south to north. Images of the Van Ness Avenue corridor are provided in Figure 4 (Photos 1-8).

Photo 1. Wide roadway, commercial corridor, and view of City Hall and distant downtown skyscape.

Photo 2. Varied architecture and mixed land use along Van Ness Avenue.

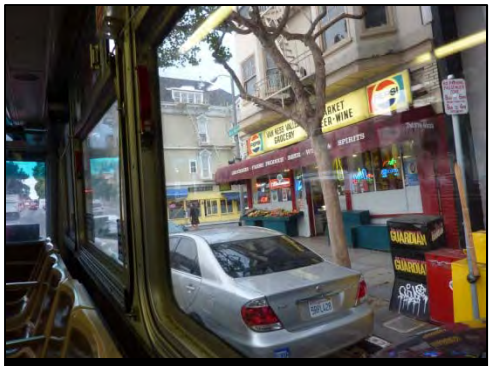


Photo 3. Colorful storefronts of Van Ness Ave.

Photo 4. Wide landscaped medians of Van Ness Avenue

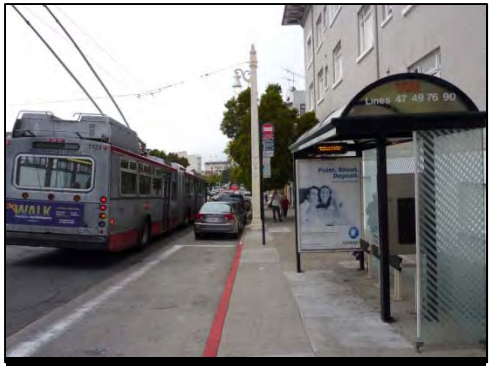


Photo 5. Sidewalk bus shelter and parallel parking lane .

Photo 6. Eclectic streetscape of Van Ness Ave.

Photo 7. Wide sidewalks of Van Ness Ave.

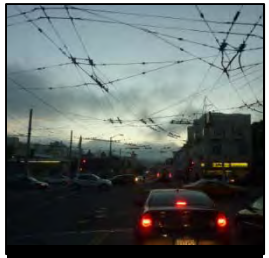


Photo 8. OCS wires at Van Ness Ave/Union St

Figure 4
Character Depicting Images of the Van Ness Corridor

South of Market Street (South Van Ness Avenue)

The visual character of South Van Ness Avenue between Mission and Market Streets is urban (Photo 9). In this segment South Van Ness Avenue intersects with Mission Street, which is another major thoroughfare. This intersection is wide and busy, and is surrounded by multi-story commercial uses that are modern in character. There is no center median on South Van Ness Avenue, and no landscaping aside from palm trees that line the west sidewalk. Van Ness Avenue is lit by Caltrans non-decorative, highway light standards from which banners displaying advertisements hang. An automobile dealership and an office building extend nearly the entire length of this stretch of roadway. The entrances to these uses are near the corner of Market Street and Van Ness Avenue, and this stretch of South Van Ness Avenue lacks streetscape amenities and public spaces so it is not inviting for pedestrian activity. This stretch of the corridor is devoid of decorative streetscape, and there are no significant visual elements or scenic vistas in this stretch of the project area.

Photo 9. South Van Ness Avenue (looking south from Market Street).

Market Street to Golden Gate Avenue (Civic Center Historic District)

The visual character of the stretch of the Van Ness Avenue between Market Street and Golden Gate Avenue is influenced by two major civic features: the intersection of Market Street and Van Ness Avenue and the San Francisco Civic Center. Firstly, the intersection of Market Street and Van Ness Avenue marks the convergence of two of the City's most prominent streets. Like Van Ness Avenue, Market Street is one of the widest streets in the City. Market Street has historically been the City's most prominent street, and today it is used for most parades and ceremonial events, in addition to being the City's focal commercial center. It serves as the backbone of the City's regional transit systems and is the busiest pedestrian and cycling street in the city. The City's historic streetcar line runs along this stretch of Market Street. This intersection is bustling with pedestrian, bicycle, streetcar, bus, auto and truck traffic. The crosswalks are wide, and crossing distances long. The wires of the overhead contact system (OCS) that support the electric buses and streetcars stretch across this intersection and are a noteworthy visual feature characteristic of both the Van Ness Avenue and Market Street corridors. The middle of the intersection offers limited views of the hills of Twin Peaks and

Sutro Tower to the distant west, and the skyscrapers of downtown to the east with a distant glimpse of the Ferry Building at the Embarcadero. Aside from these limited vistas, this area lacks a scenic quality (Photo 10). This intersection is largely surrounded by modern, multi-story (approximately three to seven story) commercial buildings of unremarkable architecture; with the exception of the Masonic Temple building[3] located on the northwest corner. This building exhibits a classical architectural style and is an aesthetic feature at this location. Market Street sidewalks are lined with mature trees and tall, decorative light poles that are historic in style. Despite these aesthetic streetscape features along Market Street, the overall surrounding commercial properties and the wide roadways dominate the visual character. Although this intersection is the convergence of two of the City's most prominent boulevards, there is an overall lack of remarkable architecture, streetscape and landscaping

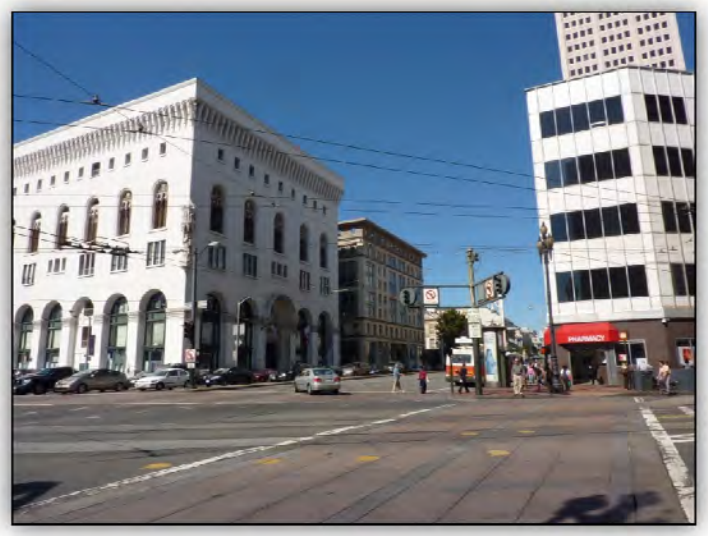


Photo 10. Van Ness Ave. / Market St. intersection (looking north).

Secondly, civic uses dominate the segment of the Van Ness Avenue corridor between Market Street and Golden Gate Avenue, including the San Francisco Civic Center. This stretch of the Van Ness Avenue corridor supports many civic uses which are housed in buildings of noteworthy architecture that are historic and monumental in character. Images of the Civic Center area are provided in Figure 5 (Photos 11-18). Generally buildings are three to six stories in height, with the exception of the AAA Building which reaches 26 stories and is a dominant visual feature on the horizon from viewpoints throughout this segment and from South Van Ness Avenue.

The stretch of Van Ness Avenue located between Hayes Street and Redwood Street is part of the Civic Center Historic District, shown in Figure 6. The Civic Center Historic District consists of two large plazas (Civic Center Plaza and United Nations Plaza) and a number of surrounding buildings of classical architecture. The Civic Center Historic District is an aggregation of these monumental buildings. One of the most visually striking of these buildings is San Francisco City

[3] The Masonic Temple Building is an office building located at 11-35 Van Ness Avenue that is listed in the California Register of Historic Resources and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (JRP, 2009).

Photo 11. Van Ness Avenue in Civic Center Historic District.

Photo 12. City Hall on Van Ness Avenue.

Photo 13. Wide sidewalks, planters and sculpture .

Photo 14. Hall of Justice & War Memorial Building on Van Ness Avenue.

Photo 15. Civic Center lighting standards

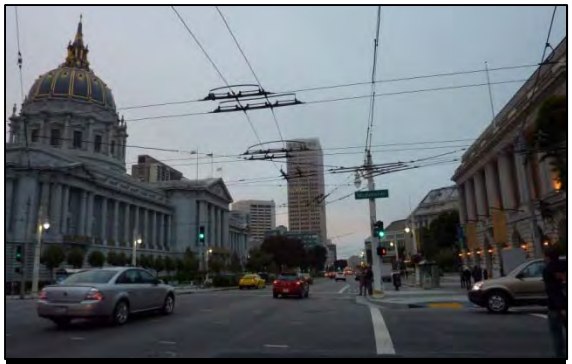


Photo 16. Van Ness Ave/McAllister St. intersection looking south.

Photo 127 Civic Center Streetscape.

Photo 18. Civic Center signage.

Figure 5
Images of Civic Center Historic District

Figure 6. Civic Center Historic District Map

Hall located on Van Ness Avenue between Grove and McAllister Streets. City Hall is visible from many points along the corridor, and the dome of the hall is visible from distant views of the corridor including many scenic vistas of downtown San Francisco. The rear facade of City Hall faces Van Ness Avenue, across from the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center. The San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center is comprised of a matched pair of buildings, the War Memorial Opera House and the War Memorial Veterans Building. The San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center is one of largest performing arts centers in the United States, and its monumental architecture lends a strong, visual presence in the corridor. This segment of Van Ness Avenue offers views of City Hall, the Supreme Court of California and associated government facilities, the War Memorial Veterans Building, San Francisco Symphony, Opera Center, and Bill Graham Civic Auditorium. All of these buildings exhibit noteworthy architecture, both historic and monumental in character. The sidewalks of Van Ness Avenue through this area are wide, ranging up to 32 ft wide in places, and

the buildings are generally set well back from the sidewalk behind landscaped planters that surround the building facades. Granite steps lead from the sidewalks to the entrances of City Hall and the Opera House. These features contribute to the feeling that this stretch of Van Ness Avenue is a grand boulevard.

Streetscape features within the Civic Center Historic District are designed and maintained to provide a cohesive visual quality. Garbage receptacles are painted white like the OCS support poles/streetlights. The bases of the OCS support poles/streetlights are painted gold within the district. Baskets of flowers hang from the poles. Recently installed sidewalk planters surrounded with low iron rod fencing are located curbside along the avenue in front of City Hall. The Van Ness Avenue center median located in front of City Hall and the War Memorial Building (between Grove and Hayes Streets) features an approximate four-ft tall fence that is designed and painted to mimic the iron work, civic blue in color, found throughout the Civic Center. A row of consistently planted and uniformly pruned trees lines the planters in front of City Hall. The sidewalk trees consistently spaced between the OCS support poles/streetlights frame the rear façade of City Hall, contributing to its monumental presence.

The median along Van Ness Avenue between Hayes Street and Golden Gate Avenue is landscaped with red and white flowering shrubs, and features red blooming, mature trees. These street blocks feature some of the best maintained landscaped medians in the project corridor. The well-maintained landscaping and streetscape in this stretch of the corridor, together with remarkable architecture of the civic buildings makes this area one of highest quality visual areas within the project corridor, as well as one of the most scenic destinations in the City.

While the landscape and themes and the monumental architecture create a visual cohesiveness and scenic quality to the Civic Center Historic District, the district feels modern. Van Ness Avenue remains a character defining feature through the historic district, and the modern roadway and streetscape mix with historic period architecture. Thus, one gets the feeling of prominence and monument in the Civic Center Historic District, and less the feeling of being in a historic time period.

Golden Gate Avenue to Broadway Street (Mixed Use Commercial/ High-Density Residential)

Between Golden Gate Avenue and Broadway Street, Van Ness Avenue supports a mix of commercial and residential uses, and feels largely commercial and high density in character (Photo 19). This area is the core of the Van Ness Avenue corridor commercial district, which is one of the major commercial districts in the city (City of San Francisco, 2004). Most buildings are three or more stories, with the ground floor occupied by commercial establishments. The ground-floor commercial uses in this area are varied and provide an active and visually

interesting atmosphere. There are several restaurants, banks, hotels, automobile dealerships, offices, churches and movie theatres along this stretch of Van Ness Avenue. The AMC Theatres (Photo 20) and the Regency Ballroom concert venue are major activity centers in the corridor, and occupy buildings of noteworthy architecture, historic in character. There are several buildings of historic architecture along this stretch of Van Ness Avenue; including multiple buildings from the historic Auto Row period (JRP, 2009). Mixed in with these noteworthy buildings of historic periods are buildings of unique modern architecture (Figure 4, Photo 2; and Photo 21). There are also multiple street blocks with well-maintained and landscaped medians featuring mature trees and flowering shrubs, listed in Section 4.4. At the same time, there are several blocks lacking a landscaped median. Sidewalk tree plantings are inconsistent throughout this segment. Thus some street blocks offer a higher scenic quality than others, and overall this portion of the corridor is eclectic in feel.

Photo 19. High-rise residential with ground floor commercial.

Photo 20. AMC Theatre Historic Building at Van Ness Avenue /O'Farrrell Street.

Photo 21. Modern architecture on Van Ness Avenue/O'Farrell Street, across O'Farrell Street from AMC Theatre.

Another major character-defining feature of this segment of Van Ness Avenue is based on the relationship between topography and building height. The residential uses in this portion of the corridor tend to be high-rise, high density apartment buildings of recent construction with commercial establishments occupying the ground floor. The Daniel Burnham Court high-rise mixed-use commercial/residential towers are one such example and are a dominant visual feature in this area (Figure 4, Photo 2). These high-rise buildings, including the Holiday Inn, are visible from many points along the corridor, and from distant views of the corridor due partly to the location of these structures near the top of a ridgeline. Generally speaking, the tallest buildings in the Van Ness Avenue corridor are centered along the top of an east-west trending ridgeline that meets Van Ness Avenue approximately between Bush and Washington Streets. Development of taller buildings at hilltops and the gradual tapering of height to the Bay waterfront is a development trend characteristic of San Francisco (City of San Francisco, 1990). This development trend allows for maximized views of the ocean and Bay, and these high-rise developments offer such views.

Moreover, the topography of this area allows for scenic, easterly views of Nob Hill and Chinatown experienced at intersections of Van Ness Avenue with east-west crossing streets. Also, limited views of the Bay and Angel Island are experienced along Van Ness Avenue from the center of the intersections with Washington, Jackson and Pacific streets.

Broadway Street to North Point (Residential)

The northern end of the project corridor between Broadway and North Point streets is overall residential and lower density in feel. This segment of the corridor predominately supports multi-family residential apartment buildings and neighborhood-serving commercial establishments. Most buildings are three-story residential buildings with small-scale businesses occupying the ground floor. Commercial uses occupy most street corners, and there are a cluster of hotels located near Lombard Street. St. Brigid Church (Photo 22), located on the southwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and Broadway Street, is of noteworthy Romanesque architecture, and is an important visual feature that is visible from many points within the corridor. The Galileo Academy of Science and Technology, a high school, is located at the corner of Van Ness Avenue and Francisco Street. Fort Mason, which is part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) managed by the National Park Service, is located along the east side of Van Ness Avenue, north of Bay Street. Fort Mason is a major activity center in the Van Ness Avenue corridor that serves as an important cultural center in the city and is comprised of special event facilities, classrooms, offices, commercial establishments, open space, and waterfront facilities. However, Fort Mason does not have much of a visual presence in the project corridor.

Views of Fort Mason from the corridor are mostly limited to a tall, stucco retaining wall along the western sidewalk of Van Ness Avenue. The high-rise Fontana West apartment building located just northeast of North Point and Van Ness Avenue is an exception to the City's development trend of buildings of reduced height near the Bay, and this 16-story, dual tower building is a dominant visual feature on the northern horizon from within the project corridor.

Aside from the aforementioned uses, this segment of Van Ness Avenue has a relatively well-defined pattern of individual apartment buildings of similar height and character lining the street, interspersed with ground-floor, neighborhood serving retail uses (Photos 23). This area is along the gently, north-facing slope of the ridgeline and limited views of the Bay and Angel Island are visible from the center of Van Ness Avenue. Sidewalk tree plantings are fairly consistent throughout this segment of Van Ness Avenue and mature tree canopies along the sidewalks and in some street block medians lend a scenic quality and create shade. The intersections of Van Ness Avenue and the cross streets of Filbert, Greenwich and Lombard streets offer scenic views of the distant Presidio.

Photo 22. St. Brigid Church.

Photo 23. Well defined pattern of apartment buildings in the northern Van Ness corridor.

4.4 IMPORTANT VISUAL ELEMENTS WITHIN VIEWSHED

Civic Center Historic District

As described in Section 4.2, the Civic Center Historic District is an important visual element in the Van Ness Avenue Corridor offering striking views of high quality architecture that exemplifies the City Beautiful Movement. The City Beautiful movement was an urban planning reform movement in the United States that flourished in the 1890s and 1900s with the intent of using beautification and monumental grandeur in cities to create moral and civic virtue among urban populations. The Civic Center is considered by many to have the finest and most complete manifestation of the City Beautiful movement in the United States.[4] City Hall is a celebrated example of Beaux-Arts architecture, and features a dome roof that is 366 ft in diameter and 390 ft tall, making it the fifth largest dome in the world. City Hall's dome is a dominant feature of the City's downtown skyscape from several vistas in the City. On occasion the dome is lit in color to commemorate special events (Photo 24). City Hall is often depicted in post cards, movies, and other media images, and is a character defining feature of San Francisco. The Civic Center is a group of monumental buildings around a central open space, the Civic Center Plaza. The pedestrian elements and plazas are concentrated along Polk, Larkin and Hyde Streets. Van Ness Avenue plays a peripheral role in this monumental assemblage, as shown in Figure 6 (JRP, 2009). The San Francisco Civic Center Historic District is comprised of 456 acres containing nineteen buildings, nine of which are significant to the character of the district (JRP, 2009). Two of these nine buildings are located along Van Ness Avenue: City Hall (described above) and the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center.

[4] http://www.nps.gov/history/nhl/designations/listsofNHLs.htm. accessed July 22, 2009.

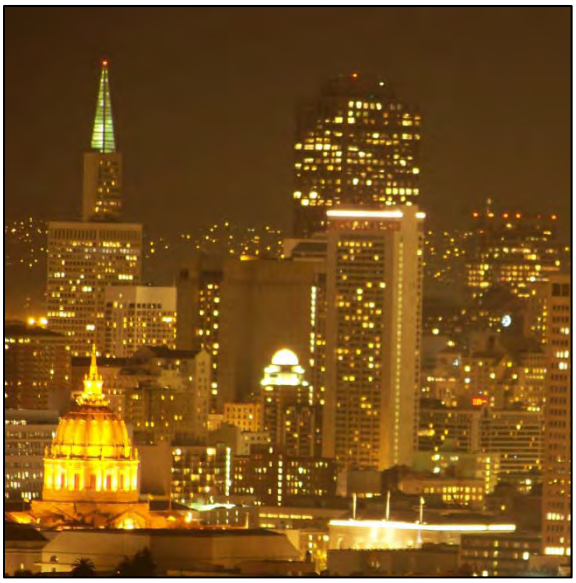


Photo 24. City Hall in Downtown Skyscape illuminated in orange to commemorate the San Francisco Giants 2010 World Series Championship.

These buildings display Beaux Arts architectural styles, the dominant architectural theme of the Civic Center, and are monumental in character (Figure 5). The San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center covers seven and one-half acres in the Civic Center Historic District. The Center is comprised of the War Memorial Opera House, the War Memorial Veterans Building (including the Herbst Theatre and Green Room), Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall, Harold L. Zellerbach Rehearsal Hall and the Memorial Court. Most of these buildings front Van Ness Avenue, and the War Memorial Opera House and the War Memorial Veterans Building comprise the block of Van Ness Avenue across from City Hall. This block of Van Ness Avenue located between Grove and McAllister Streets is one of the most character-defining locations in the historic district, and of the Van Ness Avenue corridor.

In fact, the Civic Center is one of the most important and character defining, scenic resources in San Francisco. It is a major tourist destination due to the scenic experience it offers, in addition to the many cultural events held in the various buildings and plazas that comprise it. It is a major destination in the City for civic purposes, entertainment, tourism, and employment. Thus, all major viewer groups described in Section 4.2 frequent the historic district and would be sensitive to changes in its character and scenic quality.

Significant Buildings and Architecture

As stated in the City Urban Design Element, Van Ness Avenue is endowed with a number of attractive buildings, mostly older buildings, which reflect a flavor characteristic of San Francisco's unique architectural style and heritage (City of San Francisco, 1990). Several architecturally distinguished buildings of diverse design and age flank Van Ness Avenue throughout the project corridor. Architectural styles along the Avenue include Romanesque, Gothic, Spanish Colonial, Renaissance/ Baroque, Beaux Arts Classical, and Modern. There are some common architectural themes among these buildings, but for the most part they vary in style and context, and are scattered throughout the corridor. Many buildings of noteworthy architecture contribute to the character of the corridor as experienced by all viewer groups in the corridor. At the same time, several of these buildings, like City Hall and the Holiday Inn, are

dominant features in the viewshed experienced from distant vistas. The Van Ness Avenue corridor is a rich and attractive architectural environment.

For this, the City maintains a list of Significant Buildings and Contributory Buildings in Appendices A and B, respectively, of the Van Ness Area Plan. Significant Buildings are buildings that have been identified as contributing to the rich architectural environment of Van Ness Avenue and warrant special consideration in planning. The Area Plan calls for preservation of these buildings (32 listed), and for them to serve as a basis for the theme and scale of future, adjacent development. Several of these buildings in addition to other buildings in the project corridor are listed in, or have been determined eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), or as a City Landmark (JRP, 2009). The Area Plan calls for careful review of alteration of these buildings for conformity with building-specific guidelines described in the Area Plan.

Buildings identified as Contributory Buildings in the Van Ness Area Plan are buildings that are not of sufficient importance to justify their designation as landmarks. Nevertheless these buildings possess architectural qualities which are in harmony with the prevailing characteristics of the landmark quality buildings, and they contribute to the character of the avenue. These buildings are not suggested for City Landmark status; nonetheless they are also warranted special consideration in planning, and are to be preserved as feasible. Van Ness Area Plan Appendix A Significant Buildings and Appendix B Contributory Buildings are provided as Attachment 1 to this document.

Aside from the Civic Center Historic District described above, the NRHP and CRHR listed properties and properties designated as City Landmarks, Significant and Contributory Buildings do not occur cohesively or with visual continuity in the Van Ness Avenue corridor. Most buildings of noteworthy historic architecture are adorned with modern signage, awnings or other features, and/or occur within the context of surrounding modern architecture or streetscape (Photos 20 and 21).

All major viewer groups described in Section 4.2 experience views of significant buildings in the corridor. Sensitive viewer groups (residents, commuters, and tourists) would be sensitive to changes in the character and visual quality of these buildings.

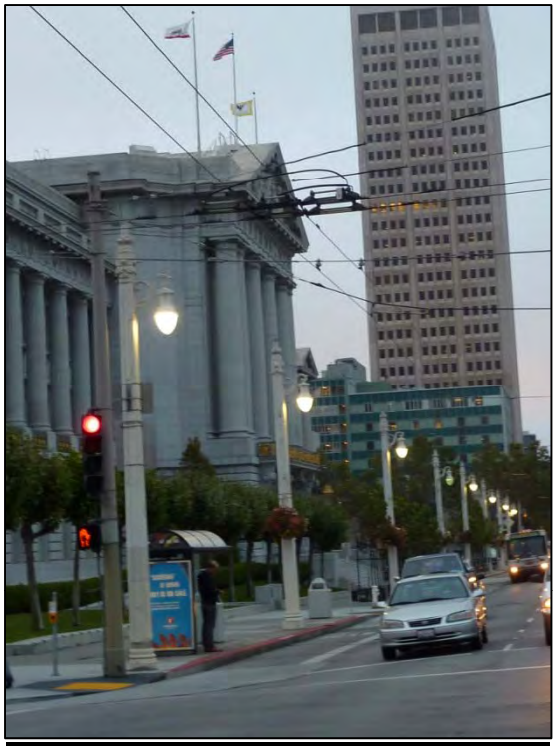


Photo 25. OCS support pole/streetlights appearing as a linear feature in Civic Center.

Photo 27. Modern poles and storefront canopies inserted in between OCS support pole/streetlight network.

Photo 28. Pole clutter at Bay St/Van Ness Ave.

Photo 30. Well maintained OCS support pole/streetlight with gold trim in Civic Center Historic District.

Photo 26. OCS support pole/streetlight network more visually prominent in front of City Hall.

Photo 29. Visually prominent pole/streetlight at corner of Van Ness Avenue/Geary Street.

Figure 7
Images of OCS Support Pole/Streetlight Network

OCS Support Poles/Streetlights

The only continuous streetscape design element on Van Ness Avenue are the OCS support poles/streetlights, which line both sidewalks of the street between Market and North Point streets. Images of the OCS support poles/streetlights are depicted in Figure 7 (Photos 25-30). The OCS support poles/streetlights are a streetscape feature unique to Van Ness Avenue that contribute to the eclectic visual character of the corridor. These poles were constructed in 1914 as part of the passenger Municipal Rail that was constructed up the median of Van Ness Avenue from Market Street to North Point. The poles served to support the OCS system of wires that ran the electric rail, and today serves to power the Muni bus system on Van Ness Avenue. The OCS is a character defining feature of the corridor, and is associated with the larger identity and character of San Francisco. The poles also support the main lighting system for the corridor. A single tear-drop, pendant light hangs from each pole over the roadway. Aside from the occasional modern cobra light pole and lights mounted on buildings, the OCS support poles/streetlights provide the only light for the roadway and sidewalks of Van Ness Avenue. Banners hang from below the pendant lights, and in the Civic Center flower baskets also hang from the poles. Traffic signals and signage are affixed to many of the poles.

The poles are a slender, square form column of Corinthian classical architectural style that slightly taper with height. The poles reach a height of approximately 25 ft. The poles are concrete, and are adorned with a decorative, foliated finial and base made of cast iron. The base is square with a modest foliated design (JRP, 2009). The poles are composed of reinforced concrete, and the entire pole is painted a uniform white, including the light fixtures. The tear-drop shaped light fixtures project from the upper portion of the pole, slightly beneath the decorative finial. These light fixtures were not part of the original pole design, and were added in 1936 when the poles were moved to accommodate a 12-ft widening of the roadway. While all of the finials are original, the bases are a mixture of original cast iron and replacement fiberglass castings that replicate the original. The fiberglass base replicas are used to replace the damaged, original bases. Many of the poles are damaged (Photos 31-33). In addition to damaged and replaced bases, many of the columns are spalling, show deterioration and are leaning (City of San Francisco, 2010). In the 1990s the City began replacing the most damaged poles with modern

Photos 31-33. Damaged and leaning OCS support pole/streetlights.

poles of nondescript design, or adding these modern poles adjacent to original poles so that the modern poles could carry the load of the OCS (City of San Francisco, 2010). In some places where these modern poles have been added, the visual continuity of the original OCS support pole/streetlights as well as the overall visual setting is degraded by pole clutter (Figure 7, Photos 27 and 28).

An assessment of the pole's eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) found that the original network of poles do not appear eligible for listing because their potential historic significance is undermined by a lack of physical integrity (JRP, 2009).[5] Although the OCS support poles/streetlights are not eligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR, they are designated as California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) Historical Resource Status Code 6L, which indicates that they may warrant special consideration in local planning, much like the Significant and Contributory Buildings identified by the City in the Van Ness Area Plan.

Regardless of the historic status of the OCS support poles/streetlights, they represent a streetscape element and visual resource in the Van Ness Avenue corridor, and at the same time the Civic Center Historic District. The OCS support poles/streetlights are the only visually notable infrastructural element occurring consistently along Van Ness Avenue that displays design with esthetic intent. As explained above, the OCS support poles/streetlights were built as part of the Municipal Rail which was constructed to serve the Panama Pacific Exposition in 1915; Van Ness Avenue served as the eastern boundary to the Exposition site. The OCS support pole/streetlight network was designed to visually connect and provide a "ribbon of light" between the Civic Center and the Panama Pacific Exposition (JRP, 2009). This cohesive design intent of the poles/streetlights for the avenue is more noticeable along some blocks of Van Ness Avenue than others. Today sidewalk trees, storefront canopies, and modern poles partially block views of the poles and streetlights along many blocks of Van Ness Avenue, and the role of the poles to bring a character defining design intent to the avenue is diminished. At some locations the poles are located closer to the street corner where they have a more prominent presence, like the southern corners of Van Ness Avenue and Geary Street (Figure 7, Photo 29). The OCS support poles/streetlights are more visually prominent in the Civic Center Historic District because views of them are less obstructed and they appear as a more cohesive, linear feature due to the wide sidewalks and setbacks of buildings behind landscaped planters (Figure 7, Photos 25 and 30). The OCS support poles/streetlights within the district have generally less signage attached to them, and there are fewer modern support poles. For these reasons they occur as more visually prominent features within the historic district in comparison to the remainder of the corridor where they stand in greater proximity to adjacent buildings and are more often

[5] The California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) reviewed and concurred with the eligibility findings in a letter dated April 27, 2010.

obstructed by trees, modern signage, and other pole clutter. In Photo 26 (Figure 7) it is possible to see how the OCS support poles/streetlights are more visually prominent in front of City Hall and then become less prominent further north along Van Ness Avenue where they are obstructed by trees, pole clutter, and adjacent buildings.

Also, within the Civic Center Historic District the bases of the poles are painted gold to contribute to the visual setting, uniformity, and character of the district. The white-buff color of the poles matches the color scheme of the Civic Center. The trees in front of City Hall have been uniformly pruned to reach approximately three-fourths the height of the OCS support poles/streetlights. Together the OCS support poles/streetlights and trees form a cohesive, linear feature that neatly frames City Hall and contributes to the monumental feeling of this location.

At night the lighting of the tear-drop shaped pendant lights makes the pole/streetlight network more visually prominent, particularly in the Civic Center area where they are notably less obstructed by trees, signage and adjacent buildings. At night, the poles present a visual continuity to the multiple street blocks and buildings that comprise the Civic Center (Figure 7, Photo 25). The OCS support poles/streetlights provide nighttime, visual continuity beyond the Civic Center and throughout the project corridor. This visual continuity throughout the Van Ness Avenue corridor is not nearly as prominent in daytime, and is significantly less a character defining feature for the corridor in daylight. In daylight and without the effects of nighttime lighting, the OCS support poles/streetlights fade into streetscape, tree canopies and backdrop of buildings.

The OCS support poles/streetlights are an important component of the viewshed experienced by all major viewer groups described in Section 4.2, including sensitive viewer groups (residents, commuters, and tourists). Thus, all viewer groups would be sensitive to changes in the character and visual quality of the OCS support poles/streetlights.

Landscaping and Trees

The landscaped medians and tree plantings along Van Ness Avenue contribute to the character and visual quality of the corridor, and thus are one of the most important visual features in the corridor. As described in the Van Ness Corridor Initial Land Use and Urban Design Needs Assessment, the Van Ness Avenue corridor lacks a comprehensive landscaping and tree planting scheme. While most blocks of Van Ness Avenue feature a fairly consistent row of sidewalk trees of varied type and maturity, the presence of trees in the median is less consistent throughout the corridor. Nonetheless the trees and sporadic, wide medians are character defining features of the corridor. A description of the varied landscaping and tree planting in the corridor follows.

A tree survey conducted in support of the proposed project identified a total of 415 trees located within the project corridor (BMS, 2009). Of these trees, 101 trees are located in the median and 314 trees are located along the sidewalks. The London Plane Tree is the most common sidewalk tree. Approximately half (46) of the 101 median trees are mature, while the other half (55) are young trees. Many young trees were planted between 2006 and 2010 as part of the Van Ness Enhancements Project which was a landscape improvement project completed by the SFDPW. The mature sidewalk and median trees are not consistently placed; however, most young trees have been planted evenly spaced apart and with some design esthetic intent. Most young trees in the median are located along the narrow, concrete stretches of median without landscaping. Most sidewalk trees are without surrounding landscaping. There are no tree plantings or landscaping component at existing bus shelters and stops along Van Ness Avenue. Aside from sidewalk planters and hanging flower baskets along Van Ness Avenue in the Civic Center, there are no landscaped areas in the corridor other than the median.

The medians of Van Ness Avenue are of varied dimension and composition throughout the corridor. Some medians are a narrow concrete strip without plantings of any kind, or with recently planted trees and no other landscaping. Some medians are landscaped with flowering shrubs, some feature mature trees while some medians have young trees or no trees. The median in block of Van Ness Avenue between California and Sacramento streets features large potted plants. Several landscaped medians feature a grey tone, block decorative trim along the curb, consistent with streetscape policies in the Van Ness Area Plan. Multiple street blocks with a landscaped median feature a landscape theme of red, white and blue flowering shrubs. This landscape theme is most evident in the well-maintained medians located within the Civic Center Historic District. Some of the mature, median trees paired with this shrub landscape theme feature matching red blossoms. The decorative block trim and the red-white-blue flowering shrubs are the only identifiable landscape themes in project corridor, and they are not typically found on consecutive street blocks with the exception of within the Civic Center Historic District where this theme is carried along three consecutive blocks. Images of the varying median configurations and sidewalk tree plantings are depicted in Figure 8 (Photos 34-40).

Overall, the presence of median trees and landscaping varies throughout the project corridor, and some blocks offer a higher scenic quality than others. The variation in median width and composition throughout the corridor has a noteworthy affect on the visual quality of each street block. Street blocks featuring a wide, landscaped median with mature trees have a higher visual quality than street blocks without a landscaped median. The blocks of Van Ness Avenue featuring high quality medians with mature trees that create a picturesque quality are listed in Table 2.

Photo 34. Varied tree type in Van Ness corridor.

Photo 35. Potted plants in landscaped median.

Photo 36. Mature median trees.

Photo 37. Red-flowering shrubs match tree blossoms in high quality landscaped median.

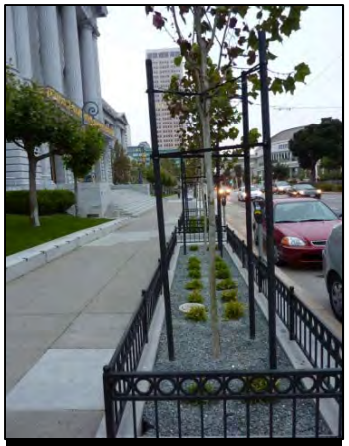


Photo 38. Civic Center sidewalk planters .

Photo 39. Young trees in narrow, concrete median.

Photo 40. Civic Center landscaping along Van Ness Avenue.

Figure 8
Landscape and Trees in Van Ness Corridor

Table 2. High Quality Landscaped Medians Featuring Mature Tree Canopies

Van Ness Avenue Block	Median	Landscaping	Tree Canopy
Hayes – Grove streets	Extends half block; Features decorative block trim.	Red-white-blue flowering shrubs	Mature tree canopy; red blooming trees.
Grove – McAllister streets	Three-quarters of block; Features decorative block trim; Blue-gold painted iron rod fence.	Red-white-blue flowering shrubs	Mature tree canopy; red blooming trees.
McAllister Street – Golden Gate Avenue	Extends half block; Features decorative block trim.	Red-white-blue flowering shrubs	Mature tree canopy
Turk – Eddy streets	Extends full block; Features decorative block trim.	Red-white-blue flowering shrubs	Mature tree canopy; red blooming trees.
Ellis – O'Farrell streets	Extends full block; Features decorative block trim.	White flowering shrubs, sporadically planted	Mature tree canopy
Sutter – Bush streets	Extends full block; Features decorative block trim.	Red-white-blue flowering shrubs	Mature tree canopy; red blooming trees.
Pine – California streets	Extends full block; Features decorative block trim.	Red-white-blue flowering shrubs	Mature tree canopy
Sacramento – Clay streets	Extends full block; Features decorative block trim.	White flowering shrubs	Mature tree canopy
Broadway – Pacific streets	Extends full block	white flowering shrubs	Mature tree canopy; red blooming trees.
Union – Filbert streets	Extends full block	white flowering shrubs	Mature tree canopy
Chestnut – Francisco streets	Extends full block	white flowering shrubs	Mature tree canopy
Bay – North Point streets	Extends full block; Features decorative block trim.	white flowering shrubs	Mature tree canopy

The landscaping and trees in the Van Ness Avenue corridor have a significant effect on the viewshed experienced by all major viewer groups described in Section 4.2, including motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, residents, commuters and tourists. All of these viewer groups, including sensitive viewer groups (residents, commuters, and tourists) would be sensitive to changes in the scenic quality of landscaping and trees in the corridor.

4.5 SCENIC VISTAS

As mentioned in Section 54.3, the topography of the project area allows for scenic vistas from the project corridor. Most vistas are experienced by looking east or west along streets that cross Van Ness Avenue. In the southern portion of the corridor, views to the east include scenic vistas of the Market Street corridor and distant downtown skyscrapers. Further north scenic views of the Nob Hill and the high-rises of Union Square are visible looking east from cross streets in the corridor. In the northern portion of the corridor, the cross streets of Filbert, Greenwich and Lombard streets offer scenic, westerly views of the distant Presidio. The intersection of North Point and Van Ness Avenue offers a glimpse of part of the Bay Bridge to the east.

The changing topography within the project corridor also allows for scenic views of the corridor itself. The top of the east-west trending ridgeline that transverses the Van Ness Avenue corridor peaks along Van Ness Avenue approximately between Bush and Washington Streets. The top of the south facing ridgeline provides scenic vistas to the south of the Van Ness Avenue corridor, some of which offer limited views of City Hall. Certain locations provide a limited, scenic glimpse of distant Potrero Hill. The north facing slope is greater than the south facing slope, and offers greater views. The top of the north facing ridgeline offers views to the north that include a limited, scenic snapshot of the Bay and Angel Island. Views from the bottom of the slope looking south show a particularly scenic portion of the Van Ness Avenue corridor where there is the largest concentration of mature trees in the median and sidewalks, and in which the tower of St. Brigid Church is a dominant visual feature. Figure 9 (Photos 41-44) depicts some of the aforementioned scenic vistas.

Photo 41. View of Van Ness Corridor looking south from Greenwich Street.

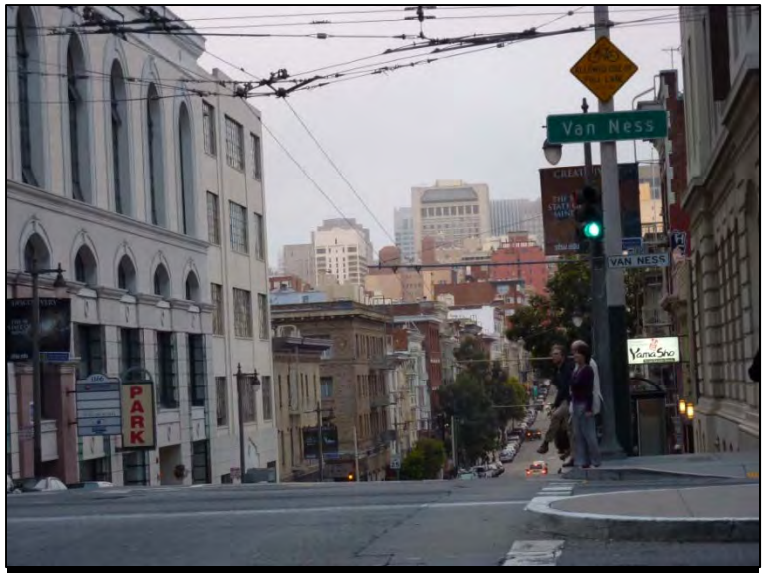


Photo 43. View of Nob Hill from Van Ness Avenue/O'Farrell Street.

Photo 42. View of Bay & Angel Island from Van Ness Avenue/Jackson Street.

Photo 44. View of Distant Presidio from Van Ness Avenue/Greenwich Street.

Figure 9
Scenic Vistas Viewed From Within the Van Ness Corridor

5. Environmental Consequences

5.1 IMPACT CRITERIA

Consideration of visual resource impacts of projects is required by NEPA and CEQA in preparation of environmental documents. The following impact criteria are taken from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, in addition to the San Francisco Planning Department Initial Study Checklist.

A project may have a significant impact on visual quality if it would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area, or which would substantially impact other people or properties;
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway; or other features of the built or natural environment which contribute to a scenic public setting; or
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

In addition, San Francisco has added a criterion regarding consideration of a proposed project's shadow effects, as evidenced in the San Francisco Planning Department Initial Study Checklist (San Francisco, 2008). The City's Initial Study Checklist states that a project is determined to have a significant shadow effect it if were to result in substantial new shadow on public open space under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Commission during the one hour before sunrise to one hour before sunset at any time of the year, or if shadows were to obscure direct sunlight on certain downtown sidewalks. The proposed project would not cast new shadows on public open space under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Commission, so this impact criterion is not further discussed.

Moreover, the City and County of San Francisco has established policies and regulations regarding visual resources which are discussed in detail in Sections 3.1 and 3.2. The proposed project may adversely affect visual resources if it conflicts with any objectives or polices in one of those applicable plans, including the San Francisco General Plan, San Francisco Better Streets Plan, and the Van Ness Corridor Initial Land Use and Urban Design Needs Assessment.

5.2 ANALYSIS OF KEY VIEWPOINTS

Key viewpoints, as shown in Figures 10-12, were identified to represent the visual character of the study corridor. The locations described below were selected because they are representative of areas where the project could affect existing visual quality and/or are proximate to important visual resources and sensitive visual receptors. Visual simulations of each proposed project build alternative are presented in Figures 10-12 in order to identify changes in the visual environment that would result.

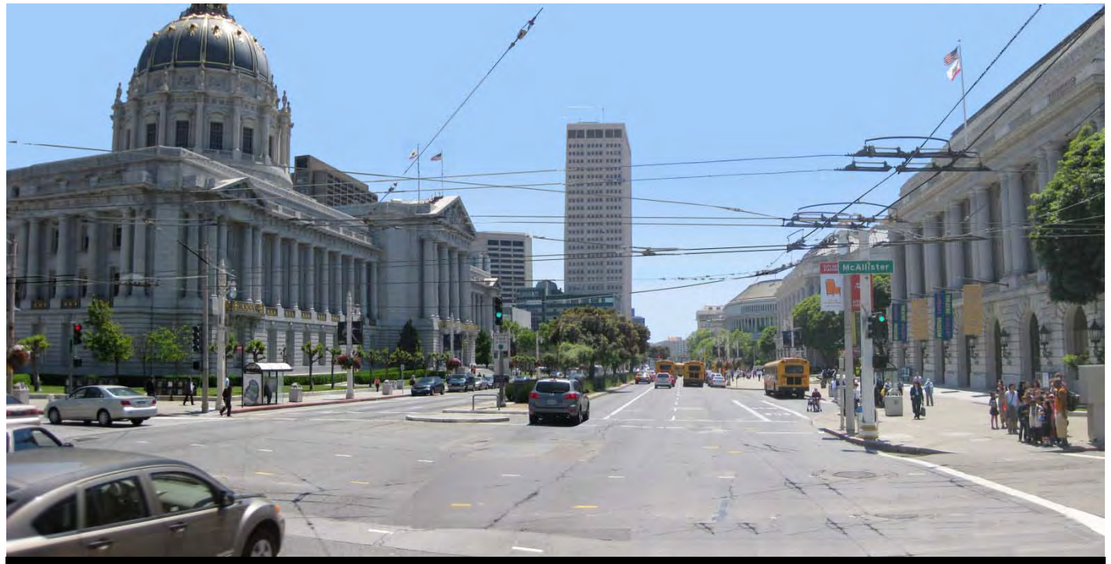
The architectural design of the BRT stations and OCS support pole/streetlight network shown in the visual simulations are representative only. Station and pole designs would be determined during the final design phase of the proposed project, reflecting comments from the public and other interested parties on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) review. Thus, a typical station and pole/streetlight design is depicted in the simulations presented in Figures 10-12. The landscape scheme, colored pavement and tree type would also be determined during the project final design phase, hence the landscaping and tree type shown is representative only.

The No-Build Alternative is represented in the existing conditions photograph because with the exception of continued spot replacement of OCS support poles/streetlights and upgrade of traffic signal poles to mast arm poles, no other physical structures would be installed. Moreover, since funding is not yet programmed for the aforementioned features and locations of pole replacement is not confirmed at this time, these features are not simulated.

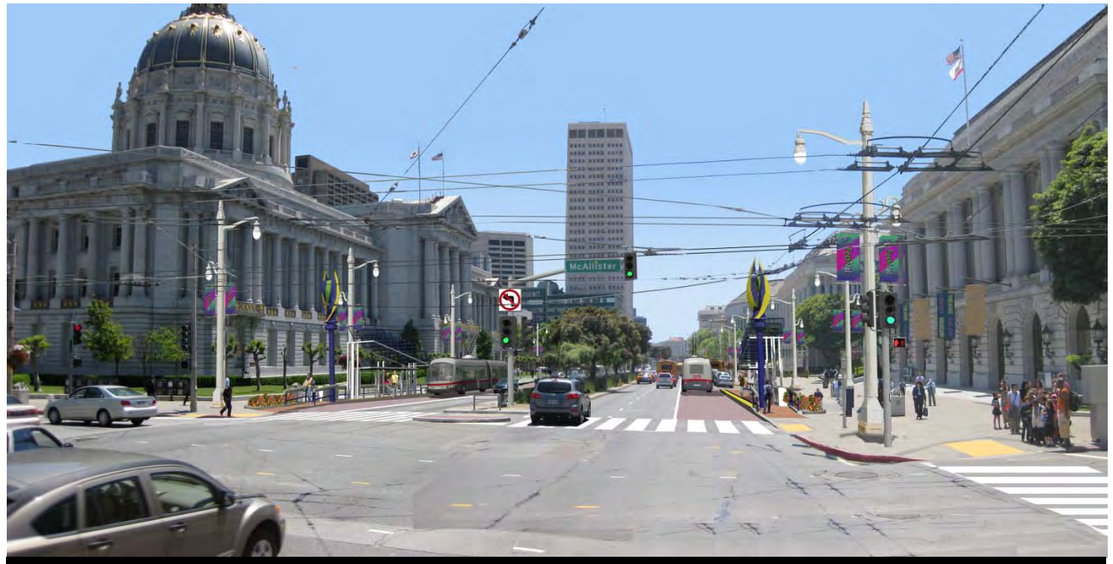
Description of key viewpoints follows, from south to north.

Viewpoint 1 – Van Ness Avenue at McAllister Street

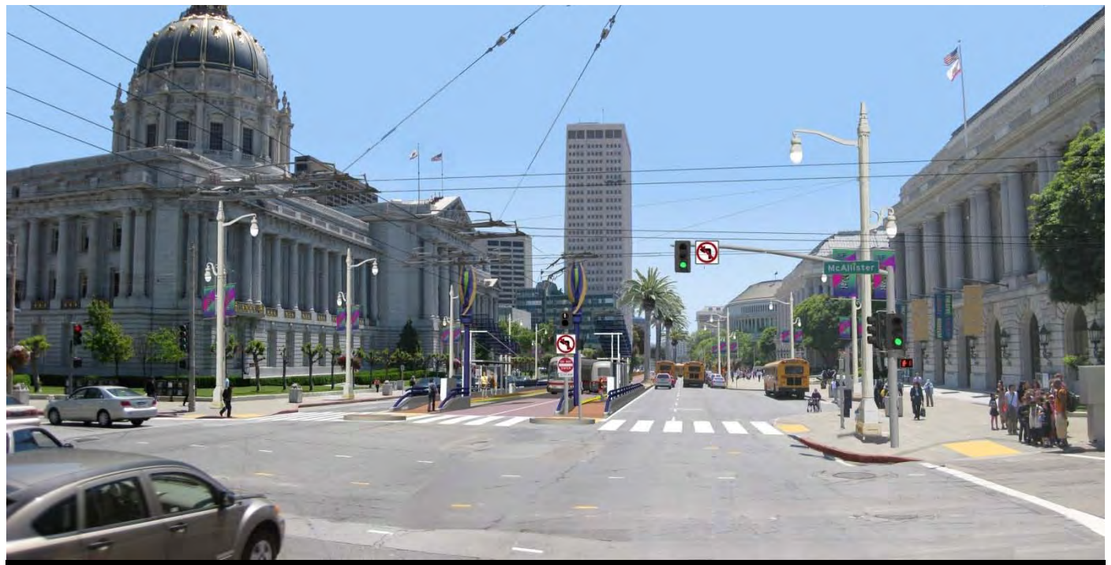
Viewpoint 1, depicted in Figure 10, is from the perspective of the northern crosswalk on Van Ness Avenue at the Van Ness Avenue/McAllister Street intersection, looking south. This location is within the Civic Center Historic District. City Hall is visible on the left (east side of Van Ness Avenue), and the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center is on the right (west side of Van Ness Avenue). The California Automobile Association Building high-rise office building is a dominant visual feature in the distant south of the viewshed. The OCS wires are visible over the roadways and intersection. The OCS support poles/streetlights are visible along the sidewalks of Van Ness Avenue. An existing Muni bus shelter is located at the southeast corner of Van Ness Avenue and McAllister Street. There is a nose cone (thumbnail island) pedestrian refuge in the far crosswalk, and curb bulbs at both corners. The median features mature trees and landscaping. Red-blooming trees match the surrounding landscape of



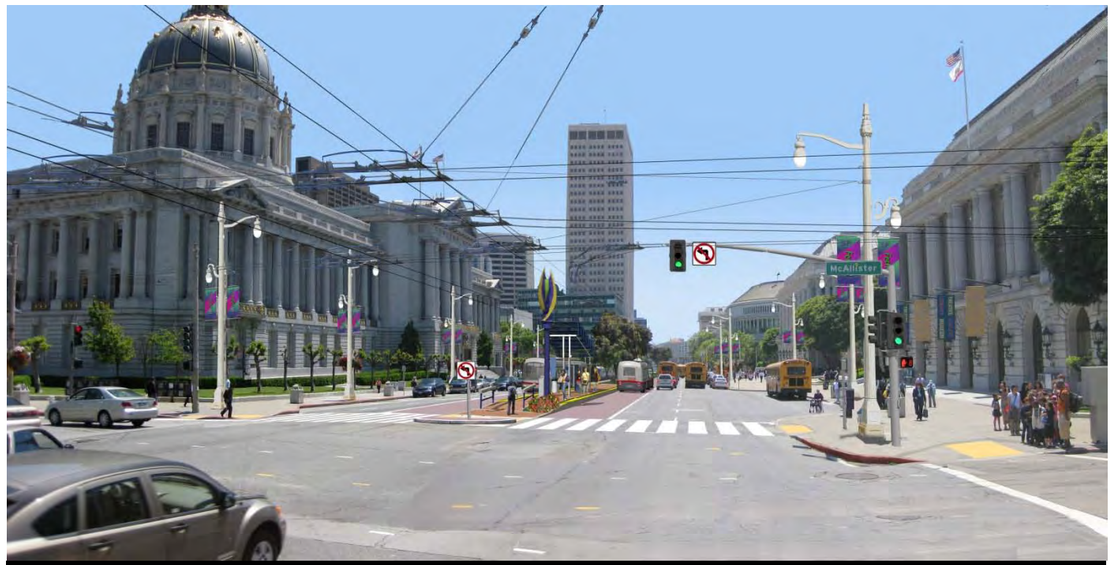
Alternative 1: Intersection of McAllister Street and Van Ness Avenue, Existing Conditions



Alternative 2: Intersection of McAllister Street and Van Ness Avenue



Alternative 3: Intersection of McAllister Street and Van Ness Avenue



Alternative 4: Intersection of McAllister Street and Van Ness Avenue

Figure 10

Viewpoint 1: Visual Simulations of Intersection of McAllister Street and Van Ness Avenue

red, white and blue blooming shrubs. This block of Van Ness Avenue features one of the best maintained medians, which contributes to a picturesque quality at this location. The dome of City Hall is the dominant visual feature, and this area is characterized by the wide roadway of Van Ness Avenue and the monumental buildings of the Civic Center. This viewpoint features all major types of historic and visually important features found in the Van Ness Avenue corridor, including significant buildings, the Civic Center Historic District, the OCS support pole/streetlights in the area where they are visually prominent, and the highest quality landscaped median. All viewer groups experience this location including tourist and commuter sensitive viewer groups. There are no immediate residential uses in this area; however high-rise residential buildings offer distant views of City Hall. The well-maintained landscaping and streetscape in this stretch of the corridor, together with remarkable architecture of the civic buildings makes this area one of highest quality visual areas within the project corridor. Thus Viewpoint 1 represents a highly sensitive visual setting.

Visual simulations of Viewpoint 1 depict the proposed BRT features and replacement network of OCS support pole/streetlights. The dedicated transitway is depicted with red colored pavement. The BRT bus fleet is shown traveling in the transitway. A typical station design is shown which features a canopy with rooftop solar paneling, wind shields, seating, ticket vending machines, signage/mapping, and garbage receptacles. A blue and gold colored wind turbine is depicted which would capture wind energy as a sustainable energy project feature.[6] This turbine would also serve as a wayfinding element that would brand the BRT service and aid in marking BRT station locations. A railing is present to separate the station platform from adjacent traffic lanes. A ramp extends from the crosswalk up to the station platform which sits approximately 10 inches to 12 inches above the street grade (approximately 6 inches above the sidewalk height). The station platform is approximately 150 ft in length for each build alternative, and would range in width between 10 ft to 25 ft, depending on the project alternative (see Section 1.2). The platform for Build Alternative 4 must generally accommodate both southbound and northbound travel, and thus is 25 ft wide, whereas the platform for Build Alternatives 2 and 3 needs only accommodate single-direction travel and is approximately 10 ft in width. The station canopy is shown in a blue, silver and white color scheme. The station canopy is approximately 9-15 ft above ground surface, and 38 ft in length. Under Build Alternatives 2 and 4, a landscaped planter is incorporated into the BRT station design, which serves to enhance the aesthetics of the station and to provide a buffer between transit patrons and pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

The most noteworthy changes to the visual context of Viewpoint 1 result from changes in the transitway and median configuration, changes to the median landscape and trees, introduction of

[6] Incorporation of wind turbines into the proposed BRT station design is still under evaluation. The turbines are included in the visual simulations to depict a scenario of the maximum anticipated visual changes that could occur with project implementation.

the BRT station (platform, canopy, solar paneling, and wind turbine), and replacement of the OCS support pole/streetlight network. Noteworthy differences in the visual setting between the build alternatives are apparent due to the difference in lane and median configuration. Build Alternative 2 features a side-lane transitway, adjacent to the curbside parking area. The station platform is on a curb extension from the sidewalk. The parking lane begins just south of the platform. The transitway for Build Alternatives 3 and 4 is in the center lanes, as depicted in the simulations. The simulation for Build Alternative 3 shows the side-by-side transit lanes located between two median strips. The strip of median to the west is approximately 9 ft wide, and supports the BRT station. The other median strip is narrower, at approximately 4 ft wide. The need to reconfigure the existing median into two median strips requires the removal of all existing median vegetation and trees. Thus the Build Alternative 3 simulation shows less landscaped area than the existing median, and shows replacement palm trees on the 9-ft, right-side medians. Build Alternative 4 shows a single 14-ft wide median with transit lanes located along either side of it. Existing median vegetation and trees are preserved, except where the BRT station is located. Thus the Build Alternative 4 simulation shows removal of existing landscaping and trees at the station site, and shows the trees and landscaping south of the station retained.

Other visual changes under all build alternatives include removal of the existing bus shelters located on the sidewalks of Van Ness Avenue near the southeast and southwest corners of the Van Ness Avenue/McAllister intersection. The traffic signal poles have been replaced with mast arm style signal poles that arch over the traffic lanes. Traffic signals are no longer mounted on the decorative OCS support poles/streetlights. Under Build Alternatives 3 and 4 the parallel OCS wires are shifted from the side lane to be centered over the center-lane transitway. The median features a nose cone pedestrian refuge framing the crosswalk with the median, and the crosswalk is paint-striped to improve visibility.

The visual simulations for the build alternatives depict a replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network.[7] The proposed replacement pole/lighting network is comprised of modern materials that are embellished with decorative elements that mimic the architectural style of the original OCS support pole/streetlight network. The poles are approximately five feet taller than the original poles, measuring approximately 30 ft in height, because taller poles are needed to better carry the OCS load. Each pole incorporates two light fixtures instead of one fixture like the original poles, in order to bring the corridor up to current roadway and pedestrian lighting standards. One light fixture serves to light the sidewalk, while the other light

[7] As noted in Section 1.1, under the No-Build scenario the OCS support poles/streetlights would continue to be replaced with modern, nondescript poles on an as-needed basis, or as a comprehensive replacement project if the needed funding becomes available. For the purposes of the visual simulations, the existing condition is used to represent the OCS support poles/streetlights in the No-Build Alternative since pole replacement plans are not confirmed at this time.

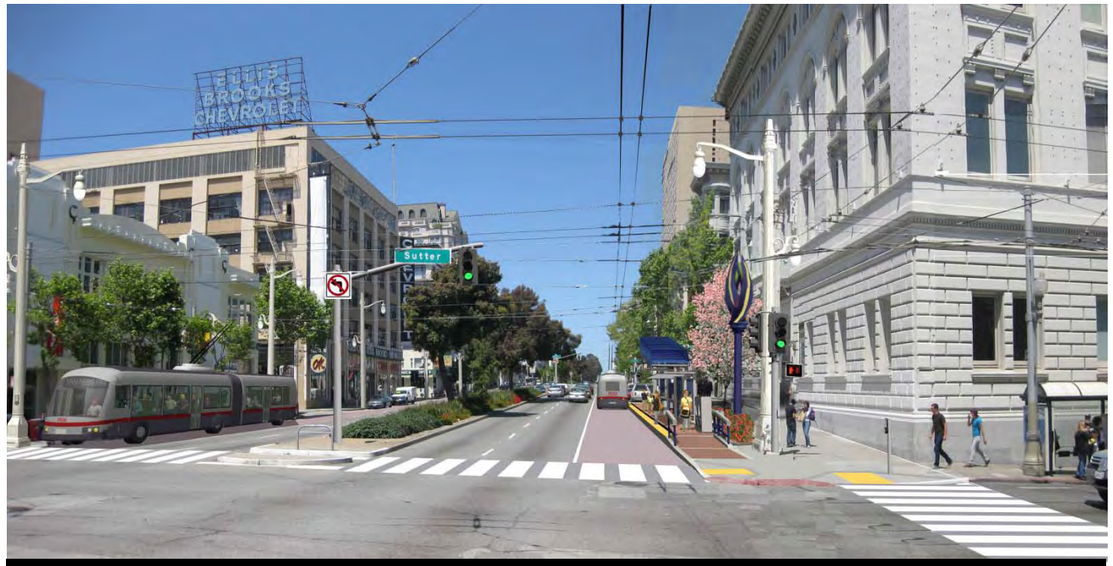
fixture hangs from an arm fixture extended over the roadway to improve roadway lighting. The replacement poles are round; however square-shaped bases and finials are added to the poles to be reminiscent of the original square column poles. The bases and finials mimic the original pole bases and finials. Similarly, the replacement poles feature teardrop pendant light fixtures reminiscent of the existing light fixtures. The replacement poles are shown in the same solid, white color as the existing poles. The pole bases are shown painted gold like the existing pole bases within the Civic Center Historic District. The replacement poles include a rack to allow for twin banners to be hung, instead of the single banner configuration currently used with the existing poles. Thus, the replacement poles are depicted with twin banners hung from each pole. In recognizing the visual and historic value of the OCS support pole/streetlight network, the replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network displayed in the simulations was developed by the SFDPW to create a feasible pole and light design that is reminiscent of the architectural style of the existing OCS support pole/streetlight network.

Viewpoint 2 – Van Ness Avenue at Sutter Street

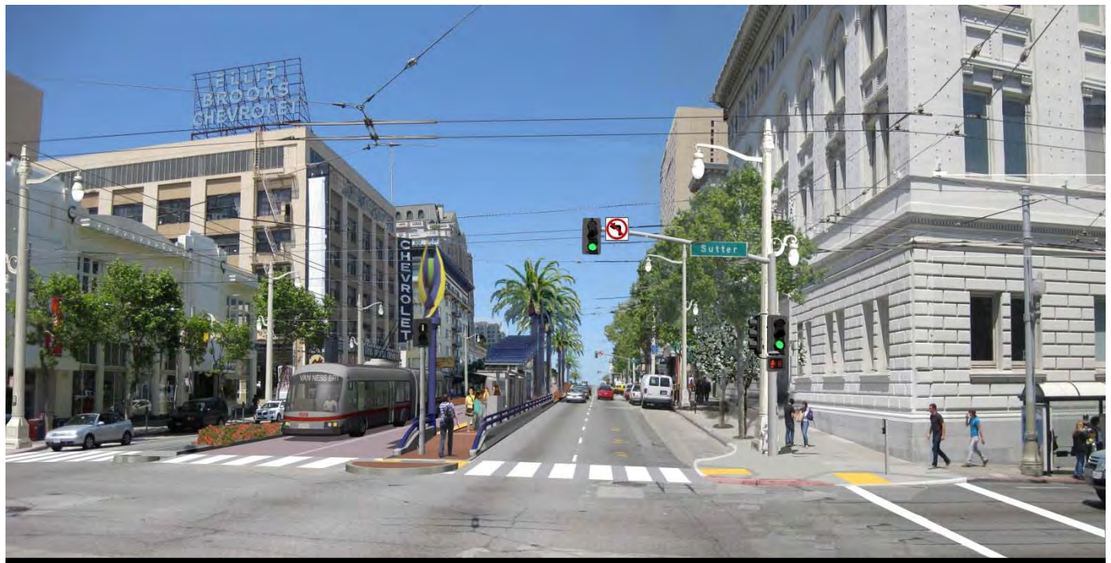
Viewpoint 2, depicted in Figure 11, is from the perspective of the southern crosswalk on Van Ness Avenue at the Van Ness Avenue/Sutter Street intersection, looking north. This location is within the mixed-use commercial/high-density residential segment of the project corridor described in Section 4.3. The Regency Ballroom, a city designated Significant Building, is visible on the northeast corner. There is an existing bus shelter at this location. The OCS wires are visible over the roadways and intersection. Although largely obstructed by sidewalk trees modern poles and signage, the OCS support poles/streetlights are visible along the sidewalks of Van Ness Avenue. There is a nose cone pedestrian refuge in the far crosswalk, and curb bulbs at both corners. The median features mature trees and landscaping, and is one of the best maintained landscaped medians in the project corridor. Viewpoint 2 is considered a key viewpoint because it displays a City designated Significant Building that is also a major performing arts venue, and one of the highest quality landscaped medians in the project corridor. All viewer groups experience this location, including sensitive view groups tourists and commuters. Thus, Viewpoint 2 represents a sensitive visual setting.

Visual simulations of Viewpoint 2 depict the proposed BRT features and replacement network of OCS support pole/streetlights. The transitway, BRT station, wind turbine, and lane-median configuration are depicted as described under Viewpoint 1. As in Viewpoint 1, median landscaping is removed to accommodate the BRT station under Build Alternatives 3 and 4, and the existing mature trees have been replaced with planted palm trees on the 9-ft right-side medians under Build Alternative 3. Other visual changes include removal of the existing bus shelter located on the sidewalk in front of the Regency Ballroom, near the northeast corner of Van Ness Avenue and Sutter Street. For Build Alternative 2, the median traffic signal pole has

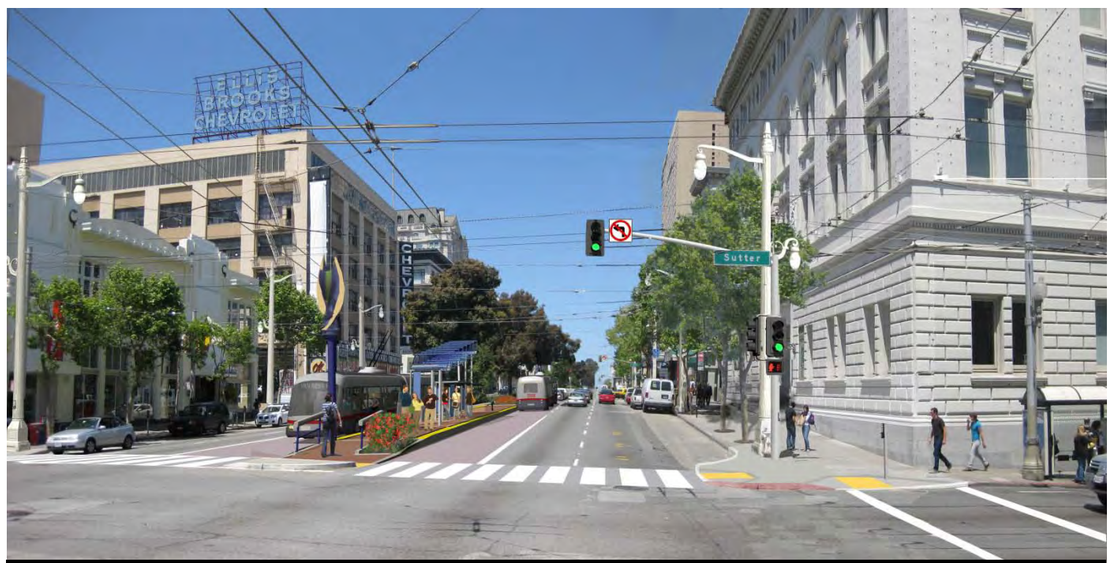
Alternative 1: Intersection of Sutter Street and Van Ness Avenue, Existing Conditions



Alternative 2: Intersection of Sutter Street and Van Ness Avenue



Alternative 3: Intersection of Sutter Street and Van Ness Avenue



Alternative 4: Intersection of Sutter Street and Van Ness Avenue

Figure 11
Viewpoint 2: Visual Simulations of Intersection of Sutter Street and Van Ness Avenue

been replaced with a mast arm style signal pole that arches over the traffic lanes. Build Alternatives 3 and 4 feature sidewalk mast arm poles. In addition, traffic signals are no longer mounted on the decorative OCS support poles/streetlights. Under Build Alternatives 3 and 4 the parallel OCS wires are shifted from the side lane to be centered over the center-lane transitway. The median features a nose cone pedestrian refuge framing the crosswalk with the median, and the crosswalk is paint-striped to improve visibility. Build Alternatives 3 and 4 feature curb bulbs and ramps, and a push-button APS pole at the corner of Sutter Street and Van Ness Avenue.

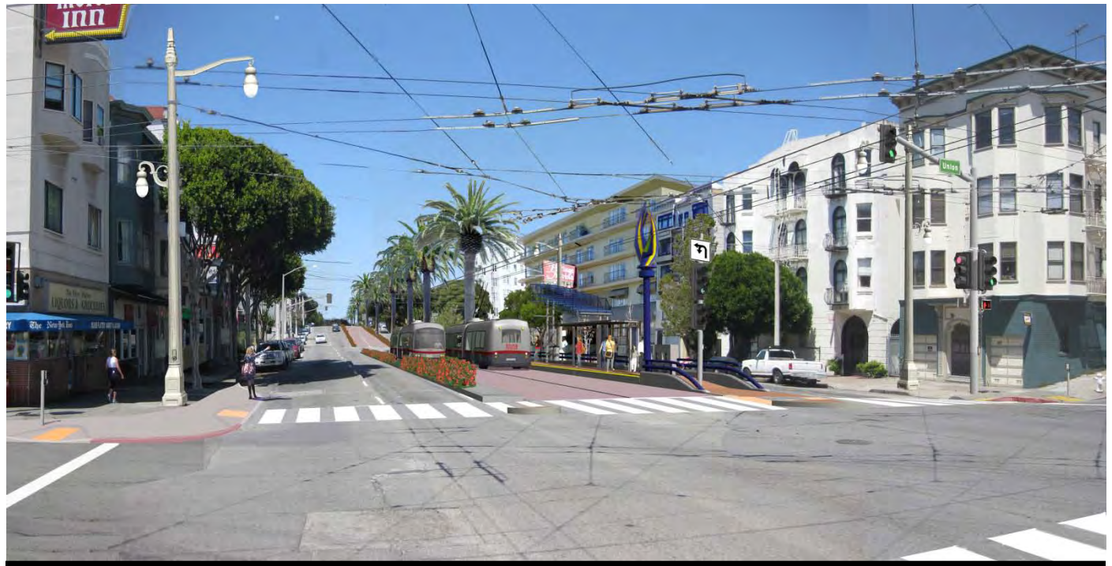
Viewpoint 3 – Van Ness Avenue at Union Street

Viewpoint 3, depicted in Figure 12, is from the perspective of the southern crosswalk on Van Ness Avenue at the Van Ness Avenue/Union Street intersection, looking north. This location is within the residential segment of the project corridor described in Section 4.3. As shown in the figure, this area is comprised of lower density apartment buildings and ground-floor, neighborhood-serving, commercial establishments. This location features a wide, landscaped median with mature trees. The sidewalks also feature mature trees that shade portions of the sidewalk. There is an existing bus shelter on the west side of Van Ness Avenue. The OCS wires are visible over the roadways and intersection. Although largely obstructed by sidewalk trees modern poles and signage, the OCS support poles/streetlights are visible along the sidewalks of Van Ness Avenue. The increased height of the OCS support pole/streetlight network is more noticeable in this simulation, and would likely be more noticeable throughout the northern portion of the corridor where the adjacent buildings are smaller in scale. A city designated Significant Building (2517 Van Ness Avenue) is located just south of the bus shelter on the west side of Union Street; however it is shielded by the sidewalk trees and angle of the viewpoint. Photo 45 provides a frontal view of this building. Viewpoint 3 is considered a key viewpoint because it represents the residential portion of the corridor, where the residential viewer group would be most sensitive to changes in the visual setting. Thus Viewpoint 3 represents a sensitive visual setting.

Photo 45. House on right is 2517 Van Ness Avenue, a Significant Building.

Alternative 1: Intersection of Union Street and Van Ness Avenue, Existing Conditions

Alternative 2: Intersection of Union Street and Van Ness Avenue



Alternative 3: Intersection of Union Street and Van Ness Avenue

Alternative 4: Intersection of Union Street and Van Ness Avenue

Figure 12
Viewpoint 3: Visual Simulations of Intersection of Union Street and Van Ness Avenue

Visual simulations of Viewpoint 3 depict the proposed BRT features and replacement network of OCS support pole/streetlights. The transitway, BRT station, wind turbine, and lane-median configuration are depicted as described under Viewpoint 1. As in Viewpoint 1, median landscaping is removed to accommodate the BRT station under Build Alternatives 3 and 4, and the existing mature trees have been replaced with planted palm trees on the 9-ft right-side medians under Build Alternative 3. The angle of Viewpoint 3 clearly shows the landscaped 4-ft median of Build Alternative 3.

Other visual changes include removal of the existing sidewalk bus shelter located on the west side of Van Ness Avenue, near the northwest corner of Van Ness Avenue and Union Street. For Build Alternative 2, the median traffic signal pole has been replaced with a mast arm style signal pole that arches over the traffic lanes. Build Alternatives 3 and 4 feature sidewalk mast arm poles. In addition, traffic signals are no longer mounted on the decorative OCS support poles/streetlights. Under Build Alternatives 3 and 4 the parallel OCS wires are shifted from the side lane to be centered over the center-lane transitway. The median features a nose cone pedestrian refuge framing the crosswalk with the median, and the crosswalk is paint-striped to improve visibility. Build Alternatives 3 and 4 feature curb bulbs and ramps, and a push-button APS pole at the corner of Sutter Street and Van Ness Avenue.

5.3 VISUAL IMPACTS

Potential impacts to the visual environment that could result from each project alternative are discussed below, employing the methodology and regulatory criteria discussed in Sections 2.0 and 3.0, respectively.

5.3.1 Scenic Vistas

Existing scenic vistas in the project corridor would not be changed under the No-Build Alternative, or under any of the proposed build alternatives. Moreover, incorporation of Center-Lane Alternative Design Option B, eliminating nearly all left turns and left-turn pockets, into the proposed project would not alter scenic vistas. The proposed project features would be confined to the roadway and sidewalks of Van Ness Avenue, and would not obstruct scenic vistas described in Section 4.5. The proposed project would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista, and would not conflict with planning policies described in Section 3.1 to protect major views.

5.3.2 Light, Glare and Shadow

No-Build Alternative

Shadow effects would not change under the No-Build Alternative, and there would be no impacts. The No-Build Alternative would not improve existing lighting, and therefore would not support the recommendation in the Van Ness Corridor Initial Land Use and Urban Design Needs Assessment to provide comprehensive street lighting for Van Ness Avenue.

Build Alternatives

With the exception of trees planted in the median or at the sites of removed sidewalk bus shelters, the project features proposed under each build alternative would not cast substantial shadows. The shadow cast from median trees and BRT station canopies would be minimal, and would be consistent with the existing visual setting. The proposed project would not cast new shadows on public open space under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Commission. Thus no adverse shadow impacts would result under any build alternative, with or without incorporation of the Center-Lane Alternative Design Option B under Build Alternatives 3 and 4.

High traffic volumes including buses on Van Ness Avenue create sources of light and glare. Operation of the proposed BRT service would not increase light and glare. The replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network would increase lighting over existing conditions to meet current safety lighting standards. Adjacent residences may be sensitive to the replacement street lighting which will increase nighttime illumination over existing conditions on the sidewalks and roadway. Glare mitigation measure VM.1 described in Section 6.0 would be required to ensure no adverse impacts to residents.

The proposed build alternatives would support the recommendation in the Van Ness Corridor Initial Land Use and Urban Design Needs Assessment to provide comprehensive street lighting for Van Ness Avenue, considered a beneficial impact.

5.3.3 Important Visual Elements Within Viewshed

OCS Support Poles/Streetlights

Replacement of the OCS support pole/streetlight network is one of the most noteworthy changes to the visual context at each key viewpoint presented in Section 5.2. Impacts resulting from changes to the OCS support poles/streetlights network would be experienced by all viewer groups, including sensitive viewer groups (residents, commuters, and tourists).

No-Build Alternative

Though not depicted in the simulations presented in Section 5.2, under the No-Build Alternative the OCS support poles/streetlights would continue to be replaced with modern, nondescript poles on an as-needed basis, or as a comprehensive replacement project if funding becomes

available.[8] Continued replacement of damaged OCS support poles/streetlights with modern poles of nondescript design would adversely affect this important visual element within the Van Ness Avenue corridor by degrading the visual continuity and diminishing the character of the pole/streetlight network. Also, the current practice of inserting supplemental, modern poles adjacent to existing OCS support poles/streetlights creates pole clutter, which also diminishes the character of the original pole/streetlight network and clutters the visual landscape of the corridor. Thus, the No-Build Alternative would result in adverse impacts to this visual resource, which would grow in significance with the increased number of replaced poles.

Build Alternatives

The proposed build alternatives would result in replacement of the existing OCS support pole/streetlight network, resulting in potentially adverse impacts to this visual resource. As explained in Section 4.4, the existing OCS support poles/streetlights are a streetscape feature unique to Van Ness Avenue that contributes to the eclectic visual character of the corridor. The OCS support poles/streetlight network is the only major infrastructural element occurring consistently along Van Ness Avenue that displays design with esthetic intent; although this intent is diminished by the insertion of nondescript, modern poles into the network, pole clutter, and the visual obstruction of many of the poles by sidewalk trees, roadway signage and storefront canopies. Nonetheless, the OCS support poles/streetlights appear as a visually important feature in parts of the Van Ness Avenue corridor, including the Civic Center and at certain street corners like Van Ness Avenue and Geary Street. Removal of this network would result in a significant impact to this visual resource. Thus, mitigation described in Section 6.0 is required to reduce this impact to a level of less than significant. Mitigation would be in the form of a replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network that is compatible with the existing visual setting of the Van Ness Avenue corridor, and that achieves the same daytime and nighttime visual continuity throughout the corridor as the existing network provides. The replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network displayed in the simulations (Figures 10-12) demonstrates that a feasible, replacement pole/streetlight network could be compatible with the existing visual setting of the Van Ness Avenue corridor and be reminiscent of the existing network. Consistent with city planning policies, the replacement pole/streetlight network depicted in Figures 10-12 displays a high quality design esthetic that would contribute to a feeling of prominence and grandeur in the Van Ness Avenue corridor, and would retain a feeling of visual continuity throughout the corridor. The increased height of the replacement poles and

[8] Approximately 33 of the original 259 OCS support pole/streetlights (13 percent) have been removed or replaced with modern, nondescript poles. Approximately 46 original poles (16 percent) are immediately flanked by a modern replacement pole installed to support OCS wires, street lights, and/or signage (JRP, 2009).

the secondary light fixture that would protrude out over the roadway would not be out of scale with the wide roadway and adjacent development along Van Ness Avenue, and would visually emphasize the network over the existing conditions consistent with city planning policies to promote a feeling of Van Ness Avenue as a grand boulevard.

Moreover, beneficial impacts could result from a replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network. A replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network, featuring an architecturally distinctive pole/streetlight configuration as represented here, would support Policy 8.8 of the Van Ness Area Plan which calls for a uniform architectural style, character and color in the design of street lights and poles. This policy would be better achieved with implementation of a project build alternative than under the No-Build Alternative, because replacement modern poles would be removed under the build alternatives, which would reduce negative visual impacts of pole clutter and would achieve a more unified pole/streetlight network than under the No-Build Alternative. Furthermore, a replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network would support Policy 10.3 of the Better Streets Plan to minimize visual clutter and share poles, and Policy 10.5 to provide adequate light levels and quality for pedestrians and other sidewalk users.

Policy 8.8 of the Van Ness Area Plan states that the existing streetlight poles should be maintained and enhanced if feasible in order to contribute to the special identity of Van Ness Avenue. Policy 8.8 also calls for the light poles to be painted a blue and gold color scheme, similar to that of the Civic Center light standards. Although the poles are depicted white-bluff in the visual simulations, this color is only representative and would be decided upon during project final design along with the pole design. Moreover, the pole/streetlight network depicted in Figures 10-13 is representative only. It was designed by SFDPW to determine and demonstrate that it is feasible to install a pole/streetlight network that retains some of the character defining features of the existing network, including white/buff colored, tapered poles with decorative finals and bases from which tear-drop shaped pendant lights hang. This representative replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network was designed to support Policy 8.8 of the Van Ness Area Plan by designing a replacement pole/streetlight network that reflects some of the visual character of the existing network since it is not feasible to maintain the existing network.[9]

[9] Replacement of the OCS support pole/streetlight network has been on SFMTA's list of desired Capital Improvement Projects since 2003 because the network is deteriorated and unable to sufficiently carry the OCS load. Thus the City has replaced several damaged poles and inserted modern poles to assist with the OCS load. The BRT system proposed under the build alternatives would require a new pole network to support the OCS load for the new BRT system, and to provide roadway and sidewalk lighting that meets current standards (City of San Francisco, 2009).

The architectural style, design, color and texture of the replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network would be subject to comments received on the Draft EIS/EIR, and review and approval by the Civic Design Review Committee of the San Francisco Arts Commission, the Architectural Review Committee of the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission, and the City Hall Preservation Advisory Commission. In addition, the replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network design must also obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the City Planning Department, as discussed in Section 3.2. These approval processes are specified in mitigation measure VM.2 described in Section 6.0, and would reduce impacts from removal of the existing OCS support pole/streetlight network to a less than significant level.

Implementation of the Center-Lane Alternative Design Option B would not affect proposed OCS support pole/streetlight replacement and related impacts under Build Alternatives 3 and 4.

Landscape and Trees

Changes to the existing landscaped median and tree canopy are one of the most noteworthy impacts on the visual setting at each key viewpoint presented in Section 5.2. As described in Section 4.4, the landscaped medians and tree plantings along Van Ness Avenue contribute to the visual quality of the corridor, and are one of the most important visual features in the corridor. All viewer groups, including sensitive viewer groups (residents, commuters, and tourists) would be sensitive to changes in the character and scenic quality of landscaping and trees in the corridor.

No-Build Alternative

No changes to the landscape and tree plantings are anticipated to occur under the No-Build Alternative. The No-Build Alternative would not change the median configuration, and there are no planned projects to change landscape and tree plantings in the Van Ness Avenue corridor. Thus the No-Build Alternative would not result in impacts to landscaping and trees.

Build Alternatives

None of the build alternatives would change sidewalk landscaping and trees, with the exception of new tree plantings at locations of removed sidewalk bus shelters as feasible. Sidewalk tree plantings would improve the visual setting, having a beneficial impact. Landscaped planters are proposed at BRT stations to beautify the stations and contribute to landscaping in the corridor. Impacts to median landscaping and trees would vary by alternative, as described below.

Minimal changes to existing landscaping and trees in the Van Ness Avenue corridor would occur under Build Alternative 2. Build Alternative 2 would increase the median width at locations where existing left turn pockets would be removed, which are indicated in Figure 3. This would

increase the available median area for landscaping and tree planting, having a beneficial impact. A planter with trees and shrubs would be located along the sidewalk side of the BRT station platform to serve as a buffer between bus patrons and sidewalk pedestrians. As feasible, trees would be planted at the sites of removed sidewalk bus shelters, which would improve the visual setting at these locations. Table 3 provides the anticipated number of trees that would be removed to accommodate Build Alternative 2, in addition to the number of new trees that would be planted. As indicated in Table 3, Build Alternative 2 is anticipated to increase the number of trees in the project corridor by 33 trees. Overall, Build Alternative 2 would preserve existing median landscaping and tree plantings and would not result in substantial changes or impacts to the landscaping and tree features of the Van Ness Avenue corridor.

Table 3. Anticipated Tree Removal

Trees	Existing Conditions/ No-Build Alternative	Build Alternative 2	Build Alternative 3	Build Alternative 4
Existing Median Trees	101	N/A	N/A	N/A
Existing Sidewalk Trees	314			
Removed Median Trees	0	0	101	72
Removed Sidewalk Trees	0	35	0	0
New Median Trees	0	0	189	136
New Sidewalk Trees	0	68	48	48
Total Trees	415	448	551	551

Source: Van Ness BRT Tree Survey performed by BMS Design Group (BMS, 2009).
Note: The health and condition of trees was not taken into account in this tree survey. Mature trees with canopies that would reach above the 5-ft OCS wire clearance were considered able to be preserved, as were trees with canopies that could be pruned to maintain clearance.

Build Alternative 3 would require removal and reconfiguration of existing medians to construct the dual-median, center-lane transitway. This would likely require removal of all existing median trees and landscaping.[10] The visual impact of this would be most noticeable along the blocks of Van Ness Avenue that feature high quality landscaped medians with mature trees, listed in Table 2, and less noticeable on blocks that feature medians without landscaping or mature trees. The dual median configuration under Build Alternative 3 includes 9-ft-wide and 4-ft-wide parallel medians. New trees would be planted along the 9-ft wide, right-side medians (as shown with palm trees in Figures 10-13); however the 4-ft wide, left-side median would not likely allow for tree planting but would allow for landscaping as depicted in Viewpoint 3, Union Street Simulation for Build Alternative 3. Removal of the existing median trees would noticeably degrade the visual environment of the corridor until replacement tree plantings mature. Also,

[10] It may be possible to preserve trees at certain locations in construction of Build Alternative 3; however, a worst-case scenario of removal of all existing trees, as depicted in the visual simulations, is considered for the purposes of visual analysis.

Build Alternative 3 would require replacement trees with a narrow canopy in order to avoid conflict with the OCS wires. Some example trees could be palm trees as shown, or Italian Cypress, Skyrocket Juniper, Hillspire Juniper and Red Maple. A narrower tree canopy would alter the character of the street blocks that currently feature median trees with wide canopies.

The adverse impact resulting from removal of all existing median landscaping and trees would be reduced to a level of less than significant with implementation of a median landscape design plan that is consistent with median design policies in the Van Ness Area Plan, Civic Center Area Plan, and San Francisco Better Streets Plan. These plans call for consistent rows of single species median trees to provide a sense of identify and cohesiveness for the corridor. The Van Ness Area Plan also includes paving material and design requirements for medians, including grey tone, block trim. The 9-ft-wide median configuration proposed under Build Alternative 3 would allow for such a landscape theme containing a consistent row of single species trees with the exception of on the blocks of Van Ness Avenue between O'Farrell and Geary streets, and Jackson and Pacific streets where the station platforms would extend the length of these blocks, allowing for only the 4-ft landscaped median without tree plantings. Currently these blocks feature medians with minimal or no landscaping and young trees,[11] so the introduction of the 4-ft landscaped median on these blocks even without trees would not substantially degrade the existing visual setting. Table 3 provides the anticipated number of trees that would be removed to accommodate Build Alternative 3, in addition to the number of new trees that would be planted. As indicated in Table 3, Build Alternative 3 is anticipated to increase the number of trees in the project corridor by 136 trees. The addition of these trees would be a substantial, visual benefit to the corridor once the trees reach maturity. Nonetheless, removal of the existing median trees would noticeably degrade the visual environment of the corridor until replacement plantings mature, and replacement trees with narrow canopies would alter the visual character of existing blocks with large, mature trees.

Also, the consistent median configuration provided by Build Alternative 3 would provide a strong, central axis for visual continuity in the corridor, consistent with urban design policies summarized in Section 3.0. The median landscape design plan, including tree type[12] and planting scheme for medians and BRT stations, would require review and approval by the City Planning Department and Civic Design Review Committee of the San Francisco Arts Commission. The median landscape design plan within the Civic Center Historic District must be reviewed and approved by the Architectural Review Committee of the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission and the City Hall Preservation Advisory Commission. A Certificate of

[11] With the exception of one mature tree located on a half-block long section of median between Jackson and Pacific streets.

[12] Selection of median tree type would consider tree canopy size and maintenance requirements to ensure a 5 ft clear zone between tree canopies and OCS wires.

Appropriateness must be obtained from the City Planning Department for the project landscape plan. A General Plan Amendment and General Plan Referral would be required from the City Planning Department to permit changes in existing median width. Thus, incorporation of a median design plan described in mitigation measures VM.3 and VM.4 of Section 6.0. that conforms to the aforementioned policies would be vetted through this approval process to ensure a high quality design, and mitigation of significant impacts resulting from the loss of existing trees and landscaping.

Build Alternative 4 would require reconfiguration of existing medians to construct the single-median, center-lane transitway. Reconfiguration of the median would require removal of some existing trees and landscaping, namely at proposed station locations. This impact would be most noticeable along the blocks of Van Ness Avenue that feature high quality landscaped medians with mature trees, listed in Table 2. A BRT station would be located on three of these eight street blocks, which would require approximately 150 ft of the existing median (approximately half the block) to be converted to a BRT station platform. Trees and landscaping along the other half of the block would be preserved.

Although some existing trees would be removed, incorporation of a median design plan described above for Build Alternative 3 would mitigate impacts resulting from the loss of these trees and landscaping. The 14-ft-wide median configuration proposed under Build Alternative 4 would allow for such a landscape theme containing a consistent row of single species trees with the exception of the blocks of Van Ness Avenue between O'Farrell and Geary streets, and Jackson and Pacific streets where the station platforms would extend the length of these blocks, allowing for only the 4-ft landscaped median without tree plantings. Currently these blocks feature medians with minimal or no landscaping and young trees,[13] so the introduction of the 4-ft landscaped median on these blocks even without trees would not substantially degrade the existing visual setting. Overall Build Alternative 4 would increase the width and available landscape area of the median throughout Van Ness Avenue, which would result in beneficial impacts to the visual setting of the project corridor. Table 3 provides the anticipated number of trees that would be removed to accommodate Build Alternative 4, in addition to the number of new trees that would be planted. As indicated in Table 3, Build Alternative 4 is anticipated to increase the number of trees in the project corridor by 136 trees. The addition of these trees would be a substantial, visual benefit to the corridor once the trees reach maturity. The larger and consistently provided median would strengthen the visual connectivity and identity of the Van Ness Avenue corridor, consistent with urban design policies. Thus, impacts resulting from the removal of some existing median landscape and trees under Build Alternative 4 would be

[13] With the exception of one mature tree located on a half-block long section of median between Jackson and Pacific streets.

mitigated to a less than significant level with incorporation of a median design plan described in mitigation measures VM.3 and VM.4 in Section 6.0.

Implementation of Center-Lane Alternative Design Option B would involve removal of the existing left-turn pockets, which may allow slightly wider medians and therefore slightly greater landscaped area at these locations. Thus, implementation of Center-Lane Alternative Design Option B would not appreciably change the impacts to landscape and trees under Build Alternatives 3 and 4.

Significant Buildings and Architecture

As explained in Section 4.4, there are several buildings located along Van Ness Avenue in the project corridor that are identified by the City as Significant Buildings and Contributory Buildings for their contribution to the architectural environment of Van Ness Avenue. Most of these exhibit historic period architecture, and they are targeted for preservation and identified as warranting special consideration in planning. Similarly, many of these buildings and others hold historic status with the NRHP, CRHR, and as City Landmarks. These special status buildings require special consideration in planning.

No-Build Alternative

There would be no change or adverse impact to significant buildings and architecture under the No-Build Alternative.

Build Alternatives

There would be no change or adverse impact to significant buildings and architecture under the proposed build alternatives; however the proposed BRT stations would alter the visual setting and views of some of these buildings as experienced by motorists, cyclists and pedestrians traveling on Van Ness Avenue. At eight locations a BRT station is proposed in the roadway across from a city designated Significant Building, City Landmark, or building that is listed or determined eligible for listing with the NRHP and CRHR. These buildings are identified as being contributors to the character of the Van Ness Avenue corridor. Table 4 lists the eight locations where a BRT station is proposed across from a special status building. Figure 13 displays the locations and photos of each of the special status buildings.

Table 4. Proposed BRT Station Locations and Special Status Properties

Property	Special Status	Build Alternative 2	Build Alternative 3	Build Alternative 4
11-35 Van Ness Avenue (Masonic Temple)	• eligible for NRHP listing; • eligible for CRHR listing; • San Francisco Significant Building.	Southbound, curbside Market Street Station	Southbound and northbound center lane Market Street Stations.	Southbound and northbound center lane Market Street station.
City Hall (Civic Center)	• Civic Center Historic District National Historic Landmark; • NRHP listed; • CRHR listed; • San Francisco City Landmark	Northbound, curbside McAllister Street Station	Southbound and northbound center lane McAllister Street Stations.	Southbound and northbound center lane McAllister Street Station.
War Memorial Building & Performing Arts Complex (Civic Center)	• Civic Center Historic District National Historic Landmark; • NRHP listed; • CRHR listed; • San Francisco City Landmark.	Southbound, curbside McAllister Street Station		
799 Van Ness Avenue (Wallace Estate Co. Garage)	• eligible for NRHP listing; • eligible for CRHR listing; • San Francisco Significant Building.	Southbound, curbside Eddy Street Station	Southbound center lane Eddy Street Station.	Southbound and northbound center lane Eddy Street Station.
1050 Van Ness Avenue (Grosvenor Inn/Opal Hotel)	• San Francisco Significant Building	Northbound, curbside Geary/O'Farrell Street Station	Southbound and northbound center lane Geary/O'Farrell Street Stations which extend the entire length of block.	Southbound and northbound center lane Geary/O'Farrell Street Stations which extend the entire length of block. (Alternative 3 configuration)
1300 Van Ness Avenue (Regency Ballroom)	• San Francisco Significant Building	Northbound, curbside Sutter Street Station	Northbound center lane Sutter Street Station	Southbound and northbound center lane Sutter Street Station
1699 Van Ness Avenue (Paige Motor Car Co. Building)	• NRHP listed; • CRHR listed; • San Francisco Significant Building.	Southbound, curbside Sacramento Street Station	Southbound, curbside Sacramento Street Station	Southbound and northbound center lane Sacramento Street Station
2517 Van Ness Avenue (house/Beauty School)	• San Francisco Significant Building	Southbound, curbside Union Street station	N/A - No station proposed in front of this property.	Southbound and northbound center lane Union Street Station.

11-35 Van Ness Avenue (Masonic Temple)

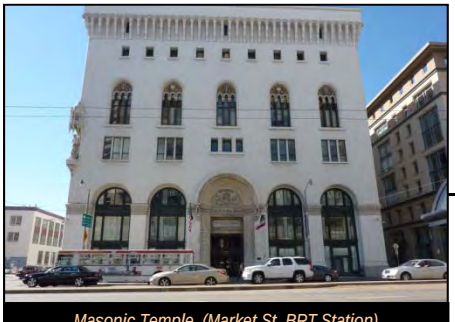
Build Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 would include installation of the Market Street BRT Station in front of the Masonic Temple Building located at the northwest corner of Market Street and Van Ness Avenue. As explained in Section 4.2, this location is identified as a visual landmark to be designed with prominent streetscape elements. The Masonic Temple Building is a prominent visual feature at this intersection and was determined eligible for listing with the NRHP and CRHR, and is a city designated Significant Building. The proposed southbound Market Street BRT station proposed under Build Alternative 2 would be located curbside on Van Ness Avenue across the sidewalk from the main entryway to this building. A BRT station serving north- and southbound travel would be located in the center lanes of Van Ness Avenue across the sidewalk and southbound traffic from this building under proposed Build Alternatives 3 and 4. While the BRT station and transitway proposed under the build alternatives are features compatible with the Van Ness Avenue corridor, the station canopy and features would partially obstruct ground-level views of this building and could obstruct views of a decorative, arched entryway that is a character defining visual feature of this building. Moreover, placement of the station may detract from the symmetrical character-defining style of the building in frontal views. Because the Van Ness Area Plan calls for Significant Buildings to serve as a basis for the theme and scale of adjacent development, architectural integration of BRT stations with adjacent Significant Buildings would be considered. Modifications of the BRT station design themes through station canopy placement, materials, color, lighting and texture would be considered to harmonize the BRT stations with the adjacent Significant Buildings. Architectural integration of BRT stations with adjacent Significant Buildings is described as mitigation measures VM.4 and VM.5 in Section 6.0. Potentially significant impacts to the visual context of the Masonic Temple building would be mitigated to less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures VM.5 and VM.6.

2517 Van Ness Ave. House (Union St. BRT Station)

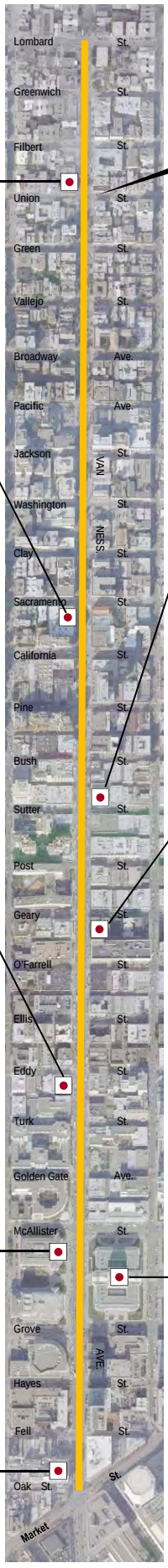
Paige Motor Car Building (Sacramento St. BRT Station)

Wallace Estate Garage (Eddy St. BRT Station)

War Memorial Building (McAllister St. BRT Station)

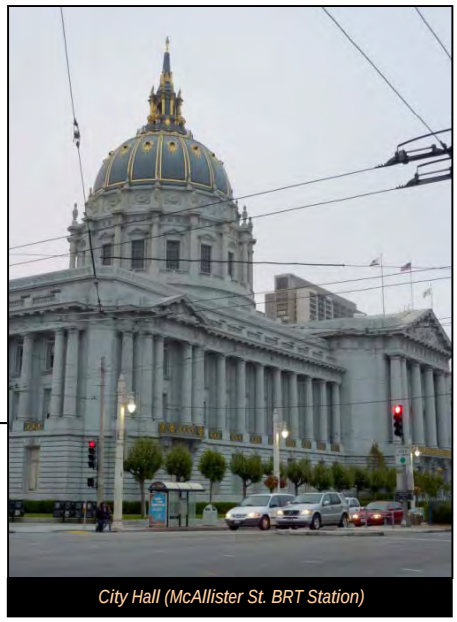


Masonic Temple (Market St. BRT Station)



Regency Ballroom (Sutter St. BRT Station)

Grosvenor Inn/Opal Hotel (Geary/O'Farrell St. BRT Station)



City Hall (McAllister St. BRT Station)

Note: Only special status buildings on Van Ness Avenue that are located adjacent to proposed BRT stations are shown.

Figure 13
Special Status Buildings
Located Adjacent to Proposed BRT Stations

City Hall and War Memorial and Performing Arts Center (Civic Center Historic District)

Build Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 would include installation of the McAllister Street BRT Station across from the San Francisco City Hall located at the southeast corner of McAllister Street and Van Ness Avenue. As explained in Section 4.4, City Hall is a National and City Landmark that contributes to the character and visual setting of the Civic Center Historic District and project corridor. Under Alternative 2, a northbound BRT station is proposed curbside on the east side of Van Ness Avenue extending 150 ft south from the McAllister Street intersection across from City Hall. A northbound BRT station is proposed curbside on the west side of Van Ness Avenue across the sidewalk from the War Memorial and Performing Arts Center. A BRT station serving north- and southbound travel would be located in the center lanes of Van Ness Avenue across the sidewalk and northbound traffic from City Hall under Build Alternatives 3 and 4. Under all of the build alternatives an existing sidewalk bus shelter of more diminutive size located in front of these buildings would be removed, which would open up the sidewalk and improve the pedestrian setting at these locations. While the BRT station and transitway proposed under the build alternatives are features compatible with the Van Ness Avenue corridor, the station canopy, wind turbines and other features would partially obstruct ground-level views of these buildings and would introduce modern features that could detract from the visual setting of these buildings. This is considered a potentially significant impact. As noted in Section 6.0, mitigation measures VM.5 and VM.6 would be implemented to mitigate potentially significant impacts to City Hall and the War Memorial and Performing Arts Center to a less than significant level.

799 Van Ness Avenue (Wallace Estate Co. Garage)

Build Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 would include installation of the Eddy Street BRT Station across from the Wallace Estate Co. Garage located at the southwest corner of Eddy Street and Van Ness Avenue. The Wallace Estate Co. Garage is a prominent visual feature at this intersection and is listed on the NRHP and CRHR, and is a city designated Significant Building. The proposed southbound Eddy Street BRT station under Build Alternative 2 would be located curbside on Van Ness Avenue across the sidewalk from this building. A BRT station serving southbound travel would be located in the center lanes of Van Ness Avenue across the sidewalk and southbound traffic from this building under Build Alternative 3. A BRT station serving north- and southbound travel would be located in the center lanes of Van Ness Avenue across the sidewalk and southbound traffic from the Wallace Estate Co. Garage under Build Alternative 4. Under all of the build alternatives an existing sidewalk bus shelter would be removed which would open up the sidewalk and improve the pedestrian setting at this location. The BRT station and transitway proposed under the build alternatives would not obstruct views of the character defining features of this building which include symmetrical arrangement of industrial windows on the second and third floors. For this, and because the BRT station and transitway proposed

under the build alternatives are features compatible with the Van Ness Avenue corridor, no significant visual impacts to this property would result. Nonetheless, implementation of mitigation measures VM.5 and VM.6 specified in Section 6.0 would avoid or further minimize any potential impacts.

1050 Van Ness Avenue (Grosvenor Inn/Opal Hotel)

Build Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 would include installation of the Geary Street BRT Station across from the Grosvenor Inn/Opal Hotel located at the northeast corner of Geary Street and Van Ness Avenue. The Grosvenor Inn/Opal Hotel is a city designated Significant Building of three stories that exhibits classical architecture and holds a dominant visual presence at this location. The Grosvenor Inn/Opal Hotel is a three story building with an ornate roofline displaying paired, scrolled cornices. A modern canopy with signage stretches along the top of the ground floor.

The proposed northbound Geary Street BRT station under Build Alternative 2 would be located curbside on Van Ness Avenue across the sidewalk from the main entryway to the Mel's Diner Restaurant and Opal Hotel lobby which occupy the ground floor of this building. A BRT station serving northbound travel would be located in the center lanes of Van Ness Avenue across the sidewalk and northbound traffic from this location under Build Alternative 3. A BRT station serving north- and southbound travel would be located in the center lanes of Van Ness Avenue across from this building under Build Alternative 4. Since the proposed BRT station canopy and features would only partially obstruct views of the ground-level of this building, it is not anticipated that the visual setting of this building would be degraded as the ground-level does not display the historic and ornate character defining features of this building. Moreover, incorporation of mitigation measures VM.5 and VM.6 specified in Section 6.0 would avoid or further minimize any potential impacts.

1300 Van Ness Avenue (Regency Ballroom)

Build Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 would include installation of the Sutter Street BRT Station across from the Regency Ballroom located at the northeast corner of Sutter Street and Van Ness Avenue. This location is depicted in Figure 11. The Regency Ballroom is a city designated Significant Building that exhibits classical architecture. Build Alternative 2 would locate a northbound, curbside BRT station across the sidewalk from this building. A BRT station serving northbound travel would be located in the center lanes of Van Ness Avenue across the sidewalk and northbound traffic from this building under Build Alternatives 3. A BRT station serving north- and southbound travel would be located in the center lanes of Van Ness Avenue across the sidewalk and northbound traffic from the Regency Ballroom under Build Alternative 4. Under all of the build alternatives an existing sidewalk bus shelter of more diminutive size would be removed which would open up the sidewalk and improve the pedestrian setting at these

locations. While the BRT station and transitway proposed under the build alternatives are features compatible with the Van Ness Avenue corridor, the station canopy and features would partially obstruct ground-level views of this building. Moreover, placement of the station may conflict with the symmetrical character-defining style of the building from frontal views of the building. Potentially significant impacts to the visual context of the Regency Ballroom would be mitigated to less than significant with implementation of mitigation measures VM.5 and VM.6 specified in Section 60.

1699 Van Ness Avenue (Paige Motor Car Co. Building)

Build Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 would include installation of the Sacramento Street BRT Station across from the Paige Motor Car Co. Building located at the southwest corner of Sacramento Street and Van Ness Avenue. The Paige Motor Car Co. Building is a prominent visual feature at this intersection that was determined eligible for listing with the NRHP and CRHR, and is a city designated Significant Building. The proposed southbound Sacramento Street BRT station under Build Alternative 2 would be located curbside on Van Ness Avenue across the sidewalk from this building. A BRT station serving southbound travel would be located in the center lanes of Van Ness Avenue across the sidewalk and southbound traffic from this building under Build Alternative 3. A BRT station serving north- and southbound travel would be located in the center lanes of Van Ness Avenue across the sidewalk and southbound traffic from the Paige Motor Car Co. Building under Build Alternative 4. Under all of the build alternatives an existing sidewalk bus shelter would be removed which would open up the sidewalk and improve the pedestrian setting at this location. The BRT station canopy, wind turbine and other station features under the build alternatives would partially obstruct views of the character defining features of this building which include distinctive arch shaped two-story tall, floor-to-ceiling show windows. However, views of the other character-defining features of the building would not be blocked, including the roof cornices and upper-story fenestration. While the proposed BRT station at this location would slightly diminish the visual setting for this property by partially obstructing views of its ground floor, it would not result in significant impacts. Nonetheless, implementation of mitigation measures VM.5 and VM.6 specified in Section 6.0 would further minimize any potential impacts.

2517 Van Ness Avenue (Beauty School/House)

Build Alternatives 2 and 4 would include installation of the Union Street BRT Station across from 2517 Van Ness Avenue, which is located just north of the northwest corner of Sacramento Street and Van Ness Avenue. This building is a three story, single-family residential building with a beauty school on the ground floor. This property has a unique, ornate rooftop that is shielded by sidewalk trees. In fact, most of the building façade is shielded by sidewalk trees and a canopy that extends from the door to the curb. Although this building does not have a strong visual presence, it is a city designated Significant Building. The proposed southbound Union Street

BRT station under Build Alternative 2 would be located curbside on Van Ness Avenue partially across the sidewalk from this building. A BRT station serving north- and southbound travel would be located in the center lanes of Van Ness Avenue partially across the sidewalk and southbound traffic from this building under Build Alternative 4. The BRT station and transitway proposed under the build alternatives would not obstruct views of the character defining features of this building. For this, and because the BRT station and transitway proposed under the build alternatives are features compatible with the Van Ness Avenue corridor, no significant visual impacts to this property would result. Nonetheless, implementation of mitigation measures VM.5 and VM.6 specified in Section 6.0 would further minimize any potential impacts.

Civic Center Historic District

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative there would be no change or adverse impact to special status buildings of the Civic Center Historic District, as explained in Section 5.3.3. Although to date no OCS support poles/streetlights have been replaced within the historic district, modern poles have been added to the network to help carry the OCS load. The current practice of inserting modern, nondescript poles into the OCS support pole/streetlight network on an as-needed basis would over time degrade the character of the pole/streetlight network. Or the existing pole/streetlight network would deteriorate to a level that requires comprehensive replacement. It is likely that per Article 10 of the Planning Code the City would replace the network within the historic district with decorative poles that harmonize with the civic setting to avoid significant visual impacts within the Civic Center Historic District.

Build Alternatives

As discussed in Section 5.3.3, potentially significant impacts to the visual setting of special status buildings including City Hall and the War Memorial and Performing Arts Center of the Civic Center Historic District would be mitigated to a less than significant level. Context sensitive design of BRT station features would be considered, including modifications of the BRT station design themes through station canopy placement, materials, color, lighting and texture. With oversight from the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission, City Hall Preservation Advisory Commission and City Planning Department, station design would be considered to harmonize the BRT stations with adjacent City Hall and the War Memorial and Performing Arts Center. The inclusion of wind turbines, as currently envisioned, would also be considered for appropriateness, as this tall, modern feature may detract from the adjacent historic period buildings. The proposed landscaping, BRT stations, and replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network would be reviewed for consistency with the existing and proposed

streetscape and lighting design themes in the Civic Center as noted in mitigation measures VM. 2 – VM.5 in Section 6.0.

The simulations presented in Figure 10 demonstrate that the character of the Civic Center Historic District would not be significantly changed by any of the proposed build alternatives. Build Alternative 3 would create the greatest visual change due largely to the removal of existing trees and landscaping. The simulations show palm trees as the replacement median tree type, which have a notably different appearance than the existing median trees. Also, the presence of two side-by-side stations at this location carries a more dominant visual presence than the more common single station per block configuration.[14] Even considering these changes in the visual environment, they are compatible with the existing eclectic streetscape features and contemporary character of the Van Ness Avenue corridor, and do change the character of the larger Civic Center. Given the size and scale of City Hall and the War Memorial and Performing Arts Center, the proposed BRT station would be largely inconsequential to the overall monumental size of these civic structures and their respective prominent architectural features.

As shown in the visual simulations (Figure 10), the replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network would be an architectural design compatible with the Civic Center Historic District, and the taller OCS support pole/streetlight network would not be out of scale or character with the setting of the Civic Center. The proposed replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network would achieve the same daytime and nighttime visual continuity throughout the corridor as the existing network provides. Therefore, while the proposed changes associated with the build alternatives would result in a slight alteration in the visual setting of Van Ness Avenue, they would not constitute a significant change in the feeling or atmosphere in the corridor or in the larger Civic Center Historic District.

5.3.4 Visual Character

No-Build Alternative

No substantial changes to the character of the Van Ness Avenue corridor would occur under the No-Build Alternative. With the exception of continued spot replacement of OCS support poles/streetlights and upgrade of traffic signal poles to mast arm poles, no other physical structures would be installed under the No-Build Alternative. The mast arm traffic signals do not seem out of place, and remain in character with the existing Van Ness Avenue corridor. Visual changes resulting from spot replacement of OCS support poles/streetlights and associated

[14] Two side-by-side station platforms are proposed at the Market Street, McAllister Street, Geary/O'Farrell Street, and Jackson Street stations under Build Alternative 3; and at the Geary/O'Farrell Street station under Build Alternative 4.

mitigation are discussed in Section 5.3.3. No significant impacts to the character of the project corridor would occur under the No-Build Alternative.

Build Alternatives

The Build Alternatives would alter the visual setting with the introduction of BRT features and the replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network as discussed above. However, these changes would not have a significant impact on the character of the Van Ness Avenue corridor. The proposed BRT features are consistent with the urban, contemporary visual setting of Van Ness Avenue. The introduced features would not substantially degrade the surrounding visual environment for any viewer group. While the removal of existing median trees under Build Alternatives 3 and 4 would noticeably degrade the visual environment of the corridor until replacement plantings matured, the opportunities for replacement tree plantings would be greater and the corridor would ultimately benefit from a unified, higher-quality landscape plan. This would enhance the visual setting of the corridor over existing conditions, and restore character to the blocks that currently feature a mature tree canopy in the median.

The proposed project would improve the feel of the Van Ness Avenue corridor with regard to the pedestrian environment by improving sidewalk lighting, installing curb bulbs and generally widening the median to reduce crossing distances at intersections. The proposed transit and streetscape improvements would support recommendations in the Van Ness Corridor Initial Land Use and Urban Design Needs Assessment to make Van Ness Avenue an attractive space for pedestrian use, and would support city policies to promote Van Ness Avenue as a prominent boulevard.

5.4 CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

Construction of the proposed build alternatives would occur within and adjacent to the existing street right-of-way. Construction would include the following major activities along the length of the proposed project: pavement rehabilitation as needed along the transitway, pavement resurfacing of Van Ness Avenue from curb to curb, reconstruction of curb and gutters (including curb bulbs), reconfiguration of the median, construction of BRT stations, replacement of the OCS support poles/streetlights system, and replacement of traffic signal infrastructure. BRT station construction would involve installing components such as canopies, ticket vending equipment, railings, lighting, signage, and station furniture.

The manner in which construction would take place would be similar for all of the build alternatives. Following mobilization and staging activities, construction of all three build alternatives would follow the work sequence shown in Table 5.

Construction activities involve the use of a variety of equipment, stockpiling of soils and materials, and other visual signs of construction. While evidence of construction activity would be noticeable to area residents and viewer groups, such visual disruptions would be short term and are a common feature of the Van Ness Avenue corridor urban environment. Mitigation measure VM.7 described in Section 6.0 would reduce visual impacts during project construction.

Some construction would be accomplished at night. Project specifications would require the project contractor to direct artificial lighting onto the worksite while working in residential areas at night to minimize "spill-over" light or glare effects. This would be a temporary degradation of the visual environment that would be restored at the completion of construction, and is therefore considered a less than significant impact. Mitigation measure VM.8 would minimize nighttime light and glare impacts. Thus, incorporation of mitigation measures VM.7 and VM.8 would reduce construction related visual impacts to less than significant.

Table 5: Construction Phases

Construction Phase	Description
Phase 1	Remove existing curb bulbs and undertake utility work
Phase 2	Build BRT station platform foundations
Phase 3	Conduct intersection/corner work and OCS support pole/streetlight replacement
Phase 4	Construct transitway and enhanced adjacent road
Phase 5	Finish BRT stations
Phase 6	Additional infrastructure elements
Phase 7	Curb-to-curb pavement rehabilitation

Source: Arup, 2010. Project Construction Plan for the Van Ness Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Project.

5.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

A cumulative impact, as defined by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), is the impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of which agency or person undertakes such actions. CEQA Guidelines define cumulative impacts as two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

No other projects have been identified that would affect the visual character of the proposed BRT station areas. No cumulative visual impacts have been identified.

5.6 SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

The proposed project would not result in significant, unavoidable impacts to visual resources.

6. Avoidance, Minimization and Mitigation Measures

Avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures are recommended to address the potential adverse visual impacts to the Van Ness Avenue corridor that could result from implementation of the proposed project. With implementation of the following measures, the visual impacts of this project would be reduced to a less than significant level and would not result in a substantial change in overall visual quality for the area.

VM.1: Sidewalk lighting will be designed to minimize glare and nighttime light intrusion on adjacent residential properties and other properties that would be sensitive to increased sidewalk lighting.

VM.2*:* Design and install a replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network that retains the function of the existing network as an infrastructural element with a uniform esthetic throughout the corridor, and carries visual character that is reminiscent of the architectural style of the original OCS support pole/streetlight network. The replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network will be approved by the Civic Design Review Committee of the San Francisco Arts Commission, the Architectural Review Committee of the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission, the City Hall Preservation Advisory Commission. The replacement OCS support pole/streetlight network will also obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the City Planning Department.

VM.3: A project landscape design plan, including tree type and planting scheme for medians, BRT stations and sidewalk trees, will require review and approval by the City Planning Department and Civic Design Review Committee of the San Francisco Arts Commission. The median landscape design plan within the Civic Center Historic District will be reviewed and approved by the Architectural Review Committee of the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission and the City Hall Preservation Advisory Commission. A Certificate of Appropriateness will be obtained from the City Planning Department. A General Plan Amendment and General Plan Referral will be required from the City Planning Department to permit changes in existing median width.

VM.4*:* Medians will be landscaped with consistent tree plantings to promote a unified, visual concept for the Van Ness Avenue corridor consistent with policies in the Van Ness Area Plan, Civic Center Area Plan, and San Francisco Better Streets Plan.

VM.5: A project station design plan will be submitted for review and approval by the City Planning Department and Civic Design Review Committee of the San Francisco Arts

Commission. The station design for stations located within the Civic Center Historic District will be reviewed and approved by the Architectural Review Committee of the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission and the City Hall Preservation Advisory Commission. A Certificate of Appropriateness will be obtained from the City Planning Department for BRT stations located within the Civic Center Historic District and adjacent to City designated Significant and Contributory Buildings.

VM.6: Context sensitive design of BRT station features will be balanced with the project objective to provide a branded, cohesive identity for the proposed BRT service. The following design objectives that support planning policies described in Section 3.0 will be considered in BRT station design and landscaping:

- Consider architectural integration of BRT stations with adjacent significant and contributory buildings through station canopy placement, materials, color, lighting and texture; as well as the presence of the modern solar paneling and wind turbine features.

- Within the Civic Center Historic District, consider integration of BRT stations and landscaping with existing and proposed streetscape design themes.

- In design of the Market Street BRT station, consider planning policies to mark the intersection of Van Ness Avenue and Market Street as a visual landmark and gateway to the city.

VM.7: During project construction the SFMTA will require the contractor to maintain the site in an orderly manner, removing trash, waste and securing equipment at the close of each day's operation.

VM.8: To reduce glare and light used during nighttime construction activities, the SFMTA will require the contractor to direct lighting onto the immediate area under construction only, and to avoid shining lights toward residences, nighttime commercial properties, and traffic lanes.

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8. List of Preparers and Contributors

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Attachment 1
Appendix A and B of the Van Ness Area Plan – Significant and Contributory Buildings

In order to give a strong economic incentive to preservation of those architecturally significant buildings along the Avenue which are classified as city landmarks, the conversion of uses in these buildings should be considered for exemption from the mandatory provision of on-site housing. Similarly, the conversion of uses in these buildings to office space should be exempted from the provisions of this Plan limiting the amount of office space allowed. These exemptions are designed to make retention and conversion of buildings classified as city landmarks as economically attractive as their demoition and subsequent construction of a mixed-use project conforming to the requirements of this plan.

POLICY 11.3

Encourage the retention and appropriate alteration of contributory buildings.

There is another group of buildings, listed in Appendix B, which are not of sufficient importance to justify their designation as landmarks. Nevertheless these buildings, referred to as contributory buildings, nevertheless, possess architectural qualities which are in harmony with the prevailing characteristics of the more significant landmark quality buildings. These buildings contribute to the character of the street and should be retained if possible.

POLICY 11.4

Encourage architectural integration of new structures with adjacent significant and contributory buildings.

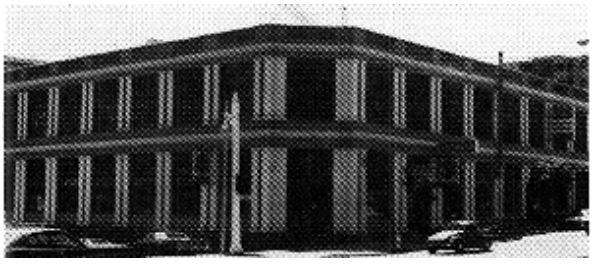
The scale of new buildings — their height, bulk, shape and proportions — should not overwhelm buildings of historic and architectural importance. Designs should harmonize with those buildings by continuing compositional features such as horizontal lines (i.e., belt courses, cornices), window proportions, and overall facade divisions. While the use of color, materials and detailing should not draw unnecessary attention and create conflict with significant and contributory buildings, choices for stylistic treatment are to be left flexible.

APPENDIX A - SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS

700 VAN NESS
NE Corner at Turk
(AB 742/6)
Commercial Showroom, former business college

A pleasant two-story structure on a small site, distinguished by the lightness and proportions of its ground level arcade and second level windows, the quality of its decorative details, and the large glass areas of its exterior walls. Its appearance could be much improved by consistent treatment in the ground floor arched openings on both streets as well as with a more sympathetic color scheme. The amount of solid wall surface is minimal in this building with only light-weight columns separating the arched ground floor openings, a condition which also prevails in the second story windows. The site size would not seem to permit a vertical addition with the kind of setbacks which would be necessary to maintain the architectural integrity and character of this building. It would be inappropriate to place anything of any weight above the almost tracery-like facades.

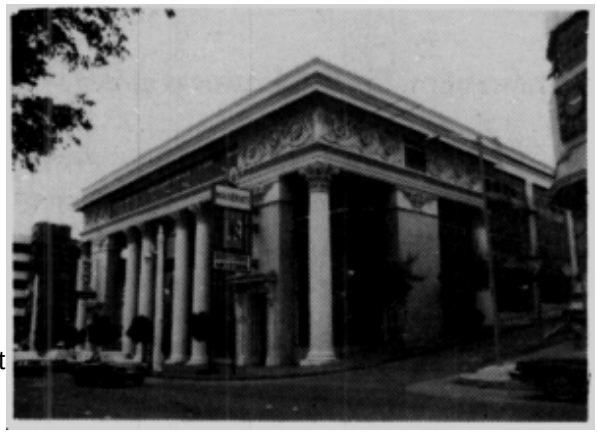
799 VAN NESS AVENUE
SW Corner at Eddy Street
(AB 743/1)
Commercial Showroom



This two-story building is sandwiched (with intervening streets) between moderate-rise apartment buildings — 725

and 801 Van Ness — with which it has some
commonalities despite the different scale. The chamfered corners at Eddy and Larch Streets reflect the angle of the slanted bay windows in the apartment buildings and the windows here and in 725 are multi-paned.P> Unless the Larch Street level is used for parking, it might be necessary, if used commercially, to modify the windows on Van Ness somewhat as the existing windows on Van Ness do not permit visibility into the interior.

901 VAN NESS AVENUE
NW Corner of O'Farrell Street
(AB 719/2)
British Motors (originally Packard) Showroom



Thearchitectural treatment of this building is decisively two-part. The monumental, columned, temple-like showroom facade on Van Ness returns along O'Farrell and Olive for two short bays and then the remainder of the facades on these two streets are industrial in appearance. In the Ellis Street facade, infill glazing between columns is an apparent recent alteration as its counterpart on Olive appears to be the original 1926 multi-paned industrial sash. This building is a designated City Landmark and any alterations would require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

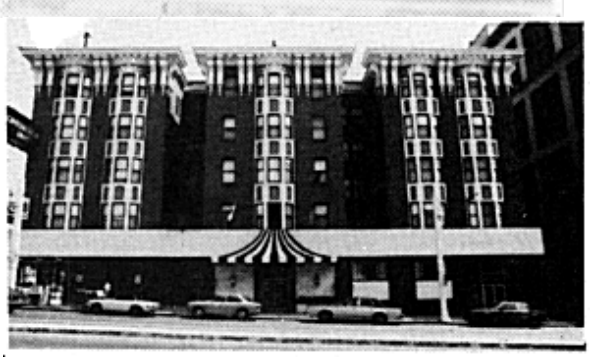
999 VAN NESS AVENUE
SW Corner at O'Farrell Street
(AB 719/1)
Cadillac Showroom

A rare and outstanding example of a Moderne auto showroom. The building, with its curving corners, powerful horizontal articulation in its sweeping upper-level solid and glass bands, and eccentric piers and pylons, appears to float above a glass base. Evidence suggests that this is the last of auto showrooms expressly built for that purpose on Van Ness. Its construction date was only 10 or 11 years after that of its neighbor, no. 901 across Olive Street, during which time buildings — as with the merchandise sold therein — became streamlined.
Alterations or additions should not be made to the Van Ness facade or the first two bays to the west. All significant interior features should be preserved intact.

1000 VAN NESS AVENUE
NE Corner at O'Farrell Street
(AB 715/5)
Don Lee Building
One of the two great temples to the automobile on Van Ness Avenue and a designated City Landmark. Its base, particularly the entrance, is monumental in scale and execution. The six upper floors, while bearing an excellent relationship to the base, take on architectural significance only when viewed with the base.
The interior fulfills the expectations gleaned from viewing

the exterior. Monumentality is achieved and expressed in variations of the California architectural theme of the Spanish revival, also expressed by the cub bears atop columns on the Van Ness facade.
Alterations would require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

1050 VAN NESS AVENUE
SE Corner at Geary Street
(AB 715/9)
Grosvenor Inn (formerly Richilieu Hotel)



Boasting an overscaled, intricately detailed cornice, this building is highly compatible in height, bulk and architectural treatment with the buildings to the east, which when taken together comprise about 75% of the block frontage.
No alterations to the exterior should occur above the ground floor. However, the sign band at the first floor level should be removed and replaced with a cornice or some other architectural feature which would be more sympathetic to the building. Minor alterations to the ground floor are encouraged in order to bring it into closer conformity with its original state and as well as more sympathetic to the upper floors, and which would provide uses and window treatment which are more attractive to the pedestrian.

1142 VAN NESS AVENUE

SE Corner at Post Street

(AB 694/11)

Concordia Club

Reconstructed following severe fire damage, this classically inspired building bears a closer affinity to Civic Center buildings than to its automobile showroom and hotel neighbors. Nevertheless, it contributes positively to the Avenue's monumental character and identity.

Over a rusticated ground floor facade, the upper two floors are treated as a single unit containing three two-story arched openings flanked by narrow pavilions at either end.

There should be no exterior alterations except those which might bring the uppermost part of the facade back to its probable original state of being capped by a cornice or parapet.

1300 VAN NESS AVENUE

NE Corner at Sutter Street

AB 670/13)

Regency Theater

Presently a theater and formerly a fraternal lodge, this building is designed in the manner of an Italian palazzo (which architectural treatment is also given the adjacent building to the east). There should be no alterations to the architectural detailing of the facades except as may be necessary at ground level for its continued viability as a commercial structure and to enhance its interaction with the pedstrian.

1301 VAN NESS AVENUE

NW Corner at Sutter Street

(AB 671/2)

Commercial Showroom

A rare architectural style seldom seen in San Francisco, this Secessionist facade provides a high note of interest on Van Ness Avenue. The architectural features along the Van Ness facade and approximately three bays along Sutter Street should be preserved.

1400 VAN NESS

NE Corner at Bush Street

AB 667/10)

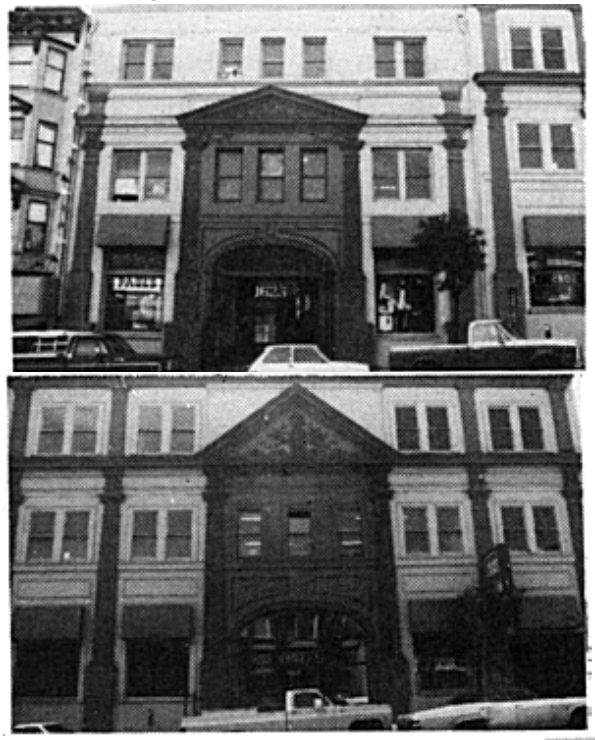
This is a fine restrained Classical Revival auto showroom with a rusticated base and Corinthian pilasters. The bay and pilaster width relate to the width of the street, with the Van Ness facade having a larger scale than the Bush facade.

Because of the building's corner location it would be difficult to alter or add to without significantly harming its integrity;

therefore the building should remain intact.

1623 and 1631 PINE STREET
South Side of Franklin, West of Van Ness
(AB 666/29)
Commercial Buildings

These two buildings, not quite twins, were constructed in 1905 (no. 1623) and ca. 1908 (no. 1629) to attract the carriage trade of fashionable Van Ness Avenue and Pacific Heights. Originally the buildings housed Kelly's Stables which offered "fine equipages, livery and boarding stables." By 1911, the buildings housed automobiles. Gradually, however, the buildings assumed other automotive-oriented uses until today, after interior reconstruction and alterations, they are used for offices and the sale of various merchandise.
Both are three stories over basement and intended to be temple-like in their eclecticism in which they preceded their automobile counterparts by a couple of decades.
Architectural embellishments and their arrangement on both facades are similar and in many instances identical. The lower two stories of each are divided, into three parts in no. 1623 and five in no. 1629, by two-story corinthian pilasters. Each center section contains a typanum above the second floor and an arched entry at ground level. The uppermost portion of the facade of 1623 appears to have had some of its ornamentation removed.
Appropriate restoration of 1623 is encouraged.



1401 VAN NESS
NW Corner at Bush Street
(AB 666/5)

This is a seven story post-fire apartment building. Its facade is richly articulated by bay windows, intact sixth story and roof cornices, and an ornamental fire escape.
Because of its corner location and two architecturally treated facades, it would be difficult to alter or add to without significantly harming its integrity; therefore it should be preserved intact.

1415 VAN NESS
NW Corner at Austin Street
(AB 666/4)

A post-fire auto showroom built around 1909, the building has recently changed use and design. Designed in an Italianate commercial style, the building retains its original bracketed cornice, floral-motif frieze, and the Ionic pilasters. Recent additions to the facade have unfortunately obscured much of the original detailing with fake-marble cladding.
The architectural treatment extends two bays up Austin Street, allowing some flexibility for alterations or additions to the rear of the building.

1699 VAN NESS
SW Corner at Sacramento Street
(AB 642/1)

This building is a four story former auto showroom originally built for the Paige Motor Car Company and is presently in office and retail use. The building is marked by two story arches on the ground level differentiating between the functions of the building. The building has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Because of its corner location, it could not be altered or added to without significantly harming its integrity, and therefore it should remain intact.

1725, 1735, and 1745 VAN NESS
Westside, between Sacramento and Clay Streets
(AB 623/1B, 1A and 1)

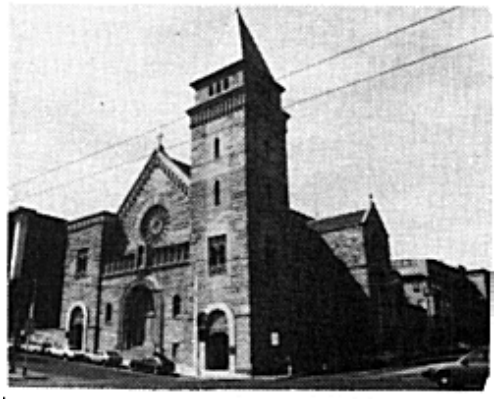
An excellent collection of three Gothic apartment buildings strongly related to each other by the use of similar materials, color, massing, scale, fenestration, bays, cornice and belt lines. 1745 Van Ness is located at the corner of Van Ness and Clay and the Clay facade serves to tie this group to a number of similar apartment buildings on Clay. The corner building (1745 Van Ness) shuld be preserved intact. 1725 and 1735 Van Ness could receive minor alterations or additions to the rear without harming their integrity.

2000 VAN NESS AVENUE
NE Corner at Jackson Street
(AB 595/5)
Medical Arts Building

A seven story medical office building with ground floor retail use. The base consists of the lower two floors in which paired windows are separated vertically by two-story Corinthian pilasters and separated horizontally by

spandrels embellished with bas-relief ornamentation. Above the third floor windows a prominent belt runs the lengths of both facades and a cornice caps the top edge. Because of its corner location, its present massing and its two highly visible, architecturally outstanding facades, no exterior alterations should occur.

2117 VAN NESS
SW Corner at Broadway
(AB 575/15)

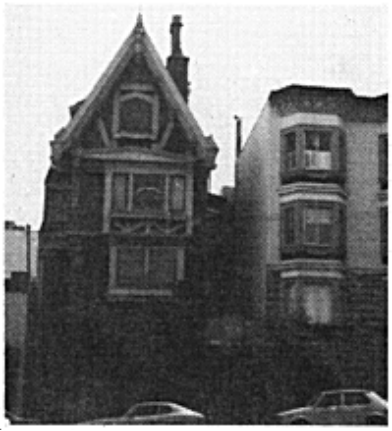


This is an important corner stone church designed in the Romanesque style. It is noteworthy for its entrance arch decoration, corner tower which is an important visual element in the streetscape, and an excellent second story arcade on the eastern facade.
Because of its massing and architectural treatment on four facades, it would be difficult to alter or add to without significantly harming its integrity, and therefore it should be retained intact.

2209 VAN NESS
Westside, North of Broadway
(AB 570/29)

Located on a small rise and set back from the street, this is a three and a half story Palladian residence with a strongly emphasized central bay consisting of Ionic columns flanking the entrance, a second floor balcony, a Palladian window on the second story and the roof dormer, and an ornate cornice.
Because it is a freestanding structure, it would be difficult to alter or add to without significantly harming its integrity; the building should therefore remain intact.

2254 VAN NESS
Eastside, South of Vallejo Street
(AB 571/12)



Located on a small rise and visible above a one story building to the north, this is a three-story Victorian residence with stick style influences, a steeply pitched roof, an ornate chimney stack and abundant detailing.
Because of its prominent location, its three architecturally treated facades, and its massing, it would be difficult to alter or add to without harming its integrity; the building should therefore remain intact.

2277 VAN NESS
SW Corner at Vallejo Street
(AB 570/1)

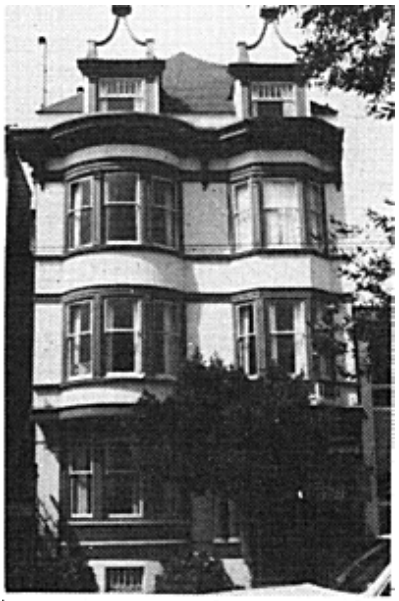
This is a three and a half story Victorian residence recently converted to commercial use with a two story addition to the rear.

The building has a strong presence on the street due to its
prominent corner location, its square bay windows on both Van Ness and Vallejo, and a complicated gable roof.
Because of its corner location and two architecturally treated facades, only alterations or additions to the rear of the building are possible without significant harm to the structure's integrity. Additions to the rear should be kept below the level of the original cornice.

2401 VAN NESS
NW Corner at Green Street
(AB 546/4)

This is a small scale Byzantine style church with Baroque detailing. The style, massing and central form of the church are unusual in the Bay Area.
Because of its corner location, three architecturally treated facades and massing, it would be difficult to alter or add to without significantly harming its integrity; the building should therefore remain intact.

2517 VAN NESS
Westside, North of Union Street
(AB 527/7)



This is a three and a half story Victorian residence with an extremely articulated handling of the facade consisting of round- and three-sided bays, an impressive entrance flanked by double Ionic columns, ornate cornices and belt course, and an unusual treatment of the roof dormers.
Because of massing and scale, the building could not be altered without significant harm to its integrity and it should remain intact.

2600 VAN NESS AVENUE
Northeast at Filbert
(AB 523/14A)
Apartment Building

This is a well-proportioned six story apartment building with good detailing throughout its facades. Above the rusticated basement, a belt course follows the plan outline of the facades including the ters of bay windows which are separated horizontally by spandrels with bas-relief. A handsome cornice completes the architectural excellence of the building.
Because of its corner location and two architecturally significant facades, no exterior alterations should be permitted.

2701 VAN NESS AVENUE
NW at Greenwich Street
(AB 503/5)
Apartment Building

This is a fine Chateau-like seven story apartment building. It is richly decorated with a two story entrance flanked by pilasters, mansard roof, octagonal chimneys and bays.
With its fine design and prominent corner location at the foot of a hill, the building could not only accept minimal alterations without harming its integrity.

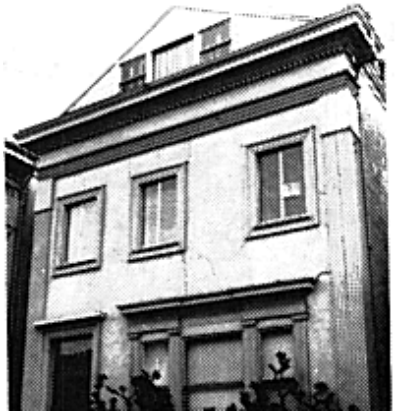
2800 VAN NESS AVENUE
NE Corner at Lombard Street
(AB 499/3)

This three story Victorian residence forms part of a fine group of pre-fire buildings between Lombard and Chestnut Streets which retain the scale and character of pre-fire Van Ness Avenue. Although two of the five buildings have been altered, the group remains coherent through use of similar scale and massing.
Because of its corner location and two architecturally treated facades, it could not be altered or added to without significant harm, and therefore it should be retained intact.

2826 VAN NESS AVENUE
Eastside, South of Chestnut Street
(AB 499/7)

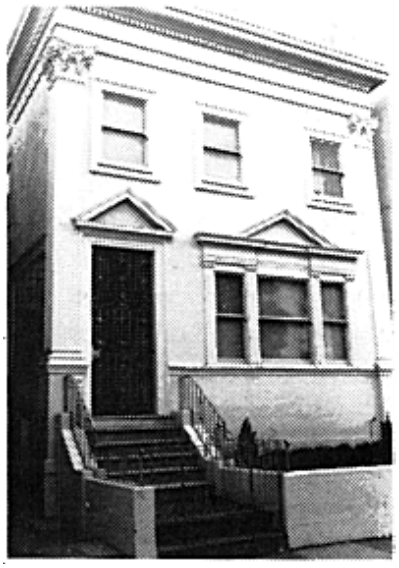
This is a three story Victorian residence, which is part of the group of pre-fire buildings on this section of Van Ness.
Because it is a free-standing structure, it could not be altered or added to without significant harm, and therefore it should be retained intact.

2906 VAN NESS AVENUE
Eastside, North of Chestnut Street
(AB 478/11A)

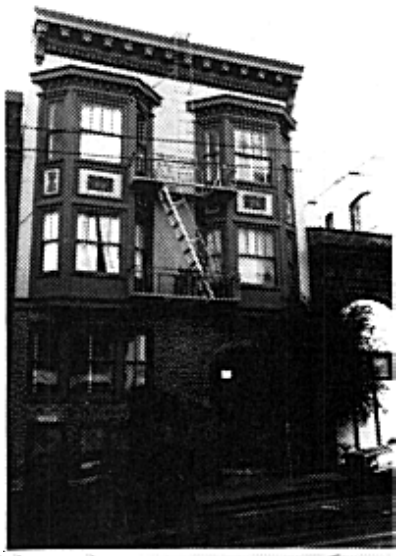


This is a three story Moderne Style residence, which has been converted to office use. It was one of five identical residences build in 1902.
Because of the building's context and it being a free-standing structure, it could not be added to or altered without significant loss of architectural integrity, and therefore is should be retained intact.

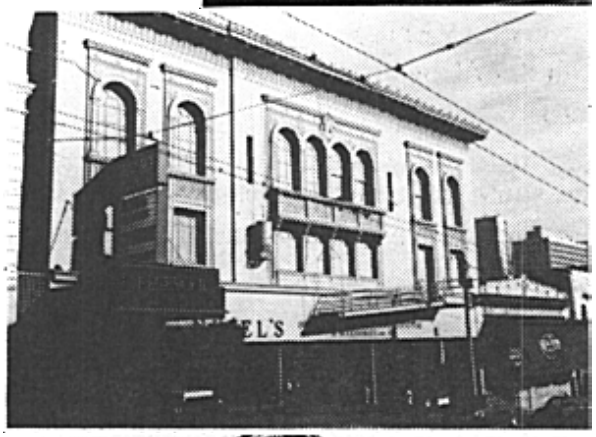
2930 VAN NESS AVENUE
Eastside, North of Chestnut Street
(AB 478/11B)
This is a three story Moderne Style residence, which like 2906 Van Ness was on of five identical buildings constructed in 1902 by Herbert E. Law. Because of the building's context and it being a free-standing structure, it could not be added to or altered without significant loss of architectural integrity, and therefore is should be retained intact.



1141 POST STREET
South Side of Post Between Van Ness & Polk Street
(AB 694/16)
This three story Renaissance/Baroque style apartment building was constructed in 1914.
Because it is a freestanding structure, it would be difficult to alter or add to without significantly harming it integrity and should be retained intact.



1244 SUTTER STREET
North Side of Sutter Between Van Ness & Polk Street
(AB 670/12)
This three story brick building northern Italian style constructed in 1911. The building served for many decades as the galleries of Butterfield & Butterfield auction house. Because of the building's rich architectural styling and cultural importance as the home of Butterfield & Butterfield it should be retained intact.



1000 GEARY BOULEVARD or 1015 POLK STREET
NW Corner at Polk and Geary
(AB 694/4)
This four story reinforced concrete Renaissance/Baroque building was built in 1913. Architect John Galen Howard designed the building as a Pierce Arrow auto showroom.

The use has since changed to offices.
Due to the freestanding structure's architect and architecture, it should be retained intact.

APPENDIX B - CONTRIBUTORY BUILDINGS

Address	Name and/or Block/Lot
540 Van Ness	State Bldg. 766/7
590 Van Ness	766/8
646 Van Ness	Civil Serv. 763/11
690 Van Ness	763/12
714 Van Ness	742/7
725 Van Ness	743/2
740-790 Van Ness	742/9
800 Van Ness	739/5
801 Van Ness	738/5
840 Van Ness	739/9
850 Van Ness	739/10
916 Van Ness	718/12
928 Van Ness	718/13
950 Van Ness	Mercedes 718/21
1233 Van Ness	690/1A
1243-1245 Van Ness	690/1
1332 Van Ness	670/14
1336 Van Ness	670/15
1346-1350 Van Ness	670/16
1355 Van Ness	671/1
1414 Van Ness	Post Office 667/9
1430 Van Ness	667/11
1431 Van Ness	666/3
1441 Van Ness	666/1
1529 Van Ness	647/3
1595 Van Ness	Great Western 647/1
1600 Van Ness	Greenspan 643/18
1700 Van Ness	Oldsmobile 622/18
1730 Van Ness	622/19
1835 Van Ness	618/1B
1840 Van Ness	619/11
2128 Van Ness	574/15
2134 Van Ness	574/16
2200 Van Ness	Dante Hospital 571/5
2211 Van Ness	570/5
2307-2311 Van Ness	551/4

2321 Van Ness	551/2
2325 Van Ness	551/1B
2327 Van Ness	551/1A
2420-2424 Van Ness	547/9
2440 Van Ness	547/11
2444 Van Ness	547/12
2511-2515 Van Ness	527/8
2806 Van Ness	499/4
2820 Van Ness	499/5
2822 Van Ness	499/6
2900 Van Ness	478/11
2918 Van Ness	478/11D
659 Turk	763/13
664-72 Turk	742/4
755 Eddy	742/10
857 Ellis	739/12
864 Ellis	718/10
854 Ellis	718/9
840-50 Ellis	718/8
820-38 Ellis	718/6
925 O'Farrell	718/20
935 O'Farrell	718/19
951 O'Farrell	718/14
963 O'Farrell	718/17
1062 Geary	694/9A
1054-60 Geary	694/9
1040-52 Geary	694/8
1034-36 Geary	694/7
1028-30 Geary	694/6
1020 Geary	694/5
1105 Post or 1047 Polk	694/1
1045 Polk	694/2
1031 Polk	694/3
1115 Post	694/19
1133 Post	694/17
1143 Pos	t694/15
1151 Post	694/14
1153-57 Post	694/13
1159-63 Post	694/12
1217 Sutter	691/12A
1219 Sutter	691/12
1240 Sutter	670/11
1441 Bush	670/23

1445 Bush	670/22
1455-65 Bush	670/20
1452 Bush	667/8
1430-42 Bush	667/5
1533 Pine	667/14
1522 Bush	666/6
1540 Bush	666/6A
1565 Bush	671/7

Amendment by Resolution 13907 adopted 7/6/1995