

Hello I'm Masaye Waugh, co-owner of Bootleg Bar & Kitchen at 2360 Van Ness Avenue in Russian Hill. I write this letter to invite VanNess Merchants to stand together and demand rights during the Van Ness Improvement Project.

The Problem

For over a year the ongoing, unsightly and delayed VanNess Improvement Project has killed foot traffic, parking spaces, customers and the sales needed for Merchants along the VanNess Corridor to survive. And now, the project has been delayed from 2019 completion to at least 2021. This is disastrous for us merchants.

Many of us are shackled to high rents despite the dwindled property value caused by the project. At best we face some decreased sales until the project ends; at worst we face going out of business at staggering loss. As we close down, more of San Francisco culture is wiped out.

The Lack of Response or Assistance From our City

We merchants have been provided with little help or acknowledgement from our supervisors or our Mayor. We are fed up with being ignored while our businesses plummet.

Please join me and sister merchants and go to **City Hall on Tuesday 10/30/18 at 2:30 pm** to demand the following. Together we stand, together we will be heard, together we demand action.

Our Demands:

- 1) Answer our emails and calls for help. My last 6 emails to Catherine Stefani were ignored, along with emails to Jane Kim, and Mayor Breed. We are being ignored.
- 2) Better Signage. The signs provided by SFMTA are not attractive. Polk Street has beautiful "Polk Street Open for Business" signs on street lamps. Why are ours so ugly.
- 3) Provide visibility. The gates, makeshift walls and tarps make restaurants such as Helmand's Palace and Bootleg Bar & Kitchen appear closed. The gates and fences also provide camouflage for burglars -- many of us have experienced increased break-ins.
- 4) Increased Police presence. A drive-by once an hour up and down VanNess to discourage burglars.
- 5) Less debris. Burglars pick up debris to break our windows.
- 6) Cleaning. Our windows and doorways are crusted with dirt and dust. We demand sidewalk, window and doorway cleaning once a week.
- 7) **A customer pick up zone. There's no way for customers to pick up their product or food. A 15-20 minute pick up zone would help.**
- 8) **Parking. A few parking spots a block would really help**
- 9) **We need economic assistance. If there are no restitutions to give us, it makes sense for us to retain money we've garnered. We demand a freeze on our sales tax, annual gross receipts tax, business registration taxes or property taxes.**

- 10) Have a plan for renovation that doesn't block off businesses and gate them off. The staging areas in front of our store fronts are ruinous.
- 11) Have safeties in place for small businesses in future city project planning. Consider and troubleshoot a project's impact on small businesses in order for it to reach approval.
- 12) Have a person in City Hall who is a liason with businesses. Provide a number to call when a worker puts a fence up blocking an entrance, etc.
- 13) Ensure there is always a clear entrance for customers to enter our storefronts. A maze of orange gates or wall with tarps blocking the view of our entrances discourages business.
- 14) Give us a heads up when a particularly impactful action will take place- such as laying down fresh pavement or jackhammering right outside a storefront. If we have advance notice, we can "make lemonade"-- create a cocktail called the Jackhammer for instance.
- 15) We urge Mayor Breed to publicly acknowledge this is a state of hardship for VanNess Merchants. Encourage customers to patronize VanNess businesses, provide an incentive for landlords to give us a break on rents-perhaps to switch to rents to a percentage of sales.**

Thank you,
Masaye Waugh
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What: Meeting of VanNess Merchants on the Steps of City Hall. Print and Broadcast Media Invited.

When: Tuesday, October 30 at 2:30 pm

RSVP: Masaye, 425.377.0382, BootlegBarSF@gmail.com

