



**DOWNTOWN
TRACY**
TRACY CITY CENTER
ASSOCIATION

Andrew Chesley
Executive Director
San Joaquin Council of Governments
555 E Weber Avenue
Stockton, CA 95202

RE: Support for Regional Transportation Plan amendment to include Valley Link project

Dear Mr. Chesley,

The Tracy City Center Association (Downtown Tracy) is pleased to provide this letter of strong support for the Regional Transportation Plan amendment being considered by the Board of Directors at the San Joaquin Council of Governments meeting on April 16, 2020. To achieve our region's goals for the economy, the environment, housing, and transportation - we need a robust and sustainable passenger rail system that will equitably serve our residents and work force with a better quality of life and access to jobs. We believe Valley Link is essential for the future of our region.

Valley Link

The Tri-Valley – San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority (Authority) is working expeditiously to achieve near-term congestion relief on the I-580 for the more than 98,500 workers commuting to the Bay Area. On average, these commuters spend an estimated 78-minutes each way. Overall traffic is projected to increase 75% by 2040 on I-580 and truck traffic is expected to increase by 60%. The 42 mile, 7-station Valley Link project will link the communities in the Northern San Joaquin Valley to the Bay Area's BART system in the Tri-Valley with 25 daily round trips – providing an estimated 28,000 daily rides in 2040. This will result in the reduction of 99.4 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per year in 2040 and the reduction of an estimated 33,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). In addition, opportunities to advance transit-oriented development adjacent to its stations will further reduce VMT and GHG emissions within the station environs.

The Authority has adopted a Sustainability Policy identifying strategies to achieve a zero emissions system and the use of battery-electric and hydrogen vehicle technologies is currently under investigation. In addition, the sustainability Policy also includes a commitment to encourage engagement in planning and decision-making for the project to ensure a meaningful level of participation from communities and households, including those that are considered disadvantaged and low-income.

Valley Link has widespread support in the Northern California Megaregion and at project inception, has nearly 1/3 of its funding already identified from local funding sources in the Bay Area – a total of \$648 million. Moving forward the Authority is pursuing Transit Intercity Rail Capital Program and Congested Corridor Program funding through the State in multiple funding cycles to obtain the Valley Link funding anticipated by 2025 associated with the amendment to the Regional Transportation Plan.

Valley Link is critical for the equitable and sustainable future of San Joaquin County and the Northern California Megaregion and we request that this transformational project be included in the fiscally constrained section of the San Joaquin Council of Government's Regional Transportation Plan. The Authority, with guidance from the Executive Steering Committee comprised of senior leadership from the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA), Caltrans, MTC, the San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG), Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC), BART, and San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (ACE), has been working expeditiously to advance the Valley Link project. A 15-member governing Board comprising representatives from the cities, counties, and transit districts from both sides of the Altamont – have provided collaborative policy oversight for Valley Link.

We appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to the advancement of this important project.

Sincerely,

Dino Margaros
Executive Director

CC: SJCOG Board Members