

From: Tim Sbranti
Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 3:17 PM
To: MTC Info; Scott Haggerty; Michael Tree
Subject: Public Comment for item 8c on MTC agenda on 6/24

External Email

Dear Chair Haggerty and Honorable Commissioners:

Subject: Item 8c – Allocation for Valley Link Project Advancement

On behalf of the Innovation Tri-Valley Leadership Group (ITV), an organization representing employers, entrepreneurs, and innovators in the Tri-Valley region, I write to support the approval of the allocation of the \$46.8 million in AB 1171 Bridge Toll funds for the Tri-Valley – San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority (Authority) for further advancement of the Valley Link project.

This item received unanimous support of the MTC Programming and Allocations Committee on September 10th, and we are hopeful that it will receive similar support of the full Commission as well. After many decades of study, this action will assure that our Tri-Valley residents will finally benefit from the taxes and bridge tolls they have paid for many decades. In addition, it is a vital and necessary infrastructure investment to support and connect one of California's fastest growing regions that is home to over 450 technology companies with a \$42 billion GDP.

This action will allow for the completion of 30% design, federal environmental review documents, required Caltrans' documentation, and other critical reports and studies needed to expeditiously advance rail connectivity to the Tri-Valley and Northern San Joaquin County. As an example of the positive impact of your support, this will allow the Authority to have the Valley Link Project ready for final design, vehicle procurement, and right-of-way acquisition as early as 2022. Now more than ever, getting major "shovel ready" projects like this ready to go are vital for the job creation and economic recovery challenges we are all facing.

With an estimate of 28,000 riders by 2040, Valley Link will benefit the entire Bay Area by reducing traffic over the Altamont Pass and through the 580/680 corridor. An estimated 98,500 Bay Area workers are now living in Northern San Joaquin County, commuting daily through the Altamont in their cars, a figure that is even more staggering when you consider that the Bay Area Council's own studies showed that in 2018 there were 86,000 workers coming over the Altamont. This is a testament to the need for a project which is a critical connection point at the very epicenter of the Northern California Mega-Region. In addition to serving as the primary goods movement corridor between Southern California, the Central Valley, and the Bay Area, this corridor also is the primary route for those delivering our most vital services - firefighters, police, nurses and teachers, many of whom have been priced out of the communities they serve by rising housing costs. Prior to pandemic travel restrictions, these commuters have faced an average 78-minute commute each way and already there is evidence that this congestion is rapidly returning.

In addition, Valley Link will support the advancement of transit-oriented development adjacent to its stations, which will further reduce VMT and greenhouse emissions within the station environs. The Transit Oriented Development policy adopted by Valley Link's Board mirrors the MTC policy with a

corridor average threshold requirement of 2,200 homes within a ½ mile of stations, ensuring that the transportation infrastructure is also a needed catalyst for smart growth that protects open space.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request, and on behalf of the business and civic organizations which comprise ITV we urge you to approve this item.

Sincerely,



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