



June 9, 2020

Mr. Nick Josefowitz, Chair
Programming and Allocations Committee
Metropolitan Transportation Committee
375 Beale Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Subject: Agenda Item 3d – Allocation for Valley Link Project Advancement

Dear Chair Josefowitz:

I write to support the approval of the allocation of \$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 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. After many decades of study, it will assure that our Tri-Valley residents will finally benefit from the taxes and bridge tolls they have paid for many decades.

The Authority was created in 2017 by Assembly Bill 758 for the purposes of planning, developing and delivering cost-effective and responsive transit connectivity between BART and the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) commuter rail service in the Tri-Valley that reflects regional consensus and meets the goals and objectives of the San Joaquin Valley and Tri-Valley communities. Valley Link will benefit the Bay Area region and Tri-Valley in particular by reducing traffic over the Altamont Pass and through the 580/680 corridor. An estimated 98,500 Bay Area workers are living in Northern San Joaquin County and commuting daily through the Altamont in their cars to destinations throughout the Bay Area. This includes 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. These commuters normally face an

average 78-minute commute each way and already there is evidence that pre-Covid congestion is rapidly returning to the Altamont Pass.

An estimated 28,000 are projected to ride the system in 2040. This will result in the reduction of over 99.4 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and the reduction of over 33,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions per year. In addition, through the Board-adopted TOD Policy, 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 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 a catalyst for smart growth that protects open space. The proposed Isabel Neighborhood Plan is an example of how this may happen throughout the system.

Valley Link is a transformational project that will link our most vital Bay Area workforce to affordable housing, provide opportunities for compact transit-oriented development and will have a significant impact on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. It will also provide an estimated 22,000 jobs during construction and, when operational, support an estimate 400 jobs per year with labor income of over \$19 million per year and \$69 million in business sales annually. In short, Valley Link is vital to our environment and the quality of life in our communities – and now even more vital to our economy given the recovery needs we are now facing.

We urge the Committee's approval of the Authority's request for the allocation of funding. This action will support the goals and objectives of our city and the economic recovery of our region by ensuring that this vital project will move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Marchand". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Marchand
Mayor

Cc: Scott Haggerty, MTC Chair
MTC Commissioners
Therese McMillan, MTC Executive Director