

Livermore Amador Valley **PUBLIC COMMENT - Agenda Item 3d**
TRANSIT AUTHORITY



June 6, 2020

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

Dear Chair Josefowitz:

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

On behalf of the Livermore Amador Transit Authority, I write to support the approval of the allocation of the \$46.8 million in AB 1171 Bridge Toll funds for further advancement of the Valley Link project – a transformative and cost-effective rail project that tackles some of our region's most intractable problems. 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 Livermore 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.

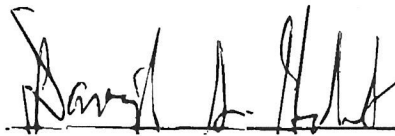
The Tri-Valley is a thriving Bay Area job center - with two national labs and it is the headquarter location of more than 450 technology companies. It has a regional gross domestic product (GDP) of an estimated \$42 billion. The quality of life it affords its residents is considered to be a large part of its competitive advantage – but growing congestion and skyrocketing Bay Area housing costs put this all at risk. An estimated 98,500 Bay Area workers are now living in Northern San Joaquin County, commuting daily through the Altamont in their cars. This includes those delivering essential services to the Bay Area - firefighters, police, nurses and teachers, many of whom have been priced out of the communities they serve by rising housing costs. Pre-pandemic, these commuters faced an average 78-minute commute each way and already there is evidence that this congestion is rapidly returning.

An estimated 28,000 are projected to ride the 42-mile, 7-station 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 will link our Northern California Megaregion's 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 400 jobs per year with labor income of over \$19 million per year and \$69 million in business sales annually. In short, it 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 approval of the Authority's request for this allocation of funding. This action will ensure that this vital project moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Haubert", written over a horizontal line.

Chair David Haubert

Cc:

Scott Haggerty, MTC Chair

MTC Commissioners

Therese McMillan, MTC Executive Director