BAYAREA COUNCIL
Shape the Future

May 27, 2020

The Honorable Pauline Cutter, Chair
Alameda County Transportation Commission
1111 Broadway, Suite 800
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear Chair Cutter:

Subject: Approval of Tri-Valley-San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority Request for a 2014 Measure BB Transportation Expenditure Plan Amendment

I write to support the approval of the Tri-Valley-San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority (Authority) request to initiate an amendment to the 2014 Measure BB Transportation Expenditure Plan (TEP). The TEP amendment will acknowledge the Authority as a new agency in Alameda County that can be an eligible recipient of Measure BB funds and update the TEP by adding Valley Link for the $400 million Measure BB funding identified for the BART to Livermore project. This action will fulfill a commitment made to the Tri-Valley, and particularly Livermore, to advance rail connectivity to Livermore. After many decades of study, it will assure that our residents will finally benefit from the taxes they have paid to BART 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 entire Tri-Valley 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. 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 – who face an average 78-minute commute each way.

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.

We urge approval of the Authority's Request for a 2014 Measure BB Transportation Expenditure Plan Amendment. This action will ensure that this vital project moves forward and that commitments to the Tri-Valley are long last met.

Sincerely,

Jim Wunderman

Jim Wunderman
President & CEO
Bay Area Council

Cc: Alameda County Transportation Commission members
Tess Lengyel, ACTC Executive Director