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2020

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July 13, 2020

Via Email

Tess Lengyel, Executive Director
Alameda County Transportation Commission
1111 Broadway, Suite 800
Oakland, CA 95607
tlengyel@alamedactc.org

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

Ms. Lengyel,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above referenced item as part of the 45-day comment period that began following the Alameda County Transportation Commission's (Alameda CTC) initial action on May 28, 2020. On behalf of the staff of the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART), I am writing to express my support, with recommendations detailed below, of the proposed amendment of the 2014 Transportation Expenditure Plan, specifically on the $400 million (M) of the 2014 Measure BB funds identified for the BART to Livermore extension project.

The 2014 Transportation Expenditure Plan (TEP) that was approved by Alameda County voters did specify "a BART Extension within the I-580 Corridor … using the most effective and efficient technology." In May 2018, the BART Board of Directors certified the Final Project EIR for the BART to Livermore extension, and directed staff not to advance a specific project in the Tri-Valley. Pursuant to AB 758 (Baker), the Tri-Valley-San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority (TVSJVRRA) at that point assumed responsibility to advance a rail project in the corridor. Because of the BART Board's decision to not advance a project in the corridor, and TVSJVRRA's subsequent assumption of the lead for rail planning in the Tri-Valley, BART staff supports (with recommendations below) the proposed action to amend the TEP naming the TVSJVRRA as an eligible recipient of Measure BB funds and specifically naming the Valley Link project in place of BART to Livermore. Staff believes this action is consistent with intent of Alameda County voters to invest in transit in the I-580 Corridor. It is important that the $400 M sales tax investment does accrue to Alameda County residents and businesses.

Since the TVSJVRRA assumed responsibility for a rail project in the Tri-Valley, BART staff have been engaged with the Authority during project feasibility and initial design of the proposed Valley Link Rail project, and this coordination continues as the project undergoes environmental review and design refinement. This coordination has been key to BART's review of the potential impacts that the Valley Link project is projected to have on riders of the BART system.

To ensure a safe, comfortable and seamless journey for transit riders, BART recommends that the amendment to the TEP clearly indicate that required improvements to the BART system in Alameda County resulting from the impacts of the Valley Link Rail project are priority components of the Phase 1 Valley Link Rail project. These fall into three areas of investments:

1) **Base Project:** As a result of our initial analysis of these impacts, BART projects that the increased ridership driven by the Valley Link Rail project will result in impacts to BART (including the need to acquire additional rail cars), station capital improvement needs (to accommodate safe and smooth passengers flows), and reconfiguration of the Dublin/Pleasanton station (to facilitate transfers between the two systems). These analyses will be further revised as coordination continues, in preparation for the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Valley Link Rail project scheduled for later this year
2) **Core Improvements:** Initial analysis indicates that many future Valley Link patrons would transfer to the BART system, and that capacity improvements of varying cost may be required at destination stations, such as the 12th St Oakland, 19th St Oakland, Castro Valley, Lake Merritt, and West Dublin / Pleasanton BART stations (i.e., platform width, emergency egress, vertical circulation). Measure BB funding eligibility must reflect the potential that expenses related to the Valley Link Phase 1 project may occur outside the I-580 corridor itself, but still within Alameda County.
3) **I-580 Corridor Fare Gate Modernization:** Funding is required to modernize faregates for BART stations within the I-580 Corridor (Castro Valley, West Dublin/Pleasanton and Dublin/Pleasanton stations) to the revised standard adopted by the BART Board of Directors. These new faregates address fare evasion at these stations and provide current and future travelers within the I-580 Corridor a safer and more secure experience.

The Valley Link project will not be successful for our riders and Alameda County taxpayers if the system does not adequately accommodate these new passengers. BART does not have funding to mitigate these impacts, which are critical to the overall success of this project. Therefore, BART anticipates that the close coordination with the Valley Link Rail project team will continue as the project advances. While ultimately other fund sources may be used for the core system BART impacts noted above, at this early phase it is important to maintain maximum flexibility of local funding so that they can be used to leverage additional region, state, and federal funding sources.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment on this proposed action. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff with any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Powers

Robert M. Powers
General Manager