BIA BAY AREA

BUILDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

sent via email

Sept. 22, 2020

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

Dear Chairwoman Cutter:

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

As a membership organization with more than 400 companies engaged in the business of entitling, designing and building new homes within the jurisdiction of the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC), I write to strongly support approval of the Tri-Valley-San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority (Authority) request to amend the 2014 Measure BB Transportation Expenditure Plan (TEP). The TEP amendment will acknowledge the authority as 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 to advance rail connectivity to Livermore and support our economy by providing our Bay Area work force with a chance to have safe and affordable choices about where they live and work.

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 a large part of its competitive advantage but growing congestion and skyrocketing Bay Area housing costs put this all at risk. An estimated 93,400 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 such as 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.

Valley Link will provide an estimated 33,000 daily rides on the 42-mile, seven-station system in 2040. This will result in the reduction of over 99.4 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and the reduction of an estimated 32,220 to 42,650 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions per year. In addition, through ACT's Transit Oriented Development policy, Valley Link will support the advancement of transit-oriented development adjacent to its stations, which will further reduce

VMT and greenhouse emissions. 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 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 met.

Sincerely,

Lisa A. Vorderbrueggen
BIA|Bay Area, East Bay Executive Director for Governmental Affairs
1350 Treat Blvd., Ste. 140
Walnut Creek, CA 94598
925-348-1956
lvorderbrueggen@biabayarea.org

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