



SAN JOAQUIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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July 29, 2019

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Mr. Carl Guardino
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Silicon Valley Leadership Group
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San Jose, CA 95110

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Bay Area Council
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President and CEO
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San Francisco, CA 94105-4015

Ms. Jo Ann Prompongsatorn Farrant &
Ms. Ann Cheng
Co-Executive Directors
TransForm
436 14th Street, Suite 600
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Altamont Corridor Vision Phase 1 Improvement Program Inclusion in FASTER Bay Area

Dear Mr. Guardino, Ms. John-Baptiste, Mr. Wunderman, Ms. Prompongsatorn Farrant, and Ms. Cheng:

On behalf of the San Joaquin Council of Governments, I am pleased to provide this letter to strongly support the inclusion of \$1.9 billion for the Altamont Corridor Vision Phase 1 Improvements Program as part of FASTER Bay Area. It is our understanding the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Bay Area Council, SPUR, and TransForm are working in partnership to place FASTER Bay Area on the November 2020 ballot for Bay Area voters.

The Altamont Corridor that connects the Northern San Joaquin Valley to the Bay Area is one of the most heavily traveled, most congested, and fastest growing corridors in the Northern California Megaregion. To achieve state and regional environmental and economic development goals, a robust program of passenger rail improvements is needed in the Altamont Corridor. This program will increase mobility by providing a sustainable transportation option, provide greater connectivity, and a better quality of life and access to jobs, educational opportunities and health care facilities.

The Altamont Corridor Vision Phase 1 Improvement Program is the result of a partnership between San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission, Tri-Valley-San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority, and San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority. The planned Bay Area improvements of this Phase 1 Program include \$1.1 billion for the implementation of 8.6-miles of a new rail alignment through the Altamont Pass (between Greenville Road and the San Joaquin County Line) to be used by both Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) and Valley Link services. This new alignment through the Altamont Pass may include a 3.5 mile tunnel and enable speeds up to 125 mph that would decrease train travel times through the Altamont Pass by 11 – 15 minutes.

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Mr. Carl Guardino, Ms. Alicia John-Baptiste, Mr. Jim Wunderman,
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The Phase 1 improvements in the Bay Area also include \$600 million to fund equipment and the additional infrastructure needed to complete the Valley Link service between the Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station and Livermore. In the near-term, the Tri-Valley – San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority anticipates running 25 Valley Link daily round-trips between the Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station and the North Lathrop Transfer Station in San Joaquin County. In addition, Phase 1 also includes \$200 million is included for new ACE equipment and Bay Area station/alignment improvements to allow for two additional ACE daily round-trips between the Northern San Joaquin Valley and San Jose.

The Altamont Corridor Vision Phase 1 Improvement Program will provide safe, frequent, and reliable regional rail service by modernizing passenger rail in the Altamont Corridor. The vastly improved infrastructure through the Altamont Pass would operate on a dedicated alignment separated from freight rail, double tracked, grade separated, and enable fast and frequent service operating at up to 125 mph. The Altamont Corridor Vision Phase 1 Improvement Program is the first step towards the completion of the Altamont Corridor Vision which is consistent with the 2018 State Rail Plan, 2007 MTC Regional Rail Plan, MTC Resolution 3829 from 2007, and the CHSRA's Altamont Corridor Rail Project.

The Altamont Corridor Phase 1 Improvement Program would:

- Substantially increase regional rail ridership in the Altamont Corridor.
- Reduce the amount of greenhouse gases and air pollution emissions by diverting trips that would have previously been taken by an automobile.
- Reduce congestion on some of the Northern California Megaregion's most congested freeways (I-205/I-580/I-680 Corridor)

The following benefits of the program will continue to grow over time as frequency increases and ridership grows:

- Reduce congestion and increase mobility by encouraging the use of transit, walking and bicycling.
- Increase equity among corridor communities by providing mobility choices for disadvantaged communities and increasing access to jobs, education, health care, goods and services, and social and recreational activities.
- Facilitate economic development and sustainable growth, and catalyze transit-oriented development and efficient land use.
- Promote improved health outcomes through lower GHG emissions and levels of particulate matter, reducing respiratory ailments, and encouraging more active lifestyle.

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Improved passenger rail is an essential component of the future transportation network for the Northern California Megaregion and the greater Central Valley. Increased frequency will make the service a viable and attractive option for business travelers, leisure travelers, and those living in transit-dependent households. The San Joaquin Council of Governments strongly supports this program of passenger rail improvements. Overall, we see this program as an important strategy to reduce congestion, improve quality of life, and pursue a comprehensive and more sustainable transportation network for our future.

Thank you for your consideration of inclusion of the Altamont Corridor Phase 1 Improvement Program in the proposed FASTER Bay Area ballot measure. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at chesley@sjcog.org or (209) 235-0600.

Sincerely,



ANDREW T. CHESLEY
Executive Director
San Joaquin Council of Governments

cc: Mr. Dan Leavitt, SJRRC
cc: Mr. Michael Tree, LAVTA