

From: [Tim Sbranti](#)
To: [MTC-ABAG Info](#)
Cc: [Therese W. McMillan](#); [Alix Bockelman](#); [Michael Tree](#); [info@planbayarea.org](#); [Dave Vautin](#); [Matt Maloney](#); [Elizabeth Bugarin](#); [Kimberly Ward](#); [Brandon Crain](#); [Tess Lengyel](#); [Scott Haggerty](#); [Reed, Michael](#); [kyle.alagood@mail.house.gov](#); [De Lauro, Mallory](#); [Kristin Connelly](#); [Lynn Naylor](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT - Joint MTC Planning/ABAG Administrative Committee - Item 5a
Date: Thursday, July 09, 2020 4:45:33 PM

External Email

Dear Chair Sperring,

On behalf of the businesses and civic organizations which comprise the Innovation Tri-Valley Leadership Group, I am writing to express our shock and dismay that Valley Link has been identified as a Period 2 project within Plan Bay Area 2050.

It is our hope that your committee will correct this error and ensure that the Valley Link Project be included in PBA as a Period 1 project. The Period 2 designation will significantly prohibit the advancement of the Valley Link Project, limiting funding opportunity for funding by putting it out of conformity with the RTP. Period 2 identifies projects for implementation after the year 2035, which is simply unacceptable.

As a matter of fact, Valley Link is much further along than all of the projects it is co-listed with in Period 2, and is actually further along than some of the rail projects identified in Period 1. In addition, based upon MTC's own cost-benefit metrics, Valley Link scored 2nd on all rail projects in the Bay Area, so the fact that it is even being contemplated for Period 2 would seem to defy a logical explanation.

As of today, over one-third of Valley Link funding has been identified and we believe it is a strong candidate for potential federal stimulus funding. Congressman Eric Swalwell (CA-15) has identified Valley Link as one of his highest transportation priorities, and he is eager to help pursue federal funding once the environmental work is completed next year. However, if MTC takes this extraordinary action of slating the project as something that cannot be completed until after 2035, it will have effectively eliminated his ability to assist our efforts.

It is also worth noting that Valley Link is a Northern California Mega-Regional project, so there will be opportunities for unique funding sources that support mega-regional connection, not to mention that the COG/RTP in San Joaquin County could also be a source of funding. The reason this is important is that Valley Link is not solely reliant and/or competing with other Bay Area rail projects for funding. With that said, if MTC identifies Valley Link as a project not slated for completion until 2035, those outside funding sources vanish.

In terms of economic impact during these challenging times, we want to point out that recent Economic Impact Study shows that Valley Link will create an estimated 22,000 jobs and \$3.5 billion in economic impact in Alameda County and San Joaquin County with the construction and operation of the project. It is anticipated that project construction can be advanced by late 2022 or early 2023 and be operational by

2027/2028 - well within the Period 1 timeframe.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter and for your support in helping us to complete this vital piece of infrastructure to relieve congestion in the Altamont Corridor and sustain our region's economic future.

Sincerely,

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Tim Sbranti

Director of Strategic Initiatives
Innovation Tri-Valley Leadership
Group
925.858.5303

tsbranti@innovationtrivalley.org

www.innovationtrivalley.org



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