



August 10, 2020

Mr. Scott Haggerty, Chair
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
scott.haggerty@acgov.org
375 Beale St, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94105-2066

Re: ACE Service Expansion Program in Plan Bay Area 2050

Dear Chair Haggerty:

In line with Union City's previously expressed support of projects that leverage funding sources to benefit multiple rail providers and provide seamless connectivity to transit hubs, Union City respectfully requests that the Metropolitan Transportation Commission include the expanded Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) service in Plan Bay Area 2050. The Period 1 (before 2035) of Plan Bay Area 2050 should have two additional ACE round trips between the Central Valley and San Jose (six total ACE daily round trips), and Period 2 (after 2035) of Plan Bay Area 2050 should have two more ACE round trips between the Central Valley and Fremont/Union City/Newark area, specifically connecting with BART at Union City's BART Station. This would allow for eight total ACE daily round trips in the Plan time horizon.

ACE expansion is consistent with the 2018 California State Rail Plan, improves connectivity with Merced-Bakersfield HSR Interim Operating Segment and complements the proposed Valley Link Project. While Valley Link will serve the northern part of Alameda County and San Francisco, the increased ACE service creates Tri-Valley and Central Valley linkages to the Tri-Cities and Silicon Valley. Importantly to Union City, this expansion of service leverages previous investments in our community and in the corridor.

ACE staff have been a valuable partner with Union City planning our Priority Development Area that transformed more than 90 acres of vacant and under-utilized land surrounding the BART Station into a new community of more than 1,700 built and entitled residential and affordable and market-rate housing units and 1.2 million square feet of planned office space – all in the Station District next to BART and ACE. In the next five years 2,000 homes are expected to be built within one-half mile, or slightly more, of the BART station. These homes will have an average density of 45 units per acre. We want, and have planned for, rich transit service to support this new community.

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The City of Union City with direct funding and leveraged grants has invested more than \$100 million transforming the Union City BART Station into a two-sided station providing direct pedestrian connectivity from the station to the new family housing as well as improved passenger circulation. A new passenger rail platform on rail tracks currently utilized by ACE will provide direct connectivity to the Union City BART Station entrance from the other side of the station when the service begins in ACE roundtrips seven and eight described above.

ACE carried more than 6,000 riders a day with four daily round trips. Expansion of ACE is needed to further reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and congestion in the I-580/I-680 corridor. Expansion of ACE improves air quality and increases and enhances opportunities for transit-oriented development. As you are aware, MTC estimates that 44% of job growth in the Bay Area between 2015 – 2050 will be to the south of Union City in Santa Clara County. ACE’s biggest markets are carrying Alameda County and Central Valley workers to/from jobs in Santa Clara County through our Tri-City communities. Because rail capacity is constrained into San Jose, our future Union City BART ACE station connectivity will be key to serving that future job growth.

The MTC Board Action on July 22, 2020 creates some fiscal capacity in Period 1 to assign funding to some additional transportation strategies to achieve equity and GHG outcomes. There is strong support in the Bay Area, Tri-Cities and Union City for expanding ACE service and ACE expansion should be one of transportation strategies included in Period 1 with additional round trips also included in Phase 2.

Union City strongly supports ACE expansion and we urge MTC to include the ACE Service Expansion Program in both Period 1 and Period 2 of the Plan Bay Area 2050. This request is a minor, incremental improvement of the ACE commuter rail service which has served the region for over twenty years and needs minimal improvements to double its train service for the benefit of the region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Carol Dutra-Vernaci'.

Carol Dutra-Vernaci
Mayor, City of Union City

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the mayor

Cc: Therese McMillan, Executive Director MTC - tmcmillan@bayareametro.gov
Alix Bockelman, Deputy Director MTC – abockelman@bayareametro.gov
Dave Vautin – Assistant Director Major Plans, MTC - dvautin@bayareametro.gov

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