

August 13, 2020

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

Re: ACE Service Expansion Program in Plan Bay Area 2050

Dear Chair Haggerty:

The Bay Area Council requests that MTC include expanding ACE service by 4 additional round trips in Plan Bay Area 2050. Period 1 (before 2035) of Plan Bay Area 2050 should have 2 additional ACE round trips between the Central Valley and San Jose (6 total ACE daily round trips), and Period 2 (after 2035) of Plan Bay Area 2050 should have 2 additional ACE round trips between the Central Valley and Fremont/Union City/Newark (8 total ACE daily round trips). This request is a minor, incremental improvement of the ACE commuter rail service which has well served the Bay Area for over twenty years.

ACE commuter rail service is important to the Bay Area economy and the well-being of its residents. Daily, more than 90,000 commuters and 14,000 trucks heading to and from the Port of Oakland travel the congested I-580 corridor, with the number of commuters expected to increase 75% between 2016 and 2040. In 2019, ACE carried more than 6,000 riders a day with only 4 daily round trips. Expansion of ACE is needed to further reduce VMT, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and congestion in the I-580/I-680 corridor, while improving air quality and the opportunities for transit-oriented development in the Altamont Corridor. MTC estimates that 44% of job growth in the Bay Area between 2015 – 2050 will be in Santa Clara County. ACE's biggest markets are carrying Alameda County and Central Valley workers to/from jobs in Santa Clara County. ACE is the only passenger rail service directly connecting the Tri-Valley and the Central Valley to Santa Clara County. ACE expansion is consistent with the 2018 State Rail Plan, improves connectivity with Merced-Bakersfield HSR Interim Operating Segment, improves the viability of the future new Transbay Crossing, complements the proposed Valley Link project, and serves a number of disadvantaged communities throughout the Altamont Corridor.

The MTC Board Action on July 22 “creates some fiscal capacity in Period 1 to assign funding to some additional transportation strategies to achieve equity and GHG outcomes” (page 10 of MTC staff report for Item 8A). There is strong support in the Bay Area and in the Megaregion for expanding ACE service and ACE expansion should be one of transportation strategies included in Period 1.

The Bay Area Council 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gwendolyn Litvak", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gwendolyn Litvak

Senior Vice President, Public Policy
Bay Area Council

Cc: Therese McMillan - tcmillan@bayareametro.gov , Alix Bockelman –
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