



Tri-Valley San Joaquin Valley
REGIONAL RAIL AUTHORITY

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Valley Link Solidifies Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

LIVERMORE, CA, March 23, 2021 - The Tri-Valley – San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority Valley, under the leadership of Chair Veronica Vargas, made an important commitment this month to assuring that social equity will be a guiding force in the development and future operation of the Valley Link system. Chair Vargas noted, “I am proud that our agency is going above and beyond in our commitment to equity. It is something we can be proud of at this time in history when so many are suffering from social inequities and injustice.” The policy statement will ensure that Valley Link programs and policies comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 – that ensures that no person is excluded from participation or denied benefits on the basis of race, color or national origin. At the direction of the Board, this statement was expanded to also include age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability.

The Board’s decision was made at their March 10, 2021 meeting where a series of other actions were taken that were aimed at preparing the agency to be an eligible recipient for potential federal funding. The equity statement was a centerpiece of a broader Title VI policy that was adopted by the Board that also included Public Participation and Language Assistance Plans.

Vice-Chair Melissa Hernandez said, “The adoption of our Public Participation Plan will ensure that there is an established process to solicit and consider public comment regarding future service, project planning, environmental studies and construction. In particular, the plan ensures we do not leave anyone out of the process. It ensures that we will reach out to minority and limited English proficient populations when shaping the project’s future.” The Language Assistance Plan identified five different limited English proficient populations in the project area including Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese and Arabic and language translations of key project notifications and documents are now available upon request.

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Background

The Valley Link Project Feasibility Report (October 2019) identified many communities in the Valley Link project area as “Disadvantaged Communities,” by definition of the California Public Utilities Commission – suffering from a combination of economic, health and environmental burdens. These communities suffer from decades of disinvestment, geographic inequity and poverty, resulting in pockets of concentrated low-income communities lacking adequate access to jobs, healthcare and educational opportunities. The proposed Downtown Tracy, River Islands and North Lathrop stations are all within geographic areas identified as disadvantaged. Areas designated as low-income are also near these stations, as well as the Mountain House station. Since project inception, the Valley Link Board has been committed to encourage engagement in planning and decision-making for the project to ensure a meaningful level of participation from disadvantaged communities and low-income communities and households. Extensive efforts have been made to maximize benefits to disadvantaged communities and low-income communities and households in project planning and design.

More About Valley Link

Valley Link is a 42-mile, 7-station passenger rail project developed in partnership with its 15-member agencies to be responsive to the goals and objectives of the communities it will serve.

The project will meet an urgent need to:

- **Connect Housing, People and Jobs**
Connects the Megaregion’s workforce to affordable housing. More than 93,400 Bay Area workers living in San Joaquin County commute daily through the Altamont in their cars.
- **Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions**
Reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 32,220 to 42,650 metric tons by 2040.
- **Serve Disadvantaged and Low-Income Communities and Households**
Promotes equity by serving four stations within areas designated as disadvantaged or within or near low-income communities.
- **Create New Jobs and Promote Economic Recovery**
Provides an estimated 22,000 jobs during construction. When operational will support 400 jobs per year with labor income of over \$19 million per year and \$69 million in business sales annually.

Additional information on the Tri-Valley – San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority, is available on the Regional Rail Authority’s website at www.valleylinkrail.com.

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