



Tri-Valley San Joaquin Valley  
**REGIONAL RAIL AUTHORITY**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Valley Link Executive Director Michael Tree Ready to Pass the Baton**

**Livermore, CA, January 20, 2022** – Michael Tree, Executive Director of the Tri-Valley – San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority, has announced that he will be passing the agency’s leadership baton to Deputy Executive Director/Program Manager Kevin Sheridan at the end of February 2022. His leadership on the Valley Link project spans nearly five years, three at the helm as the agency’s first Executive Director when it was established in January of 2019 and two years prior to that on initiatives which led to the agency’s formation.

“Michael recognizes the very urgent need for this project and has been its tireless advocate since even before day one,” said Authority Board Chair Veronica Vargas. “He has been instrumental in establishing the Authority and bringing it to a point where it is now equipped to meet its mission to deliver the Valley Link rail project. I also give him credit for identifying a successor who can move the project into its next phase and get construction underway,” she continued.

As Executive Director of the Rail Authority, Tree’s efforts included overseeing the completion of the legislatively mandated Project Feasibility Report, which identified project features including alignment, stations and the system’s operating characteristics. During his tenure, the project also cleared critical milestones with completion of the project Environmental Impact Report and preliminary engineering. He also worked doggedly to assemble more than half of funding needed to advance an initial segment of the project.

Said Authority Vice-Chair Melissa Hernandez, “I am so grateful for Michael’s leadership on our project and amazed that he was able to accomplish so much, while also holding a dual role of Executive Director for the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority. He has been highly successful in both roles. Handling either alone in itself would be no small feat. We certainly owe him a great debt of gratitude.”

“It’s been quite a ride,” said Tree as he addressed the Board following discussions regarding his announcement. “I have a passion for this project and will continue to be its biggest advocate as it moves forward. I am very proud of all that we have accomplished so far.”

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## **More about the Tri-Valley – San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority**

The Tri-Valley – San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority was created by California Legislature in 2017 with the passage of Assembly Bill 758, co-authored by Assemblywoman Catharine Baker, R-San Ramon and Assemblywoman Susan Eggman, D-Stockton. The authority's primary purpose is to plan, develop and deliver cost-effective transit connectivity between the San Joaquin Valley and the Bay Area.

The Authority is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by its 15-member agencies, including: the Town of Danville, the cities of San Ramon, Dublin, Pleasanton, Livermore, Tracy, Manteca, Lathrop and Stockton, the Mountain House Community Services District, the counties of Alameda and San Joaquin, the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA), the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE).

The proposed Valley Link project includes seven stations along 42 miles of track, connecting the existing Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station to the proposed ACE North Lathrop Station. Trains would be scheduled to allow for convenient transfers to BART. The first Valley Link trains could be placed into service in 2028.

Valley Link will carry more than 33,000 passengers a day in 2040, reducing vehicle miles travelled by 141 million each year, and eliminating between 33,000 to 42,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) per year depending on the vehicle technology selected. Currently, the Regional Rail Authority is considering four technologies that include two zero emission technologies; battery/electric and hydrogen.

The passenger rail project will have a significant impact on the regional economy. A recent Economic Impact Study performed by PGH Wong found that during construction Valley Link will create 22,000 jobs with an economic impact on the region of \$3.5 billion. Additionally, during service, Valley Link will create 400 jobs and an economic impact of \$69 million per year.

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](http://www.valleylinkrail.com).

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