

1.1 Introduction

The Tri-Valley–San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority (Authority) is proposing the Valley Link Project, which is being evaluated on a project level in this Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR). This chapter provides a brief overview of the Proposed Project and alternatives; the Project goals and objectives; Project background and context; an overview of the environmental review process; and the scope, content, and organization of the Draft EIR.

Figure 1-1. Valley Link Project Geographic Segments



1.2 Project Overview

1.2.1 Proposed Project

The Proposed Project is a new 42-mile, 7-station passenger rail project that will connect the existing Dublin/Pleasanton Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Station in Alameda County to the approved Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) North Lathrop Station in San Joaquin County (Figure 1-1). Valley Link will use existing transportation corridors: the existing Interstate (I-) 580 corridor (11.7 miles) in the Tri-Valley; the Alameda County Transportation Corridor right-of-way (ROW) through the Altamont Pass (14.5 miles); and the existing Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Corridor (16.1 miles) in Northern San Joaquin County. The Proposed Project includes the following stations:

- Dublin/Pleasanton (BART Intermodal)

- Isabel (Livermore)
- Greenville (Livermore)
- Mountain House (San Joaquin County)
- Downtown Tracy Station (Tracy)
- River Islands Station (Lathrop)
- North Lathrop Station (ACE Intermodal)

The Proposed Project also includes the proposed Tracy Operation and Maintenance Facility (OMF), which would be located in the City of Tracy.

Figure 1-2. Proposed Valley Link Project



The Proposed Project would provide regular service throughout the day in both directions with timed connections with both BART and ACE services. The overall travel time from North Lathrop to the Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station would be approximately 61 to 65 minutes depending on direction of travel. The 2040 service plan includes 12-minute peak period headways and 2-minute off-peak headways with more limited service on the weekend. A detailed service plan for the proposed 2025 initial service and the 2040 future service plan are both presented in Chapter 2, *Project Description*.

1.2.2 Initial Operating Segments

Full implementation of the Proposed Project would be subject to available funding and design and construction considerations; therefore, two initial operating segments (IOS) were identified (Figures 1-3 and 1-4). The IOS are under consideration and would establish initial service from the Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station to one of the following stations:

- Greenville Station
- Mountain House Station

Either IOS would include modified station parking designs to accommodate additional ridership associated with being an interim end-line station.

The Mountain House IOS would include the proposed Tracy OMF in the City of Tracy. The Greenville IOS would include an Interim OMF to be constructed on a 5-acre portion of the Alameda County Transportation Corridor ROW approximately 2,250 feet east of Dyer Road.

Figure 1-3. Initial Operating Segment to Greenville Station

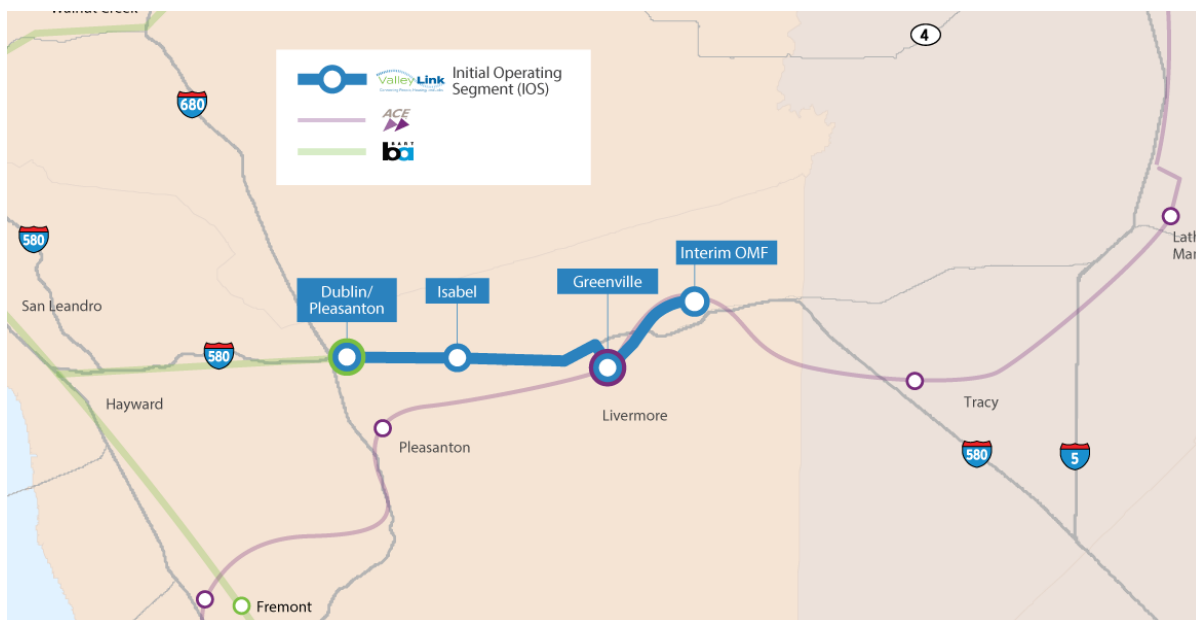


Figure 1-4. Initial Operating Segment to Mountain House Station



1.2.3 Project Variants

The Proposed Project includes the variants described below. These variants are analyzed at the same level of detail as the Proposed Project in this Draft EIR. The description of these variants is

included in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, and an analysis of the potential environmental impacts of these variants is included in Chapter 3, *Environmental Impact Analysis*.

1.2.3.1 Train Technology Variants



Valley Link service would employ either diesel locomotives hauling carriages or multiple-unit train equipment. A multiple unit train is a self-propelled train composed of one or more passenger carriages joined, which when coupled to another multiple unit, can be controlled by a single driver. Proposed trains would be capable of operating at speeds of up to 79 miles an hour (mph). Top speeds along the alignment would be limited by track geometry.

Multiple units are classified by their power source. The preferred power source for the Authority would be one that would minimize air quality degradation and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and would meet the desired performance criteria (including train speed and acceleration/deceleration rate). The choice of rolling stock that would be used for the Proposed Project depends on multiple factors, including the availability of the technology in the marketplace, the number of potential vehicle providers (e.g., the ability to obtain

competitive bids), whether certain power sources can meet desired performance criteria (including transit over the Altamont Pass), and air quality, noise, and GHG emission considerations. Thus, the Authority is considering four train technology variants:

- Diesel multiple unit (DMU) variant
- Hybrid battery multiple unit (HBMU) variant
- Battery-electric multiple unit (BEMU) variant (This variant includes an overhead catenary system [OCS] on the Altamont segment.)
- Diesel locomotive haul (DLH) variant

1.2.3.2 Alignment Variants

Alignment variants are under consideration to allow for flexibility in operations of the Valley Link service as well as in the final operating agreement between the Valley Link operator and UPRR. These include two variants for the portion of the alignment through the Altamont segment that would operate along the UPRR Owens-Illinois Industrial Lead in San Joaquin County, and two alignment variants in the Tracy to Lathrop segment that would operate on the Owens-Illinois Industrial Lead and the Tracy Subdivision.

The single-track variants below assume Valley Link would operate predominantly on shared track with the freight rail service. The double-track variants below assume Valley Link would operate predominantly on a separate new track.

- Altamont segment alignment variants:

- Owens-Illinois Industrial Lead Variant 1, Single Track
- Owens-Illinois Industrial Lead Variant 2, Double Track
- Tracy to Lathrop segment alignment variants:
 - Tracy to Lathrop Alignment Variant 1, Single Track
 - Tracy to Lathrop Alignment Variant 2, Double Track

1.2.4 Project Alternatives

The following project alternatives are analyzed at the same level of detail as the Proposed Project in this Draft EIR. The description of these alternatives is included in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, and an analysis of the potential environmental impacts of these alternatives is included in Chapter 3, *Environmental Impact Analysis*.

- Station alternatives:
 - Southfront Road Station Alternative (Livermore)—Alternative to Greenville Station. This alternative includes a Southfront Road IOS (with Interim OMF)
 - Mountain House Station Alternative—Alternative to Mountain House Station. This alternative includes a Mountain House Station Alternative IOS (with West Tracy OMF)
 - Downtown Tracy Station Parking Alternative 1 (three-level parking structure at the site of the existing surface parking lot)
 - Downtown Tracy Station Parking Alternative 2 (three-level parking structure at the southwest corner of the North Central Avenue/West Sixth Street intersection)
- Alignment alternative:
 - Stone Cut Alignment Alternative
- OMF alternative:
 - West Tracy OMF

The selection of either the Downtown Tracy Station Parking Alternative 1 or Downtown Tracy Station Parking Alternative 2 is dependent on completion of station area plans and funding from the City of Tracy or other local funding partners. These parking alternatives are not part of baseline project funding.

The following project alternatives are analyzed at a lesser level of detail in Chapter 5, *Other Alternatives Considered*:

- No Project Alternative
- Bus/Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) with Managed Lanes Alternative
- Train Alternatives
 - Diesel Locomotive Haul
 - Electric multiple unit (EMU) with OCS

1.2.5 Other Alternatives

A wide range of other alternatives was considered during the planning and scoping process for the Proposed Project prior to selecting the alternatives to be evaluated in this Draft EIR. These alternatives were dismissed from further analysis due to not meeting most of the project objectives, being infeasible, or not avoiding or substantially reducing one of more significant impacts of the Proposed Project. The following dismissed alternatives are described in Chapter 5, *Other Alternatives Considered*, of this Draft EIR:

- Valley Link with Third-Rail Technology
- CyberTran – Personal Rapid Transit
- BART Extension from Dublin/Pleasanton to Isabel or Greenville
- Travel Demand Management
- ACE on Valley Link Alignment into Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station
- Combined ACE/Valley Link Station in West Tracy Vicinity
- Aerial I-580 Alignment
- Downtown Livermore Alignments
- Iron Horse Trail
- Altamont Tunnel¹
- Grant Line Road Station
- North of Tracy Alignment
- 11th Street Alignment
- South of Tracy Alignment

1.2.6 Phase II Improvements Identified in the Notice of Preparation

The Notice of Preparation (NOP) identified future Phase II improvements that would be implemented following the initial buildout of the Proposed Project. These Phase II improvements were assumed to be evaluated on a programmatic level. Subsequent to circulation of the NOP, and in response to continued stakeholder coordination, the potential Southfront Infill Station (retitled “Southfront Road Station Alternative”) is now included in this Draft EIR as a full alternative to the Greenville Station, which is part of the Proposed Project. A full description of the proposed Southfront Road Station Alternative is included in Chapter 2, *Project Description*, and it is evaluated at an equal level of detail in Chapter 3, *Environmental Impact Analysis*. The treatment of the proposed Grant Line and Ellis Infill Stations and a Phase II extension to Stockton are discussed in Chapter 5, *Other Alternatives Considered*.

¹ This alternative would include a short or long tunnel in the Altamont Pass to shorten service times between the West Tracy vicinity and eastern Livermore.

1.3 Project Goals and Objectives

The major goals and objectives adopted by the Tri-Valley–San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority Board of Directors (Board) for the development of the Valley Link Project and its environmental review in this Draft EIR include:

- Improve connectivity within the Northern California Megaregion: connecting housing, people, and jobs.
- Establish rail connectivity between BART’s rapid transit system and the ACE commuter service in the Tri-Valley
- Pursue Project implementation that is fast, cost-effective, and responsive to the goals and objectives of the communities it will serve
- Be a model of sustainability in the design, construction, and operation of the system
- Support the vision of the California State Rail Plan to connect the Northern California Megaregion to the State rail system.

More details regarding these goals and objectives are provided in Chapter 2, *Project Description*.

1.4 Background: Valley Link Project Development

1.4.1 Altamont Regional Rail Working Group

The Altamont Regional Rail Working Group (Working Group) was created in October 2015 to support the advancement of an interregional rail connection between the San Joaquin Valley and the Tri-Valley. After numerous meetings and extensive discussions over two years, the Working Group adopted a proposed project concept that identified the goal of rail connectivity between Northern San Joaquin County communities to the Tri-Valley and BART through frequent rail service through the Altamont Pass. The goal was supported through adopted resolutions of support by most member agencies. This mandate was reflected in Assembly Bill (AB) 758, which transitioned the efforts of the Working Group to the Authority.

1.4.2 Legislative Mandate – California State Assembly Bill 758

AB 758, co-authored by Assemblywomen Catharine Baker and Susan Eggman, was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown October 13, 2017, establishing the Authority. AB 758 established the Authority effective January 1, 2018 with a 15-member governing Board comprising representatives from: the cities of Dublin, Lathrop, Livermore, Manteca, Pleasanton, Stockton, Tracy, Danville, San Ramon, and the Mountain House Community Services District; the counties of Alameda and San Joaquin; and the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA), BART, and the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRRC).

The bill required the new Authority to provide a project feasibility report for review by the stakeholders and public, on or before July 1, 2019, that at a minimum, include the following elements.

- 1** Recommendations for expediting the development of cost-effective and responsive connectivity between the BART and ACE rail systems in the Tri-Valley.
- 2** The identification of a preferred entity or entities to deliver transit connectivity, including the role each entity will play in planning, designing, financing, constructing, operating, maintaining, and the leasing, developing of land, facilities or equipment necessary to delivery transit connectivity.
- 3** A funding plan describing any grants, loans, allocations, fund transfers, or awards of local, regional, state, federal, or private funds that are proposed to be made available for achieving transit connectivity.
- 4** A description of any plan to finance the development of transit connectivity, including a description of any revenue source or sources to be pledged for financing, the duration of time to complete the financing, and the estimated total cost of financing.
- 5** A proposed schedule for completion of transit connectivity.
- 6** Preliminary design for the project or projects to complete transit connectivity, including the identification of right-of-way, routes, stations, equipment, and any other facilities necessary to achieve transit connectivity.

AB 758 contains a provision which states that the Authority “may use any relevant environmental review documents previously completed by the Bay Area Rapid Transit District or the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission to prepare the report.” The bill specified that the statute is not intended to disrupt current BART or SJRRC environmental review processes, or infringe upon BART’s planning, development, and delivery process for a BART extension in the I-580 corridor to the I-580/Isabel Avenue interchange. It further specifies that this provision would become inoperative on July 1, 2018 if the BART governing board fails to adopt a preferred alternative for an extension to the I-580/Isabel interchange by June 30, 2018.

1.4.3 Project Feasibility Report

The Project Feasibility Report, which was published in October 2019, meets all of the key requirements of AB 758. It also includes a review of extensive public outreach and community engagement efforts that occurred throughout the development of the report. The report also details how the implementing strategies of the Board-adopted Sustainability Policy will guide project advancement and implementation. The Draft Project Feasibility Report was completed through a rigorous 22-month work program focused on key decisions within a highly structured timeframe. Key milestones included the adoption of the project goals and the identification of a preferred project concept with a plan for expediting project delivery and funding. A Final Project Feasibility

Report was completed in October 2019 following a 45-day public review period and responds to extensive comments received by key stakeholders and the public.

1.4.4 Sustainability Policy

The Authority Board adopted a policy to be a model of sustainability in the design, construction, and operation of the Valley Link Project in December 2018. The Sustainability Policy outlines policy objectives and strategies to achieve this goal.² These strategies are outlined below.

Environment

- Reduce GHG emissions
- Renewable Energy—Operate system on renewable energy to the extent feasible.
- 100% Self-Sufficient—Strive to create a system that can operate largely on its own stored and created energy.
- Design and construct sustainable infrastructure using global best practices for preserving natural resources.

Connectivity

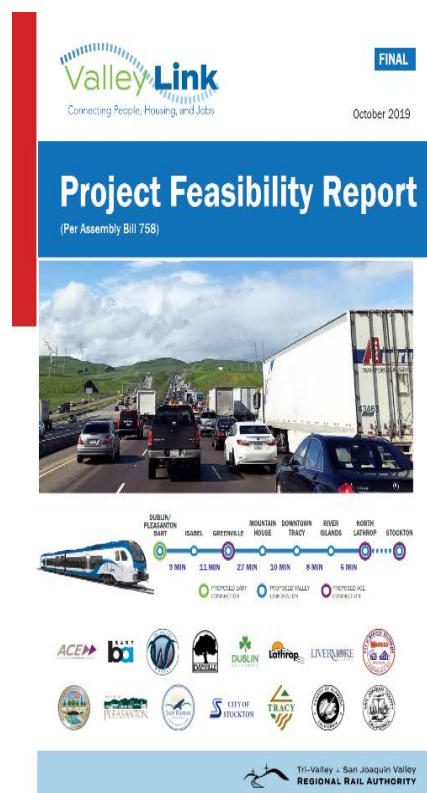
- Integrate rail services with state’s rail and transit operations (including High Speed Rail System).
- Expand and improve connectivity through improved transit and/or feeder bus services.
- Promote active transportation (bicycling and walking).
- Encourage use of zero emission vehicles and shared rides.

Equitable Access

- 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.
- Strive to maximize benefits to disadvantaged communities and low-income communities and households in project planning and design.

Station Area Plans

- Work in partnership with communities to identify and incorporate high-priority local goals and objectives for individual stations.



The Final Project Feasibility Report was published in October 2019.

² The policy objectives and strategies included in the Sustainability Policy are not “Project Objectives,” as defined by California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines § 15124, subd. (b).

- Initiate service at earliest possible date and preserve land and right-of-way to allow for the implementation of phased design and infrastructure in support of Sustainable Community Strategies (Senate Bill [SB] 375).

1.4.5 Transit-Oriented Development Policy

To support the regional goals of both San Joaquin County and the San Francisco Bay Area (Bay Area), the Board adopted a transit-oriented development (TOD) policy on December 11, 2019 that identifies key policy objectives and strategies to:

- Establish corridor-level thresholds of 2,200 housing units around transit stations along the Valley Link corridor.
- Develop local station area plans, in conjunction with local communities, that address future land use, station access needs, circulation improvements, pedestrian-friendly design, and other key features of TOD.

The TOD Policy outlines policy guidelines for both corridor-level thresholds and station area plans. These are detailed below.

Corridor-Level Thresholds

Meeting the corridor-level thresholds requires that within a half mile of all stations, a combination of existing land uses and planned land uses meets or exceeds the overall corridor threshold for housing. To count toward the threshold, planned land uses must be adopted through general plans, and the appropriate implementation processes must be put in place, such as zoning codes prior to completion of station final design. Ideally, planned land uses will be formally adopted through a specific plan (or equivalent), zoning codes, and general plan amendments along with an accompanying programmatic EIR as part of the overall station area planning process. Minimum densities will be used in the calculations to assess achievement of the thresholds.

An existing end station is included as part of the transit corridor for the purposes of calculating the corridor thresholds; optional stations will not be included in calculating the corridor thresholds.

New below-market housing units will receive a 50 percent bonus toward meeting the corridor threshold (i.e., one planned below-market housing unit counts for 1.5 housing units for the purposes of meeting the corridor threshold. Below market for the purposes of this policy is affordable to 60 percent of area median income for rental units and 100 percent of area median income for owner-occupied units).

Station Area Plans

At a minimum, station area plans will define both land use plan for the area as well as the policies—zoning, design standards, parking policies, etc.—for implementation. The plans shall at a minimum include the following elements:

- Current and proposed land use by type of use and density within the half-mile radius, with a clear identification of the number of existing and planned housing units and jobs.
- Station access and circulation plans for motorized, nonmotorized, and transit access. The station area plan should clearly identify any barriers for pedestrian, bicycle, and wheelchair access to the station from surrounding neighborhoods, and should propose strategies to remove these

barriers and maximize the number of residents and employees that can access the station. The station area and transit village public spaces shall be made accessible to persons with disabilities.

- Estimates of transit riders walking from the half mile station area to the transit station to use transit.
- Transit village design policies and standards, including mixed-use developments and pedestrian-scaled block size, to promote the livability and walkability.
- TOD-oriented parking demand and parking requirements for station area land uses, including consideration of pricing and provisions for shared parking.
- Implementation plan for the station area plan, including local policies required for development per the plan, market demand for the proposed development, potential phasing of development and demand analysis for proposed development.

The TOD policy, along with the Board-adopted Sustainability Policy, presents strategies to create vibrant and livable station area communities within the proposed station environs. The advancement of TOD adjacent to stations would also further reduce vehicle miles traveled and GHGs. Station area plans are currently under development at the Isabel, Downtown Tracy, and River Islands Stations.

1.5 Background Plans and Programs

1.5.1 Predecessor Project EIRs to Valley Link

1.5.1.1 BART to Livermore Program EIR

In November 2009, BART released the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the BART to Livermore Extension. The purpose of the PEIR was to evaluate possible alignments for BART expansion, and the Draft PEIR considered nine alignment alternatives for extending the existing BART service eastward from the Dublin/Pleasanton Station to Livermore. For the programmatic analysis, the PEIR assumed use of BART's existing heavy rail, electric-powered technology. The PEIR analysis was focused on alignment alternatives and was not intended to evaluate alternative technologies such as DMU or bus alternatives. The BART Board of Directors did not select a technology as part of the PEIR process. Instead, the evaluation of alternative technologies was deferred to the subsequent project-level EIR. Seven of the nine alternative alignments studied in the Draft PEIR extended east to Greenville Road. The routes and station locations studied in the PEIR were based on prior BART studies and input from BART's local partners in Alameda County and the Tri-Valley area.

1.5.1.2 BART to Livermore Project EIR

The Proposed Project in the BART to Livermore Draft EIR (DEIR), released July 31, 2017, consists of a 5.5-mile BART extension along I-580 to a new station near the Isabel Avenue/I-580 interchange. The DEIR also evaluates a 5.5-mile DMU alternative along I-580 to the Isabel Avenue/I-580 interchange; an Express Bus/Bus Rapid Transit Alternative; and an Enhanced Bus Alternative. On May 24, 2018, the BART board took an action to certify the environmental document but chose to

not select a preferred alternative. In this action, the board also chose to allow the Authority to move forward with planning for rail expansion and decision-making in the corridor. As a result of BART failing to adopt a preferred alternative for an extension to the I-580/Isabel Avenue interchange by June 30, 2018, the provision in AB 758 regarding potential infringement upon BART's planning, development, and delivery process for a BART extension in the I-580 corridor to the I-580/Isabel Avenue interchange became inoperative on July 1, 2018. At their September 24, 2020 meeting, the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) approved a request from the Authority to reallocate \$400 million in Measure BB funds that had previously been allocated for the BART to Livermore Project to the Valley Link Project.

1.5.1.3 **ACEforward EIR**

The SJRRC *ACEforward* program is a phased rail infrastructure and service improvement plan to increase frequency, improve service reliability, and enhance passenger facilities along the existing ACE service corridor from San Jose to Stockton and to extend ACE service to Modesto and Merced. This improvement plan would provide the foundation for SJRRC's long-term vision of inter-city/commuter passenger rail services. *ACEforward* includes near-term and longer-term improvements. Near-term improvements include plans to increase service to six trains per day and extend service to Modesto. Longer-term improvements include plans to expand service to 10 trains per day and extend service to Merced. Among the longer-term improvements were 11 alternatives to connect ACE to BART in the Tri-Valley area.

The SJRRC issued an NOP for the *ACEforward* project in June 2013 and released a Draft EIR in May 2017. Through the *ACEforward* project development and environmental review, substantial financial, environmental, and logistical challenges were identified with some of the improvements necessary to increase ACE service levels to San Jose. The SJRRC determined that the *ACEforward* plan no longer represented the intention of SJRRC for ACE in the immediate term and, therefore, rescinded the prior *ACEforward* NOP and the Draft EIR and began to focus instead on the Valley Link Rail program and a new EIR for the ACE Valley Rail Extension from Lathrop to Ceres/Merced Project.

All the material developed by the SJRRC for the *ACEforward* Draft EIR was made available to the Authority for advancement of the Valley Link Project Feasibility report and Draft EIR.

1.5.2 **California State Rail Plan**

The 2018 California State Rail Plan (CSRP) is a strategic plan with operating and capital investment strategies that will lead to a coordinated, statewide travel system. The 2018 CSRP is an important element in the comprehensive planning and analysis of statewide transportation investment strategies detailed in the California Transportation Plan 2040.

The State rail transportation goals are laid out in the 2018 CSRP and cover the next two decades with horizon years in 2022, 2027, and 2040. Valley Link (along with other investments) is designed to meet regional and State transportation goals in the Tri-Valley. Valley Link connects two designated State Rail Hubs, Stockton Area Hub and the Tri-Valley Hub (Figure 1-5). The goals for the Northern California Megaregion are included below.

Figure 1-5. 2018 California State Rail Plan Map



Source: 2018 California State Rail Plan

1.5.2.1 2022 State Goals

The 2022 CSRP goals related to the Valley Link corridor include:

- Plan for phased growth in east-west service across the Altamont Pass to hourly off-peak and half-hourly peak service, enabling connectivity to regional transit and statewide rail networks, including connectivity in the Tri-Valley and Stockton.
- Tri-Valley hub to build connectivity between existing BART service, ACE service, future regional rail service, and expanded regional bus services.

Valley Link has been responsive to these goals in establishing the Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station as a future hub, providing connectivity between the proposed Valley Link service, BART, ACE, and integrated express bus service.

1.5.2.2 2027 State Goals

The 2027 CSRP goals related to the Valley Link corridor are to provide up to half-hourly peak service in the Altamont corridor connecting San Jose and the Stockton Area, with timed connections in the Tri-Valley and East Bay to integrated transit and express bus services.

The Authority envisions the Valley Link Project in the 2027 time horizon. Valley Link is envisioned to partner with the California Department of Transportation to implement the Tri-Valley hub and

the proposed Valley Link Project would exceed the goal for half-hourly service in the Altamont corridor.

1.5.2.3 2040 State Goals

The 2040 CSRP goals related to the Valley Link corridor include:

- Focus on providing services for east-west connectivity to the Tri-Valley and Stockton Area.
- Provide half-hourly bus or rail service in the Dumbarton corridor, integrated with East Bay, BART, and Altamont services.

Valley Link is positioned to provide local service between the proposed Tri-Valley hub and a future Stockton hub. The Altamont Corridor Vision (see Section 1.5.7, *Altamont Corridor Vision*) plans for megaregional connectivity from the Altamont to BART, the East Bay and across Dumbarton.

1.5.3 Regional Transportation Plans

The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008, also known as SB 375, is a California law targeting GHG emissions from passenger vehicles. The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32) sets goals for the reduction of statewide GHG emissions. Passenger vehicles are the single largest source of GHG emissions statewide, accounting for 30 percent of total emissions. SB 375, therefore, provides key support to achieve the goals of AB 32.

SB 375 instructs the California Air Resources Board to set regional emissions reduction targets from passenger vehicles. The metropolitan planning organization for each region must develop a “sustainable communities strategy” (SCS) that integrates transportation, land-use, and housing policies to plan for achievement of the emissions target for their region.

1.5.3.1 Metropolitan Transportation Commission Plan Bay Area

Plan Bay Area 2040

Plan Bay Area 2040 is the SCS and part of the regional transportation plan (RTP). The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) are jointly responsible for developing and adopting it. *Plan Bay Area 2040* provides a roadmap for accommodating projected household and employment growth in the nine-county Bay Area by 2040 as well as a transportation investment strategy for the region. *Plan Bay Area 2040* details how the Bay Area can make progress toward the region’s long-range transportation and land use goals. The Plan charts a course for reducing per-capita GHG emissions through the promotion of more compact, mixed-use residential and commercial neighborhoods near transit.

Plan Bay Area 2040 identifies priority development areas (PDAs) as the implementing framework for identifying priority areas for concentrating future growth and are intended to leverage existing infrastructure to minimize development impacts on communities. PDAs are areas within existing communities that local city or county governments have identified and approved for future growth and are served by existing or planned high-quality transit. PDAs are supported with planning grants, technical assistance, and prioritization for regional and state transportation and affordable housing funds. Four PDAs identified in *Plan Bay Area 2040* are located along the Valley Link alignment:

- **Livermore Isabel Avenue PDA**—a 1,131-acre PDA is envisioned as a TOD neighborhood with a mix of housing types close to transit and trail connections, and expanding employment center, and Las Positas College. This PDA encompasses the proposed Isabel Station.
- **Livermore East Side PDA**—The Livermore East Side PDA is a 785-acre PDA next to two major employment centers in the city, the Lawrence Livermore and Sandia National Laboratories, and includes the ACE rail station. This PDA extends south of I-580 and west of Greenville Road to Vasco Road. The overall vision for the area integrates a revitalized research and technology center with affordable housing of varied types and commercial services. The Livermore East Side PDA is less than 1 mile from the Southfront Road Station Alternative.
- **Dublin Transit Center/Dublin Crossings PDA**—The Dublin Transit Center/Dublin Crossings PDA is located north of I-580, south of 5th Street between the Iron Horse Trail and Arnold Road, just north of the Dublin/Pleasanton Station. This PDA would serve as a commuter hub for the surrounding suburban region and is forecasted to accommodate 9,030 new jobs by 2040, and 3,140 additional housing units since 2010 by 2040.
- **Pleasanton Hacienda PDA**—The Pleasanton Hacienda PDA is located directly south of the Dublin/Pleasanton Station and I-580, just east of Hopyard Road. Similar to Dublin Transit Center/Dublin Crossings PDA, this PDA would serve as a commuter hub for the surrounding suburban region and is forecasted to accommodate 5,140 additional jobs since 2010 by 2040, and 3,590 additional housing units since 2010 by 2040.

Plan Bay Area 2050

Plan Bay Area 2050 is a long-range plan, building on *Plan Bay Area 2040*, charting the course for the future of the nine-county Bay Area. Plan Bay Area 2050 will focus on four key issues—the economy, the environment, housing, and transportation—and will identify a path to make the Bay Area more equitable for all residents and more resilient in the face of unexpected challenges. Building on the work of the Horizon Initiative, this new regional plan will outline strategies for growth and investment through 2050, while simultaneously striving to meet and exceed federal and state requirements. MTC and ABAG are expected to adopt Plan Bay Area 2050 in 2021.

In September 2020, the MTC and the ABAG Executive Board approved the Plan Bay Area 2050 Final Blueprint, which includes a set of 35 revised and expanded strategies, as well as the Growth Geographies and the Regional Growth Forecast. Valley Link is included as a Period 1 project on the list of fiscally constrained projects in the Plan Bay Area 2050 Final Blueprint.

At the request of the City of Livermore, MTC approved an application for the inclusion of a Southfront Station PDA in the plan in February 2020. This plan would support the development of a station area plan for the Southfront Road Station Alternative and the Vasco Road ACE Station.

1.5.3.2 San Joaquin Council of Governments Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

The RTP/SCS is a long-range vision and investment plan that provides a comprehensive look at future transportation needs in San Joaquin County. The RTP/SCS maps out how the region will integrate transportation and land use, with the goal of providing transportation options to help the region grow in a financially and environmentally responsible way. The RTP/SCS reflects a region-specific, balanced multimodal plan that achieves the intent of SB 375 and is implemented through existing and planned programs or policies. The RTP/SCS includes recent household and job growth

forecasts, market demand and economic studies, and transportation studies including the San Joaquin Council of Governments' (SJCOG's) Smart Growth TOD Plan.

On March 26, 2020, the SJCOG Board of Directors adopted the Draft 2018 RTP Amendment #3 and Conformity Analysis, which included summary programming changes and corresponding financial table updates for inclusion of Valley Link.

1.5.4 MTC Regional Rail Plan

As required by voters who approved the Regional Measure 2 Traffic Congestion Relief Program, MTC, Caltrain, BART, and the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA), in collaboration with a coalition of rail passenger and freight operators, regional partners, and rail stakeholders, prepared a comprehensive Regional Rail Plan for the Bay Area. MTC adopted the Regional Rail Plan—Final Report on September 26, 2007. The Regional Rail Plan examined ways to incorporate passenger trains into existing rail systems, improve connections to other rail lines and transit, expand the regional rapid transit network, increase rail capacity, and coordinate rail investment around transit-friendly communities and businesses. Overall, the plan evaluated potential improvements and extensions of railroad, rapid transit, and high-speed rail services in the near-term (5 to 10 years), medium-term (10 to 25 years), and long-term (beyond 25 years). The Regional Rail Plan for eastern Alameda County called for the preservation of the I-580 corridor for a possible BART extension to Livermore, intermodal connections between BART and ACE services, and increased ACE service.

1.5.5 California High-Speed Rail

The CHSRA is responsible for planning, designing, building, and operating the first high-speed rail system in the nation. California high-speed rail will connect the mega-regions of the state, contribute to economic development and a cleaner environment, create jobs, and help to preserve agricultural and protected lands.

When completed, Phase 1 of the high-speed rail system will run from San Francisco to the Los Angeles basin in under 3 hours and be capable of exceeding 200 mph. The system will eventually extend to Sacramento and San Diego, totaling 800 miles with up to 24 stations. In addition, the CHSRA is working with regional partners to implement a statewide rail modernization plan that will invest billions of dollars in local and regional rail lines to meet the state's 21st century transportation needs.

The initial 171-mile operating line between Merced and Bakersfield is currently under construction and will include seamless connections to other passenger rail systems—the Amtrak San Joaquins service and ACE at Merced, and Thruway Bus services at Bakersfield.

The North Lathrop Station would provide a connection for Valley Link to the ACE system and a long-term connection to California high-speed rail in Merced.

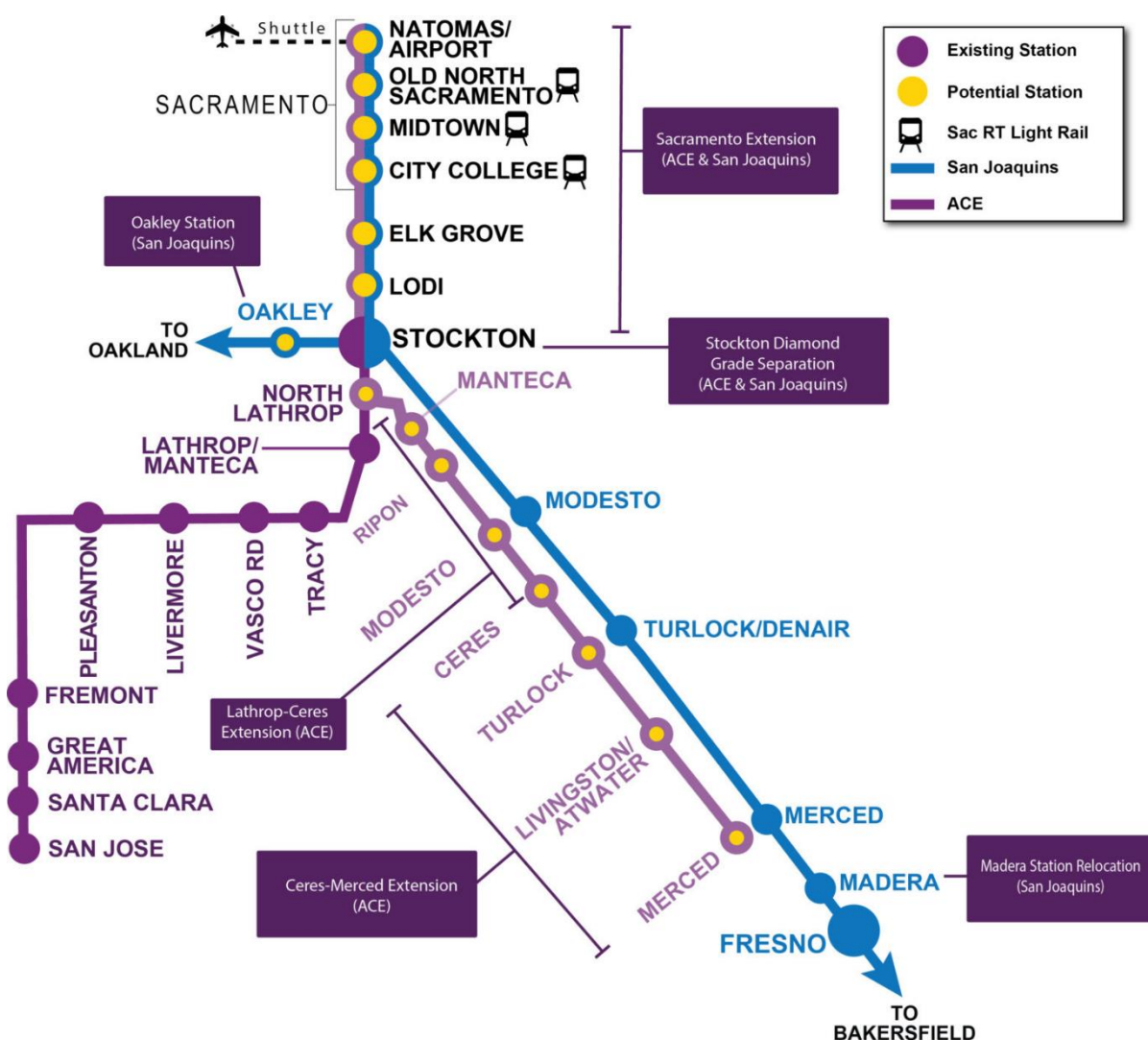
1.5.6 Valley Rail

The Valley Rail Program implements two new daily round trips for the Amtrak San Joaquins service to better connect San Joaquin Valley travelers with the Sacramento area, as well as an extension of ACE between Sacramento and Merced, which builds upon ACE funding from SB 132 (Figure 1-6). In addition, Valley Rail would convert the entire fleet including the thruway bus network to renewable diesel fuel. The following are the components of the Valley Rail Program and their status.

- Lathrop-Ceres Extension (ACE)—EIR Completed/Final Design
- Sacramento Extension (ACE & San Joaquins)—Draft EIR Released
- Ceres-Merced Extension (ACE)—EIR Process Underway/NOP released
- Stockton Diamond Grade Separation (ACE & San Joaquins)—EIR Process Underway
- Madera Station Relocation (San Joaquins)—Environmental Clearance Process Underway
- Oakley Station (San Joaquins)—Environmental Completed/Final Design

The Valley Link Proposed Project envisions connecting with the new ACE Lathrop-Ceres Extension at the new North Lathrop Station.

Figure 1-6. Valley Rail Program



1.5.7 Altamont Corridor Vision

The Altamont Corridor Vision is the result of a partnership between the SJRRR (ACE), the Authority (Valley Link), and the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA; San Joaquins). The Altamont

Corridor Vision would provide safe, frequent, and reliable regional rail service by modernizing passenger rail in the Altamont Corridor. The vastly improved infrastructure would be separated from freight, with predominately two tracks, mostly grade separated, electrified, to enable fast (up to 125 mph maximum speeds), and frequent services. It would be a “universal” passenger rail infrastructure that could be used by a variety of services. This program is consistent with the 2018 CSRP, 2007 MTC Regional Rail Plan, MTC Resolution 3829 from 2007, and the CHSRA’s Altamont Corridor Rail Project. The Altamont Corridor Vision would allow for the possibility of a one-seat ride across the megaregion with travel times as little as 1 hour between Stockton/Modesto to San Jose, Oakland, and the Peninsula. It would also be compatible with high-speed rail trains and enable a one-seat ride from the high-speed rail initial operating segment in the San Joaquin Valley.

The Altamont Corridor Vision from Stockton to San Jose is estimated to need \$9.7 billion in funding. The segment from Newark to North Lathrop is estimated to need about \$6.6 billion in funding. Improvements in the Altamont Corridor can be phased based upon the available funding. Incremental improvements can bring near-term benefits and help lead to the development of the ultimate Altamont Corridor Vision. In the short-term, the goal is to add two additional ACE round trips between the San Joaquin Valley and San Jose and have full weekend service, and to initiate Valley Link service between Dublin/Pleasanton BART and North Lathrop (with 25 daily round trips). Key short-term goals include the transformational implementation of a new 3.5-mile tunnel in the Altamont Pass and straightening the alignment throughout the pass to enable speeds up to 125 mph that would be used by both ACE and Valley Link services (decreasing travel times by 11–15 minutes). Implementing these short-term goals is the first phase/highest priority for Altamont Corridor Vision. In the mid-term, the goal is to add 4 additional ACE round trips to San Jose (bringing to total to 10 daily round trips) which will require improvements through the wetlands between Newark and Alviso to add capacity and raise the profile of the alignment to address sea level rise, and to extend the Valley Link service to Stockton (with a total of 30 round trips). The completed Altamont Corridor Vision is the long-term goal.

1.6 Project Context

This section provides an overview of the regional and inter-regional context for Valley Link, discusses the existing transportation conditions in eastern Alameda County and northern San Joaquin County, and existing transit services in the Project area.

1.6.1 Northern California Megaregion

The Northern California Megaregion is composed of 21 counties grouped into four regions: Bay Area, Sacramento, Northern San Joaquin Valley, and Monterey Bay Area. It consists of 12.5 million people (in 2015) and it continues to grow steadily. It is one of the fastest growing economies in the country. Since 2010, the Bay Area has accounted for three-quarters of megaregional job growth. While the megaregional workforce increased by 17 percent between 1990 and 2013, commuters crossing regional boundaries have grown by 78 percent. Of the estimated 190,500 commuters crossing regional boundaries in 2013, 68.7 percent were commuting into the Bay Area for work. The growth of Northern San Joaquin Valley commuters to the Bay Area has been particularly dramatic, more than doubling from 1990 to 2013 and now comprising 15.8 percent of the Northern San Joaquin Valley’s resident workforce.

1.6.2 Tri-Valley/Eastern Alameda County

The Tri-Valley area is located east of the San Francisco Bay within the I-580 and I-680 corridors and consists of three valleys: the Amador, Livermore, and San Ramon Valleys. Livermore is in the Livermore Valley and Dublin and Pleasanton are in the Amador Valley; both valleys are in Alameda County. The combination of the Livermore and Amador Valleys is referred to as the Livermore-Amador Valley. The town of Danville and city of San Ramon are in the San Ramon Valley in Contra Costa County. Within this area, eastern Alameda County is primarily defined by the cities of Dublin, Pleasanton, and Livermore, as well as unincorporated County lands to the north and south. Eastern Alameda County has been one of the fastest growing subregions of the Bay Area.

As a result, travel demand has continued to increase despite frequent congestion on I-580. In addition, inter-regional commuting along I-580 from San Joaquin County to the Bay Area has exacerbated traffic issues throughout the Project corridor. The Tri-Valley Rising (2018) report indicates the region has a population of 361,000, comprising about 5 percent of the Bay Area's population. This represents growth of 8 percent since 2014, adding 28,000 people. The number of jobs has grown even more rapidly, increasing by 12 percent since 2014.

1.6.3 San Joaquin County

East of the Tri-Valley/Alameda area is San Joaquin County. The county is located in Northern California's Central Valley just east of the very highly populated nine-county Bay Area region. One of the smaller counties in area in California, it has a high population density and is growing rapidly as a result of the housing shortage and prices in the Bay Area. Since 2015, the County has had the second fastest population growth in the state. The County is a major shipping hub, as I-580 and I-5 connect the Central Valley and destinations south and north with the Tri-Valley and Bay Area. The growing population, jobs, housing imbalance, and thriving trucking industry have created significant congestion on local roads and the I-5, I-580, and I-205 corridors.

1.6.4 Regional Growth Trends by 2040

By 2040, Alameda County is projected to experience an increase in population from 2020 estimates of approximately 22 percent (from 1,711,460 to 2,092,370 persons) and have an increase in households of approximately 19 percent (from 614,965 to 734,210 households). Furthermore, by 2040, the county is projected to have an approximately 11 percent increase in jobs (from 858,685 to 952,940 jobs). A large portion of Alameda County's growth is projected to occur in the eastern part of the county, primarily in the communities of Dublin, Pleasanton, and Livermore. Dublin is projected to experience the greatest growth of these three cities, with a 64 percent population increase and a jobs increase of 46 percent. Pleasanton is projected to increase in population by 17 percent and in jobs by 16 percent, and Livermore is projected to increase in population by 34 percent and jobs by 7 percent.

San Joaquin County, immediately east of Alameda County along the I-580 corridor, is projected to have an approximately 29 percent increase in population from 2020 estimates by 2040 (from 773,889 to 1,004,094 persons) and an approximately 30 percent increase in households (from 247,169 to 323,446 households). By 2040, San Joaquin County is projected to have an approximately 23 percent increase in jobs (from 256,019 to 314,544 jobs).

1.6.5 Inter-Regional Transportation Conditions

Altamont Pass Corridor, located in the center of the Northern California Megaregion, connects the San Joaquin Valley to the Tri-Valley in the Bay Area and is a vital node in the megaregion's economic ecosystem as well as a key megaregion transportation route. The I-580 freeway serves the Altamont Pass Corridor and ranks as one of the most congested freeways in the megaregion during peak hours due to a high volume of regional and inter-regional commuter, freight, and recreational traffic. According to the Bay Area Council Economic Institute, more than 86,000 commuters currently travel this route daily, and this number is expected to increase by up to 75 percent from 2016 to 2040.

Throughout the Bay Area region, daily minutes of delay per worker due to commute congestion have steadily increased, rising by more than 40 percent over the past two decades. Within Alameda County, the highways are key regional and inter-regional connectors. As one of the region's highway network hubs, Alameda County experiences a disproportionately high share of the region's congestion. Overall, 47 percent of trips on Alameda County roads originate outside of the county. I-580 is the primary east-west transportation corridor in eastern Alameda County, and the topography of the areas north and south of I-580 limits alternative east-west transportation routes. In 2018, Alameda County has five of the top ten most congested roads and 31 percent of the Bay Area's congestion-related vehicle delay. Specifically, the westbound segment of I-580 from approximately the San Joaquin County line to Hacienda Drive in Dublin and Pleasanton was the 17th most congested highway segment in the Bay Area in 2015, with the congestion primarily occurring during the morning commute.

Rapid development within eastern Alameda County and in the Tri-Valley area, as well as inter-regional commuting from San Joaquin County, has resulted in severe congestion along I-580. For example, 84 percent of Tracy residents commute out of Tracy for work. San Joaquin County places in the top 10 nationally for its percentage of residents with a commute over 90 minutes long. It is estimated that these commuters spent over 5,000 hours stuck in traffic in each direction during an average day during 2017. These long commutes can be explained in part by the long distance traveled and by the growing congestion on I-580. The number of daily commuters traveling through the Tri-Valley from Northern San Joaquin Valley has grown to 86,445, a 43 percent increase from 2010 to 2017 (Figure 1-7). As shown in Figure 1-8, the number of daily commuters traveling through the Tri-Valley from Northern San Joaquin Valley has continued to increase (14 percent between 2017 and 2018), resulting in even greater congestion.

Figure 1-7. Change in Daily Megaregional Commuters from 2010 to 2017

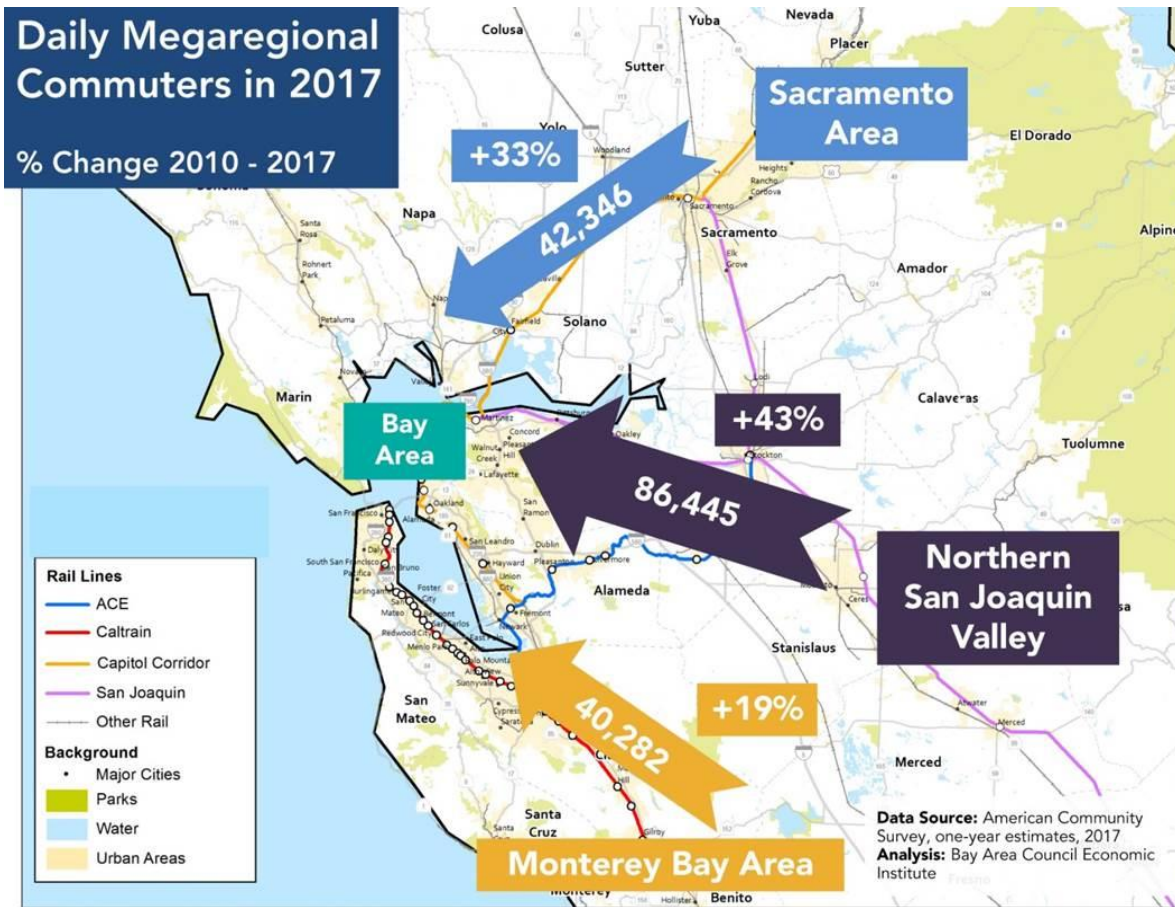
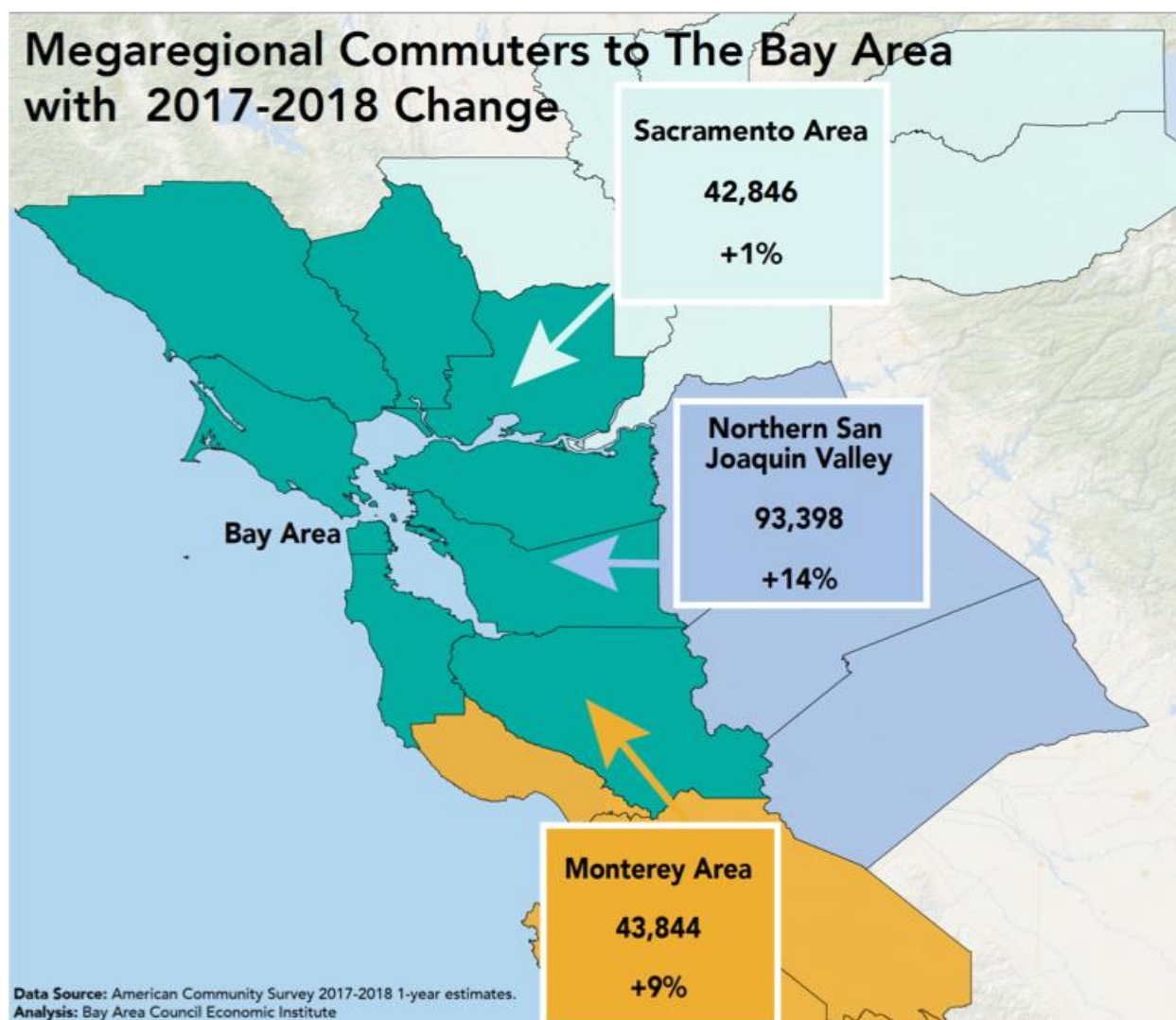


Figure 1-8. Change in Daily Megaregional Commuters from 2017 to 2018

1.6.6 Existing Transit Service

1.6.6.1 San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District

BART operates a heavy rail, electrified, rapid transit system in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, and San Mateo Counties, and will soon operate in Santa Clara County (Figure 1-9). BART's Daly City-Dublin/Pleasanton line provides regional rail access to the Tri-Valley area. The line originates at the Daly City BART Station, extends through San Francisco, reaches Oakland via the Transbay Tube, then continues south through San Leandro and Castro Valley before proceeding east to its current terminus at the Dublin/Pleasanton Station. The Dublin/Pleasanton Station serves as a primary transfer point between BART and local, regional, and commuter bus services provided by LAVTA, (Contra Costa) County Connection, Tri Delta Transit, San Joaquin Regional Transit District, Modesto Area Express, Stanislaus Regional Transit, and Amtrak California.

Figure 1-9. BART System Map (2020)



1.6.6.2 Altamont Corridor Express

The SJRRRC is the designated owner, operator, and policy-making body for the ACE service, which focuses on connecting northern San Joaquin County, the Tri-Valley, and Silicon Valley by providing daily train service from Stockton to San Jose.

The ACE service was initiated in October 1998, with two daily round-trip trains between Stockton and San Jose. Running primarily on tracks owned by the UPRR, ACE heavy commuter rail service is operated using diesel-powered locomotives. The 86-mile ACE corridor parallels I-5, I-205, I-580, I-680, and I-880. ACE currently operates four weekday peak-period commuter rail trains between Stockton and San Jose and serves the Tri-Valley area at three stations: Pleasanton, Downtown Livermore, and Vasco Road in Livermore. It continues through San Joaquin County with three additional stations at Tracy, Lathrop/Manteca, and Stockton. Each of these stations provides commuter parking and transit connections. The Downtown Livermore ACE Station functions as a regional transit hub and connects to eight LAVTA bus routes as well as to Amtrak California intercity bus service. There are no direct connections between the ACE system and BART. LAVTA provides a bus route from the West Dublin/Pleasanton Station to the ACE Pleasanton Station, which is about 3.5 miles to the south near the Pleasanton Fairgrounds and Civic Center.

1.6.6.3 Amtrak California

Amtrak trains and connecting buses reach more than 150 destinations in California, including Stockton, Oakland, San Diego, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, San Francisco, and Sacramento. The Bay

Area is served primarily by the San Joaquins, run by the SJJPA, and the Capitol Corridor, run by the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority.

The San Joaquins runs multiple times daily between the Bay Area or Sacramento and Bakersfield. Other stops along the way include Stockton, Modesto, Merced, Martinez, and Fresno. There is connecting service to the ACE system at Stockton.

1.6.6.4 Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority

LAVTA provides local bus public transit service (Wheels) in the Tri-Valley area. LAVTA provides fixed-route bus service, consisting of express, local, and school service routes, as well as a flexible dial-a-ride service. LAVTA structures its bus service around two primary transit hubs: the Dublin/Pleasanton Station and the downtown Livermore Transit



LAVTA Wheels Bus

Center/Livermore ACE Station. Fourteen bus routes provide service to the Dublin/Pleasanton Station and eight bus routes provide service to the Livermore Transit Center. In June 2016, LAVTA approved the Wheels Forward program, which reconfigured existing bus routes and provided more frequent buses, including adding new routes in Livermore, Dublin, and Pleasanton and a new route with all-day 15-minute headways that will receive signal priority at intersections.

1.6.6.5 San Joaquin Regional Transit District

San Joaquin Regional Transit District (RTD) is the regional transit provider for San Joaquin County, serving the Stockton Metropolitan Area and the County with intercity, interregional, and rural transit services. RTD operates 35 fixed routes to the Stockton metropolitan area, including 4 Metro Express routes, RTD's Bus Rapid Transit service.



San Joaquin RTD Express Bus "Hopper"

RTD also operates a commuter bus with three routes that serve Sacramento and the East Bay (Dublin/Pleasanton's BART Station). RTD averages over 4 million trips per year.

1.6.6.6 Other Commuter Bus Service

County Connection

The County Connection is a Concord-based public transit agency operating fixed-route bus and Americans with Disabilities Act paratransit service in and around central Contra Costa County in the Bay Area. It has 29 local and 7 express routes with approximately 11,500 boardings per weekday.

Modesto Area Express

The Modesto Area Express is the bus agency for the City of Modesto. The agency provides regular transit and dial-a-ride local service in addition to commuter feeder service to regional rail systems, BART, ACE, and Amtrak’s San Joaquins train. The Modesto Area Express has a fleet of 61 buses and serves 2.6 million passengers annually.

Stanislaus Regional Transit

Stanislaus Regional Transit is the primary provider of mass transportation in the suburban areas of Stanislaus County. It serves more outlying regions of the county, while the Modesto Area Express runs public transit within the city of Modesto. Six fixed routes are provided, and it serves 340,000 passenger trips per year.

1.7 Environmental Review Process

1.7.1 California Environmental Quality Act

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) applies to all discretionary activities proposed to be implemented by California public agencies, including state, regional, county, and local agencies (California Public Resources Code [Public Res. Code] § 21000 et seq.). CEQA requires agencies to estimate and evaluate the environmental impacts of their actions, avoid or reduce significant environmental impacts when feasible, and consider the environmental implications of their actions prior to making a decision. CEQA also requires agencies to inform the public and other relevant agencies and consider their comments in the evaluation and decision-making process. The State CEQA Guidelines are the primary source of rules and interpretations of CEQA (Public Res. Code § 21000 et seq.; 14 California Code of Regulations § 15000 et seq.).

1.7.2 Purpose of this Environmental Impact Report

The purpose of this EIR is to provide the information necessary for the Authority to make an informed decision about the improvements included under Valley Link, and to supply the information necessary to support related permit applications and review processes.

This Draft EIR has been prepared in compliance with CEQA to achieve the following goals.

- Identify potential direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts associated with the Project.
- Describe feasible mitigation measures intended to avoid or reduce potentially significant impacts to a less-than-significant level.
- Disclose the environmental analyses, including potential impacts and mitigation measures, for public and agency review and comment.
- Discuss potential alternatives to near-term and longer-term improvements that meet the purpose and need, are feasible, and would avoid or reduce identified significant impacts.

One of the purposes of CEQA is to provide an opportunity for the public and relevant agencies to review and comment on projects that might affect the environment. Scoping activities are discussed

below. The Authority will provide a public review period for this Draft EIR of 45 days from its release for comment. The Authority will also conduct public meetings to receive comments during the comment period. Once the public review period is complete, the Authority will prepare a Final EIR that includes all the comments received on the Draft EIR, responses to all comments, and any necessary revisions to the draft EIR. CEQA requires the Authority's decision-making body, the Board, to review and consider the information in the EIR before making a decision on Valley Link.

1.7.3 Project Environmental Impact Report

A project EIR is the most common type of EIR and applies to projects that have been sufficiently developed to a level of certainty that is ready for detailed environmental impacts analysis. Under CEQA, a project EIR is prepared for a construction-ready project and should focus primarily on the changes in the environment that would result from development of the project. A project-level analysis examines the impacts associated with all phases of the project including planning, construction, and operation. The specific sites, implementation (including construction activities), and operational details for Valley Link's project-level improvements have been defined, and, thus, a project-level analysis for these improvements' environmental impacts is appropriate. This EIR evaluates at a greater level of detail (compared to program-level improvements) the environmental impacts of the project-level improvements for which implementation is presently being considered and for which the Authority anticipates that no further environmental document will be required under CEQA. Following certification of this EIR by the Board and necessary regulatory approvals, the project-level improvements would be ready for implementation.

1.7.4 Scope and Content of this Environmental Impact Report

Scoping refers to the process used to assist the lead agency in determining the focus and content of an EIR. Scoping solicits input on the potential topics to be addressed in the EIR, the range of alternatives, and possible mitigation measures. Scoping is also helpful in establishing methods of assessment and in selecting the environmental effects to be considered in detail. A description of the formal scoping activities undertaken for Valley Link is described in the following subsections.

1.7.4.1 Notice of Preparation

The scoping process for this EIR was formally initiated on September 13, 2018, when the Authority submitted an NOP to the California State Clearinghouse; federal, regional, and local elected officials; and federal, state, and local agencies, including the planning and community development directors in Alameda and San Joaquin Counties; and the interested public. The purpose of an NOP is to solicit participation from relevant agencies and from the public in determining the scope of an EIR. The scoping period ended October 15, 2018.

1.7.4.2 Scoping Meetings

Two public meetings were held in October 2018 to provide the public with an opportunity to be informed about the alternatives under consideration and to comment on environmental issues of concern. Public scoping meetings were held on October 2, 2018 in Livermore and October 3 2018, in Tracy.

Appendix A, *Scoping Report*, contains the scoping report detailing the 2018 scoping process, including the notification and scoping activities undertaken. Comments received during the scoping period are also included in the report.

1.7.5 Resource Topics

Consistent with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines,³ this Draft EIR evaluates the potential impacts of the near-term and longer-term improvements for the following resource areas.

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise and Vibration
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Safety and Security
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

The following topics are also analyzed in this Draft EIR.

- Cumulative Impacts
- Significant and Unavoidable Impacts
- Significant Irreversible Changes in the Environment
- Growth Inducement
- Alternatives

³ Includes additional resource areas from related topics.

1.7.6 Environmental Impact Report Organization

This Draft EIR is organized into the following chapters and appendices.

- *Executive Summary* provides a summary of the key information and conclusions in the EIR.
- Chapter 1, *Introduction*, provides a brief overview of the Proposed Project and alternatives; the Project goals and objectives; Project background, Project context, an overview of the environmental review process; and the scope, content, and organization of the Draft EIR.
- Chapter 2, *Project Description*, provides a detailed description of the Proposed Project and alternatives analyzed at equal level of detail in Chapters 3, *Environmental Impact Analysis*, and 4, *Other CEQA-Required Analysis*.
- Chapter 3, *Environmental Impact Analysis*, provides an evaluation of impacts of the Proposed Project and alternatives analyzed at equal level of detail for each of the resource topics outlined above. Each resource-specific section discusses the environmental setting, regulatory setting, and any impacts and mitigation measures.
- Chapter 4, *Other CEQA-Required Analysis*, provides a discussion of cumulative impacts, significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided, significant irreversible changes in the environment, and growth-inducing impacts. It also contains a summary of public and agency involvement to date and a list of preparers of this Draft EIR.
- Chapter 5, *Other Alternatives Considered*, provides a description and evaluation of alternatives analyzed at a lesser level of detail and an evaluation of alternatives considered but dismissed from further consideration; a description of the screening process and identification of the environmentally superior alternative.
- Chapter 6, *References*, provides a list of the printed references and personal communication cited in this Draft EIR.
- Appendices:
 - Appendix A, *Scoping Report*
 - Appendix B, *Environmental Footprint*
 - Appendix C, *Preliminary Right of Way Requirements*
 - Appendix D, *Utilities*
 - Appendix E, *Valley Link 15% Preliminary Engineering Plans*
 - Appendix F, *Valley Link Ridership Technical Memorandum - Revised*
 - Appendix G, *Preliminary Cost Estimates*
 - Appendix H, *Public and Agency Coordination*
 - Appendix I, *Regional Plans and Local General Plans*
 - Appendix J, *Supporting Aesthetics Information*
 - Appendix K, *Supporting Agricultural Resources Information*
 - Appendix L, *Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Health Risk Assessment Supporting Documentation*

- *Appendix M, Supporting Biological Resources Information*
- *Appendix N, Supporting Geology, Soils, Seismicity, and Paleontological Information*
- *Appendix O, Supporting Cultural Resources Information*
- *Appendix P, Supporting Hydrology and Water Quality Information*
- *Appendix Q, Summary of I-580 Modifications*
- *Appendix R, Supporting Noise Information*