



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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Contact:  
Michael Tree  
Executive Director  
Office: 925.605.8442  
Email: [mtree@valleylinkrail.com](mailto:mtree@valleylinkrail.com)

## **Tracy Councilmember Vargas New Valley Link Board Chair**

**Livermore, CA, January 4, 2021** – Tracy City Councilmember Veronica Vargas has assumed the position of Chair of the Tri-Valley – San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority Board of Directors, effective January 2021. The Rail Authority Board oversees the planning and implementation of the new Valley Link commuter rail service that will connect the Central Valley with the Dublin/Pleasanton BART Station.

Vargas, who has held the position of Vice-Chair since the agency's formation in January 2018, succeeded Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty as Chair. Said Vargas, "I feel it's incredible how much we've accomplished in such a short time frame. My goal is to keep this project moving on the same trajectory and to get service up and running at the soonest possible date."

Valley Link is projected to carry 33,000 passengers a day in 2040 and during construction create an estimated 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.

"Valley Link is essential to our post-pandemic economic recovery," said Vargas. "The project will create jobs and serve our most essential workers. Congestion on I-580 through the Altamont throughout this past year is proof positive of its dire need."

Vargas was recently named the 2021 Vice-Chair of the League of Cities Transportation, Communications and Public Works Policy Committee. She was a key participant in a recent webinar hosted by the League of California Cities Latino Caucus along with other California leaders as well as Congressmember Josh Harder. Key points of discussion included concerns over growing socioeconomic disparities in the allocation of transportation funding.

"I am looking forward to the year ahead and fighting for an equitable share of funding to support immediate economic recovery while simultaneously planning for and working toward a long-term future for our project," said Vargas. "I'm ready for the challenge."

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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 the 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 33,000 passengers a day in 2040, reducing vehicle miles travelled by 99.3 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 three 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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