



March 10, 2021

Mr. Brian P. Kelly, Chief Executive Officer
California High-Speed Rail Authority
770 L Street, Suite 620 MS-1 Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: CHSRA Draft 2020 Business Plan

Dear Mr. Kelly,

On behalf of the Innovation Tri-Valley Leadership Group (ITV), I wish to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the CHSRA 2020 Draft Business Plan for advancing a Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield interim operating segment. The interim plan will substantially improve intercity passenger rail service while also providing high-speed rail service throughout California at the earliest date possible.

ITV is led by business leaders and influencers committed to connecting the businesses, research labs, educational institutions, and civic leaders in the Tri-Valley, one of the fastest growing and economically robust regions in the state of California. According to the Bay Area Council's Economic Institute in the "Tri-Valley Rising" report they published in 2018, the Tri-Valley has a \$42 billion GDP with over 450 high-tech companies. The Tri-Valley is also at the epicenter geographically of the Northern California Mega-Region by connecting the Bay Area and Central Valley through the Altamont Corridor, and is situated in the second largest county in Northern California (Alameda) with 1.67 million residents. As such, any planning around major rail improvements in the State of California should keep the Tri-Valley and the East Bay at the forefront.

To that end, **ITV respectfully requests that the 42 mile, 7-station Valley Link Project be more clearly identified in the CHSRA 2020 Business Plan, as it is a vital and cost-effective link which can unlock many of the transformative economic and environmental benefits of the emerging high-speed rail system.** Valley Link is already identified in the State Rail Plan, is slated for Phase 1 of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Plan Bay Area 2050, and will be operated by a well-established and reputable provider (ACE). In addition, Valley Link's alignment with vital State Rail improvements north of Merced will leverage both existing and planned rail infrastructure for near-term Bay Area connectivity.

The upgraded San Joaquin/ACE service and Valley Link will not only provide the Bay Area with an early connection to the high-speed rail system, but it also provides substantial benefit to the

entire Northern California Mega-Region. Valley Link serves communities and households in the Northern San Joaquin Valley with some of our state's highest poverty rates. It will readily connect our state's future high-speed rail system to BART with direct and seamless service to major employment centers in all parts of the Bay Area. It links our Northern California Megaregion's workforce to affordable housing, provides opportunities for compact transit-oriented development and is projected to have a significant impact on the reduction of VMT and greenhouse gas emissions.

At its intermodal North Lathrop hub, Valley Link will connect with the San Joaquin to provide service throughout the Central Valley, it will link with ACE to provide commuter rail service to Silicon Valley, and it will link with the Dublin/Pleasanton BART station where it will provide fast and frequent service to San Francisco and the East Bay. Further access on BART from the Tri-Valley to Diridon Station will be possible when the BART Silicon Valley Phase 2 project is complete – providing a vital interim connection to the Silicon Valley while completion of the Phase 1 project segment is further advanced.

The CHSRA Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan identifies on page 71 that: "Our collaboration with the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority and CalSTA will focus on developing integrated services and connections between state rail systems, including projects such as the Valley Link project that will provide increased connectivity between ACE service from Merced and BART..." ITV fully supports this collaborative spirit and believes that Valley Link is the most cost-effective approach to providing advancement and equitable access for the residents of the Bay Area as part of the CHSRA 2020 Business Plan.

In summary, Valley Link can make CHSRA much more financially viable with its earlier connection to Silicon Valley, San Francisco, and the East Bay. It leverages existing and planned improvements, provides near-term service while the Pacheco connection advances in fulfillment of the long-term vision, has frequent headways, provides significant environmental benefits, and assures equitable access and economic opportunity for the entire Northern California Mega-Region.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide comments on the Draft CHSRA 2020 Business Plan. We look forward to working with the CHSRA towards advancing Valley Link as a high priority in support of the proposed interim operating plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lynn Naylor".

Lynn Naylor, CEO
Innovation TRIVALLEY Leadership Group