

1,500 LIVING UNITS FOR TRANSIT VILLAGE:

River Islands plan tied to Valley Link trains would be a SJ first

By : Dennis Wyatt



An Example of a transit village in Plano, Texas

A massive departure from the current development patterns in the Northern San Joaquin Valley to provide housing for the job-rich Bay Area could be triggered by Valley Link — the rail system that will initially connect Lathrop and Tracy to the BART station in Pleasanton-Dublin.

River Islands at Lathrop, where the Lathrop station would be placed, is seeking a general plan amendment to allow the creation of a robust transit village complete with 1,500 apartments.

Susan Dell’Osso, project manager for River islands, indicates the vision is to develop roughly 30 acres including apartments, dining spots, small shops and community gathering places built around a transit station.

The goal is to get Valley Link up and running in six years using existing rail structure.

“It’s an opportunity for people able to walk from their home and get on board a train and head to jobs in the Bay Area,” Dell’Osso said.

Dell’Osso noted it would afford a better lifestyle for people who are either renters or homeowners who commute to employment in the Bay Area currently using vehicles.

At the same time having a transit center on the eastern edge of the planned River Islands business park that bars distribution centers and others requiring heavy truck movements in favor of more employee intense tech concerns should help to eventually attract such firms to this side of the Altamont Pass.

The non-River Islands residents accessing the Valley Link station would not park on River Islands property but would use parking developed on the east side of the rail line. It is also how bus service carrying commuters to the station would likely access the station as well.

The general plan amendment could increase the overall housing unit count on River Islands from 11,000 homes to 12,500 but without changing the character of the development.

Unlike the apartments and retail that has sprung up along the Pleasanton-Dublin BART station creating a transit village of sorts, by using a blank canvas given there is no existing development where the station is planned, River Islands will be able to situate apartments and such in a manner that maximizes the effectiveness of a transit village concept by deemphasizes autos to enhance foot and bicycle traffic.

Valley Link trains will operate from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. both weekdays and weekends. Peak hours will be from 5 to 8 a.m. and 5 to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Trains on the Tri-Valley segment will initially operate every 12 minutes during peak hours to match BART service frequency. In the off peak hours, Tri-Valley trains will run every 30 minutes.

Those trains originating from the San Joaquin Valley will operate every 24 minutes during peak times to meet every other BART train. The trains would operate on an hourly frequency during off-peak times.