



Central Valley: "Backbone" of High-Speed Rail

HIGH-SPEED RAIL IN THE CENTRAL VALLEY

Many Californians are curious as to why high-speed rail is starting in the Central Valley instead of the Bay Area or Southern California. Most of this curiosity stems from the fact that the Valley does not have urban centers comparable to those in other parts of the state. However, what most do not realize is that there are seven million residents who live in the Valley and that the region continues to be one of the fastest growing areas in the state. Work on the nation's first high-speed rail is underway in the heart of the Valley with more than \$2 billion of investments that will create jobs and connect the region to the rest of the state like never before.

With the completion of high-speed rail, Central Valley residents will be able to travel to San Francisco or Los Angeles in just under an hour without spending hundreds of dollars on gas, driving or traveling to the airport. In addition, residents of the Bay Area and Los Angeles will be able to travel through the Valley's major population areas with greater ease, with several stops in major Valley cities. This will help revitalize Valley downtown areas and bring in potential new sources of revenue and opportunities.

Starting the high-speed rail program in the Central Valley makes sense for several reasons, including the availability of federal funding and the ability to advance the program faster and at a lower cost to the taxpayer. High-speed rail in the Valley will serve as the "backbone" of a system that will ultimately tie all major regions of California together, modernizing transportation in the state and linking our diverse economic and cultural centers like never before.

CENTRAL VALLEY POPULATION GROWTH

Over the past 10 years, the Central Valley has been the fastest growing region in the state, with its population increasing by 17 percent compared to 10 percent statewide. Moody's Analytics predicts that by 2040, there will be close to 10 million people living in the Valley, adding three million more people to its current population. Every county in the Valley is expected to experience population growth. The cities of Fresno and Bakersfield today have populations of 500,000 and 350,000 respectively, and have become major financial, business and academic centers.

SECURING FUNDING AND CONTAINING COSTS

In order to secure federal funding made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, the U.S. Department of Transportation required that project construction



1. Construction crews work on utility relocation in downtown Fresno near the site of the high-speed rail station.
2. Work crews use cranes and other heavy equipment at the Fresno River Viaduct, the first aerial structure in the Central Valley.

start in the Central Valley. It did so for two primary reasons: (1) developing rail infrastructure in relatively flat, rural areas allows for lower construction costs as well as more opportunity for necessary testing; and (2) by law, ARRA funds must be expended by 2017; a deadline that could not be met if construction were to start in densely-populated urban areas.

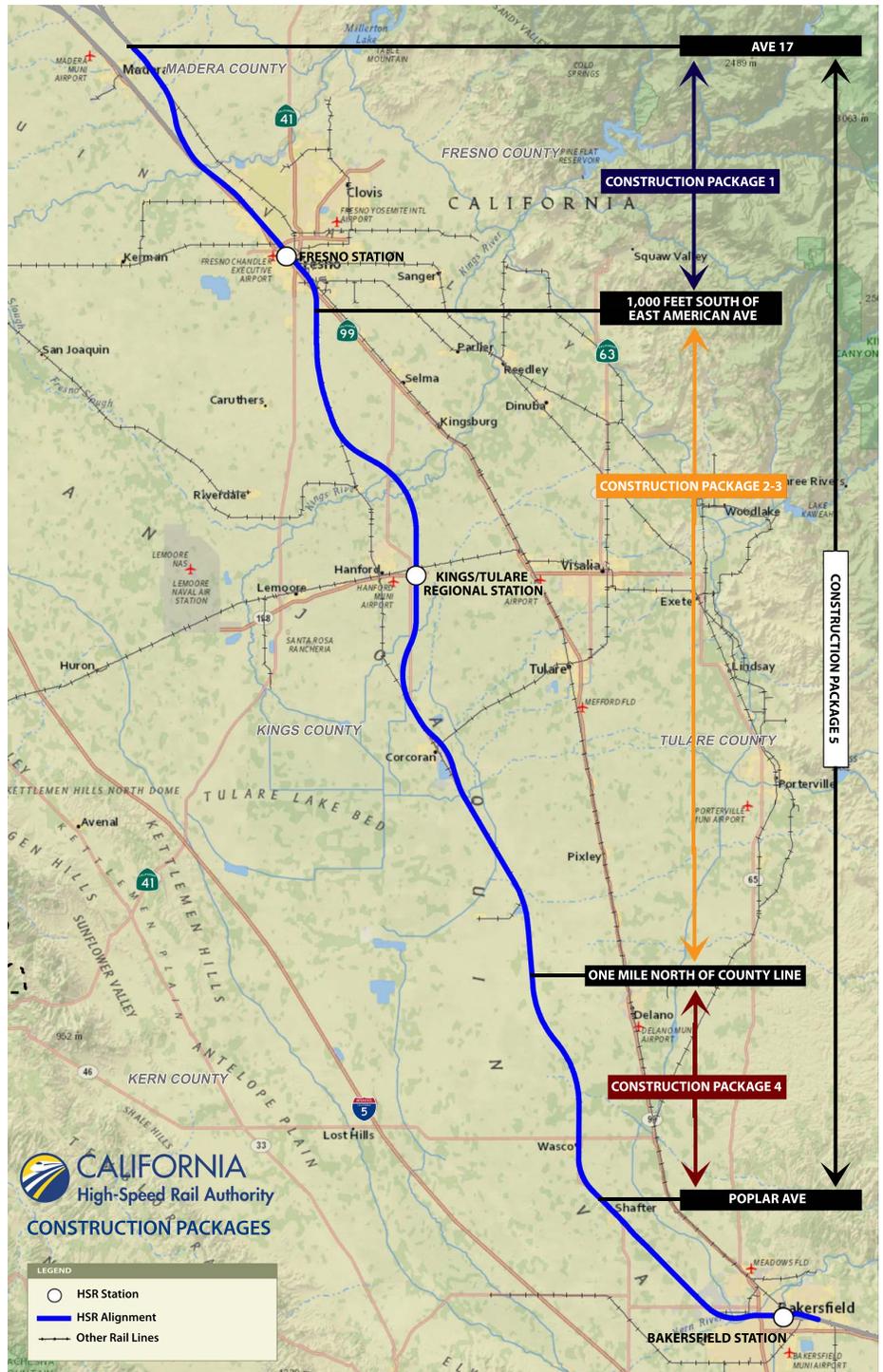
JOB CREATION

With construction ramping up in the Central Valley it is expected the program will create 20,000 jobs annually for the next five years. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in May of 2015, 7 of the top 10 California counties with the highest unemployment rates are located in the Valley. The Authority Board of Directors has also adopted a Community Benefits Policy to ensure participation of community-based small businesses and individuals in economically distressed areas in the construction of the system.

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Over the past year, the Authority has taken several positive steps towards building relationships with community members and stakeholders from Central Valley businesses, government, agriculture and environmental groups. Fresno native Diana Gomez has served as the region’s Central Valley Regional Director since 2012. Under her leadership, the Fresno regional office has been committed to working with members of the community to make sure that people’s voices are heard and that they have a chance to provide input on the program.

These efforts are part of a larger effort to ensure that those communities along the high-speed rail alignment play an active and positive role in development of the program.



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