

## Next Steps for the Fresno to Merced Section

### Right-of-way acquisition

If the Authority and FRA approve the project, the right-of-way acquisition process would begin in preparation for groundbreaking and construction in the Fresno area. The acquisition process includes appraisals, acquisition offers, relocation assistance and other activities.

### Initial construction locations and schedule

Construction of a portion of the high-speed rail alignment is expected to begin in late 2012. Design-build contractors were pre-qualified by the Authority and a Request for Proposals was issued for the first construction package in March of 2012. The contract is expected to be awarded by fall of 2012. This portion of the high-speed rail alignment would extend 29 miles from near the city of Madera to south of the city of Fresno. The Authority is committed to ensuring that diverse, small and local businesses are afforded every opportunity to participate in contracting opportunities for the high-speed train project. For more information on small business opportunities visit, [www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/business\\_job\\_opportunities.aspx](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/business_job_opportunities.aspx)

## Fresno to Bakersfield Section Update

In August 2011, the Authority released its Draft EIR/EIS for the Fresno to Bakersfield high-speed train section. Following a request from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. EPA, the Authority agreed to evaluate a West Hanford Bypass Alternative and to prepare a Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report/Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. The revised document is to be released for public review and agency comment in June 2012. Following the public review period, the Authority will prepare and issue a Final EIR/EIS in the fall, and complete the environmental process by late 2012 or early 2013.

Public and agency comments on the Draft EIR/EIS received last summer are being reviewed, considered and incorporated for the Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental EIS. Responses to those comments will be provided in the Final EIR/EIS to be issued late this year.



## Recent Statewide and Regional Activities

The following provides a brief overview of statewide activities:

### 2012 Business Plan

On April 2, 2012, the High-Speed Rail Authority released an updated Business Plan. Some highlights from the revised plan include:

- The plan utilizes existing rail infrastructure in both the southern and northern sections of the state to facilitate earlier high-speed train implementation. The plan introduces the preferred implementation strategy to build the Initial Operating Section from Merced to the San Fernando Valley, with cap-and-trade funds identified as being available, as needed, upon appropriation, as a backstop against federal and local support.
- Early investments in the “bookends” of the high-speed train system, simultaneous with construction of the “backbone” in the Central Valley, will provide earlier benefits throughout the system. The cost has been reduced to \$68.4 billion – a one third reduction from previous estimates.
- By 2029—17 years from now—passengers will be able to take a one-seat high-speed train ride from Los Angeles to San Francisco at a cost of \$81 in today’s dollars, roughly 83 percent of average air fare.

For more information about the Revised 2012 Business Plan please visit [www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/)

### Para más información

Por favor vaya a [www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/Espanol](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/Espanol) para información en español. Si quiere más información sobre el proyecto del tren de alta velocidad o si tiene cualquier pregunta, la Autoridad Ferroviaria de Alta Velocidad tiene interpretres disponibles. Por favor llama al 1-866-761-7755 y alguien estará disponible para ayudarle.



### IMPORTANT DATES:

**Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement available**

**April 20, 2012**

**High-Speed Rail Authority Board Meetings**

**SACRAMENTO, CA  
April 19, 2012, 10:00 a.m.**

**Sacramento City Hall  
Council Chambers  
915 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814**

*Informational meeting only*

**FRESNO, CA  
May 2, 2012, 10:00 a.m.**

**Fresno Convention Center  
700 M Street  
Fresno, CA 93721**

*Presentation on Final EIR/EIS and public comments heard by Board under CEQA*

**FRESNO, CA  
May 3, 2012, 10:00 a.m.**

**Fresno Convention Center  
700 M Street  
Fresno, CA 93721**

*Board will consider whether to certify the Final EIR/EIS under CEQA (thus completing the CEQA process)*

### Available April 20, 2012: Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement for the Merced to Fresno section of the High-Speed Train Project

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) are announcing the availability of the joint Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIR/EIS) for the Merced to Fresno section of the California High-Speed Train Project. The Final EIR/EIS will be available to the public on April 20, 2012.

### About the California High-Speed Train Project

The Authority is proposing to develop an 800-mile high-speed train system that would connect the San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento in the north, through the Central Valley to Los Angeles, Orange County, Inland Empire and San Diego in the south. From 2005-2012, the Authority completed program-level environmental studies to determine the general train corridor routes and city/station locations. In November 2008, California voters approved \$9.95 billion in bonds to help move the program forward, and project specific environmental studies were initiated for the nine sections that make up the system.

### The Merced to Fresno section

The Merced to Fresno high-speed train section is 65 miles long. Following release of the Draft Project EIR/EIS for the section in August 2011 and completion of the public review process in October, the Authority Board in December 2011 selected the “Hybrid” route as the preferred alternative out of the three primary alternatives studied during the EIR/EIS process. The Hybrid Alternative alignment generally parallels the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks and State Route 99 between Merced and Fresno. To avoid impacts to downtown Madera, the alignment travels east of Madera and generally parallels the existing Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad corridor. Station locations are proposed in downtown Merced between Martin Luther King Jr. Way and G Street and in downtown Fresno at Mariposa Street.

### Heavy Maintenance Facility

No preferred alternative for location of the Heavy Maintenance Facility (HMF) has been identified at this time. A preferred HMF site between Merced and Fresno is to be further evaluated in future environmental review, likely as part of the San Jose to Merced EIR/EIS. The Authority’s selection of a HMF site is not expected until 2013 at the earliest.

### Wye Connection

The San Jose to Merced high-speed train section project team will study alternatives for the east-west wye connection, including alignments along Avenue 21, Avenue 24, and SR 152, and proposed routes in the Chowchilla area, under a separate environmental process. The San Jose to Merced team anticipates completing the alternatives analysis process mid-2012 and producing a Draft EIR/EIS in the early spring of 2013.

## About the Environmental Review Process

### Overview of the environmental process

Whenever large projects like the California High-Speed Train System are planned, it is important to study how the project will affect the human and natural environment, and look for ways to avoid, reduce or mitigate any negative environmental impacts. The environmental process for this project is guided by statutory and regulatory requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). These requirements allow a standardized method of identifying, evaluating and addressing these impacts. The Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS document will report these findings.

### What is the purpose of the Final EIR/EIS?

The Final EIR/EIS serves several purposes:

- Inform the public and agency decision makers of the environmental impacts of the proposed project
- Provide mitigation measures to avoid or significantly reduce negative environmental impacts
- Identify and evaluate reasonable alternatives that could avoid or lessen negative environmental impacts
- Formally address public comments on potential environmental impacts

### What is the process for certifying the Final EIR/EIS and approving the project?

The Authority is the project's lead agency under CEQA. The FRA is the project's lead agency under NEPA. The Authority's Board of Directors will hear a presentation and receive public comment on the Final EIR/EIS at a meeting to be held at 10:00 a.m. on May 2, 2012, in Fresno at the Fresno Convention Center, 700 M Street, Fresno, CA 93721. The following day, May 3, 2012, beginning at 10:00 a.m., the Board will consider whether to certify the Final EIR/EIS under CEQA (which completes the CEQA process) and whether to approve the project; the meeting will be held at the same location in Fresno. Following the Board action, the FRA will then consider approving the project and issuing a Record of Decision under NEPA, which is anticipated in June 2012.

### How can I find responses to my comments in the Final EIR/EIS?

All formal comments submitted on the Draft EIR/EIS will be addressed in the Final EIR/EIS. The responses to comments will be included in Volume IV of the Final EIR/EIS. Everyone that submitted a formal comment on the Draft EIR/EIS will be notified that the Final EIR/EIS is available and where it can be viewed. The Final EIR/EIS and comment responses will also be on the California High-Speed Rail Authority website at [www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov) and the FRA's website at [www.fra.dot.gov](http://www.fra.dot.gov). If you are unsure how to locate your comment and responses, please email us at [merced\\_fresno@hsr.ca.gov](mailto:merced_fresno@hsr.ca.gov) or call 916-324-1541.

## Where can I find the Final EIR/EIS?

All the locations listed below will have a printed copy of the Final EIR/EIS and a digital copy on CD-ROM. The Final EIR/EIS and related documents are also available on the Authority's website at [www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov) and the FRA's website at [www.fra.dot.gov](http://www.fra.dot.gov). If you need help locating the document, please email us at [merced\\_fresno@hsr.ca.gov](mailto:merced_fresno@hsr.ca.gov) or call 916-324-1541.

VENUE	ADDRESS
Fresno County Public Library, Central Branch	2420 Mariposa Street, Fresno, CA 93721
Gillis Branch Library	629 W. Dakota Ave, Fresno, CA 93705
Madera County Library	121 North G Street, Madera, CA 93637
Chowchilla Branch Library (Madera County Library)	300 Kings Avenue, Chowchilla, CA 93610
Merced Community Senior Center	755 West 15th Street, Merced, CA 95340
Merced County Library	2100 O Street, Merced, CA 95340
Galilee Missionary Baptist Church	22491 Fairmead Blvd., Chowchilla, CA 93610
Le Grand Branch Library	12949 Le Grand Road, Le Grand, CA 95333
Lao Family Community	855 W 15th Street, Merced, CA 95340
Madera Ranchos Branch Library	37167 Avenue 12, Suite 4C, Madera, CA 95636
Merced County Los Banos Branch Library	1312 South Seventh Street, Los Banos, CA 93635
Atwater Branch Library	1600 Third Street, Atwater, CA 95301
California High-Speed Rail Authority Office	770 L Street, Suite 800 Sacramento, CA 95814

## Preferred Alternative

In December 2011, the Authority identified the "Hybrid" route as the preferred alternative from the three primary alternatives studied during the EIR/EIS process. The Hybrid Alternative generally parallels the Union Pacific railroad tracks and State Route 99 between Merced and Fresno (see blue line on map). The Wye connection in the middle (see gold highlighted lines on map) and the Heavy Maintenance Facility will not be decided as part of this Final EIR/EIS.

