



Palmdale to Burbank Project Section



ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) is responsible for planning, designing, building and operation of the first high-speed rail system in the nation. California's electric high-speed rail will connect the mega-regions of the state, contribute to economic development and a cleaner environment, create jobs and preserve agricultural and protected lands. By 2029, the system will run from San Francisco to the Los Angeles basin in under three hours at speeds capable of over 200 miles per hour. The system will eventually extend to Sacramento and San Diego, totaling 800 miles with up to 24 stations. In addition, the Authority is working with regional partners to implement a statewide rail modernization plan that will invest billions of dollars in local and regional rail lines to meet the state's 21st century transportation needs.

CURRENT PROGRAM STATUS

Phase 1 of the high-speed rail system will provide fast, safe and reliable connections between the counties and cities from the Bay Area to Los Angeles/Anaheim. Phase 2 will add further connections to Sacramento and San Diego.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Palmdale to Burbank Project Section connects the Antelope Valley to the San Fernando Valley in Southern California. Two distinct high-speed rail corridors with multiple alignment options are currently being considered: SR 14 Corridor and East Corridor (see enclosed maps).

ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS

In 2001, the Authority, in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), started a tiered environmental review process for the statewide high-speed rail system per requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The 2005 first-tier California High-Speed Rail Program Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Statewide Program EIR/EIS) described the program alignment, which included a corridor between Palmdale and Los Angeles. The timeline of activities since then includes the following:

- The 2007 release of public scoping notices and scoping meetings presented the proposed Palmdale to Los Angeles Project Section (P-LA) study area to receive agency and public comments on the issues that should be analyzed in the environmental document. The 2007 Scoping Report summarized the scoping process, documented the comments received during the process, and outlined the next steps in the development of the environmental document.
- The 2010 Preliminary Alternatives Analysis presented and evaluated the initial alignment alternatives systematically using established criteria. Two subsequent Supplemental Alternatives Analyses (SAA) prepared in 2011 and 2012, further developed the alignment alternatives and station options based on stakeholder feedback.
- The 2014 SAA further refined alignment alternatives and station options and discussed the evaluation of Palmdale to Burbank and Burbank to Los Angeles as two separate Project Sections.
- The July 2014 scoping notices amended the 2007 P-LA scoping notices, providing for separate environmental documents for the Palmdale to Burbank (P-B) and Burbank to Los Angeles (B-LA) project sections.
- The next SAA is now being released and will present the latest project refinements and alternatives under consideration.

The development of the environmental document for the P-B Project Section is advancing and a draft is anticipated for release in summer 2016, which will include public hearings as well as agency and public comment opportunities. This ongoing planning process will continue to include public involvement opportunities.

Four major activities are underway now:

1. Construction of the backbone of the high-speed rail system in the Central Valley.
2. Planning and/or environmental clearance of the remainder of the Phase 1 System.
3. Planning for the Phase 2 System.
4. Implementation of a statewide rail modernization plan, in partnership with local stakeholders, that invests billions of dollars in local and regional rail lines right now.

The recent commitment of ongoing California cap and trade proceeds allows the Authority to advance the program on multiple segments concurrently, which will bring the benefits of an improved transportation system and broader range of travel options to local communities sooner.

BENEFITS OF THE HIGH-SPEED RAIL PROGRAM

- Curbs congestion on California roadways and at airports – some of the busiest in the nation.
- Prepares the state for a projected population of 50 million by 2050.
- Costs billions less than continuing to invest only in California's aging roads and airports.
- Connects the major regions of the state – the Bay Area, the Central Valley and Southern California – and ties their economies together.
- Connects businesses with customers, and broadens opportunities for workers, employers, students and visitors.
- Benefits the environment by improving air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Encourages sustainable community planning through smart land use and station-oriented development, which can also reduce pressure to convert farmland and other natural areas to development.



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