



Central Valley: "Backbone" of High-Speed Rail

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 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.

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 Central 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.

With the completion of high-speed rail, 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 Central Valley major population areas with greater ease, with several stops in major Central Valley cities, which will help revitalize Central Valley downtown areas, bring in potential new sources of revenue and add jobs.

Starting the high-speed rail project in the Central Valley makes sense for several reasons, including the availability of federal funding and the ability to advance the project faster and at a lower cost to the taxpayer. High-speed rail in the Central 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.

The Initial Operating Section (IOS) of high-speed rail, the beginning of Phase 1 of the overall system, will connect Merced to the San Fernando Valley gateway to Los Angeles. It will be approximately 300 miles and service will start in 2022.

"High-speed rail offers an opportunity to transform the future of California's Central Valley by connecting it to major urban centers, revitalizing city cores, and reducing suburban sprawl's encroachment on agriculture."

**- Dan Richard,
Board Chairman,
California High-Speed
Rail Authority**

High-Speed Rail Fact

- With seven million residents, the Central Valley is larger than 38 states and comprises close to 20% of the state's residents.

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 Central Valley, an additional three million more people than live there today. 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 (DOT) required that project construction start in the Central Valley. They 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

When the Merced to Fresno section breaks ground in 2013, the project will create 20,000 jobs annually for the next five years. According to the U.S. News and World Reports in November 2011, six of the top ten U.S. cities where it's hardest to find a job are located in the Central Valley. The Authority Board 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. Most recently, the Authority hired Fresno native Diana Gomez as Central Valley Regional Director to make sure that people's voices are heard and that they have a chance to provide input on the project. Additionally, the Agricultural Working Group has been working with members of the Central Valley's vital agriculture industry to analyze all potential impacts on agriculture that may arise from high-speed rail construction and operations. The group has studied areas such as irrigation, wind, pollination, and bees to mitigate any potential high-speed rail effects.

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 system.

CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL INITIAL OPERATING SECTION (IOS)

