



ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) is responsible for planning, designing, building and 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.



Merced to Fresno Project Section: Central Valley Wye



CENTRAL VALLEY WYE OVERVIEW

The Central Valley serves as the backbone of the High-Speed Rail system connecting the San Francisco Bay Area to Southern California. The Merced to Fresno section of the 800-mile system is 60 miles long and generally parallels Highway 99 through the northern stretch of the San Joaquin Valley. The Central Valley Wye is located near the City of Chowchilla and will serve as the junction for the system to head West to San Francisco and North to Sacramento (connecting with the Merced to Sacramento section) and South to Fresno and on to Los Angeles (connecting to the Merced to Fresno section and other southern sections).

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) Board of Directors certified the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIR/EIS) for the Merced to Fresno Section of the program in early 2012. At that time, the Board determined that additional alternatives should be studied and included in a Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report/Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIR/SEIS).

Since 2012, the Authority's Central Valley Regional Director, supported by the Central Valley Wye team, has worked with stakeholders and agencies to identify a range of feasible alignment alternatives for the Central Valley Wye area. Fourteen alignments were originally considered, and based on stakeholder input were narrowed down to six and then to four alignments. These four alignment alternatives were presented to regulatory agencies and the public for review and feedback in early 2013. Following community meetings in early 2013, outreach and discussions continued to seek ways to refine Central Valley Wye alternatives to address stakeholder and agency concerns.

After stakeholder engagement, continued evaluation and regulatory agency input, Authority staff now recommend three alternatives for detailed evaluation in the SEIR/SEIS. All of the proposed alignment alternatives for the Central Valley Wye area are still subject to change, as the Authority considers and seeks to address stakeholder and agency concerns.

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.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE CENTRAL VALLEY WYE?

Public, stakeholder and agency input received to date has informed and continues to shape the development of potential Central Valley Wye alternatives. Engagement with Central Valley stakeholders will continue through the release of the Draft SEIR/SEIS, which is anticipated in fall 2015 for public review and comment. In an effort to advance selection of a preferred alternative and remove much of the uncertainty around this process, the Authority will be seeking input from stakeholders and agencies to inform the selection of a Preliminary Preferred Alternative in mid-2015, which will be included in the Draft SEIR/SEIS. Following public hearings and completion of the public comment period, the Authority will continue working with stakeholders to address comments, identify the Preferred Alternative, anticipated in mid-2016, and then release the Final EIR/EIS. The Board will consider certification of the Final SEIR/SEIS and project approval in late 2016.



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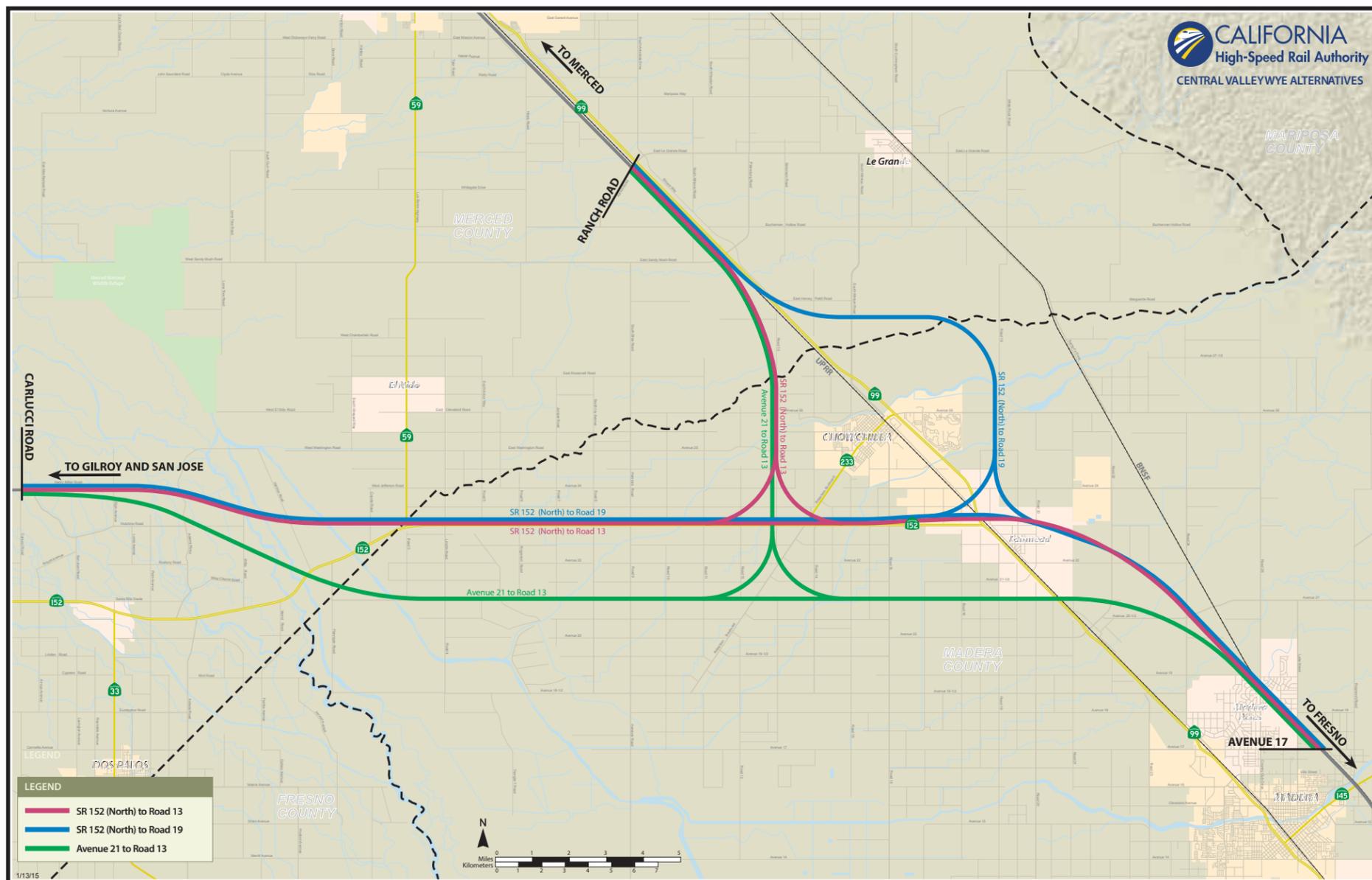


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Central Valley Wye Alternatives Recommended for Study in the SEIR/SEIS



Preliminary and Subject to Change

Central Valley Wye MILESTONE SCHEDULE



Range of Alternatives Considered



In 2012, based on stakeholder input, the Authority Board directed additional evaluation of potential Wye alternatives. Fourteen Wye alternatives were considered, and in early 2013, four of these were recommended for further study.



In early 2013, four alternatives were presented for public feedback and regulatory agency concurrence. Since then, additional input has resulted in refinements to three alternatives and withdrawal of the SR 152 (South) to Road 18 Wye. The three alternatives recommended for detailed study in the SEIR/SEIS are shown in the map above.