



Fresno Council of Governments One Voice D.C.

Regional Priorities Summary ***March 2024***



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Fresno COG One Voice 2024

Regional Priorities Summary

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Millerton Road Widening and Safety Improvements

REQUEST SUMMARY

The County of Fresno requests support for its Millerton Road Widening Project RAISE application totaling \$25 million. The project expands a 3.5-mile stretch of Millerton Road from a two-lane rural roadway to a four-lane divided arterial roadway in the community of Friant, from North Fork Road to Marina Drive. The funding is for construction assistance which includes additional safety features.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project experienced several delays due to environmental, right-of-way, and utility concerns, but is now ready for construction. Funding is insufficient due to rising construction costs and unexpected issues. During the time the County was working through the delays, Table Mountain Rancheria, the Chukchansi band of Yokut and Monache tribes of Indigenous Americans, widened a 0.8 mile section of the roadway in front of their newly built casino on Millerton Road from two-lanes to four-lanes, starting at the casino entrance and ending at Marina Drive/Winchell Cove Drive. The change from four-lane to two-lane traveling west on Millerton Road creates an abrupt bottleneck that has resulted in multiple severe crashes, some fatal. Between 2012 and May 2023 there were 44 collisions, nine of which were fatalities, and 26 injury, within 900 feet of the intersection. The County proposed a roundabout at this intersection, which adds approximately \$4 million to the project. The roundabout should significantly reduce crashes and deaths in that location. Additionally, widening the remainder

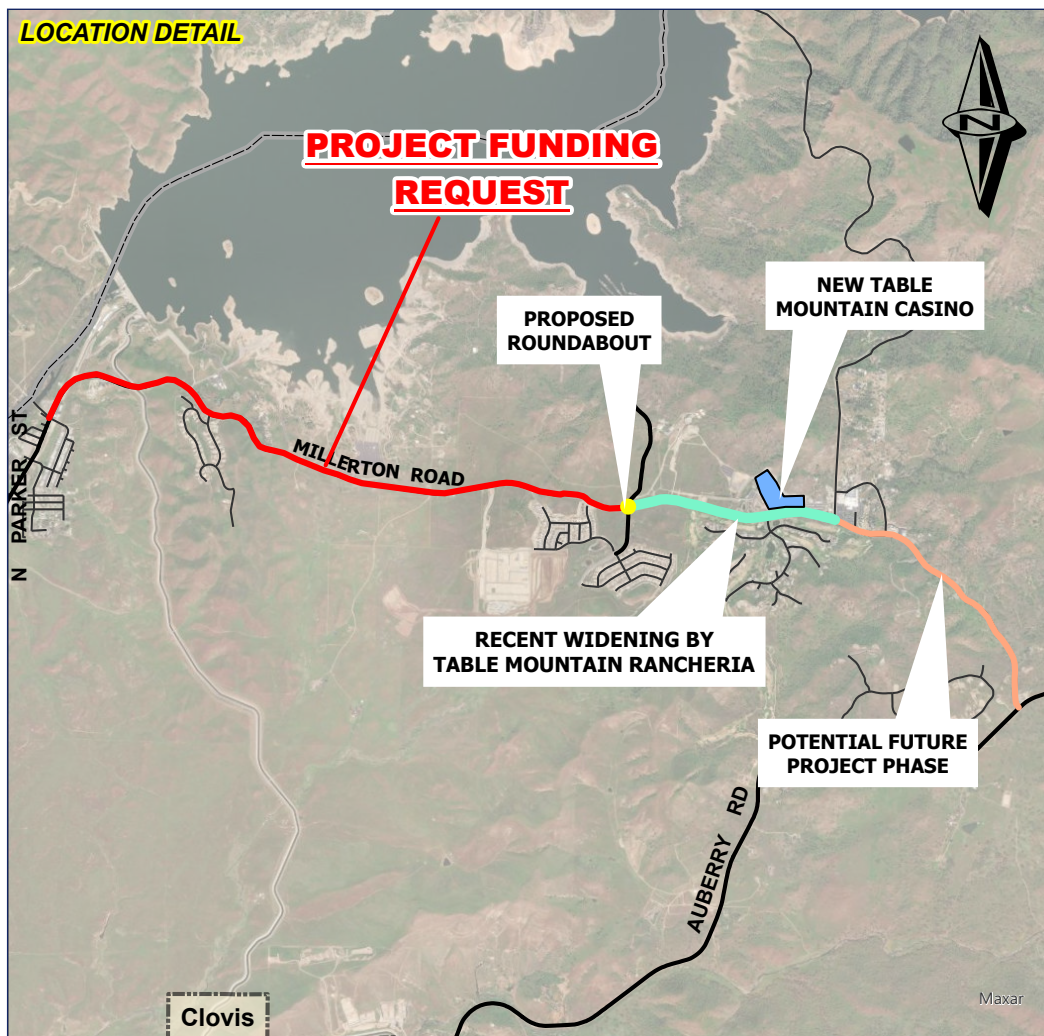
of the road will improve an ongoing bottleneck. Development fees are \$5,000 per parcel, and are adjusted annually for inflation, but only \$1.2 million has been collected to date. Projected development fees over the next 10 years are estimated to be \$3 million. Table Mountain Casino is not legally required to pay traffic impact fees, but has contributed by paying for the project's design and some environmental studies.

BACKGROUND

Millerton Road is the primary corridor for Table Mountain Rancheria tribe members to access their lands and governmental operation. It is used by more than 1,300 employees, thousands of patrons, and is integral to the Tribe's economic success.

Millerton Road serves a unique blend of local commuter, recreational, and public facility traffic and is used daily to transport children within several school districts. To this end, expanding Millerton would potentially reduce accidents and make this area much safer for all motorists/residents. As a vital connection in and out of the forested areas of Fresno County, a newly approved fire station site for the Fresno County Fire Protection District would provide an additional layer of public safety for this thoroughfare and region.

The widening and improvements will tie the foothill region to the Fresno/Clovis metropolitan area. By supporting regional development and economic growth, property values can be improved and relat-



Several public road intersections, private road intersections, and driveway intersections will be improved to accommodate the widening and median improvements. A roundabout at the intersection of Millerton Road and Marina Drive/Winchell Cove Drive will reduce accidents and promote safer driving practices. Additionally, the project will include new, pocketed, left-turn lanes, and a new, two-lane, pre-stressed I girder bridge to accommodate the four-lane road widening and complement the already existing bridge over Friant-Kern Canal. These alterations will contribute to greater safety and utility for motorists and bicyclists. The reconstructed roadway would generally follow

the alignment of the existing roadway, with deviations needed to upgrade the horizontal and vertical geometry to current standards.

The Millerton Road project, which has been on the region's Measure C project list since the voters approved it in 2006, has also been on the COG One Voice list during past trips; however, now the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) work required for this project has now been completed.

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ed construction and service industries will be sustained. Residual impacts and job creation from this investment will reverberate throughout the region.

The County's objectives for the project are:

- Accommodate a higher level of projected traffic demand, and promote improved traffic operations, as well as bike and motorist safety
- Increase community safety by decreasing the California Fire Department's fire response time
- Bolster regional tourism by better accommodating seasonal traffic to the scenic Millerton Lake State Park
- Improve access to Table Mountain Rancheria tribal lands (Project preliminarily designed by Table Mountain Rancheria's consultant)

Business Friendly Administrative Relief at the United States Department of Labor

REQUEST SUMMARY

Specific changes requested are:

1. Incumbent Worker Training, as the employer is viewed as the client, remove the requirement that existing employers certify selective service registration for employees, many of whom are long-term and beyond draft age
2. WIOA Supportive Service Payments -- allow payments for WIOA clients post placement
3. Tracking of Training-Related Placements at Community Colleges -- remove requirement that all trainees in a given community college program or class be tracked for training-related placement, instead leaving such a mandate for WIOA clients in the class only

ABOUT THE PRIORITY

The changes requested will directly lead to an increased percentage of Fresno residents being employed on many of the public infrastructure projects occurring in our greater Fresno community. If we do not adequately prepare the local workforce for these good-paying, career positions, workers will be imported from out of the area to take these jobs.

Relatedly, high-growth sectors in healthcare and manufacturing will also benefit from an increasing supply of qualified workers.

Finally, the nascent forestry sector will also gain access to qualified applicants making it possible

for Fresno forestry employers to bid on Federal and State contracts in the Southern Sierras.

Traditionally, economic development has been described as a BEAR process, i.e. Business Expansion, Attraction, and Retention. As it pertains local business expansion and retention, the proposed administrative changes will directly improve local employers' ability to retrain their existing workforce with WIOA funds, and concurrently benefit newly hired WIOA trainee capacity to retain their new positions.

In both instances, from the standpoint of the employer AND the employee, direct tangible benefits will result from these proposed changes.

BACKGROUND

Each of these three requests are cognizant of the "lay of the land," economically speaking, in Fresno County. Firstly, it is a fact that in Fresno County we do not have the variety or number of industry sectors found in other parts of our state. As a result, it is crucially important that federal funding, like WIOA funds, be as "business-user friendly" as possible.

Secondly, available human capital within the Fresno community faces barriers to employment in far greater percentages than are found in other parts of the state. Maximizing WIOA funding's impact throughout the client service cycle maximizes positive outcomes.

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South Fresno - State Route 99 Corridor Project

REQUEST SUMMARY

Congressional delegation support for the \$25 million RAISE grant application on file with the Department of Transportation.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Fresno Council of Governments and the Fresno County Transportation Authority (FCTA) formally request support for their joint \$25 million RAISE grant application for the South Fresno State Route 99 Corridor Project. If funded, the project would replace a non-standard, split interchange at North/Cedar Avenue and a non-standard, half-interchange at American Avenue – just under three miles south of North/Cedar.

The project is intended to accomplish the following:

- Replace two aged overcrossings
 - Realign and widen ramps
 - Eliminate isolated ramps
 - Install signalized intersections
 - Provide sidewalk and bicycle facilities
 - Install a sound barrier to mitigate traffic noise
 - Provide electric-vehicle (EV) charging stations
- Replace/rehabilitate existing pavement.

Furthermore, the project has the potential to:

- Reduce lifecycle costs
- Improve safety
- Improve access to jobs
- Reduce congestion
- Improve goods movement and supply chains
- Facilitate California High-Speed Rail (HSR) construction and operations

BACKGROUND

The North/Cedar and American Avenue interchanges are located along the State Route (SR) 99 trade corridor and are priority locations for reconstruction. Both Interchanges serve as primary access points for existing and developing industrial and commercial businesses, which includes three major distribution centers for Amazon, Ulta Beauty, and Valley Wide Beverage. In addition to those three distribution centers, as well as hundreds of other industrial employers in south Fresno, this project will also serve the nearby Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) intermodal rail facility. Lastly, it would provide access to the proposed Fresno HSR Maintenance-of-Way/Heavy-Maintenance Facility site.

North Avenue

This project will reduce driver confusion at the North Avenue interchange by reconstructing interchanges to standard design. Improvements will include installing traffic signal controls at the ramp intersections, which should reduce overall collisions as much as 30 percent, with some reduction to collision severity. Left-turn phasing will also eliminate free movements, which reduces potential collisions with cyclists and pedestrians. The interchange ramps at Cedar Avenue are eliminated and consolidated at North Avenue. This removes the conflict points between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians in which free movements currently exist.

American Avenue

The proposed improvements at the American

Avenue interchange include roundabouts at the ramp intersections. The roundabouts have several added safety features, including reducing collision severity and providing for improved pedestrian crossings. Multi-use paths will run adjacent to the roundabouts, which will provide a safe route for both pedestrians and cyclists.

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House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Bill Spending Levels

REQUEST SUMMARY

- For the FY 2025 budget, oppose cuts to transportation infrastructure spending delivered as part of IIJA and the Inflation Reduction Act.
- Support current spending levels as prescribed in existing federal legislation.

ABOUT THE PRIORITY

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations bill initially included proposed



transportation funding cuts that were avoided as part of the transportation minibuss package. We appreciate your role in ensuring those cuts were spared. Had funding been slashed by the 38 percent originally proposed, it would have undermined the commitments made under the

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and damaged the continued development of our nation's transportation infrastructure. The IIJA presented a transformative opportunity to modernize our country's transportation systems. The 2025 House THUD appropriations bill poses a powerful opportunity to once again affirm funding provided under the IIJA. The proposed bill should support funding for critical transportation and housing programs reinforcing the efficacy and potential of these vital initiatives. For the 2025 budget, we once again urge your support for several critical programs, including the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grants, National Infrastructure Project Assistance (Mega) grants, and Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) grants. These programs have consistently demonstrated their impact and importance in promoting sustainable infrastructure, fostering equity, and supporting economic growth in communities across the country.

BACKGROUND

Funding from IIJA resulted in no less than 17 new transportation-related programs, including new formula programs such as the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) and the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient and Cost Saving Transportation (PROTECT), which have the potential to bring more than \$6 million per cycle to the Fresno region. Other enhanced, discretionary programs offer potential grant opportunities of \$10 million or more.



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Parlier to Reedley Education Trail

REQUEST SUMMARY

The City of Parlier requests support for its RAISE application totaling \$9.25 million to fund the Parlier-to-Reedley Education Trail project. The funding will be used for the right-of-way acquisition, environmental clearance, engineering design, and physical construction of the improvements.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Education Trail will connect the cities of Parlier and Reedley, addressing deficiencies in the region's active transportation network to provide residents better access to higher education and other important destinations in the region. Manning Avenue is a principal arterial roadway connecting several communities within Fresno County. The project proposes to construct a protected and separated multi-purpose trail alongside Manning Avenue to connect Parlier and Reedley.

Parlier residents lack equitable transportation access to higher education opportunities. Individuals and families that share one vehicle for the entire household, if they have a vehicle at all, are at an educational and economic disadvantage because there are very limited options to access the educational, economic, and recreational opportunities outside of walking distance. Parlier and Reedley are neighboring cities that are physically separated by the Kings River, with the Manning Avenue arterial corridor being the only means by which Parlier residents can directly access Reedley, and vice versa.

Although the Fresno County Rural Transit Agency serves Parlier and Reedley, there is only a single intercity transit bus that connects the two cities with three pick-up times for Parlier residents to travel from Parlier to Reedley and back. This project will expand the mobility options available to our residents. With a safe, protected, shaded, and lighted multi-purpose



pathway, residents from both cities will be able to walk, ride, scooter, or rollerblade themselves to access the services they need without being forced to plan their travel needs around the fixed bus transit bus schedule.

With this project, the cities of Parlier and Reedley will address deficiencies in their active transportation networks to better serve residents' limited mobility options to Reedley Community College, business centers, recreational facilities, and other important destinations. The proposed trail alongside the

Manning Avenue corridor will provide a convenient, functional, equitable, and safe multi-purpose pathway to access schools, churches, shopping centers, government services, and parks. Reducing fossil-fueled vehicle miles driven will improve air quality for these disadvantaged communities that are heavily burdened by greenhouse gas emissions and particulate matter pollution.

BACKGROUND

The proposed regional trail would be approximately three miles long, connecting Parlier residents to neighboring Reedley, which offers additional resources and services that Parlier does not have,

Reedley with more students attending the college and visiting the city. Additionally, the trail will benefit Reedley residents, providing access to additional employment opportunities in Parlier at major employers such as Maxco and Sunwest.

Since the communities are close in proximity, the trail will encourage the communities to walk or bike instead of drive. This will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to increased air quality not only for Parlier and Reedley but for the region. Overall, the trail will provide several benefits that positively impact both the local communities and the broader region.



such as a hospital, banks, Department of Motor Vehicles, additional employment opportunities, and Reedley Community College. Most importantly, the trail will increase equity for those without a vehicle to attend Reedley College, providing access to higher education.

This trail project will not only benefit the community of Parlier but will also provide economic benefits to

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Cross Valley Rail Corridor In Huron

REQUEST SUMMARY

Congressional delegation support for future grant applications for the Cross Valley Corridor in general and for rail station construction in Huron, specifically.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Cross Valley Corridor (CVC) is a vital east-west rail corridor among communities in Fresno, Tulare, and Kings Counties in the Central San Joaquin Valley. While existing rail is active in certain segments and abandoned in others, the corridor presents a unique opportunity to unlock mobility improvements for the region, advance local economic development, and to improve local air quality. With a proposed California High-Speed Rail station located in the middle of the corridor, there is an opportunity to improve regional and statewide connectivity and mobility throughout the communities along the corridor, which include Huron, Naval Air Station Lemoore, Hanford, Visalia, Farmersville, Exeter, Lindsay, and Porterville.

BACKGROUND

In 2016, Tulare County Association of Governments began the Cross Valley Corridor Plan to study connectivity and mobility improvements in the Central San Joaquin Valley. The project aims to increase transit service efficiency, enable communities and cities in the Cross Valley Corridor (CVC) to promote developments that

support transit usage, encourage revitalization and economic development, and enable growth around the California High-Speed Rail (HSR) investment. By planning for a CVC transit system well in advance, right-of-way and land needs can be identified and protected now, avoiding costly acquisitions or eminent domain processes later.

The Cross Valley Corridor (CVC) is approximately 75 miles long between the cities of Huron and Porterville, with seven to 13 potential stops, serving as the backbone for a future transit corridor. Most of the corridor is occupied by single track freight

railway owned and operated by the San Joaquin Valley Railroad (SJVRR). However, existing track conditions are not yet suitable for passenger rail operations. The existing right-of-way (ranging from 50-200 feet wide) would

be suitable for passenger rail via mixed use (freight and passenger rail). The alignment connects the corridor cities' downtown areas, making it an ideal route to serve the region's major activity centers and populations.

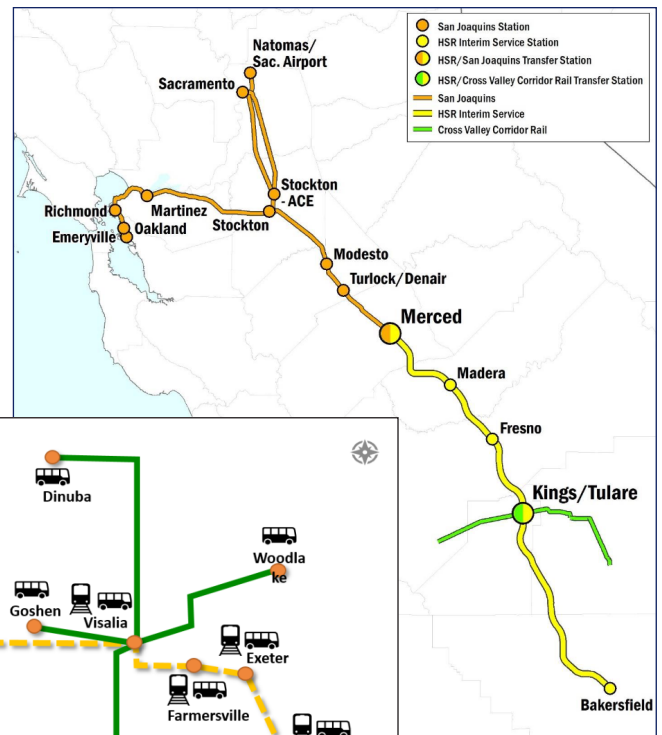
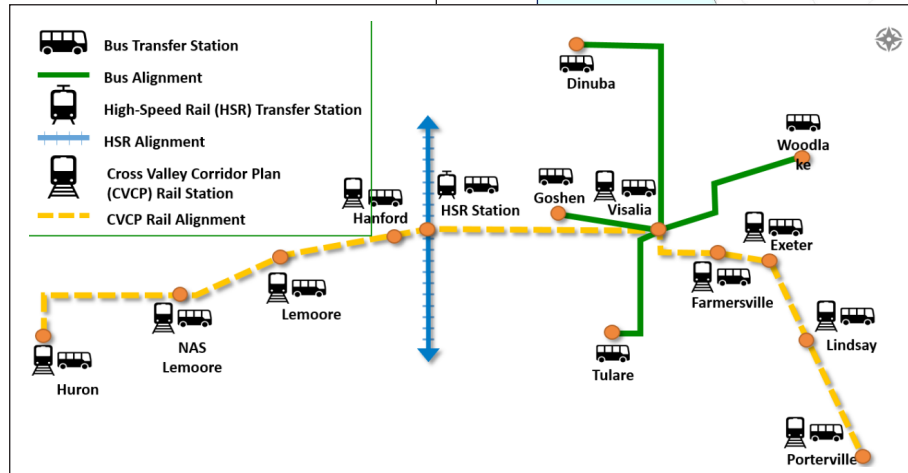
A connection between the proposed Kings/Tulare Regional High-Speed Rail Station and the CVC could benefit the region by potentially linking communities to each other. The HSR station that will ultimately link the Central Valley with the HSR system is located near the City of Hanford and will open as part of the first phase of the HSR project.



Design and implementation of a large-scale rail project can span decades and come with a hefty price tag that may be alarming to stakeholders who are unsure if the project benefits outweigh the costs. Accordingly, the CVC Plan proposes a phased approach to demonstrate value in the near-term by a bus or BRT service along the approximate proposed route to spark awareness among the communities along the corridor while allowing for data collection in ridership and usage trends that could be helpful in future rail planning efforts.

Huron residents would benefit from both the positive economic and environmental improvements that the CVC would provide. According to the California EPA CalEnviroScreen 3.0 tool, the City of Huron ranks in the top 70-85th percentile of pollution burden in California. Specifically, the concentration of particulate matter, or PM2.5, in Huron is in the 95th percentile, meaning it is higher than 95 percent of the census tracts in California. PM2.5 comes from cars, trucks, and other activities, and can have serious health effects, including heart and lung disease. Increasing local transit opportunities will help to reduce local PM2.5 concentrations. Additionally, Huron is defined by the California Department of Housing and Community Development as a low-income community. Connecting Huron to cities along the CVC, as well as the California High-Speed Rail, will improve Huron residents' access to jobs and services.

In 2023, Caltrans awarded the project a \$650,000 Sustainable Communities Planning Grant through



the City of
Hanford
to identify

recommendations for connecting transit services between Downtown Hanford and the Kings-Tulare HSR Station along Lacey Boulevard, and promote transit-oriented development (TOD) around the Kings-Tulare HSR Station. The final plan will guide land use planning along Lacey Boulevard and the Kings-Tulare HSR Station, support TOD, promote economic development and revitalization, enhance connections to transit and mobility choice, stimulate connectivity between Downtown Hanford and the Kings-Tulare Station, connect Hanford with other communities along the CVC, and support an efficient and effective multi-modal transportation system in some of California's most disadvantaged and low-income communities.

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Fresno Yosemite International Airport

New Air Traffic Control Tower

REQUEST SUMMARY

City of Fresno - Airports requests assistance with funding this critical project. It is anticipated that the cost of a new 120-foot facility will cost an estimated \$75 million. The City anticipates competing for Federal grant funds that will only provide for an estimated \$10 million leaving a shortfall in construction costs. This ask is for an additional \$10 million to further reduce the shortfall. The remaining funds will be pursued through other grant programs and public financing.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Air Traffic Control Tower Facility at Fresno Yosemite International Airport (FAT) first opened in 1962. In addition to providing air traffic control services for aircraft at FAT and the surrounding airspace, the facility also provides aircraft radar

control throughout the region in its Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON) role in this facility. The facility is owned and maintained by the City of Fresno - Airports and operated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). This project will construct a new air traffic control tower facility.

BACKGROUND

Fresno Yosemite International Airport (FAT) is a regional asset providing for the San Joaquin Valley's economic development by offering commercial air service, air cargo and fulfilling corporate needs. In addition, the airport is a joint civil/military operation with a critical mission protecting the western United States. The airport also supports the State's wildfire effort with based firefighting aircraft capable of responding at a moment's notice. The air traffic control tower has reached the end of its

useful life; is increasingly difficult to maintain; does not meet current business codes; does not meet current air traffic control tower standards; and does not meet ADA requirements.

Air traffic control services are essential to the airport's safe and efficient operation and the surrounding regional airspace. This facility



operates 24/7, ensuring regional access, including international routes, and providing for national defense resource readiness.

FAT supports economic development, moving travelers on business coming to the San Joaquin Valley; and residents departing to conduct business elsewhere. Having the capability to move goods through the region via air cargo is a significant regional strength and economic benefit. As companies look to establish a presence in the Valley, or conduct business with companies based in the area, moving people and goods is a priority. The air traffic control tower and radar facility are staffed by approximately 60 FAA employees who, in addition to providing for a safe operating environment, are essential to commerce and the region's economic growth. Without this facility, the airport could not operate and the region would not benefit from the jobs supported by the airport.



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Fresno Yosemite International Airport Runway Reconstruction Project

REQUEST SUMMARY

City of Fresno – Airports requests assistance with funding its runway reconstruction project. While the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) may provide priority funding for most of the \$75 million cost; however, an estimated \$7.5 million in matching funds is needed.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The runways at FAT provide critical access to the region and support moving both people and goods. Whether for business or leisure, FAT is the airport of choice within two to three hours of its location for many San Joaquin Valley residents. This project will reconstruct its aging and deteriorating runway and ensure the airport continues to meet its obligations to the region.

BACKGROUND

Fresno Yosemite International Airport (FAT) is a regional asset providing for the economic development and growth of the San Joaquin Valley by virtue of the commercial air service, air cargo and corporate needs it satisfies. In addition, the airport is a joint civil/military facility with a critical mission of protecting the western United States. The airport also supports the State's wildfire effort with based firefighting aircraft capable of responding at a moment's notice. Key to supporting these operations is the airport's primary runway 11L/29R, which has seen a significant increase in activity resulting in further wear-and-tear of the pavement surface. The runway's complete



reconstruction is estimated at \$75 million and will be completed in phases over two years or less.

FAT supports economic development through moving travelers on business coming to the SJV or residents departing through the airport to conduct business elsewhere. In addition, having a commercial service runway with the capability of supporting aircraft for commercial air service and air cargo is a significant benefit to the region. As companies look to establish a presence in the Valley, or conduct business with companies based in the area, moving people and goods is a priority.

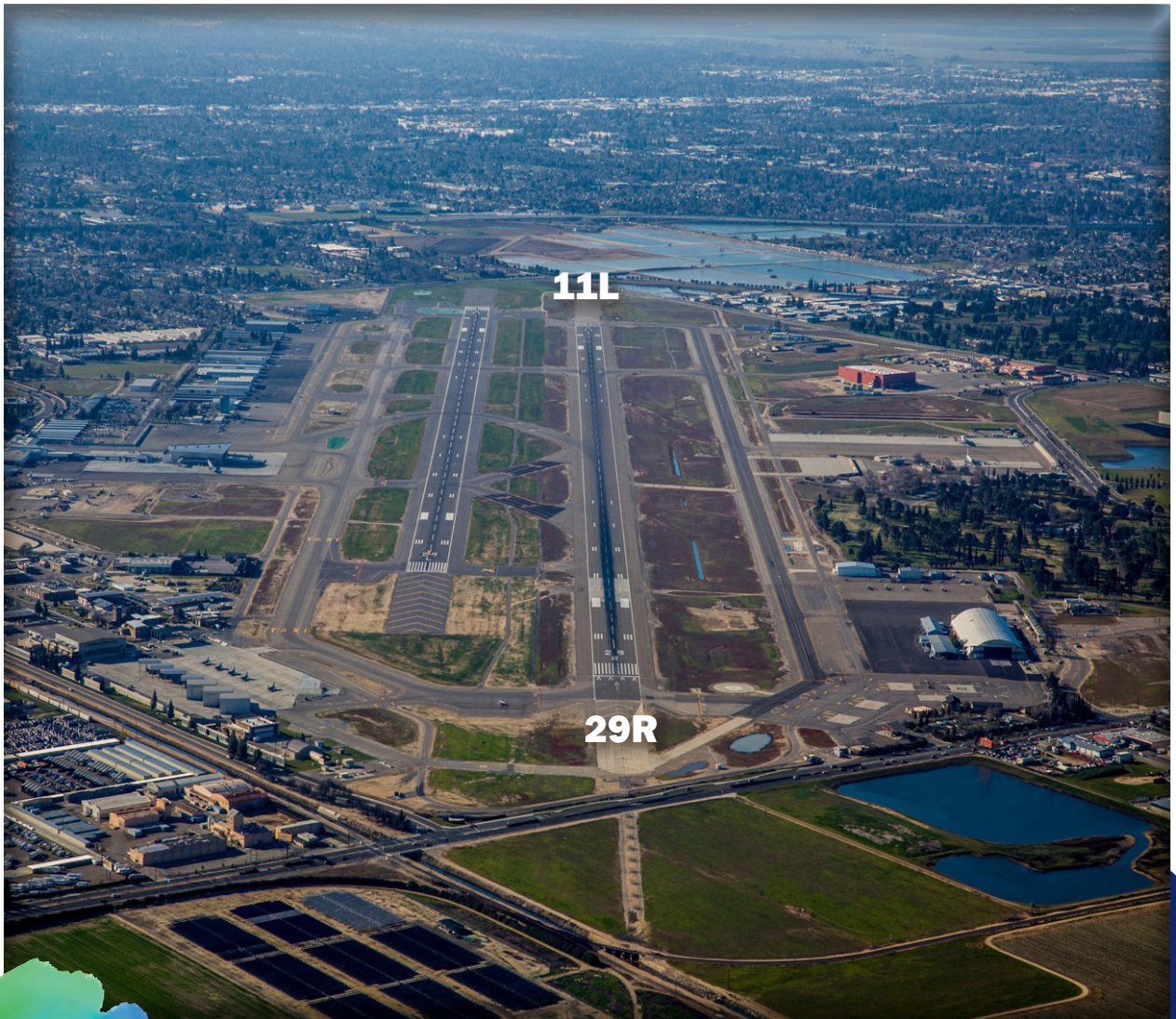
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FRESNO YOSEMITE
International Airport



High-Speed Rail for Fresno County

Funding for the Finish

REQUEST SUMMARY

Maintain sufficient Federal funding to complete the transformational, large-scale High Speed Rail system in Fresno County, enriching the lives of the region's residents. Many of the overcrossings in the rural areas have been completed. Construction has started on all the underpasses and overpasses within Fresno, but significant work still needs to be completed. Work has not started on the tracks or the electric power delivery system. Architects have been hired to design the Fresno High-Speed Train Station, which will likely be the first of its kind in the United States. The One Voice request is to provide sufficient Federal dollars to complete the Central Valley segment of the High-Speed Rail project, and to ensure that no work in the Fresno County region is left unfinished. The City of Fresno also hopes to construct a multimodal transit station to bring passengers from all parts of Fresno and from its rural communities to the new station.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Fresno is home to over 546,000 residents, making it the fifth largest city in California. The California high-speed rail system will connect different regions of the state, contribute to economic development and a cleaner environment, while creating jobs and preserving agricultural and protected lands. The system will run from San Francisco to the Los Angeles basin, eventually extending to Sacramento and San Diego. Segment 1 design and construction began in Fresno County in 2014, extending from Merced to Bakersfield.

BACKGROUND

The high-speed rail station in Fresno will be located in the heart of the city, serving downtown and Chinatown. Within roughly a ½-mile walk, patrons will be able to get to Chukchansi Park, the County of Fresno offices and federal courthouses, the Fresno Area Express (FAX) Bus Rapid Transit service as well as Fresno City Hall. Fresno State University is located about six miles north of the station and can be easily accessed using FAX. Riders who would like to explore Yosemite National Park will also be able to connect with Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS), offering public transportation to one of the country's most beautiful national parks.



Mobility – Faster, more frequent and more reliable passenger rail service and enhanced connections will contribute to significantly higher ridership in the corridor, with 6.6 million projected annual systemwide riders in 2030.

Climate – Electrified, zero-emission trains running on on-site renewable resources will reduce greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂) approximately to 32,720 metric tons by 2030

Air quality – San Joaquin Valley air quality will be improved by reducing 183 million annual vehicle miles traveled through higher ridership systemwide, and by reducing vehicle emissions and congestion in shifting travel from gas and diesel to electric, high-speed trains.

In the short term, ongoing construction is projected to produce nearly 200,000 job-years of employment in

the Merced to Bakersfield corridor and over \$41 billion in economic activity. In the long-term, the system will create direct and indirect jobs that will permanently transform the region. Connectivity statewide, VMT reduction, and new business development in the area will all increase local sales tax revenues.

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