

DOWNTOWN BAKERSFIELD HIGH-SPEED RAIL STATION AREA PLAN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE DOWNTOWN BAKERSFIELD HIGH-SPEED RAIL STATION AREA PLAN?

The City of Bakersfield (City), in partnership with and funding from the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority), has begun the process to develop a High-Speed Rail Station Area Plan for Downtown Bakersfield (Downtown). The Station Area Plan (SAP), Making Downtown Bakersfield, will develop an urban design strategy for the study area that promotes economic development and sustainability, encourages station area development and enhances multimodal connectivity. When complete, the SAP will serve as a vision document that will guide the future development of Downtown. The vision plan will be used to pursue and leverage public and private sector funding for implementation, and create a baseline document for future planning efforts.

WHAT AREAS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE STATION AREA PLAN?

The study area as defined by the City is within the approximate boundaries of Kern River and 38th Street to the North, California Avenue to the South, Union Avenue to the East, and F Street to the West. This area encompasses the two station location options the Authority is still evaluating—the Authority has not selected a station location yet.

WHAT WILL BE STUDIED IN THE STATION AREA PLAN?

The SAP will primarily study land use, transportation, and economic development in Downtown. It will also address jobs, housing, retail, entertainment, art, cultural amenities, pedestrian and bicycle access, parking, streetscape improvements, lighting, wayfinding, open space and recreation and sustainability. This plan will comply with all relevant federal, state and local regulations, including, but not limited to: the Authority’s General Principles and Guidelines, the Federal Railroad Administration’s (FRA) Station Area Planning Guidelines, the City’s General Plan, as well as Senate Bill 375 (SB 375) which requires planning efforts to facilitate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through complementary land use and transportation strategies.

HOW WILL THE COMMUNITY BE INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT?

To help guide the planning process, the City has established the High-Speed Rail Stakeholder Committee as a working group to solicit feedback from a broad range of community stakeholders as it develops the SAP. The Committee will convene on a monthly basis throughout the development of the Final Vision Plan, including the release of a final draft review and approval process expected in Spring 2017. The Committee includes businesses, property owners, residents and other relevant special interests within and adjacent to the study area and other community representatives. The intent of the Committee is to transition into the driving force for implementation after the planning process has concluded.

In addition, the planning process will include multiple public engagement opportunities, including a series of visioning workshops, two community forums, additional stakeholder meetings, a project website, and other digital tools and platforms (social media updates, online public engagement tools, etc.). For more information about the project, please either go to www.makingdowntownbakersfield.us or email us at StationAreaPlan@bakersfieldcity.us

WHAT IS THE STATION AREA PLAN PROCESS AND SCHEDULE?

Below is an overview of the planning process that is anticipated as part of the development of the Downtown Bakersfield High-Speed Rail Station Area Plan.



WHAT IS HIGH-SPEED RAIL?

The High-Speed Rail (HSR) system will be an all electric (no emissions), world-class rail transportation system that will transform California by connecting the regions of California together through the Central Valley like never before. In the Valley, it is being designed to run up to 220 miles per hour, providing a safe, efficient and reliable option for travel to and from urban centers. The stations are also typically many miles apart from each other to allow trains to pick-up higher speeds. HSR is a proven mode of transit that today operates in 12 different countries with many more systems planned, with Japan operating the world's first system since 1964.

California's HSR system is on track to become the first of its kind in the nation. By 2029, the system will run from San Francisco to the Los Angeles basin in under three hours. The system will eventually extend to Sacramento and San Diego, totaling 800 miles with up to 24 stations, including the Downtown Bakersfield HSR station. In addition, the Authority is working with its state and regional partners to modernize the passenger rail network throughout the state, making strategic investments in high-speed, local and regional rail lines to meet the state's 21st Century transportation needs.

WHAT IS A HIGH-SPEED RAIL ALIGNMENT?

A HSR alignment is the route where the track is constructed and upon which high-speed trains travel. This SAP process is a parallel effort to the Authority's work on alignments in and around Bakersfield and will NOT influence any of those decisions. Due to the high speeds, alignments for HSR operations require different standards than those imposed on freight and other passenger rail systems. Elevation (rise and fall) changes are very gradual and the alignment must be as straight as possible to allow the HSR system to reach optimum speeds. In addition, the HSR alignment corridor must be fully sealed (fenced) and grade separated to allow vehicular and pedestrian crossing in a safe and smooth manner under or over the railroad tracks. The Authority is currently designing all alignments, and construction has begun in the Central Valley.

WHERE WILL BAKERSFIELD'S HIGH-SPEED RAIL STATION BE LOCATED?

The Authority has not yet selected a final station location. The Authority is still considering two locations: one near the present Amtrak station and one near Chester Avenue and Golden State Avenue. The Authority is currently working closely with the cities of Bakersfield and Shafter, as well as local residents, stakeholders and regulatory agencies to develop a supplemental environmental document for the Bakersfield F Street Station Alignment (BFSSA), which includes a station at the intersection of Chester Avenue and Golden State Avenue. After extensive public outreach, including public hearings and open house community meetings, with agency and public comment opportunities, the Authority Board decided that the Locally Generated Alternative (LGA), BFSSA, is the preferred alternative in May 2016. The supplemental environmental document will evaluate the potential effects associated with the BFSSA and will provide a comparison of the BFSSA and the previously analyzed Bakersfield Hybrid Alternative, which includes a station location on Union Avenue near the current Amtrak station site on Truxtun Avenue. This SAP process is a parallel effort to the Authority's work on alignments in and around Bakersfield, including station locations, and will NOT influence any of those decisions. Making Downtown Bakersfield will, however, develop a vision of how this HSR station should be integrated into Downtown.

HOW CAN I STAY INFORMED AND UPDATED?

Please visit the project website at www.makingdowntownbakersfield.us often for the latest project updates and announcements about public participation opportunities or email us at StationAreaPlan@bakersfieldcity.us

Contact City staff if you have questions, would like to speak to someone directly about this project or would like to be added to the project's interest list to receive notices of all future community meetings and public hearings for this project:

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