

Caltrans may soon buy land to move Highway 99 for high-speed rail

BY TIM SHEEHAN

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The California Department of Transportation may begin making offers within weeks to property owners for the land it needs to relocate a two-mile stretch of Highway 99 through central Fresno.

Caltrans will move the freeway about 100 feet to the west of its current course between Ashlan and Clinton avenues, and rebuild the Ashlan and Clinton freeway interchanges, to make room for the state's proposed high-speed rail line. The rail line is planned to run between the highway and the adjacent Union Pacific Railroad freight tracks.

At an open house Wednesday evening at Mental Health Services, the former Hacienda Resort on Clinton Avenue west of the freeway, Caltrans project manager Garth Fernandez said the agency is working with property owners along the route to discuss potential effects such as lost access or relocation of businesses.

Construction on the \$226 million project is anticipated to begin in early 2016 and be completed in mid-2018.

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