

High-Speed Rail Authority prepares to bids on Fresno-Kern stretch

<http://www.fresnobee.com/2014/03/10/3815061/rail-agency-gets-ready-to-see.html>

By Tim Sheehan

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The California High-Speed Rail Authority says it's ready to begin soliciting bids from contractors to design and build a 60-mile stretch of a proposed statewide bullet-train route from Fresno to the Tulare-Kern county line.

The authority's board will meet Tuesday in Sacramento to consider issuing its request for proposals for the project, which is estimated to cost between \$1.5 billion and \$2 billion. Five teams of contractors were recently deemed pre-qualified to submit bids for the work in anticipation of awarding a contract late this year.

Among the pre-qualified contracting teams is a consortium comprising Tutor Perini Corp. of Sylmar, Zachry Construction of Texas and Pasadena-based Parsons Corp., which last year won a contract worth about \$1 billion for the rail system's first construction section, a 29-mile length from the northeast edge of Madera to the south end of Fresno.

Other groups in the running are:

- California Rail Builders, a joint venture composed of Ferrovial Agroman U.S. Corp. and Granite Construction. Ferrovial is an American subsidiary of Ferrovial S.A., a Spanish company, while Granite Construction is a California company headquartered in Watsonville.
- Dragados/Flatiron/Shimmick, a consortium that includes Dragados USA Inc., a subsidiary of Grupo ACS and Dragados S.A. of Spain; Flatiron West Inc. of San Marcos; and Shimmick Construction Co. of Oakland.
- Golden State Rail Partnership, composed of OHL USA Inc., a subsidiary of Spain's Obrascón Huarte Lain S.A., and Samsung E&C America Inc., a U.S. subsidiary of South Korea's Samsung Group.
- Skanska-Ames Joint Venture, a team that includes Skanska USA Civil West California District Inc., a subsidiary of Sweden's Skanska, and Minnesota-based Ames Construction Inc.

The rail board is being asked to approve a term sheet that sets out the conditions under which the contractors will bid. The request by the authority's staff also includes paying a stipend of up to

\$2 million to each of the contractors that does not win the contract, intended to help defer the "proven costs" of preparing their bid proposals. Each proposal would then become the property of the rail authority.

The authority anticipates issuing its formal request for bids late this month; contracting teams would likely be required to submit their bids sometime this summer.

The bids will eventually be scored "to determine the team offering the best value," according to a memo prepared by Scott Jarvis, the authority's assistant chief program manager. The scoring will be weighted 30% on technical and 70% on price.

The meeting occurs as the agency continues to grapple with court challenges to its plans in the state's 3rd District Court of Appeal. One case deals with whether the state should be authorized to sell Proposition 1A bonds to finance construction of the statewide project. The second is a lawsuit by Kings County opponents alleging that the authority's plan violates various requirements of Prop. 1A, a \$9.9 billion bond measure approved by California voters in 2008 to help pay for high-speed rail planning, engineering and construction.

Also on Tuesday's agenda:

- The rail board will get a progress report on development of a final environmental impact report for the Fresno-to-Bakersfield segment of the rail route. The agency has said it anticipates publicly releasing the report this spring. Approval of the EIR and selection of a "least environmental practicable alternative" is required to set the intended route before the agency can award a design-build contract for the work.
- Board members will hear testimony on the agency's draft 2014 business plan, released in February for more than two months of public comment. The business plan -- the first update since the rail authority's April 2012 business plan -- estimates the construction cost for Phase 1 of the statewide project from San Francisco to Los Angeles at about \$67.6 billion.

That's down slightly from \$68.4 billion estimated in 2012, but still more than double the \$33 billion predicted in 2008 when Prop. 1A was approved.

The new plan forecasts that more riders will use the train if and when it begins running by the mid-2020s than predicted two years ago, but anticipates lower ticket revenue. Still, the plan predict that the system can at least break even and operate without a subsidy -- a key promise made in Prop. 1A.

If you go

What:

California High-Speed Rail Authority board meeting

When: Tuesday. Open session begins at 10 a.m. The board meeting will be preceded by a finance/audit committee meeting at 8 a.m. and a closed session to discuss litigation at 9 a.m.

Where: Secretary of State Auditorium, 1500 11th St., Sacramento

Agenda: Go to [the authority's agenda page](#) and click on the "March" link

Webcast: The meeting will be webcast live [here](#)

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Read more here: <http://www.fresnobee.com/2014/03/10/3815061/rail-agency-gets-ready-to-see.html#storylink=cpy>