

Five construction teams invited to bid for next high-speed rail contract in Valley

By Tim Sheehan



Gov. Jerry Brown, fifth from right, joins dignitaries at the January ceremonial groundbreaking in Fresno for California's high-speed rail project.

GARY KAZANJIAN — Associated Press

- Construction Package 4

The California High-Speed Rail Authority will soon seek bids for its third construction segment in the San Joaquin Valley.

- **Where:** A 22-mile segment from about a mile north of the Tulare-Kern county line to Poplar Avenue near Shafter.
- **When:** The rail authority expects to issue its request for proposals from contractors in late May. Bids are due by Oct. 16.
- **How much:** The engineering estimate of the section's cost is between \$400 million and \$500 million.
- **Previous contracts:** A 29-mile segment between south of Fresno and northeast Madera for about \$1 billion; a 60-mile segment from south of Fresno to near the Tulare-Kern county line for about \$1.4 billion.
- *Bids due in October for 22-mile segment in northern Kern County*
- *Project expected to cost between \$400 million and \$500 million*

- *Losing bidders get a stipend, rail authority keeps their ideas as intellectual property*
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Five teams of contractors will be invited later this month to compete for a contract to design and build the third segment of a high-speed rail route through the San Joaquin Valley.

The [California High-Speed Rail Authority](#)'s board of directors, meeting Tuesday in Sacramento, approved the overall term sheet and authorized the issuance of a formal request for bids from contractors for its Construction Package 4, a [22-mile stretch of the proposed bullet-train line in northern Kern County](#), from about a mile north of the Tulare-Kern county line to Poplar Avenue in Shafter.

Scott Jarvis, the authority's chief engineer, said the request for proposals likely would be issued on May 27. Contractors that already have been deemed as qualified to work on the project will have until mid-October to submit their bids. The agency's recommendation of a winning bidder for the contract could come in November.

The rail route through the southern San Joaquin Valley broadly runs near the BNSF Railway freight tracks that course between Bakersfield and Corcoran, with bypasses around the towns of Hanford, Corcoran and Allensworth. The rail authority's engineers estimate the cost of the work — which will cover demolition, construction of the at-grade railbed and aerial structures, as well as road over- and underpasses — at \$400 million to \$500 million.

The would-be competitors for the contract are:

- California Rail Builders, which includes Ferrovial Agroman US Corp., an American subsidiary of Ferrovial S.A., a Spanish company.
- Central Valley Connection Builders, composed of Spanish firms FCC Construcción S.A. and Corsan-Corviam Construcción S.A.
- Dragados/Flatiron Joint Venture, a team that includes Dragados USA Inc., an American subsidiary of Grupo ACS and Dragados S.A. of Spain; and Flatiron West Inc. of San Marcos.
- Salini Impregilo/Security Paving Joint Venture, composed of Italian construction company Salini Impregilo S.p.A. and Security Paving Co., based in Sun Valley.
- Tutor Perini/Zachry/Parsons, a consortium that includes Tutor Perini Corp. of Sylmar, Zachry Construction of Texas and Pasadena-based Parsons Corp.

While the winning bidder will land the construction contract, the bidding process also includes a modest consolation prize for the contracting teams whose bids are not chosen.

As with the first two construction contracts, the rail authority board approved paying a stipend of up to \$2 million for each of the losing teams. In exchange for the stipend, "we own the intellectual property of that bid from the losing bidder," said Dan Richard, the rail authority's board chairman.

"If they come in with an alternative technical concept that can save money," Richard said, "we can take that concept and apply it to the winning bidder" and also use it for future construction segments up and down the state. "We can harvest the best intellectual concepts that those people bring to us. It's well worth the dollars that we're paying."

[Construction Package 4](#) is the third segment of what is expected to serve as the backbone of a statewide, 520-mile high-speed train line linking San Francisco and Los Angeles by way of the Valley with stations in Merced, Fresno, Hanford and Bakersfield.

The first contract was awarded in mid-2013 for about \$1 billion to Tutor Perini/Zachry/Parsons for Construction

Package 1, a 29-mile section between Avenue 17 northwest of Madera to American Avenue south of Fresno. The second, for Construction Package 2-3, was awarded in January for about \$1.4 billion to build about 60 miles of the line south to the Tulare-Kern county line. Dragados and Flatiron are two of the three companies on that winning team.

Ferrovial Agroman was among the unsuccessful bidders for the first construction contract and withdrew from competition for the second contract. FCC Construcción, Corsan-Corviam Construcción, Salini Impregilo and Security Paving are new entrants to the high-speed rail bidding.

One later construction contract will cover the installation of the steel tracks themselves across the Valley from Madera to Bakersfield.

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