

# State bumps high-speed rail bid deadline into November

**Tim Sheehan, Fresno Bee, 10-13-15**

Five teams of builders competing for a contract to build a 22-mile high-speed rail segment in northern Kern County will have an extra month to prepare their bids.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority last week extended the deadline for its Construction Package 4, which runs near the BNSF Railway freight rail line from the Tulare-Kern county line to Poplar Avenue near Shafter, from Oct. 16 to Nov. 13. The Oct. 16 deadline was set when the state originally issued its request for bids in May; the deadline extension was part of an amended bid request for bids issued Friday by the state.

The rail authority originally anticipated awarding a contract for CP4 before the end of the year; extending the bid deadline will push that into at least January 2016. It's another month of precious time in a development schedule that includes a tangle of strings attached to about \$2.2 billion in federal grant funds for construction in the Valley.

That economic stimulus money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, must be fully spent by Sept. 30, 2017 – a hard and fast deadline now less than two years away. Any of that money not spent by that time reverts to the Federal Railroad Administration. The state is also required to pony up a like amount in matching funds. To meet the ARRA grant deadline, the state is front-loading its spending in the Valley with the federal dollars and planning to pour in more and more state funds later in the schedule prior to completion of the work in 2018.

CP4 will be the third construction contract in the San Joaquin Valley, and is forecast to cost between \$400 million and \$500 million to design and build. The Kern County segment and the first two contracts – a 29-mile segment between Fresno and Madera, and a 65-mile stretch between Fresno and the Tulare-Kern line – comprise much of what the rail authority describes as the “backbone” of a statewide system planned to connect San Francisco and Los Angeles with electric passenger trains capable of traveling at up to 220 mph by 2028.

Lisa Marie Alley, the authority's chief of communications, said that all five contracting teams remain in contention for the contract. They 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 Sylmar.
- Tutor Perini/Zachry/Parsons, a consortium that includes Tutor Perini Corp. of Sylmar, Zachry Construction of Texas and Pasadena-based Parsons Corp.

Alley said the bidding deadline was bumped back at the request of the construction companies.

The work includes demolition of structures in the path, construction of embankments and elevated structures, relocating some portions of the existing BNSF freight tracks, and building grade separations – over- or underpasses – for a number of major roads.

The Tutor Perini/Zachry/Parsons team was the winning bidder for a \$1 billion contract to design and build Construction Package 1 the Fresno-Madera portion of the route. Dragados/Flatiron won the \$1.23 billion contract for Construction Package 2-3 through southern Fresno County, Kings County and Tulare County.

Still to be settled are routes between Madera and Merced and from Shafter into Bakersfield. One final contract is expected to cover construction of the railbed and installation of steel tracks for the entire Valley route from Merced to Bakersfield.