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Tehachapi welcomes latest changes to high-speed rail plans

| News

bakersfield4 weeks ago



Mayor Greg Garrett said on Monday that he and his staff hadn't read the entire new environmental review of the project, but the California High-Speed Rail Authority appears to have made many positive changes in response to the city's request. Said.

Among the most welcome revisions outlined at the Monday morning meeting between Tehachapi officials and railroad officials, one is in the Ash Village area and the other is near the Arabian Estate. A wall section has been introduced.

Another improvement he pointed out was an agency agreement to lower the height profile of the Shinkansen through the Tehachapi area and a commitment to accommodate stations that could one day be built in the city.

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"At this point, we feel (the railroad authorities) have addressed our concerns in that we can continue to move forward," he said. "But we will encourage citizens to consider the latest plans," he added.

Late Friday afternoon, rail authorities said with a final environmental review of the 80-mile alignment, following Highway 58 between the proposed station on Bakersfield's F Street and Golden State Avenue and another station in Palmdale. Issued what is called. The railroad authorities' board of directors will vote on whether to adopt the review in mid-August.

The map contained in this document shows that the route is built on a viaduct that runs through most of Bakersfield and descends to the surface level through the Edison region. Through the Tehachapi Mountains, it runs not only underground, but also above ground and viaducts, after which most travel along the surface through the Antelope Valley. Railroad officials predict that the route will be operational in 2033 as part of the launch of service between San Francisco and Los Angeles. It's been about three years since trains up to 220 mph were expected to connect Merced and Bakersfield.

Friday's announcement also updated the Kahn Government Council's call for state cooperation on the three parts of the proposed Bakersfield and Palmdale coordination. Secretary-General Aaron Hakimi has been discussing with rail authorities for years the possibility of Khan COG coordinating work on grade separation, improving safety, congestion and other conditions near the Edison Highway and Morning Drive. He said. The idea is that the work there will take years to plan, and due to the independent utility, overpasses can start earlier than the construction schedule for the railroad segment. Another project that Hakimi said would benefit from the early start of construction is a grade separation at the intersection of highways 58 and 223 near Bakersfield National Cemetery. Early work there is useful, as excess soil from the railroad authorities' excavation work through the Tehachapi Mountains can be used to use the ridges of the intersection. The additional lane for the eastbound truck climbing the Tehachapi Pass represents the third project Khan COG wants to start early. According to Hakimi, the project has been under consideration for over 20 years.

Although no formal agreement has been reached to advance these projects ahead of other local jobs, a representative of the railroad authorities emailed Monday on all three efforts "when funds became available." He said he was interested in working with local jurisdictions to advance.

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The money to complete the entire project remains an open issue. The Biden administration has recently released nearly \$ 1 billion robbed of the project by the Trump administration, but it still needs tens of billions of dollars to complete. The Biden administration has talked about funding the project, but has not confirmed funding.

Meanwhile, California High-Speed Rail supporter Gavin Newsom has recently negotiated with the state legislature about \$ 4.2 billion in new funding for a railroad project.

"We hope to have the latest information (on these discussions) by the end of the month," railroad spokeswoman Toni Tinoco said on Monday.

Garrett, the mayor of Tehachapi, said that even if Bakersfield and Palmdale would benefit, the area would benefit little or no from the project itself. That's why he said the possibility of having a station in Tehachapi one day is fascinating.

"It's not part of the plan at all, but it might be possible in the future," he said.

In a news release on Friday, railroad authority CEO Brian Kelly released a draft in February 2020 and a new environmental review following the revised version a year later, with new environmental reviews from various agencies and local governments. He said it was the result of thoughtful research and cooperation with the leaders. Community members and other stakeholders.

"With this effort, California will environmentally clean up 300 of its 500-mile high-speed rail system, paving the way for future construction progress in Los Angeles County," he writes.

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