

High Desert Corridor  
Joint Powers Authority

April 10, 2013

Meeting Materials

Item 7

California State Rail Plan



March 11, 2013

Bill Bronte  
Caltrans Division of Rail  
P.O. Box 942874, MS 74  
Sacramento, California 94274-0001

RE: **Comments on the Draft Rail Plan 2013 for California**

Dear Mr. Bronte:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Rail Plan 2013 for California. We have the following comments:

- 1) Page ES-9, California Intercity and High-Speed Network **Comment:** Add High Desert Corridor between Palmdale and Victorville as possible extension to ExpressWest service consistent with discussion on pages 264-265.
- 2) Page 156, BNSF Mainline Stockton to Bakersfield (San Joaquin Corridor) **Comment:** Add discussion on potential use of parallel former Southern Pacific mainline as a possible corridor for additional short haul capacity to the Port of Oakland should increases in Passenger Service and increased port traffic displace short haul use in the San Joaquin Corridor. The following is a map of a proposed Corridor from the 2011 Kern COG Regional Transportation Plan.



- 3) Page 174, second paragraph states "The first California HSR construction segment will include up to 130 miles of new HSR tracks on dedicated right-of-way from Madera to just north of Bakersfield. This segment will become available for interim *San Joaquin* intercity service between Madera and Bakersfield. Once HSR is operational, interim intercity service would cease, and *San Joaquin* service will continue over the existing BNSF route." This paragraph suggests that Amtrak passenger rail service will be unavailable to residents of Wasco and Corcoran during interim use of the first construction segment. Also, no mention is made to Amtrak alternatives to loss of passenger rail service such as a thruway bus connection. Yet on Page 217, fourth paragraph, second sentence states "These planning scenarios include up to six trains operating on the current BNSF route that would stop at the existing Hanford, Corcoran, and Wasco Amtrak stations." **Comment:** Kern COG recommends that the statement on Page 174 be edited to re-align with the statements made on page 217.
- 4) On Page 219, Table 8.9, **Comment:** To avoid the need for a potential reduction in service to Wasco and Corcoran, additional stops as early as 2020 as indicated in Table 10.1 should be considered for North/West Bakersfield and North Fresno on the BNSF route along the double track segment. Platforms, sidings, parking and right of way should be included in the San Joaquin Route Capital Investments in Table 8.9. Both sites would service over 100,000 population. See attached maps for 2020 thru 2040.
- 5) On Page 219, Table 8.9, **Comment:** During interim use of the HSR First Construction Segment around 2020, a 1 mile bus connector run between the Fresno HSR station on the UP and the Amtrak station on the BNSF will be needed. To avoid this, a switch Between Fresno and Hanford allowing trains on the BNSF to pull into the HSR Station adjacent the UP is needed. Please analyze the potential benefit of this switch and add to Table 8.9 if warranted. See attached maps for 2020 thru 2040.
- 6) On Page 219, Table 8.9, **Comment:** After HSR IOS begins operating around 2025 and the San Joaquins are pushed back to the BNSF between Bakersfield and Madera, a 1 mile bus connector run between the Fresno HSR station on the UP and the Amtrak station on the BNSF will be needed. To avoid this, a conventional at-grade rail line parallel to the UP should be considered so that the two Fresno passenger rail stations can be consolidated at the same location. Please analyze the potential benefit of this parallel rail through Fresno and add to Table 8.9 if warranted.
- 7) On Page 219, Table 8.9, **Comment:** To bolster the feeder network for High Speed Rail, Kern is planning to extend Metrolink into Southeastern Kern County by 2040 to the community of Rosamond. Platforms, sidings, parking and right of way should be included in the San Joaquin Route Capital Investments in Table 8.9. The site would service over 10,000 employees at Edwards AFB. See attached maps for 2023 thru 2040.
- 8) On Page 275, sixth paragraph, second bullet states that Central Valley HSR service will include blended service hubs in Sacramento, Stockton, Merced, Madera, and Bakersfield. **Comment:** Kern COG is aware of the High-Speed Rail Authority's planning efforts to include the Cities of Fresno and Hanford as a HSR stations. Has this changed?
- 9) On Page 301, Table 10.1, Caltrans Division of Rail projects its growth and reduction of Amtrak *San Joaquin* service between Bakersfield and Madera ranging from 6 trains per day (2013 Baseline) to 2-5 trains per day (2020) plus 1 additional train per day between Bakersfield and Oakland. **Comment:** Kern COG recommends reserving a service agreement with BNSF and UPRR to reserve track rights for future growth of Amtrak *San Joaquin* service to complement HSR service.
- 10) On Page 301, Table 10.1, **Comment:** Add a series of a graphics or maps illustrating table 10.1. see attached sample.

- 11) On Page 301, Table 10.1, **Comment:** The 2025 column is a big step in the changes from 2020. An interim scenario is needed that looks at an Early Initial Operating Segment (EIOS) scenario for around 2023, or the 2025 scenario could be pushed back to 2030 and the EIOS could be for 2025. See the attached map for 2023.
- 12) On Page 301, Table 10.1, **Comment:** The table omits the Metrolink Antelope Valley service in 2013, 2020, and 2040 columns. The Antelope Valley route should be broken out in this table and properly reflected in the modeling because of the potential for feeder service and interim connector service to the HSR. See the attached map for 2023.
- 13) On Page 301, Table 10.1, **Comment:** The table omits the High Desert Corridor and connecting Palmdale to Victorville as early as 2020. The High Desert Corridor and Service to Las Vegas should be added to this table and properly reflected in the modeling because of the potential for feeder service and use in an Early Initial Operating Segment (EIOS) of HSR. That state rail plan should analyze the potential for using CA HSR trainset on the high desert corridor and run to Las Vegas as an EIOS, possibly attracting additional private investment and U.S. Senate support from Nevada. By building the EIOS from Fresno to Palmdale to Las Vegas the time and funding to operation of true high speed trains could be greatly reduced. See the attached map for 2023.
- 14) On Page 301, Table 10.1, **Comment:** The Interim Use of the First Construction Segment of HSR in the Improved 2020 column will require double tracking of BNSF segments on both ends of the First Construction Segment and should be reflected should be included in the San Joaquin Route Capital Investments in Table 8.9 on p. 219. See attached map for 2020.
- 15) On Page 301, Table 10.1, **Comment:** The potential reduction of service by up to 3 trains per day to the communities of Wasco and Corcoran beginning in 2020 needs to be supplanted by connector bus service to those stations. In addition, an agreement is needed with BNSF to retain those passenger rail slots for future use when ridership rebounds and service by rail is warranted again. See attached map for 2020 thru 2040.
- 16) Please reference our recently completed Kern freight rail studies available on our website at:  
<http://www.kerncog.org/images/docs/studies/KernRailStudyPhaseII.pdf>  
<http://www.kerncog.org/images/docs/studies/Kern County Short Line Rail Study 2011.pdf>  
[http://www.kerncog.org/images/docs/studies/KernCounty GradeSepStudy\\_DRAFT.pdf](http://www.kerncog.org/images/docs/studies/KernCounty GradeSepStudy_DRAFT.pdf)

Thanks again for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Rail Plan 2013 for California. If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Robert Ball, Director of Planning or Bob Snoddy, Regional Planner.

Sincerely,

Ahron Hakimi,  
Executive Director



Robert Ball,  
Director of Planning





Attachments

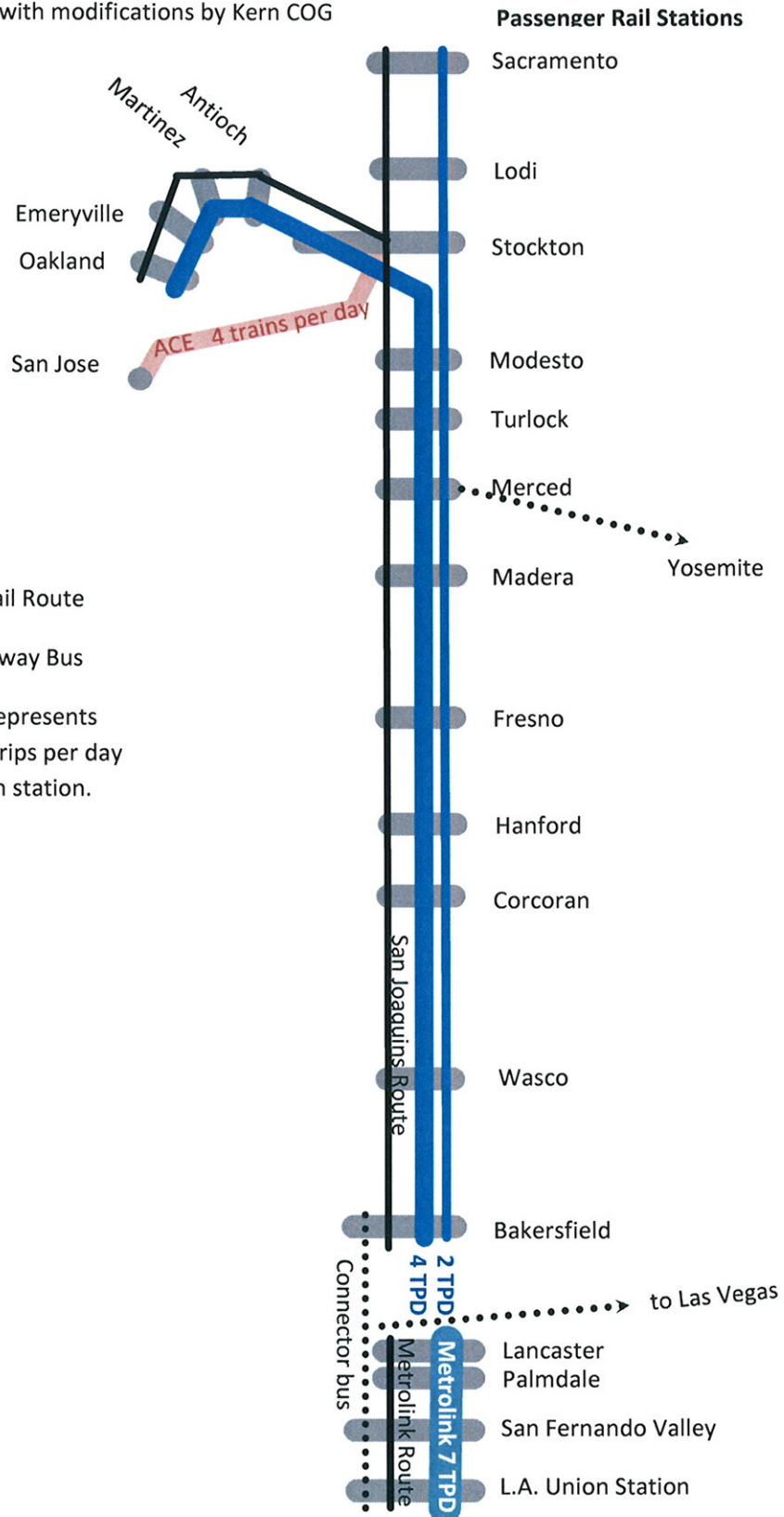
# 2013 – Existing Amtrak San Joaquins Service & High Speed Rail

## Draft State Rail Plan 3/13

Diagram based on Table 10.1 with modifications by Kern COG

Table 10.1 provides the number of trains per day for 2013, 2020, 2025 and 2040. A diagram has been prepared for each year to illustrate comments being proposed to the Draft State Rail Plan.

- Legend
-  Station
  -  Passenger Rail Route
  -  Amtrak Thruway Bus
  -  Bandwidth represents train round trips per day (TPD) to each station.



# 2020 - Amtrak San Joaquins Interim Use of High Speed Rail

## Draft State Rail Plan 3/13

Diagram based on Table 10.1 with modifications by Kern COG

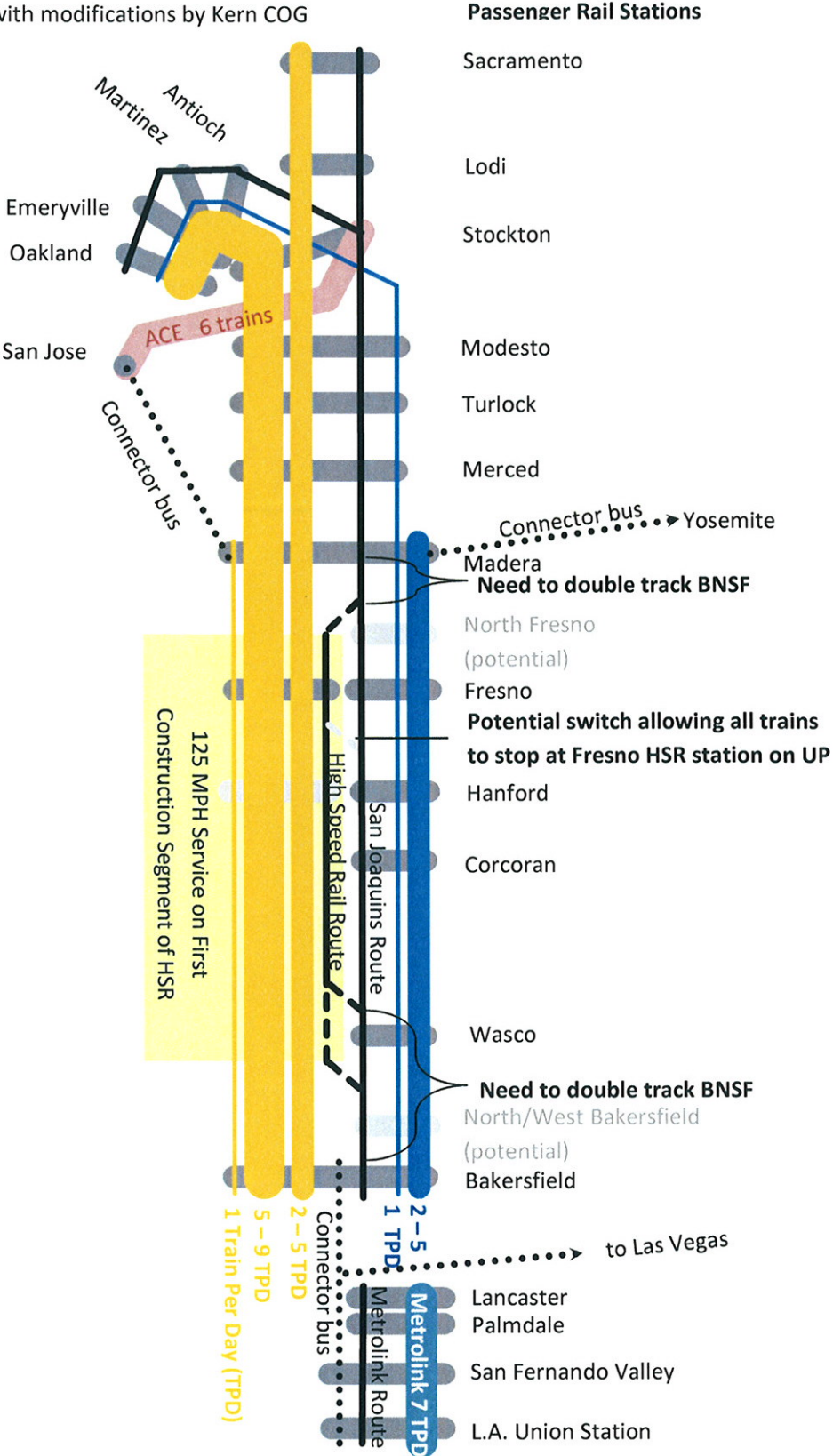
The First Construction Segment (FCS) of the California High Speed Rail (CHSR) is anticipated to build up to 130 miles of high speed track. That would require use by Amtrak for federal independent utility requirements. The plan should consider the following:

1) Need for double track on BNSF South of Madera and North of Bakersfield due to congestion from up to 15 additional round trip passenger trains per day.

2) Addition of stops on the San Joaquins for segments that parallel HSR Service (North/West of Bakersfield, and North of Rosamond).

3) To avoid the need for a 1 mile passenger shuttle between the Fresno Amtrak Station on BNSF and the Fresno HSR Station on the UP a switch South of Fresno could allow all trains to stop at the HSR Station.

4) By adding a bus connector from Madera to San Jose, travelers can save up to 2 hours on train trip between Southern California and the South Bay Area.



**Passenger Rail Stations**

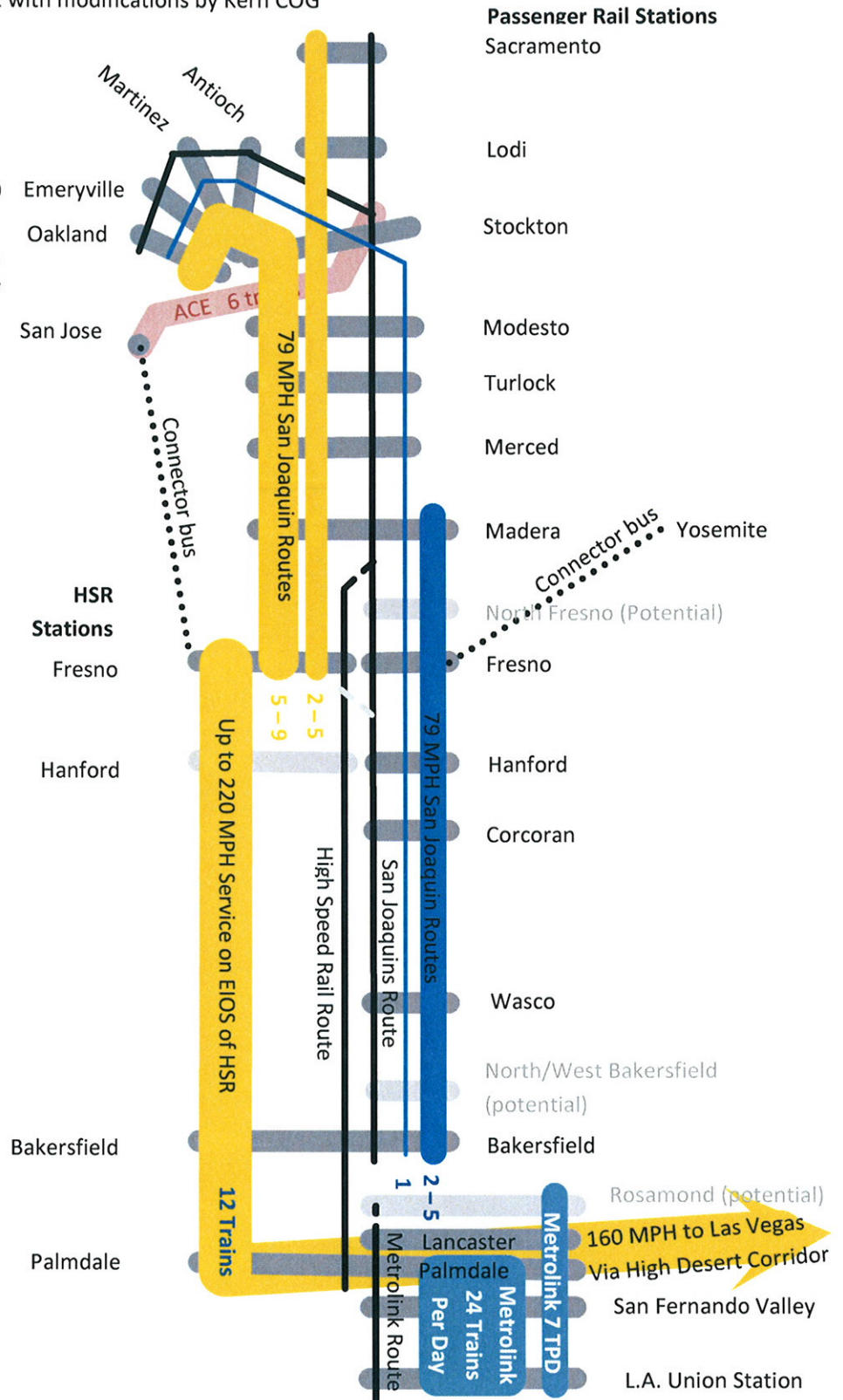
- Sacramento
- Lodi
- Stockton
- Modesto
- Turlock
- Merced
- Madera
- North Fresno (potential)
- Fresno
- Hanford
- Corcoran
- Wasco
- Bakersfield
- Lancaster
- Palmdale
- San Fernando Valley
- L.A. Union Station

# 2023 - Amtrak San Joaquins Integration with High Speed Rail Early Initial Operating Segment (EIOS) - Draft State Rail Plan

Diagram based on Table 10.1 with modifications by Kern COG

Table 10.1 and the High Speed Rail 2012 Business Plan lack an early initial operating segment (EIOS), should a portion of the \$20 Billion needed for the full IOS be delayed. This phase could require less than half of the \$20 billion as well as attract private investment and Senate support from Nevada. The plan should consider the following:

- 1) Connecting to one of the high speed trains (XpressWest or the X Train) to Las Vegas via the High Desert Corridor.
- 2) Addition of stops on the San Joaquins for segments that parallel HSR Service (North/West Bakersfield, and Rosamond).
- 3) Maintaining and expand Metrolink service North of San Fernando Valley to Palmdale/Lancaster and expand service north to the Rosamond at the gateway of Edwards AFB with over 10,000 employees.

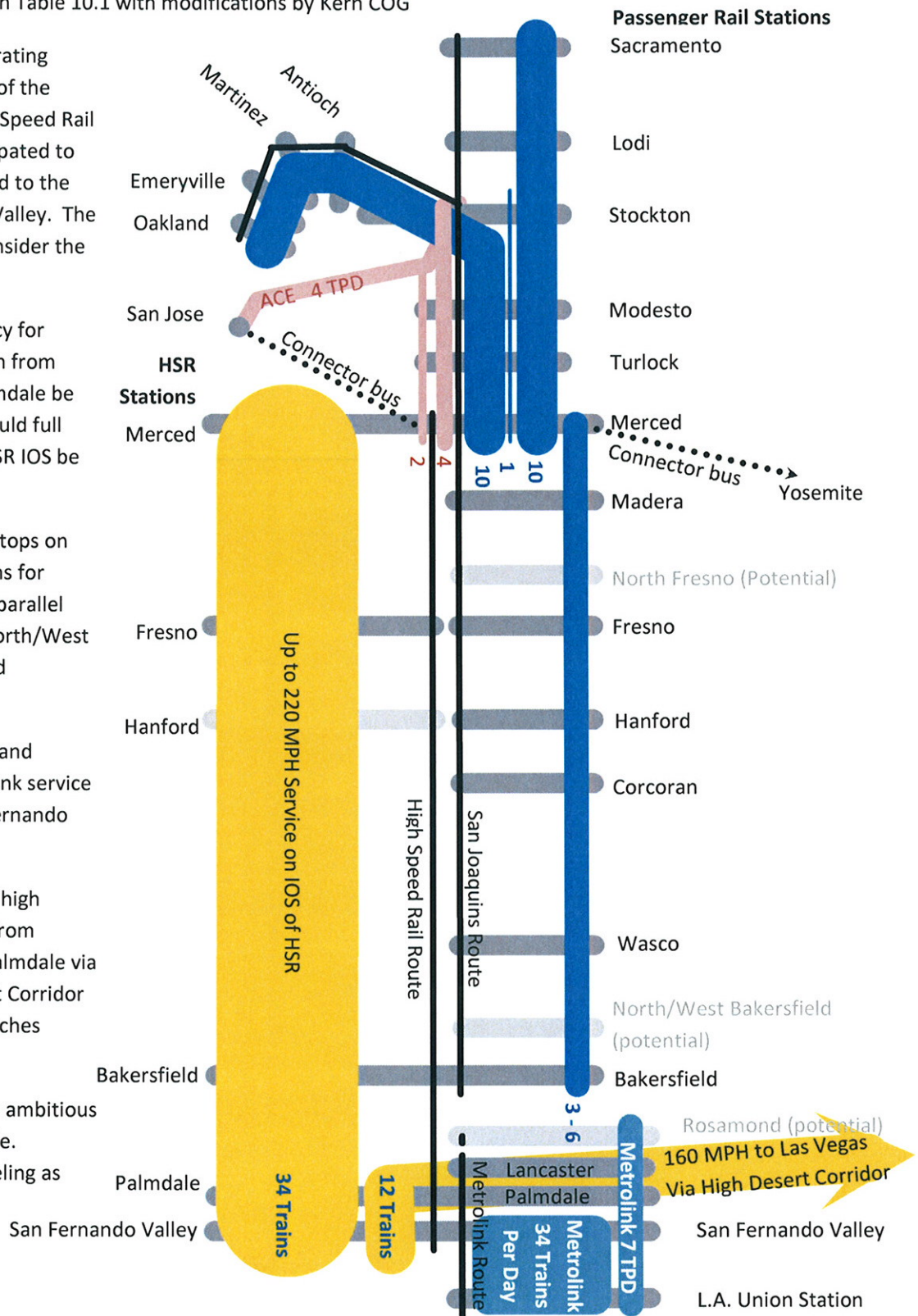


# 2025 - Amtrak San Joaquins Integration of High Speed Rail Initial Operating Segment (IOS) - Draft State Rail Plan 3/13

Diagram based on Table 10.1 with modifications by Kern COG

The Initial Operating Segment (IOS) of the California High Speed Rail (CHSR) is anticipated to connect Merced to the San Fernando Valley. The plan should consider the following:

- 1) A contingency for initial operation from Madera to Palmdale be considered should full funding for CHSR IOS be delayed.
- 2) Addition of stops on the San Joaquins for segments that parallel HSR Service (North/West Bakersfield, and Rosamond).
- 3) Maintaining and expand Metrolink service North of San Fernando Valley.
- 4) Extension of high speed Service from Victorville to Palmdale via the High Desert Corridor when CHSR reaches Palmdale.
- 5) 2025 may be ambitious for this schedule. Consider relabeling as 2030.





# 2040 - Amtrak San Joaquins Integration Phase I High Speed Rail Draft State Rail Plan 3/13

Diagram based on Table 10.1 with modifications by Kern COG

Divert some of the trains to San Francisco to Las Vegas.

