BEYOND THE TRACKS
The potential of high-speed rail to reshape California’s growth

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Outline of today’s discussion

1. Thoughts on the land use opportunity of high-speed rail
2. A typology of high-speed rail station areas in California
3. Recommendations for land use response
The CA High Speed Rail Alignment
The opportunity of high speed rail in California
High-speed rail makes existing communities appear closer to each other by shortening travel time.
Time/space map of high speed rail in CA
HSR could revitalize existing downtowns.
HSR should contribute to poverty alleviation and social equity – but faces market challenges in the Central Valley (such as Fresno).
The private market will not initially support dense development in many station areas

Should these places do land banking or permit lower-density "temporary" development?

Proposed station location in downtown Bakersfield
HSR should contribute to the development of high-quality urban environments.

Stations should not be like airports.
We must learn from BART – establish some criteria for local development in exchange for transportation investment
But traditional “TOD” is not appropriate for HSR – this is not commuter rail.

Station areas should be “destinations” (primarily nonresidential development).

The moderate density apartments in this CAHSR image for San Jose should not be the goal for station areas.
Think beyond the station area – biggest opportunity is to link to key destinations throughout the city.
HSR provides an opportunity to reduce sprawl, but only with limits to exurban development
Merced case: farmland and < two hours from Yosemite (second homes...)
What We’re Up Against: California’s constraints that affect high speed rail

1. There is no clear source of funding for planning.
2. There are insufficient funds invested in building and maintaining infrastructure.
3. Local control over land-use planning may not result in a sufficient land-use response to high-speed rail in terms of statewide needs.
4. Few tools exist to limit sprawl at the edges of regions and urbanized areas.
5. Our historic urban pattern requires a car for most travel within communities with proposed high-speed rail stations.
A typology of California’s varied high-speed rail station areas
Traditional downtowns and established business districts
(San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sacramento)
Emerging downtowns and business districts (San Jose, Anaheim)
Market-challenged downtowns
(Stockton, Merced, Fresno, Bakersfield)
Edge cities
(University City, Escondido, Irvine)
Suburban commuter stations
(Gilroy, Murrieta, Sylmar)
Airports
(SFO, Burbank, Ontario Airport)
Greenfield sites (Hanford)
High-level recommendations from SPUR paper: Achieving a better planning outcome
1. Establish statewide planning and development guidelines for HSR station areas with oversight.

2. Provide incentives to local governments to develop station area plans that conform to statewide criteria.
   - TIF for HSR area through IFD
   - Modified CEQA

3. Encourage station access plans (beyond the ½ mile area), include focus on limits to sprawl.

4. Correlate future rail service with actual ridership and local support for development.
Thank you

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