

# *San Joaquin Valley Regional Fall Policy Conference*

*Hosted by:  
Madera County Transportation Commission*



*Conference Program*

*October 12-13, 2011*

*The Pines Resort*

*Bass Lake, CA*



***The Annual fall Policy conference is a gathering of transportation leaders from the eight San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies to discuss issues that effect the Region.***

***While the focus is on transportation planning, it is recognized that other regional issues must be considered in planning efforts to lead to improved quality of life for all who live in the Valley. This Conference is for all, from the public or private sector, interested in the transportation planning process.***

## Welcome

On behalf of the Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC), welcome to the 2011 San Joaquin Valley Fall Policy Conference! We are so pleased to be hosting the conference in Bass Lake. This is our third time hosting you here at the Pines Resort on the beautiful Bass Lake. We hope your stay here is pleasurable.

All Conference sessions will be held in the Lakeview Room at the Bass Lake Event Center. Registration will be available starting at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday and Thursday. The Exhibit Area will also open at 8:00 a.m.

Please join us for a welcoming reception, Tuesday evening at the Idle Hour Winery in Oakhurst beginning at 7:00 p.m. A shuttle will be available to transport you to and from the Pines Resort to Idle Hour Winery in Oakhurst beginning at 6:15 p.m. in front of the Pines Resort. If you prefer to drive, the address to Idle Hour Winery is: 41139 Highway 41, Oakhurst, California 93644.

A deluxe breakfast will start at 8:00 a.m. Wednesday and Thursday both in the Lakeview Room. Lunch both days will also be held in the same room. A no-host reception and dinner on Wednesday evening will be held in the Lakeview Room beginning at 4:00 p.m.

This conference is possible because you chose to attend and the generous support received from our gracious sponsors. We give a huge "thank you" to all of you for your tremendous support. We encourage you to visit the Exhibit Area; meet the sponsors personally and join us in thanking them.

As your hosts, MCTC Staff is ready and willing to assist you at any time. MCTC Staff will be wearing yellow name badges so feel free to approach any of us with any of your questions or concerns. If you should happen to need assistance outside of conference hours, please call me at (559) 960-3727 or Derek Winning at (559) 355-5281.

Sincerely,

Patricia Taylor  
Executive Director  
MCTC



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## Bill Coate - Keynote Speaker

Bill Coate is a veteran of 36 years in the classroom. He is the founder of the Madera Method, a research based educational program that utilizes primary source material to bring students face to face with history on its own terms. He is also the founder of the Madera Method Wagon Train, which provides young people with “real life” learning experiences on the trail.

Bill has been published in several educational and historical journals as well as many well-known newspapers across the United States. He was named “National History Teacher of the Year by the Daughters of the American Revolution and was a California Teacher of the Year finalist.

Over the years, Bill has been the recipient of numerous other awards for his innovative teaching. He was one of 39 educators who were recognized nationally by the Disney Company for creativity in the classroom and given the Disney American Teacher Award. Disney later featured Bill in a national public service spot entitled “The Power of Teaching.” It aired on ABC, Disney Channel, and ESPN.

Harvard University’s Graduate School of Education featured Bill in a documentary entitled, “Inside the Creative Classroom.”

When he is not teaching, Bill spends his time writing and speaking. He is the author of *Twist in Time: History’s Mysteries Revealed* (2005), *History’s Shocking Secrets* (2006), and *History’s Outrageous Oddities* (2007). In addition, for 16 years he was the host of “Twist in Time,” a twice weekly television show aired on KMPH Fox 26 in Fresno.

## **Wednesday, October 12th**

**8:00 am to 9:00 am - Registration, Continental Breakfast**

**8:45am to 9:00 am - Welcoming Remarks**

Robert Poythress - Mayor of Madera,  
Madera County Transportation Commission Policy Board Chair

**9:00 am to 10:20 am - Session I: High Speed Rail,  
The San Joaquin Valley Segments**

Richard Poythress - Transportation Planner,  
Madera County Transportation Commission

Jeff Abercrombie - Central Valley Program Manager,  
California High Speed Rail Authority

**10:20 am to 10:40 am - Break**

**10:40 am to 12:00 pm - Session II: Valley Legislative Action  
Committee, Valley Voice**

Dianne Barth - San Joaquin Council of Governments

Len Simon - Principle, Simon and Company Incorporated Lobbyists

Charlotte Hrcncir - Senior Associate, Alcade and Fay Lobbyists

Robert Phipps - Administrative Division Director,  
Kern Council of Governments

**12:00 pm to 1:00 pm - Lunch**

**1:00 pm to 2:20 pm - Session III: San Joaquin Valley Travel  
Demand Model Applications**

Derek Winning - Deputy Director,  
Madera County Transportation Commission

Mike Bitner - Principal Planner, Fresno Council of Governments

Mike Aronson - Principal, Dowling Associates

Mike Wallace - Transportation Engineer, Fehr & Peers

Richard Lee - Associate, Fehr & Peers

## **Wednesday, October 12th**

**2:20 pm to 2:40 pm - Break**

### **2:40 pm to 4:00 pm - Session IV: San Joaquin Valley Goods Movement Action Plan - Federal Reauthorization**

Ted Smalley - Executive Director,  
Tulare County Association of Governments

Andre Boutros - Chief Deputy Director,  
California Transportation Commission

Vince Mammano - Division Administrator,  
Federal Highway Administration

Ethan Kirk - Field Representative for Rep. Jeff Denham,  
California District 19

Liisa Stark - Director of Public Affairs and Corporate Relations,  
Union Pacific Railroad Company

Michael Sigala - San Joaquin Valley Policy Council, Sigala Inc.

### **4:00 pm to 6:00 pm - No Host Lounge**

Drinks and Hours' devours

Musical Entertainment by Mike DeCarli

### **6:00 pm - Dinner is served**

### **6:30 pm - Keynote Address**

Introduced by: Tom Wheeler - Madera County Supervisor,  
Madera County Transportation Commission Policy Board Vice Chair

**Keynote Speaker Bill Coate**  
**Award Winning Educator, Author and Historian**



## **Thursday, October 13th**

**8:00 am to 9:00 am - Registration, Continental Breakfast**

**8:45am to 9:00 am - Welcoming Remarks**

Bill Spriggs - Mayor of Merced

**9:00 am to 10:20 am - Session V: Urban Solutions? Smart Growth Applications for Rural Counties and Small Cities**

Heather Fargo - Executive Policy Officer, Strategic Growth Council

Chris Ganson - Governor's Office of Planning and Research

Susan DeCarli - Planning Manager; City of Paso Robles

Terrance Fraizer - President and CEO, TFS Investments

Rich Brassfield - Area Director, USDA Rural Development

**10:20 am to 10:40 am - Break**

**10:40 am to 12:00 pm - Session VI: Sustainable Communities Strategy Development**

Bruce Abanathie - Regional Planner, Kings County Association of Governments

Carolina Gregor - Urban Planner, San Diego Association of Governments

Steve Devencenzi, San Luis Obispo Council of Governments

Garth Hopkins - Caltrans Planning

Lezlie Kimura Szeto - Local Government Strategies, Air Resource Board



**Thursday, October 13th**

**12:00 pm to 1:30 pm - San Joaquin Valley  
Blueprint Awards Luncheon**

Five years ago, the eight regional planning agencies in the San Joaquin Valley came together in an unprecedented effort to develop a coordinated valley vision - the San Joaquin Valley Regional Blueprint. This eight-county venture was conducted within each county, and in 2009 was integrated to form a preferred vision for future development throughout the Valley to the year 2050.

In an effort to recognize projects that are "Blueprint friendly", the Valley's regional planning agencies created an awards program specifically designed for this purpose. Nominations were solicited from throughout the San Joaquin Valley for smart growth projects. The judges reviewed the nominations and selected several for their efforts to reflect the Blueprint Principles. We are pleased to announce this year's Blueprint Awards recipients.

**Public Infrastructure – Large Jurisdiction**

Award of Achievement – Mill Creek in Bakersfield, *City of Bakersfield*

**Public Infrastructure – Small Jurisdiction**

Award of Achievement – City of Newman Downtown Plaza, *City of Newman*  
Award of Merit – City of Avenal Street Improvements, *City of Avenal*

**Mixed Use**

Award of Achievement – Fulton Village in Fresno, *GV Urban*  
Award of Merit – Fultonia Complex (Rehabilitation Project) in Fresno,  
*TFS Investments*

**Transit Projects**

Award of Achievement - Downtown Transit Center in Stockton,  
*San Joaquin Regional Transit District*

**Darrel Hildebrand Blueprint Leadership Award**

This award is presented to an individual who has also shown enthusiasm and tenacity in promoting the Blueprint principles. Carol Ornelas, CEO,  
Visionary Home Builders

**2:00 pm - San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council  
Meeting (Cedar Room)**

## SESSION MEDERATORS AND SPEAKERS

### ***Bruce Abanathie***

Bruce is a Regional Planner with the Kings County Association of Governments Bruce is a Veteran of the United States Air Force and over twenty years as a Paramedic and Police Officer before becoming a planner more than ten years ago. Bruce completed the Bachelor of Public Administration program at the University of San Francisco and a Bachelor of Science in Community Planning and Affairs at Humphreys College. Bruce's duties at KCAG involve the planning, programming, and project delivery of federally funded projects and developing, managing the KCAG Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP), the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP), and working with KCAG Staff and member agencies in a lead position developing the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Regional Bicycle Plan. Bruce is also an active participant in a number of Caltrans managed committees, including the California Transportation Commission/Caltrans RTP Guidelines Advisory Committee that established how the requirements of SB 375, primarily the SCS, would be incorporated into the RTP.

### ***Jeff Abercrombie***

Jeff Abercrombie is a lifelong valley resident. He graduated from Santa Clara University in 1984 with a Bachelor Degree in Civil Engineering. After graduation Jeff began working for Caltrans in the Structures Department. He has spent 27 years working in the valley constructing bridges and buildings for Caltrans. The past 12 years has been as an Area Construction Manager in the valley covering the areas from Stockton to Bakersfield, Santa Cruz to Santa Barbara along the coast, and Inyo and Mono counties on the eastern side of the Sierras, effectively overseeing quality, budget and policy. Jeff joined the HSR Executive team in February of 2011 to serve on the Merced to Fresno and Fresno to Bakersfield sections.

### ***Michael Aronson***

Mr. Michael Aronson has over 20 years of experience in all aspects of transportation planning and traffic operations analysis. He has managed transportation studies for general plans, major corridor studies, rail transit extensions, Caltrans highway project development, and many types of development master plans. Mr. Aronson has also developed and updated travel demand models using all major software programs, and has led staff training programs in travel modeling and computer applications. He specializes in producing consistent and defensible results from complex transportation planning processes, and clearly explaining those results in presentations and training programs.

### ***Dianne Barth***

Dianne Barth has been serving as the Public Communications Manager at San Joaquin Council of Governments since 2007. She also held the same title for the Stockton unified School District for 6 years and was the Capitol Bureau Chief in Sacramento for the Stockton Record from 1992 until 2001.

***Mike Bitner***

Mike Bitner is a Principal Regional Planner for Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG). Mike has been with Fresno COG for 24 years. Mike supervises all planning staff and planning activities at Fresno COG. Mike serves as the lead for valley modeling and is the project manager for the Valley Model Improvement Plan, the Valley iPlaces contract and other valley wide modeling activities. Prior to becoming Principal Regional Planner Mike served as Senior Transportation Planner in charge of the Technical and Modeling section at the COG. Mike's hometown is Reedley.

***Andre Boutros***

Mr. Boutros is the Chief Deputy Director of the California Transportation Commission where oversees the day-to-day operations serving as the chief of staff and the Commission's principal policy advisor. He directs the development and management of California's multi-modal transportation programs, the allocation of state and federal funds, the initiation and implementation of Commission's actions and policies, and the evaluation of proposed legislation with impacts to transportation funding and project delivery. Mr. Boutros' career spans more than 28 years in transportation infrastructure project development. He is particularly knowledgeable in the areas of innovative project delivery and project funding and finance.

***Richard Brassfield***

Richard Brassfield is U.S. Department of Agriculture Area Director for a portion of the Central San Joaquin Valley. Richard is also responsible for reviewing all National Environmental Protection Act environmental assessments throughout California for Rural Development. He has over 33 years experience with the U.S. Department of Agriculture assisting rural communities in the Central Valley and is a graduate of California State University Fresno. Presently he is a member of the Communities Solution Team in Fresno as a part of the Whitehouse initiative "Strong Cities / Strong Communities (SC2)". In addition to his government service he is a small business owner, in Selma CA, which is managed by his wife Susan. Richard is an active member in his church and several non-profit organizations. He lives with his family in Kingsburg, CA.

***Susan DeCarli***

Susan DeCarli has been a land use and environmental planner on the Central Coast for the last 21 years. She began her career in planning working for the City of Atascadero. Following this position, she became a planning consultant with Crawford Multari and Clark Associates. From there she became the Assistant Community Development Director for Grover Beach. She has been working for the City of Paso Robles, as the Planning Manager for the last 8 years where she oversees the development review and is the project manager for long-range planning projects.

***Steve Devencenzi***

Steve Devencenzi is the Planning Director for San Luis Obispo Council of Governments. Steve has been responsible for the development and implementation of many major programs within San Luis Obispo County over the past 31 years. Steve is a member of the Community Indicators Roundtable for the Foundation for Community Design, and participates on the Steering Committee for Action for Healthy Communities which prepares the San Luis Obispo County Community Indicators Report.

***Heather Fargo***

Heather Fargo is the first Executive Policy Officer for the CA Strategic Growth Council. Heather served as Mayor of Sacramento Ca from 2000-2008, and on the city council from 1989-2000. During that time, she served on the Sacramento Area Council of Government (SACOG), the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA), the Downtown Sacramento Partnership and numerous other boards including the CA League of Cities and the advisory board of the US Conference of Mayors. From 1975-2003, she worked for the CA Department of Parks and Recreation in a variety of positions.

***Terance Frazier***

Terance Frazier owns Frazier Realty and TFS Investments, LLC. His companies specialize in all areas of residential and commercial real estate needs and expand from the Central Valley in California to Texas and Georgia. Terance has worked in the real estate industry for over twenty years and currently invests in over 100 homes per year. Terance is currently a member of the Central Valley Business Incubator, North Fresno Lion's Club and the Facility Committee of Fresno Unified School District. Terance is also a former member of the Chief Advisory Board. Terance was an award winning baseball player for California State University Fresno and played professionally for the St. Paul Saints and Oakland A's.

***Chris Ganson***

Chris Ganson works in the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, focusing on the intersection of transportation, land use planning, and greenhouse gas emissions reduction. Previously, Chris worked at the World Resources Institute in Washington DC and EPA's Region 9 office in San Francisco. Chris holds masters degrees in City Planning and Transportation Engineering from UC Berkeley, and grew up in Sacramento.



***Carolina Gregor***

Carolina Gregor is a Senior Regional Planner at SANDAG. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from UCLA and her Masters Degree in City Planning from San Diego State University (SDSU). She has worked at SANDAG for over 15 years. One of her top projects included managing the preparation of the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP), the regional "blueprint" for the San Diego region. The SANDAG Board of Directors unanimously adopted the RCP in 2004. Carolina currently serves as the project manager of RCP Implementation. In this capacity, she coordinated the preparation of the "Smart Growth Concept Map," a map that shows almost 200 smart growth opportunity areas in the San Diego region.

***Garth Hopkins***

Garth Hopkins is currently the Chief of the Office of Regional and Interagency Planning at the California Department of Transportation(Caltrans). As Office Chief at Caltrans headquarters located in Sacramento, Garth and his staff are responsible for a wide range planning activities including: developing policy for long-range transportation plans; incorporating environmental mitigation activities in those plans; climate change activities; addressing federal air quality regulations; regional blueprint planning and addressing transportation/land use planning efforts such as California's SB 375. Garth has been at Caltrans for over 20 years and has prior work experience in transportation system planning; bicycle and pedestrian planning issues; and aeronautics.

***Charlotte Hrcir***

Charlotte Hrcir is a Senior Associate with Alcalde and Fay in Washington, D.C., and has worked in government and intergovernmental relations for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), and was also a political appointee at the Department of Transportation (DOT) where she served as a Director of Inter-governmental Affairs at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

***Richard Lee***

Richard is an Associate at Fehr & Peers in Walnut Creek, California. He has over 25 years of experience as a transportation consultant and academic and has been with Fehr & Peers since 2002. The majority of his recent work focuses on measuring the transportation effects of smart growth planning and policies. Richard consults extensively with local, regional and state agencies as well as private developers to analyze transportation and land development projects and to develop feasible alternatives that address issues of circulation and community needs. Richard has taught transportation planning and led major transportation research projects at several universities, including Massey University in New Zealand, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, UC-Berkeley and UC-Davis. He is currently teaching a regional transportation planning course at San José State University.

***Vince Mammano***

Vince Mammano is the Division Administrator of the California Division of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). He joined FHWA in 1993, and over the past 18 years has served in the Division Offices in Florida, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Hawaii and California.

***Robert Phipps***

Robert Phipps is Administrative Services Director for Kern Council of Governments. Robert oversees seven employees and a variety of projects and programs. Prior to joining Kern COG in 2000, he was the A1 page editor at the Bakersfield Californian, where he worked on the copy desk for seven years. He has also worked as a reporter and editor for several other publications including The Santa Maria Times, Madera Tribune, Merced Sun-Star and Fresno Bee.

***Richard Poythress***

Richard Poythress is a Transportation Planner with Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC). Richard works with MCTC Staff and member agencies in a lead position developing the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and is the project manager for MCTC modeling activities. Richard graduated from UC-Santa Barbara with a degree in political science.

***Robert Poythress***

Robert Poythress is currently serving as the Mayor of the City of Madera and is in his second term in office as a City Council Member. Robert was first elected to the City Council in 2004 and reelected in 2008. The Mayor's position is rotated annually amongst the Council Members and Robert previously served as Mayor in 2006. Robert also serves as a Board Member of the Madera Redevelopment Agency, Commissioner of the Housing Authority of the City of Madera and as Chair of the Madera County Transportation Commission. Robert is a native Maderan who graduated from Madera High School in 1974. Robert has been in the banking industry since 1979. He is currently Vice President and Manager of Citizens Business Bank in Madera, California where he has been since 2005.

***Lezlie Kimura Szeto***

Lezlie Kimura works as a planning liaison at the California Air Resources Board (ARB). Her work focuses primarily on transportation and land use strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including Senate Bill 375 implementation. In this role she has worked directly with regional transportation planning agencies, local government representatives, and other stakeholders to develop the sustainable communities greenhouse gas reduction targets approved by ARB last year. She was also one of the key staff to develop ARB's greenhouse gas evaluation methodology for sustainable communities strategies released this past July. Lezlie has recently returned from work on special assignment under ARB's chair, Mary Nichols, and is now focused on working with the Valley and Sacramento MPOs on their SCS review processes.

***Michael Sigala***

Michael has extensive experience in urban real estate, planning, housing, and redevelopment. He is the former Housing and Community Development Manager for the City of Fresno. Michael's experience also spans several years of private consulting with the California companies of Keyser Marston Associates and BAE. He has had considerable involvement in urban redevelopment projects and public financing in communities throughout California

***Len Simon***

Len Simon Founded Simon and Company, Inc. in 1987, to provide targeted Washington, D.C. representation services to cities and public authorities, the non-profit sector and national organizations interested in federal policies and programs important at the local level. Today he is actively engaged in undertaking these efforts for a wide variety of entities, leading the firm's activities with Congress and the federal executive branch. Prior to this, he was the Assistant Executive Director of the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

***Ted Smalley***

Ted Smalley is the Executive Director for Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG). Ted was a principal writer and active participant in the development of Measure R, the only new sales tax passed in 2006 in California. Measure R will generate more than \$652 million in the next 30 years for major transportation projects in Tulare County. In his more than ten year term with TCAG, Ted has managed the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the preparation of the Regional Transportation Plan. Prior to working in Tulare County, Ted was a Senior Transportation Planner for a private firm in San Diego where he prepared numerous transportation studies.

***Bill Spriggs***

Bill Spriggs was elected Mayor of Merced in November of 2009, and he was previously a City Council Member for eight years. He is the current Chair of the San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council, and is a Certified General Real Estate Appraiser.



***Liisa Stark***

Liisa Stark is the Director of Public Affairs and Corporate Relations for the Union Pacific Railroad Company for Northern California and Nevada. She oversees the company's legislative affairs and community relations in both states, as well as community and philanthropic endeavors on behalf of America's largest class one freight railroad. Liisa also has experience as a contract lobbyist specializing in transportation issues at the federal and state levels, with the League of California Cities, where she represented city interests to the Governor, Legislature, state agencies and commissions in the areas of Transportation and Public safety.

***Barbara Steck***

Barbara Steck is the Deputy Director for the Fresno Council of Governments. In addition to her administrative duties, she serves as project manager for Fresno COG's activities related to the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint. She manages the Valley COG's joint venture on the Blueprint as well. Prior to returning to COG in 2005, Barbara served as the Chief Operating Officer for the Fresno Business Council. She has also held planning positions with the County of Fresno, the City of Fresno and held a joint position with Fresno COG and Fresno Area Express as Transit Planning Manager in the mid 1990s.

***Mike Wallace***

Mike Wallace, an Associate with Fehr & Peers, graduated from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo with a master's degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering. Mike holds an Engineer-In-Training (EIT) license from California and is a certified Professional Transportation Planner (PTP), and is an active member of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and American Planning Association (APA). Mike has been responsible for detailed travel forecasting projects and has played a key role in enhancing four-step models' sensitivity to smart growth, including 10 Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) models in California. Mike works extensively with local and regional agencies, DOTs, and private firms to analyze the effects of infrastructure, policy, and land development to develop feasible alternatives that address issues of operational efficiency and community values.

***Tom Wheeler***

Tom Wheeler is the Madera County Supervisor for District 5 which includes thousands of miles of Sierra National Forest, Yosemite National Park and the mountain communities of Oakhurst, North Fork, Coarsegold, Ahwahnee and Bass Lake. Tom has been a resident of Eastern Madera County for over 50 years. In that time, Tom has experience as a rancher, businessman, logger, builder and avid community supporter. Tom assumed office in January 2007 and has worked diligently to solve many of the growth-related issues we faced in Madera Counties mountain communities including water, traffic, jobs and housing. He has also continuously supported County policies that promote property rights, conservation and common sense solutions to Madera county's problems.

***Derek Winning***

Derek Winning graduated with a degree in Economics from California State University Fresno and also served in the Marine Corps for 4 years. He has been the acting Deputy Director of the Madera County Transportation Commission for 10 years and is regularly involved in Measure "T" project delivery, travel demand modeling and Federal Transportation Improvement Programming for projects in Madera County.



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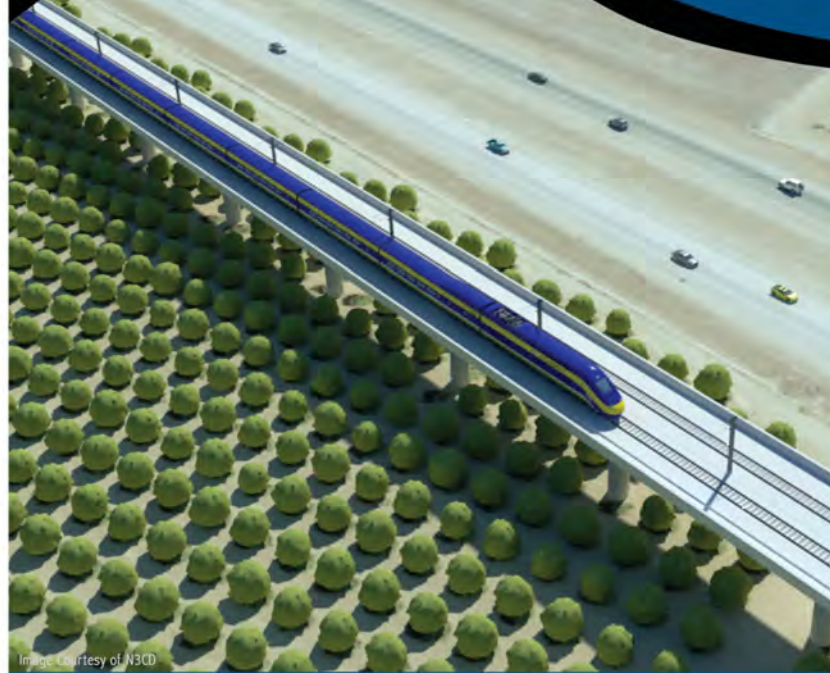


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\*\*Supervisor Allen Ishida, County of Tulare, TCAG Chair, Policy Council Vice-Chair  
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Ted Smalley, Executive Director, Tulare County Association of Governments

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