

# Run through of Final Questions to be asked by Will Kempton:

**Final Version, Dated: April 20, 2023**

## **Finishing what we started on Hwy 99 Session Description:**

A safe and efficient multimodal transportation system is the heart of a strong economy, and here in the San Joaquin Valley, that backbone is State Route 99. It is a critical corridor for moving our bountiful agricultural goods up and down the state on their way to feed people across the nation. It is a connector of people and jobs, of students and education, of economy and sustainable communities. State Route 99 is indeed the “main street” of California and yet State Route 99 remains unfinished. It has never been built out to six continuous travel lanes through the Valley as envisioned in the Caltrans Highway 99 Business Plan.

This session brings together the director level partners among the 8 Valley COGs, Caltrans Districts 10 and 6, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, and San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority to tackle the hard questions on how to deliver a transportation solution and “finish what we started”. It will look at multimodal corridor investments, east-west transportation connectors, and other comprehensive strategies to provide mobility and safety on the 99 Corridor while also addressing air quality and climate change. The session offers a candid discussion of the hurdles that have adversely impacted the delivery momentum and explores a solution-oriented approach to achieving the functional goals of transforming State Route 99.

### **Two Part Session on April 25 and 26, 2023**

**Part 1: Session is 3:15 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. April 25, 2023, SJV Directors and Caltrans:** Panel includes Diane Nguyen, Executive Director SJCOG; Ted Smalley, Executive Director Tulare County Association of Governments; Patricia Taylor, Executive Director Madera County Transportation Commission; Stacie Guzman, Executive Director Merced

County Association of Governments; Dennis T. Agar, District 10 Caltrans Director; Diana Gomez, District 6 Caltrans Director.

**Part 2A: Session 9:15 a.m. to 10 a.m., April 26, 2023, SJV Directors and Caltrans:** Panel includes Rosa DeLeon Park, Executive Director of Stanislaus Council of Governments; Ahron Hakimi, Executive Director of Kern Council of Governments; Tony Boren, Executive Director of Fresno Council of Governments, and Terri King, Executive Director of Kings County Association of Governments; Marlon Regisford, District 10 Deputy Director, Michael Navarro, District 6 Deputy Director

**Part 2B: 10:05 a.m.– 10:35 a.m., April 26, 2023:** Role other partner agencies play on mobility on SR 99. Panel includes Samir Sheikh, SJV Air Pollution Control District Director and Dan Leavitt, Manager of Regional Initiatives, San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority/Altamont Corridor Express

## **Suggested Opening Remarks by Will Kempton to set the table:**

- A safe and efficient multimodal transportation system is the heart of a strong economy, and here in the San Joaquin Valley, that backbone is State Route 99. It is a critical corridor for moving our bountiful ag goods up and down the state on their way to feed people across the nation.
- It is a connector of people and jobs, of students and education, of people and opportunity. State Route 99 is a quality-of-life corridor for the San Joaquin Valley and beyond. And yet, State Route 99 remains unfinished. It is not six through lanes through the SJ Valley.
- In 2005, Caltrans published the SR 99 Business Plan, which outlined a strategic approach to transforming SR 99 into a safe and efficient trade corridor. The plan solidified Caltrans' long-term goals for the route and a corresponding list of projects to achieve those goals,

thereby streamlining funding decisions for corridor improvements. A key priority for this work was completing widening projects necessary for SR 99 to be a six-lane corridor. The plan was updated in 2020.

- Today, the goal established in the Business Plan of widening SR 99 from 4 to 6 lanes from Kern County to San Joaquin County, remains unfinished. As a result, the corridor is needlessly congested and unsafe, hampering economic activity, negatively impacting the quality of life in the San Joaquin Valley, and adversely impacting air quality and the environment.
- There have been misconceptions also that Finish the 99 is singularly focused on these six lanes. In fact, partners are looking at multimodal solutions as well as complementary east-west relievers to address safety and mobility on the corridor.
- In this first session, we will hear from Directors about their 99 vision and what is needed to strengthen this collaborative effort and to finish what we started. A safe and efficient SR 99 is critical to the future of the San Joaquin Valley and the State of California.

**Questions for Part 1: Session is 3:15 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. April 25, 2023, SJV Directors and Caltrans:**

1. What does finish Hwy 99 mean to your region?  
*(This question is to be asked for all panel members including Caltrans.)*
2. What are some myths or misconceptions about Finish 99?  
*Stacie Dabbs, MCAG will lead an answer.*
3. What have been some progress made on Hwy 99?

*(This question is to be asked for all panel members including Caltrans.)*

4. What funding or other commitments has your region made on Hwy 99?

*Diane Nguyen, SJCOG will lead this answer.*

5. What are your project priorities....and describe the benefits of that project(s).

*All 4 COG directors will answer.*

6. What needs to happen to strengthen the partnership with Caltrans? Identify existing successes/strengths.....and elaborate on how it can be elevated?

*Ted Smalley and Tricia Taylor will lead this answer.*

7. Is managed lanes part of the conversation on Hwy 99?

*Tricia Taylor and Caltrans directors should answer.*

### **Specific questions for Caltrans (not identified above)---**

- Tell us more about the multimodal plan for the 99 corridor? What are outcomes you are excited about/hope to achieve.
- Does Caltrans have a funding strategy to finish 99?

<b>Part 2A: Session 9:15 a.m. to 10 a.m., April 26, 2023, SJV Directors and Caltrans:</b>
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Will Kempton opens the session with some remarks/conclusions about yesterday's setting. Further states,

We want to continue to hear from other directors in the Valley and partners on the collaborative effort to finish 99. And, while Hwy 99 does not run through Kings County, that region's highway transportation network is directly impacted by mobility on Hwy 99.

1. What does finishing Hwy 99 mean to your region? Ask Caltrans Deputies if they want to add to anything said yesterday by the District Directors.  
*All Valley Directors to answer.*
  
2. What funding or other commitments has your region already made on Hwy 99 mainline, or other projects which complement 99 mobility/safety?  
*Tony Boren, Rosa DeLeon Park, and Ahron Hakimi will answer.*
  
3. What are your current priorities in development....and describe the benefits of that project(s) that complement the Finish 99 effort.  
*All Directors to answer. Caltrans deputy directors should answer.*

**Part 2 of this question for Caltrans:** Yesterday, the Caltrans Directors were asked about the multimodal plan for 99? Do you have anything to add about what outcomes you'd think will be most effective to get funding and delivery of the priority projects to Finish 99?

4. Looking at the entire 99 corridor in the San Joaquin Valley---what would be some important solutions on 99 that you would like to see?  
*Ahron Hakimi, Terri King, and Tony Boren to answer; Ask Caltrans too.*
  
5. Can you elaborate on some best practices or project experiences with Caltrans that showcase what can be achieved together..... and then highlight what you think can be improved in the partnership with Caltrans on 99?  
*Rosa DeLeon Park, Tony Boren, and Ahron Hakimi to answer.*

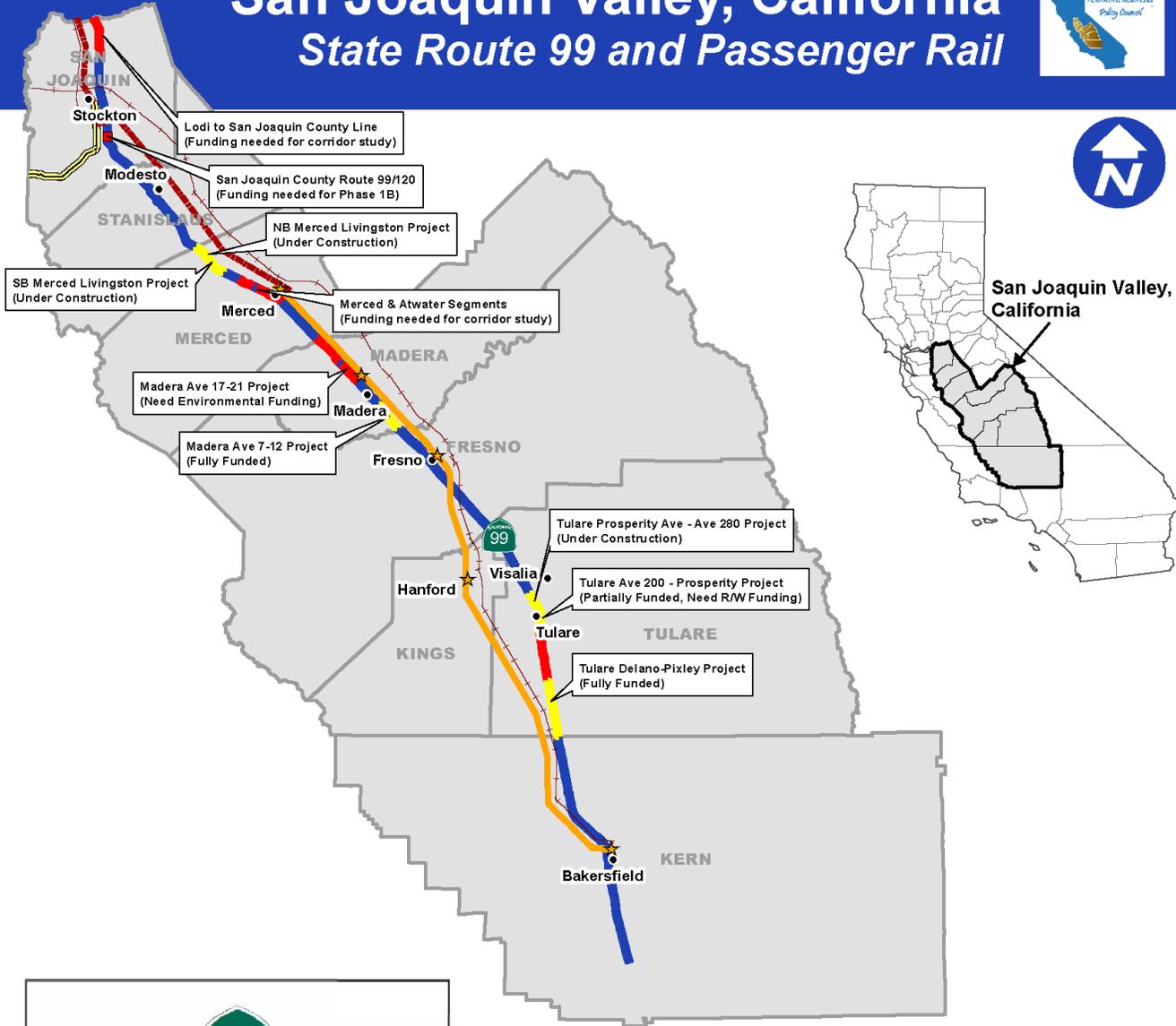
*Part 2 of this question*---Caltrans, what do you think based upon what you just heard. How can Caltrans strengthen partnerships with regional agencies?

**Part 2B: 10:05 a.m.– 10:35 a.m., April 26, 2023:** Role other partner agencies play on mobility on SR 99. Panel includes Samir Sheikh, SJV Air Pollution Control District Director and Dan Leavitt, Manager of Regional Initiatives, San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority/Altamont Corridor Express

1. Why do you think it is important to finish what we started on Highway 99?
2. How does our agency offer a complementary investment strategy that bolsters or amplifies Hwy 99 investments and mobility?
3. The theme of the conference is “better together”. What specifically do you see the role of your agency in the near-term future....that will help the Regional Transportation Planning Agencies secure investments on the 99 corridor.....or raise the visibility at a state /national level that these improvements need to happen.

Closing/Summary Remarks by Will Kempton.

# San Joaquin Valley, California State Route 99 and Passenger Rail





**274 Total Miles**  
*(San Joaquin County Line to South of Bakersfield I-5 Merge)*

**82.3 Miles Partially Funded,  
Under Construction or Incomplete**

**14 - Number of  
Bottlenecks**



- SR99 Partially or Fully Funded/Under Construction - 38.8 mi
- SR99 Incomplete (4 Lanes) - 43.5 mi
- SR99 Complete (6 lanes or more) - 191.7 mi
- High Speed Rail (HSR) - 171 mi (Merced to Bakersfield)
- HSR Station
- Altamont Corridor Express (ACE)
- San Joaquin Amtrak
- Valley Rail Expansion

Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA