

Merced Station Options: Efficient Delivery of High-Speed Rail



California is committed to delivering a financially responsible system that brings real benefits to communities. A southern Merced station concept represents a practical, forward-looking solution that ensures Merced receives the benefits of high-speed rail service while minimizing disruption and supporting long-term regional growth.

Why Southern Merced?

Certainty for Merced

A southern Merced station would offer the best and fastest path to deliver high-speed rail service to Merced without relying on multiple additional outside infrastructure projects and timelines.

Benefits to this approach include:

- Greater delivery certainty
- Reduced project risk
- Financially responsible approach
- Faster path to service

Supports Future Growth

A southern Merced station would offer development and infrastructure advantages including:

- Supporting planned expansion
- Preserving downtown activity
- Creating flexibility for future transit connections

Protects Downtown Merced

A downtown station would require years of major construction activity in the city core, negatively impacting businesses, traffic, and community facilities. A southern Merced station would support future development while protecting downtown from:

- 5 years of construction disruption (Phase 1 Merced – Madera)
- 2 – 5 years of construction disruption (Phase 2 Merced – Sacramento)
- ACE extension construction disruption (duration unknown)
- Amtrak connection construction (duration unknown)
- Traffic and emergency access impacts
- Business and facility displacement



Rendering of a southern Merced station concept

Regional Connectivity

A southern Merced station concept creates opportunities for strong regional connections, including:

- UC Merced
- Local and regional transit
- Easy access to State Routes 99, 140, and 59 via Campus Parkway and East Mission Avenue
- Future airport transportation options

The station also strengthens Merced’s role as a university-centered regional hub by improving access to UC Merced, California’s fastest-growing UC campus.

Travel Times from Southern Merced Station Concept

Destination	Approximate Distance	Estimated Drive Time
Merced Regional Airport	~6 miles	~12 minutes
UC Merced	~10 miles	~14-18 minutes
Downtown Merced	~5 miles	8 minutes

Southern Merced vs. Downtown

Southern Merced Station Concept

- ✓ Clear, fundable delivery path
- ✓ Avoids years of downtown construction
- ✓ Protects businesses and community facilities
- ✓ Supports planned growth
- ✓ Stronger connection to UC Merced

Downtown Station Challenges

- ⚠ Extended downtown disruption
- ⚠ Negative impacts to businesses and facilities
- ⚠ Traffic and emergency access concerns
- ⚠ Delivery uncertainty
- ⚠ Dependence on multiple outside agency funding uncertainties

A Proven Global Approach

Locating high-speed rail stations outside downtown areas is a common practice around the world to reduce costs, simplify construction, and minimize community impacts.

Spain: Guadalajara’s high-speed rail station was built outside the historic city center to avoid major disruption and simplify construction.

France: Stations serving Avignon and Aix-en-Provence are located outside downtown areas to avoid costly and disruptive urban construction.

Germany: Edge-of-city station locations have been used to preserve existing infrastructure and limit construction impacts.