

# The five biggest stimulus projects in Sacramento region

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The federal government has approved more than \$600 million in stimulus projects and programs so far in the Sacramento region, with more money still to come, according to a Bee analysis of multiple government sources.

Most of the projects are limited efforts with budgets under \$1 million. A few, though, are huge, multi-million dollar jobs.

An official, comprehensive list of the region's projects doesn't yet exist. The Bee has created an unofficial list of hundreds of projects, all of them viewable at [www.sacbee.com/stimulus](http://www.sacbee.com/stimulus).

Here's the skinny on the five construction projects in the region that, at this point, are getting the biggest share of stimulus funds:

## **Folsom Dam safety improvements – \$22.3 million:**

Built in 1955, Folsom Dam created Folsom Lake, one of the region's premier recreation spots. The dam is mostly for flood control, but also provides water for domestic and agricultural use.

The dam is in good shape but is starting to show its age, said Pete Lucero, a spokesman for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Officials have long planned to modify the dam's spillway gates to make them less susceptible to earthquakes. The stimulus money will go toward making that happen quickly.

There's no imminent danger, Lucero said, but "we are able to accommodate a project we were planning to do. It's a huge project."

Lucero said construction work would start soon, but he could not give an exact timeframe. Lucero also could not give a specific number of jobs that will be supported, instead referring to a federal formula that maintains about 20 jobs will be supported for every \$1 million in stimulus spent.

## **Development at the Sacramento railyard – \$20 million:**

Probably the highest profile local stimulus project, Sacramento's railyard has long sat fallow on the edge of downtown. City planners hope a large, planned infill project at the railyard will be a shot in the arm for the region, and the stimulus money is a key component of their plans.

The \$20 million would help move some train tracks a few hundred feet north, making room for a transit center behind a depot, and allowing Fifth and Sixth streets to extend on bridges into the railyard, all of which could jumpstart development.

"Everything hinges on the track relocation," the city's Fran Halbakken said soon after funding was announced.

But the plan has hit a snag. The rail move project is not yet shovel-ready. City officials have been given a Dec. 1 deadline to get paperwork in order and show that they are prepared to hire a contractor. If the city doesn't meet the deadline, the money gets pulled, and planners will redistribute the funds to take care of smaller projects.

## **Highway 70/99 rehab near the Sacramento/Sutter county line – \$18.3 million:**

North of Sacramento, Highway 99 has been getting a lot more traffic, largely because so many commuters flocked to Marysville and Plumas Lake in search of less-expensive housing. But large swaths of the road are in poor shape.

This project will apply rubberized paving to 10 miles of Highway 99 from the Sacramento County line to State Highway 70. Of the five projects mentioned here, it is the only one that is actively under way and creating jobs.

The project is supposed to be completed by November.

## **Live Oak wastewater treatment plant – \$16 million:**

It's easy to make a case that the small Sutter County town of Live Oak desperately needed stimulus funds. Its unemployment rate stands at 30 percent – almost three times the state average.

State regulators told the town years ago that its wastewater treatment plant wasn't up to snuff, and the plant has been

operating under a cease-and-desist order since 2005, said Jim Goodwin, Live Oak's city manager.

The stimulus money – a \$10 million grant and a \$6 million low-interest loan – will build a new plant, support 45 local construction jobs and forestall a large rate increase, Goodwin said. Construction will start soon.

"The only way to meet the state's requirements was to completely rebuild the plant," Goodwin said. "We've been struggling on how we could do that at a rate our customers could afford."

**American River levee improvements – \$14 million:**

The Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency is concerned that water from the American River could flow under some levees and pool up on the other side, causing flooding.

This project, an extension of construction undertaken a decade ago, will let SAFCA work on that problem and fix "gaps along county roads and sewer lines that our initial construction couldn't do," said Pete Ghelfi, SAFCA director of engineering. Work will be done at multiple points in the region along the river, Ghelfi added.

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