

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Vice Mayor Hume called to order the special City Council meeting of August 19, 2008 at 7:01 p.m.

Present: Vice Mayor Hume, Council Members Cooper, Leary and Scherman

Absent: Mayor Davis

**PRESENTATION – Elk Grove – Rancho Cordova – El Dorado Connector Summit**

Don Nottoli, Sacramento County Board Supervisor, stated that the Connector Summit was an outreach effort to the public offered early in the process of the Elk Grove – Rancho Cordova – El Dorado Connector project (Connector project). He noted the importance of starting the dialogue early with involved agencies, communities, and the public at large.

**Project Briefing**

With the aid of an overhead presentation (filed), Tom Zlotkowski, Executive Director of the Elk Grove – Rancho Cordova – El Dorado Connector Joint Powers Authority (Connector JPA), provided an overview of the purpose of the Connector project and the roadway configuration alternatives being presented for initial environmental review. The Connector project is a roadway bypass, and resulting transportation corridor, connecting Interstate 5 and Highway 50 through the communities of the cities of Elk Grove and Rancho Cordova, and the counties of El Dorado and Sacramento. Mr. Zlotkowski stated that the Connector JPA is currently conducting a branding effort to name and uniquely identify the Connector project, but as of current an official name has not been decided upon. He noted that the evening's presentation was the first major outreach update by the Connector JPA on the Connector project to the public. The Connector project was based on work compiled by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), in which the period from 2003 to 2005 established the corridor study area where the Connector project would be located. He stated that the preliminary work coordinated by SACOG was conducted by stakeholder advisory committees comprised of 57 representative organizations, groups, and committees.

Mr. Zlotkowski explained that the Connector project is currently in its initial phase, preparing to conduct the necessary environmental review required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of the proposed alternatives for the Connector project. To date, the creation of project alternatives had been guided by draft proposals of the needs, purposes, and functional guidelines which he presented as follows:

- General need is to mediate issues of mobility and land use. Increased mobility to improve access to, and connections between, residential and employment areas lost or compromised due to increasing congestion; and examination of land use to assist in preservation of open space and habitat that may be threatened as the region develops.
- Project need is to address transportation route options, traffic congestion relief, emergency access, increased safety, open space preservation, and job-housing transportation access.
- Project purpose is to provide mobility options, economic development, preservation of open space, and growth management minimizing impacts to communities along the corridor.
- Functional guidelines provide the framework to guide capacity, access, design, materials, and maintenance of the roadway itself, as well as setting priorities to examine transit options, non-motorized facilities, open space preservation, and integration with other facilities such as regional parks and trail systems.

Mr. Zlotkowski described four (4) current route alternatives, with three (3) variations for the applicable alternatives passing through the Sheldon Community, as the product of the preliminary Connector project development. All alternatives share consistent design at either end of the corridor, sharing a similar plan from Interstate 5 to Highway 99 on the west, and from Highway 50 to the intersection of White Rock Road and Grant Line Road to the east. The route alternatives arise between Highway 99 and the intersection of White Rock Road and Grant Line Road as follows:

- Alternative 1 passes the Jackson Highway at Sunrise Boulevard, contains three (3) major intersections requiring advanced design, and incorporates trail systems in tandem with the roadway. Alternative 1 has a conflict with the Rancho Cordova General Plan.
- Alternative 2 follows Grant Line Road and is the most direct route configuration with only two major interchanges, incorporating trail systems in tandem with the roadway.
- Alternative 3 also follows Grant Line Road, but creates a Class I Non-Motorized Trail system off of the roadway corridor to better integrate the trail system with regional recreation areas.
- Alternative 4 passes the Jackson Highway at Bradshaw Road, traveling along Bradshaw Road and Douglas Boulevard, and utilizes the trail system of Alternative 3. Alternative 4 involves four (4) major intersections and conflicts with both the Rancho Cordova and Sacramento County General Plans.

The variations affect Alternatives 1 through 3 which pass through the Sheldon community and include: 1) a bypass around the community, 2) a tunnel, and 3) an at-grade, direct route through the community.

Mr. Zlotkowski explained that the Connector JPA has taken over the work produced by the efforts of SACOG and would begin the environmental review process to evaluate

the feasibility of the design alternatives. The environmental review process is intended to identify impacts on communities, the environment, traffic congestion, access, mobility, safety, and conformity with existing land use policies of effected agencies. He presented a timeline in which the preliminary noticing of the environmental review process would occur in early 2009, with a majority of the technical studies being conducted throughout 2009, and the final environmental analysis compiled for review in 2010.

During a question and answer period, the following was discussed:

- The current cost estimation for financing the Connector project is approximately \$700-\$800 million, and the addition of the Sheldon tunnel variant would add an estimated additional \$500 million to the project. The proposed four alternatives' base cost estimates, without variants, are currently each expected to have a total cost within ten percent (10%) of one other.
- The timeframe for completion of the Connector project is ten to twenty years. Measure A funding is expected to cover initial costs up to \$100 million, and long term financing options would be examined for actual construction once the Connector project progresses through the initial design and study phases.
- The idea of regional transportation connectors has been a topic of discussion for over fifty years. The availability of funding mechanisms, such as the Measure A renewal, has made it possible to examine the issue, as of recent, in depth.
- Concern was raised that locating an arterial transportation route next to the school at Bradshaw Road and Bond Road may constitute a "fatal flaw" that would make Alternative 4 infeasible. Mr. Zlotkowski responded that the environmental review process provides a forum for participating agencies to examine and raise such concerns, as well as open the dialogue if such concerns can be mitigated.
- Regarding layout and design, a speaker inquired as to why the intersection with Highway 50 was so far east in El Dorado County. Vice Mayor Hume responded that no final design has been set, and options to alter the layout and design of project alternatives are still available at this stage.
- Regarding growth management, a speaker raised concern that the creation of a bypass and resulting corridor would be a mechanism triggering growth and development, disrupting current land use through the proposed project plan. The speaker noted that since the Connector project does not link readily identifiable, regional destinations, development patterns may follow incentives targeted for regional transportation needs, rather than meeting local, community needs.
- In response to a speaker inquiry whether duplicate efforts were being initiated and if regional agencies were being coordinated, Supervisor Nottoli responded that this recently initiated, multi-year study process was to define the project and agencies involved. Mr. Nottoli noted that from this initial study the stakeholder agencies would be identified to focus future coordination as the project moves towards the planning phase.
- Regarding the branding and naming of the project, a speaker believed that the project was incorrectly emphasized as a community connector, and rather primarily appears to serve as a bypass that will attract additional regional traffic

congestion. Supervisor Nottoli identified that the project has a community component and agreed the project is a bypass, bringing all of the development and traffic issues related to such projects into the Connector project discussion. Mr. Nottoli noted that the Connector project would also provide parallel carrying capacity of regional traffic patterns, relieving traffic congestion on other overstressed, regional roadways.

- Mr. Zlotkowski responded to the question regarding the process for deciding on a final alternative, stating that through the environmental review process it is expected that adequate comparative information would be discovered to select an overall preferred alternative. He explained that once a final alternative was selected, all governing bodies within 1,000 feet of any portion of the Connector Project must first approve the alignment proposed in their respective jurisdiction. Once all local agencies have agreed on the alternative and the layout in their respective jurisdictions, the project would continue with the Connector JPA taking steps to finalize plans and initiate subsequent phases.

### Sheldon Community Association

With the aid of an overhead presentation (filed), Tom Shine, June Coats, and Tom Franzoia, representatives of the Sheldon Community Association and the Greater Sheldon Road Estates Homeowner's Association, presented an additional Connector route alternative for consideration for the environmental review process. The alternative proposed was an elevated causeway bypass traveling around the Sheldon Community, on a route in the vicinity of the Urban Services Boundary (USB) to the south along Deer Creek, and included expanding portions of Grant Line Road with an additional lane to accommodate local traffic needs.

Ms. Coats presented an overview describing the Sheldon community, noting that increased expansion of Grant Line Road would diminish, and potentially threaten, the existence of the rural residential and agricultural uses of the area. She stated that community groups have been involved in the progress of the Connector project since 2003. She noted that the community, City Council, and District 5 Sacramento County Board Supervisor Nottoli supported a previously submitted fifth alternative, but that this alternative was rejected by SACOG for consideration under the environmental review.

Mr. Shine observed that planned future development along Grant Line Road, such as the proposed waste transfer station in Elk Grove and three gravel quarries being examined in the vicinity of the northern terminus of the proposed Connector project, could generate up to 2,400 additional truck trips per day. He noted that not all of the newly generated trips would be directed southwards, but continuing development of the southern Sphere of Influence for the City of Elk Grove, and the location of the Promenade Mall, would be factors influencing the percentage of future trips heading south on Grant Line Road. Mr. Shine believed that the proposed bypass and additional small scale lane expansion of Grant Line Road would relieve future traffic impacts in the area.

Mr. Franzoia explained that the causeway would be similar in concept to the Yolo Causeway near Woodland. He stated that the group's intent is for their proposed alternative to be included with the Connector JPA's proposed alternatives for examination under the environmental review process.

During a question and answer period, the following was discussed:

- A speaker raised concern that the alternate bypass causeway, along the USB, would be disruptive to the agricultural businesses currently located in the proposed project area, and would have several negative environmental impacts to a sensitive, natural area with complex habitat, water, and flood factors. The speaker was also concerned that the proposed project space was suggested in an area of low population, creating a scenario where communities of higher population can exert their voting influence to divert a project to the disadvantage of the smaller community directly affected by the new, proposed location. Supervisor Nottoli noted that funding, in the amount of \$15 million, was available to discern preliminary environmental issues and possible mitigation solutions.
- Vice Mayor Hume observed that a raised causeway, reducing points of access, opens opportunities to consider placing a toll for the use of the facility to encourage a public, private partnership. He noted that a raised causeway provides mitigation options for the mobility and preservation of habitat. A speaker noted that the area of Deer Creek is different from that of the habitat around the Yolo Causeway, and there may be substantial challenges in mitigating the negative environmental impacts for this unique area.
- In response to a speaker inquiry regarding the shifting number of lanes currently on Grant Line Road, Diane Nguyen, Transportation Program Manager, described current planning efforts by the City of Elk Grove to widen Grant Line Road to Waterman Road. She explained the plan consists of an expansion to four lanes with the expectation to begin construction in the later part of 2009, including an overcrossing at the railroad and an intersection improvement at Grant Line Road and Waterman Road.
- In response to questions on the cost of the proposed alternative, Vice Mayor Hume offered that the elevated causeway alternative would likely generate the additional cost associated with the tunnel variant, in the amount of \$500 million, but would open the possibility to explore alternative funding mechanisms.
- In response to describing the viable process to add an alternative for the environmental review, Mr. Zlotkowski explained that the Connector JPA would have to review and accept the alternative. He noted that the next six months would be the window to engage the Connector JPA, both to the board and through the environmental review process, to consider additional alternatives.
- In answer to the question of how many stoplights are projected to be placed along the Connector project, Mr. Zlotkowski responded that the matter is contingent on the local governing bodies, but the Connector JPA prefers as few as possible. He noted that the worst case scenario is estimated at 35 stoplights.

- A speaker inquired if other cities involved with bypass projects, such as East Nicolaus and Lincoln, have been contacted to discuss their efforts, challenges and successes.

Supervisor Nottoli encouraged community involvement as the process continues and expressed a desire to see similar outreach opportunities in the future.

Vice Mayor Hume thanked community members for their efforts in organizing and assisting with the Elk Grove – Rancho Cordova – El Dorado Connector Summit program. He announced that the current website for the Connector project can be accessed at: [www.connectorjpa.net](http://www.connectorjpa.net).

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no additional business to conduct, the special City Council meeting of August 19, 2008 was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

  
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JASON ROLF LINDGREN,  
ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

ATTEST:

  
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GARY DAVIS, MAYOR of the  
CITY OF ELK GROVE