

## NEWS

### Sheldon workshops create possible routes for connector project

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Photos by Keri Wood John Hykes, (far left), a senior associate and project manager with Berkeley-based Design, Community and Environment, has spent weeks in a rented outreach office in Sheldon. He helped lead a design workshop this weekend to craft possible routes for a connector road through Sheldon.

**By Cody Kitaura - Citizen Staff Writer**

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If Grant Line Road is destined to become an expressway through Sheldon, residents now have a better idea of what it might look like.

Design consultants and dozens of residents participated in a weekend-long workshop in Sheldon to hammer out details of what the proposed road to connect Highway 50 in El Dorado Hills with I-5 and Highway 99 south of Elk Grove may look like if a route widening Grant Line Road through Sheldon is chosen.

The two alternatives created this weekend focused on what Grant Line Road would look like if it were widened to six lanes and turned into a "limited-access roadway" with no residential driveways and only a few intersections.

Other possible connector routes traveling along Sunrise Boulevard or Bradshaw Road will also be studied further.

If Grant Line Road is chosen as the final route, officials will have several options for the Sheldon section of the road – the two alternatives created this weekend, a "bypass" that would create a raised causeway through the Cosumnes River Floodplain, and a "no build" option that would not limit intersections or close driveways along the road.

The weekend workshops were focused on creating more specific details for the limited-access roadway, but did not mean that option would be preferred over the others.

The results of the workshop will be presented to the Capital Southeast Connector Joint Powers Authority (JPA), the multi-agency board overseeing the project, at its Aug. 12 meeting in Rancho Cordova. That board will study potential environmental impacts of each route and begin to narrow them down next year.

JPA Executive Director Tom Zlotkowski stressed that a final route for the project won't come for some time.

"At the length of the room, we're at the front door and a decision on actually getting this thing built is at the back door,"

Zlotkowski said.

The road is scheduled to be complete by 2025.

In the end, the two alternatives crafted by the residents and Berkeley-based consultants Design, Community and Environment were largely identical except for the downtown Sheldon area of Grant Line Road, where one option curved south to bypass the area, leaving it intact.

The other option took the six-lane road straight through downtown Sheldon.

The "mini-bypass" idea found support from some residents who wanted to see the area's historic center preserved, but was opposed by business owners who wanted more traffic pass their shops.

Stephen Leonard of Grant Line Vet Hospital was in favor of routing the expressway straight through the downtown area.

"You can put up the biggest signs in the world, and if the access goes around and you lose the visibility, the businesses die," Leonard said during the final meeting on July 12.

Sheldon resident Dave Young said if the option curving around downtown is chosen, many local customers would likely move out of the area.

"If you want to give us up in order to take a chance that somebody's going to drive by your building and pull in there and buy a sandwich, go ahead and drive it through there and you won't have us anymore," Young said.

Other attendees worried that the other options, such as the raised bypass through the floodplain, were being ignored altogether.

Tom Franzoia, a Sheldon resident working as a "liaison" between the JPA and the community, said he has always been a supporter of that alternative.

"(Sheldon needs) a local roadway and a connector roadway, and I don't believe Grant Line Road can (serve) as both," Franzoia said after the meeting.

The final meeting of the weekend was at times heated, and stretched until 9 p.m. Design, Community and Environment staff members said they had worked until 10:30 p.m. the previous day in the rented office on Grant Line Road.

The meeting was attended by Elk Grove city staff such as Interim Planning Director Taro Echiburu and Capital Improvements Manager Diane Nguyen, who said they were observing the process and happy with the amount of participation from the community.

Zlotkowski worried that attendees and staff were focusing too closely on minor details that could change in the future or become irrelevant if another route is chosen.

"I don't want anybody to feel like we're deciding everything here at the (more broad) project level," he said, later adding: "We will support additional study here if the (limited-access roadway) becomes the chosen option of the three we already have."

Details of the proposed routes can be viewed at [www.SheldonGLRVisionPlan.com](http://www.SheldonGLRVisionPlan.com) and [www.ConnectorJPA.net](http://www.ConnectorJPA.net). The JPA board will meet at 8:30 a.m. on Aug. 12 at Rancho Cordova's City Hall, 2729 Prospect Park Drive.

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