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NEWS

Connector board to discuss environmental document

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The Capital Southeast Connector Joint Powers Authority (JPA), which includes representation from the city of Elk Grove, will meet at 6:30 p.m. on July 20 to discuss the newly finalized environmental document.

The two-volume draft Program Environment Impact Report (PEIR), which was released earlier this year and was more than 1,200 pages in length, was finalized on July 19 after comments received from the public were incorporated into the revised document.

The proposed connector is a 35-mile stretch that aims to provide a transportation route between Interstate 5 and El Dorado County. From Interstate 5, the route would run along Kammerer and Grant Line roads in Elk Grove toward and into El Dorado County.

"At this stage, the programmatic document has taken a broad-brush stroke," said Elk Grove City Council Member Pat Hume, who sits on the JPA board of directors.

JPA Executive Director Tom Zlotkowski said the board is not required to hold a public hearing to announce the release of the final PEIR but is required when certifying the large document.

Zlotkowski said certifying the document means the material contained in the document is accurate. He said the action would be made at the JPA meeting next month when the board is also expected to adopt a proposed general alignment.

However, the executive director said he and the board wanted to give people another opportunity to ask questions and time to review the final PEIR.

While the normal review time for a final environmental document is 10 days, the final document will have been available for 24 days when the board meets on Aug. 12.

"We are trying to be as transparent as we can with our answers," Zlotkowski said.

Both Zlotkowski and Hume noted that the release of the final PEIR is just one step in a long process.

"People who have been following along will understand this is just one sequence," Hume said.

The executive director said no planned construction can begin without some form of habitat conservation plan or a financing plan.

He said presentations will be given in the coming months to the JPA's member jurisdictions that include the cities of Elk Grove, Rancho Cordova, and Folsom along with Sacramento and El Dorado counties.

Both the July 20 and Aug. 12 meetings will be held at the Rancho Cordova City Hall, 2729 Prospect Park Drive in Rancho Cordova.

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