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NEWS

Workshop held for future connector project

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The Capital SouthEast Connector board held a public workshop on April 14 in Elk Grove to discuss the recent release of the draft program environmental impact report (PEIR).

The meeting was among the five to be held in each jurisdiction that is represented on the Joint Powers Authority (JPA).

About 70 people showed up for the meeting in the Elk Grove City Council chambers, making that crowd equal to the combined attendance for the April 12 meeting in El Dorado County and the April 13 event in Rancho Cordova.

There were also meetings held April 19 on Branch Center Road in south Sacramento County and April 20 in Folsom.

The focus of each meeting was on the draft report, which was released on March 15 and consists of two volumes with a total of 1,210 pages.

There were charts, graphics, and statistics that provided information on air quality impacts and the environmental process.

"It's good to have people process the information," said Elk Grove City Council member Pat Hume, who represents the city on the JPA.

The draft report includes information about the proposed 35-mile corridor that is planned to run from El Dorado County near Highway 50 along Grant Line Road out to Interstate 5. The public is allowed to review and comment on the draft until May 13.

"I hope they provide comments and they will be responded to in the final PEIR document," Hume said.

At the meeting in Elk Grove, people could write their comments and place them in a comment box or verbalize comments to a person who typed in the statements.

The connector is comprised of five segments, each of varying lengths, proposed dates for construction, and proposed dates of operation.

The 6.23-mile "Kammerer Road" segment that will run between Interstate 5 and Highway 99 is slated to be built from 2015 to 2017 and begin operation in 2018.

The "Bond Road" segment from Highway 99 to Bond Road is 4.21 miles and will be built from 2016 to 2018 with operation to begin in 2019. There is also a small stretch of road that is based solely in El Dorado County.

The biggest segment known as the "Expressway" is 18 miles long and runs on Grant Line Road by Calvine Road to the El Dorado County line.

Connector JPA Executive Director Tom Zlotkowski said at the board's March meeting that this stretch of road may include tolls to help offset construction costs.

At the meeting in Elk Grove, Zlotkowski pointed out that the potential tolling component is not included in the PEIR because the former deals with financing while the latter focuses on the environment from a programmatic perspective.

"They run concurrently, but they are not attached," he said.

That segment is just north of the neighboring "Sheldon" segment that will run from Bond Road to Calvine Road.

The stretch of 2.72 miles runs through Sheldon and is slated for construction from 2018 to 2020 with operation to begin in 2021.

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