

Informal summit to explore connector

On Tuesday, residents and leaders from around the region will get together at Elk Grove City Hall, 8400 Laguna Palms Way, beginning at 6:30 p.m. to hear about and discuss the Elk Grove-Rancho Cordova-El Dorado Connector project.

This informal summit is being sponsored by the Elk Grove Community Connection and will be hosted and facilitated by Sacramento County Supervisor Don Nottoli and myself. Both Supervisor Nottoli and I, along with other regional elected officials, are members of a joint powers authority charged with planning, environmental review, engineering design and development of the connector.

Identified in both the Sacramento Area Council of Government's Blueprint plan and the 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the connector is one of the major projects funded partially under the new Measure A that voters resoundingly passed in 2006. It is the sole focus of the JPA, with representatives from the cities of Elk Grove, Folsom and Rancho Cordova and El Dorado and Sacramento counties.

The connector will link Interstate 5, Highway 99 and Highway 50. Regional and local transportation officials have recognized the need for a connection between I-5 and Highway 50 for years.

As the region continues to grow and change, there is a challenge to protect residents' quality of life while continuing to enjoy the benefits of economic growth. This, and other opportunities for improvement over the old model, is at the forefront of the search for solutions.

Once considered for a southeast segment of a beltway freeway system in the 1950s, the new iteration of the connector promises to be much more innovative. This vital connection will not only improve mobility for people, goods and services but also looks to be cutting edge as a multi-modal system to improve

GUEST COMMENTARY



Patrick Hume

transit efficiency and non-vehicular connectivity. It is shaping up to be much more than just a road.

Though still early in a long timeline, the JPA has hired an executive director, Tom Zlotkowski, and has issued a request for proposals for a firm to undertake the environmental processing. Zlotkowski will be at the summit to give a summary overview presentation on the connector project and status. No formal decisions related to alignments or design have been made.

There also will be a community association presentation and an ample question-and-answer period. We all look forward to a fruitful discussion.

As vice mayor of Elk Grove, I believe this is a fantastic opportunity to come together and start early to get everyone well informed. Residents will be brought up to speed on the process and timeline and the electeds can hear early questions and concerns. Whether this is the first you've heard of the connector, or if you've followed the progress from the beginning, this is a great chance to participate in a relaxed open environment.

The evening will begin with a networking buffet "meet and greet" reception at 6:30 p.m. and then convene for presentations and discussion at 7 p.m.

The program also will include a few surprises ending with a special drawing. In the spirit of community, donations will be accepted for the Elk Grove Community Network Assistance.

So, come out and join us for what is sure to be a lively and informative exchange and to learn more about this important undertaking.

Hope to see you there.

Patrick Hume is the vice mayor of Elk Grove.

8/14/08
Sae Bee