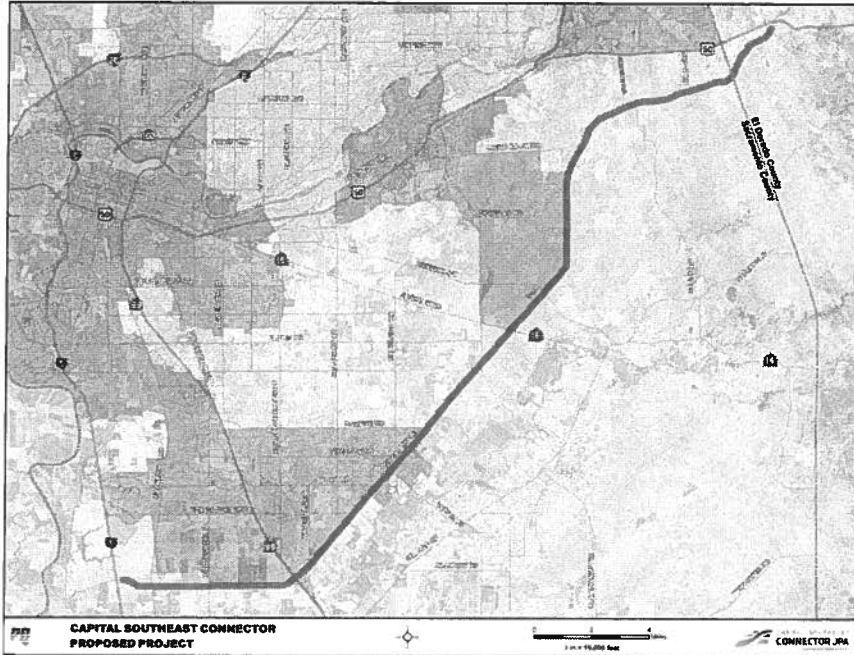


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Folsom approves Capital SouthEast Connector alignment



The Folsom City Council was the first of the five jurisdictions in the Capital SouthEast Connector Joint Powers Authority to pass a resolution approving the general alignment adopted by the JPA board of directors on March 7. The Folsom City Council voted unanimous support at its regular meeting on April 10.

JPA Connector Executive Director Tom Zlotkowski presented the matter before the Folsom City Council. He said planning for a multi-modal transportation corridor that would connect Interstate 5 and Highway 50, ease commutes and relieve traffic time has lasted more than two decades.

The JPA board considered four alternative alignments. The members selected Alternative II. The general alignment for the 35-mile corridor goes along existing and planned roadways from Interstate 5 at the Hood Franklin Road interchange, east along Kammerer Road, Grant Line and White Rock roads where it meets with Silva Valley Parkway at Highway 50. The portion in Folsom's jurisdiction is White Rock Road from Prairie City Road to the El Dorado County line. This section defines the southern limit of the 3,500 acres between Highway 50 and White Rock Road that the Sacramento County Local Area Formation Commission approved for annexation by the city on Jan. 18.

In November 2004 Sacramento County voters approved Measure A, a countywide 0.5 percent sales tax to be levied over 30 years that will pay a portion of the connector project's construction.

After three years of meetings with community residents, local agencies and other stakeholders, in 2005 the Sacramento Area County of Governments approved the concept plan.

The Capital SouthEast Connector JPA was formed in December 2006 by five jurisdictions. The JPA agreement authorizes the agency to provide for the coordinated designation, acquisition, planning, design, financing, construction, operation and maintenance of the connector project.

The members are El Dorado and Sacramento counties and Folsom, Rancho Cordova and Elk Grove cities. The current representatives are El Dorado County Board of Supervisors Chair John Knight, who serves as 2012 JPA chair, Sacramento County Board of Supervisors Chair Don Nottoli, Folsom City Councilman and former mayor Jeff Starsky, Rancho Cordova Mayor Dave Sander and Elk Grove Vice Mayor Patrick Hume.

The JPA board ordered a Programmatic Environmental Review to study the environmental impacts of the over-all concept. The EIR made the rounds of public review. After it was certified, the board pulled it back to rewrite two sections in response to a court decision that might have bearing on the EIR. Following additional review, the board recertified the EIR on March 7 and selected the preferred alignment.

The connector will link communities, commercial and recreation areas. The project will accommodate bicycle,
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transit, auto and pedestrian travel. The design includes open space and habitat preservation.

The Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan describes the connector as an expressway with six travel lanes and limited access points, separated from the specific plan area by a 50-foot wide natural parkway. The connector may narrow when it crosses the El Dorado County line.

Zlotkowski said doing the project as a whole will be more beneficial and cost less than if each jurisdiction builds its roads piece by piece.

Mayor Howell asked if construction could start at El Dorado Hills-Folsom rather than the west end of the project. "White Rock has higher traffic counts," she said.

She also asked whether the "doglegs," the 90-degree turns at White Rock and Grant Line would be straightened. Zlotkowski said that Sacramento County already has a grant to do just that, and that he would be working with the county to make certain that the work lines up with the Connector.

Starsky said he views the Connector project as vital to attracting other major manufacturing companies to Folsom. "It's a job producer," he said.

Chairman Knight reported in an email that he is trying to get the El Dorado County resolution on the agenda in May. "It is vital that this project works for the El Dorado Hills Business Park," he said in an interview.

Zlotkowski is looking for approval from all five jurisdictions within the next few months. The following step will be another series of community meetings to discuss the design of the connector.