

The following section of the Draft EIR contains a description of the proposed Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 Interchange Modification project, consistent with the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15124. As described in Section 15124 of the CEQA Guidelines, a complete project description shall contain the following information: (1) the location of the proposed project; (2) a statement of project objectives; (3) a general description of the project's characteristics; and (4) a statement describing the intended uses of the EIR. The CEQA Guidelines state that a project description need not be exhaustive, but should provide the level of detail needed for the evaluation and review of potential environmental impacts.

3.1 PROJECT HISTORY

The continued expansion of the City of Elk Grove and south Sacramento County has precipitated the need for the Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 Interchange Modification project. Many new businesses, communities, and schools have been developed in various parts of the city, which have resulted in increased traffic and road wear.

State Route (SR) 99 originates south of Bakersfield and terminates at SR 36 near the City of Red Bluff to the north. SR 99 runs in a northwest/southeast direction through the City of Elk Grove as a four- to six-lane grade-separated freeway. Elk Grove Boulevard is an east/west arterial connecting Interstate 5 with Grant Line Road. Increased traffic in the City of Elk Grove has led to congestion during peak hours on Elk Grove Boulevard at the existing Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 Interchange.

The current Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 on-ramps to both the north and south directions of SR 99 are signalized with turn lanes in each direction from Elk Grove Boulevard. The current northbound off-ramp from SR 99 onto East Stockton Boulevard is stop-sign controlled. The current southbound off-ramp from SR 99 to Elk Grove Boulevard is signal controlled, with two left turn and two right turn lanes.

CITY OF ELK GROVE TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The City of Elk Grove Transportation Capital Improvement Program 2005–2010 (TCIP) describes transportation capital improvements planned by the City for the five-year period from fiscal year 2005/06 through fiscal year 2009/10 and sets forth a funding strategy for their implementation. The Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 Interchange Modification project is a part of the City TCIP.

3.2 PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

The Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 interchange is located in the south central region of Elk Grove, California. Elk Grove is approximately 14 miles southeast of downtown Sacramento and approximately 12 miles north of the Sacramento County/San Joaquin County boundary. The proposed modifications would take place in the area of the existing Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 interchange (see **Figure 2.0-1**, Regional Location Map, and **Figure 2.0-2**, Project Location Map).

The northeast portion of the site consists of commercial land uses, with apartment buildings and residential subdivisions farther east. The southwest portion of the site consists of a cemetery, gasoline station, and additional commercial development, with a park and ride lot, a former Caltrans maintenance yard, vacant land, residential subdivisions, and a mobile home park farther east. Land to the west of the project site is developed with commercial retail, an auto park, and business.

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

EXISTING CONDITIONS

During the PM peak hour, drivers experience unacceptable level of service (LOS) E and F conditions and vehicle queues that routinely exceed available storage, block adjacent intersections, and contribute to vehicle queuing on the southbound off-ramp. This condition is exacerbated by poor lane utilization of the east- and westbound outside through lanes on Elk Grove Boulevard. The following conditions contribute to poor lane utilization along the corridor:

- The transitions from three to two through lanes east of Emerald Vista Drive (eastbound) and west of Auto Center Drive (westbound);
- The close spacing between the ramp-terminal intersections;
- The controlled eastbound Elk Grove Boulevard to northbound SR 99 on-ramp movement; and
- Inefficient traffic signal coordination.

ROADWAY DEFICIENCIES

A three-year traffic accident history (April 2001 to March 2004) for SR 99 between Grant Line Road and Laguna Boulevard/Bond Road was provided in a traffic analysis prepared by Fehr and Peers based on the TASAS database maintained by Caltrans. The most frequent types of accidents are rear-end and hit-object collisions, which is an indicator of congested conditions and narrow lateral distance.

Existing conditions were provided in a traffic analysis prepared by Fehr and Peers based on AM and PM peak hour volumes at study intersections collected from fall 2004 traffic counts, and on AM and PM peak hour volumes on the SR 99 mainline at Elk Grove Boulevard from Caltrans 2005 traffic counts. The following freeway and arterial facilities were studied:

Freeway Mainline

- SR 99 – Grant Line Road to Elk Grove Boulevard
- SR 99 – Elk Grove Boulevard to Laguna Boulevard/Bond Road
- Ramp Junctions
- Northbound SR 99 Off-Ramp to East Stockton Boulevard
- Northbound SR 99 Diagonal On-Ramp from Elk Grove Boulevard
- Southbound SR 99 Off-Ramp to Elk Grove Boulevard
- Southbound SR 99 Diagonal On-Ramp from Elk Grove Boulevard
- Northbound SR 99 On-Ramp from East Stockton Boulevard (Proposed Project)

Intersections

- Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 Southbound Ramps
- Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 Northbound Diagonal On-Ramp
- Elk Grove Boulevard/East Stockton Boulevard
- SR 99 Northbound Ramp(s)/East Stockton Boulevard

Travel demand forecasts show that without the proposed project, most of the study intersections would operate unacceptably at LOS E or F in 2030 during at least one peak hour with less than 77 percent of the corridor travel demand served. Average vehicle queues on the southbound and northbound off-ramps would exceed available storage and extend onto the SR 99 mainline.

Demand for travel on Elk Grove Boulevard and the Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 interchange will increase with planned development south of Elk Grove Boulevard, resulting in peak hour spreading (i.e., an increase in the number of hours that drivers experience “peak hour” conditions). Consequently, drivers may seek alternative routes to bypass the Elk Grove Boulevard corridor, which will increase travel times and congestion on adjacent roadways like Bruceville Road, Big Horn Boulevard, Laguna Springs Drive, Laguna Boulevard, and Sheldon Road.

The proposed project will increase the number of vehicles served at most intersections in the AM peak hour by 8 percent and all of the intersections in the PM peak hour by 4 to 8 percent, which indicates an increase in interchange capacity. Consequently, more drivers will be able to use the interchange during peak hour conditions with the proposed project, which may reduce traffic on alternative routes.

3.3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 Interchange Modification project is to reduce congestion on Elk Grove Boulevard through the ramp intersections. Elimination of the traffic signal on Elk Grove Boulevard at the existing northbound on-ramp and the left turn from eastbound Elk Grove Boulevard to the northbound diagonal on-ramp will largely relieve traffic congestion on both eastbound and westbound Elk Grove Boulevard and improve traffic flow.

3.4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project would modify the existing Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 interchange by eliminating the traffic signal on Elk Grove Boulevard at the existing northbound on-ramp and eliminating the left turn from Elk Grove Boulevard to the northbound on-ramp, and providing a new northbound hook on-ramp from East Stockton Boulevard to northbound SR 99 (refer to **Figure 2.0-3**). The interchange improvements project would include the following features, as shown on **Figure 2.0-4**:

- Provide a new northbound hook on-ramp from East Stockton Boulevard to northbound State Route 99 having two metered mix flow lanes and transition to a one-lane freeway entrance.

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Close the left turn from Elk Grove Boulevard to northbound on-ramp with a raised median across the ramp intersection, eliminate the traffic signal, and lengthen the single left turn lane to the southbound on-ramp.
- Modify the intersection at Elk Grove Boulevard and East Stockton Boulevard to provide a free right turn lane from Elk Grove Boulevard to southbound East Stockton Boulevard.
- Widen East Stockton Boulevard on the west side between Elk Grove Boulevard and the northbound ramp intersection to provide one additional dedicated right turn lane, shoulders on both sides for future bike lanes, raised median, and curb, gutter, and sidewalk on the west side.
- Add a bicycle lane within the traffic lanes a short distance to the East Stockton Boulevard/SR 99 ramps intersection to allow bicycle traffic through the intersection.
- Widen the northbound off-ramp to provide two lanes at its intersection with East Stockton Boulevard and signalize the northbound off-ramp intersection with East Stockton Boulevard.
- At the modified off-ramp intersection on East Stockton Boulevard, provide an access road to the shopping center on the east side.
- Northbound on East Stockton Boulevard, north of the ramp intersection, modify the existing bus stop to a bus turnout.
- On East Stockton Boulevard, provide an intersection and access road to the former Caltrans parcel and park and ride lot. The intersection will have right turns in and out only.
- Southbound on East Stockton Boulevard, provide a bus turnout south of the ramp intersection.
- Provide a soldier pile retaining wall along SR 99 immediately south of the existing overcrossing bridge to avoid the existing cemetery.
- The Elk Park Village Shopping Center entrance and a portion of its parking lot would be reconfigured.
- A former Caltrans equipment building, water supply well, and associated well shed would be demolished and removed.
- Add a second left turn only lane on westbound Elk Grove Boulevard to the southbound SR 99 on-ramp on the western portion of the overpass bridge. This will require widening the southbound on-ramp to receive two lanes that would then merge back into one lane prior to entering the freeway.

3.5 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT REMOVED FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION

Two alternatives, Alternative 3 and Alternative 4, were considered during the project development phase, but were removed from further consideration because they did not meet the project objectives.

Alternative 3 and Alternative 4 were similar and included construction of a new on-ramp loop to provide access for eastbound traffic on Elk Grove Boulevard traveling north on SR 99, as is included in the proposed project; however Alternative 3 would have retained a single left turn lane onto northbound SR 99 and signal on eastbound Elk Grove Boulevard and designated it as a high occupancy vehicle (HOV) access lane during peak hours. Alternative 4 would have retained a dual left turn lane and signal on eastbound Elk Grove Boulevard and designated the lanes as HOV access lanes during peak hours. These alternative were removed from further consideration after it was determined that the configurations would result in potential traffic queuing in the eastbound direction if HOV traffic utilizing the left turn pocket(s) exceeded the pocket storage length and that the configuration offering drivers more than one option for entering northbound SR 99 would be confusing and potentially result in poor traffic flow.

3.6 REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS, PERMITS, AND APPROVALS

CITY OF ELK GROVE

The City of Elk Grove City Council, as the City's legislative body, is the approving authority for the project. The City will consider the following actions in association with the proposed project:

- Certification of the Elk Grove Boulevard/SR 99 Interchange Modification EIR by the Elk Grove City Council prior to or concurrent with approval of the proposed project.
- Adoption of Findings and a mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP) in association with the proposed project. After certifying the final EIR, the City of Elk Grove must adopt findings under the CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15090, 15091, and 15093, describing the disposition of each significant effect identified in the EIR. In addition, the City is required to adopt an MMRP for the changes made to the project or conditions of project approval adopted in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment.
- Acquisition of property determined as necessary for project construction.

OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY APPROVALS

Additional subsequent approvals and permits that may be required from local, regional, state, and federal agencies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Caltrans approval of any activity within Caltrans right-of-way – encroachment permit
- Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board – 401 Water Quality Certification and SWPPP approval
- United States Army Corps of Engineers -- 404 Permit