



## **Old Town Elk Grove Improvement Project Construction Update Meeting – May 17, 2005 Recap**

### **Meeting Summary**

On Tuesday, May 17, 2005, the city of Elk Grove's Old Town Elk Grove Improvement Project team and city staff invited local merchants to a construction update meeting at the Elk Grove Grange Hall. Held at 8 a.m., the meeting provided local merchants the opportunity to learn more about construction status, upcoming construction activities and potential construction impacts. Approximately 20 people attended the meeting. A question and answer period followed the presentation.

### **Welcome/Introductions**

Lucy Eidam, project team communications advisor and facilitator, welcomed attendees to the meeting. After self-introductions, Lucy discussed the meeting purpose, which was to allow local merchants to hear more about construction status and discuss potential impacts with the project team and city staff.

Lucy also informed attendees about the city's plan to keep them informed throughout the construction project. Merchants were asked for additional feedback about the best ways to keep the public informed during construction.

This plan includes some of the following steps:

- ◆ Door hangers – to be hung on each door prior to implementation of new construction activities that could impact businesses.
- ◆ Weekly construction update meetings – of which, this meeting is the first opportunity for merchants to meet directly with project team since construction began.
- ◆ Weekly postings of project schedule at the Elm Building, online and to the e-mail distribution list.
- ◆ Regular one-on-one visits from project team and city staff.
- ◆ Project hotline – operators available to take calls and triage information to project team (operable 24-7 at 877-577-0629).
- ◆ Adding signage and handbills to inform the public about available public parking lots.

### **Construction Status**

After Lucy's introduction, Carl Sloan, assistant resident engineer for the project and the person responsible for overseeing the construction contractor, presented an update on construction progress.

Carl presented the following information:

1. Phase 1, construction of the parking lot behind the Toronto Hotel, is largely complete. Some work remains (landscaping, minor paving), but the parking lot is open to the public.
2. Since construction began in mid-April, nine working days have been lost due to unsuitable materials and unforeseen conditions found in the parking lot. The contractor was unable to work an additional four days because of unusual, substantial rain.
3. Carl told the group that, even with the lost working days, the contractor finished the parking lot only three days behind the contract schedule.
4. Although attendees were told to expect additional lost working days due to unsuitable materials and unforeseen conditions through project completion, the city is looking to make up time wherever possible. A couple of options being considered in order to finish construction by Thanksgiving include:
  - ◆ Working two shifts per day, one at night and one during the day on a one-week trial basis.
  - ◆ Working an additional night shift.

The city will evaluate production figures and potential impacts to businesses, among other considerations, to determine a definite approach.

5. Finishing the project by Thanksgiving remains the city's goal. It is thought that much of the merchants' revenue is made during the holiday shopping season and an extension of construction beyond Thanksgiving could result in significant delays due to the rainy season.

### **City Efforts to Promote Old Town**

After Carl completed his updates, Reid Montgomery, economic development manager for the city of Elk Grove, discussed the city's efforts to promote Old Town to the general public. First and foremost on the city's priority list is providing additional public parking and then informing the general public about this parking through appropriate signage and other materials.

Some of the steps to provide public parking include:

- ◆ Completed parking lot behind Toronto Hotel.
- ◆ Made agreement with Brewery Annex to open up parking lot to Old Town patrons during construction.
- ◆ Working on agreements for public use of parking lots at United Methodist Church and the mortuary (when no events are planned) during construction.
- ◆ In process of obtaining rights to courthouse property.
- ◆ Adding "public parking" and "business is open" signs along Elk Grove Boulevard (includes decorative signs at parking lots and directional sandwich board signage pointing to public parking lots).

Additional community assistance efforts include:

- ◆ Old Town promotions – including working with Old Town Foundation marketing committee to develop insert advertisements in local publications and 30-second public service announcements that promote Old Town and available parking.

- ◆ Public parking maps for businesses to hand out to customers.
- ◆ Walking maps that educate the public about historical structures in Old Town and direct them on a walking tour of the area.
- ◆ Elm Building office and hotline – city staff and project team available to answer merchant questions and assist with construction and other inquiries.
- ◆ Open Air Faire and other events – city lending expertise and other assistance to help Air Faires continue through construction.
- ◆ SBA financial counseling – city can provide contacts for assistance in working with Small Business Administration (SBA).

### Public Comment

After the presentations concluded, various attendees were able to receive answers to their questions by city and project staff. Additional public input was provided and recorded for follow-up by the project team.

**Q = Question      A = Answer      C = Comment      R = Response**

**C:** The primary concern many merchants had with last week's construction is not the loss of on-street parking so much but the fact that little notice was provided and traffic controls were in place when no one was working.

**R:** Although city inspectors did walk door-to-door to inform merchants of the pending construction, additional steps have now been implemented to improve communication. The traffic controls have been removed.

**Q:** Would it be possible when the traffic controls are set for people to park in the middle of the street, between the cones?

**A:** No, because it presents safety concerns.

**Q:** Once the road demolition has occurred, could on-street parking be maintained in the demolition area?

**A:** No, this option is not possible because the demolition area will be 24 inches below the road surface.

**Q:** Will customer access to businesses be maintained?

**A:** Yes, customer access to businesses will be maintained, even during the demolition phase. This will include temporary pavings or other methods to maintain driveway and business frontage inlets and outlets. Each business may experience a 16-hour window in which its frontage access may be restricted. This will be a one-time event to allow construction to continue past each storefront.

**Q:** Will the public be able to turn left out of driveways?

**A:** Every reasonable effort will be made to maintain left-turn driveway access.

**C:** Temporary signage is needed to show people how to get to public parking lots – and that is highly visible. For example, the sign at the Toronto Hotel needs to be posted so that drivers on both sides of the road can see it. Also, the Toronto Hotel parking lot needs to be beautified so it is more inviting to the public. The approach to the parking lot is still only gravel right now.

**R:** Visible signage is in the process of being developed and installed at the available parking lots. Additionally, the owner of the Toronto Hotel has agreed to allow the city to place a banner that promotes public parking on the front façade of the building. The contractor is scheduled to finish the paving, striping and other minor work within two weeks. Not all of it can be completed until a water line can be installed.

**C:** The schedule should be accelerated.

**R:** The city will discuss accelerating the schedule with the contractor. Basically, three items will be considered for expedited completion by the city:

- ◆ Paving the west side of the lot.
- ◆ Providing more signage to promote parking availability.
- ◆ Finishing the striping in the parking lot.

**C:** The Open Air Faire committee is meeting this week to decide whether to proceed with the events as planned or cancel them.

**R:** The city is interested in helping the Air Faires go forward and will offer assistance as it can (**since the meeting, the city has met with the committee and the decision has been made to proceed with this year's events**).

**Q:** Will the contractor (Bay Cities Grading & Paving) attend these meetings in the future?

**A:** Their attendance may be possible occasionally but not regularly. Carl and city project manager Bert Brown are in constant communication with the contractor and are tasked to represent the public interest at weekly meetings with Bay Cities.

## Closing

After the question and answer period concluded, a few remaining items were discussed. A discussion about the public's use of the construction hotline concluded that generally the system is working well but a few minor tweaks need to be made. It was also made clear that any technical questions should be addressed to Carl Sloan or Bert Brown, although other city and project staff will gladly take questions and respond as they are able.

## More Information

- ◆ For immediate assistance to technical construction-related questions, call Carl Sloan at (916) 240-7170 or Bert Brown at (916) 838-1776.

## Upcoming Meetings

- ◆ Weekly construction update meetings: every Wednesday at 8 a.m. at the Grange Hall
- ◆ Old Town Foundation marketing committee meetings: every Wednesday at 9:30 at the Elm Building, Suite 203
- ◆ Open Air Faire planning meetings: every Wednesday at 9 a.m. at BT's Place
- ◆ Old Town Foundation monthly meetings: last Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Mercantile Building

## Next Meeting

- ◆ Weekly schedule postings in Old Town and on Web; weekly meetings
- ◆ Wednesday, May 25, 8 a.m., at Grange Hall