About Elk Grove

Elk Grove began as a stage stop in 1850, on the route to Sutter’s Mill and is one of the oldest white settlements in the Sacramento Valley. It grew into a small farming community before becoming a suburb of Sacramento. It incorporated in 2000 and today it has a population of about 156,000, making it the second largest city in Sacramento County. The population is majority minority, with a large Asian population. The residents have a high median household income of about $79,000.

It is bisected by old US 99 and the main north-south railroad line. Interstate 5 runs close to its western border.

About Old Town Catalytic Site

Old Town Elk Grove is an area about a third of a mile in length, on both sides of Elk Grove Boulevard. It has several blocks of historic buildings that provide charm and character. The Land Use Element of the General Plan states, “Old Town Elk Grove represents a significant resource of local and national importance—Old Town is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as an excellent example of a 19th Century California town.” Because of its historical significance, it has been designated a special planning area, which means development is subject to area-specific design review standards.

The City is fortunate that Elk Grove Boulevard is busy, two lanes, two-ways, and narrow, with on-street parking. The City has made significant public investment in sidewalks and landscaping along Elk Grove Boulevard in Old Town, which is served by Elk Grove’s municipal transit system, E-tran. Businesses in Old Town include restaurants, shops, professional offices, and a funeral home. A successful brewery/pub shut down recently in a signature building that requires significant work for it to be redeveloped.
Project Scope

The City wants to develop a 5-acre city-owned catalyst site to accelerate redevelopment. The property was purchased from BNSF and adjoins the rail line that bisects Old Town, north to south. The railroad imposed a restriction on the property prohibiting residential development, but that may be negotiable if the City can show that the authorized commercial uses might generate even more pedestrians, etc.

Challenges to Overcome

• Disorganized downtown association
• Absentee building owners
• Young city that still needs time to develop its planning capacity
• Lack of community in Old Town

Project Goals

• Better use of park space to attract more people
• Promote community features to capture young professionals and the creative class
Project Elements: Old Town Catalytic Site

Redevelopment

The Sustainability Element of the General Plan for Elk Grove (adopted March 2013) contains this policy statement: “Support higher-density, compact, residential development along transit by placing high density residential or mixed-use sites near transit opportunities.” This strategy is also an element of the City’s 2013 Climate Action Plan. Old Town Elk Grove is served by several E-Tran bus lines, a morning and evening commuter service to downtown Sacramento, a weekend shuttle, and local routes.

Green Design & Infrastructure

As part of this project, the City will consider whether and to what degree it wishes to require the development to meet green building standards. The 2013 Sustainability Element of the General Plan includes the following action item: “Establish a green building incentive program to encourage developers to integrate green design techniques above and beyond the requirements of Action 1. Incentives may include, but are not limited to, expedited review, plan/permit review fee reduction, density bonuses, tax credits, and/or technical assistance.”

Transportation Choices

The General Plan contains a Vision for Elk Grove that “includes an increase in the use of alternative forms of transportation: walking, cycling, public bus transit, and light rail.” The site design could include elements that support the use of buses, bikes, and walking. More generally, the development of the site will create more varieties of uses in Old Town and help it make a transition to a neighborhood where shops and services can be easily accessed without driving.

Equity

There is concern that developing Old Town could lead to rising property values that results in gentrification.
Old Town Catalytic Site Development Team

Gary Davis, Mayor, City of Elk Grove
Contact: gdavis@elkgrovecity.org
Gary is working to innovatively improve the economic climate in Elk Grove and create jobs.

Laura Gill, City Manager, City of Elk Grove
Contact: lgill@elkgrovecity.org
Laura S. Gill has more than 20 years of experience in local government, including 5 years as the El Dorado County Chief Administrative Officer.

Randy Starbuck, Economic Development Director, City of Elk Grove
Contact: rstarbuck@elkgrovecity.org
Starbuck has nearly three decades of economic development experience, more than 20 of which as a department director.

Taro Echiburú, Planning Director, City of Elk Grove
Contact: techiburu@elkgrovecity.org
With more than a decade of experience as a highly respected planner, Director Taro Echiburú was appointed Planning Director by City Manager Laura S. Gill in November 2010. He has worked for the City of Elk Grove for more than seven years, most recently serving as the contract Interim Planning Director.

Mike McKeever, CEO, Sacramento Area Council of Governments*
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Mike McKeever has led the Sacramento Area Council of Governments since December 2004. Over his 30-year career specializing in the field of planning, he has owned and managed two private businesses that specialized in working with local governments on innovative multi-jurisdictional projects. He has been instrumental in developing cutting-edge planning techniques to integrate land use and transportation planning.

Kacey Lizon, Senior Planning Director, Sacramento Area Council of Governments*
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Kacey Lizon is a land use planner and manages SACOG’s long range transportation plan and land use forecasting and analysis program. She received her BS and MRP from Cornell University.

*The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is an association of local governments in the six-county Sacramento region, which includes the Cities of Elk Grove and Rancho Cordova and Sacramento County. SACOG provides transportation planning and funding for the region and serves as a forum for the study and resolution of regional issues. California Senate Bill 375 added a new regional planning requirement called Sustainable Communities Strategy that integrates land use and transportation planning and SACOG has organized the three local governments’ participation in the USA program to help achieve this new requirement.