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Wednesday, July 6th, 2011 | Posted by [Chris Daley](#)

Supes OK Silva Valley SEIR

Certified back in 1991, the Environmental Impact Report for the Silva Valley Parkway Interchange project had to be updated. Consequently the El Dorado County Department of Transportation prepared a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report that was approved by county supervisors during a recent meeting.

Because of the “passage of time,” minor changes to the project and minor changes in environmental laws over the past two decades, it was determined that the SEIR would adequately address new issues, thereby avoiding the need for another, complete EIR.

DOT deputy director Matt Smeltzer gave a PowerPoint presentation to the board outlining the history of the project and detailing the work that will be done in two distinct phases.

Both Smeltzer and deputy county counsel Paula Frantz assured supervisors that because of the relatively insignificant nature of the changes, even after 20 years, the county could proceed with confidence.

Frantz noted that some changes in construction standards were addressed, and “new information has become available regarding noise, asbestos and nighttime construction,” and those were addressed in the SEIR. She added that “every element of the original 1991 EIR was looked at” during the process.

The Silva Valley Interchange project was first adopted in 1987 under the El Dorado Hills Specific Plan and later incorporated into the county’s General Plan and is a major element in the 2010 Capital Improvement Plan undertaken by the Department of Transportation. Funding was begun in 2004 with a “set-aside account allocating approximately 30 percent of Traffic Impact Mitigation fees collected in the area,” according to DOT summary documents.

Phase 1 is estimated to cost just more than \$60 million and is essentially a “partial cloverleaf with loop on-ramps” that will cross over Highway 50 about one mile east of the El Dorado Hills Boulevard interchange. It will consist of four lanes for through traffic on Silva Valley Parkway. The Clarksville Underpass will remain a two-lane local road with Class II bike lanes on each side and a concrete sidewalk on the west side, the documents further describe.

“We anticipate starting Phase 1 construction in the summer of 2012,” Smeltzer wrote in an e-mail to the Mountain Democrat Wednesday. “We will need to acquire all of the land for the Phase 1 prior to starting construction. There are agreements that can be executed to give permission to construct while title transfers take place and are officially recorded,” he explained.

John Knight, whose supervisorial district includes the project area, noted that of potential problems related to the acquisition of three parcels, in fact, two had been mostly resolved.

Phase 1 is expected to take about two years and is projected to be “fully operational” no later than 2020.

“I believe the statement about Phase 1 being operational in 2020 was referring to the expected traffic volumes in 2020 and that we analyzed Phase 1 and found it meets that traffic load,” Smeltzer explained.

Phase 2 will be constructed between 2020 and 2030, according to DOT projections.

“The project purpose has not changed since the 1991 EIR approval,” reads the summary. “The purpose of the project is to accommodate planned growth as noted in the county’s General Plan as well as the El Dorado Hills Specific Plan, and to accommodate commercial and residential development of the area.”

Asked if another SEIR might be required if 15 or 20 more years pass before Phase 2 starts, Smeltzer wrote:

“It is possible an addendum or supplement to the EIR may be required after that much time passes. It will depend on potential changes in the environmental regulatory process and if there are future/new requirements to address. It may also be triggered by a proposed change in the future phase. This project will improve circulation in the El Dorado Hills area and we look forward to its completion,” he concluded.

Related future projects include widening of Silva Valley Parkway and connecting Country Club Drive to the parkway. The Country Club Drive segment is not part of the current project but is a Capital Improvement Program “future project.”

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