
PREFACE

PREFACE: A VISION FOR ELK GROVE



The “Visioning” process was a key component of the General Plan’s preparation

From the beginning of the General Plan program in Elk Grove, a core concept underlying the preparation of the Plan was that it should represent the community’s goals and aspirations. For this reason, an extensive “Visioning” process was conducted during the initial phase of the General Plan’s preparation, with the goal of developing a consensus Vision for the future of Elk Grove.

The following is a summary of the Vision for Elk Grove as it was developed during the public outreach process. This Vision for Elk Grove is reflected in the Goals, Policies, and Action Items of this General Plan,

HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE

VISION FOR ELK GROVE—*Elk Grove in the future is envisioned by the residents to continue to reflect the attributes which brought them to the community: a diversity of high quality residential and commercial areas in a rural setting, a high level of public services provided by the City Elk Grove, and a pleasing environment in which to live and work. The future will also provide more shopping opportunities (including a regional mall), increased employment opportunities, and an increased tax base to support City government and the services it provides.*

RURAL AREAS OF ELK GROVE

Although Elk Grove has seen substantial growth in recent years (primarily west of Hwy 99), much of the city retains the “rural” character which once typified the entire community. In the eastern portion of Elk Grove, including the “Sheldon” area, large lots of two acres in size and more predominate, and animal raising is a common use. Infrastructure in this area is limited, and large trees still line many of the roads, which for the most part remain narrow and less improved than the “modern” roads in the newer parts of Elk Grove.



Typical scene in the eastern, “rural” portion of Elk Grove

VISION FOR ELK GROVE—*The Elk Grove of the future is a community in which the rural portions of the community are valued and retained as an important part of the city. These rural areas are envisioned as continuing to provide a scenic backdrop, where cattle and horses can be raised, and where reminders of the area’s past and its natural history are available to all residents. As development of open lands in the western portion of Elk Grove continues, these rural areas are envisioned to have an increasing importance as a place for a rural lifestyle and as a place where wildlife such as the Swainson’s hawk can continue to find refuge.*

DIVERSIFIED ECONOMIC BASE

The recent period of rapid residential growth in Elk Grove has seen the expansion of retail opportunities available to residents. New retail centers have opened, and most neighborhoods have a wide variety of retail services nearby. The Vision for Elk Grove is that the variety of retail services will continue to increase, and that the city will take its place in the region as a location for more regional shopping opportunities—the Lent Ranch Marketplace regional mall is envisioned to play a key role in the city’s economic future.

Mindful of the need to help reduce regional traffic congestion and air pollution—and to meet the needs of residents of Elk Grove—the residents’ vision also includes an expansion of the city’s role in providing professional employment opportunities in office settings. The General Plan includes substantially more office-designated lands than were previously planned for Elk Grove, expanding the potential for this type of use in the future.

VISION FOR ELK GROVE— *Elk Grove is envisioned to contain a diversity of local and regional retail uses, building on the stores and service providers in existence at the time of the preparation of the City’s first General Plan. New commercial areas will provide many opportunities not only for residents but for persons from throughout the region to shop, eat, and entertain in Elk Grove, bringing increased tax revenues to City government and helping to fund a wider range of public services. In the Elk Grove of the future, many more residents will live and work within the city. New office and other commercial developments provide an opportunity for workers at all levels to find work close to their homes. An increasing number of workers are envisioned to be able to avoid commuting to other cities, helping decrease traffic and decrease air pollution.*



The addition of regional shopping opportunities is part of the City’s vision for the future

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Elk Grove is home to a federally listed Historic District in Old Town, and the residents recognize this area as the historic “center” of town.

The Vision for Elk Grove includes retaining and enhancing this area, as well as historic resources in other parts of the city, for the benefit of current and future residents.

VISION FOR ELK GROVE— *Elk Grove’s historic resources will continue to form an important part of the community’s character, and will be protected and preserved to maintain this important part of the community for future generations.*



Elk Grove in the 1930s, the former Fish Hatchery at Elk Grove Florin and Bond roads



Elk Grove Police motorcycle unit

HIGH QUALITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Essential to a high quality of life are the services provided by local government: police, fire protection, and schools. In Elk Grove, police protection is provided by the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department, under contract to the City. Fire protection and public parks and recreation are provided by the Elk Grove Community Services District, an independent agency. Education is provided by the Elk Grove Unified School District, which enjoys a reputation for high academic quality and which is continuing to add new schools to serve the rapidly growing population of school-aged children.

In addition to these items, the City and other agencies offer a wide variety of essential services which add to the quality of public services: roads, water service, planning, and many others.

VISION FOR ELK GROVE— *The Elk Grove of the future remains a place in which residents expect—and receive—a high level of public services. Where necessary to meet the needs of an expanding population, the level of public services also expands. Because the population will continue to change and grow, public services are envisioned to be adjusted to meet new conditions, and to expand as needed to serve a larger population.*

MANAGED GROWTH

A major concern expressed through the General Plan preparation process was a desire to manage growth in the city. Participants in the process expressed a desire for continued growth which could be managed so that the desirable aspects of Elk Grove are not negatively affected, and the policies of Sacramento County (which allowed the incremental development of major roadways and the creation of wide/narrow “zipper streets”). “Growth is accepted, but should be properly managed,” was the consensus on this issue.



Residential development in Elk Grove

VISION FOR ELK GROVE— *The future envisioned in this General Plan is one in which the City carefully manages the growth of new residential and commercial areas in the City—to the extent possible—by directing growth to those areas where new development can be supported and in a manner which does not cause or add to traffic congestion or other problems. Land use and economic development policies will play a key role in achieving this vision, by directing growth to appropriate areas and by directing economic development efforts. This vision also includes a future in which the planning and financing of public infrastructure is accomplished in a manner that supports the “up front” development of major infrastructure facilities, such as roadways, ahead of need.*

TRAFFIC/CIRCULATION

Traffic congestion is a major concern of many Elk Grove residents. Traffic congestion is seen by the residents of Elk Grove as a solvable problem—the congestion which results on many roadways is due to the partial construction of roadways where full roadways are needed; when the ultimate roadway system is built, most congestion issues will be resolved.

Residents recognize that new roadways are needed to help solve the city's traffic problems, but they also realize that some potential solutions carry with them their own problems. Building new roadways in the rural area would negatively affect the character of those areas by removing mature trees, introducing higher-speed traffic, and placing wide roadways in a rural setting.

Residents also recognize that Elk Grove should not place itself in the role of solving regional problems. If traffic problems are caused by commuters from other cities, or by an imbalance of jobs and housing in the region, then the solution to these problems should come from the region.

Finally, the Vision for Elk Grove includes an increase in the use of alternative forms of transportation: walking, cycling, public bus transit, and light rail. While these are not viewed by Elk Grove as a panacea for the city's or the region's traffic congestion, they are recognized as important parts of the overall movement of goods and people in the city.

VISION FOR ELK GROVE— *The vision for future traffic congestion in Elk Grove is that the City will “hold the line” keeping traffic at manageable levels. This vision, however, recognizes that not all traffic problems can be solved; some congestion may continue because the solution to congestion may be worse than the problem it solves.*



Traffic congestion on some roadways can result in significant delays during “rush hour” periods