

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## **Latest Agreement Advances Elk Grove Zoo Project, Design Firm Selected**

*Sacramento Zoological Society and City of Elk Grove Formalize Roles in Next Phase of the Project*

(May 26, 2022) -- With a continued focus on building a larger, more modern zoological park in the Sacramento region, the [City of Elk Grove](#) and the [Sacramento Zoological Society](#) (SZS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to define roles and responsibilities for the development of a [new zoo in Elk Grove](#).

“The City and the Sacramento Zoological Society are moving forward together with a clear understanding of what to expect from each other on this project,” said Elk Grove Mayor Bobbie Singh-Allen. “The MOU will allow us to take new and exciting steps in the development process that will include the opportunity to more actively engage with the community on this project.”

With the MOU in place, the Sacramento Zoological Society can now begin to advance a capital campaign with potential corporate partners, donors, and community organizations to raise funds for the project.

“Everywhere I go, people ask me, is the new zoo happening? Will the giraffes have more space? Is there a plan to bring back hippos, tigers, and bears? We know that the entire region is excited about the prospect of a new and expanded zoological park and we will need everyone’s assistance to build the new zoo,” said Elizabeth Stallard, President, Sacramento Zoological Society.

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The Sacramento Zoological Society has recently retained [SHR Studios](#), a Seattle-based landscape architectural firm that specializes in the development and design of zoological parks, to create the conceptual plan for the zoo in Elk Grove. SHR has completed projects at zoos within the United States such as Houston Zoo, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo, and the Nashville Zoo. The firm also has international experience designing plans and habitats at locations such as Werribee Open Range Zoo outside of Melbourne, Australia, the Taronga Western Plains Zoo in Dubbo, Australia and the Auckland Zoo, in New Zealand.

"We look forward to working with the team at SHR Studios to create a plan for a new zoo that will combine the best standards in animal care and guest experience to inspire our visitors to make a difference for wildlife," states Jason Jacobs, Executive Director, Sacramento Zoological Society. "In addition to the planning of SHR, our dedicated zoo staff have been collaborating with dozens of other Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) accredited intuitions over the past several months to develop best practices for habitat design, space requirements, and species care."

Staff from Elk Grove and the SZS are developing plans for outreach and engagement events and activities beginning this summer that will provide the public with opportunities to guide and inform the look, feel, and experiences of the Zoo. Online and in person events are being planned. The public is encouraged to register on the project website to receive updates and event announcements at [www.elkgrovecity.org/zoo](http://www.elkgrovecity.org/zoo).

"Giving the community a voice in how this project develops remains a top priority for the City and the Zoological Society," said Elk Grove City Manager, Jason Behrmann. "We want to hear from people of all ages on what amenities and design features are most important to them as we continue through the development process."

Preparation of a facility master plan, conceptual and schematic design, a financing plan, and completion of an Environmental Impact Report are expected to take 18 to 24 months to complete. Formal consideration of the Zoo project by the SZS Board of Directors and the Elk Grove City Council, and potential approval that would advance the project into construction, could occur in late 2023.

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#### **About the Sacramento Zoological Society**

*The Sacramento Zoo is home to nearly 500 native, rare and endangered animals and is one of more than 200 accredited institutions of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The Zoo inspires conservation awareness and action through exceptional animal care, education and recreation, and it welcomes an average of 500,000 visitors a year. The Sacramento Zoological Society formed in 1958 to support and raise funds for the zoo that was created in 1927 in William Land Park. In 1970, the Sacramento City Council adopted the name "Sacramento Zoo." And in 1997, as city funding continued to decrease, the Sacramento Zoological Society assumed responsibility for the Zoo's management and the majority of its financial support. For additional information visit [saczoo.org](http://saczoo.org).*

#### **About the City of Elk Grove**

*Elk Grove is a high-quality suburban community of approximately 178,000 people located 14 miles south of the California State Capitol in the State's affordable Central Valley. Elk Grove is a young, ethnically diverse, modern city that incorporated in 2000. Elk Grove is a family- and business-friendly community with low crime, excellent schools, over 100 community parks, excellent dining and shopping options, numerous annual events and festivals, and over 270 sunny days per year. Major corporations like Kubota, Apple, Amazon, AllData, and the State of California call Elk Grove home. Elk Grove is governed by a five-member City Council consisting of the Mayor and four Council members and is served by the highly regarded Elk Grove Unified School District and Cosumnes Community Services District. Visit us at [investelkgrove.org](http://investelkgrove.org).*