



TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

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HIGHLIGHTS

April 24, 2024

TAMC Board Receives Scenic State Route 68 Corridor Improvement Project Update

The Transportation Agency Board of Directors received an extensive update on the Scenic State Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project.

The Scenic State Route 68 Corridor Improvement project was identified and approved by Monterey County voters in the Transportation Safety & Investment Plan, known as Measure X. The project was identified because the corridor between Salinas and the Monterey Peninsula experiences heavy congestion, travel delays, and safety issues. Daily travel delays are predicted to nearly triple by the year 2045 with the existing intersection traffic controls and lane configurations. Long lines of westbound vehicles queue back during the morning and eastbound traffic queues back in the early evening commute hours. Congestion and safety issues are primarily the result of conflicting traffic movements at the signalized intersections.

The identified needs and improvements to address these safety issues and improve traffic flow along State Route 68, identified in the Scenic State Route 68 Corridor Improvement Project are the following:

1. Improve signalized intersections along the highway between Josselyn Canyon Road and San Benancio Road.
2. Enhance wildlife connectivity.
3. Reduce the rate of collisions between vehicles and wildlife.
4. Improve bicycle and pedestrian access within the project section of State Route 68.

Two alternatives are under consideration to meet the project's purpose and need. They are Alternative 1, which calls for the conversion of signalized intersections to roundabouts, and Alternative 2, which involves signal modifications and lane widening.

After a through explanation of each alternative, followed by public comment and a vigorous discussion by the Board, the TAMC Board of Directors authorized the Executive Director to submit the following recommendations to Caltrans:

1. Select Alternative 1 (Roundabouts) as the preferred project alternative that best meets the project objectives.
2. Identify and pursue funding to construct a Phase 1 of the project that includes improvements to the intersections at San Benancio Road, Corral de Tierra, and Laureles Grade, and associated wildlife crossings.
3. Ensure that roundabout designs for Alternative 1 enable upgrades to hybrid roundabout for the Phase 1 intersections.
4. Continue to work with emergency responders to address project impacts on emergency response times.
5. Request that Caltrans pursue interim operational improvements along the corridor focused on signal coordination including a pilot project to implement adaptive signal operations, with a recommendation to include all nine intersection locations in the pilot program.

Caltrans will consider the TAMC Board of Director's recommendations and incorporate them into the Scenic State Route 68 Corridor Improvement project Final Environmental Document, which is scheduled to be completed in October 2024.

Indexed for inflation, Measure X has \$60.5 million dedicated towards improvements on the Scenic State Route 68 corridor between Salinas and the Monterey Peninsula. The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) will fund the project through final design and the preparation of a bid package for construction. The Board action will allow staff to pursue funding options that can leverage Measure X funds for construction of Phase 1 improvements and support a pilot project to implement adaptive signal operations as an interim project.