

The Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee

Dear Committee Members,

There is some important Bicycle & Pedestrian safety information that you should be made aware of, as it relates to the proposed Hwy 68 Corridor Improvement Project. Alternative 1, that is being proposed and has already been provisionally preferred by the TAMC Board, is calling for 9 roundabouts (8 of them being single lane) to be constructed on 8 miles of Hwy 68. While one of the Caltrans purposes for the project (on page 7 of the recent DEIR) states “The project proposes to improve bicycle and pedestrian access within the project corridor” **the 9 roundabouts will actually make it less safe for bicyclists and pedestrians** according to published data and recent articles.

Bicycle Safety

You need to know that roundabouts are being removed in the UK due to bicycle safety and operational failure and recent data and reports show clearly that roundabouts are unsafe **(40% increase in the number of fatal or serious injuries)** for bicyclists?

Recent reports are as follows:

An article from The Guardian in March 2015 titled “**Traffic lights are so dictatorial...but are roundabouts on the way out? The UK is quietly replacing roundabouts with traffic lights**” states “It’s just begun. In the west of the city, the doughnut-shaped Cowgate roundabout is next to go, its “hole” filled with polystyrene blocks so they can build a new road over top with traffic lights. The same is happening in other UK cities, which have decided that **signal junctions are better for traffic flow and safer for cyclists.**”

An article published in VELO in March 2021 titled “**Roundabouts suck for Cyclists**” states “A 2008 study of [91 roundabouts in Flanders](#), Belgium showed that the installation of roundabouts led to a 27% increase in “bicyclist injury collisions” and **an increase of more than 40% in the number of fatal or serious injury crashes involving cyclists**. Meanwhile, a 2013 study of more than 300 roundabouts in Denmark found that the installation of roundabouts led to a **65% increase in bike crashes and a 40% increase in injuries.**”

Here is the actual article:

[Roundabouts suck for cyclists: here's why - Velo \(outsideonline.com\)](#)

The proposed single lane roundabouts will force all bicyclists to leave the current bike lane that they enjoy on Hwy 68 and **merge into the vehicle lane with the cars and trucks** while going through each of the 9 roundabouts and thus increase the potential for collisions with fatalities and injuries as described in the data. The only other option is for bicyclists to get off their bikes and walk through the pedestrian walkways. Currently, the bicyclists can proceed through spacious intersections to connect with the bike lane on the other side of the intersections.

Pedestrian Safety

Additionally, it is a well-known fact that is published in many evaluations of roundabouts, that **roundabouts cause significant problems for sight impaired pedestrians** compared to the signalized intersections that are currently installed. I'm not an expert on the subject but it seems obvious that the roundabouts are less safe since the sight impaired cannot evaluate flow and yielding within a roundabout and are at the mercy of vehicles stopping for them to cross as opposed to a traffic signal that lets them know they have a total red light stop for vehicles, before crossing.

TAMC Q & A

Another interesting observation is that while Caltrans falsely promotes that 9 roundabouts will improve things for bicyclists and pedestrians, the TAMC website, in the Q & A section seems to say that not much will change with the proposed project and states:

Will there be new bike lanes?

Bike lanes were considered but unfortunately could not be added with this project. To accommodate bike lanes, additional right-of-way and environmental impact assessment would have been required, both of which are outside of the scope of this project.

At the intersections, there will be accommodations for bicyclists for both alternatives. The roundabout alternative will provide two options for cyclists, to either travel through the roundabout in the vehicle lanes or exit roadway and use a shared use pathway and crosswalk.

While not included in this project at this time, it may be possible to upgrade current bike facilities in the future by improving existing or installing new features along the existing shoulder.

Will there be new sidewalks for pedestrians?

New pedestrian walkways were considered but unfortunately could not be added with this project. To accommodate new walkways, additional right-of-way and environmental impact assessment would have been required, both of which are outside of the scope of this project.

Pedestrians are not prohibited from using State Route 68, but for safety we recommend other options (that is, other pathways or transportation modes) if possible.

At the intersections where pedestrian crossings are currently provided, there will be improvements to the intersections that will provide accessible crossings for pedestrians for both alternatives.

Conclusions

The proposed 9 roundabouts will make it less safe for both bicyclists and sight impaired pedestrians. A better alternative for both groups is **Artificial Intelligence (AI) controlled signals** which can be installed with the current intersections and signals and which will produce better traffic congestion results than roundabouts at a fraction of the cost (\$440,000 versus \$200 Million) plus not make conditions less safe for bicyclists and pedestrians. AI can actually detect the difference between bicycles and vehicles in their smart signal operation. You can learn more about the AI results and operation by going to the website:

[Home - 9 Roundabouts versus Artificial Intelligence Traffic Signals](#)

Thank you for your interest and involvement in advocating for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Dwight Stump