TAMC Board Members 10-28-26

Questions to Caltrans/TAMC from the Public regarding Hwy 68 Project

During the extensive discussion by TAMC Board at the August 26th Board Meeting, following the update on the SR 58 Corridor Improvement Project, **"Board Chair Poduri asked staff to prepare and post answers to frequently asked questions on the TAMC website"** as stated in the published minutes. To date, no FAQs have been posted, so here are some suggested questions from the public that can be posted and answered as soon as possible. It would also be recommended that each Board member have the answer to each question since the Board is tasked with making the final decisions.

1. How long will Phase 1 construction be and will all 3 roundabouts be built at the same time?

2. How will traffic on Hwy 68 be handled during Phase 1 construction and what are the anticipated traffic delays, especially during peak hours?
3. How much delay will Emergency Response Vehicles experience during construction of the Phase 1 roundabouts and how will the proposed road layout allow for movement?
4. Will "Do Drive Beside Trucks" signs be installed at each Phase 1 roundabout to be consistent with Caltrans newly proposed rules for multilane roundabouts that resulted from 3 recent fatalities in a similar 2-lane roundabout?
5. If the 2 lane hybrid roundabouts are promoted as preventing fatalities, why did the 3 separate fatalities recently occur in a similar 2 lane roundabout near Hollister and why is TAMC/Caltrans not addressing those in the Phase 1 Project promotion?
6. Will there be separate bike paths designed within the Phase 1 roundabouts as described at the August TAMC Board Meeting as both grade and longitudinally separated that would be accessed by ramps and where can that design be viewed by the public?
7. What is the predicted reduction in actual transit times for commuters during the AM and PM peak commute through the SR 68 Corridor, produced by the Phase 1 roundabouts, how was it measured and calculated and is it better than the original simulation tests which showed no real improvement in the AM Peak and 5 minutes improvement in the PM Peak commute?
8. Since TAMC has already acknowledged that Phase 1 roundabouts will slow all traffic during the 18 hours of non-peak commute time each day, compared to current conditions, exactly how much actual delay is anticipated during that time?
9. Since the Final EIR (Page 185) noted that 4.000 trees will be removed in constructing 9 roundabouts, how many will be removed in constructing the three Phase 1 roundabouts, including replanting plans, and how extensive will the new retaining walls be?
10. Does TAMC/Caltrans agree with the reported actual testing done by Fire Chief Sargenti, that showed a 32 second delay for firetrucks going through each roundabout as compared to the current signals with Opticom controls?
11. Do roundabouts prevent or reduce collisions that occur outside the actual intersection, including rearend collisions, and if so, what is the basis of that claim?

12. Why has TAMC/Caltrans not been able to identify any similar installation of a series of roundabouts in the USA that produced a measurable reduction in peak commute times and thus report that actual reduction instead of using only computer simulations?
13. If the San Benancio intersection signal is a major cause of the traffic queue in the AM Peak commute as claimed by Caltrans, why does the actual viewed (Caltrans Cameras) back up always begin at the Portola merge while traffic approaching the San Benancio intersection moves slower (20-30 MPH) but steady during the peak time? Is the real cause of the AM Peak commute backup, the merging of 2 lanes to 1 at the Portola ramp on 68?
14. How long will side street traffic need to wait for safe gaps in both lanes to enter the Phase 1 roundabouts when faced with 2 lanes of peak commute traffic on the main line that is very continuous and aggressive and how was it studied?
15. Why was the Board and Public not given the promised simulations of the traffic flow during peak times showing how it copes with the 1400 vehicles per hour.
16. Has Caltrans restricted the AI Adaptive signal performance on the main line by decreasing the amount of side street wait times?
17. Will the Scenic Corridor designation be removed for 68 with roundabout construction which will remove 4,000 trees and install extensive retaining walls that will be "inconsistent with the existing visual character of the corridor" according to page 185 of the Final EIR?
18. Why is TAMC/Caltrans relying solely on accuracy of computer simulation to judge roundabouts effectiveness in reducing peak transit time when the same GHD computer simulations in Nov 2023 of emergency response time delay in each roundabout, showed 8.5 seconds versus the Monterey County Fire Chief test with actual firetrucks that showed a 32 second delay? (a 276% error)
19. Why did TAMC/Caltrans suddenly switch to the term throughput for Phase 1 roundabouts when the "success" measurement for years had been "transit time" that showed the actual commute time for corridor drivers during peak and non-peak times and which was the stated focus of the Draft and Final EIR?
20. Why did Caltrans switch from safer single lane roundabout with less conflict points, to 2 lane hybrid that showed a decreased transit time results of 12 VHD versus 15 VHD for single lane per actual tests done by Caltrans and noted in the Final EIR on page 164?
21. Why did TAMC and Caltrans claim in the original “Fact Sheet” that was posted for years, that roundabouts will reduce emergency response times when Monterey County Fire Chief showed that each roundabout delayed the fire trucks by 32 seconds compared to the current intersections with Opticom that allows the firemen to change signal lights to green?
22. Why does Caltrans and TAMC continue to claim that roundabouts reduce emissions when they force all vehicles, 24/7. to slow from 55 to 20 MPH at each roundabout and then accelerate back to 55 when a recent study on Measurement of Vehicle Tailpipe Emissions by North Carolina State University showed that acceleration emissions are 5 to 10 times greater than idle emissions which are minimally reduced during the 6 of peak commute each day?

23. How can Caltrans/TAMC claim that the 2 lane, Phase 1 roundabouts will reduce all accidents when an extensive 2016 Arizona State study on the “Effect of Roundabouts on Accident Rate in Arizona” showed that 2 lane roundabouts increased accidents by 62% over the signalized intersections that they replaced?
24. How many accidents are anticipated at the merge immediately following each Phase 1 roundabout when the two lanes in the roundabout are forced merge back into one lane in such a short transition?
25. When and how was the public notified of the Hwy 68 Project open house event on November 4, that was recently posted on the TAMC website?

Thank you,

Dwight Stump