

What is the actual “Public/Community Engagement” by TAMC and Caltrans for major Transportation Projects?

Is it appropriate in the spirit of transparency and accountability for Caltrans and TAMC to answer specific questions from the public and respond to information presented that challenges or refutes claims or data that are made by the agencies, regarding major transportation projects? Or is “engagement”, simply posting information online of what TAMC and Caltrans intend to do on transportation projects that use taxpayer money without responding to legitimate inquiries from the Public about the projects? What is the opinion/directive of the Board and what is the directive by the CTC for Caltrans?

In past few years, the Project Manager for the Hwy 68 Project at Caltrans, had acknowledged a number of emails from me and others in the public, on the project and even answered some of the questions. They even promised to respond to a number of challenges to current project benefit claims and safety concerns. But now suddenly, there is a complete refusal to follow up on the promised responses and a total ignoring of any new inquiries, even those trying to clarify the new restrictions of communication between the public and Miovision. All communication on the project receives the same response from John Olejnik, the Chief of the Office of External Affairs that directs us to the “Division of Maintenance” that is listed below:

Mr. Stump, below are the available communication channels for further information and correspondence:

- For information regarding the Scenic State Route 68 Corridor Improvement Project, please refer to the Caltrans project website:
<https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-5/district-5-current-projects/d5-scenic-route-68-improvements>
- For information regarding the Adaptive Traffic Signal Control Pilot Project, please refer to TAMC’s project website:
<https://www.tamcmonterey.org/scenic-state-route-68-salinas-to-monterey>
 - Realtime operational issues can be reported via Caltrans’s Customer Service Request Portal: <https://csr.dot.ca.gov/>

This will continue to be our response going forward for emails on this topic.

Regards,
John Olejnik

Many questions that Board members even deemed appropriate, and requests for specific information on the project that have been directed to the TAMC staff and Todd, frequently do not receive responses. This has now resulted in needing to pursue them through the process of a formal **“Request for Public Records”** which consumes much more time for everyone involved.

Even an email to Todd on Oct 12th, to clarify his verbal statement at the last Board meeting on the new communication restrictions between Miovision, Barry Jones and myself plus the new parameters of communicating on the project, remain unanswered as of today (10-26-26). Todd clearly stated that **“the communications should go through Caltrans”** yet Caltrans is now refusing to respond to any communication, so the end result is a dead end. **Is this “Public Engagement”?**

I even got a similar response from Caltrans on a recent inquire I made to the Caltrans Project Manager for the Castroville/SR 156 Project which is **posted below** along with the response from Caltrans Office of External Affairs. The listed job description for a Caltrans Project Manager is to "communicate with external stakeholders and the public" so why is that not happening?

Remember, if it weren't for challenges made by the public to TAMC staff, the TAMC Board and the Public would still believe the **absolutely false claim** that roundabouts **“reduce emergency response times”** which was on the original “Project Fact Sheet” that was posted on the TAMC Website for many years and even 2 additional years, after being proven wrong by TAMC’s own testing.

I am asking the Board and Caltrans to establish a better and more accountable engagement with the public that is an honest dialogue on important and very costly projects that use public funds and impact the public for many years to come. I can also provide additional specific emails with Caltrans/TAMC staff that the Board requests.

Thank you,

Dwight Stump

Referenced Caltrans Emails

From: Dwight Stump
Sent: Tuesday, September 29, 2026 1:21 PM
To: chad.stoehr@dot.ca.gov <chad.stoehr@dot.ca.gov>
Subject: SR 156/Castroville Blvd Project

Chad,

Heard your presentation at the last TAMC Board meeting and have a few questions that I had discussed with Doug Bilse some time ago, but he did not have the answers and suggested to contact you.

I originally thought this project on 156 was to improve commute time in that corridor as well as safety. The original design options that were presented to the Public in the Draft and Final EIR, listed two different road designs replacing the one signal light on that stretch. Neither alternative, including the one that was selected, had any roundabouts included in the design, and no one at TAMC seemed to know how they appeared and how they improved traffic flow on 156 itself. When I did a search for "roundabout" in the Final EIR, it did not show any mention. When the project ran into extreme cost overruns (\$29.5M to \$47.5M to \$129M reported in the Monterey Weekly), that seemed to be mainly a result of the PG&E gas lines being moved. I had asked Doug to confirm what I thought I heard at one of the Board meetings....That the footprint of one or more of the roundabouts was the main reason for needing to move the gas lines and that situation was new because it was not in the original designs.

<https://publicinput.com/Customer/File/Full/01ae084f-17d9-4877-a815-8217ea3d9b6a>

So, my questions are how did the roundabouts get inserted into the project when they were not part of either original alternative, when was the Public informed about the addition, what do they do to improve the commute on 156 and is it true that their location is the reason for the gas lines needing to be moved and the extreme increase in expenses for the project? How much of the total expense is for the roundabouts, and were other design options considered? While the project removes one signal light for traffic going West on 156 for safety, it seems like the current design is an extreme cost to do so and takes funds away from other improvements on that corridor that would help more with the commute and other dangerous intersections on 156.

Does your report showing construction cost funding of \$75.6M exclude other costs and that is why it is lower than the reported \$129M? When all costs are included, what is the current estimate and what does that do to the original Benefit/Cost Ratio of 5.2? What happens if increasing costs exceed funding totals?

Are other alternatives still possible and being considered? The question during the meeting about if this will improve the commute on 156 could have been answered No, for traffic traveling East and Yes to some unknown degree for traffic going West since the signal light will be removed, unless I am missing something.

Thanks,
Dwight Stump

Caltrans Response:

Olejnik, John@DOT<john.olejnik@dot.ca.gov>
You

Hello Mr. Stump, John Olejnik here from Caltrans Central Coast. Your recent email about the Castroville Boulevard Interchange project has been redirected to me in the Office of External Affairs for response. This project is currently in implementation, approaching construction, and has obtained all the required clearances and permitting to reach these milestones.

Please visit the project website for general information at: [SR156 West Castroville Boulevard Interchange | Caltrans](#)

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Regards,
John Olejnik