

TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

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HIGHLIGHTS

June 28, 2017

Highway 68 Projects Highlighted at the TAMC Board Meeting

Two Highway 68 projects were front and center at the TAMC Board meeting this week: the Holman Highway 68 Roundabout Project and the SR 68 Scenic Highway Plan. TAMC Board members were pleased to learn that the Holman highway Roundabout would be fully operational this Friday, just in time for the 4th of July holiday, and that the project is on schedule to be completed by October. Construction items remaining include some concrete work, paving, installation of directional signage and landscaping.

Following a presentation on the roundabout project, the TAMC Board received an update on the corridor study for the Salinas-Monterey portion of the highway. The study evaluates scenarios that would improve this highway to make it safer and more efficient.

Holman Highway 68 Roundabout Project

Construction of the Holman Highway 68 Roundabout began in late August 2016 and was slowed during the winter months due to excessive rainfall. Yet, in spite of the rain delays, many major construction milestones have already been met, including:

- Reconstructing the southbound Highway 1 off-ramp over Veterans Day Weekend 2016.
- Opening of the free right turn lane from the southbound Highway 1 off-ramp to westbound Holman Highway 68.
- Completing construction of the “teardrop” median at the entrance to Pebble Beach during May 2017.
- Removal of the traffic signal on May 30th, when the intersection switched to yield control.

The project has now entered a new phase with construction focused on building the center island of the roundabout, which is expected to continue into early July. The current construction schedule calls for paving work to be completed in August, prior to Classic Car Week, and all remaining work, including landscaping, to be completed by early October.

Throughout the remaining construction, Transportation Agency staff will continue to meet with stakeholder groups and provide updates on the project website (<http://www.tamcmonterey.org>), in newsletters, news releases, via email and text messages.

SR 68 Scenic Highway Plan Corridor Study

After considerable research, travel demand modeling, and public outreach, staff presented a recommended concept to make affordable, mid-term, operational and capacity improvements on Highway 68 between Salinas and Monterey to the Transportation Agency’s Board of Directors.

TAMC staff originally presented three corridor concepts to the Board for their consideration at the April 2017 Board meeting. All three alternatives also include enhancements to make it easier for animals to cross under the highway, thereby making it safer for both motorists and wildlife. The three concepts presented were:

- Concept 1: Installation of roundabouts at major intersections
- Concept 2: Selective segment widening with roundabouts at major intersections
- Concept 3: Adaptive signalization with some widening

Since April, the project team has been engaged in public outreach to gather public input on the three alternatives. Some of the key findings of the outreach include:

- Strong public interest
- Strong support for roundabouts
- Keep Highway 68 scenic
- Strong opinions for and against widening
- A lack of support for signals

After providing a detailed summary of the outreach results, project manager Grant Leonard presented that the Agency is recommending Concept 1 to the Board of Directors with modifications to accommodate the potential future development of Ferrini Ranch. The modifications would include:

- A roundabout at New Torero Drive;
- Widening the highway near the new intersection; and
- Study highway widening at Corral de Tierra and San Benancio.

The next step in the planning process will be to release the SR 68 Scenic Highway Plan for public review in July, and the plan will be brought back to the Board for adoption on August 23, 2017. Following adoption by the Board, the Plan will move into the next stage of project development with Caltrans, followed by environmental review.

The recommendations in the SR 68 Scenic Highway Plan Corridor Study will help the Agency determine how to use Measure X funds to make improvements on the highway. More information about the study can be found at www.SR68ScenicCorridorStudy.com.

New Federal Program Funds Benefit County Projects

The Transportation Agency was recently notified that \$1.17 million of Regional Surface Transportation Program funds are available for transportation projects in Monterey County. The Board of Directors approved the staff recommendation to program the federal funds to the Castroville Bicycle and Pedestrian Path and Railroad Crossing Project to cover the project's additional costs, while shifting \$248, 249 of local funds from the Castroville project to cover unanticipated costs related to the Holman Highway 68 roundabout project, which cannot use federal funds.