

Letter To TAMC Board for 23 Sept 2026 Meeting

SR68 Highway Project Phase 1

At the June TAMC Board meeting you will recall that I outlined the history of successful SB1 grant applications to CTC for Highway construction Projects with values between \$50-\$150m with particular reference to the associated BCR values.

To refresh your memory I have attached the relevant letter and report to this letter.

At the meeting..as recorded on the Board video ...a Board member asked Staff and the Mark Thomas representative if "they had been successful in being awarded SB1 grants for such projects in the past with a BCR of 1.15"...which is the incredibly low BCR that has been calculated for the SR 68 Phase 1 project.

The representative clearly replied YES.

Having carried out an extensive search of public documentation ...there is no evidence to substantiate such a claim. Indeed there is no publicly available evidence that Mark Thomas' has won an SB1 grant with a submitted BCR of less than 1.5 over the past 5 years...

There is evidence that substantiates several successful Mark Thomas SB1 applications, but publicly retrievable BCRs are 3.53 and >6.25 . However several other successful projects remain in the underlying agency applications files rather than being publicly available.

I therefore ask that at least one Board Member raises this issue during this meeting ...and requests TAMC and or Caltrans staff..or indeed Mark Thomas company ..to provide documented evidence supporting the "BCR 1.15" claim .

I understand that this evidence is available via a request to the CTC for copies of the relevant Exhibit C - Original Application Submittals which are required in SB1 Baseline agreements and include the BCR values . I am

sure that Staf/Caltransf and yourselves would be able to obtain this information far more rapidly than me.

I therefore ask that the TAMC Board do their due diligence and request TAMC Staff/Caltrans to obtain this information ..as it seems crazy to me that the preparation for an SB1 grant submission is racing ahead with such a low BCR and relevant undocumented claim by the Consultant.

I look forward to hearing at least one TAMC Board Member actually ask this question at the meeting.

Barry Jones

Letter To TAMC Board

At the time of writing, the presentation materials and background data have not been posted on the web site. This is particularly poor as the memo appears to be presumptively requesting that the Board simply go ahead and authorize submission of SB1 funding grant process.

Staff are asking the Board to go ahead with a SB1 submission based on a BCR of 1.17

I find it staggering that Staff are asking TAMC Board to continue with the SB1 grant submission based on a BCR of 1.17.

Based on the results from an analysis of publicly available and verifiable information relating to typical successful highway projects in California since 2022..... This simply a most unconvincing BCR figure.

The typical BCR values for successful grant applications are about 3.5 : 1 for highway projects receiving \$50 - \$150m SEE ATTACHED Report

Please ask yourselves truthfully "What is the chance that the CTC will grant the funding on that 1.17 BCR ?".

Indeed the calculations to determine the BCR of the 1.17 are "suspect" and small variations have a large effect on the BCR calculated values.

ON THE COSTS sides

1. An increase of only 15% on the construction costs, during the bid to completion cycle (some 3-4 years) would change the BCR 0.97 instead of 1.17 ie benefit is to stay with Adaptive.

ie additional project cost would be \$10.44m and therefore total project = \$123.14m giving an NPV of 0.949

Indeed there will also probably be increased costs involved on ROW and PS&E

ON THE BENEFITS Slide

1. Travel Time figures ..

No detail is provided as to how these figures have been created relating to allocation of business vis personal travel time ratio.... are they realistic and justifiable/defensible.... or created in favor of a higher total number in order to facilitate the highest NPV benefit value..

2. Collision Reduction figures

No detail is provided as to how these figures have been created relating to allocation relating to predictions of increases in collision rates and types and the resultant cost figures that are used in the assessment consequently facilitating a higher NPV benefit value

RAMIFICATION

If modestly both the above sets of Benefits figures were even 5% lower (Travel time...\$7.99m and Collision Reduction \$4.98m)

and project cost reduced by \$12.97m the new total project = \$253.53m resulting an NPV of 0.843

So given that as above...The typical BCR values for successful grant applications are about 3.5 : 1 for highway projects receiving \$50 - \$150m

This NPV clearly indicates that the 1.17 BCR is a figure that is not convincing or defensible and nowhere near the values that the CTC have been historically granting funds for.

The Board should adhere to the agreement to give the AI Adaptive system a fair and suitable length of time to show further improved results. and and delay the SB1 grant submission to the next cycle.

Barry Jones

California SB 1 Highway Grants

Successful benefit-cost ratios for highway projects receiving \$50 million-\$150 million

The typical successful benefit-cost ratio was about 3.5:1 for California SB 1 highway projects receiving \$50 million-\$150 million.

I treated the range as the SB 1 amount awarded, not total project cost. I also used the two completed biennial decisions covering 2023-2025-the 2022 cycle adopted in June 2023 and the 2024 cycle adopted in June 2025. The 2026 competition is still underway. Award amounts come from the official [2022 SCCP](#), [2024 SCCP](#), [2022 TCEP](#), and [2024 TCEP](#) project lists.

Successful projects with publicly reported BCRs

Successful highway project	SB 1 award	Published BCR
SR-156 Castroville Boulevard Interchange	\$80.3M	2.74
Santa Barbara US-101, 2024	\$109.0M	3.24
Fix 5 Cascade Gateway	\$70.8M	3.30
Tulare Six-Lane/Paige Interchange	\$62.7M	3.40
Santa Barbara US-101, 2022	\$132.4M	3.67
SR-37 Sears Point-Mare Island	\$73.0M	4.11
SR-71 Gap Closure Phase 2	\$80.0M	7.00
Five Cities Multimodal Network	\$61.3M	15.80

Results

- Median: 3.54
- Core successful range: roughly 3.2-4.1
- Full range: 2.74-15.8
- Six of eight publicly documented projects fell between 2.74 and 4.11.
- The simple average is 5.41, but that is misleading because the 15.8 project is an extreme outlier.

This is a publicly verifiable subset: I found 13 qualifying highway awards, but five public summaries did not disclose a usable project BCR.

What this means for Highway 68

For Highway 68, I would interpret the benchmark this way:

- Below 3.0: comparatively weak for an award of this size.
- 3.0-4.0: normal competitive territory, but not exceptional.
- Above 4.0: comparatively strong.
- Merely above 1.0: economically positive, but historically not very persuasive by itself.

There is no official pass/fail BCR threshold. CTC also evaluates readiness, multimodal benefits, climate and equity performance, matching funds, community engagement, and corridor-plan consistency. Its guidelines require cost effectiveness but do not establish a minimum ratio. [CTC's 2024 guidelines](#)

Most importantly, TAMC has not yet published a final numerical BCR for the Highway 68 roundabouts. Its June presentation only says preliminary results suggest they are "likely" a good investment and schedules a final Cal-BCA after additional adaptive-signal monitoring. The analysis should therefore use the optimized adaptive signals as the no-build baseline, consistent with TAMC's own project description-not the older fixed-signal conditions. [TAMC Highway 68 project page](#), [June 2026 evaluation slides](#)

I can also monitor TAMC for the final published Highway 68 ratio.

Track Highway 68 final BCR

Source links are embedded and clickable throughout the document.