

TAMC Board of Directors Meeting 12-3-25

Millions in Potentially Wasted Taxpayer Funds

TAMC Board Members,

At the last Board meeting on October 22, 2025, the issue was raised about the “only” \$9.9 Million of STIP funds that was being spent to complete the design of the 3 “hybrid” roundabouts in Phase 1 of the Route 68 Corridor project. It was pointed out that this was being done at the same time as the AI Adaptive Signal Project was being installed and evaluated and that if successful, all these tax payer funds would be wasted. Todd stated that TAMC had discretion and flexibility to move funds between projects and if AI proved to be the best alternative, TAMC staff further stated the “we can shift funds at a later time.” That response sounded more like a budgeting answer, when the original question was **will funds actually be spent** during this AI evaluation period. I followed up with TAMC Staff regarding how much of the \$9.9M will likely be **spent** while AI is being evaluated and was told that spending would be linear and that about half of that \$9.9M (**\$5 Million**) would actually be spent doing final design, by mid-2026 when the AI evaluation may be completed.

Today’s Agenda Item

Now I see in today’s agenda Item 3.4.1 on page 103 for the 2026 Regional Transportation Improvement Program, that additional funds that total **\$21.7 Million** are proposed to be spent on the right-of-way phase for these 3 roundabouts at the same time (“concurrent”) as the AI Adaptive Project is being evaluated. Here is the agenda item:

“Staff is proposing to fund the right-of-way phase as follows: **\$15.4M** (Measure X), **\$1.5M** (SB 1 Local Partnership Program Formula), **\$4.8M** (2026 STIP). This process is moving forward **concurrent** with the implementation of the adaptive traffic signal control project, maintaining a schedule to make the project eligible for the next cycle of Senate Bill 1 grants. The agency will pursue future SB - 1 Solutions for Congested Corridors and SB - 1 Local Partnership Program Competitive grants using Measure X as a match to fully fund construction in FY 2027/28.”

So, exactly how much will be **spent or obligated** during this “concurrent” period which will be totally wasted if AI proves to be the best option for the corridor? From my business background, I thought the budgeting process was the first step and once approved, spending or funding actually occurs, which cannot be recovered, once spent. **The public deserves to know how much their tax money will be spent during the AI Adaptive evaluation which is expected to last until mid-2026 for a complete and objective evaluation.** This timing also assumes that Caltrans can complete the installation, collect traffic data, and make necessary adjustments to signal timings in an optimal manner and on schedule.

Phase 1 Hybrid Roundabouts

The Board also needs to realize that the 3 proposed “Hybrid” roundabouts in Phase 1 were **never** part of the original plan as defined in the Draft EIR and were suddenly and quietly inserted in place of the original single lane roundabouts that were presented to the public. **Additionally, these hybrid roundabouts, that are really a modified 2 lane roundabout, have not been tested for performance in the Hwy 68 application by either TAMC or Caltrans and yet millions of taxpayer funds are being used for final design and right-of-way.** The Public was told in public meetings that Caltrans would only consider single lane roundabouts on Hwy 68 from a safety perspective, since 2 lane roundabouts on a single lane highway had a much higher accident rate due to the increased conflict points and merging that was necessary when going from 2 lanes to one at each intersection. So why are these **2 lane roundabouts** being proposed now, with untested peak commute results and a higher accident rating? It looks like a desperate attempt to do something to cover for the terrible results for the original proposed roundabouts that produced a measly 5-minute improvement for PM peak commute and no improvement for the AM peak commute. Remember that roundabouts are universally described as “**traffic calming**” since they slow traffic down rather than to speed it up to help with peak commute traffic, which is also why Caltrans or TAMC Staff cannot point to any series of roundabouts installation in the US that improved a peak commute problem along a busy corridor.

Skyrocketing Roundabout Costs

Also remember the huge cost of the proposed roundabouts when considering the cost benefit between them and AI Adaptive. When the roundabouts were proposed for Hwy 68 in 2017 the TAMC Executive Summary proposed to the Board a plan for 11 roundabouts on Hwy 68 for a total construction cost of \$48.2M or \$4.4M for each roundabout. Then the TAMC Fact Sheet in 2023 listed the proposed 9 roundabouts at \$227M or \$25M per roundabout. Now the current budget for Phase 1 for only 3 roundabouts is a total of \$120.6M or \$40.2 million for each roundabout. So, applying that per roundabout cost to the whole corridor with 9 intersections would result in a total cost of \$361.8 Million or a 60% increase in just 2 years. And how many major construction projects come in under budget, so actual roundabout costs will probably be significantly more than budget and that is not even considering the commute nightmares that will occur over the many years of construction. Compare that to the total cost of the AI Adaptive System of \$1.2M for what is predicted to be a better result based on actual similar installations.

Recap of Estimated Roundabout Costs

2017 \$4.4 per roundabout, \$48.2M total

2023 \$25M per roundabout, \$227M total

2025 \$40.2M per roundabout, \$361.8 total

Pause the Taxpayer Fund Spending

So why is there such a tremendous push to spend millions of dollars of tax payer money to design and get right-of-way for these very expensive, unproven roundabouts rather than putting a prudent and logical pause on this spending until the AI Adaptive system is thoroughly tested and compared to the cost/benefit of roundabouts for this application. This well-intentioned but ill-advised roundabout plan that was promoted with significantly inaccurate claims for over 8 years, needs to be paused to allow today's new and better technology to prove itself. Please stop wasting tax payer funds chasing something, which testing shows, does not produce commute improvement results and which also increases emergency response times.

I urge the Board to take action on this misuse of taxpayer funds and pause the spending until after the AI Adaptive evaluation is complete.

Thank you,
Dwight Stump