

TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

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HIGHLIGHTS

September 26, 2018

TAMC and Caltrans Move Forward with Highway 156 Interchange at Castroville Boulevard

On Wednesday, the TAMC Board of Directors reviewed updated designs for the planned Highway 156 Castroville Boulevard Interchange. The interchange is part of the larger \$368 million Highway 156 West Corridor Project, which Caltrans and TAMC now plan to construct in three segments.

At a cost of approximately \$43 million, the Castroville Boulevard Interchange will be the first segment constructed and will improve safety and operations on Highway 156 by replacing the an existing traffic signal with a new interchange.

Caltrans has begun the design process for the State Route 156 Castroville Boulevard Interchange project, which has been updated to include three roundabouts where traffic signals had previously been planned. By including roundabouts, the proposed bridge over State Route 156 can be narrower which reduces construction costs. Roundabouts also perform better than traffic signals and have a longer design life.

The updated design will also provide for safe pedestrian and bike crossings between North County High School and the recently completed bike / pedestrian bridge into Castroville.

The Interchange is being designed to allow for a future connection to Blackie Road and the Castroville Industrial Park, which would help reduce the amount of truck traffic on Merritt Street in Castroville.

Funded through a combination of state, federal, and Measure X monies, the Castroville Boulevard Interchange is expected to be ready for construction by 2022.

Update to the Regional Impact Fee Program Supports Local Transportation Projects

The TAMC Board of Directors approved an update to the Regional Development Impact Fee Program at its September 26th meeting. The program is updated every five years to ensure developments in Monterey County with transportation impacts pay a fair share towards making transportation improvements.

To prioritize the expenditure of the revenues collected through the fee program, TAMC adopts an annual five-year Strategic Expenditure Plan. Currently, the Regional Development Impact Fee program has a balance of \$3.67 million. The Board has approved programming of \$312,205 of these funds to the State Route 68 Commuter Improvements between Salinas and Monterey. The Strategic Expenditure Plan also allocates the \$3.35 million balance of existing fee revenues to the Highway 156 West Corridor Project.

The Regional Development Impact Fee program, as adopted by the Transportation Agency Board of Directors and each of the jurisdictions, went into effect in August 2008. Prior to the adoption of the regional fee program, development proposals were evaluated on a case-by-case basis for cumulative impacts to the regional transportation network as part of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. This process resulted in, at times, lengthy negotiations with developers, and assessments were not consistently applied throughout the County.

TAMC Leading Safe Routes To School Planning Effort for Monterey County

On Wednesday, the TAMC Board of Directors received an update on the Measure X Safe Routes to School Program, Monterey County's first countywide planning effort directed towards safe routes to school.

The Measure X Safe Routes to School program funds projects and programs that improve children's health by making walking and bicycling safer and easier. The program also identifies projects that improved safety for children walking and biking to school, improve connections between schools, residential areas and vocational training programs, enhanced air quality, and offer healthier transportation choices for school children and parents.

A major goal of the program is to provide pedestrian safety classes to all 2nd graders, and bicycle safety classes to all 5th graders in Monterey County. The program will achieve this by offering bicycle and pedestrian safety educational programs that will take place at elementary schools across the county. Other program goals include:

- Develop a comprehensive Measure X Safe Routes to School website
- Develop performance measures, guidelines and application forms for mini grants and engineering support
- Support Safe Routes to School infrastructure projects
- Apply for grant funding to support programs and projects
- Coordinate with County Health Department on education and outreach in Salinas Valley
- Begin school traffic garden pilots at local schools
- Implement the education program serving Salinas Valley, Seaside, Marina and North County

Central to the success of the Measure X Safe Routes to School program is the ability to effectively collaborate with other multiple agencies to reach program goals. To accomplish this countywide collaboration, agencies and organizations have been invited to participate in a Safe Routes to School Task Force facilitated by TAMC staff. The Task Force meets quarterly to review Program progress, discuss funding opportunities, and provide interagency support.