



TRANSPORTATION AGENCY FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

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HIGHLIGHTS

March 26, 2025

Salinas Sidewalk Art Project Provides Safe Route to School

The Transportation Agency Board of Directors received an update on the Salinas Sidewalk Art Project. The project is a community-driven public art project marking safe routes to four schools and community spaces in East Salinas.

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) provides Safe Routes to School programming to teach and encourage Monterey County kids to safely carpool, walk, bike, skateboard, and scoot to school. One way to increase the visibility of safe routes to schools programming and create more enjoyable walking routes is through public artwork.

The Transportation Agency partnered with the City of Salinas and were successful in securing Clean California grant funding from the State to develop sidewalk art marking safe routes between schools and public amenities in East Salinas. The project is funded through a Clean CA grant and Measure X matching funds.

The first sidewalk art piece, "One Man Banda" by Augustine D. Escobedo, was installed on the sidewalk in front of Closter Park near the basketball courts in November 2024. The remaining artwork will be installed by June 2025 to meet the Clean California grant deadline. The artwork will be inspected and maintained once a year for five years through TAMC's contract with Artists Ink. Local funds will be used to maintain the artwork.

In addition to the artwork, two TAMC Fellows from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS) have developed handouts for each sidewalk art piece to further engage students and families to visit and explore the artwork, learn about their community,

and reflect. All handouts have been created to meet school curriculum requirements so they can be used by teachers for class field trips. The TAMC/MIIS Fellowship was approved by the TAMC Board in August 2024.

TAMC Board Receives Update on State Route 68 Adaptive Traffic Signal Pilot Project

Caltrans District 5 and TAMC staff presented an update on efforts to implement an adaptive signal control pilot project in the Scenic State Route 68 Corridor.

Last October, the Board allocated \$500,000 in Regional Measure X funds towards the purchase and installation of adaptive (also known as artificial intelligence, or AI) signal controls as a pilot project at all nine signalized intersections along State Route 68 linking the Salinas Valley to the Monterey Peninsula.

Adaptive signal control technology adjusts the timing of red, yellow, and green lights to accommodate changing traffic patterns and ease traffic congestion. Unlike traditional traffic signals, which operate on fixed timings, adaptive signals use real-time data from sensors and cameras to optimize traffic flow. This technology is particularly beneficial during peak travel times, incidents and special events when traffic volumes can vary unexpectedly. Reduced congestion can also reduce collision rates.

The adaptive signal operations are expected to serve as an interim solution, complementing the roundabout intersections identified as long-term improvements for the Scenic State Route 68 Corridor. Staff have identified potential funding options for the first phase of the roundabout projects, but most intersections along the corridor are expected to remain signalized for the foreseeable future.

TAMC's Board of Directors engaged in a comprehensive discussion to assess the phased approach recommended by staff to use the allocated funding to purchase and install adaptive signal equipment at four intersections located at the eastern end of the corridor, rather than installing the AI signals at the nine intersections along the entire corridor.

At the conclusion, the Board voted to authorize up to \$1.2 million to purchase and install adaptive signal equipment at nine signalized intersections on State Route 68 between Toro Park and Highway 1 over the 5-year life cycle of the project; and to receive a report back on the results after the initial installation.

Caltrans Offers \$1,000 Scholarships to High School Seniors

The employees of Caltrans District 5 and the California Transportation Foundation (CTF) are offering three \$1,000 Scholarships to high school seniors. The scholarships are intended to recognize and assist students who are planning to pursue a transportation related career.

The application and directions to apply can be found at:

<https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-5/district-5-popular-links/d5-scholarships>

Applications must be received at the District no later than May 15.