

Re: Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvement report June 24th 2026

The bottom line of the " Scenic Route 68 Improvement Project Update" seems to be that, once again, timelines have slipped and now the Benefit-Cost analysis will not now be ready until the 26th August TAMC Board meeting

It states that Caltrans and TAMC are considering co-sponsoring an SB1 Grant application - so does this mean that they are going to continue spending at the same \$150k rate per month on design until the Board can review the Benefit-Cost analysis and make a decision as to whether to go ahead with the 3 Phase 1 roundabout project or hold off whilst the ATSC settles in.?

For the first time, a "combined projected" cost for the Phase 1 roundabouts of \$98.6 million is provided to the Board. You may recall that all previous cost figures that have been declared are in the region of \$65 million. Undoubtedly staff will explain the difference in the figures ..but never the less the actual project cost is much more than has been declared before.

Needless to say that a "projected" cost very rarely equals the "final" cost of any highway construction projects. Witness the SR 218 Del Rey Oaks FORTAG project. The original staff estimate was around \$12m which then went out for bid and was finally awarded at \$19,9m + \$2.7m contingencies. Indeed it will be very unusual if it ends up being that price after the various delays and challenges that all construction projects experience.. So is TAMC really looking at a final spend of \$20m - \$50m more for SR68 Phase 1, by the time the 3 roundabouts would be completed?

Once again, we have a report that uses the "expected" word relating to improving safety, and that the roundabouts are "projected" to reduce the potential for serious injury, and fatal collisions. As stated before the collision and accident rate at the relevant SR68 corridor intersections is lower than state averages.

I'm sure that the Board will want some clarification regarding the figures relating to Peak Hour Travel Time and Maximum Traffic Throughput.

and will want to wait until actual figures are available from the “comprehensive before and after evaluation planned for the fall under non-summer traffic conditions” ... before making any major funding decisions regarding the corridor.

Indeed, if the two sets of figures are indicative of any travel time and traffic flow benefits that the \$96.8 million construction of three roundabouts would provide, I believe that any Transportation Board, or members of the public, would be hard pressed to go ahead with this level of expenditure, I think that the major concern about whatever decision is eventually made, was admirably highlighted by a Board Member at the last meeting..

Paraphrased it was “What does this (either ATSC or Roundabouts) do for the 2035 and 2045 traffic flows?... Todd’s answer. paraphrased " It will get a bit better in the short term ...then worse as traffic flows increase.”

So there we have it ..we have a Capacity problem..

Is it time to seriously consider going back to the 2017 Report and re-look at the alternatives reviewed there and/or reassess trying to maintain the rural nature throughout the SR68 corridor, given the larger than envisaged growth and expansion served by the corridor.

I look forward to the seeing/reviewing the Comprehensive evaluation and results of Benefit-Cost analysis at the August TAMC Board meeting.

Barry Jones