

2017 Transportation Excellence Awards Nominations

Individual Citizens

Heather Lanier/Carissa Chappellet - Big Sur Bypass Trail Project

In February 2017, roads and bridges in communities throughout Monterey County were devastated by a series of winter storms. The Big Sur community was one of the most severely impacted with the Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge being structurally compromised, necessitating an immediate closure, and eventual demolition. Making the situation even more dire in Big Sur, were mudslides further south on the coast, creating an enclave of approximately 450 people who found themselves completely isolated on “the Big Sur Island.” People could not get to work. Children could not get to school. Families were separated. Faced with the reality that it would be months before they could drive north along HWY1, Big Sur residents began calling for an immediate solution – the opening of an emergency trail which would bypass the closure of the Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge.

Although State Parks, the California Conservation Corps, and other partners such as State Senator Bill Monning and Big Sur Fire, were indispensable partners in this project, it was the volunteer effort initiated by Heather Lanier and Carissa Chappellet (cousins) that ultimately decreased the time this project took and allowed for the entire project’s completion in only 10 days. The result was a trail that was about a mile long that gained about 500 feet of elevation in the second half and included approximately 150 steps.

Under normal circumstances, this project would have taken a few years to develop and implement, however it was completed in a phenomenally short period of time due to the commitment and organization of the Big Sur volunteer community. Heather Lanier and Carissa Chappellet were indispensable to the project’s success. Because of their leadership, the community was reunited, families could bring in the groceries and supplies they needed to live, workers could go to and from work, and children returned to school.

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John Viarengo - City of Salinas

John Viarengo has served on the Salinas Traffic and Transportation Commission, and as such, he has participated in many Salinas projects, including the revisions of the Salinas General Plan, the Alisal Street Roundabout Project; and parking and traffic issues throughout the city. Through his service, he has contributed to making Salinas a better place with better flowing traffic and safer streets.

Programs

MST Reduced Pricing Bus Passes - Monterey-Salinas Transit

Prior to the construction of the Holman Highway 68 Roundabout Project, MST was asked by the local hospitality community to assist with the congestion that was expected during the construction by encouraging people who travel through the intersection, or along the Del Monte/Lighthouse corridor in New Monterey, to utilize MST.

The MST Board of Directors approved a deeply-discounted bus pass for residents and employees of the following affected areas: Big Sur, Carmel, Carmel Valley, Monterey, Pacific Grove and Pebble Beach. MST's 31-Day Basic bus pass was discounted from \$95 per month to \$13 and for seniors, youth, people with disabilities and veterans from \$47 per month to \$6.50 per month.

The reduced-price bus passes were available from August 15, 2016 through June 30, 2017. Overall, bus pass sales more than doubled and MST saved the community nearly \$800,000 in commute costs over the 10-month construction period.

Bike and Pedestrian Safety Public Education Program - City of Monterey

The City of Monterey – Traffic Engineering applied for and successfully earned two highly competitive grants from the California Office of Traffic Safety in the amount of \$110,000 in November 2015 and \$74,000 in October 2016. The first grant funded a one-year Program Coordinator position responsible for establishing a comprehensive bike and pedestrian safety public education program to reduce bicycle and pedestrian collisions. The grant funded Program Coordinator launched

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“Walk & Bike Safety in Monterey,” an interactive public education program focusing on educating children and seniors as safe pedestrians and bicyclists.

Hundreds of young children received their first safety messages at over 36 fun *Walk & Bike Safe in Monterey* events. The program successfully reached students of all ages from preschool to high school. The program also encouraged helmet use among young cyclists.

Through the *Walk & Bike Safe in Monterey* outreach booth, the program reached over 8,500 children, parents and seniors and offered them activities to learn and practice the skills needed to be safe pedestrians, bicyclist and drivers.

Bike and Pedestrian safety audits were also conducted at 10 schools and surveys were developed to evaluate the program and to develop three, age-appropriate in-class PowerPoint presentations. The presentations included safety videos created by the city, live demos and quizzes for children to learn and practice simultaneously. These presentations were complemented with hands-on activities including bike rodeos and a “pedestrian rodeo, PSA videos, educational brochures and activities. Overall, the program successfully reached over 3,000 children who learned to stop, look, and listen before crossing the street.

Projects

Holman Highway 68 Roundabout Project - Caltrans/City of Monterey

Extensive traffic delays were too common along Holman Highway, one of the Monterey Peninsula’s main transportation corridors. The busy signalized intersection joining the Highway 1 on and off-ramps to Highway 68 and the famous 17 Mile Drive caused commuter frustration, increased air pollution, restricted access to the local hospital and compelled impatient drivers to invent detours through adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The Holman Highway 68 Project, led by the City of Monterey implemented a multi-lane, sustainable, low-maintenance, user-friendly roundabout to relieve congestion at this important and busy intersection that is one of two vital gateways to the Monterey Peninsula. Keeping this critical arterial open throughout construction required multiple staging and contingency plans to mitigate traffic

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congestion and confusion while simultaneously maintaining access for residents and emergency vehicles.

There was also a need for extensive public and stakeholder education and outreach both in the benefits of roundabouts to get stakeholders buy-in on the design and updates during construction and staging to keep everyone informed and up-to-date on progress and to inform everyone of traffic pattern changes throughout the different stages of construction.

In the end, this public-private partnership was a successful collaboration between the City of Monterey, Pebble Beach Company, Monterey Bay Regional Air District, County of Monterey, City of Pacific Grove, Caltrans and other community partnerships with CHOMP, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, MST, the Unitarian Church. It has improved the lives of those who travel through the intersection to get to work, home, school, the hospital, or to enjoy the beautiful Monterey Peninsula.

Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge - Caltrans

Highway 1 in Big Sur is a designated American National Scenic Byway. Road designated within the America's Byways program are unique. However, Highway 1 through Big Sur is considered one of the crown jewels on the byways program. Views from the highway provide amazing visual experiences and that is why it is major destination for national and international tourism. Numerous businesses depend on this tourism for their success. Highway 1 is also the only major road connection for hundreds of residents that call Big Sur home.

A landslide, due to heavy rains which began in early January 2017 caused major damage to the Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge on Highway 1 in Monterey County. By February 15, the Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge, which was built in 1968, was determined to be beyond repair and needed to be replaced.

It was quickly apparent this would cause a humanitarian and economic crisis for businesses and residents of the Big Sur Coast. Residents no longer had access to necessities like propane for heating their homes or food, in addition, national and international tourists could no longer reach local businesses.

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The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) immediately jumped into action to replace the bridge as quickly as possible. Remarkably, the new \$24,000,000 single-span steel girder bridge was built and opened to the public just eight months after the original concrete structure was condemned, a process that would normally take about 8 years.

Elkhorn Road Emergency Storm Damage Repair - County of Monterey

Winter storms battered the Central Coast in January and February of 2017. The damage was so great in northern California that FEMA declared the area a Major Disaster to provide federal funding to help communities recover from the severe winter storms, flooding and mudslides.

Infrastructure and roadways in Monterey County suffered greatly with over \$30 million in damages. Elkhorn Road was one of the roadways severely affected and catastrophically damaged in multiple locations by the storms. It should be noted that Elkhorn Road is critical to emergency responders as the North County Fire Station 3 is located 5 miles further north on Elkhorn Road. The 10-mile detour around the damaged section of road was lengthy and emergency response time critical.

This section of roadway also serves as the first road inland from Highway 1 that runs parallel to Highway 1 and approaches nearly 3,000 vehicles trips per day. Repairing and re-opening it quickly was a priority. However, the damage was so severe and continued to worsen with continued storms, it was necessary to keep the roadway closed for the public's safety until necessary repairs could be made to stabilize the site.

The County put together an emergency team that determined that it was best to wait for a clear weather pattern prior to the mobilization of the emergency construction crews. This quick and focused action of the County of Monterey and the Elkhorn Road Emergency Repair team resulted in the \$1 million emergency roadway work being successfully completed; thereby re-opening a safe and critical access route for the community and emergency responders.

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Lighthouse Corridor Adaptive System – City of Monterey

The City of Monterey was experiencing significant arterial roadway congestion along the Lighthouse Avenue corridor, which created inefficient traffic flow resulting in considerable emissions of pollutants and particulate matter.

City staff researched many different Adaptive Traffic Control Systems (ATCS), for improving traffic conditions by better synchronizing and controlling traffic signals. ATCSs use vehicle detection and artificial intelligence software to respond accurately and immediately to real-time traffic conditions. This enables the system to progress traffic through a corridor with few or no stops.

The City chose the Split Cycle Offset Optimization Technique System (SCOOT). The SCOOT system measures volumes entering each link, calculates cycle length, splits and offsets and makes regular small steps to follow changing traffic patterns, this all happens on a cycle by cycle basis.

With an adaptive system, information is collected and signal timing is updated continually. Coordinated traffic signals on the corridor benefits all modes of travel by improving traffic flow and maintaining more consistent travel speeds. Before and after study has shown that the average travel time has decreased by an average of 10%, average delay has decreased by 30%, average stops have declined by 32% and average speed has increased by an average of 13%. The system when completed along Lighthouse, Del Monte and North Fremont, is expected to reduce 10.81 tons of pollutants per year.

Del Monte Boulevard and Beach Road Improvement Project - City of Marina

The Del Monte Boulevard and Beach Road Improvement Project is the second new roundabout project the City of Marina has constructed in the last three years after successfully completing the Reservation Road roundabout project in 2014.

The existing intersection had two straight through lanes, one right turn pocket and one left turn pocket on northbound Del Monte Blvd, three lanes including a left turn pocket on southbound Del Monte Blvd and two lanes each on eastbound and westbound Beach Road. The stop controlled wide intersection presented a grade

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deferential challenge creating a slight distance issue resulting in difficulty for pedestrians crossing and multiple accidents making this project a high priority.

The initial design considered a traffic signal option to better control the wide intersection, however, the City of Marina, being a pioneer proponent of roundabouts in Monterey County, conducted a traffic study, and concluded that a one lane roundabout would accommodate the traffic beyond 2035. Hence a one lane roundabout design was pursued taking into consideration the expansion for a second lane roundabout at the appropriate time.

Along with the roundabout, project improvements also included new LED pedestrian crossing signs, powered by solar panels, improved access along the Monterey Peninsula Recreational Trail, as well as, new bicycle and pedestrian facilities connecting downtown Marina to the Marina Branch Library and Beach Road Shopping Center.

State Highway 1 Northbound and Southbound at Imjin Parkway - City of Marina

The existing intersection of southbound off-ramp and Imjin Parkway was controlled by a one way stop sign for the traffic exiting the freeway. This created a backup on the off-ramp with long queues and waiting time particularly in the AM peak hours. This back up and delay was due in large part to the regional traffic utilizing Imjin Parkway between the City of Salinas and the Monterey Peninsula, and the Dunes development within the City.

Existing traffic from the northbound off-ramp had a long sweeping right turn onto eastbound Imjin Parkway. The free right-turn presented a merging conflict with traffic from southbound off-ramp heading eastbound on Imjin Parkway and turning right onto Second Avenue. The merging distance for both traffic was only 639 feet. A modification to the off-ramp had to be implemented to eliminate the short merge and potential conflict.

The project widened the northbound off-ramp of State Route 1 to Imjin Parkway, widened Imjin Parkway from the northbound off-ramp terminus to 300-feet east and installed one traffic signal at the southbound off-ramp of State Route 1 and Imjin Parkway.

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It reconfigured the northbound off-ramp to move the free right turn movement to the west which increased the merge distance to approximately 1100 feet. This modification made for a safer operating merge and turn onto Second Avenue.

Along with the signal at the southbound off-ramp and ramp modifications at the northbound off-ramp, project improvements also included drainage facilities, new LED lighting, video camera detection, advanced loops, concrete barrier removal and reconstruction, signing and striping.

The project also closed off an unsafe bike access on Imjin Parkway to the Monterey Bay Recreational Trail through the opening in the concrete barrier. Bike trail signs directing bikers to the Monterey Bay Bike trail were added on Imjin Parkway, Second Avenue and 9th Street.

TAMC Employee Recognition:

- Ariana Green - 5 years of service
- Todd Muck – 10 years of service
- Maria Montiel – 10 years of service