



To: Board of Directors
From: Debra L. Hale, Executive Director
Date: January 27, 2021
Subject: Caltrans Innovations EXPO

During the week of November 16, 2020, Caltrans held its first ever Innovations EXPO. The virtual Expo, attended by Caltrans staff and partner agency representatives, showcased presentations on innovations in five targeted areas: *Safety, Modality, Innovation, Efficiency, and Partnerships*. The sessions were held every afternoon, kicked off by a short video featuring Caltrans Director Toks Omishakin on the theme of the day. Here's a link to Director Omishakin's video related to "modality" (transit and bicycling, in this example): <https://youtu.be/quDoo7NKBgY>. Several TAMC staff members tuned in to various Expo presentations during the week.

TAMC Principal Engineer Rich Deal presented on a panel with Ron Boyle of GHD, Inc., entitled *Using Roundabouts at Interchange Approaches to Reduce Cost and Improve Safety*. The presentation reviewed the design of the Highway 156 improvements at Castroville Boulevard. The use of roundabouts, rather than traffic signals, will reduce costs and improve safety at this location for everyone – visitors driving to the peninsula, students walking to North County High School, or residents bicycling to and from Monte del Lago. The goal was to educate Caltrans engineers on the benefits of using roundabouts as a cost-effective safety measure throughout the state. Here's a link to the presentation: <https://youtu.be/lz0DIGSEmma>.

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission's engineer, Sarah Christensen, presented information on their bus-on-shoulder/auxiliary lanes project on Highway 1 (starts at 10:40): https://youtu.be/2_jgb15xZms. It is apparent that this bus-on-shoulder project will provide important time savings for those traveling between Santa Cruz and Monterey, particularly when linked to the SURF! Busway corridor.

Three additional takeaways from the Expo were:

- Each Caltrans District will be forming an Innovation Team. TAMC has talked to District 5 Director Tim Gubbins and requested that our staff be invited to participate in the team.
- Caltrans leadership, most notably the new director of Planning and Modal Programs Jeannie Ward-Waller, is interested in including pedestrian and bicycle safety features as part of Caltrans' highway projects – something that TAMC has requested for many years.
- Caltrans staff is developing and implementing a variety of new data collection tools that could serve as resources for future TAMC grant applications, notably a statewide active transportation count database.