

2021 Transportation Excellence Awards Nominations

Individual Nominee Award

Nominee: Norm Groot

Nominator: Jayne Smith

Description: Norm Groot, Executive Director of Monterey County Farm Bureau, is nominated for his support of the South of Salinas (SOS) Traffic Safety Alliance’s mission to improve traffic safety along the US 101 corridor south of Salinas. Mr. Groot has supported the Alliance since the group formed in 2018 and officially endorsed their mission with a letter of support in March 2019. Since that time, he has made the Farm Bureau's conference room available for countless meetings to discuss short and long-term improvements along the corridor. He has participated in on-going public outreach campaigns to ensure Farm Bureau members are informed about traffic safety improvements and potential long-term projects so that they have opportunities to share feedback. Mr. Groot has been available during and after business hours to share insight and guidance with SOS’s founding members to inform their advocacy efforts to improve traffic safety.

Mr. Groot’s continued support of these efforts has contributed to securing support and offer priceless feedback on agriculture’s transportation needs – both human and goods/services – to inform any short and long-term improvements along the highway. Without his leadership and support, public outreach, the awareness of changes along the corridor would not be as robust as it has been. He is truly a forward-thinking and progressive industry leader who genuinely cares about Monterey County residents and travelers arriving safely to their destinations.

Individual Nominee Award

Nominee: Amelia Conlen & Gino Garcia

Nominator: TAMC

Description: Amelia Conlen and Gino Garcia (Ecology Action) have gone above and beyond to find creative and safe ways to engage the Salinas Community in the Salinas Safe Routes to School Plan through the pandemic. The Salinas Safe Routes to School Plan kicked off in Fall 2019 and was just gearing up when COVID-19 stay-at-home mandates were enacted. Despite the pandemonium, Amelia and Gino found safe ways to continue the project which included completely redoing the community engagement strategy, conducting a citywide community survey, creating a neighborhood bingo game to collect input from families while providing a healthy outdoor activity, and participating in many more remote meetings with parents, school groups and stakeholders than originally anticipated.

Amelia and Gino also led the Seaside & Marina Safe Routes to School planning process which resulted in a \$12.04 million Active Transportation Program grant award for the City of Seaside. “It is obvious to

anyone who has worked with Amelia or Gino, that they really care about doing good work and making a difference. We are very lucky to have such dedicated and talented partners working with us to make our streets safer for children and the greater community.” – Ariana Green, TAMC Safe Routes to School Program Manager.

Business/Group Nominee Award

Nominee: South of Salinas Traffic Safety Alliance

Nominator: Jayne Smith

Description: The SOS Traffic Safety Alliance is a grassroots effort led by volunteers with vested interests in improving traffic safety along the US 101 corridor south of Salinas. SOS officially formed in 2018 when 7 founding members came together intending to work with local, state, and federal elected officials, residents and business owners/operators, and other key stakeholders to improve traffic conditions on US 101 and surrounding county roads. Over the last several years, SOS has garnered pledges of support from over 15 agencies, organizations, municipalities, and individuals to improve traffic safety for Monterey County residents and visitors and to move products and services through the corridor with minimal injuries and lives lost.

The Alliance has brought key stakeholders to the table on a regular basis such as representatives from the offices of Congress Member Panetta, State Senator Caballero, Assembly Member Rivas, County Supervisors, Local Emergency Services (CHP and Fire), Caltrans, Monterey County Public Works, TAMC, and local industry leaders such as Farm Bureau, Grower Shipper, and Vintners and Growers. They have co-hosted several townhall meetings intended to increase public outreach about a large-scale project to improve US 101. They have also worked with TAMC and their consultant, GHD, for the Project Study Report, which is a key step to secure a long-term solution. Their continued efforts to keep this corridor as a priority project has resulted in several short and intermediate improvements, while awaiting the Project Study Report with its potential long-term solutions.

Projects

Nominee: Reservation Road Cold-in-Place Recycling Project

Nominator: Edrie Delos Santos, Senior Engineer, City of Marina

Description: The Reservation Road Cold-in-Place Recycling project was unique since it was the City of Marina’s first use of sustainable pavement recycling technology.

As a major arterial connection for the City of Marina’s street network, Reservation Road is an integral segment of the City’s downtown corridor and regional commuter traffic. The integrity of the roadway is a major concern, especially during winter season, as this segment of Reservation Road accounted for much of the annual pothole patching effort by the City’s maintenance staff. Rehabilitation of this

segment of Reservation Road was critical at this time, as motorists will rely on Reservation Road even more, once Imjin Parkway Widening Project is in construction for two years.

Utilizing a pavement analysis by Parikh Geotechnical Engineering, the City hired Kimley-Horn Engineering to develop a pavement rehabilitation plan comparing traditional roadway reconstruction versus cold-in-place recycling. The resultant sustainable pavement project has a total project greenhouse gas emissions reduction of 79%, equivalent to the emission of 48 passenger vehicles for an entire year. The energy savings using cold-in-place recycling for this project was 76%, the same power output of 71 homes for an entire year. The approximate project cost savings is \$650,000, when compared to traditional paving.

Nominee: Cooper Street Pavement Rehabilitation Project

Nominator: Randy Ishii, Director of Public Works, Facilities & Parks, County of Monterey

Description: The Measure-X-funded Cooper Street Pavement Rehabilitation Project in the community of Castroville included the rehabilitation of Cooper Street from Blevins Street to Pomber Street. The \$500,000 project consisted of a total of sixteen ramps that were reconstructed to meet the newest ADA standards. Additional work on the project included the installation of a new sidewalk adjacent to the Cooper residence. The final phase of the project was the restriping of the markings on the road to enhance pedestrian and traffic safety.

This project addressed the needs of Castroville residents, as well the needs of those who travel on Cooper Street, by making improvements on a street that was distressed and deteriorated with visible cracks and in need of repair, as it posed safety issues for drivers and pedestrians.

The successful completion of the Cooper Street Pavement Rehabilitation Project has improved travel safety along Cooper Street and contributed to improving transportation in Monterey County. The project also provides a safer route to school for kids who walk or ride their bikes to North Monterey County Middle School.

Nominee: Salinas Vision Zero Action Plan

Nominator: Andrew Easterling, Traffic Engineer, City of Salinas

Description: The City of Salinas adopted a Vision Zero Policy on February 11, 2020 and directed staff to develop a Vision Zero Action Plan. "Vision Zero" is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. It is a movement that began in Europe and spread to American cities, rooted in the philosophy that no loss of life due to road crashes is acceptable or inevitable and therefore sets the goal of reducing fatalities and severe injuries to zero.

The development of the Vision Zero Action Plan has been a community driven process involving a variety of project partners with different disciplines. Over the course of a year and a half, Salinas staff

worked with a wide range of stakeholders and community members who participated in online surveys during the pandemic and came to a community workshop to develop the Action Plan. As a result of their work, the Plan identifies where fatal and severed injury collisions are occurring within the City, and GIS technology helps reveal emphasis areas where a higher frequency of collisions can be evaluated to achieve the goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries most effectively.

A Vision Zero Action Plan or a functional equivalent will soon be required to be eligible for federal Highway Safety Improvement Program grant program, which has provided millions of federal dollars towards local safety improvement projects. This federal grant program is a critical funding source for the City of Salinas. Adoption of the Vision Zero Action Plan keeps the City eligible and competitive in future grant cycles.

The Vision Zero Policy will be ongoing until a goal of zero traffic fatalities and severe injuries is achieved. The Vision Zero Action Plan is funded with a state grant, through the leveraging of Measure X funds.

Nominee: Salinas Downtown Complete Streets

Nominator: Andrew Easterling, Traffic Engineer, City of Salinas

Description: The Salinas Downtown Complete Streets project implemented a road diet on West Alisal Street, converting a 4-lane road to a 3-lane road with buffered bike lanes. The lane reduction provides critical safety improvements to all roadway users; car drivers can use channelized turn pockets and separate themselves from through traffic, bicyclists have dedicated space separated from vehicles, and pedestrians are able to cross West Alisal Street with fewer lanes of traffic. The project improved safety for everyone, without having to remove nearly any of the on-street parking. The scope of the project included traffic signal modifications, sidewalks, ADA ramps, storm drains, traffic signing, traffic striping, the installation of a fiber optic communications system for future broadband, coordination of Alisal Street traffic signals for improved traffic signal operations, and other improvements. The project limits on West Alisal were set between Blanco Road and Front Street.

The Salinas Downtown Complete Streets project was an element of the Salinas Downtown Vibrancy Plan and the Transportation Agency's Marina to Salinas Multimodal Corridor Plan. Both planning documents, each developed over dozens of community meetings, have been adopted as strategic planning documents, with very broad and expansive recommendations. The road diet on West Alisal Street is just one piece of these larger planning documents.