

Maria Aldape

Subject: FW: New Board memo to load into novus for Sept 10th Board meeting.
Attachments: Roundabout Lane Change 07.20.2018.pdf

From: Harry Mavrogenes
Sent: Thursday, August 22, 2019 10:06 AM
To: Mary Gilbert
Subject: Comments prepared for the August COG Board meeting

COG Board members:

At the request of Board Member Richman, I am transmitting the comments that I had prepared for the August Board meeting regarding my safety concerns about the proposed Roundabout at the intersection of Highway 25 and 156. Unfortunately, I was cut off from making a full presentation. Following are my comments:

Boardmembers:

My name is Harry Mavrogenes, and I am the Director of the Resource Management Agency for San Benito County. I am also a member of your Technical Advisory Committee. I would like to address the Board on the roundabout issue. I believe that there are still many unanswered questions and that there are safer alternatives that have not been considered.

Certainly everyone is legitimately concerned about the present intersection of Hwy 25 and 156. It is dangerous and safety improvements have to be done. The project study report done by CalTrans in June of 2018 addresses "alternatives", BUT ONLY TWO ARE CONSIDERED: NO BUILD, AND ROUNDABOUT. No other alternatives are considered. Why was the construction of a two lane overpass of 156 over 25, as an interim solution, not considered? As a first stage for a full interchange project, it can be built for just slightly more than the roundabout, at \$10 to \$12 million.

At the March 2019 COG Board meeting, there was a commitment to do significant public outreach by CalTrans, yet only one meeting occurred, on June 25th. The meeting left a lot of us frustrated because there was no real opportunity given for public participation. Neither the public or the five elected officials present were allowed to speak.

According to the PSR, there were thirty seven (37) collisions at the intersection within a recent three year period. I researched another roundabout that has been touted by CalTrans as a similar project. This is the 11th Street /Grant Rd. roundabout just east of Tracy. I have driven that roundabout many times. It is in an industrial area, but does not carry either the high volume nor the speed of our interchange. Large semi's mix in with passenger vehicles. In its first four and a half years of use, there were 114 accidents at the Tracy roundabout. It got so bad that the County has reduced the number of lanes from two to one, in order to minimize the confusion and the accident rate. (See article attached). I discussed the roundabout issue with the Deputy Public Works Director at San Joaquin County. His advice was very to the point: IF YOUR COMMUNITY IS NOT FAMILIAR WITH OR USED TO ROUNDABOUTS, DO NOT INSTALL YOUR FIRST ONES IN HIGH TRAFFIC VOLUME AREAS!

I am also the Road Commissioner and Public Works Director for San Benito County. I would not be doing my job if I did not raise these concerns. I am very frustrated with CalTrans and their inflexibility. I am requesting that an opportunity be given to the community to fully vet its concerns and that they back off and reconsider a safer and more rational approach that SEPARATES, and not intermix the heavy truck traffic of highway 156 with the passenger car commuter traffic of Highway 25. Imagine, a tired commuter, coming home from a two hour commute from San Jose, on their last mile having to fight and dodge large semi trucks. It is a recipe for disaster.

I would like to ask several questions of CalTrans:

- 1) What is the truck percentage and how was that accounted in the traffic analysis?
- 2) High speed approaches in rural areas are always of concern. What speed reduction techniques being implemented prior to and at the roundabout influence area.
- 3) What type of landscape/vegetation treatments are being considered to help alert motorists? What type of lighting and signage?
- 4) What independent peer review process is being implemented for the roundabout design of this complicated concept? Are you open to further review?
- 5) Can we see the Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) report? The PSR states that it had a negative evaluation.