

June 15, 2022



**Letter From the Mayor**

Dear Residents of Yucaipa,

Since our incorporation in 1989, the City has continued to prioritize projects that enhance quality of life for our residents. Some of these projects include building new parks and facilities, constructing groundwater recharge facilities, improving the City's drainage network, creating new trails and open spaces as well as providing roadway enhancements while always maintaining healthy reserves. Today, I would like to not only discuss the benefits of roundabouts in our community but also provide a historical perspective on how the City made this determination.

In 2009, during the revitalization work in the Historic Uptown District, members of the City Council at that time directed staff to research various traffic circulation models that help to increase pedestrian-safety while still prioritizing traffic flow as part of the Streetscape Redevelopment Project; this included the possibility of incorporating roundabouts. As part of the research process, the City Council, Planning Commission, City's Consultant, and City staff began to evaluate how roundabouts could work in the Historic Uptown District.

On June 18, 2010, this group of representatives took a tour of several Southern California communities which had converted a four-lane street, with a middle turn lane, to a two-lane street with several roundabouts. During this process, the group had the opportunity to interview several business owners with storefronts along the roadway and were pleased to find out that their businesses had become more successful after the roundabouts were constructed.

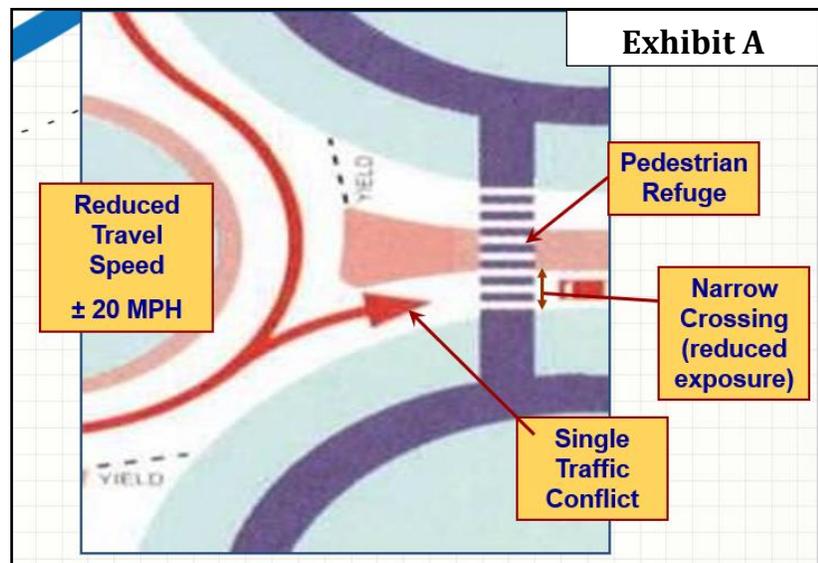
The business owners told the group that before the roundabouts were installed, the speed limit was 35 mph with actual speeds perhaps more like 40 to 45 mph, and the road was used as a "thoroughfare." Pedestrians not only had a difficult time crossing the five lanes of traffic, but the roadway effectively acted as a barrier that hindered their businesses. The business owners explained that once the roundabouts were constructed, the travelling public was slowed down and notice their businesses and began to shop rather than "zipping past." Additionally, pedestrian activity increased substantially; the roundabouts allowed for frequent and easy roadway crossings to businesses on both sides of the street. In these interviews, business owners highlighted that multiple residents told them that prior to the construction of the roundabouts they had never noticed their businesses. The business owners were also pleased with the reduced traffic noise due to the slow speeds and limited start up and slow down noises.

With this information, along with the data collected through an extensive traffic study that analyzed the potential impacts that roundabouts could have on traffic in the Historic Uptown District, staff recommended, and City Council decided to install Yucaipa's first roundabouts at California Street and Second Street on Yucaipa Blvd together with two lanes of traffic and on street parking versus five lanes of traffic and no on street parking (the original plan). This project received the 2012 APWA Project of Year Award in the category of Traffic, Mobility and Beautification and the 2013 ENR California/Hawaii Best Project Award of Merit in the category of Landscape/Urban Development.

As a result of this decision, in 2013, City Council approved, and City staff initiated the Citywide Miscellaneous Intersection Roundabout Study. The purpose of this study was to evaluate if roundabouts at various intersections along Avenue E, County Line Road, and Wildwood Canyon Road could prove to be a better method for traffic circulation, then traditional traffic signals and stop signs. The study evaluated if a roundabout could enhance safety, improve roadway operations, increase traffic flow, and maintain an acceptable Level of Services (LOS) (a term used to qualitatively describe the operating conditions of a roadway based on factors such as speed, travel time, maneuverability, delay, and safety) along an arterial roadway (a roadway designed to deliver traffic from a local street to a major freeway system).

As part of this process, a contract was awarded to RBF Consulting (Consultant), a professional traffic engineering firm, to help City staff complete the roundabout study. The scope of work consisted of collecting peak traffic volume data during the morning, afternoon, and evening hours for a 24-hour period at various intersections in order to compare traffic circulation of roundabouts and traffic signals. Once this information was collected and processed into the study, the team began to analyze, evaluate, and determine which traffic circulation method provided the most benefit.

In the finalized study, it was determined that traffic signals can handle heavy traffic volumes with less delays when compared to a four-way stop; however, roundabouts are able to provide an even higher traffic volume capacity when compared to traffic signals or four-way stops. According to the Consultant and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), roundabouts increase traffic capacity by 30 to 50 percent when compared to traffic signals. Unlike roundabouts, traffic signals force the traveling public to a complete stop when the red-light is activated. This is a standardize traffic control method which the traveling public is very familiar with and accustomed too. However, the study



revealed that traffic noise with signals is higher than with roundabouts due to the frequent stopping and starting; additionally, vehicle emissions are usually higher with traffic signals due to the stopping and accelerating.

The study found that roundabouts act as a traffic calming measure, this not only help mitigate speeding issues, but it also helps reduce emissions and noise levels since the traveling public is not frequently stopping. Also, the study found that roundabouts enhance public safety not only for the traveling public but for pedestrians as well. When roundabouts are constructed not only is the distance to cross a traffic lane shorter for pedestrians, but roundabouts also create additional “refuge” areas for pedestrians as well. (Exhibit A) Also, vehicle traffic collisions tend to be less severe and fewer in roundabouts due to lower speeds and the mitigation of conflict points. The study highlights that there are more conflict points associated with traffic signals which often lead to broadside, T-bone and rear-end collisions. According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), installing a roundabout typically results in a 76 percent reduction in injury accidents, a 90 percent reduction in fatality accidents, a 40 percent reduction in pedestrian injuries, and 75 percent fewer conflict points compared to traffic signals and four-way stops.

### Exhibit B

Right-of-Way Requirements  
Both Alternatives



Additionally, traffic signals depend fully on a reliable source of electricity in order to perform traffic conducting operations; unfortunately, electricity is not 100 percent reliable subjecting traffic signals to malfunctioning or even shutting off entirely. The study points out that roundabouts have no need for electricity and can fully perform traffic conducting operations regardless of external circumstances. Where

the City was able to build two lanes between intersections versus four lanes (previously required in the City’s General Plan) less right of way is required than traffic signals or four-way stops. Not only does this create a significant cost saving to the community as it relates to right of way and constructions cost, roundabouts also minimizes the amount of right of way needed which mitigates the impacts to property owners in the surrounding area. (Exhibit B)

Based on the information analyzed in the study, it was determined that roundabouts are an exceptional traffic circulation method that enhances safety, improve roadway operations, increase traffic flow, and maintain an acceptable Level of Services (LOS). City staff and the Consultant have done an excellent job strategically identifying where roundabouts will have the most benefit in our community.

In the end, the City has made sure to take the necessary measures to ensure the construction of roundabouts positively enhances your quality of life and safety as residents in our community . I would encourage you to visit the City's website ([Yucaipa.org](http://Yucaipa.org)) for more information regarding the roundabout study.

Sincerely,

Mayor David Avila