

Lauren Hollenbeck

From: Michael Kallas <mkallas@iwmhoa.com>
Sent: Monday, December 23, 2019 12:57 PM
To: Community Development Email <communitydevelopment@cityofcamas.us>
Cc: Nancy Lambert <nlambert@iwmhoa.com>
Subject: VRL - Case Number SEPA 19-21 - Roundabout Improvements at NE Lake Road and NE Everett Street

Hello,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide comments regarding the proposed roundabout improvements at the intersection at NE Lake Road and NE Everett Street. Please see our comments and concerns in the attached letter.

We look forward to your consideration of our concerns.

Regards,

Michael A. Kallas
Community Manager



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Village At Round Lake Homeowners Association

C/O Invest West Management, LLC
12503 SE Mill Plain Blvd, Suite 260
Vancouver, WA 98684
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(360) 254-5700

December 23, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

We manage The Village at Round Lake Homeowners Association (the "HOA"), which is comprised of thirty (30) members who own homes on NE Franklin Street and NE Franklin Loop in the City of Camas. The HOA and its members are greatly concerned about the City's proposal to place a traffic roundabout at the intersection of NE Everett St. and NW Lake Road. The sole point of ingress and egress from the neighborhood is at the intersection of NE Everett St. and NE 35th Avenue, which is just north of the proposed roundabout, and the HOA and its members have safety concerns about the effect the roundabout will have on traffic flows and volumes.

Currently, the only way a vehicle can safely turn onto NE Everett St. from NE 35th Avenue is when the signals located at the intersection of NE Everett St. and NW Lake Road change, permitting a brief but safe window for such turns. Otherwise, traffic on NE Everett St. is nearly constant during peak traffic hours due to school buses and commuters going to and from school and work. Moreover, the situation becomes exponentially more difficult during the summertime due to significant increases in recreational use and demand for the activities provided by Lacamas and Round Lakes – visitors to the overflow parking lot of Lacamas park can only access that parking lot through the intersection.

We assume that a detailed traffic study has been performed in connection with this project, as is customary and required by law, but we are asking that it be refined to include traffic patterns and flows during both the academic school year, as well as the Summer months, to best determine the safety and effectiveness of the roundabout and its placement, with particular attention to intersection at NE Everett St. and NE 35th Avenue. If such a study has not been performed, we ask that you please let us know why and whether one will be done.

Sincerely,

Michael Kallas

Community Manager

The Village at Round Lake Home Owners Association

Lauren Hollenbeck

From: Jim Hodges
Sent: Tuesday, January 7, 2020 5:33 PM
To: Michael Kallas
Cc: Lauren Hollenbeck; Curleigh (Jim) Carothers; Jim Hodges
Subject: FW: VRL - Case Number SEPA 19-21 - Roundabout Improvements at NE Lake Road and NE Everett Street
Attachments: VRL Roundabout Letter 122319.pdf

Hello Mr. Kallas –

This e-mail is written in response to your e-mail below and attached letter dated December 23, 2019 regarding access to NE Everett Street from NE 35th Avenue.

Thanks for submitting your comments and asking questions about the project. I hope to respond adequately to your concerns in this e-mail, but I'm very happy to meet with you and others from the VRL HOA if that would be helpful. I recently received a similar e-mail from another resident of Village at Round Lake citing the same concerns.

I understand the conditions that you describe in your second paragraph regarding the difficulties of turning onto NE Everett. It also indirectly points to the level of congestion that occurs at Lake & Everett. The current traffic signal stops traffic flow on Everett Street to allow vehicles on Lake Road to turn north and south. During this signal phase, vehicles "stack-up" on Everett Street until the signal changes and releases traffic to move north and south on Everett. The effect of the signal stopping traffic is to create a "platoon" of vehicles heading north and south once the signal turns green. Similarly, vehicles also stack-up on Lake Road while traffic moves on Everett. This "platooning" creates a steady stream of cars without any gaps once the signal turns green. Also, as you have noted, summer brings a lot a recreation activity around Lacamas Lake and the competition for parking spaces and the number of pedestrians increases dramatically. Pedestrian traffic at the existing intersection essentially stops vehicles in all directions, which increases stacking and the long platoons mentioned above.

Roundabouts operate differently. Roundabouts actually tend to create more gaps in traffic flow because traffic is continually moving through the intersection. All traffic must slow to negotiate the roundabout, but it doesn't generally have to stop. Since traffic continues to move through the intersection, the "platooning" I mentioned above doesn't have an opportunity to occur. The effect of traffic moving through a roundabout will create numerous random smaller gaps that will accommodate one or two vehicles at a time to enter Everett from NE 35th Ave. The general rule with a roundabout is that "everyone must slow down but no one has to stop." Traffic speeds must decrease at a roundabout, and lower speeds increase "yielding behavior" and typically result in larger gaps and easier access from side streets. It's also important to note that the current roundabout design will move the intersection to the south about 230 feet, which will also tend to increase gaps at 35th. Additionally, during the design there was special consideration given to the movement of pedestrians through the intersection. This relates to providing safer opportunities for pedestrians to move on all legs of the intersection, as well as the potential impact of pedestrians on vehicle movement through the intersection. Our final design shows an alternative that will have pedestrians crossing the intersection one-lane at a time. This configuration allows pedestrians to be isolated to looking at traffic in one lane from one direction before deciding to cross. This is safer for pedestrians and has far less impact on the flow of vehicles through the intersection.

A detailed traffic study and analysis was completed by our Traffic Engineering consultant, Kittelson & Associates. Early-on when evaluating different design alternatives, the design team looked at the potential for decreased gaps on Everett north and south of the roundabout. The conclusion was that available gaps would generally be increased with a roundabout vs. a larger signalized intersection since traffic won't have the opportunity to stack-up at the intersection, as I mentioned above. The design takes into account growth projected through year 2040. The alternatives analysis for the

project looked at three different variations of a more robust signalized intersection and three different roundabout designs. These were not just evaluated for traffic flow characteristics but also included environmental and construction impacts.

It might seem counter-intuitive, but the current roundabout design should increase gaps and decrease wait times at NE 35th Ave. However, since there have been multiple folks with the same concern, I've asked our Traffic Engineer to collect some additional traffic data on NE 35th Avenue and to perform a gap analysis at Everett. I hope to have the results in a couple of weeks. Also, we have another meeting scheduled at 6:00 p.m. on January 23rd to share more information about the construction schedule for the project. I hope to see you there.

I have also attached some information that was displayed at Open House #2 which was held on April 9, 2019 that addresses some of the concerns that you mention. Please contact me if I there's a desire to discuss your concerns in more detail. While I've tried, there are times when explanations of technical information don't translate well via e-mail.

Thanks Much, Jim

James Hodges
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- Q.

How will construction impact traffic? Can it happen outside peak traffic hours?

Most construction will not have a significant impact on traffic, because the majority of the new construction can be completed outside of the existing T-intersection. Efforts will be made to further minimize disruption, including performing work in the existing roadway during non-peak-time periods during the day and over the summer, when school is not in session.

In comparison, a signalized intersection would have had a more significant impact on traffic, because the footprints of all signalized concepts overlapped the existing T-intersection and would result in longer and more frequent traffic delays.
- Q.

Can there be a bridge crossing over or a tunnel running under the intersection for pedestrians and bicyclists?

A bridge or tunnel would limit crossing options, likely requiring some people to travel out of their way to cross. For both the roundabout options, the proposed street-level crossings are simple enough that people would likely find them more comfortable and convenient than walking or biking out of their way to use a bridge or tunnel.

A “midblock” crossing just south of the Round Lake parking lot could also be considered, allowing pedestrians and bicyclists to cross only two lanes of traffic with potential aid from a flashing beacon alerting motor vehicle traffic to their presence.
- Q.

Why not include replacement of the existing bridge north of the Lake Road/Everett Street intersection regardless of the alternative selected? It should all be fixed now, not later.

It comes down to funding and timing. A bridge replacement is anticipated to more than double the construction cost and construction time for the project. Per the community survey, a timely remedy for the congestion problem is strongly preferred by the community. Although funding has not yet been acquired for this project, the City is confident that it can acquire the funds in the near future for the proposed intersection improvements. However, the City anticipates that it would take much longer to acquire funding for the bridge replacement, which would slow down the entire project significantly.
- Q.

There isn't enough parking for the recreational facilities there now; how will this project impact parking availability and will it improve the issue of people parking along the shoulder of the road?

Neither of the roundabout options being considered will impact the existing parking lot at Round Lake immediately north of the intersection. Although a new parking lot is not included in the scope of this project, the City and County are both very aware of the current parking challenges and are working together to find a solution.

The planned roadway and intersection improvements will include curbs, sidewalks, and bike lanes. While these enhancements will improve access and mobility, they will also eliminate places for people to park illegally on the shoulder of the road within the project limits – something that many community members cited as a current frustration. The project will also add a sidewalk along NE Lake Road from Lacamas Lake Lodge to the intersection, allowing people wishing to access the Round Lake area to use the Lacamas Lake Lodge parking lot and walk safely to the Round Lake trail network.

Project Update

From January through March 2019, the City of Camas project team, assisted by engineering firms PBS, Kittelson, and BergerABAM, completed several initial planning steps, including a project design alternatives analysis, stakeholder interviews, two project advisory committee meetings, a presentation to Camas City Council, Community Open House 1, and an online survey.

- At the Community Open House 1 on February 26, the project team shared details about the planning process and presented two main concepts under consideration: a signalized intersection and roundabout intersection.
- Based on community and stakeholder comments, emails, and survey feedback, combined with analysis of several factors, including safety, accessibility, environmental impact, and projected growth, one concept stood out as best meeting the needs of the Camas Community: **the roundabout concept**.
- Subsequently, on March 18 the project team recommended the roundabout concept to Camas City Council and discussed the potential for **two options**.

Next Steps

- **April 9:** The project team will share the two roundabout options at Community Open House 2 and ask for input on their preferred option, by way of a visual voting map and for those not present, an online survey. This information and the online survey will also be made available through City of Camas social media, the Camas Connect App, the project website, www.cityofcamas.us/lakeroad, and local media outlets.
- **May 6:** These preferences will be shared with Camas City Council for consideration.
- **Ongoing:** Based on direction provided by Camas City Council, the project team will prepare a final design and seek funding needed for construction.

For a better understanding of the benefits of the roundabout option, please read through the following questions and answers inspired by your questions, comments, and survey remarks.

Your Input is Important!

We invite you to learn more and share feedback in any of the following ways:

- Online:** www.cityofcamas.us/lakeroad
Visit the City’s project website for project details, upcoming events, and next steps.
- Community Survey 2**
Please take the community survey, available on the project website, from April 9 to April 20, 2019.
- Contact us with questions, concerns, or comments:**
Jim Hodges, City of Camas, Project Manager, 360-817-7234, jhodges@cityofcamas.us
James Carothers, City of Camas, Engineering Manager, 360-817-7230, jcarothers@cityofcamas.us

What we’ve heard so far...

- reduce long wait times
- accommodate growth
- provide bicycle access
- add center turn lanes
- implement pedestrian safety
- add sidewalks
- minimize impacts to wetlands
- reduce traffic congestion
- protect our environment
- minimize construction delays
- build safe crossings
- provide roundabout usage education

NE EVERETT STREET NE LAKE ROAD

Question & Answer

Intersection Improvements

Q. Are roundabouts safe for pedestrians and bicyclists?

Yes. Very few crashes involving pedestrians or bicyclists have been reported at roundabouts. A recent study reviewed 6,771 reported crashes at 355 U.S. roundabouts over an average period of 5.9 years.



1.1%
Of total crashes
involved bicyclists

0.4%
Of total crashes
involved pedestrians

In general, it is safest for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross a single lane of one-way traffic. Both of the proposed roundabout configurations have single-lane entries and exits, with one exception (the northbound entry—which would have two lanes going one way). Roundabouts slow drivers down, giving them time to react and increasing the likelihood they will yield.

Whichever roundabout design is ultimately chosen, it will offer safety and accessibility to all pedestrians and bicyclists, including those with mobility and vision disabilities, in adherence with state and federal guidelines.

Q. What about school traffic?

Both the signalized and roundabout options presented in February 2019 were designed to address future traffic needs, as well as traffic associated with anticipated growth in local schools. Specifically, the project team reviewed traffic counts taken during various times during the day, including during peak school commute times, and looked at the most recent Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council predictive models for traffic conditions in 2040, which consider how much traffic is expected to be generated by future area land use, including schools.

Q. Aren't roundabouts confusing to high school students?

Research suggests that teens learn to navigate roundabouts more quickly than adults. For a good regional example, city officials in Kennewick reported that high school students picked up rapidly on how the roundabout installed near Southridge High School worked. Their observations were supported by comments from residents. The city aided understanding by providing informational how-to videos. The effectiveness of this roundabout encouraged Kennewick to build 25 more roundabouts in the following 19 years.



Preferred Alternative Option 1

Option 1 saves an existing American chestnut tree, but has greater impacts to the natural visual buffer between the roadway and Round Lake.

LEGEND

AVAILABLE RIGHT-OF-WAY

WETLAND / SHORELINE

PRIVATE PROPERTY

RCO PROPERTY

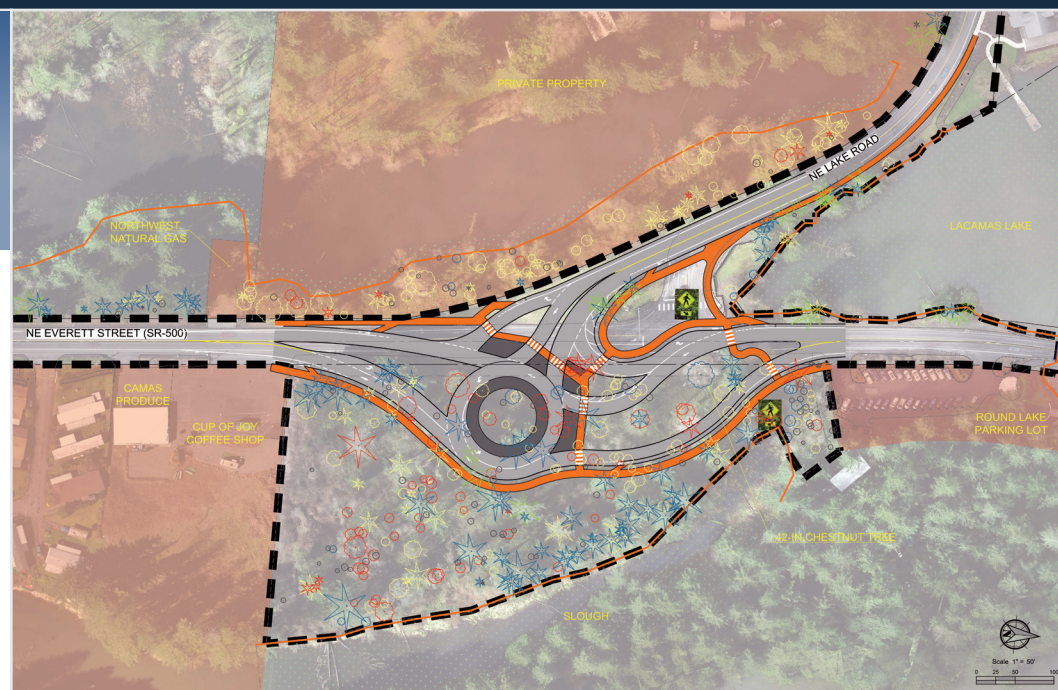
TREE - GOOD

TREE - FAIR

TREE - POOR

TREE - HAZARD

TREE - NOT SIGNIFICANT



Preferred Alternative Option 2

Option 2 removes the American chestnut tree, but provides a more natural buffer between the roadway and Round Lake.

LEGEND

AVAILABLE RIGHT-OF-WAY

WETLAND / SHORELINE

PRIVATE PROPERTY

RCO PROPERTY

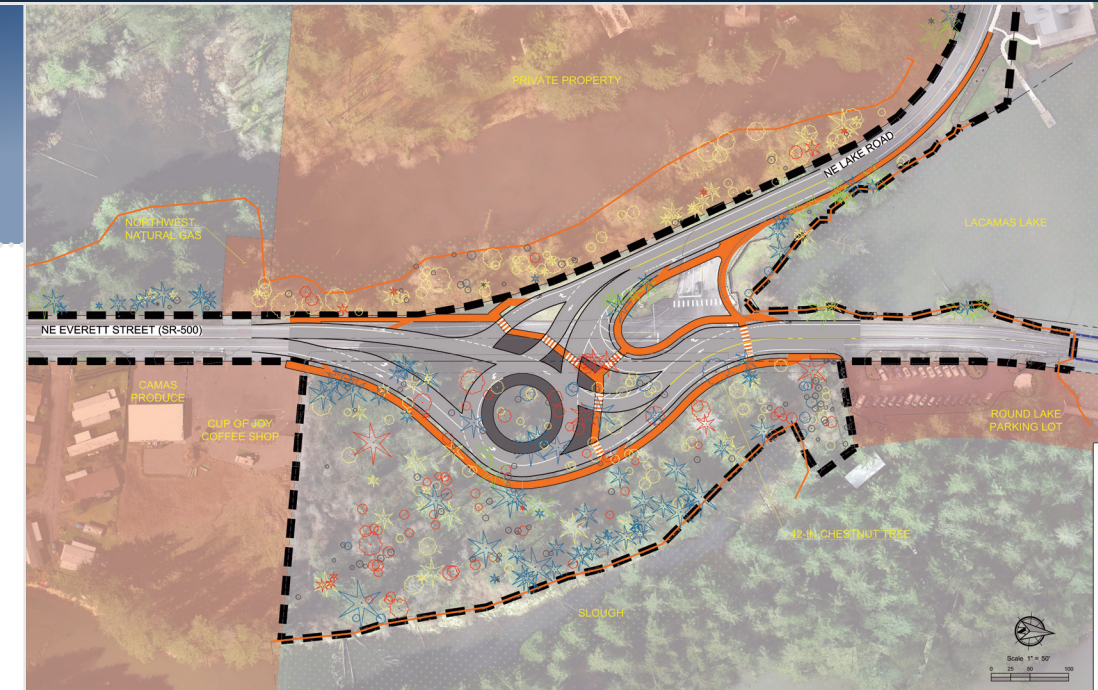
TREE - GOOD

TREE - FAIR

TREE - POOR

TREE - HAZARD

TREE - NOT SIGNIFICANT



Q. Roundabouts have continuous, non-stopping traffic. Doesn't that make it harder for pedestrians, vehicles, and bicyclists to enter and exit the main roads?

A roundabout can actually improve access. Its circular construction slows people down, creating more gaps and increasing yielding behavior. In this way, a roundabout is similar to a four-way stop without a signal.

In comparison, a signalized intersection would have resulted in longer waits for gaps in traffic because the lines of cars waiting for the signal are likely to block driveways and side streets near the intersection. Additionally, the gaps in traffic provided by a traffic signal are short lived due to the signal cycles allowing a new stream of traffic every time the light changes.

Q. How many trees will be impacted by each of the two roundabout options being considered?

Either roundabout option selected will require the removal of some trees. The anticipated number of trees impacted varies between the two preferred alternative options. Option 1 is anticipated to impact 159 trees (but saves the American chestnut tree) and Option 2 is anticipated to impact 146 trees (including the American chestnut). Several of the trees currently in the area have received a poor health assessment.

Q. How will each roundabout option being considered affect the natural visual buffer between Round Lake and NE Everett Street (SR 500)?

Either roundabout option selected will affect the natural visual buffer between the Round Lake Trail and NE Everett Street to some degree. The roundabout option that incorporates the existing American chestnut tree (Preferred Alternative Option 1) would create a new roadway closest to the trail and have the most significant impact on the natural visual buffer.

Whichever roundabout option is selected, new trees and foliage will be planted to mitigate the removal of existing trees and help restore the natural visual buffer. The area will also undergo ivy removal and other proactive efforts to support the health of the new and existing trees.