

The following addresses comments and concerns submitted by City of Anacortes residents in response to a Request for Public Comment from the Public Works Department regarding plans for the R Avenue Corridor Improvements.

*Question:* I'm wondering why it (the roundabout) is not being installed at 32nd (Street)? 32nd is a major corridor serving many neighborhoods west of R and Commercial (avenues). It is used by a lot of people to get FROM R Avenue to west 32nd, as well as to get TO R Avenue FROM 32nd. Please help me understand this project. Specifically, there is a roundabout proposed at 30th Street? Why there and not at 32nd where there is more traffic turning onto the arterial? Just DON'T CUT OFF 32<sup>nd</sup>!!!

*Answer:* The original design of R Avenue is not being used for what it was originally intended. Fifty years later, the R Avenue corridor has become the second largest transport corridor along the west coast. Passenger vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians utilize R Avenue as a back door to downtown businesses, the Port of Anacortes, the Tommy Thompson Trail, and the industrial area east of the project. Pedestrians and bicyclists also utilize R Avenue for bus service. Additionally, the area between Commercial and Q avenues is zoned commercial, while the area between Q and R avenues and 34<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> streets has recently been up zoned to Residential High Density. The purpose of this project is to make the corridor safer for all modes of transportation, providing ease of access for all different types of trades and businesses east of R Avenue as well as the north end of Q Avenue. Focusing solely on vehicle traffic is no longer an option for roadway improvement projects.

Traffic accident data shows clusters of accidents at 34th, 32nd, and 30th streets along R Avenue, particularly side-impact and T-Bone accidents. Roundabouts have been proven to reduce overall collisions by more than 30%, injury collisions by 75%, and fatalities by 90% (<https://wsdot.wa.gov/travel/traffic-safety-methods/roundabouts#:~:text=Studies%20by%20the%20IHS%20and,percent%20reduction%20in%20fatality%20collisions>). Since there are three failing intersections in a row, closing two of them to left turn and crossing movements, and sending traffic to the third intersection, which has a roundabout, will greatly improve all three intersections. 34th Street is too close to SR20 Spur to warrant a roundabout, so 32nd, 30th, and 28th streets were reviewed. 32nd Street does not provide access into the Industrial Park as the eastern leg was vacated by the City many years ago. A four-legged (access to four streets) roundabout provides the most bang for the City's dollar both for vehicles and pedestrians.

Additionally, it is assumed east/west pedestrian and bike traffic may gravitate toward the less busy 29th Street corridor from Commercial to I avenues, particularly since bus access is located near 29th Street on M, Commercial, and R avenues. WSDOT recently studied and approved a Rapid Flashing Beacon crossing at 29th Street and Commercial Avenue. Locating a roundabout nearer to 29th Street accommodates this expected multimodal traffic and contributes to the need for shared-use paths between the roundabout and Commercial along 29th and 30th streets and Q Avenue.

*Question:* Is there a plan to add a major signal at 30th, 29th or 28th (streets) on Commercial (Avenue)?

*Answer:* Under this project, we will be adding curb extensions and RRFBs (Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacons) at 29<sup>th</sup> Street and R Avenue. There is no plan to add signals on the Commercial Avenue Corridor. To see what is planned for Commercial Avenue, go to <https://www.anacorteswa.gov/1197/Commercial-Avenue-Complete-Street-Projec>

*Question:* The plan to install a circle at 30th (Street) and a full median at 32nd (Street) will force many cars to make multiple turns to access roads that otherwise would be easily accessible.

*Answer:* Currently, none of the businesses along R Avenue between 34<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> streets are accessed directly from R Avenue. All vehicles must make multiple turns from R to access businesses or residences anyway. R serves as a higher speed connection for vehicles, freight, and pedestrians on the east side of Anacortes. Reducing the number of left turn or crossing movements will allow traffic to move along the corridor more safely.

*Question:* On the website (<https://www.anacorteswa.gov/1359/R-Avenue-Long-Term-Improvements---Phases>), it shows Phase IV “complete” when the indicated pedestrian corridors are not complete. Is there a plan to install sidewalks all the way from R Avenue to the Tommy Thompson Trail?

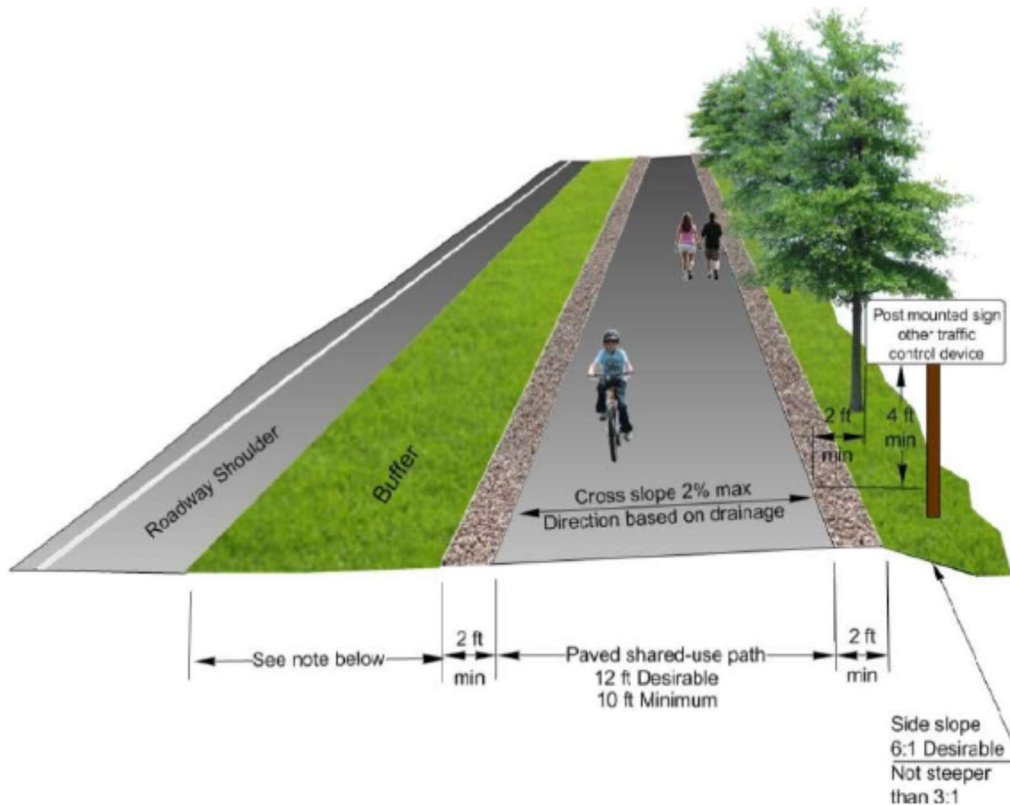
*Answer:* 34th Street had an asphalt overlay in 2014 as part of the City of Anacortes Waterline Replacement Project. This was a portion of the Phase IV project. There are existing sidewalks along the north side of the street that extend easterly to the Tommy Thompson Trail.

There are a few possibilities for funding sidewalks along the south side of 34th Street:

1. Any redevelopment along the south side of 34th Street will be required to extend sidewalks, curb, and gutter, per Anacortes Municipal Code 19.51.
2. 34th Street is part of a bicycle route. There are yearly funding opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian projects the City can apply for. 34th Street from the Tommy Thompson Trail, west to M Avenue is on the radar for this type of grant opportunity.

*Question:* Why do we need 10-foot-wide sidewalks on R (Avenue)?

*Answer:* The minimum width for Multimodal or shared-use facilities that include non-motorized modes of transportation, such as pedestrians and bicycles, is 10 feet, per WSDOT Design Manual M22-01, Chapter 15.



Additionally, the City has included this minimum requirement in the Engineering and Development Standards, Chapter 3 – Streets.

**STR-12 NON-MOTORIZED PATHS AND ACCESS ROADS**

	Minimum Width	Maximum Grade	Minimum Curb Radii
Non-motorized bike/pedestrian path	*10'	15%	10'
Maintenance Access Road	12'	15%	25'
Public Access Easement or Tract	15'		

\* The City may allow sections less than 10 feet wide to accommodate topographic constraints.

**Question:** On 32nd Street, the existing arrangement has adequate turning and merge lanes off and onto R Avenue and from side streets, both north- and southbound as well as east- or westbound. However, on 30th Street, there is only one turn lane off R Avenue in the southbound direction, and it is only for eastbound turns.

**Answer:** Based on traffic accident data, the issue is not with the protected turn lanes making a left turn from R Avenue westbound. The issue is left turns from the westside street going northbound or 30th Avenue traffic crossing the five lanes of R Avenue.

Merge right acceleration lanes are tough on arterial-type roads as they are opposite of what most drivers are used to (merge left on highways and within roundabouts). Adding a roundabout will help circulate the turning movements in a much safer fashion. While the City recognizes the number of vehicles that attempt to circumvent Commercial Avenue by using R Avenue and 32nd Street, spreading out the traffic along the numbered streets will reduce the number of vehicles trying to speed through the light at 32nd Street and Commercial, which contributes to the high number of collisions there. The City is also looking to address the 32nd Street and Commercial intersection as part of its Commercial Avenue Improvements Corridor Project.

*Question:* When the accidents map is consulted, there are certainly clusters of accidents at the intersections on R Avenue: 28 accidents at R and 34th Street, 21 accidents at R and 32nd Street, and 24 accidents at R and 30th Street (roughly).

*Answer:* Data shows this. A roundabout along R Avenue with crossing or long-turning movement closures of the other two intersections will resolve this issue at those intersections. The roundabout will reduce the number and type of accidents from T-bone type to sideswipe.

*Question:* Some of the proposed projects make sense -- like making a solid median blocking turns onto 34th Street. Currently, heavy equipment, trucks, semis, and motorcycles scream up 34th, the road is in terrible condition and no apparent plans to address the road condition.

*Answer:* 34th Street had an asphalt overlay east of R Avenue in 2014 as part of the City of Anacortes Waterline Replacement Project. This was a portion of the Phase IV project. Improvements to the west leg of 34th, between Commercial and R avenues will most likely be part of future private entity improvements to the properties.

*Question:* Was the project developed so that the now through street of 30th to Commercial would provide direct access to The Salish Inn?? The project maps on website are not current and do not reflect 30th Street now connecting to Commercial, and the proposed jog in traffic, along quiet Q Avenue, to 28th Street and thence to Commercial – makes no sense at all.

*Answer:* There are many benefits of having the roundabout at this location. This project design was developed in 2005 to enhance the freight corridor along R Avenue from the Port of Anacortes to SR20 Spur, well before the Salish Inn was ever a consideration. The area between Commercial Avenue and R Avenue was part of an up-zone during the last Comprehensive Plan update. This will allow for significant growth to happen in the future.

30th Street is mid-point between 22nd Street and the SR20 Spur, and provides:

1. The easiest connection to 32nd Street for vehicles that are wanting to head north on R Avenue.
2. The best access into the Industrial Park from Commercial Avenue.

3. Great pedestrian connectivity to an existing transit system and a safe mode of non-motorized transportation into the downtown core.
4. A crosswalk at 29th Street and Commercial Avenue that will allow folks from the west side of Commercial Avenue access to the recreational opportunities that exist east of R Avenue.
5. A great neighborhood connection to other areas of town.

Q Avenue is currently a “quiet street.” However, it is expected to see more traffic as the area develops out commercially and in high-density residential. Upgrading the road, adding curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and stormwater collection and treatment systems now is an important factor in seeing this area develop as well to reduce the inconvenience of shutting down the road in the future to traffic.

*Question:* This proposed roundabout on R Avenue and 30th Street will not reduce arterial traffic on 32nd Street at all, because people are trying to travel westbound or access Commercial to travel northbound to downtown.

*Answer:* The project will still allow all vehicle traffic to continue to travel westbound on 32nd Street with the existing turn lane. Left turns from R Avenue to 32nd will still be allowed as will right-hand turns from southbound R Avenue. Northbound access along Commercial to downtown is still best accessed via the roundabout at the SR20 Spur and Commercial, not utilizing R Avenue.

*Question:* Please! Look at this again — 32nd Street is the arterial. Make the roundabout there, add protected turn lanes on 30th Street like they currently exist at 32nd Street. It makes sense!

*Answer:* 32nd Street is designated as a Collector, not an arterial, per the City’s Street Classifications map. Based on the traffic accident data, the issue is not with the protected turn lanes making a left turn from R Avenue westbound, the issue is the left-hand turns from the west side street going northbound.

The issue is also freight traffic access to and from the industrial area east of R Avenue. This area is not accessible from 32nd Street. Adding protected turn lanes at R and 30th Street only benefits passenger vehicles. Freight access will benefit from a roundabout at 30th or 28th streets, allowing a direct north- or southbound connection to downtown or SR20 via R Avenue. Pedestrians and bicyclists will also benefit from a roundabout at 30th as a roundabout can more safely allow non-motorized travelers to navigate from east to west along the 29th/30th pedestrian corridor utilizing the proposed Rapid Flashing Beacon at Commercial and the proposed shared-use paths along R Avenue.

*Question:* What do the improvements mean to the Samish Indian Nation?

*Answer:* 30th Street and R Avenue will become a closer crossing for the Samish Indian Nation in the event of a tsunami warning.