

ROUNDAABOUT: ODOT is ready to start “Design Acceptance”

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of Transportation (ODOT) will meet within the next two weeks with freight industry representatives to seek formal concurrence with the design. That’s a critical step in getting to what ODOT calls “Design Acceptance.”

At a workshop on Thursday, ODOT representatives asked for the Sisters City Council’s concurrence as well.

In a letter to the council, project leader Mike Darling said, “As we move toward Design Acceptance and ask you for concurrence/support of the proposed roundabout design, we want to make sure that the community and public in general is informed about the process which got us to this point, including direction previously set in a public context.”

An extensive public process brought community consensus on the desirability of a roundabout — but that happened several years ago, and for some people in Sisters the idea of a roundabout may be new, alien, and not necessarily welcome.

Councilor David Asson

expressed concern at Thursday’s workshop regarding public outreach.

“I’m 99-percent sure you have the confidence of the Council,” Asson said. “It’s the community I’m concerned about ... it’s as if they’ve never heard of this before. There are people who are very dubious — ‘why the hell are you doing this? Is it a done deal again?’”

If a roundabout is a “done deal,” it was a deal done in 2011, with public input.

The City of Sisters identified a roundabout at the intersection of Highway 20 and Barclay Drive as a traffic-control option (a traffic signal being another) in its Transportation System Plan (TSP) adopted in January 2010. The TSP adoption had its own public-input process.

The next year, the engineering firm Kittleson & Associates conducted a feasibility assessment of a roundabout.

Community members participated in a workshop in November 2011 and determined that a roundabout was the preferred alternative.

Getting the roundabout identified in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan and getting the freight industry on board took several years. The freight industry wanted to test a design before



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

Barclay Drive/Highway 20 will eventually be controlled by a roundabout.

signing off on a roundabout.

The tests were concluded on February 27 at the Deschutes County Fairgrounds and again at Portland Meadows on March 5.

The roundabout is projected to cost around \$1.4 million, depending on right-of-way acquisition costs.

“At this time, without clearly understanding what ODOT right-of-way costs are (they are using estimates), the City of Sisters will be required to contribute \$360,000, which is very much subject to change,” City Manager Andrew Gorayeb told *The Nugget*. “A portion of that contribution will

be paid from transportation SDCs that have been paid related to the North Sisters Business Park. The balance will be paid by regular transportation SDCs.”

North Sisters Business Park was assessed for future intersection improvements to mitigate the development’s traffic impacts when that development was approved by the City.

ODOT is asking the Council to set an informational public open house in early April, where they can present the design of the roundabout to the public, answer questions, and accept feedback.

Invasive garlic mustard found in Eastern Oregon

PENDLETON (AP) — Weed-control experts in Umatilla County are saying: “Hold the mustard!”

County weed-control supervisor Dan Durfey tells the *East Oregonian* newspaper that garlic mustard first appeared in Eastern Oregon several years ago atop Cabbage Hill. Now the invasive plant has spread to the Umatilla River all the way to the Oxbow site in Hermiston.

Durfey says garlic mustard will eliminate small native plants.

The plant has white flowers in April or May, but does not bloom for very long before going into seed production. He says it can be difficult to spot because it blends with other plants in wetter areas near trees.

Durfey says the Oregon Weed Board aggressively targets garlic mustard, and he has received two grants to address the only known outbreak in Eastern Oregon.

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