

ROUNABOUT: Signal cost and footprint are about the same

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But the 2011 numbers are, in fact, close to equal:

- 2011 Signalized Intersection Improvement Estimate (all costs including engineering/42,000 square feet of right-of-way/construction) — \$3.96 million.
- 2011 Roundabout Improvement Estimate (all costs including engineering/43,000 square feet of right-of-way/construction) — \$4.1 million.

Current estimates for a roundabout come in at \$3.2 million.

Farnsworth told *The Nugget* that “it’s safe to say that the ‘apples to apples’ would be scalable and the costs between the two alternatives based on today’s project objectives for mobility would still be about the same.”

Farnsworth also notes that there is significant area-wide funding support available for the roundabout. The City of Sisters’ portion of the bill would be about \$300,000, paid out of developers’ fees for infrastructure improvements.

Another issue that has been a point of concern for some is the inclusion of a lane that goes past the roundabout in each direction, designed to accommodate oversize loads. That lane would likely be gated during regular use.

According to Farnsworth,

that lane is a critical element as far as the trucking industry is concerned — even though it would be used very rarely, perhaps as seldom as once every couple of years.

“Addressing that issue was a big breakthrough in getting full-on support from the freight industry,” Farnsworth said. “We have a legal obligation to allow the freight industry to pass through highway 20 — including the big over-size over-dimensionals.”

Farnsworth told *The Nugget* that his outreach has garnered “pretty overwhelming support” — even from folks who had been detractors of the roundabout plan. Some, he said, will continue to agree to disagree.

For Farnsworth, the matter is pretty straightforward — with costs and footprint about the same and with similar effect (or not) on traffic congestion, the roundabout comes out ahead on safety. Proponents also tout the roundabout’s potential to create an aesthetically pleasing gateway to the region, but that’s not the primary driver.

“The big difference is safety,” Farnsworth concluded. “They are significantly safer.”

ODOT and the City are currently working on an inter-governmental agreement, a draft of which may be ready for the council’s review this month. Hearings would follow before the council makes a decision that would allow ODOT to move on with right-of-way acquisition and detailed planning.

Sisters Country birds

By Douglas Beall
Correspondent

Steller’s jay [*Cyanocitta Stelleri*] is a very common forest bird, loud, always hungry, and able to mimic several other bird species’ vocalizations — especially the red-tailed and red-shouldered hawks.

They form tight family bonds and will remain with their mates for the entire year. The female incubates 4-5 eggs for 16-18 days, and both adults feed the nestlings which leave the nest in 16 days.

Feeding on the nuts and seeds of the forest, the Steller’s jay also has insects, small rodents, and the eggs of other birds in their diet.

They will fly silently through the trees, one at a time in groups of 10-15 in the fall as they gather and cache food for the winter. Remembering where these food treasures are located as needed for food throughout the cold winter months.

Their stunning blue and black feather displays can be enjoyed at many of the bird feeders in Sisters.



PHOTO BY DOUGLAS BEALL

Double trouble.

For more Steller’s jay photos, visit <http://abirdsingsbecauseithasasong.com/recent-journeys>.

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