

Lindsay, SHE works on roundabout

April 12, 2017

By: Paul Myers

Lindsay – Roundabouts are becoming much more popular in California, and as a result more are popping up in the Central Valley. Some of the newest recipients of roundabout projects are Farmersville with dual roundabouts on Farmersville Boulevard near the Highway 198 exit and Woodlake who finished their project just last year. But Lindsay, who has had a roundabout on their main thoroughfare at Hermosa and Elmwood since 2010, is looking to add another this year.

The City of Lindsay and Self Help Enterprises (SHE) will partner on the roundabout slated to be installed on Hermosa and Westwood next to Jefferson Elementary. The project is a win-win for both the City and SHE. City manager Bill Zigler notes that the City has been aware that there needs to be a roundabout at the intersection since 2006. There are only two stop signs on Westwood controlling the intersection. And Hermosa spans four lanes without stop signs making Hermosa particularly dangerous to cross.

City Services Director Mike Camarena notes that the roundabout reduces the four lanes of traffic to two ensuring the students only have to cross 33 feet of space instead of the 66 feet before. As well students will be able to reach the median island so they only have to cross one lane at a time.

In terms of traffic, Camarena finds that speeds will be reduced to 20-25 miles per hour entering the roundabout.

“I would say that it is nearly impossible for a car to enter at 40 miles per hour,” Camarena said. “The people in the Jefferson district have been saying that they want something done because this is a dangerous intersection.”

For SHE the roundabout addresses the issue of safety for additional students who will be living across the street from the school. SHE plans to construct a 50 unit complex across from Jefferson Elementary where an orchard of orange trees was once planted. Knowing the project would add traffic to the intersection SHE applied for Housing Related Infrastructure funding for the roundabout. Zigler noted that as a result of the project and along with it their funding for the roundabout, the City does not have to match funds or pay for the project from their own streets fund.

Aside from ensuring student safety as they cross the intersection, City Manager Bill Zigler notes that it is better overall for traffic and air pollution. Zigler relayed to the City Council during their Feb 28 council meeting that roundabouts reduce pollution because cars do not idle which is when they pollute most, and reduces the severity of traffic accidents. Instead of cars being hit directly, a roundabout accident often results in a glancing blow reducing damage and injury. But the City also hopes to avoid other problems with this roundabout that were overlooked when building the one on Hermosa and Elmwood.

The Elmwood roundabout is designed to have large trucks drive over the apron to make it through the intersection. However, big rigs will drive over the inner curb that works as a barrier for landscaping. The potential damage can compromise the inner curb and damage the landscaping.

According to Camarena the Westwood roundabout is 110 feet in diameter. Camarena noted that that is larger than the Elmwood roundabout and that should solve many of the problems they currently face with trucks.

Zigler claimed that the roundabout is a better option than a stop light because it would back up traffic at heavy traffic times on all sides of the streets. Conversely, the roundabout slows traffic down while keeping cars moving through the intersection.

Camarena noted that the City plans to reach out to the public for their input on the project. He added that a construction plan should be in place by the end of this year.