



10/16/24

Dear neighbors of the Atherton Ave. & Alameda de Las Pulgas intersection,

I am an Atherton resident and the former chairman of the Atherton Transportation Committee. I am writing you about some changes that are under consideration for that intersection. The reason why I am writing is that I understand that some of you are upset at the prospect of the installation of a roundabout. Since **I am a major proponent of a roundabout** there, I am able to correct misinformation that you may have received and share other helpful information.

If you are getting this in paper form, in order for you to click on the links in this, go to [www.AthertonRoundabout.com](http://www.AthertonRoundabout.com) or scan the QR code in the top right of this page.

#### **Changes to the town's plans that you might not know:**

- Design will be changed to no longer **block driveways**. The splitter islands were too long.
- Design will no longer impinge on private property nor the PG&E pole—since it can be moved to the north onto town-owned land, and more importantly, it can be shrunk.

Compared to a traffic light, the additional benefits of a roundabout are:

- **MUCH safer:** [multiple studies](#) have similar findings:
  - Fatalities drop by 90%
  - Injury accidents reduce by ~75%
  - Crashes roughly halve.
  - 30-40 percent reduction in pedestrian crashes
  - Single-lane roundabouts are safer for bikers than traffic signals ([sources](#))
- **Less noise:** less brakes squealing, diesel trucks [accelerating](#) and less **honking** with [gridlock](#).
- Get through the intersection faster without having to wait for the light to change.
- So increases road capacity by [30-50%](#), so less backup, so **less cut-through traffic**.
- Less energy used from acceleration, which means:
- Fewer pollutants emitted that waft into your homes (nor [greenhouse gasses](#)).
  - For every 1ppm of Carbon Monoxide, 1% increased risk of hospitalization ([source](#))
- Construction disruption can be even less than for a traffic light with [modular roundabouts](#).
- They can also be [beautiful](#)

[Studies](#) that compare people's attitudes before roundabouts are built to afterwards show dramatic shifts from negativity before, to positivity afterwards (33%→72%). This should give you pause.

In Carmel, Indiana, they have over 100 roundabouts, and the residents love them!

If I can be of assistance with your understanding this issue, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Gary Lauder <gary@lauderpartners.com> Home phone: (650)323-5700.

Federal Highway Administration (FHA) [Publication](#) from p.40:

“A recent survey conducted of jurisdictions across the United States (3) reported a significant negative public attitude toward roundabouts prior to construction (68 percent of the responses were negative or very negative), but a positive attitude after construction (73 percent of the responses were positive or very positive).”

Last month The Economist had an article called “What To Do About America’s Killer Cars?”

<https://www.economist.com/leaders/2024/09/05/what-to-do-about-americas-killer-cars> which said:

"It may seem arcane, but the lack of roundabouts in suburban and rural America is a big cause of deaths. Replacing intersections would save thousands of lives a year."

The US is saving lives - and energy costs - with this one radical change to its traffic system

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/12/roundabouts-save-more-lives-than-traffic-lights/>

[“Continued Reliance on Traffic Signals: The Cost of Missed Opportunities to Improve Traffic Flow and Safety at Urban Intersections](#) (9/05 publication of the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety)

Personal note: I am hoping that Atherton leads by example. Success in this location will influence other towns to follow suit. It’s better for noise, safety, traffic queues, cut-through traffic, the local air quality, global emissions, pedestrians, bikers, aesthetics, etc. This is why post-installation twice as many people are positive about them than before they are installed.