

The Roundabout Comes Full Circle.....

*by Dave Earling*

After a passionate and robust community conversation, the 5 Corners Roundabout is finished, and it is a stunning addition to 5 Corners, the neighborhood and the city. While many supported the project, I know many also thought the idea was foolish, and some may still feel that way. But I hope they will soon be able to experience the many benefits provided by the roundabout.

We all acknowledge the challenge any neighborhood faces with a major improvement. In this case, the 5 Corners business community and local residents were challenged. They are to be thanked for their patience. The businesses have begun to see a return to normal and some improvement.

A special thank-you to our fine staff and Marshbank Construction for bringing the project in on time and within budget. The co-ordination required between sub-contractors and utilities must have been overwhelming.

By the time we had the Ribbon Cutting last week, with more and more people beginning to see and sample the roundabout, you could feel a growing excitement surrounding the project. One of the most rewarding experiences the Council, Staff and I have had in the past couple of weeks is folks stopping us to say thanks for the quality project, many admitting they had changed their mind from their initial misgivings.

Amidst all the pushback, many Council members held firm and supported the project. They are to be thanked. Moving projects of change is difficult in any community and Edmonds is certainly no exception!

So what do we have?

First, and most important, we have an addition which will allow traffic to move freely through a very difficult intersection. Besides the increased traffic flow, we improve air quality by eliminating the traditional backups as well as improve access to businesses and neighborhoods. The new directional signs will allow out-of-area visitors to better locate their destination.

Second, we have dramatically improved safety for pedestrians. The highlighted paver crossings and push-button flashing lights let traffic easily see which street is being accessed by a pedestrian.

Third, we have created a stunning Gateway to our community, which was one of the goals. The magnificent artwork, paved circle, plantings and nighttime lighting add to the sense of place. If you haven't been through the circle at night, go treat yourself. It is a truly gorgeous photo-op!

Over time we have a great opportunity to attract new businesses and update current buildings. The former Vision Quest gym is currently being prepared for leasing to potential new tenants and we are anxious to see what will happen in that space. We hope to see 5 Corners become more of a destination, as opposed to a place to merely pass through. The pieces are coming together; the roundabout is a key addition.