

EAGLE POINT — We know change isn't always easy. Building public sentiment for a project to build a rural roundabout may be the perfect example. But a recent open house to introduce such a project in southern Oregon ended on a surprisingly positive note.

More than 50 people gathered at Eagle Point City Hall on July 30 to learn about an upcoming roundabout project for the intersection of OR 62 and OR 234.

"Going into the meeting, we had already heard from people who were skeptical about roundabouts," said Public Affairs Coordinator Mary Dillinger. "But by the time they left, most seemed to like what they heard."

The intersection, located between the cities of Eagle Point and Shady Cove, sees an average of 13,000 vehicles per day. It is on the main route to Crater Lake and is used by people traveling between the Rogue Valley and central Oregon. It's also a key connection for rural residents commuting to the Medford and Grants Pass areas.

ODOT State Traffic Standards Engineer Kevin Haas told community members about the process of determining when a roundabout is the best traffic control solution. He provided data to explain the rationale and gave examples of roundabouts already in use throughout Oregon, including in rural areas.

"A common thing we hear is that people want a traffic signal instead of a roundabout," said Haas. "We show them how roundabouts are more efficient at moving traffic through the intersection and — most importantly — how much safer they are by comparison."

Many of the questions from the audience centered around myths or concerns about roundabouts: crash rates, ease of use by trucks and other large vehicles, speeding on nearby roads, and potential issues for people living nearby.

While some entered the meeting with doubt, others supported the change and said the intersection has been a concern for years. In fact, the intersection is a top 10% Safety Priority Index System site. This designation prioritizes the project for federal funding earmarked for improving safety on dangerous highways.

Region 3 traffic engineers Eric Finney and William Fitzgerald and Project Manager Roger Thom were also on hand to help Haas and Dillinger answer questions. Following the meeting, many attendees lingered in the room to chat about the project — or just to catch up on small town life.

The OR 62 at OR 234 Roundabout project is scheduled to begin construction in 2027. To learn more, visit the project webpage: [OR 62 at OR 234 Roundabout](#).

Additional resources:

- [All about roundabouts, FAQs](#) (pdf).