

# Belfair's 1st roundabout gets state approval

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A road project that generated heated debate earlier this year recently passed a new milestone, setting Belfair up to potentially get its first roundabout.

The Washington State Department of Transportation

(WSDOT) last week approved the intersection control analysis for the proposed roundabout, located where Log Yard Road meets state Route 3, north of the downtown area.

Patrick Holm, SCJ Alliance Consulting Services project manager, said in an interview with the Shelton-Mason County Journal that getting

the approval from WSDOT means the project is sticking to its anticipated timeline. The next step will be completing a "plan for approval" package, outlining the geometry of the roundabout.

News of WSDOT's approval comes at the one-year anniversary of the completion of the state Route 3 widening

project, which provided new sidewalks along the highway in downtown Belfair and added a turning lane.

"One of the benefits of a roundabout is that you can shift traffic," Holm said, which would make it easier to keep traffic flowing during the construction process.

Holm said he would remind

residents that even with the roundabout, the traffic issues won't change until changes happen on a larger scale.

Plans for a new road meant to divert traffic from going to the downtown area, informally known as the Belfair

see SR3, page A-21



Herald file photo by Dana Kampa  
The intersection of state Route 3 and Log Yard Road, also called Belfair Yard Road, could be the site of Belfair's first roundabout.

## SR3: DOT gives the A-OK

continued from page A-19

Bypass, but officially renamed the SR3 Freight Corridor, are in place so construction can begin within the next few years.

The focus of the roundabout is tackling a more targeted traffic issue — specifically, how to keep traffic moving once the Mason Transit Authority builds its new Belfair park-and-ride facility on Log Yard Road. MTA aims to begin construction in June.

At public meetings held earlier this year, residents said they were most worried about how the roundabout would affect traffic flow in the historically congested area. SCJ Alliance presented its findings on three intersection control options: adding two-

way stop signs, building traffic lights or constructing a roundabout. Of these options, consultants said the roundabout would affect traffic the least.

During an April 24 meeting at the HUB Center for Seniors, Holm said the process of selecting a type of intersection regulation is designed to find the most efficient, safest and most valuable intersection that can be put in for the longest amount of time.

However, finding a solution that addresses everyone's concerns is difficult.

"I think until there's a greater mutual improvement, congestion in that area is going to be a continual concern," he said.

Holm said there are currently no public meetings about the roundabout scheduled.