

December 11, 2021

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Dear Bellemont Area Residents,

I would like to share some information about the traffic issues related to the snowstorm on December 10 and clarify some of the misinformation that we've received from residents.

At the onset, it is critical to understand that the traffic issues during our first snowstorm of the season had nothing to do with the roundabout. The incident that caused most of the traffic delays occurred in ADOT right-of-way where a semitruck exiting the Pilot Travel Center was involved in an accident. This issue was further exacerbated by another truck that jackknifed after trying to enter the clearly signed auto entrance of the Pilot.

As we shared before, there are several factors that are contributing to these traffic issues. These include an ever-growing number of inexperienced truck drivers that are just entering this profession to help mitigate the truck driver shortage caused by COVID-related supply chain issues, the "Great Resignation" and other issues. Illegal driving maneuvers into and out of Pilot by both truckers and motorists also continue to be a problem. However, it's important to note that we have definitely seen an improvement along the learning curve as truckers and drivers alike become more familiar with safely and lawfully navigating into and out of the Bellemont area.

To this end, please note that the other major factor which caused the issues last Friday was the first snowstorm of the 2021 – 2022 season. As northern Arizona residents, we've all experienced delays and accidents due to snow, especially early in the season, as was experienced around the County that day. These are most often due to driver error, but other factors certainly contribute to them. Lack of visibility, coupled with more challenging driving conditions, inexperienced drivers, and the newness of the Bellemont driving patterns, also play a role in these issues.

To reduce icing and improve traction in the area of the roundabout, the County will be moving to using chemical deicers. We are equipping a pickup truck with a spreader that can either use chemical deicers and/or cinders, which will be spread with greater frequency. The truck will also have a blade on the front, but plowing will be primarily performed by other County snowplows (along with spreading additional cinders). The spreader has been on back-order given supply chain issues but was shipped last Monday. We should know soon when the spreader will arrive. As soon as it does, it will be mounted. The plan is to largely dedicate an Operator to this effort during most snowstorms. In addition, ADOT has agreed to use deicer through the roundabout as they treat the on- and off-ramps as well as the accesses to the freeway.

Lastly, we continue to work with the Pilot on their responsibility to both manage

their operation in support of public safety and educate truckers about lawful access to their business. We did observe some issues with lack of management of the site once again and those will be discussed with Pilot Travel Center leadership.

In addition to these measures that are specific to snow removal operations, the County's contractor has installed two additional "No Left Turn" signs and two "Do Not Enter" signs at the Pilot auto entrance. In addition, object markers to hinder illegal left turns and the permanent "Exit Only" signs on County right-of-way at the Pilot fuel island truck exit are scheduled to be installed by the end of next week, weather permitting. Other work to date includes the following:

- ❖ Installation of delineators along Hughes Avenue to reinforce lane separation is nearing completion. Installation of the "Right Movement Only" sign on Hughes and an additional "Do Not Enter" sign near the back of the Pilot Travel Center parking lot has been completed.
- ❖ Directional chevrons and an instructional sign have been installed on the roadway.
- ❖ Damaged concrete roundabout curbing was replaced, and a new inner concrete ring was installed to reduce damage being caused to the landscaping by truck and trailer operators.
- ❖ An additional truck apron has been installed to help mitigate the repeated damage to the curb and gabions of the center island.

We would again like to thank everyone for their patience as we continue to work on enhancing safety and traffic flow in Bellemont for both commercial and residential drivers. We also will continue to provide email updates as necessary regarding our traffic operations mitigation work. If you or anyone you know might like to receive these updates, then please email us at countyroadsinfo@coconino.az.gov with "Add Me to Bellemont Project E-mail List" in the subject line and our Community Relations Manager Marc Della Rocca will add you to our list.

Thanks again, and all the best for a great and safe holiday season!

Sincerely,



Lucinda Andreani
Deputy County Manager
Director, Coconino County Public Works

Cc: Supervisor Matt Ryan