



Victoria Avenue Forever



Victoria AveNews

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Don't let the City Destroy Victoria Avenue's Historic Landscape with Roundabouts

Victoria Avenue currently faces the greatest threat to its historic integrity since it was created in 1892! It is imperative that citizens who care about Victoria Avenue as Riverside's historic and scenic jewel, make their concerns known to Riverside's elected officials. The Department of Public Works will present a report to the Transportation Committee on **November 8th at 1PM in the City Council Chambers** in which they will recommend construction of a roundabout on Victoria Avenue at the Washington intersection, as well at other intersections on Victoria Avenue. The *VAF* Board has been discussing the many negative impacts that would result from their plan and we now bring our concerns to you – our members.

First, let's review the history of Victoria Avenue and its unique landscape design. **Victoria Avenue is a divided scenic parkway that traverses the greenbelt.** Originally commissioned in 1892, it has become a popular tourist attraction and linear park because of the many trees and exotic plants used to landscape the route. The nine miles of preserved Victorian landscaping are characterized by a 30 foot-wide median planted with flowering trees lined by 100+ year old Mexican Fan Palms and Ragged Robin roses. The parkways possess tall, evergreen trees, including California Fan Palms, Eucalyptus and Pepper trees. The

iconic views of Victoria Avenue include the tall fan palms with their "heads" all aligned in the sky as far as you can see.

Since 1992, *VAF* has taken over the planting of replacement trees with —[*cont. on pg 2*](#)

On right—City's Roundabout design for the Washington St. and Victoria Ave. intersection. NOTE—the approaches to the roundabout on Victoria Ave. meander right through the medians, requiring the removal of 14 tall Fan Palms and 12 flowering trees.

CONCEPT IMAGE OF ROUNDABOUT SHOWING POTENTIAL RIGHT HAND TURN LANE (—)



donations from local citizens in memory of loved ones (i.e. they are memorial trees). Volunteers planted these **1600 trees and they belong to the community**. The citizens of Riverside have been protecting Victoria Avenue since the 1920s for the generations to come. And thus, Victoria Avenue is Riverside Cultural Heritage Landmark #8 and was placed on the National Registry of Historic Places in 2000. These designations should guarantee protection of Victoria Avenue against such travesties.

Our concerns about the roundabout concept and design ([see page 1](#)) are many and diverse:

1. Preservation: The roundabouts would **send cars right down the median**, thus significantly changing the structure of Victoria Avenue, and necessitating the removal of at least 14 Mexican Fan Palms and 12 mature, flowering trees from each intersection. The report **falsely claims** that these “can be relocated” or “replaced in kind”. It is biologically impossible for 100+ year old palms and mature, flowering trees to be transplanted or replaced “in kind.”

Victoria Avenue is a unique scenic corridor through the City of Riverside. Experimentation with radical traffic engineering concepts should not occur in such historically sensitive locations. If traffic congestion is the concern, traffic signals would be better from a preservation standpoint because they would maintain the overall original landscape design of the Avenue and would result in the loss of fewer, irreplaceable trees.

2. Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety: Victoria Avenue is a multiuse open space. It is on the City and County Trail maps because it has a dedicated pedestrian walkway and a memorial bicycle path. The traffic study focuses solely on motorist use and provides no data on the numbers or timing of walkers, joggers and cyclists. The accident report shows two accidents in which bicyclists were injured and one in which a pedestrian was injured even though the double stop on Washington is designed to protect them. A disadvantage of roundabouts is that it marginalizes pedestrians and cyclists, at best, or is dangerous for them, at worst.

In the roundabout drawing, pedestrian walkways are placed at a distance from the roundabout proper. Two cut right through the median of Victoria Avenue necessitating the removal of more trees and landscaping. Despite the statement to the contrary in the report, crosswalks associated with roundabouts are NOT safer for pedestrians, especially children, elderly, wheelchair-bound and the visually impaired. Crossing the exit lane from the roundabout is particularly confusing and hazardous for walkers because drivers typically don't signal their exit. Therefore, it is impossible to determine which cars travelling within the roundabout will exit into the oncoming lane. When they do, there is limited time to make a safe crossing. We are particularly concerned about the red, right turn bypass lane from Washington to Victoria

Avenue, where pedestrians will have to cross three lanes of traffic (in two places). Many traffic engineers recommend adding traffic signals to safe-guard pedestrians. These would increase the costs of the project, slow traffic and further degrade the historic character of the Avenue. Again, traffic signals are a better alternative to roundabouts for pedestrians.

We also contest the notion that roundabouts are safer for bicyclists. Avid, racing cyclists might feel bold enough to travel in the center of the roundabout lane and compete in speed and skill with vehicles, but most recreational cyclists, especially, young and elderly would likely travel in on the right of vehicles. There they are vulnerable to being hit because “the motorists need only look to their left” and will not be aware of the bicycle on the right. The alternative, that cyclists travel in the pedestrian walkways, will discourage them from using the Avenue. In Europe, roundabouts are not used in city centers where there are many bicyclists and pedestrians.

3. Unequal Traffic: Roundabouts give preference to motorists traveling in the dominate direction of traffic. Since vehicles already in the roundabout have the right of way, those traveling in other directions are prevented from entering the roundabout and traffic in these directions backs up. The heavy traffic on Washington is due to commuters. Thus neighborhood residents, as well as the pedestrians, joggers, and bicyclists, who are on Victoria, will be disadvantaged. **So, we will be transferring delays for those outside the neighborhood to those inside the neighborhood.** Traffic signals would provide a more equitable alternative.

4. Social Justice: Victoria Avenue runs right through a disadvantaged community and provides open space to its residents. The pedestrians (walkers, joggers, parents pushing baby strollers, care providers pushing wheelchairs, etc.) and most of the bicyclists are locals and whose children go to two schools (Washington Elementary and Gage Middle School) within a block of Victoria Avenue. We need to protect their use of the Avenue and not let it be curtailed by roundabouts that entitle motorists traveling through them.

In summary, for all the above reasons roundabouts are the wrong choice for Victoria Avenue: they irreparably mar its historic character; reduce its recreational value; and place traffic burdens on local neighborhoods. A **more global approach to reducing traffic**, in accordance with Prop R and Measure C, should be explored **first**. **As a last resort, traffic signals would more effectively (1) solve the traffic congestion problems (i.e. produce acceptable levels of service) whereas the roundabout does not, (2) provide safety to pedestrians and cyclists, (3) distribute intersection delays more equitably, and (4) protect the historic nature of Victoria Avenue.**

What you can do to Help!

- 1. Be Informed.** Go to the City’s Website (<https://riversideca.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>)
And read the reports for the Transportation Committee Meeting on November 8th. You can use “eComment” to provide your response.
- 2. Attend the Transportation Committee Meeting** and obtain a speaker card – **November 8th, 1 PM** in the City Council Chamber, City Hall
- 3. Send an e-mail to the City Clerk** (city_clerk@riversideca.gov), and your **City Councilman** prior to the meeting.
- 4. Inform your friends, family, and other groups** to which you belong and encourage them to respond.

Talking Points:

- 1. Roundabouts will destroy Victoria Avenue’s historic character and its trees.**
Victoria Avenue is one of the most iconic symbols of Riverside and should be preserved along with its trees.
- 2. Roundabouts will endanger and displace walkers, joggers, bicyclists, and scenic drivers** who use Victoria Avenue as a linear park.
- 3. Roundabouts will slow and burden local residents** using the Avenue to travel to their destinations.
- 4. Roundabouts do not belong in Historically Sensitive Locations.**


Roundabouts
on Victoria Avenue!!!

Contributions

August - mid-October 2018

Thank you to all who contributed to *Victoria Avenue Forever*. Your gifts will be used to help protect and care for Riverside’s living legacy – Victoria Avenue.

General Contributions and for trees/upkeep

Katherine Hyett, Judith Murakami, Mark & Nancy Parrish, James Robinson, Margaret Robinson, Kerry & Linda Stevens, Ruth Anderson Wilson

Snyder Garden

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Memorial Contributions

Tom & Mary Carpenter	In Memory of Betty Lanier
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Gerry Marr	In Memory of Joan Hall
Judith Murakami (& Roslie & Jackie)	In Memory of Brunhilde Anhalt
Barbara Wood Pafe	In Memory of Tom Wilson, Sr.
Ken & Debby Phillips	In Memory of Joan Hall
James Robinson	In Memory of Elaine Ford
The Wood Family	In Memory of Gladys Wilson
(Barbara, Julie, India & Jean)	

Commemorative Tree Donations

Clara Gallanes	In Memory of Julie Ann Rich
	In Memory of William D Rich

We thank an anonymous donor for a gift of \$5000!

New Corporate Sponsor





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Roundabouts
on Victoria Avenue!!!

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**Details on how you
can help are provided
inside!**