

City Talk for July 10, 2024
City Manager's Office
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Sedona in Motion projects were tested

The Independence Day weekend is filled with celebrations; it is also typically a busy weekend for Sedona with visitors escaping the heat to enjoy cooler temperatures in Northern Arizona. This means usually we see average congestion conditions, a bit reduced from the peak congestion experienced during the spring season.

This year things were different with several of our transportation improvement projects complete, and several nearly complete. These projects, which were developed by our 2018 Transportation Master Plan, are what we refer to as Sedona in Motion (SIM) projects.

Many of the congestion reducing projects focus in the area surrounding the Y Roundabout, since the areas of significant congestion include northbound state route (SR) 89a (towards Uptown), southbound SR 89a (between Uptown and the Y), and northbound SR 179 (south of the Y). The projects completed in this area include:

- The Uptown Roadway Improvement Projects in 2020
- A dedicated right turn lane at Amara Lane
- SR 89a northbound improvements between the Y and Uptown (with a zipper merge)
- The Pedestrian Crossing on Oak Creek (which is nearly complete and we are planning an official opening celebration in a few weeks)

In addition to these projects the Forest Road Connection project is under construction, and the Uptown Parking Garage project is expected to be under construction soon. Also micro transit is scheduled to begin operation in September. Several other projects in this area are also under design.

For the first time, this Independence Day weekend, we tested different traffic control scenarios to determine how effective additional improvements would be in this area. This included a project expected to begin next year, in partnership between the city and ADOT, which will consider adding adaptive metering signals to the Y Roundabout. This is a concept used in other areas of the U.S., and other countries, however, if installed, it would be the first application in Arizona.

The testing included Police Department staff, in coordination with our Public Works staff, essentially manually acting as a traffic signal to intermittently stop traffic from Uptown turning onto southbound SR 179 to see if short, under one minutes closures, allows the Y roundabout to function more efficiently. Also, we tested closing the at-grade SR 179 crosswalk and directing pedestrian traffic through the new undercrossing at Oak Creek, during a portion of the test to see if this helped move traffic better through that corridor.

Again, with traffic levels expected to be congested but not at a level of peak congestion, the traffic control plan allowed data to be obtained at average congestion levels, without the potential of exacerbating peak congestion. In addition, for improvements such as the potential adaptive signal metering, testing is needed in various traffic scenarios as the system would be expected to be in operation during more than just peak congestion.

At the time of publication of this article, we didn't have the results of the test; to see how it went, watch the SIM update at the council meeting held at 3 pm on Wednesday July 10th. This meeting may be viewed live or on the city website at www.sedonaaz.gov/councillive.

While the effectiveness of SIM projects is typically based on engineering modeling and simulations, this will be the first field test ran on completed SIM projects in this area. There has been significant speculation over the years regarding what is and is not effective. So, tune in to our council updates to hear what we found on this test and also hear updates about our zipper merge concept in Uptown, the hopeful launch date of the upcoming micro transit and more.