




City of Billings

Public Works Department *Engineering*
Division

2224 Montana Avenue
Billings, Montana 59101
Office (406) 657-8321
Fax (406) 237-6291

December 4, 2012



TO: Nicole Cromwell, AICP, Zoning Coordinator
FROM:  H. Terry Smith, P.E., PTOE, City Traffic Engineer
SUBJECT: Proposed Zone Change #906, Lot 2, Block 2 Harvest Subd., 3rd Filing

We have reviewed the traffic study submitted in conjunction with the proposed zone change to Neighborhood Commercial for the subject property. As shown by the traffic study, the proposed use associated with the zone change (a sandwich shop) would have adverse traffic impacts at the intersection of Rosebud and 32nd Street West. As outlined below, we do not feel the proposed mitigating measures are desirable.

Installation of a traffic signal. A traffic signal at Rosebud would be approximately 600 feet away from the major signalized intersection of 32nd and King Avenue West. Closely spaced signals significantly reduce the ability to maintain signal progression along an arterial. Existing signals along 32nd are at half-mile intervals. To best handle future traffic growth along 32nd it is imperative that we do not end up with closely spaced signals as we currently have on Grand Avenue or 24th Street West. Additionally, we do not agree with the signal warrant analysis in the traffic study. A deduction in traffic volumes needs to be made for the large percentage of right turns at Rosebud. With such a deduction, signal warrants are not met for either existing traffic or existing plus site traffic. It should be noted that due to equipment limitations we do not currently operate the traffic signals along 32nd Street West as a coordinated corridor.

Median to restrict left turns. We are concerned that preventing left turns from Rosebud onto 32nd would force some of those left turns south to the intersection of Henesta & 32nd. We have already received complaints from the businesses in the strip mall at the northwest corner of King & 32nd about the conflicts and potential hazards with left turns at Henesta. Adding additional traffic from Rosebud would make that situation worse. An option to "solve" the left turn problem at both intersections would be to extend raised median north from King all the way north thru the Rosebud intersection. In addition to not being popular with the adjacent commercial properties, this would have a high potential to push additional commercial traffic back into the residential neighborhoods both east and west of 32nd.

There has been informal discussion of installing a roundabout at Rosebud to mitigate traffic impacts. At this point we have no hard data to show what the additional right-of-way needs would be for a roundabout, nor do we have any traffic analysis showing how a roundabout would function at this location given the close proximity to the signal at King. From a more practical perspective, we don't know how or when the construction of roundabout at this intersection would be funded. Given overall traffic needs in Billings we would not see a roundabout at this location ranking as a high priority on a City-wide basis.

In summary, we believe a zone change to Neighborhood Commercial could result in traffic impacts that cannot be mitigated without creating other adverse impacts. We recommend against the requested zone change at this time on the basis of potential adverse traffic impacts. This does not mean that a zone change could not be considered at a future date when a coordinated signal system is in place and the degree of improvement in traffic flow along 32nd is known.