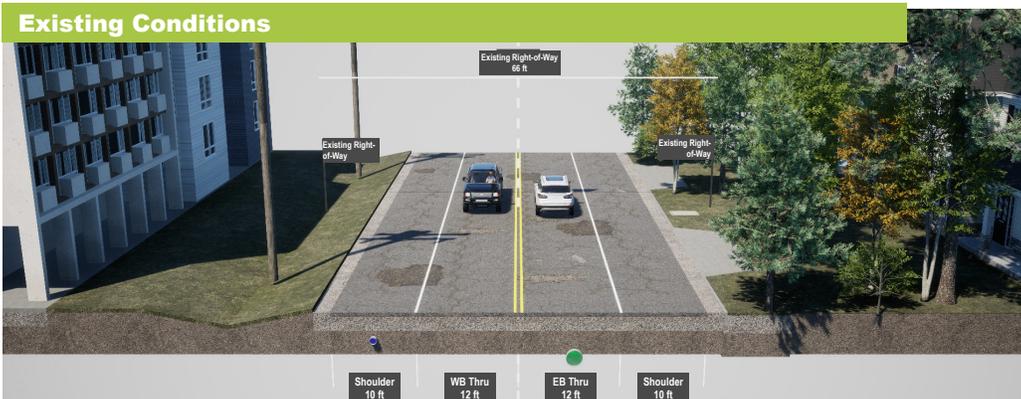


# COUNTY HIGHWAY 32 PEDESTRIAN AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

## ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Washington County explored pedestrian and safety improvements to County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 32 between I-35 and Trunk Highway 61. The study assessed intersection and traffic safety, drainage, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The study resulted in a preliminary design for the roadway that would transition to final design and future construction starting in 2027.



### ENGAGEMENT GOALS

Engagement was a key feature of the study’s development, including a total of five phases of engagement. Through this process, the project team looked for opportunities to inform the community of project outcomes and analysis and to gather input that would inform the preliminary design of CSAH 32.

### ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

Through the five phases of engagement, the project team gathered input about people’s existing experiences in the study area, impressions of design options, and perspectives of the preliminary design. While the project began with three planned phases, two additional phases of engagement were added to the project to maintain open communication and understanding of the project goals and benefits. More specifically, the fourth and fifth phases were added in response to a strong community desire to revise a portion of the roadway design.

## PHASE 1: NEEDS AND CONCERNS

### Purpose:

The first phase of engagement set out to understand people’s needs and concerns related to CSAH 32 and the project area. Specifically, to learn about their experiences and what changes would they like to see. Additionally, it was an opportunity to bring awareness of the project.

### Outcomes

Feedback gathered through Phase 1 provided an understanding of the roadway today and peoples’ perspectives. Many stories of near misses or crashes were shared, along with desires for dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

#### Desired outcomes

- Dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Improved traffic safety
- Access management
- Improved pavement

#### Key Locations

- 12th Street SW Intersection
- 4th Street SW Intersection
- Forest Road N & Centennial Intersections
- Highway 61/Lake Street Intersection

### Strategies:

 Stakeholder Meetings

 Open House August 2022

 Online Engagement

## PHASE 2: CONCEPTUAL ALTERNATIVES

### Purpose:

The second phase of engagement provided an opportunity to share the preliminary designs with the community for the first time and gather feedback. Through activities, the community was invited to explore the preliminary design alternatives and provide ideas or commentary.

### Outcomes

Feedback gathered through Phase 2 varied across the four design alternatives presented. Overall the community was supportive of a trail or sidewalk on one side and general design improvements. The orange alternative with a trail on the north side and a shift of the roadway to the south was preferred by many. This alternative rated the highest for its alignment with the project goals of access, corridor safety, intersection improvements, and pedestrian and bike facilities.



### Strategies:



Stakeholder Meetings



Open House  
February 2023



Online Engagement

## PHASE 3: PRELIMINARY DESIGN

### Purpose:

The third phase of engagement focused on sharing the preliminary design of the selected alternative for review and comment. The feedback received at this phase of engagement would be incorporated into the final design for CSAH 32.

### Outcomes

The community shared their thoughts on features that were supported and features that could be modified or changed to respond to desires. Overall, there was general support for the project, including the addition of a trail and safety improvements.

Additionally, the community did not publicly support the proposed right-in right-out configuration for Forest Road. Concerned community members left feedback and attended City Council Meetings to voice their concerns. The project team took a step back to re-evaluate options for Forest Road. It was determined that a realignment of Forest Road would best suit the community and further improve safety and operations.

***Based on this feedback, the project team would redesign the intersection and add additional engagement phases to the project.***

### Strategies:



Stakeholder Meetings



Open House  
August 2023



Online Engagement

## PHASE 4: FOREST ROAD REALIGNMENT

### Purpose:

The fourth phase of engagement was added to the study process to share the revised preliminary design for the Forest Road and CSAH 32 intersection and gather feedback from the community.

### Outcomes

The proposed design included a realignment of Forest Road to 4th Street with a roundabout. This design was explored in Phase 2, but removed due to cost. Overall the revised design was supported by the community in Phase 4. Concerns of the impacts and cost of this redesign were shared again by some in this phase.

***This feedback would inform refinements to the intersection design and the addition of a fifth and final open house***

### Strategies:



Stakeholder Meetings



Open House  
February 2024



Online Engagement

## PHASE 5: FINAL PRELIMINARY DESIGN

### Purpose:

The fifth, and final, phase of engagement was added in response to public questions being raised about the preferred alternative following the third and fourth open houses and to share project updates and collect feedback. The proposed design of the intersection of Forest Road and CSAH 32 had been the focus of conversation across the past open houses.

### Strategies:

-  **Open House**  
April 2024
-  **Online Engagement**
-  **Newsletter**

### Outcomes

Support for the project and preliminary design was gathered through the final phase of engagement. This support ranged from specific support of the Forest Road realignment and the addition of turn lanes throughout the study area. Many shared a desire to see implementation of the design soon. Questions and comments of concerns around the Forest Road alignment were also shared, comparing the cost and impacts of the design to the overall traffic benefit.

*The preliminary design will move into the final design stages in preparation for construction in coming years.*

### NEXT STEPS

The feedback received throughout all phases of community engagement directly informed the development of the preliminary design for CSAH 32. Specifically, input informed the location of the trail, intersection design, and the realignment of the Forest Road Intersection.

The following pages highlight key questions received regarding the proposed alternative.

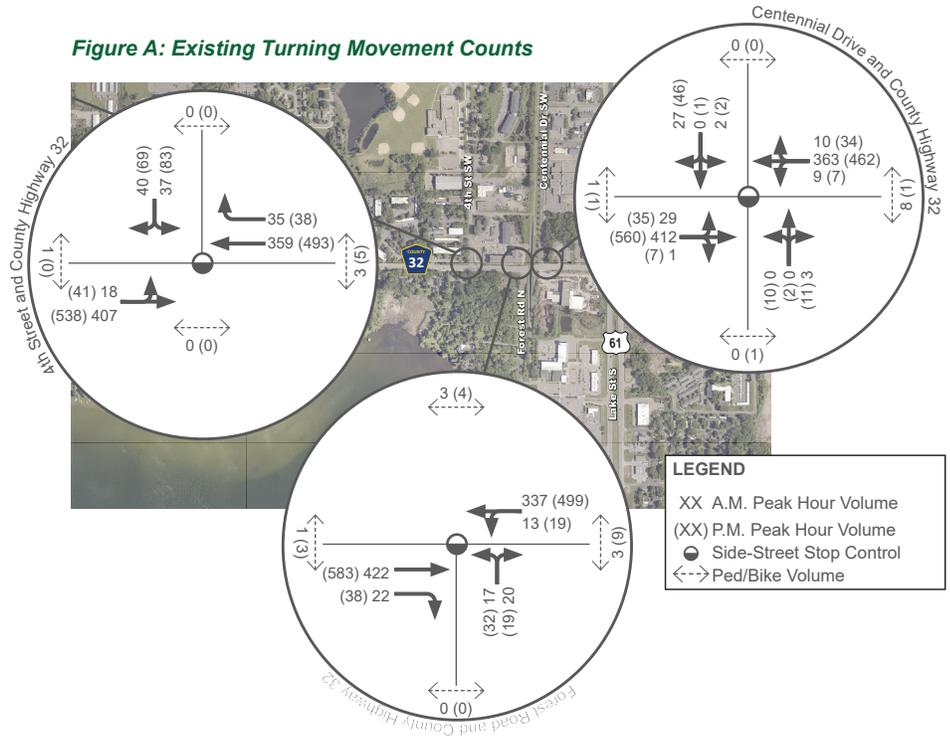
## Proposed Typical Section



# CSAH 32 Design Details and Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the problem with the existing Forest Road connection to County Highway 32?

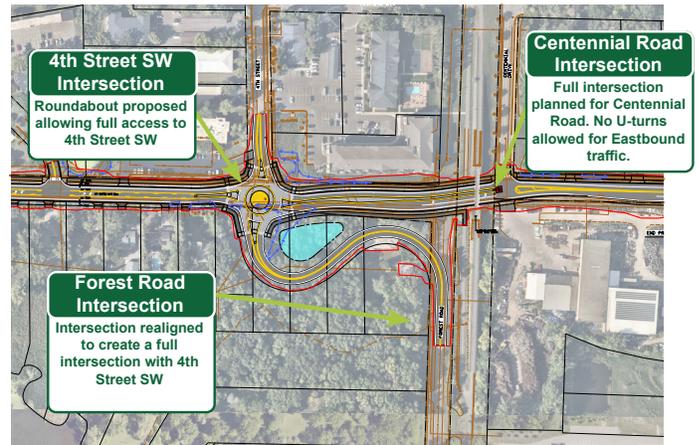
Because Forest Road is offset from (but in close proximity to) both Centennial Drive and 4th Street, traffic queues back up behind left turners and obstruct other vehicular movements creating congestion, driver frustration, and safety concerns (see Figure A). This condition will worsen as traffic volumes continue to grow in the area. In addition, the existing Forest Road location has poor sight lines due to the Hardwood Creek Regional Trail bridge and the profile of County Highway 32.



## What advantages are gained by realigning Forest Road over to 4th Street?

Realigning Forest Road to 4th Street would eliminate the offset intersection problem and improve traffic flow by consolidating vehicular turning movements and providing a controlled intersection with speed control, which is proven to reduce the wait time to find a gap to enter the highway. Pushing this intersection west (see Figure B) will improve intersection sight lines and prevent left turn congestion from obstructing other movements. The proposed roundabout at 4th Street will improve intersection safety and reduce delay for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists.

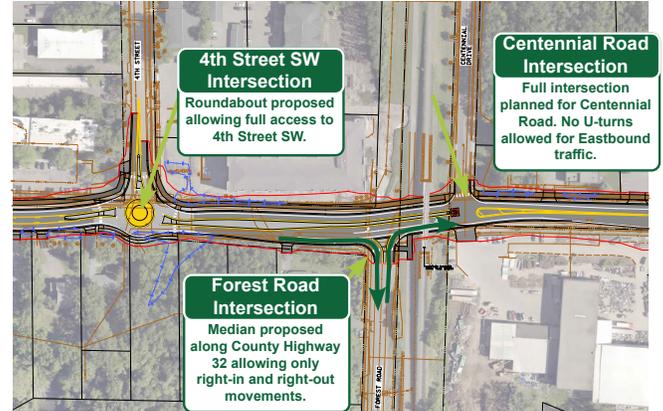
**Figure B: Current Realigned Forest Road Design**



## What other options were investigated for the Forest Road intersection?

The previous concept (see Figure C) for the Forest Road intersection included a restricted access by eliminating left turns to/from Forest Road at County Highway 32, but still allowing right-in/right-out movements. This would be accomplished by constructing a raised concrete median from 4th Street to Centennial Drive. While this concept has safety benefits, it did not fully address the close intersection spacing between Forest Road and Centennial Drive and requires left turns to choose a different route. The project team heard that residents have consistent concerns with the inability to head west on County Highway 32 from Forest Road. However, leaving the roadway in its current configuration is unsustainable and already problematic during peak times.

Figure C: Previous Forest Road Right-in/Right-out Design



## Can Forest Road be connected to Centennial Drive instead?

No. Realigning Forest Road to Centennial Drive, would require removing and realigning the Hardwood Creek Trail Bridge and trail, which would have significant cost implications. Moreover, the Centennial Drive intersection is already only 700 feet from Trunk Highway 61, and it is therefore important to keep westbound traffic moving in order to keep the Highway 61 intersection clear, ensuring that westbound traffic does not get blocked by drivers making left turns. By realigning Forest Road to connect to 4th Street, improved intersection spacing can be achieved, which will aid in the safety and overall efficiency of the transportation system.

## What is planned at the intersection of Forest Road at Trunk Highway 97?

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has plans to reconstruct Trunk Highway 97 to improve safety and traffic flow, and the proposal includes a raised median which will restrict the south end of Forest Road to right turns only. A roundabout is planned to the west of this location, which will enable traffic from Forest Road to reach Highway 61 by making a right turn and then a U-turn at the new roundabout.

Scan here for more information



## What are the long-term plans for Trunk Highway 61?

MnDOT and Washington County are exploring a potential jurisdictional transfer of Highway 61 to Washington County, however traffic volumes are anticipated to continue to increase regardless of which agency owns and operates the roadway. The traffic signal at the intersection of County Highway 32 and Trunk Highway 61 is due for replacement because of its age. No other major changes to this corridor or intersection are programmed at this time.

## Who would pay for the realignment of Forest Road over to 4th Street?

The City of Forest Lake and Washington County are actively seeking outside funding sources through State and Federal grant opportunities.