

Dear Mayor Sparks and Esteemed Councilmembers,

I wanted to write you to share a recent experience that I found remarkable and that I believe you may find helpful.

In the last week of June, I volunteered to walk for a week gathering signatures for the repeal of Cotati's somewhat unusual roundabout ban.

As some of you may remember, 13 years ago this was an issue of great dispute within Cotati. There were numerous factors that lead to that dissension, including various business interests, small town politics, and a few very unique characters, but ultimately the main driver was unfamiliarity with something new and the natural human resistance to change.

I'm pleased to share that those sentiments have changed dramatically in the last 13 years. My experience was that roundabouts have become a familiar and generally well accepted traffic feature for our citizens. I talked to over 130 people, and all but 7 signed the petition to rescind the ban on roundabouts. That is a remarkable number, particularly in light of the previous community attitude that existed many years ago.

Many people, particularly younger people, were amused that we actually have such a draconian law on our books. Many remembered the controversy from years past, but were unaware Cotati had been actually left saddled with a ban on using roundabouts anywhere within city limits. Some recalled having doubts about roundabouts previously, but found that time and experience had changed their opinion. Others told me they thought this ban was a mistake when it happened and that they would be glad to see it changed.

The key thing I'm happy to share was the overwhelming nature of the support for this. I'm pleased to share my opinion that this measure is very likely to be successful at the ballot box, but would like to add one last caveat-

Many of the citizens I talked with felt strongly that this issue should be decided by the citizens themselves in a new vote. They felt this was only fair as the citizens had originally instituted this ban. A few who told me they generally didn't like to sign initiatives told me they would support this specifically because of the intention to take this back to the people.

As I understand it is the staff belief and recommendation that going back to the electorate is required, and bearing the above in mind, I would urge the council to not entertain any consideration of bypassing the public on this issue, even if there is a legal path to do so. I mention this only as I would be sorry to see the evident goodwill for this repeal lost if people felt their ability to choose had been taken away.

Thanks for your consideration and thanks to all of you for the time you put into our community.

Sincerely,

Mark Landman

