ROAD COMMISSION for OAKLAND COUNTY

Modern Roundabouts

A new intersection Design that is...

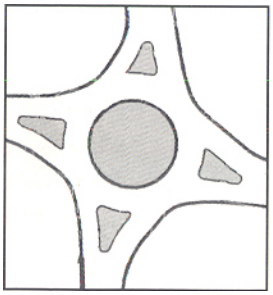
- improving safety
- adding capacity
- improving aesthetics

ROUNDABOUTS

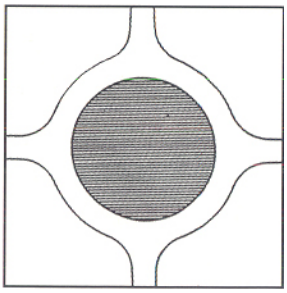
Modern roundabouts, a relatively new form of circular intersection, are an alternative to traditional signalized intersections. They were developed by traffic engineers in England, who, after a substantial amount of research, concluded that the roundabout is the safest, most efficient design for many intersections.

ROUNDABOUTS ARE NOT TRAFFIC CIRCLES

Modern roundabouts are not the same as the traditional traffic circles that were built around the US in the first two thirds of the 20th century. In fact, there are some significant differences:



Modern



Traditional

- In many traditional traffic circles, before entering the circle, traffic must come to a complete stop and then make a 90-degree turn into the circle. In a roundabout, traffic merges into the circle at a much lesser angle – vehicles do not have to come to a full stop at the circle, but simply merge into traffic.
- Roundabouts are generally much smaller than traffic circles, which reduces vehicle speed within the circle, thus reducing the likelihood of accidents.

ROUNDABOUTS IMPROVE SAFETY

Studies* indicate roundabouts result in:

- 37% fewer crashes
- 51% fewer injuries

The crashes that do occur tend to be much less serious and rarely fatal, because they are typically low-speed sideswipes and rear-end collisions, rather than the head-on, left-turn and high-speed broadside collisions that occur at signalized intersections.

*Source: *Federal Highway Administration's "Roundabouts: An Information Guide."*

ROUNDABOUTS INCREASE ROAD CAPACITY

- Continuous but reduced travel speed through the intersection actually gets you there sooner than the stop and go of a traditional signalized intersection.
- Roundabouts at the intersections of two-lane roads can allow the two-lane roads to carry additional capacity, in some cases nearly as many cars as a four-lane road with signals.

ROUNDABOUTS OFFER IMPROVED AESTHETICS

- Most people think roundabouts look nicer than signals.
- Opinion surveys in Maryland, Colorado and Vermont found that 80-90% of area residents liked their new roundabouts. The central island can provide space for a sculpture, landscaping, etc.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

Crossing at a roundabout is generally easier for a pedestrian than at a traditional signalized intersection. This is because in a roundabout, the pedestrian is only crossing one direction of traffic at a time.

Pedestrians should use the appropriate pedestrian crossings and stay out of the center island. Simply look for exiting or entering traffic and cross the exit or entrance lane to the “diverter” island which splits the entrance/exit lanes, and then continue across. These diverter islands provide safe havens where pedestrians can wait for traffic to clear.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING A ROUNDABOUT

Roundabouts are different than traditional intersections and require some different driving techniques. Here are steps to follow as you navigate a roundabout.

1. Slow down as you approach the roundabout – 15 miles per hour is usually about right for driving in the roundabout.
2. When approaching the roundabout, always yield to pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles (the yield sign will show you where to yield).
3. Look left. Vehicles in the roundabout have the right of way. If there is no traffic in the roundabout, don't stop. If traffic is present, wait for an opening and then enter.
4. Once in, keep right – a roundabout is a one-way street. The circulating car has the right of way.
5. Proceed with care to your exit. If you miss your exit, simply go around again.
6. Pedestrians should cross only in the marked crosswalks.

SAFETY FIRST

As a matter of policy, major road improvement projects are conducted by the Road Commission based on a safety ranking system. At RCOC “Safety First” is more than a motto.

Material provided by:

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