

Roundabouts

Frequently Asked Questions

Design

Why are roundabouts being utilized more at intersections?

When comparing roundabouts to traffic signals, roundabouts are favorable due to the reduction of injury and fatal crashes that occur. This is the reason why the Federal Highway Administration has encouraged public agencies (cities, counties, and state highway departments) to use roundabouts since 2008. Simply put, roundabouts help get our family, friends and neighbors home safe at night. Roundabouts may also result in enhanced operational performance meaning less delay for drivers, less maintenance cost than traditional traffic signals and provide aesthetic appeal to communities. A roundabout is typically the optimum intersection control solution for any intersection that is expected to accommodate less than 50,000 vehicles per day.

How is the size of a roundabout determined?

Roundabout sizes vary depending on traffic volumes, capacity needs, intersection location/context, and the largest anticipated vehicle at the intersection along with other factors. Most modern roundabouts will have a diameter less than 180ft with some roundabouts, such as mini-roundabouts, having a diameter as small as 60ft.

Can a roundabout handle the same traffic volume as a signalized intersection?

Roundabouts are designed to keep traffic flowing by dispersing traffic across the roadway network instead of platooning traffic as traffic signals do. Although there are several dozen roundabouts in the U.S. that operate with greater than 50,000 vehicles per day, most intersections with a significant amount of traffic volume will be better accommodated by traffic signals due to the need for more than two lanes.

