

Roundabouts

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a roundabout?

A roundabout is a circular-shaped intersection designed to increase safety and reduce traffic congestion at an intersection.

Are roundabouts new?

No. Modern roundabouts started being implemented in the United Kingdom in the late 1960s. It took several decades before modern roundabouts began to be installed in the U.S. Today, there are more than 10,000 roundabouts built in the U.S. and many state highway departments, counties, and cities are implementing roundabout-related programs to bolster their success in communities.



Why choose roundabouts at intersections?



Safety

- Based on research here in the U.S. over the past 20 years, **roundabouts reduce fatal and injury crashes by greater than 70%¹** and injury crashes by greater than 40% when they replace stop control and signalized intersections.
- The slower speed and similar directions of travel help reduce the potential for serious crashes because of **fewer conflict points**.



Traffic management

- Roundabouts also **reduce traffic congestion**.
- Roundabouts are designed for vehicles to yield and travel through the roundabout at a **slow speed** with all vehicles traveling counterclockwise.



Economic

- Roundabouts are economical with less maintenance and energy costs compared to traditional signalized intersections.



Environmentally friendly

- Roundabouts improve air quality by reducing vehicle emissions via the decrease in vehicle idling and delay. The quantity of impervious surface area is decreased, compared to conventional intersections, resulting in less storm water runoff needing to be treated at the intersection.



Resiliency

- Roundabouts continue to operate during and after inclement weather since the intersection does not depend on electricity.



Gateways and branding

- The center landscaped island of roundabouts can be themed using vegetation, ornamental grasses and stones, short dry-stack walls, and other amenities to create a destination-type branding for the intersection. Some roundabouts in the U.S. have gone so far as to put fountains, sculptures, and artwork within the center island that are illuminated at night providing an enhanced aesthetic appeal.

¹<https://cmfclearinghouse.fhwa.dot.gov/results.php?qst=roundabout>