

Frequently Asked Questions

Are roundabouts dangerous?

No. Statistically, roundabouts have been proven safer than traditional intersections with traffic signals.

The central island eliminates high speed t-bone collisions that occur at traditional intersections, while splitter islands at the entry slow vehicular speeds. Due to the reduced speeds, drivers no longer attempt to “beat the light,” and the severity of accidents is significantly reduced.

After 9 years of operating roundabouts in Washtenaw County, there have been 0 fatal car accidents.

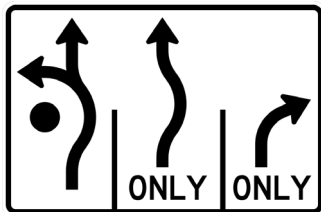
Why not put up a traffic light instead?

In addition to being safer, roundabouts are generally more cost effective than installing a traffic signal at an intersection.

Over time, traffic signals are more costly than roundabouts. Signal equipment costs an average of \$50,000- \$100,000, plus on-going electricity fees. Adding a signal can also require pavement changes to provide a center left turn lane which could require expensive right-of-way (land) acquisition costs.

How do I switch lanes in a roundabout?

Similar to how you choose a lane prior to entering a signalized intersection, you should select the appropriate lane before entering a roundabout. Avoid switching lanes once you are inside the roundabout.



Learn more in our
“Driving Roundabouts” brochure

WCRC Mission Statement

The Washtenaw County Road Commission is responsible for maintaining a road system that is reasonable safe and convenient for the traveling public.

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Questions or Comments?

555 N. Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Phone: 734-761-1500
E-Mail: wrc@wccroads.org
www.wccroads.org

Office Hours:

Regular Hours: 7:00a.m. until 3:30 p.m.
Summer Hours: M-Th 6:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

 facebook.com/washtenawroads

 twitter.com/wccroads

Resources:

1. *Roundabouts*. Institute for Highway Safety.
2. *Roundabouts*. Institute for Highway Safety.
3. *Impact of Modern Roundabouts on Vehicular Emissions*. Iowa State University.

All About Roundabouts



“Look Left and Yield”



- About Modern Roundabouts
- Roundabout Features
- Why Roundabouts?
- Frequently Asked Questions



About Modern Roundabouts




Modern roundabouts are one of the safest types of intersections available. The main characteristic of a modern roundabout is the “yield-at-entry” rule.


When entering a roundabout, you should slow down as you approach the intersection and be prepared to yield to traffic inside the roundabout. **Vehicles that are inside the roundabout always have the right-of-way.** You should proceed into the roundabout when a safe gap is present. Do not merge into the intersection.


When do we build Roundabouts?


Roundabouts are not always appropriate at all intersections. Typically, we consider a roundabout at intersections where congestion and/or safety is an issue.

Benefits of Roundabouts

 **Fewer severe crashes:** Studies have shown roundabouts to be one of the safest types of intersections available. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, a modern roundabout provides a 39% reduction in total crashes and a 90% reduction in serious injury/fatality crashes.¹

 **Reduced traffic delays:** Roundabouts can move traffic through an intersection more efficiently and with less congestion than traditional intersections. Unlike traffic signals, drivers do not have to wait for a green light to proceed. Drivers are only required to stop at entry yield signs when circulating traffic is present to their left.

 **Better Fuel Consumption for Drivers:** Without the start and stop of traditional intersections, drivers use 30% less gas when using a roundabout compared with a traffic signal.²

 **Reduced Air Pollution:** When stopped at a red light or stop sign for excessive periods of time, a vehicle’s exhaust emits unnecessary pollutants into the atmosphere. Roundabouts alleviate congestion and reduce complete stops. Studies have shown that roundabouts reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 32%.³

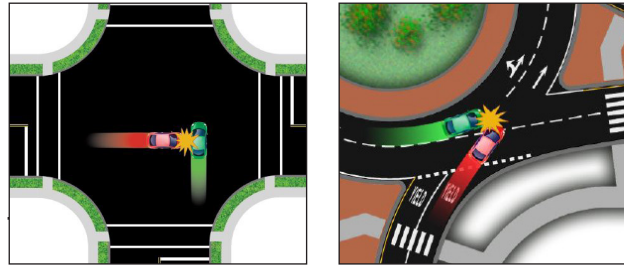


Fig. 1 Intersection Crash Types. GHD.

Features of a Modern Roundabout

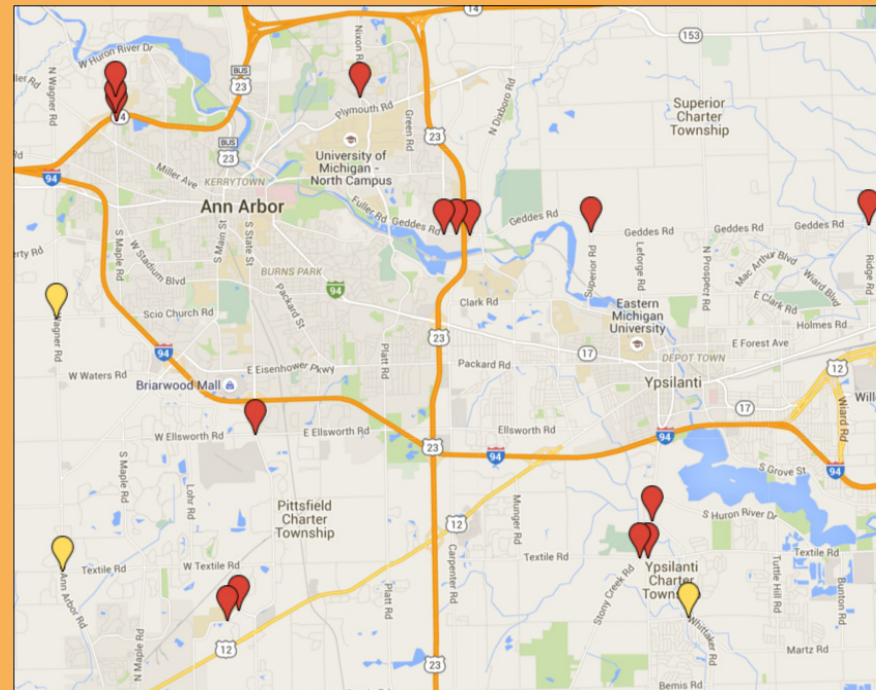


Central Island- This is the main feature of a modern roundabout. The central island is often raised, but sometimes flat. The circular shape helps control the direction of traffic and reduces vehicular speeds.



Splitter Islands- These features are located before you enter the roundabout. They are present to slow and direct traffic. Splitter islands also act as a safe place of refuge for pedestrians when crossing the road.

Roundabouts in Washtenaw County



Existing Roundabout:

- Superior Rd & Geddes Rd
- Geddes Rd & Ridge Rd
- U.S. 23 & Geddes (2x)
- Geddes Rd & Earhart Rd
- M-14 & Maple (2x)
- Maple Rd & Skyline H.S.
- Campus Pkwy & Community Dr
- Campus Pkwy & Suncrest Dr
- State Rd & Ellsworth Rd
- Whittaker Rd & Stony Creek Rd
- Textile Rd & Stony Creek Rd
- Textile Rd & Hitchingham Rd
- Huron Parkway Rd & Nixon Rd

Future Roundabout:

- Ann Arbor-Saline Rd & Textile Rd
- Whittaker Rd & Merritt Rd
- Scio Church Rd & Wagner Rd
- M-52 & Werkner Rd
- U.S. 23 & North Territorial Rd