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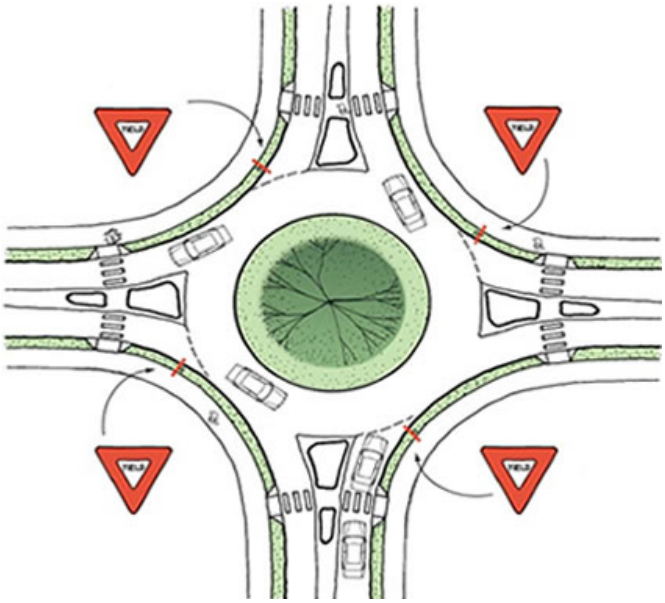
Roundabouts 101:
Intro to Roundabout Navigation

What is a Roundabout?

A modern roundabout is an unsignalized circular intersection engineered to maximize safety and minimize traffic delay. Roundabouts have been popular in Europe, Australia and other parts of the world for decades, but it is only recently that they can be found in the United States.

Roundabouts are particularly effective at intersections with large numbers of left turns. They are also effective at places with moderate to high entering traffic volumes, at the ends of freeway on and off ramps, and at intersections with more than four legs.



In the cities and towns where roundabouts have been built, even where the public has been hesitant about accepting them initially, roundabouts have ultimately been accepted willingly because of the increased safety they provide, along with traffic calming, and aesthetic benefits.

Safety - Roundabouts have been shown to reduce fatal and injury accidents as much as 76% in the United States. Slower speed and the reduced number of conflict numbers is attributed to the reduction in accidents.

Calming Effects - Roundabouts can actually decrease aggressive driving because roundabouts provide no red light to try to "beat," or opportunity to race away from the stop line after the signal finally turns green.

Low Maintenance - Roundabouts eliminate maintenance costs associated with traffic signals.

Reduced Delay - By yielding at the entry rather than stopping and waiting for a green light, delay is significantly reduced.

Capacity - Intersections with a high volume of left turns are better handled by a roundabout than a multi-phased traffic signal.

Aesthetic - A reduction in delay corresponds to a decrease in fuel consumption and air pollution. In addition, the central island provides an opportunity for landscaping.

How to Navigate a Roundabout

Roundabouts can be used by cars, trucks, buses, bicycles, and pedestrians. By exercising caution and using proper signalization, all users can safely and effectively navigate a roundabout.

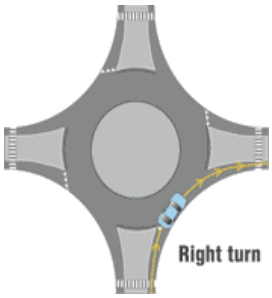
Motor Vehicles

To enter a roundabout:

1. When approaching the roundabout, especially multi-lane roundabouts, follow the lane designation signs and choose the proper lane. Slow down and yield to any pedestrians in the crosswalk.
2. If another car is waiting at the yield line ahead of you, do not stop in the crosswalk. Keep the crosswalk clear for pedestrians.
3. Look to the left. **Traffic in the roundabout has the right-of-wa**y!
4. Approach the yield line and enter the roundabout when there is an adequate gap in the circulating traffic flow.
5. Bicyclists are permitted to ride within the roundabout and will be riding in the lane just as other vehicles do. Please do not pass a bicycle in the roundabout.

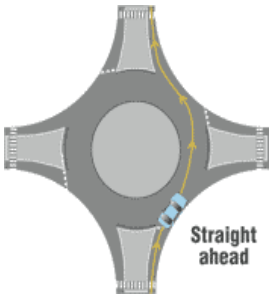
To exit a roundabout:

1. Once you have entered the roundabout, proceed counter-clockwise to your exit. You now have the right-of-way.
2. As you approach your exit, turn on your right turn signal.
3. Exit the roundabout, yielding to pedestrians in the crosswalk.



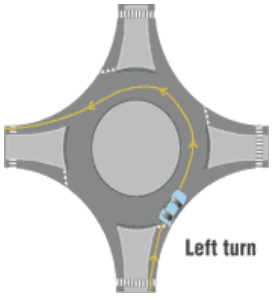
Trucks

Trucks should drive on the circulatory roadway, and navigate the roundabout just as a car would. Truck and trailer combinations may use the truck apron provided to negotiate the tight turning radius. Trucks can drive (usually with just the rear wheels) on the raised pavement of the truck apron to navigate more easily, only if the trailer length requires it. Cars do not to use the truck apron.



Pedestrians

Pedestrians should stay on the designated walkways at all times, and cross only at the designated crosswalks. Pedestrians should never cross to the central island. When entering the roundabout, pedestrians have the right-of-way, but your best protection is your own attention, so watch for cars. Cross the crosswalk one lane at a time, using the splitter island as a refuge area before crossing the next lane.



Bicyclists

Bicyclists can take the lane and circulate as though they are a vehicle, making sure to yield to traffic in the circle when entering. Cyclists should ride as close as possible to the speed of the circular roadway to discourage cars from passing. When exiting the roundabout, use your right hand signal. If you are unsure about using the roundabout, dismount and walk your bike as a pedestrian at the designated crosswalks.

Additional Roundabout Resources

There are many online resources available to receive additional information about roundabouts, including several websites that host videos and animated demonstrations of roundabout navigation. A few of these resources are listed below.

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments:
http://www.semcog.org/TranPlan/Roundabouts/index.htm

Livingston County Road Commission: http://www.livingstonroads.org/Roundabout%20Guide.htm

Oakland County Road Commission: http://www.nwconnector.com/education.cfm

New York State Department of Transportation:
https://www.nysdot.gov/portal/page/portal/main/roundabouts/guide-users

City of Sammish, WA: http://www.ci.sammamish.wa.us/RoundaboutDemo.aspx