

Roundabout Frequently Asked Questions

What are the benefits of the Route 8 / Smythe Street roundabout?

- Reduced congestion on adjacent corridors including Regent Street and Hanwell Road;
- Improved connectivity in the Uptown;
- Improved emergency access;
- Improved opportunities for Transit access;
- Improved access to developable lands on Bishop Drive; and
- New active transportation connection between Prospect Street and Bishop Drive

What is a roundabout?

A roundabout is a circular intersection designed to manage traffic in a simple and effective manner. Vehicles move in a counter-clockwise motion around a central island, and entering vehicles must yield to all traffic already in the roundabout.

Roundabouts, rotaries, traffic circles - how are they different?

They are all circular, but a modern roundabout operates much differently than other intersections and tends to be less stressful and confusing. Rotaries and traffic circles are often very large circles. Some have traffic signals and even stop signs to control traffic coming into and circulating in the intersection. A roundabout is simpler because drivers always must yield upon entry and can never stop within the circle. The geometry is designed specifically to direct traffic around the circle at much slower speeds.

Are roundabouts safe?

Many studies have found that roundabouts are safer than traditional types of intersections. Although there may be as many reported crashes, typically there are fewer injuries and less damage to vehicles because roundabouts are designed to have slower and more consistent speeds and they eliminate the more severe right-angle and head-on collisions that are present in traditional intersections. Pedestrians crossing roundabouts only have one direction of traffic to cross at a time. Also, since drivers must only yield upon entry, there is simplified decision making for drivers.

Are roundabouts safe for pedestrians?

For a single lane roundabout, pedestrians only need to cross one lane of traffic at once instead of multiple. For a multi-lane roundabout, pedestrians only need to cross one direction of traffic at once instead of multiple. This minimizes the number of things to look for (right turning on red, left turns, drivers running a light). Many studies have shown a pedestrian's risk of being involved in a severe collision is lower at roundabouts, due to the slower vehicle speeds. Also, the number of conflict points for a pedestrian is lower at a roundabout than at other intersections, which lowers the frequency of

collisions. A Dutch study of 181 intersections converted to roundabouts found a reduction in all pedestrian crashes of 73%.

Who says that Roundabouts are safer?

Several recent studies identify that the installation of roundabouts at intersections previously operated by all way stop or traffic signals led to improved safety. Transport Canada is recommending that Canadian jurisdictions consider converting signalized intersections to roundabouts wherever appropriate. Their findings as well as many others have concluded that countries showing higher reductions of intersection collisions have been implementing roundabouts. The most recent study completed by the National Cooperative Highway Research Program identified 26 multi-lane intersections that were converted to multi lane roundabouts. The study showed a 67% overall reduction in collisions when a signalized intersection was converted to a roundabout.

What are the common types of collisions at a roundabout?

1. Entering collision, when a vehicle entering the roundabout does not yield to a vehicle already in the roundabout.
2. Rear-end collision, usually at the entrance to the roundabout.
3. Turning collision caused by drivers using incorrect lane. Example: Turning left from right lane.

Are roundabouts better for the environment?

Longer delays and the start and stop approach to signalized intersections will have a demanding impact on the environment. The shorter delays and “rolling” approach to roundabouts generally reduce fuel and energy consumption, green house gas emissions and drivers’ carbon footprint, as well as creating a reduction in noise to the surrounding community. For these reasons, roundabouts help to support the City of Fredericton’s Green Matters Campaign.

How do I drive a Roundabout?

As you approach a roundabout, slow down and watch for pedestrians, stopping if necessary to let them cross. Do visual checks of all vehicles already in the roundabout and those waiting to enter (including cyclists). Yield to vehicles within the roundabout, as they have the right-of-way. When a gap in traffic is available to your left, enter the roundabout by turning right and continue traveling in a counter clockwise direction around the centre island. Do not stop, except to avoid a collision. When exiting, yield to pedestrians already crossing the exit lane.

How do I signal at a roundabout?

When in the roundabout, use your right turn signal to indicate your intention to other road users as soon as you pass the exit prior to yours.

What do the signs at a roundabout mean?

- **Roundabout Ahead Sign:** indicates that you are approaching a roundabout.

- **Roundabout Yield Sign:** indicates that you must yield to right-of-way to vehicles already in the roundabout, stopping is if necessary, and proceed when there is a gap in traffic.

- **Truck Encroachment Sign:** indicates that large trucks use both lanes of the roundabout. Give trucks lots of room and do not attempt to pass trucks.

- **Roundabout Directional Sign:** indicates one-way traffic that is counter-clockwise in a roundabout.

- **Pedestrian Crosswalk Sign:** indicates that there is a crosswalk and that you must yield to pedestrians.

- **Roundabout Guide Signage:** indicates that there are two entry lanes to this roundabout. Choose the correct lane for your destination before entering the roundabout:
 - If you are turning left, get in the left lane;
 - If you are turning right, get in the right lane; or
 - If you are going straight through you can be in either lane.

What if an emergency vehicle comes through the roundabout?

If you have not yet entered the roundabout, pull over to allow the emergency vehicle to pass. If you are in the roundabout, continue to your exit and pull over where there is room for the emergency vehicle to pass. Do not stop inside the roundabout because you may block the emergency vehicle.

How do I cycle through the roundabout?

Experienced cyclists may choose to travel through the roundabout with the other vehicles. Motorists travel the roundabout at a slower speed, which allows cyclists to keep up with traffic and travel in the middle of the lane. Less experienced cyclists might be more comfortable dismounting before entering the roundabout and using the sidewalks and crosswalks.

Are roundabouts easy to adjust to?

Although Roundabouts are often a new type of intersection for drivers to encounter, fewer decisions are necessary. Roundabouts don't have left turns or require drivers to cross busy thoroughfares from cross streets. Motorists must simply yield to the pedestrian in the crosswalk and wait for an appropriate gap.

I drive a big truck, and that roundabout looks small. Will I fit?

The roundabouts are large enough to accommodate buses and large trucks, but small enough that you need to slow down to go around them. As in many turning situations, the truck needs more room. Truck drivers should stay to the middle of the lane as they approach and use the truck apron if needed. At

multi-lane roundabouts, large trucks may need to straddle both lanes when entering and travelling through the roundabout. You should never attempt to pass a large truck or bus on the approach to or within a roundabout.

I want to see across the roundabout. Why is there landscaping in the middle of the roundabout?

The landscaping is placed so drivers can't see across the roundabout. As a driver, you should be looking to the left, not across the roundabout, to see what traffic is approaching. There is enough sight distance to see approaching traffic.

Why are roundabouts considered more aesthetically pleasing?

There is typically more green space available at roundabouts than at signalized intersections. The center island can be landscaped using such treatments as trees, shrubs, flower beds, public art, etc.

What about snow removal at roundabouts?

Generally there have been no problems with snow removal in roundabouts.

What if an emergency vehicle comes through the roundabout?

- Do not stop inside the roundabout.
- If you have not yet entered the roundabout, pull to the right and let the emergency vehicles pass you.
- If you are in the roundabout, exit as normal, then pull to the right and let the emergency vehicle pass you.

Do I need to use my signal at a roundabout?

Yes. When exiting the roundabout, use your right turn signal to indicate you are exiting.