DEBUNKING FIVE ROUNDABOUT MYTHS

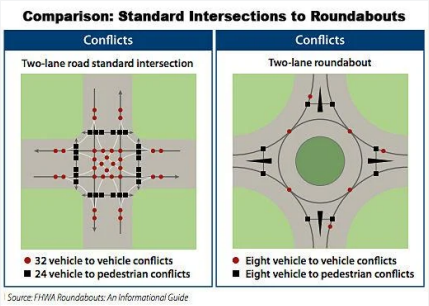
WATCH FOR ME CT

CTDOT Connecticut Children's

MYTH:
Roundabouts are not safe for drivers and pedestrians.

FACT:
Roundabouts are actually the safest type of intersection.

The CTDOT studied roundabouts in the state and found a 49% reduction in total crashes and an 81% reduction in crashes resulting in serious injury or death. Crosswalks are placed away from the circle and refuge islands allow pedestrians to cross one lane at a time.



- In this image, every dot is a place for a potential crash. At traditional intersections, vehicles and pedestrians have 56 conflict points. Roundabouts have 16.
- The most deadly crashes – head-to-head and T-bone crashes – are common with traditional intersections but do not occur in roundabouts.
- The crashes that occur in roundabouts tend to be slow speed fender benders and side-to-side crashes, which cause minimal injury.

MYTH:
Roundabouts are bad for large vehicles.

FACT:
Large vehicles do not have trouble negotiating roundabout with a truck apron.

Roundabouts have truck aprons which are slightly raised sections of pavement ringing the center of the roundabout that widens the road for larger vehicles. Emergency vehicles, including fire trucks, use the truck apron if needed to travel through the roundabout. Snow removal is also not impacted.

Image from Minnesota DOT

MYTH:
Roundabouts are not ADA compliant.

FACT:
Roundabouts are ADA compliant.

FHWAm JamesBrey, E+, Getty Images

Splitter islands and crosswalk placements make the crossing distance shorter, which is more accessible for those with mobility impairments. To accommodate visual impairments, the US Access Board issued a rule that multilane roundabout entrances must have a raised crosswalk and/or a pedestrian beacon. All roundabouts must have a detectable buffer between the sidewalk and the curb.

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MYTH:
Roundabouts are the same as rotaries or traffic circles.

FACT:
Roundabouts are different in every important way.

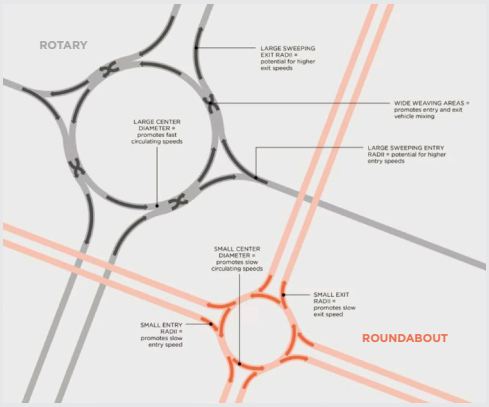

Image from Mass.gov

Modern roundabouts are smaller than traditional rotaries and use design features like splitter islands and a tight center radius to slow traffic. They follow a "yield-at-entry" rule, requiring approaching vehicles to wait for gaps, unlike old rotaries, which emphasized high-speed merging and made circulating traffic yield, leading to delays.

MYTH:
Roundabouts make traffic worse.

FACT:
Roundabouts can help traffic flow smoother.

Roundabouts allow for continuous movement, as all approaches can proceed simultaneously and vehicles yield instead of stop and wait. Studies at Kansas State found a 20% reduction in delays after intersections were converted to roundabouts. Additional studies by the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety and the Federal Highway Safety Administration have shown similar or better results across multiple states.

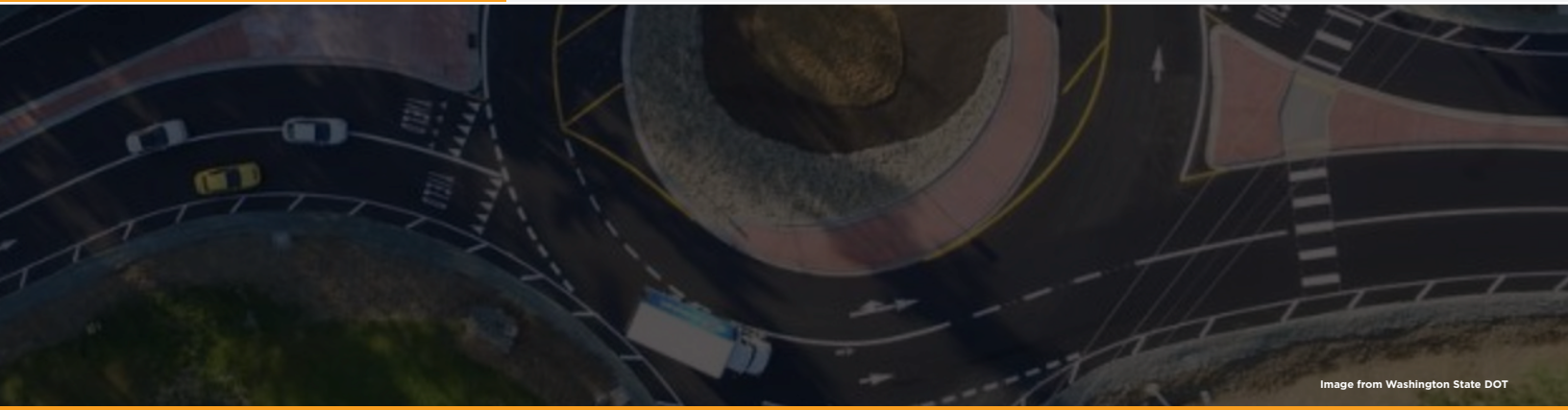
Image from Washington State DOT

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