

## Roundabouts

River Falls has recently constructed several roundabouts. The following information can help you navigate and learn more about the safety benefits of roundabouts.



**Q: What is a roundabout?**

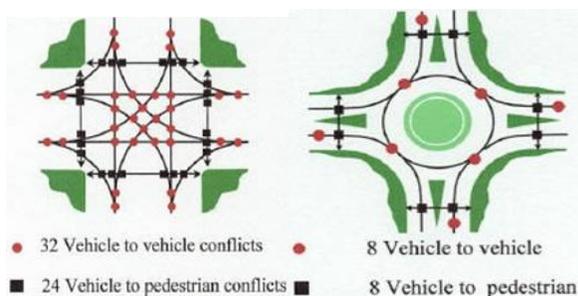
**A: A modern roundabout is an unsignalized circular intersection engineered to maximize safety and minimize traffic delay. Over the last few decades, thousands of roundabouts have been installed in Europe, Australia and other parts of the world. Recently, they have gained support in the United States with many states getting experience with their use and design. In the cities and towns where roundabouts have been built, and even where the public has been hesitant about accepting them initially, roundabouts ultimately have been accepted enthusiastically because of the increased safety they provide, along with traffic calming, and aesthetic benefits.**

**Q: Why are roundabouts used instead of a signal light?**

**A: In a recent Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study of 24 intersections in the USA where stop control and traffic signals were replaced with Modern Roundabouts, there was a large drop in crashes. They have a 90% fatal crash reduction. Roundabouts reduce vehicle speed, minimize vehicle weaving, automatically establish right-of-way, and reduce points of conflict.**

**Q: How can such impressive crash reductions be explained?**

**A: One reason is that there is a reduction in the number of conflict points within the facility. The circulatory vehicle movements at roundabouts eliminate or drastically reduce the critical conflicts resulting from red light running, left-turns against opposing traffic, right-angle conflicts at corners, and rear-end collisions. As the figure below shows, a standard intersection has 32 potential vehicle-to-vehicle conflicts versus 8 for a roundabout, according to the FHWA Roundabout Guide. In addition, modern roundabouts are designed such that traffic enters at nearly right angles to circulating traffic. Also, roundabouts are relatively small (compared to traffic circles) so traffic speeds are slower. This allows more opportunities to enter circulating traffic and fewer accidents result.**



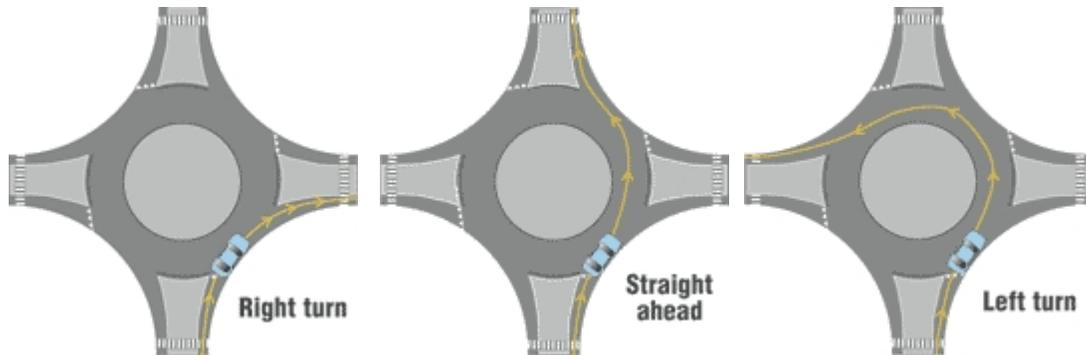
**Q: How do I navigate the roundabout?**

**A: The sections below outline how drivers, bikers, pedestrians and trucks navigate in a roundabout.**



### Drivers in a roundabout

- When approaching the roundabout, slow down and yield to pedestrians.
- Look to the left, as traffic in the roundabout has the right-of-way.
- Enter when it is safe and there is an adequate gap in the circulating traffic flow.
- Keep your speed low within the roundabout.
- As you approach your exit, turn on your right turn signal.
- Exit carefully to your destination, yielding to pedestrians.



### Bicyclists in a roundabout

- If you are riding on the shoulder or bike lane, merge into the traffic lane before the shoulder ends.
- Signal your intent to move into traffic.
- Once inside the roundabout, don't hug the curb.
- Ride close to the middle of the lane to prevent cars from passing and cutting you off.
- Watch for cars waiting to enter the roundabout, as they may not see you.
- If you do not want to ride your bike in the roundabout, use the sidewalk to walk your bicycle and proceed as a pedestrian.



### Pedestrians in a roundabout

- Stay on designated walkways at all times.
- Watch for cars; you have the right-of-way, but your best protection is your own attention.
- Cross one lane at a time, using the splitter island as a refuge area before crossing the next lane.
- Never cross to the large round central island.



### Trucks in a roundabout

- Drive on the circulatory roadway, except large trucks and trailers may use the truck apron provided to negotiate the tight turning radius.
- Drive on the raised pavement of the truck apron to navigate more easily.
- Cars should not use the truck apron.

## Citizen Perspectives

I had stopped in last Friday to discuss roundabouts with you. I have lived overseas in various countries over the years and have traveled to many more and have learned to love the efficiency and ease of roundabouts. As such, I'm forwarding some information I have recently obtained regarding his subject. In the e-mail below it should be noted that the chiefs for both the police and fire departments in Maplewood are on the road speaking to other communities about the increased safety when roundabouts are installed.

I am pleased to see that the city of River Falls is planning to install its first one over by the high school and look forward to many more in and around the city. If there are any public meetings/hearings regarding these, I would be interested in being present to support these projects.

Thanks.  
Mike Kinney  
109 N. 3rd St.

As a resident of the South Valley Second Addition who has occasion to drive the turnabout every **single day, I wanted to let you know how pleased we are with this improvement to the intersection. From my perspective, the traffic moves smoothly without delays.** Thanks to you and your staff for developing this alternative to a stoplight.

Mary Scheide  
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