

**NORTHWESTERN
CONNECTOR**

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PROJECT**



WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION
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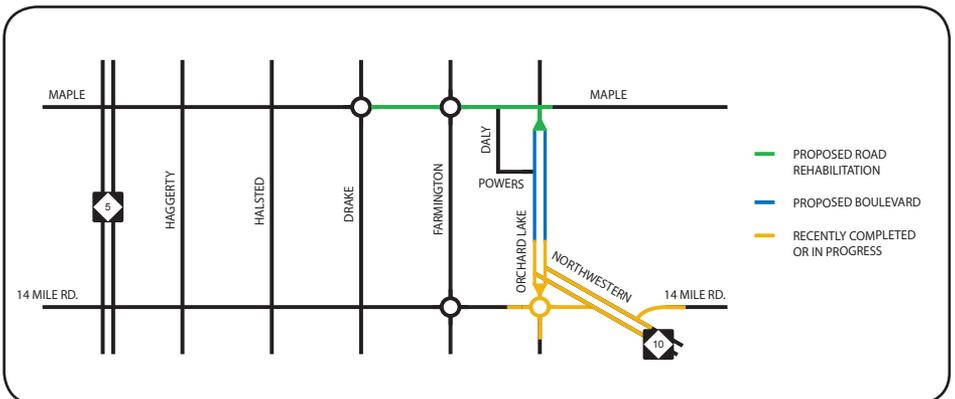
NORTHWESTERN CONNECTOR PROJECT

The Northwestern Connector project is a cooperative effort involving the Road Commission for Oakland County (RCOC), the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), the Charter Township of West Bloomfield and the City of Farmington Hills. RCOC is the lead agency for the project.

This project is intended to reduce local traffic congestion, provide an improved connection between M-10 (Northwestern Highway) and M-5 (Haggerty Connector), and improve motorist and pedestrian safety. In addition, the boulevards and roundabout intersections will reduce the number and severity of crashes, thereby providing much safer roads.

The project is needed because of Oakland County's continued population growth and to handle the traffic congestion caused by the ending of Northwestern Highway at Orchard Lake Road. Increased traffic, caused by population and employment growth in the area over recent decades has strained the capacity of the existing roads and intersections, causing severe traffic congestion and long delays, especially during peak hours.

Visit the website www.nwconnector.com to view project plans



THE IMPROVEMENTS

There are a number of elements that make up the Northwestern Connector project. Several of these have already been constructed, while others remain on the long-term list. Elements already completed are:

1. The roundabout at 14 Mile and Farmington
2. The roundabout at Maple and Farmington
3. The roundabout at Maple and Drake
4. The “Triangle Project” at 14 Mile / Orchard Lake / Northwestern Highway, which includes a roundabout at 14 Mile and Orchard Lake, plus road reconstruction and traffic signal upgrades (completed in the fall of 2015)
5. The widening of 14 Mile Road to three lanes between Haggerty Road and Orchard Lake Road

Future elements of the project include:

1. Widening of Orchard Lake Road from north of Northwestern Highway to south of Maple Road to a four-lane boulevard. The project also includes:
 - a. Traffic signal upgrade at Orchard Lake Road and Powers Road
 - b. Elimination of some of the service drives
 - c. Re-configuration of some driveways to better manage access to Orchard Lake Road, allowing for safer traffic movement and improved traffic flow.
2. Construction of turn lanes at Maple Road and Orchard Lake Road. This project is led by West Bloomfield Township.
3. Road rehabilitation on Maple Road, from Drake Road to Orchard Lake Road.
4. Construction of pedestrian safety paths.
5. SMART locations.

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

The next planned phase includes the Maple Road rehabilitation from Drake Road to Orchard Lake Road, and the construction of turn lanes at Maple Road and Orchard Lake Road. The widening of Orchard Lake Road from north of Northwestern Highway to south of Maple Road to a four-lane boulevard will occur after the Maple Road projects.

HOW IS THIS PROJECT BEING PAID FOR?

The total cost for Phase 1 of the project will be more than \$40 million. Funding will come from a variety of sources including MDOT, federal road funds, special federal “earmark” funding, Oakland County general government, RCOC, West Bloomfield Township and the City of Farmington Hills.

WHAT IS A ROUNDABOUT?

A modern roundabout is a transportation management tool that moves traffic through an intersection without the aid of traffic signals. It involves one-way-traffic moving around a circular central island where entering traffic must yield to the traffic already in the roundabout. The objectives of roundabouts are to reduce traffic speeds and reduce the number and severity of crashes, while improving traffic flow. Roundabouts are designed to accommodate all sizes of vehicles.

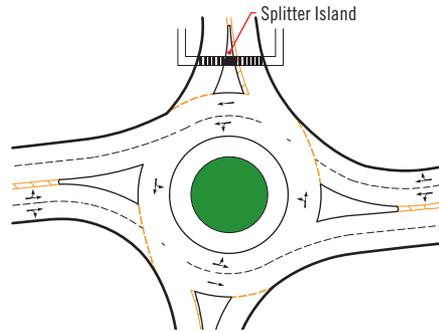
A ROUNDABOUT IS NOT A TRAFFIC CIRCLE

Many people confuse modern roundabouts with traditional traffic circles or rotaries, such as those found on the East Coast. Three basic principles distinguish the modern roundabout from a traffic circle:

1. Modern roundabouts follow the “yield-at-entry” rule. Approaching vehicles must wait for a gap in the circulating flow before entering the circle. Many traffic circles require circulating vehicles to grant the right of way to entering vehicles. Some traffic circles also use stop signs or signals to control vehicle entry.

2. Modern roundabouts involve low speeds for entering and circulating traffic. Roundabouts are generally much smaller than traffic circles, which naturally causes drivers to reduce speed within the circle, thus reducing the likelihood of accidents.

3. Modern roundabouts eliminate other problems associated with traffic circles. In giving priority to entering vehicles, a traffic circle tends to lock up at higher volumes. The operation of a traffic circle is further compromised by the high speed environment in which large gaps are required for proper merging.



WHY IS THE ROAD COMMISSION FOR OAKLAND COUNTY BUILDING ROUNDABOUTS?

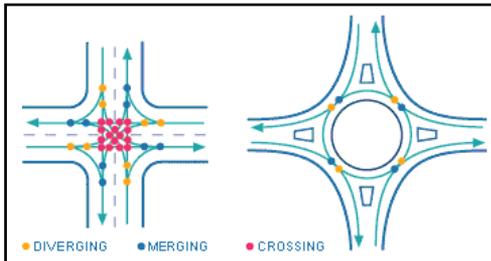
Roundabouts offer a sensible solution to safety and capacity problems at some intersections. Here's a list of some of the benefits associated with modern roundabouts:

SAFETY

According to the Federal Highway Administration, installing a roundabout typically results in:

- A 76% reduction in injury-accidents
- A 90% reduction in fatalities
- A 40% reduction in pedestrian injuries and 75% fewer “conflict points” compared to standard intersections (see diagram below)

CONFLICT POINT DIAGRAM



**Safety Statistics Excerpted from Federal Highway Administration, “Roundabouts: An Informational Guide,” June 2000.*

LESS DELAY

Roundabouts are designed to handle traffic more efficiently than signalized intersections. With traffic constantly moving and vehicles entering the intersection at lower speeds, more vehicles are able to move through the intersection at any given time.

AN IMPROVED ENVIRONMENT

With more vehicles able to move through the intersection at any given time, there will be fewer vehicles idling for shorter periods of time. Because idling vehicles cause the most air pollution, roundabouts result in reduced air pollution.

WHY DO ROUNDABOUTS HAVE SUCH A GOOD SAFETY RECORD?

1. Conflicts are reduced. With fewer conflict points, roundabouts eliminate the potential for hazardous conflicts, such as right angle and left-turn head on crashes.

2. Speeds are reduced and are more consistent. Low speeds driven in roundabouts allow drivers more time to react to potential conflicts, thus helping to improve the safety of roundabouts. Since most drivers travel at similar speeds through roundabouts, crash severity is reduced compared to traditional intersections.

3. Pedestrians cross one direction of traffic at a time. Pedestrians need only cross one direction of traffic at a time at each roundabout approach, as compared with signalized intersections.

HOW DO I DRIVE THROUGH A ROUNDABOUT?

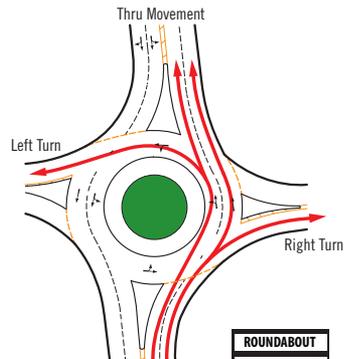
Follow these simple rules for driving in roundabouts:

- 1. Speed:** Slow down! The objective of the roundabout is to keep traffic moving and allow for more capacity. But to do it properly and safely, it must be done at a safe speed. Smaller roundabouts require speeds of 15 mph, while larger roundabouts allow for speeds of 20-25 mph.

Pick your Lane: Before entering the roundabout be aware of your intended exit and pick the appropriate lane. Look for the green guide signs and black-on-white lane-use signs as you approach the roundabout. These will provide general directions for roundabout use. The rules are similar to other multi-lane intersections. Make a left-turn from the left-most lane and a right-turn from the right-most lane. When entering and navigating the roundabout, follow the lane lines.

- 2. Yielding:** Always yield to traffic in the roundabout and to your left. Motor vehicles should yield to bicyclists and pedestrians.

- 3.** Never pass in the roundabout.
- 4.** Allow Large Vehicles the extra turning radius needed to navigate the roundabout properly. Never pass or drive next to a large vehicle in the roundabout.



PEDESTRIANS & ROUNDABOUTS

Pedestrians have the right of way within crosswalks at any intersections, including roundabouts. For safety's sake, pedestrians must never walk into the path of a vehicle if it is so close that it is an immediate hazard.

1. Walk around the perimeter of the roundabout. Do not cross the roadway to the central island.
2. Use the crosswalks on the legs of the roundabout. Crosswalks are placed one to two car lengths back from the roundabout entrance areas. Approaching cars will yield to enter the roundabout behind the yield line. Pedestrians may cross the roadway behind the car at the yield line. Please note: If there is no crosswalk marked on a leg of the roundabout, that leg is not intended to be crossed. Find another route to your destination with pedestrian markings.
3. In some roundabouts, pedestrian-crossing devices such as the “Hawk Pedestrian Beacon” or Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons” are provided to aid all pedestrians.
4. Look and listen for approaching traffic. Choose a safe time to cross from the curb ramp to the median opening. Although you have the right of way, if approaching vehicles are present, it is best to first satisfy yourself that vehicles have recognized your presence and right to cross. When crossing an entry or exit with more than one lane, be sure that vehicles in adjacent lanes are coming to a complete stop before proceeding.
5. Use the median or “splitter island”. It allows you to cross one direction of traffic at a time.

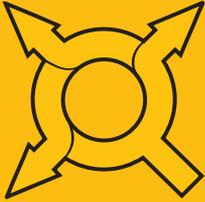
BICYCLES

Bicycles travel through a roundabout one of two ways:

- As a pedestrian, traveling on the sidewalk and walking the bike through the crosswalk.
- As a vehicle, traveling on a roadway
 - Take the lane and circulate as a vehicle, making sure to yield to traffic in the circle when entering.
 - Ride at the speed of the circular roadway to discourage cars from passing you.
 - When you exit 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.

The Basics

- **Follow the sidewalks**
- **Keep within the crosswalk.**



NORTHWESTERN CONNECTOR



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