

# Roundabouts

## In the St. Cloud Metro Area

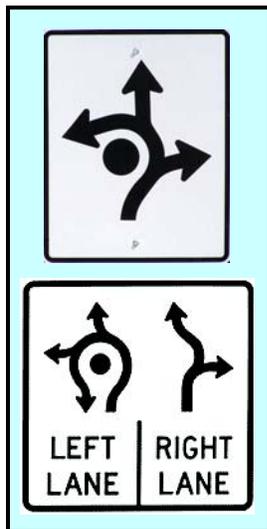
by Blake Redfield – St. Cloud Traffic Systems Manager



There has been an outbreak of a new traffic control device in the St. Cloud metro area over the past two months. Three new roundabouts have been installed on Stearns County Road 120 between Minnesota Highway 15 and Stearns County Road 1. There have also been two new roundabouts installed on the new section of Pinecone Road between Stearns County Road 120 and Stearns County Road 134. This new traffic control device is becoming a transportation standard throughout the world because of its simplicity, reduced crash severity and reduced long term maintenance costs. As with any new traffic control device the motorist, bicyclist and pedestrian must become accustomed to the proper means of navigating roundabouts.



Pictured to the left is the advance warning sign that indicates the motorist is approaching a roundabout. This sign will be in advance of all single and multi-lane roundabouts. The motorist needs to slow down when approaching roundabouts as a roundabout is typically designed for a driving speed of 15 MPH. A recommended driving speed plate will also be placed under the roundabout warning sign.



Since roundabouts come in single and multiple lane configurations, the next sign the motorist will encounter is the lane designation sign. The motorist will lane shift to the appropriate lane prior to traversing the roundabout. The upper sign to the left designates a single lane roundabout and therefore the motorist only has one lane choice to traverse the roundabout. The lower sign indicates a multiple lane roundabout. Prior to the roundabout, the motorist should lane shift to the appropriate lane noting that through movements and right turns use the outside lane while vehicles making left turns or U-turns should use the inside lane.



The YIELD sign is not new or exclusive to a roundabout. However, it is the most important sign at the roundabout intersection to make the roundabout operate efficiently and safely. **MOTORISTS ENTERING A ROUNDABOUT MUST YIELD TO THE MOTORISTS ALREADY IN THE ROUNDABOUT!**

## Navigating a Roundabout

### Motorists

- When approaching a roundabout, slow down. Be in the proper lane when approaching the roundabout.
- Yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk because they have the right of way.  
**It is the Law.**
- When entering a roundabout, **YIELD TO THE VEHICLES ALREADY IN THE ROUNDABOUT!** Merge into the traffic flow when it is safe. The motorist already in the roundabout has the right of way. Always follow the arrows and turn to the right. **DO NOT TURN TO THE LEFT WHEN ENTERING A ROUNDABOUT!**
- Continue through the roundabout until you reach your exit. **DO NOT STOP OR PASS IN A ROUNDABOUT.**
- When exiting a roundabout, signal your turn and yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk.

### Cyclists

- Cyclists can either ride with traffic inside the roundabout or use the crosswalks appropriately.
- Cyclists who ride with traffic must follow the same rules as vehicles and must yield as they enter the roundabout. Since traffic is slower inside the roundabout, cyclists should be able to travel at or near the same speed as motorists, staying in line with the circulating traffic.

### Pedestrians

- Cross only at crosswalks and always stay on the designated walkways.
- Never cross to the central island.
- Cross roundabouts one approach at a time. Use the splitter island as a highway point where you can check for approaching traffic.

## A Typical Roundabout with Vehicle Paths for Various Movements



*Note the various vehicle pathways for motorists entering a multi-lane roundabout. Also note the locations of the pedestrian crossings and YIELD signs.*

*Diagram compliments of the Minnesota Department of Transportation.*

**Oversized Trucks & Superloads.** Check with local jurisdictions for the possibilities of encountering roundabouts. Roundabouts are designed for standard sized semi-trucks and may not be capable of handling oversized loads.

A special thanks to the Minnesota Department of Transportation for much of the information in this article related to navigating roundabouts found in their brochure “How About a Roundabout?” For roundabout animations and additional information on roundabouts go to:

[www.dot.state.mn.us/roundabouts/](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roundabouts/)

[www.th.gov.bc.ca/popular-topics/roundabouts/roundabouts.htm](http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/popular-topics/roundabouts/roundabouts.htm)

[www.dot.state.wi.us/safety/motorist/roaddesign/roundabouts/av/roundabout.swf](http://www.dot.state.wi.us/safety/motorist/roaddesign/roundabouts/av/roundabout.swf)