



Q. Are roundabouts safe for pedestrians and bicyclists?

Yes. Very few crashes involving pedestrians or bicyclists have been reported at roundabouts. A recent study reviewed 6,771 reported crashes at 355 U.S. roundabouts over an average period of 5.9 years.



1.1%

Of total crashes
involved bicyclists

0.4%

Of total crashes
involved pedestrians

In general, it is safest for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross a single lane of one-way traffic. Both of the proposed roundabout configurations have single-lane entries and exits, with one exception (the northbound entry—which would have two lanes going one way). Roundabouts slow drivers down, giving them time to react and increasing the likelihood they will yield.

Whichever roundabout design is ultimately chosen, it will offer safety and accessibility to all pedestrians and bicyclists, including those with mobility and vision disabilities, in adherence with state and federal guidelines.

Q. What about school traffic?

Both the signalized and roundabout options presented in February 2019 were designed to address future traffic needs, as well as traffic associated with anticipated growth in local schools. Specifically, the project team reviewed traffic counts taken during various times during the day, including during peak school commute times, and looked at the most recent Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council predictive models for traffic conditions in 2040, which consider how much traffic is expected to be generated by future area land use, including schools.

Q. Aren't roundabouts confusing to high school students?

Research suggests that teens learn to navigate roundabouts more quickly than adults. For a good regional example, city officials in Kennewick reported that high school students picked up rapidly on how the roundabout installed near Southridge High School worked. Their observations were supported by comments from residents. The city aided understanding by providing informational how-to videos. The effectiveness of this roundabout encouraged Kennewick to build 25 more roundabouts in the following 19 years.

Q. Roundabouts have continuous, non-stopping traffic. Doesn't that make it harder for pedestrians, vehicles, and bicyclists to enter and exit the main roads?

A roundabout can actually improve access. Its circular construction slows people down, creating more gaps and increasing yielding behavior. In this way, a roundabout is similar to a four-way stop without a signal.

In comparison, a signalized intersection would have resulted in longer waits for gaps in traffic because the lines of cars waiting for the signal are likely to block driveways and side streets near the intersection. Additionally, the gaps in traffic provided by a traffic signal are short lived due to the signal cycles allowing a new stream of traffic every time the light changes.

Q. How many trees will be impacted by each of the two roundabout options being considered?

Either roundabout option selected will require the removal of some trees. The anticipated number of trees impacted varies between the two preferred alternative options. Option 1 is anticipated to impact 159 trees (but saves the American chestnut tree) and Option 2 is anticipated to impact 146 trees (including the American chestnut). Several of the trees currently in the area have received a poor health assessment.