

## Roundabouts in the Neighborhood

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Not one, not two, but three Roundabouts are coming to our neighborhood. By the time the construction along 40<sup>th</sup> Street is complete, there will be three roundabouts between Hillsborough Avenue and Busch Boulevard.

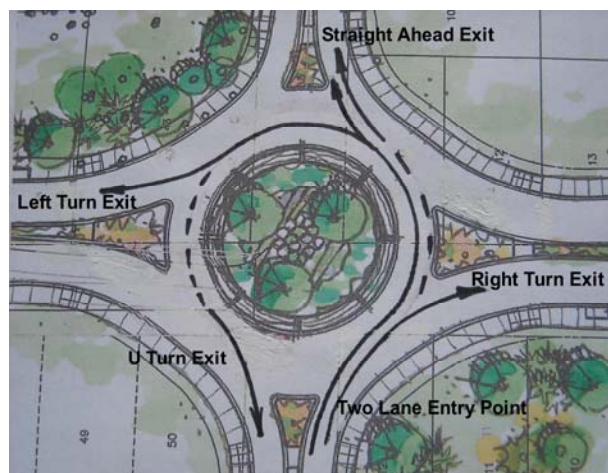
One will be at Hanna Avenue, in Segment A, one at River Hills Drive and the third at Yukon Street, both of these are in Segment B. These roundabouts will eliminate three of the four existing traffic signals between Hillsborough and Busch. The only traffic light to remain will be at the intersection of River Grove Drive and 40<sup>th</sup> for the Paul Sheehy Elementary School.

Our roundabouts will be a little bit special. They are going to be two lane roundabouts. Like all roundabouts, they are designed to slow traffic, but keep it moving at safe, reduced speeds. The worry about the reduction in speed and the procedures for the use of roundabouts are a couple of the reasons many people are, at first, against roundabouts. Nevertheless, roundabouts on average actually move traffic quicker than streets with traffic signals. More importantly they reduce the number of possible places collisions can occur and if a collision does happen, they reduce injuries and damages.

To use a two lane roundabout is easy, but you must plan ahead. As you approach the roundabout slow down. Look for pedestrians and bicycles and be prepared to YIELD to them and any vehicles in the roundabout to your LEFT. Initially, this may be a confusing part about using roundabouts

Most of our driving experience has been to yield to traffic to our right, like at four way stop sign locations. Since traffic in a roundabout flows counterclockwise, before entering a roundabout, we must yield to all traffic, on our LEFT, in the roundabout. Too properly YIELD is to let the vehicle or vehicles to our left pass while we slow up and, if necessary, stop.

The secret to safely navigating two lane roundabouts is to get in the correct lane as early as possible. If you are making a Right Turn or are going straight ahead, that is continuing in the direction you were going prior to entering the roundabout, then you should be in the Right Lane. If you are going straight through, making a Left Turn or a U Turn, then you should enter the roundabout in the Left Lane. The picture below should help explain this procedure.



To make the Right Turn you will be going one quarter of the way around the roundabout before exiting. If you are going straight through, then you will be going half way around the roundabout. If you will be making a Left Turn, then you will be driving three quarters around the roundabout before exiting. And if you are making that U Turn, you get to drive all the way around the roundabout..

It is recommended that you be very careful changing lanes while in the roundabout. If you are in the left lane and plan on continuing straight ahead after going half way around the roundabout, be very sure any vehicles on your right are also going to exit straight ahead. Be sure to use your turn signal to show your intention to make that little right turn in order to continue straight ahead. If you are making a Left or a U Turn, it should be safe to change from the left or inner lane to the right lane or outer lane as you approach the street you want to go "left" on or as you approach the exit street you are U Turning to because all traffic in the outer lane should have exited the roundabout by this point. This is not to say you will not encounter a visitor experiencing one of our roundabouts for the first time, maybe in front, alongside or behind you. Therefore, while in a roundabout be careful, pay attention. Check rearview mirrors, blind spots and be sure to use turn signals prior to changing lanes. One final note, give large trucks with trailers extra space to take up both lanes as they approach, circulate and exit the roundabout.

Now that you have survived the lesson on using roundabouts, here comes the boring stuff. In the past much driver resistance to roundabouts or traffic circles was due to their poor designs and a reluctance to try something new. Surveys taken before and after construction, in cities throughout the Country have shown doubling in numbers of drivers in favor of their roundabouts after they have used them for awhile.

New design standards for arterial roadways, such as 40<sup>th</sup> Street, call for a minimum diameter of roundabouts to be 64 feet. From the diagrams I have seen, it appears our roundabouts will be about 160 feet in diameter from outside curb to outside curb. With a roundabout of this size, we can expect speeds around our roundabouts to be in the 18-23 miles per hour range. This size roundabout also leaves lots of nice open space in the middle with unlimited aesthetic possibilities. Hopefully, then, we shall see some nice landscaping in our roundabouts

For those having internet access and wanting more information, just enter the word "roundabout" into any search engine. You may be surprised to find over a million entries.