

September 1, 2006

Unique roundabout improves highway intersection

Calgary... A European-style roundabout will replace the intersection of Highways 8 and 22, marking the first time that type of intersection will be used on a rural highway in Alberta.

Construction is expected to begin later this year and the roundabout is expected to open to traffic in the fall of 2007. The Alberta government chose the roundabout option because a full interchange is not required for at least two decades, while traffic signals would serve the intersection for only five years.

"The roundabout is an innovative, cost-effective approach to this increasingly busy intersection," said Ted Morton, MLA for Foothills-Rocky View. "The new intersection will improve traffic flow and safety for motorists."

The \$4.3-million roundabout will be similar to traffic circles found in urban areas. Drivers reduce speed as they approach the roundabout and must yield to vehicles already in the circular lane. Drivers then enter the circle and travel in a counter clock-wise direction until exiting the circle to their right.

The roundabout's advantages are numerous.

- It eliminates left turns across traffic and the need to cross two lanes of highway-speed traffic.
- There are fewer conflict points, lower collision potential, and lower collision severity compared with traffic signals.
- It will accommodate projected traffic for the next 25 to 30 years and the future twinning of Highways 8 and 22.
- It costs significantly less (\$4.3 million) than an interchange (\$20+ million).

Ty Lund, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, said infrastructure improvements increase the safety and efficiency of the highway network. "The Alberta government is always seeking innovative ways to do business and the roundabout is an example of using an alternative approach," said Lund.

In addition to the roundabout, improvements will be made to the intersections of Highway 8 with Range Road 35 and Range Road 41. The \$570,000 worth of improvements will make turning onto and off Highway 8 easier and safer.

Approximately 7,000 vehicles per day use Highways 8 and 22 near their junction. Including this project, the Alberta government will invest a record \$1.3 billion this year to build, repair, and maintain the province's highway network.

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Note:

see both first and second attached backgrounders.

Media enquiries may be directed to:

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(780) 427-0623

To call toll-free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

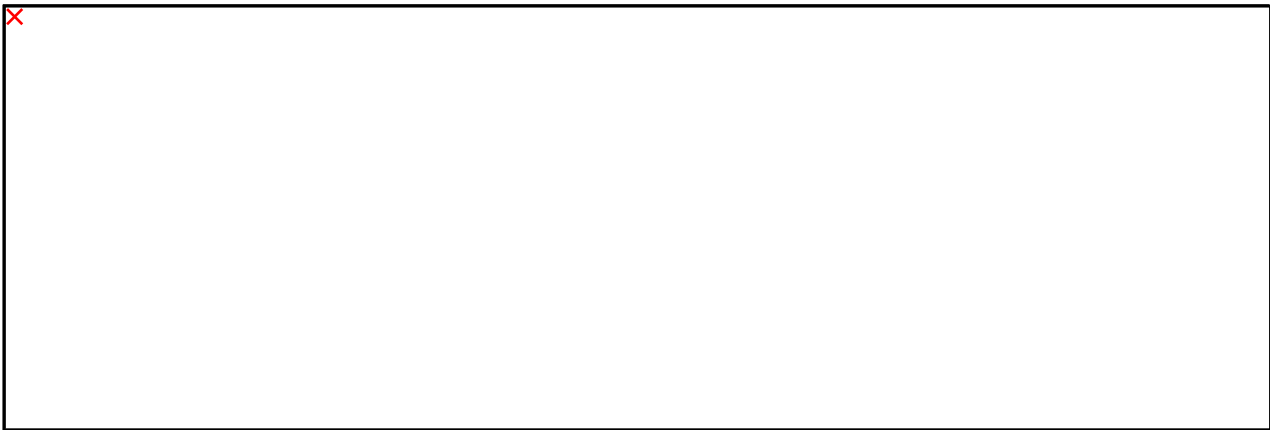
Background

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Comparison between roundabout and traffic signals

Roundabout

Traffic Signals



- Reduces collision severity as vehicles enter the roundabout at lower speeds
- Vehicles are not forced to stop, which reduces delays
- Will handle projected traffic for up to 30 years
- Low maintenance costs
- Successful performance in other jurisdictions

- Higher number of conflict points and potential collisions
- Increases collision severity with potential for t-bone, angle and rear-end collisions
- Stop and go conditions create delays
- Will handle projected traffic for up to five years
- Higher annual maintenance and power consumption costs
- More traditional and less innovative

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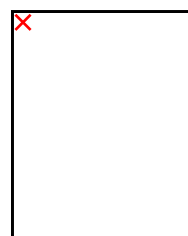
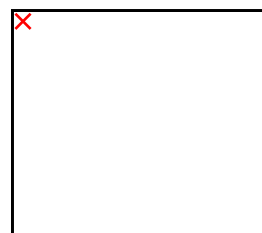
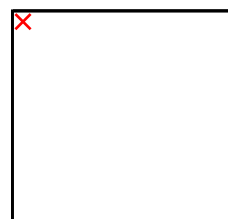
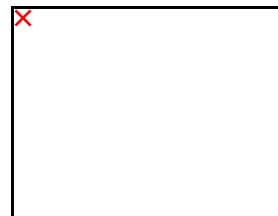
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Backgrounder 2

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How to use a roundabout

1. Slow down once you see the roundabout approach sign.
2. Traffic entering the roundabout must wait for a gap in the circulating traffic.
3. Approaching traffic must yield to traffic in the circular lane.
4. Maintain a safe speed, between 30 and 40 km/h around the roundabout until your exit.
5. Signal for right turn as you approach your desired exit while maintaining a slow speed.



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