

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

August 30, 2010

Wisconsin Motor Carriers &
Minnesota Motor Carriers

Re: forward to all members

Div. of Transportation Infrastructure
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The Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Transportation are currently evaluating the design process and practices to accommodate non-permitted trucks (legal size without a permit) at multi lane roundabouts. Roundabouts will continue to be a critical tool for improving traffic safety, and it is important that they are also designed to facilitate efficient movement of freight.

As members of the trucking industry, we are soliciting your expert advice and experiences navigating roundabouts that have been constructed. Your input will be used to evaluate the current design practices and determine how to update guidance for design engineers. Please feel free to include general comments as appropriate.

Why Install Roundabouts?

Roundabouts are a safe and effective way to move traffic through an intersection. Recent studies conducted by the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety and the US Federal Highway Administration have shown roundabouts to be safer than traditional stop controlled and signal controlled intersections. Roundabouts reduce crash severity because speeds are reduced. Approach geometry forces vehicles to slow down prior to entering the roundabout. Vehicles entering the roundabout are required to yield to vehicles circulating in the roundabout. Because roundabout traffic enters or exits only through right turns, the occurrence of severe crashes is substantially reduced. Small angle collisions that may occur as a result of a right-hand turn are typically less severe than other types of collisions present at traditional intersections. More and more roundabouts will be installed throughout the United States because of the safety benefits that roundabouts provide.

Additional Input

Unfortunately, what works well to improve safety for passenger cars can affect the operations for freight. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the Minnesota Department of Transportation are currently evaluating the design guidance for standard semi trucks and accommodations at roundabout intersections. The ultimate goal of intersection design is to balance the needs of the traveling public with the physical constraints of the intersection. There are times when the physical constraints of the intersection require modifications to the design which lead to inconsistencies for trucks. As respected leaders in the trucking industry, we are requesting your input to assist in developing guidance to produce the safest and most effective intersections that we can. Information you provide to us is important as we lay the ground work for future roundabout intersections and locations. Attached is a brief questionnaire. Please review and provide your feedback.

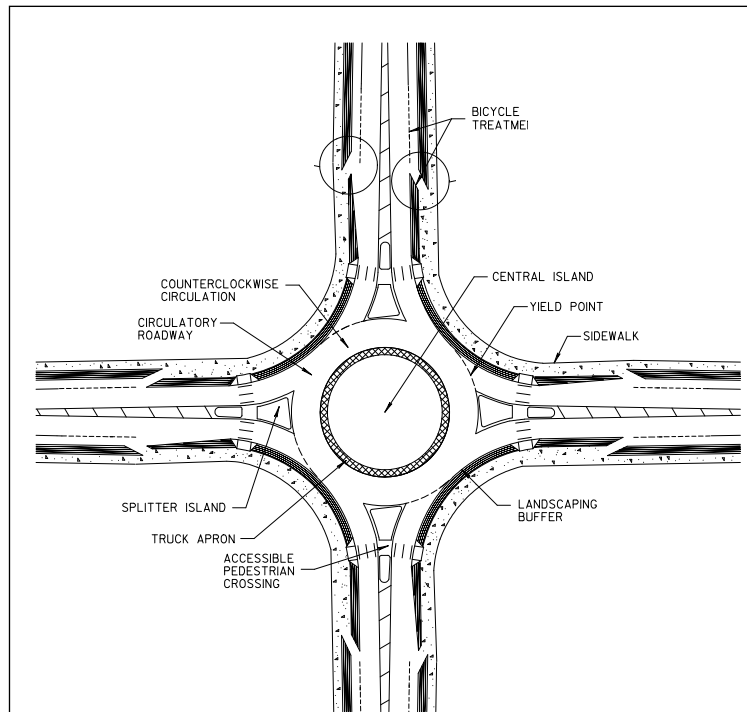
Any questions/concerns please contact Peter Lynch, Freight Operations Program Manager, at (608) 267-4486 or by email peter.lynch@dot.wi.gov, or mail to Peter Lynch, Wisconsin DOT, 4802 Sheboygan Ave., room 501, Madison, WI 53707; or Wes Butch, DLZ National, at (517)393-6800 or by email wbutch@dlz.com.

Please return your completed questionnaire via email to Peter Lynch and Wes Butch at the emails provided above by October 22, 2010. Thank you again for your time and effort with this process.

Questionnaire

- 1.) Do you have company policies (or specific training) for your drivers as it relates to navigating multilane roundabouts (roundabouts with two or more lanes)?

- 2.) Please review the roundabout diagram below. Have your drivers expressed difficulty in any one of the following scenarios:



- a.) When approaching a roundabout, the signage, pavement marking, or colored truck apron is confusing?: Yes or No
Comments:

- b.) When circulating in a roundabout, the signage, pavement marking, or colored truck apron is confusing?: Yes or No
Comments:

- c.) When exiting a roundabout, the signage, pavement marking, or colored truck apron is confusing?:
Yes or No
Comments:

- d.) Please have your drivers cite specific examples and locations of roundabouts that provide adequate signing and marking or roundabouts that pose concern with regard to signing and marking?

- 3.) In multilane roundabouts semi trucks are allowed to off track on the truck apron for the inside lane within the roundabout. For the additional or outer lane(s) would it be better to stay in lane or allow trucks to off track into the inside circulating lane?

- 4.) The ultimate goal in design is to balance the needs of the traveling public with the physical constraints of the intersection. There are times when the physical constraints of the intersection require modifications to the design which lead to inconsistencies for trucks. When these modifications are made, what would be the preferred indicator to notify the truck driver entering a roundabout whether or not the driver should stay in lane or if the driver is required to straddle lanes on entry and exit of a multi lane roundabout?

- 5.) Roundabouts will continue to be constructed due to their high safety benefits. The key will be how to design them to achieve the safety benefits without creating delays or bottlenecks for freight. Are there any features about roundabouts that you would change to make it better for semi trucks to navigate safely? Please provide any specific intersections and locations of preferred roundabout designs.