

The public engagement session yielded some great conversation and some good questions about converting the North Park intersections to roundabouts. We heard from vehicle users, cyclists, pedestrians, and neighbours.

The following are questions that were captured during the discussions and have been answered below:

Will it take longer to clear collisions?

No. Time to clear collisions will be similar to how long it currently takes to clear a collision at any other intersection, including the existing traffic signals.

Will one lane create backups?

No. Typically, roundabouts operate with less delay to users than traffic signals or all-way stops. This is because unlike signalized and all-way stop intersections, a roundabout does not require a complete stop by all entering vehicles. Also drivers are able to proceed when traffic is clear without the delay incurred while waiting for the traffic signal to change to a green light.

Bus lanes – give buses/high occupancy vehicle lane (HOV) preference

HOV lanes will not be considered as part of this project. It has been determined that the streets surrounding and including North Park Street would not be a cost-effective location for investment in HOV lanes.

Other options – have they been explored?

Yes. North Park Street is an arterial street that services vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, buses, trucks, residents, tourist destinations, businesses, Canadian Forces and the Halifax Common. The replacement of the traffic signals with

roundabouts provided the maximum benefits for this diverse group of users.

Is it safe for bikes?

Yes. Due to lower speeds that are achieved in a roundabout it is generally safest for a cyclist to “claim the lane” if they choose to remain on street. Because of the geometry, drivers should be travelling at between 25 to 40 kilometers per hour, closer to the cyclists speed. As the design progresses, multi-use trails, bike lanes, and/or sidewalk will be reviewed for inclusion. This will give cyclists options on how to travel through the roundabouts and within the North Park Street corridor. Cyclists always have the option to dismount and walk like a pedestrian through the roundabouts at the marked crosswalks.

Transit – will it work, is it safe?

Yes. Buses can travel through a roundabout similarly to any other intersection. Roundabouts are designed specifically to accommodate large vehicles including trucks, fire trucks, and buses.

Lower speed limit

The speed along the North Park Street corridor will be 50 km/h; however, one of the benefits of the installation of roundabouts is that a roundabout's geometry is designed specifically to direct traffic around the circle at a much slower speed. Therefore, lower speeds (between 25 and 40 km/h) provide more time for all users to detect and correct for their mistakes. If a collision does occur, it is less severe due to the lower speeds.

Education – roundabouts on driver's test

The Province of Nova Scotia (Access Nova Scotia) oversees and administers motor vehicle licenses and the driver's test. This recommendation has been passed along to Access Nova Scotia for their consideration.

Need mid-block pedestrian crossings

Currently there is a midblock crossing on North Park Street at Cornwallis Street; this will be retained in the redesign.



Will drivers yield?

The Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act requires motorists to yield to a pedestrian in a marked or unmarked crosswalk. Each leg of the roundabout and also the intersection at Cornwallis Street will have a marked crosswalk. Compliance rates of vehicles stopping for pedestrians at crosswalks within the HRM are high and similar results are expected at the roundabouts.

Pedestrian Crossing – all way stops? Signals?

As indicated above, pedestrian crossings will be handled along this corridor via the marked crosswalk at Cornwallis Street and the marked crosswalks on each leg of the roundabouts. Stop signs are not appropriate at roundabouts and will not be utilized. HRM uses the guidelines on traffic control devices from the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC), currently TAC has not approved a device for signaling crosswalks at roundabouts and therefore this will not be included in the design.

How will high pedestrian volumes affect vehicle traffic flow?

The pedestrian and vehicle volumes will be counted and compared to our historical data in the area. These counts will be inputted into a computer modelling program to ensure that North Park Street is designed to accommodate vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists in the safest and most efficient way.

Further to that, what happens to traffic flow when large groups of pedestrians want to cross at the same time? I.e., when school lets out or following a major public event on the Common.

HRM has observed pedestrian behaviour at the existing signalized intersections to understand pedestrian flow and movement. Currently when the nearby school day ends, large crowds of students cross various intersecting streets en masse whether or not the pedestrian crossing light is in their favour. This causes minor traffic delays until all pedestrians have crossed to their intended locations. This will be no different with a roundabout.

Visually impaired community – Is it safe?

HRM has been working closely with the visually impaired community to ensure that they are engaged in this process and to ensure we are doing everything possible to provide a safe crossing environment.

How does snow clearing work?

Snow removal at roundabouts will be similar to snow removal at other intersections throughout the Municipality. There are generally no major problems with snow removal in roundabouts. In fact, our snow removal crews currently clear snow in three of HRMs roundabouts.

Street parking for residents – will there be a loss?

Street parking will be reviewed as part of the design. All the preliminary plans show street parking for both residents and public usage. There may be a shift in where the spaces are located, ie: not as close to the intersections, etc. As the detailed design progresses, parking will be reviewed and affected stakeholders will be able to provide comment at the public engagement session in November 2013 when the 50% design drawings will be available.

Kids – will it be safer for them?

Some of the benefits of roundabouts are:

- It is anticipated that crossing distances at the crosswalks within the roundabouts will be shorter than the existing conditions
- In the roundabout, the pedestrian only crosses one direction of travel at a time
- Upgraded sidewalks or multi-use trails for walking and cycling will be provided
- The speeds will be slower than existing conditions

Where does the traffic go if there is less on North Park Street?

The intention for this project was not to decrease traffic on North Park Street, but to provide more efficient and continuous flow for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists with the installation of roundabouts. Therefore, due to these increased efficiencies provided by the roundabouts the number of lanes can be reduced.