



DOWNTOWN LANCASTER ROUNDABOUTS PROJECT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the history of the project?

The 1998 Downtown Lancaster Study focused on West Main Street to revitalize the downtown business district. In 2008, A Citizens Advisory Group proposed extending West Main Street to Aurora Street. Both of these plans focused on mixed-use development and walkability within the downtown area. In 2018, the Lancaster Downtown Development Strategy included recommendations for redevelopment of the former mall site into a mixed use, pedestrian oriented district; to put Pleasant Avenue on a road diet (reducing the width of the street) and creating a “Complete Street” (to improve mobility and access by all road users); and install landscaped roundabouts at the intersections of Pleasant / Central and Pleasant / Aurora. All of these planning efforts included public outreach opportunities for public input.

2. How does this project fit with other projects in the area?

The roundabouts will provide a key link between two recently completed projects:

- the Central Avenue bike lanes slow traffic on Central Avenue and promote bicycle activity, which will be further improved with the Pleasant Avenue Complete Street being developed under this project.
- the West Main Street Extension includes a mini roundabout at the new intersection of West Main and Aurora Streets and converted West Main Street from one-way to two-way traffic with parking, and providing better access to Downtown Lancaster activities.

3. Has a traffic study been performed?

A detailed traffic study for the West Main Street Extension was performed by the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council and included the additional traffic expected from new development and included the two proposed roundabouts on Pleasant Avenue. Further studies conducted as part of the Design approval process confirmed that the roundabouts would provide a better level of service than the existing traffic signals under existing conditions and with the forecasted future traffic.

4. Where are the proposed roundabouts located?

The signalized intersections of Pleasant Avenue at Central Avenue and Pleasant Avenue at Aurora Street would be replaced with landscaped roundabouts.

5. What are the goals of this project?

The goals of the project are to reduce traffic congestion and delay, improve air quality, and improve pedestrian safety, while advancing downtown revitalization efforts. The project will also include “Complete Street” design features along Pleasant Avenue between the roundabouts to accommodate all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and automobiles.

6. How is the project funded?

Funding for 80 percent of the project is from the Federal Highway Administration Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program, with a 20 percent local match provided by the Village of Lancaster. The funding must be used to attain the goals of the program and cannot be allocated to other uses. A state grant is being used to cover a portion of the Village match.

7. Why are roundabouts proposed for these two locations?

- To reduce vehicle speeds
 - Provides more time for drivers to judge and react to other drivers and pedestrians
 - Fewer and less severe crashes compared to signalized intersections
 - Makes for a safer and more comfortable pedestrian and bicycling environment
- Crash reduction
 - Studies show roundabouts reduce injury crashes by 76% and all crashes by 35%
 - Fewer vehicle-to-pedestrians crash conflict points

- Efficient traffic flow
 - Increase in traffic capacity
 - Results in reduced vehicle emissions and fuel use
 - Reduces the need for turning lanes seen at signalized intersections
 - Less waiting for red signals to turn green
- Reduced costs
 - No signal equipment to install and repair
 - Electricity and maintenance costs savings
 - Service life of a roundabout is 25 yrs. vs. 10 yrs. for traffic signals
- Aesthetics
 - The center island provides an opportunity for landscaping and art installations
 - Create “gateways” to activity areas, such as the Central Avenue business district and the future West Main Street development

8. How do roundabouts accommodate large vehicles like tractor-trailer trucks or emergency vehicles?

Roundabouts are designed with a truck apron, a slightly raised section of concrete around the central island that gives large vehicles and vehicles with trailers more space to navigate the turn. The back wheels of the oversize vehicle can ride up on the truck apron so it may easily complete the turn, while the raised portion of concrete discourages use by smaller vehicles.

9. Is the roundabout safer for pedestrians? How?

Although traffic signals provide lights that indicate when a pedestrian has the right-of-way, pedestrians crossing at traffic signals must still be vigilant of drivers making yielding left turns or making right turns on red, and drivers too often make tragic mistakes such as running red lights, often at high speeds. Roundabouts offer pedestrians much lower traffic speeds, better sight lines, shorter crossing distances, and less waiting time before being able to cross, putting pedestrians in greater control of their own safety. Roundabouts also include refuge islands that permit pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time.

10. What impacts do roundabouts have on surrounding property?

Minor right-of-way acquisitions are being obtained from five adjacent property owners to maintain sidewalks around the roundabouts. The roundabouts will be designed to minimize impacts while maintaining design standards.

11. How is the public being informed about the project?

The design team (Mott MacDonald, EDR, Highland Planning, Watts Architecture & Engineering, Popli Design Group, and ROW Professionals) has engaged stakeholders and the general public through a series of public meetings, focus groups, pop-up engagement, and door-to-door outreach throughout the course of the project. In addition to these activities, a survey was conducted in June and July 2020, with over 1,000 responses obtained. The results of the survey are available on the project website noted below. The third public meeting is being planned this spring to solicit feedback on construction phasing and provide an update on the project.

12. Will traffic detours be in place to redirect motorists?

Options for traffic control during construction will be reviewed with property owners and businesses in the project area, including Central Avenue, West Main Street, and North Aurora Street. It is likely that short-term detours will be needed to construct the roundabouts in an efficient manner, but maintaining access to residences and businesses will be a requirement for the contractor. The details for the construction phases will be a major topic at the upcoming third public meeting.

13. How will parking be affected by the project?

The current concept eliminates two parking spots on Central Avenue near Pleasant Avenue West but adds ten parking spaces on the west end of Pleasant Avenue West.

More information can be found on the project webpage: www.lancastervillage.org/downtown-lancaster-roundabout.html. Stay updated by following the Village on Facebook: VillageofLancasterNY, Instagram: @lancastervillage and Twitter: @lancaster_NY.