

Drivers will go for a spin

When it opens next week, roundabout near hospital will be 2nd of 3 in area

BY KYLA KING
THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

Grand Rapids drivers will get their first crack at navigating a European-style roundabout late next week when one opens near downtown.

They will join motorists in Plainfield Township, who have used a new traffic circle for three weeks. Drivers in Coopersville will get their chance when another opens in mid-October.

It remains to be seen whether the circular intersections, which have no traffic signals and avoid direct left turns so traffic can flow freely, will be popular with motorists.

"Any time you do something new, it takes people a little bit of time to become used to it," said Tiu Arrak, spokeswoman for the Grand Rapids Engineer's Office. "But I think figuring it out will be pretty easy."

The roundabout opening next week at Cherry Street SE and Jefferson Avenue is designed to slow traffic, reduce delays and make the intersection safer for pedestrians.

Instead of traffic signals, drivers are moved through intersections after yielding to traffic on the left and continue without stopping until they reach the street to which they are traveling.

It's too soon to say exactly what effect a new roundabout in Plainfield Township at Seven Mile Road NE and Brewer Avenue is having on traffic.

SEE ROUNDABOUT, B2



PRESS PHOTO/LANCE WYNN

Going in circles: Construction crews finish work on the roundabout at Cherry Street SE and Jefferson Avenue, near Saint Mary's Health Care.

FACT SHEET

Rounded corners

Drivers soon will encounter a European-style road configuration.

What are roundabouts? A circular intersection with slower speeds where entering traffic yields to circulating traffic to allow free movement.

Why use them? They can reduce crashes, save money and protect pedestrians.

Where are they around here?

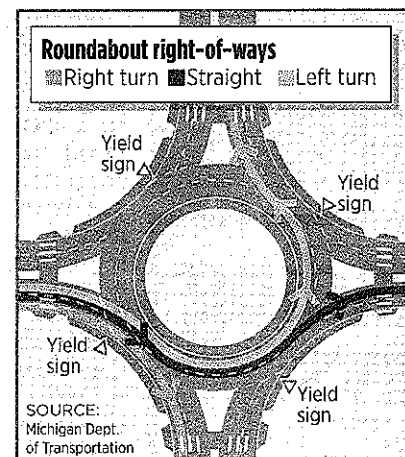
▪ One opens late next week in Grand

Rapids at Cherry Street SE and Jefferson Avenue.

▪ Another opened three weeks ago in Plainfield Township in Kent County at Seven Mile Road NE and Brewer Avenue.

▪ An Ottawa County roundabout opens in mid-October in Coopersville, at 68th Avenue and Randall Street.

How do they work? To check out an interactive diagram of how to drive a roundabout, visit www.michigan.gov/mdot then click on "roads & travel," and then click on "intersection & signal types"



SOURCE:
Michigan Dept.
of Transportation

PRESS GRAPHIC/NANCY JONESFRANCIS