



Roundabout and Alternative Intersection Design (RAID)

Best Practices

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ROUNABOUT AND ALTERNATIVE INTERSECTION DESIGN

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT BEST PRACTICES

When transportation planners and engineers make plans to deploy alternative intersection designs, including roundabouts, it is likely that they will be required to introduce these designs to members of the public that may be unfamiliar or resistant to the changes. In the project development phase, that unfamiliarity could lead to resistance against the project or to dissatisfied communities who feel that something “new” and “different” was forced upon them without fair warning. After construction, continued unfamiliarity could lead to incorrect use of intersections, negating many of the project’s benefits in safety and efficiency.

Because of these challenges, effective and intentional public involvement is a necessary component of projects utilizing alternative intersection designs. Here are some best practices to incorporate into public involvement planning to promote an intentional and successful engagement process.

1) DEFINE AND COMMUNICATE YOUR ENGAGEMENT NEEDS

Public involvement occurs at different stages of the planning and design process, with the information to convey to the public and the feedback needed from the public both evolving over time. The lists below are considerations to make for deciding what needs to be communicated during engagement and what input should be sought in return.

COMMUNICATE TO THE PUBLIC	RECEIVE FROM THE PUBLIC
Stage of the planning process	What feedback is most helpful
Decisions made and reasoning	Design preferences and priorities
Alternative intersections being considered, and the benefits of alternative intersections (safety, operations, environmental, aesthetics and benefits to other road users)	Local context to inform design evaluation
How these intersections function	Preferences of other road users, including bike/pedestrians
Pros and cons of each design	
What role the public has at this stage	

2) UNDERSTAND WHO YOU’RE ENGAGING

Learning more about the communities you seek to engage will help you decide the best engagement methods to use. Consider:

- **Demographics of nearby communities** – Completing a community profile can reveal needs to be addressed in public involvement planning, particularly with potential translation needs, non-traditional engagement methods beyond public meetings and considerations for when and where to host events.



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- **Other road users** – The intersection is not only relevant to those living nearby, but to motorists who travel through the area, particularly if the intersection is on a roadway vital to longer-distance commutes. Depending on the location, bicyclists and pedestrians may need to cross the intersection as well.
- **Stakeholders who rely on the roadway** – You will also want to reach out to businesses and institutions that rely on road access, particularly those with commercial and heavy-duty vehicles, special equipment or transit.

3) PLAN YOUR ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Public involvement for alternative intersection-related projects presents challenges that are less common with engagement for other types of projects; helping the public explore and understand intersection designs that they may have never seen before often requires more than a single presentation slide and accompanying narrative.

Factor in the following considerations when planning for engagement:

- **Combining engagement activities** – No single event can bring together everyone whose input is helpful to a project, and no one notification method can reach everyone. Consider multiple activities that can reach both local and regional audiences, can involve both online and in-person participation and can target both stakeholders and the public. For example, you might use pop-up engagement at activity centers for local communities, websites and online surveys promoted through social media for commuters and a digital lunch-and-learn for businesses and stakeholders.
- **Inform beyond the norm** – Do not expect participants to understand how intersections function based on diagrams and schematics alone. For in-person events, consider interactive displays such as tabletop demonstrations of model cars navigating scale diagrams. For both in-person and digital engagement, use animations and videos to demonstrate design function and features. If similar intersection designs exist nearby, highlight these; people can see them in person or at least believe they've been road-tested locally.
- **Share information that can be shared** – Prepare both print and digital materials that not only inform participants in the moment but can be kept or accessed for further reference in the future or can be shared with friends and neighbors, especially as project construction approaches and the intersection is opened for use. This can take the form of fact sheets and brochures or websites that archive the videos, diagrams and informational materials produced. Distribute these at your own meetings and pop-up events or as part of other community events.
- **Provide customized outreach to stakeholders and specific road users** – Information and feedback mechanisms best suited for the public might not be the most appropriate for specific audiences. Work with businesses such as trucking companies and those that receive freight and groups such as farmers and bus drivers to discuss their needs for the intersection. Also discuss the parameters of the vehicles used by such businesses for traveling through intersections. Work with local transportation officials to prepare them to answer questions and receive feedback about the intersection, especially once a design has been chosen and is being constructed.



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4) MAINTAIN FEEDBACK LOOPS

Collect public and stakeholder feedback through a variety of channels. Digital surveys offered online are a great way to hear from both in-person event participants (be sure to provide web links and QR codes) as well as those participating digitally; be sure to have printed paper copies of surveys at events as well as making them available online. Consider alternative surveys for businesses and stakeholders that speak to their particular needs. Comments should always be accepted through various feedback methods, such as paper and/or digital comment cards, email and telephone.

At future stages of engagement, be sure to demonstrate how public and stakeholder input has driven the design process. Provide the same informational opportunities to learn about intersection design and function; newcomers to each round of engagement will want to learn more and will have similar questions as participants from previous rounds.