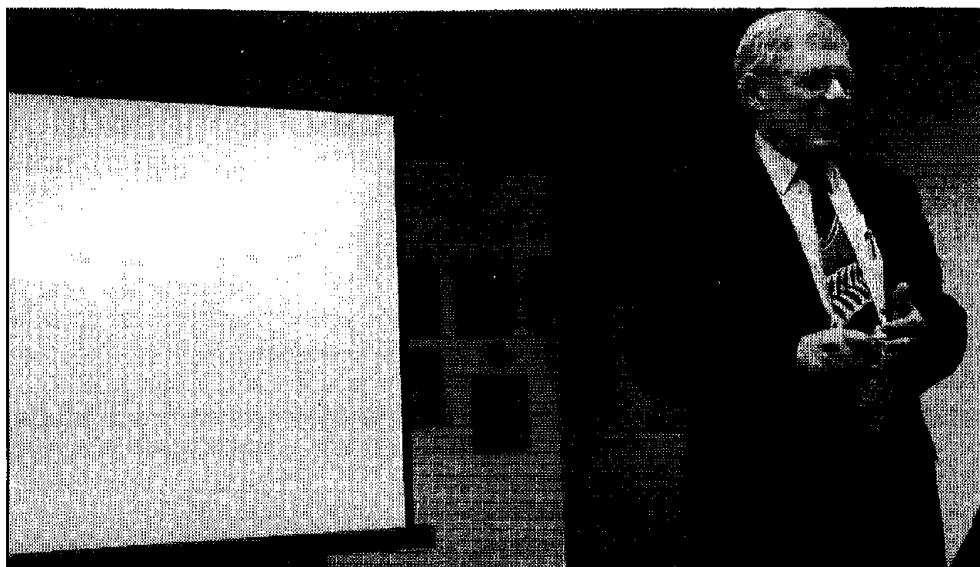


What About a Roundabout? What Is a Roundabout?

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Michael J. Wallwork, a traffic engineer also known as Mr. Roundabout worldwide, was recently retained by the Lincroft Village Green Association to explain Roundabouts to the County and township. LVGA hopes that the county would consider a roundabout instead of their planned jug handle to facilitate traffic into and out of Brookdale College.

by Marianne Kligman

The Lincroft Village Green Association (LVGA) is possessed of very dedicated volunteers determined to return the Lincroft Village back to the community and its pedestrians.

In their search to assist the county's improvement of the Route 520 corridor, they believe they may have found the answer –Roundabouts.

Roundabouts are circular designs in the road, smaller than traditional traffic circles with much slower speeds of approximately 15 to 20 miles per hour. Traffic must slow down to enter the roundabout on a right turn and yields to all traffic within the roundabout. There is no need for stoplights or stop signs. Traffic rarely stops and is smoothly incorporated into the roundabout. This reduces road rage.

The empty land in the center of the circle can be planted attractively or used for artistic display. They are often utilized as gateways to towns or even buildings such as universities.

Unlike jug handles, they require little road widening or taking of adjacent property to construct. The minimal construction and lack of signalizations makes them much more economical than traditional intersection treatments.

Splinter islands and crosswalks at the base of the roundabout provide pedestrian safety and refuge to cross the road.

Roundabouts are very low tech, simple but effective ways of moving large volumes of traffic with minimal vehicular collisions.

The roundabout eliminates most right angle crashes caused by lefts and reduces rear end collisions.

To impress this fact on the powers that be, the Lincroft Village Green Association hired the international Roundabout expert, Michael M. Wallwork, also known as "Mr. Roundabout." He met with the County engineers, the Middletown Township mayor, and planning director. He also offered comments to the County engineer's evening presentation of their revised Route 520 road improvement plan to the community.

Dr. Webster Trammell, Vice President of Government Relations at Brookdale also attended Mr. Wallwork's presentation and appeared enthusiastic over the possibility of providing a safe and attractive gateway entrance to his college.

At the public meeting, Monmouth County Engineer Ted Giannechini admitted that roundabouts had merits and agreed to consider one in lieu of a planned jug handle and right turn slip lane for the Brookdale entrance on Route 520.

Mr. Wallwork, a transportation engineer, has been designing roundabouts for 25 years in his native Australia, Europe, and now in the United States.

To date, Australia utilizes 250,000 roundabouts. England, he claims has always utilized them, and France is up to approximately 1000.

Thus far, he has designed or consulted traffic engineers on projects in eleven states in the US. He has made presentations and given training classes in many more.

Wallwork claims the states of New Hampshire and Virginia have passed legislation to require that roundabouts be considered before any other type of intersection improvements are made in their states. He estimates that currently there are over 700 single lane roundabouts; 70 double lane roundabouts and one three lane roundabout in the United States. None are in New Jersey.

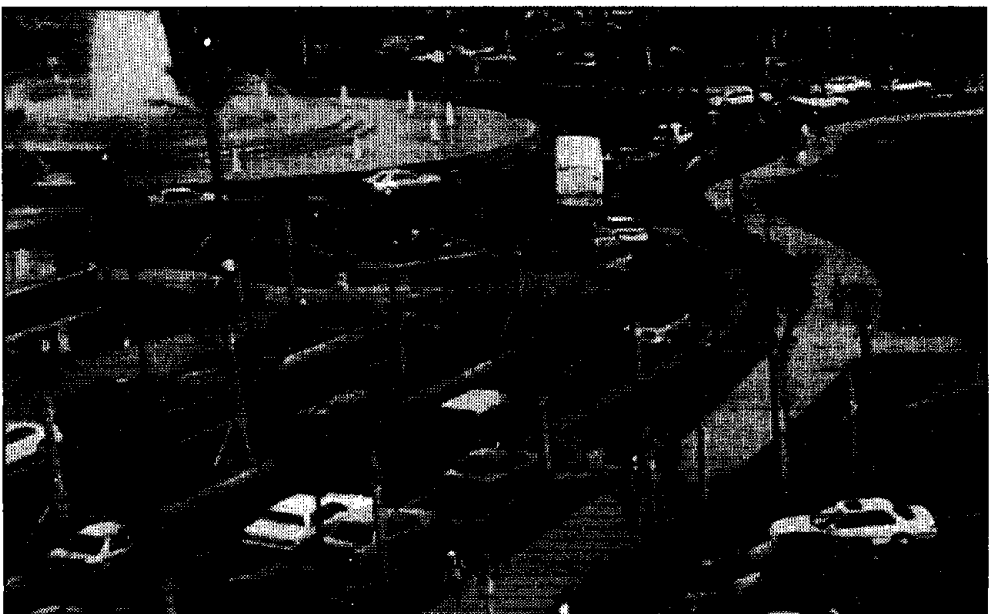
While Mr. Wallwork extols the roundabout's virtues of safety, efficiency, and economy he claims, "The problem with roundabout in this country is that they are different. But once a city or state puts one in, they continue to put in more and more."

He presented slides of various roundabouts throughout the United States. One road in Colorado successfully replaced five signalized intersections with four roundabouts. He claims that the city of Clearwater, Florida is currently planning its 21st roundabout. That city, he explains, has experienced resurgence in downtown productivity since the major roundabout was installed.

Also in attendance at Mr. Wallwork's presentation was Middletown Planning Board member John Deus who publicly suggested that the roundabout be considered, not just for Brookdale's entrance, but for the entire Route 520 corridor project.

Mayor Rosemarie Peters remains a bit skeptical in voicing her concerns about New Jersey drivers and their awful experiences with New Jersey traffic circles.

The County has stated it hopes to begin construction on the Brookdale project sometime in late 2004. Perhaps by then, Lincroft will boast New Jersey's first roundabout.



A roundabout in Florida serves as a gateway for the city and is adorned with a fountain. Roundabouts can handle large volumes of traffic, and consistently demonstrates much lower crash rates and pedestrian injuries.