

Taking Turns

Ted Talk by Gary Lauder

And energy efficiency is more than just about the vehicle -- it's also about the road. Road design makes a difference, particularly intersections, of which there are two types: signalized and unsignalized, which means stop signs. Fifty percent of crashes happen at intersections. Roundabouts are much better. A study of 24 intersections has found crashes drop 40 percent from when you convert a traffic light into a roundabout. Injury crashes have dropped 76 percent, fatal crashes down 90 percent. But that's just safety. What about time and gas? So, traffic keeps flowing, so that means less braking, which means less accelerating, less gas and less pollution, less time wasted, and that partly accounts for Europe's better efficiency than we have in the United States.

So, unsignalized intersections, meaning stop signs, they save many lives, but there's an excessive proliferation of them. Small roundabouts are starting to appear. And they are much better -- better than traffic lights, better than four-way stop signs. They're expensive to install, but they are more expensive not to. So, we should look at that. But they are not applicable in all situations. So, why not use a yield sign? Well the meaning of yield is: You must yield the right-of-way. That means that if there are five cars waiting, you have to wait till they all go, then you go. It lacks the notion of alternating, or taking turns, and it's always on the minor road, allowing the major one to have primacy.

So, what the world needs now is a new type of sign. So, you'd have a little instruction below it, you know, for those who didn't see the public service announcements. And it merges the stop sign and yield signs. It's kind of shaped like a T, as in taking turns. But, don't wait for that sign to be adopted, these things don't change quickly. But you all are members of communities, and you can exercise your community influence to create more sensible traffic flows. And you can have more impact on the environment just getting your neighbourhood to change these things than by changing your vehicle.

Opinion

I agree with the talker. Sometimes signalized and unsignalized intersections doesn't work how they should. And it is because of cultural issues, sometimes the road becomes a fight field and people wants to show that they are superior. Drivers sometimes forget that they're not the only people on the road. About his idea of roundabout, I don't think it works that good, there are a lot of ways that weren't designed to have a round point, so maybe to have some of them it is necessary to rebuild the road and that is much more expensive. Additionally, and as he says it is not for all intersections, and I think that in many of them there the problem about taking turns to cross, is in the rush hour, so an invest on it probably will be notice at that period of time and not during all day. So, my idea for it, is to make people more conscious about roads, about sharing and about caring the others.