

USCM Climate Protection Award Remarks  
June 2008

Carmel is honored to have been selected from such a distinguished group of cities for the Climate Protection Award sponsored by the US Conference of Mayors and Wal-Mart.

I know we are not alone in our efforts to reduce the negative impact on our climate. Many cities have found innovative ways to improve the environment in their communities and I commend Wal-Mart and the US Conference of Mayors for encouraging environmental sustainability through these award programs.

Like many other cities across the nation, Carmel, Indiana is looking for ways to make a difference in big ways and in the smaller things we do every day. A few years ago, I issued an executive order that city departments purchase only alternative fuel vehicles when available. We have also encouraged green building practices for developers in the area, leading by example by requiring new developments be walkable and pedestrian friendly, as well as testing wind power as a possible energy source for our utilities and other city operations

One initiative that will have the greatest impact on our community today and well into the future is our widespread use of roundabout intersections in the City of Carmel. Today, we have installed about 50 roundabouts with more to come. This is the effort for which we are being honored here today ... our roundabout program.

The City of Carmel has so many roundabouts that the Institute for Highway Safety recently called Carmel the "Roundabout capital of the U.S." We have replaced all manner of intersections with roundabouts from smaller neighborhood crossroads, to 4-way stops, traffic signals, main thoroughfares and today, we are in the process of installing six roundabout interchanges on a 5-mile stretch of former state highway. This particular project is unique in the U.S.

The use of roundabouts has helped us in many ways. They are safer, more cost effective and better for the environment.

They are safer because of their design. Diverter islands slow incoming traffic, which yields to cars already in the roundabout. If no cars are coming from the left, drivers are free to enter the roundabout without stopping. Statistics from the Institute for Highway Safety show this reduces the number of accidents with injury by 80 percent. Actual statistics in our community support this finding as well.

Roundabouts are more cost effective to build, maintain and drive. Many times, less land is needed to build a roundabout, reducing its construction and right of way costs. There are no overhead traffic signals to purchase or maintain, which translates into further cost savings and energy. Drivers today may appreciate most the gas savings that comes from not sitting idling at traffic lights. An Institute for Highway Safety study showed that gas savings averaged 24,000 gallons per year per roundabout. At \$4 a gallon, that's millions

of dollars saved by drivers in your communities. *(and, as Wal-Mart would say, that helps you SAVE MONEY - LIVE BETTER)*

That also translates into millions of toxins **not** being emitted into the air. Roundabouts are better for the environment because as cars travel smoothly through the roundabouts, there is a reduction in the amount of time spent idling at intersections. Fewer cars sitting at stop signs or red lights means fewer toxic emissions are polluting our air. When you calculate the impact that more than 50 roundabouts have on the overall air quality in a community, you begin to understand the positive effect of roundabouts.

You can also begin to see that there are changes that American cities can make right now with current technology that will have a valuable and lasting positive impact on the environment. If more cities built roundabouts instead of traditional intersections on new roadways and converted older traffic signal intersections into roundabouts, we could make significant progress toward a healthier environment.

We began building roundabouts more than a decade ago and have learned a great deal along the way. Traffic in the City of Carmel flows more efficiently and more safely because of our roundabouts. However, the greatest long term benefit of this program is the continued reduction of toxic emissions into the air. This positive, sustainable, environmental impact is making a difference every day in the City of Carmel.

It's just part of what we do to try and make Carmel, Indiana the best place to live, work and raise a family.

I want to again thank the US Conference of Mayors and Wal-Mart for honoring the City of Carmel with the Climate Protection Award. We consider it quite an honor.