

Feel like you're going in circles?

In Golden Meadows area, you will be — slowly

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City traffic officials are preparing to throw a curve at drivers in one southeast Fort Collins neighborhood.

Next month, crews plan to install a roundabout — or traffic circle — at the intersection of Ticonderoga and New Bedford drives in the Golden Meadows subdivision. The hope is to discourage speeders from zipping through the neighborhood.

The intersection will be reconfigured with a concrete circle in the middle and bowed-in curbs that will restrict all traffic — including bicycles — to a single curving lane in all four directions. The idea is to force traffic to take the in-

Interested?

For information on traffic circles, call Fort Collins Traffic Operations at 221-6630.

tersection at 10 to 12 mph, city traffic engineer Eric Bracke said.

"You won't have much choice except to slow down," Bracke said. "You can't go through at 25 mph."

The circle will take some getting used to, Bracke said. Drivers will have to learn to keep to the right and go around the bend, even if they intend to go straight or turn left. There

will be no corners to cut, he said.

Traffic circles have been used for years in Europe and some cities in the eastern United States but are just now being introduced in Colorado. Cities such as Boulder and Loveland have started using the devices and have recorded lower average speeds and fewer accidents, Bracke said.

The Ticonderoga circle is one part of a larger traffic-calming project in Golden Meadows that includes the installation of seven speed humps and two raised crosswalks in the neighborhood. The work is being done in anticipation of the opening of a Safeway store at Harmony Road and Wheaton Drive.

Safeway is paying for the improvements, Bracke said, as part of an agreement with area residents who are concerned about what effect the store may have on their neighborhood, such as an increase in the amount of cut-through traffic.

The final tally may exceed \$40,000, he said. But the price is worth it, said Katie Press, Safeway's real estate manager.

"We always try to be responsive to neighborhood concerns," she said.

Most drivers will use major streets such as Harmony Road and Wheaton Drive to access the store, Press said, if they find

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neighborhood streets do not offer "the path of least resistance."

The 48,000-square-foot store is expected to open by the end of the year. Other stores and a pavilion area with a gazebo are expected to be added to the center next year.

As part of the project, the entry into the neighborhood at Lemay Avenue and Ticonderoga Drive will be landscaped so that "it looks like a neighborhood street and not a cut-through to Safeway," Bracke said.

Golden Meadows resident Al Koppel said the neighborhood is looking forward to the completion of the center and the traffic-calming devices. He said Safeway and city officials have done a good job of listening and responding to the neighbors.

"All this input and all these meetings we've gone through will result in something that is good for Fort Collins," he said.