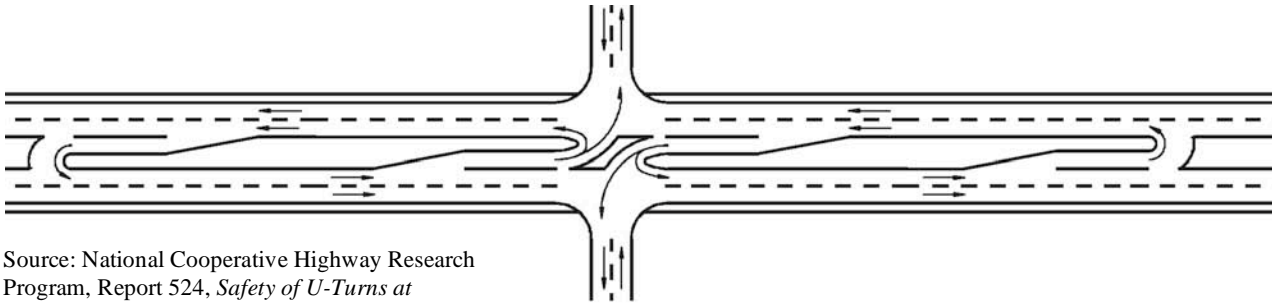


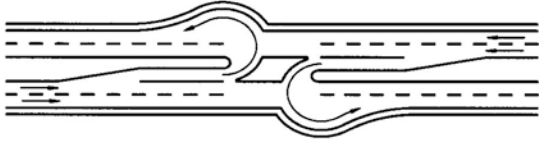
INDIRECT LEFT TURNS

What do they look like?



Source: National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Report 524, *Safety of U-Turns at Unsignalized Median Openings*

Type 2c—Directional Midblock Median Opening With Left-Turn Lanes and Loops



Advantages

- Widening on the far side of the turn makes it possible to make a U-turn without stopping or backing and reduces interference between U-turn and through traffic, particularly for large vehicles.
- Without performing major reconstruction, additional space can be provided to facilitate the larger turning path of commercial vehicles along narrow medians.
- The presence of left-turn lanes reduces potential for rear-end collisions between U-turn vehicles and following through vehicles.
- The presence of left-turn lanes mitigates the problem of U-turn vehicles encroaching on adjacent lanes and interfering with through traffic while waiting for a gap in the opposing traffic.
- This design prevents overlapping U-turns.
- Midblock access is provided for vehicles to (a) make a U-turn and (b) reach driveways on the opposite side of the street.
- Since only major-road traffic is involved, delays to vehicles making U-turns will be less than where an intersection is present.
- If U-turn traffic would otherwise proceed downstream to an intersection with a median opening, then this treatment should reduce VMT.
- Providing median openings for U-turns between intersections reduces the number of turning maneuvers at the intersections.
- Accident rates at midblock median openings are lower than at three- or four-leg median openings.

Disadvantages

- The presence of loops may make snow removal and other maintenance work more difficult.

Figure 24. Advantages and disadvantages of median opening Type 2c—directional midblock median opening with left-turn lanes and loops.

How do you make a left turn?

You leave your driveway, business or intersection by turning right. You signal and merge to the left lane and prior to the next median opening you turn into the left turn pocket and make your u-turn when it is safe to do so.

Why use indirect left turns in this Parks Highway corridor?

Indirect left turns are being considered for several important reasons:

- The Parks Highway Visioning Document (PHVD) details the need for evolution of the Parks Highway into a freeway-style controlled access facility. The PHVD identifies the need for this highway to become a four-lane section with access restricted to interchanges to meet the traffic projected in 2030. This project and all future Parks Highway projects will be designed towards this vision.
- We are designing the Parks Highway beginning at Church Road as a four-lane divided highway.

- Divided highways need access control for crossing and left turn traffic.
- Indirect left turns placed spaced approximately one-half mile apart will:
 - Require motorists to change their travel patterns.
 - With planned improvements to the Parks frontage road system, provide motorists reasonable access to adjacent businesses.

- Provide optimum spacing for intersection spacing if traffic signals become required in the future.
- Manage access to the highway necessary to accommodate future traffic.
- Provide a safer corridor for all the traveling public.
- When compared to the direct left turn, indirect left turns will reduce the amount of time waiting for a break to enter Parks Highway by *about 1/3 to 1/2* and reduce the likelihood that a driver will accept gap in the traffic too short to safely enter the highway.
- Indirect left turns reduce the number of conflicts for turning vehicles and make the highway safer. A driver using an indirect left turn has to look for gaps in traffic from one, rather than two, directions at a time.

Where can I find more information?

National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP), Report 524, *Safety of U-Turns at Unsignalized Median Openings*, TRB, 2004

Traffic Analyses and Alternative Development for Safety, Access and Intersection Control, prepared by Hattenburg Dilley & Linnell, LLC and Kinney Engineering for Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, July 2006. (Appendix D of Draft Preliminary Engineering Report)

Bookmark the project web site – www.parkshighway44-52.info -- and check it periodically for updates.