

SECTION 6

AT-GRADE INTERSECTIONS

6-01 GENERAL

Most highways intersect at grade. To minimize the resulting conflicts and to provide adequately for the anticipated crossings and turning movements, the geometric design of the intersection at grade must be given careful consideration.

Although intersections have many common factors, they are not subject to a set treatment, and must be looked upon as individual problems.

In varying degrees, four basic factors enter into the design of an intersection. These factors are traffic, physical, economic and human.

Traffic factors to be considered include: possible and practical capacities, turning movements, size and operating characteristics of vehicles, control of movements at points of intersection, vehicle speeds, pedestrian movements, transit operations, and accident experience.

Physical factors which control intersection design and application of channelization are: topography, abutting land use, geometric features of the intersecting roadways, traffic control devices, and safety features.

Economic factors, which are important and often controlling, include the cost of improvements and the economic effect on abutting businesses where channelization restricts or prohibits certain vehicular movements within the intersection area.

Human factors such as driving habits, ability of drivers to make decisions, effect of surprise, decision and reaction times, and natural paths of movements must be considered.

An intersection may be extremely simple, or highly developed depending on the proper evaluation of the foregoing factors. In the redesign of an existing intersection, standards sometimes must be compromised due to the high cost of existing development or to the necessity of meeting rigid physical controls. In the design of a new intersection, however, such controls frequently can be avoided by a shift in line or grade of one or both of the intersecting highways.

6-02 GENERAL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

6-02.1 Capacity Analysis

Capacity analysis is one of the most important considerations in the design of intersections. This is especially true in the design of at-grade intersections on urban streets and highways. Optimum capacities can be obtained when intersections include auxiliary lanes, proper use of channelization, and traffic control devices. Reference is made to the 1985 *Highway Capacity Manual (Special Report 209)*, Transportation Research Board, for procedures in performing capacity computations.

6-02.2 Spacing

The spacing of intersections on major arterials is important to the capacity and safety of the roadway. In urban areas, the capacity of the arterial is determined by the capacity of the signalized intersections along the roadway. Ideally, signalized intersections should be located no closer than 1200 feet apart. In rural areas, the minimum spacing of intersections should be one-half mile.

6-02.3 Alignment and Profile

Intersections are points of conflict between vehicles, and between vehicles and pedestrians. The alignment and grade of the intersecting roads should permit drivers to discern and perform readily the maneuvers necessary to pass through the intersection safely and with minimum interference between vehicles. To these ends, the horizontal alignment should be as straight as possible and gradient as flat as practical. The sight distance should be equal to or greater than the minimum values for the specific intersection conditions. Sight distance is discussed later in this section.

1. Alignment

Regardless of the type of intersection, intersecting highways should meet at or nearly at right angles. Roads intersecting at acute angles require extensive turning roadway areas. Intersection angles less than 60 degrees normally warrant realignment closer to 90 degrees. Intersections on sharp curves should be avoided wherever possible because the superelevation and widening of pavements on curves complicate the intersection design. Furthermore, since traffic stripes are not normally carried through the intersection, there is no visual reference for the guidance of the driver through the intersection curve during adverse weather and visibility conditions.

2. Profile

Combinations of profile lines that make vehicle control difficult should be avoided. Substantial grade changes should be avoided at intersections, although it is not always feasible to do so. Adequate sight distance should be provided along both highways and across corners, even where one or both intersecting highways are on vertical curves.

The grades of intersecting highways should be as flat as practical on those sections that are to be used for storage space for stopped vehicles. A minimum storage space for 2 vehicles, approximately 50 feet, should be provided for minor streets where stop sign control is employed and the approach grade is up towards the intersection. Such slopes should desirably be less than one percent and no more than 3 percent.

The profile lines and cross sections on the intersection legs should be adjusted for a distance back from the intersection proper to provide a smooth junction and proper drainage. Normally, the profile line of the major highway should be carried through the intersection, and that of the cross road adjusted to it. Intersections with a minor road crossing a multi-lane divided highway with narrow median and superelevated curve should be avoided whenever possible because of the difficulty in adjusting grades to provide a suitable crossing. Profile lines of separate turning roadways should be designed to fit the cross slopes and longitudinal grades of the intersection legs.

As a rule, the horizontal and vertical alignment are subject to greater restrictions at or near intersecting roads than on the open road. Their combination at or near the intersection must produce traffic lanes that are clearly visible to the vehicle operators at all times and definitely understandable for any desired direction of travel, free from sudden appearance of potential hazards, and consistent with the portions of the highway just traveled.

6-02.4 Cross Section

The cross section of the pavement surface within an intersection should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The development of the centerline profiles and edge of pavement profiles should flow smoothly through the intersection.

6-03 SIGHT DISTANCE

6-03.1 General

There must be unobstructed sight along both roads at an intersection and across their included corner for distances sufficient to allow the operators of vehicles approaching the intersection or stopped at the intersection to carry out whatever maneuvers may be required to negotiate the intersection.

Any object within the sight triangle high enough above the elevation of the adjacent roadways to constitute a sight obstruction should be removed or lowered. Such objects include but are not limited to cut slopes, hedges, bushes, tall crops, signs, buildings, parked vehicles, etc. Also check the vertical curve on the highway to see if it obscures the line of sight from the driver's eye (3.5 feet above the road) to the approaching vehicle (4.25 feet above the road) as per the sight distance determined in the next three sections.

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6-03.2 Stop Control on Cross Street

Intersection designs should provide sufficient sight distances to avoid potential conflicts between vehicles turning onto or crossing a highway from a stopped position and vehicles on the through highway operating at the design speed.

Figure 6-A indicates the required sight distance along the major roadway for various design vehicles to cross safely. Where the median width on a divided highway is equal to or greater than the vehicle length, the crossing can be accomplished in 2 steps. The vehicle crosses the first pavement, stops within the median opening, and proceeds when a safe gap in traffic occurs to cross the second pavement. However, when the median width is less than that of a vehicle, the crossing must be made in one step and the median must be included as part of the roadway width (w).

Figure 6-B indicates the suggested sight distance requirement to permit passenger vehicles to turn left or right onto a 2-lane highway from a stopped position.

6-03.3 Yield Control

When an intersection is controlled by a yield sign, the sight triangle is governed by the design speed on the main highway and that of the approach highway or ramp.

Suggested approach speeds on the yield controlled approach are 15 mph for urban conditions and 20 to 25 mph for rural conditions. Where two major highways intersect and one leg is controlled by a yield sign, the design speed on both highways should be used in determining the minimum sight triangle.

Figure 6-C illustrates the method for establishing the minimum sight triangle for yield controlled intersections.

6-03.4 Sight Distance at Signalized Intersections

Intersections controlled by traffic signals presumably do not require sight distance between intersecting traffic flows because the flows move at separate times. However, drivers should be provided with some view of the intersecting approaches in case a crossing vehicle violates the signal indication. In addition, sight distance requirements for vehicles permitted to turn right on red signal indications must be considered. Line-of-sight should consider the effect of parked vehicles. As a minimum, stopping sight distance should be provided.

6-04 TURNING MOVEMENTS

6-04.1 General

One of the primary concerns of intersection design is to provide adequately for left and right turning movements. The pavement and roadway widths of turning roadways at intersections are governed by the volumes of turning traffic and the types of vehicles to be accommodated.

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6-04.2 Design Vehicles

The overall dimensions of the design vehicles considered in geometric design are shown in Table 2-1 of SECTION 2, GENERAL DESIGN CRITERIA. The minimum turning radius of these design vehicles is shown in Figures 6-D through 6-I.

These figures should be used as guides in determining the turning radii at intersections and the widths of turning roadways. The principal dimensions affecting design are the minimum turning radius and those affecting the path of the inner rear tire, tread width and wheel base. The paths shown for the several design vehicles are established by the outer trace of the front overhang and the path of the inner rear wheel.

Due to the greater usage of the 8.5 foot wide, 48 foot long trailers, the designer is encouraged to use the WB-62 turning template when designing new intersections or upgrading existing intersections. However, the designer is cautioned not to arbitrarily provide for these larger vehicles in the design of all intersections. For example, if the turning traffic is almost entirely passenger cars, it may not be cost-effective to design for large trucks, provided that an occasional large truck can turn by swinging wide and encroaching on other traffic lanes without disrupting traffic significantly. When selecting the appropriate design vehicle, the designer is encouraged to use vehicle classification counts. Also, the existing land use and/or zoning requirements may be useful in selecting the appropriate design vehicle. However, selection of the design vehicle will depend on the designer's judgement after all the conditions have been analyzed and the effect of the operation of larger vehicles has been evaluated.

It is very possible that the use of more than one design vehicle may be appropriate. As an example, the design of one quadrant of the intersection may warrant the use of a SU truck or passenger vehicle while another quadrant may warrant the use of the WB-62.

It is further recommended that all interstate and freeway ramp terminals be designed to accommodate the WB-62 design vehicle.

The use of the WB-62 design vehicle should also be considered when designing ingress and egress to commercial or industrial buildings along the state highways.

6-04.3 Minimum Edge of Pavement Design for Turns

Where it is necessary to provide for turning vehicles within minimum space and slow speeds (less than 10 mph), as at unchannelized intersections, the minimum turning paths of the design vehicles apply.

For most simple intersections with angle of turn of 90 degrees or less, a single circular arc joining the tangent edges of pavement provides an adequate design. Generally, radii of 15 to 25 feet are adequate for passenger vehicles. Radii of 30 feet or more should be provided to allow an occasional truck or bus to turn without much encroachment. Radii of 50 feet or more should be provided where large truck combinations and buses turn frequently.

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When provisions must be made for the larger truck units, and the angle of turn exceeds 90 degrees, a 3-centered compound curve may be used in lieu of a single circular arc with a large radius.

Figure 6-J indicates the minimum treatment at unchannelized intersections.

6-05 CHANNELIZATION

6-05.1 General

Where the inner edges of pavement for right turns at intersections are designed to accommodate semitrailer combinations, or where the design permits passenger vehicles to turn at speeds of 15 mph or more, the pavement area at the intersection may become excessively large for proper control of traffic. To avoid this condition, a corner island, curbed or painted, should be provided to form a separate turning roadway.

At-grade intersections having large paved areas, such as those with large corner radii and those at oblique angle crossings, permit and encourage undesirable vehicle movements, require long pedestrian crossings, and have unused pavement areas. Even at a simple intersection, appreciable areas may exist on which some vehicles can wander from natural and expected paths. Conflicts may be reduced in extent and intensity by a layout designed to include islands. For the design of 3-centered curves for right angle turns with corner islands and oblique angle turns with corner islands, see AASHTO *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets* (1990), Figure IX-29 and Table IX-4 respectively.

6-05.2 Islands

An island is a defined area between traffic lanes for control of vehicle movements. Islands also provide an area for pedestrian refuge and traffic control devices. Within an intersection, a median or an outer separation is considered an island. This definition makes evident that an island is no single physical type; it may range from an area delineated by curbs to a pavement area marked by paint.

Islands generally are included in intersection design for one or more of the following purposes:

1. Separation of conflicts;
2. Control of angle of conflict;
3. Reduction in excessive pavement areas;
4. Regulation of traffic and indication of proper use of intersection;
5. Arrangements to favor a predominant turning movement;
6. Protection of pedestrians;

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7. Protection and storage of turning and crossing vehicles;
8. Location of traffic control devices.

Islands generally are either elongated or triangular in shape, and are situated in areas normally unused as vehicle paths. The dimensions depend on the particular intersection design. Islands should be located and designed to offer little hazard to vehicles, be relatively inexpensive to build and maintain, and occupy a minimum of roadway space but yet be commanding enough that motorists will not drive over them. Island details depend on particular conditions and should be designed to conform to the general principles that follow.

Curbed islands are sometimes difficult to see at night because of the glare from oncoming headlights or from distant luminaires or roadside businesses. Accordingly, where curbed islands are used, the intersection should have fixed-source lighting.

When various intersections are involved in a given project and the warrants are sufficiently similar, a common geometric design for each intersection should be used. This design approach will enhance driver expectancy. The designer should also refer to Part V of the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways* (MUTCD) for guidance.

Painted, flush medians and islands may be preferred to the curbed type under certain conditions including the following: in lightly developed areas; at intersections where approach speeds are relatively high; where there is little pedestrian traffic; where fixed-source lighting is not provided; and where signals, signs, or lighting standards are not needed on the median or island.

Islands may be grouped into 3 major functional classes: (1) channelizing islands designed to control and direct traffic movement, usually turning, (2) divisional islands designed to divide opposing or same-direction traffic streams, usually through movements, and (3) refuge islands to provide refuge for pedestrians. Most islands combine 2 or all of these functions.

1. Size

Island sizes and shapes vary materially from one intersection to another. Islands should be large enough to command attention. The smallest curbed island that normally should be considered is one that has an area of approximately 50 square feet for urban streets, and 75 square feet for rural intersection. However 100 square feet is the minimum desirable size for islands used in both urban and rural areas.

2. Approach-End Treatment

The approach end of a curbed island should be conspicuous to approaching drivers and should be definitely clear of vehicle paths, physically and visually, so that drivers will not veer from the island.

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The nose offset should be 3 feet from the normal edge of through **pavement**. Figure 6-K shows the recommended design details of curbed triangular islands under conditions of no shoulder on the approach roadways.

On highways with auxiliary lanes or shoulders, the corner islands should be offset the full auxiliary lane or shoulder width on both the main highway and the cross road as shown in Figure 6-L.

3. Divisional Islands

The most common type of elongated divisional island is the median island, for which a design guide is illustrated on Figure 6-M.

6-05.3 Auxiliary Lanes

Auxiliary lanes at intersections serve a wide range of purposes including space for deceleration and acceleration, bus stops, and storage for turning vehicles.

Deceleration lanes are always advantageous, particularly on high speed roads, because the driver of a vehicle leaving the highway has no choice but to slow down on the through-traffic lane if a deceleration lane were not provided. On the other hand, acceleration lanes are not always necessary at stop controlled intersections where entering drivers can wait for an opportunity to merge without disrupting through traffic. Acceleration lanes are advantageous on roads with yield control and on all high volume roads even with stop control where openings between vehicles in the peak-hour traffic streams are infrequent and short.

When practical, an auxiliary lane should be of sufficient width and length to enable a driver to maneuver a vehicle onto it properly and once onto it, to make the necessary change between the speed of operation on the highway or street and the lower speed on the turning roadway. See Figure 6-N for desirable lengths of auxiliary lanes.

6-05.4 Median Openings

Median openings on divided roadways are provided to permit intended movements only. Figures 6-O and 6-P show application of grass median and concrete barrier curb median openings, respectively, to control the various types of movements along a divided roadway.

The length of the median opening desirably should equal the full roadway width of the cross road, shoulder to shoulder plus 5 feet on both sides and in no case less than 40 feet. The control radius (R_1) should also be considered in determining the minimum length of median opening. The control radius (R_1) is determined by the design vehicle as follows:

<u>Design Vehicle</u>	<u>Control Radius</u>
P and SU	40 feet
SU, BUS, WB-40	50 feet
WB-50, WB-63	75 feet

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Provisions shall be made where pedestrian traffic is present at median openings, see Figures 6-O and 6-P.

The use of a 40 foot minimum length of opening without regard to the width of median, the cross road width, pedestrian traffic or the control radius should not be considered except at very minor crossroads. The 40 foot minimum length of opening does not apply to openings for U-turns. Consult the AASHTO *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets* (1990) for the design of U-turn median openings.

On urban divided roadways, median openings for U-turns should not be provided. U-turn movements may be permitted at signalized intersections where there is sufficient pavement width to accommodate the movement. Provisions for U-turns should be made on rural divided roadways where intersections are spaced in excess of one-half mile apart. Median widths in such cases should be at least 20 feet and desirably 30 feet to provide adequate protection for the vehicle executing the U-turn movement from the median. It is highly desirable to construct a median left-turn lane in advance of the U-turn opening to eliminate stopping on the through lanes.

6-05.5 Median Openings For Emergency Vehicles

Although it is desirable to require all U-turns by official vehicles to be accomplished at intersections or interchanges, experience demonstrates that some emergency median openings are necessary for proper law enforcement, fire-fighting apparatus, ambulances and maintenance activities. Where median openings are provided for use by official vehicles only, they shall be limited in number and carefully located.

On freeways and Interstate highways where the spacing of interchanges is greater than approximately 3 miles, a U-turn median opening may be provided at a favorable location halfway between the interchanges. Where the spacing of interchanges is greater than about 6 miles, U-turn median openings may be provided so that the distance between such openings or interchange is not greater than about 3 miles.

U-turn median openings in general should not be provided on urban freeways due to the close spacing of interchanges. Generally, due to the close proximity of intersections on divided arterials, emergency U-turn median openings are not provided. However when emergency facilities are located between intersections, there may be a need for direct access to the highway.

See Figures 6-Q & 6-R for typical emergency median opening treatments.

6-06 MEDIAN LEFT-TURN LANE

6-06.1 General

A median lane is provided at an intersection as a deceleration and storage lane for vehicles turning left to leave the highway. Median lanes may be provided at intersections and other median openings where there is a high volume of left-turns, or where vehicular speeds are high on the main roadway. Median lanes may be operated with traffic signal control, with stop signs, or without either, as traffic conditions warrant. Figure 6-S shows a typical median left-turn lane.

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6-06.2 Lane Width

Left-turn lanes with median curbing should be 11 feet wide and desirably 14 feet wide. The lane width is measured from the curb face to the edge of through lane. Left-turn lanes without median curbing should be at least 11 ft. wide and preferably 12 feet wide.

Median widths of 20 to 25 feet or more are desirable at intersections with a single left-turn lane, but widths of 15 feet to 18 feet are acceptable.

6-06.3 Length

The total length of the left-turn lane is the sum of storage length and entering taper.

1. **Storage Length**

The median left-turn lane should be sufficiently long to store the number of vehicles likely to accumulate during a critical period. The storage length should be liberal to avoid the possibility of left-turn vehicles stopping in the through lanes.

2. **Taper**

The entering taper treatment is illustrated in Figure 6-S.

6-07 CONTINUOUS TWO-WAY LEFT-TURN MEDIAN LANE**6-07.1 General**

A continuous two-way left-turn median lane provides a common space for speed changes and storage for left-turn vehicles travelling in either direction and allows turning movements at any locations along a two-way roadway.

Continuous two-way left-turn median lanes are an effective means of providing an increased level of service on many urban arterials. They are especially effective in locations of strip commercial development and frequent driveway openings experiencing moderate left-turn demands.

Since it is possible for vehicles traveling in opposite directions to enter the two-way left-turn lane simultaneously, sufficient stopping sight distance must be provided to permit vehicles to stop. Table 6-1 provides the desirable and minimum stopping sight distance as related to design speeds that are applicable to two-way left-turn lanes.

Superseded

Table 6-1

Stopping Sight Distances for
Two-Way Left-Turn Lanes

Design Speed <u>MPH</u>	Stopping Desirable <u>Feet</u>	Stopping Minimum <u>Feet</u>
30	400	400
35	500	450
40	650	550
45	800	650
50	950	800
55	1100	900
60	1300	1050

The length of crest vertical curve can be computed by the following formulas. The formulas are based on the height of driver's eye of 3.50 feet and of an object 2.0 feet on the road, which is equivalent to the headlight height above the roadway.

When S is greater than L, $L = 2S - (2158/A)$

When S is less than L, $L = AS^2/2158$

S= Stopping sight distance from Table 6-1, in feet.

L= Length of vertical curve, in feet.

A= Algebraic difference in grade, in percent.

If there is adequate roadway lighting present, the object height may be increased to 4.25 feet (top of vehicle), therefore, substitute "3093" for "2158" in the previous formulas. The vertical curve length on the highway should also be checked by Figure 4-I and use the greater of the two "L" values when designing the vertical curve.

Figure 6-T shows a typical two-way left-turn median lane.

6-07.2 Lane Width

Lane widths for continuous two-way left turn median lanes range from 12 to 16 feet. The wider pavement width should be used only when raised islands are provided at major intersections with high left-turn demands. A median lane width of 12 feet is desirable where raised islands are not provided at major intersections.

6-07.3 Cross Slope

Generally the crown line should be located in the center of the median turn lane. The slope of pavement from the crown line should be the same as the cross slope on the through lane adjacent to the median lane.

Superseded

6-08 JUGHANDLES

6-08.1 General

A "jughandle" is an at-grade ramp provided at or between intersections to permit the motorists to make indirect left turns or U-turns. Around-the-block designs that use interconnecting local street patterns to accomplish indirect left turns or U-turns are not considered "jughandles".

These ramps exit from the right lane of the highway in advance of the intersection, or past the intersection and convey traffic across the main highway under traffic signal control. This movement eliminates all turns within active traffic lanes and, in addition to providing greater safety, reduces delays to the through traffic that left turns usually create.

6-08.2 Ramp Width

Ramp widths are based on Figure 7-B in SECTION 7. The minimum width for a one lane ramp should not be less than 22 feet. Ramps may have more than one lane when required to accommodate the anticipated traffic volumes.

6-08.3 Access Control

In order to provide safe and efficient traffic operations on land service highways, the interior of all jughandles shall be acquired. In addition, no access is permitted on the outside of all jughandles including the entire length of acceleration and deceleration lanes, excluding the taper length, see Figures 6U, 6V and 6W. It is desirable to control access along the taper length of acceleration and deceleration lanes.

When a deceleration lane extends through an intersection and the deceleration lane accommodates both the right turn move onto the cross street and the right turn onto the jughandle past the intersection; the access restriction that applies in advance of the intersection is "corner clearance", see Figure 6W. The deceleration lane following the intersection has no access permitted in accordance with the prior paragraph.

Where access is proposed at new or existing jughandle locations, design waivers (submitted as an attachment to the permit application) to the above paragraph will be granted only after a thorough analysis has been made with respect to the cost of acquisition and impact on safety. For further information on access control, see Section 5-08, DRIVEWAYS.

6-08.4 Standard Jughandle Designs

Figures 6-U through 6-W illustrate the three basic jughandle configurations. The dimensions and radii shown are recommended, however, social, environmental or economic impacts may make adherence to the basic geometrics impractical. The recommended design speeds for the basic jughandle configurations are shown in Table 6-2.

Superseded

Table 6-2

Jughandle Design Speeds

<u>Jughandle Type</u>	<u>Minimum Design Speed</u>
A	25 mph
B-one lane	15 mph
B-one lane with T-intersection	20 mph
B-two lane	25 mph
C-loop ramp	15 mph
	20 mph (Des.)
C-finger ramp	25 mph

When initially providing jughandles at locations where there are no existing cross streets or there is an intersecting street on only one side, the designer should evaluate the future development potential of the property adjacent to the jughandle. Consideration should be given to designing the jughandle for future expansion to accommodate the access needs of the adjacent property.

The design of Type "B" jughandles should generally be limited to locations where the development of the adjacent land is limited due to topography, environmental constraints, zoning restrictions, etc.

6-08.5 Superelevation And Cross Slope

It is desirable to provide as much superelevation as practical on jughandles, particularly where the ramp curve is sharp and on a downgrade. Table 6-3 provides a suggested range of superelevation rates in percent for various ramp radii. Rates in the upper half or third of the indicated range are preferred. The cross slope on tangent sections of ramps is normally sloped one-way at 2 percent, which is considered a practical minimum for effective drainage across the surface (see Figure 5-J).

Table 6-3

Jughandle (Ramp) Superelevation (%)

<u>Design Speed (MPH)</u>	<u>Radius (Feet)</u>					
	<u>50</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>230</u>	<u>310</u>	<u>430</u>
15	2-6	2-6	2-5	2-4	2-3	2-3
20	---	2-6	2-6	2-6	2-4	2-3
25	---	---	4-6	3-6	3-6	3-5
30	---	---	---	6	5-6	4-6

Exceptions to the use of full superelevation are at street intersections where a stop or yield condition is in effect.

The length of superelevation transition should be based on a minimum distribution rate of 2% per second of time for the design speed. With respect to the beginning and ending of a curve on the ramp proper (not including terminals), two-thirds of the full superelevation rate should be provided at the beginning and ending of the curve. This may be altered as required to adjust for flat spots or unsightly sags and humps when alignment is tight. The principal criteria is the development of smooth-edge profiles that do not appear distorted to the driver.

See Section 7-06.2, "Ramp Terminals", for a discussion on development of superelevation at free-flow ramp terminals and the maximum algebraic difference in cross slope at crossover line.

6-09 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

6-09.1 Parking Restrictions At Intersections

Vehicular parking should not be permitted within the immediate limits of at-grade intersections; see Section 6-03 for sight distance requirements at intersections.

6-09.2 Lighting At Intersections

Lighting affects the safety of highway and street intersections and the ease and comfort of traffic operations. In urban and suburban areas where there are concentrations of pedestrians and roadside and intersection interferences, fixed-source lighting tends to reduce accidents. Whether or not rural at-grade intersections should be lighted depends on the planned geometrics and the turning traffic volumes involved. Intersections that generally do not require channelization are seldom lighted. However, for the benefit of non-local highway users, lighting at rural intersections is desirable to aid the driver in ascertaining sign messages during non-daylight period.

Intersections with channelization, particularly with multiple-road geometrics, should include lighting. Large channelized intersections especially need illumination because of the higher range of turning radii that are not within the lateral range of vehicular headlight beams. Vehicles approaching the intersection also must reduce speed. The indication of this need should be definite and visible at a distance from the intersection that may be beyond the range of headlights. Illumination of at-grade intersections with fixed-source lighting accomplishes this need.

See Section 11, "Roadway Lighting Systems" for guidelines in the planning and design of roadway lighting systems.

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