

DESIGN BULLETIN #38/2006

Vehicle Inspection Stations / Rest Areas in Highway Median

Summary: The provision of facilities in the median of highways is often the subject of discussion at the time of planning, design and construction of divided highways in Alberta. The purpose of this Bulletin is to inform designers, planners and other staff and consultants working for Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation regarding the department's position on this subject. There have been cases where median facilities such as Vehicle Inspection Stations have been permitted in the past due to special constraints. **As a department policy the construction of new median facilities is not permitted.**

Key Points:

- Left hand exits from divided highways are generally unconventional and should be discouraged due to the potential for driver confusion and erratic movements.
- Left hand entries onto divided highways (requiring entering vehicles to merge into the faster left hand side lane) are normally more problematic operationally than right hand entries. This is especially a problem for larger vehicles and trucks which require more time to accelerate and may have limited visibility to the rear on the right hand side.
- Merging vehicles on the left hand side of divided highways introduce excessive turbulence in the traffic stream which often results in higher than normal incidences of collisions. These collisions typically involve one or more vehicles traveling at high speed.
- Operational and safety problems can be expected between 6000 and 9000 AADT threshold. It is expected that existing median facilities will need to be relocated to the outside in the future, thus resulting in poor economics when overall life-cycle costing is considered.

Recommendation:

- No Rest Areas, Vehicle Inspection Stations or other developments or facilities are permitted in the median of highways in Alberta.

Implementation

This Bulletin is effective immediately (21 November 2006).

Contact

Any outstanding questions should be directed to Technical Standards Branch (Attention: Jim Der or Bill Kenny, fax (780) 422 2027.