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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
REGION FOUR
310 New Bern Avenue, Suite 410
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

January 6, 1993

In Reply Refer To:
HO-NC

CC: THOMPSON, BARBOUR, MADDOX, SMITH

Mr. D. R. Morton, P.E.
State Highway Design Engineer
Division of Highways
Raleigh, North Carolina

Dear Mr. Morton:

Subject: Continuous Two-Way Left Turn Lanes

The use of continuous two-way left turn lanes on undivided multilane facilities is briefly discussed in Chapter 9 of the 1990 AASHTO Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets (Green Book). In general, these lanes should be used only in urban settings where operating speeds are relatively low and there are no more than two through lanes in each direction. Caution is recommended when more than a five lane section is considered. Due to high traffic demand and high right of way cost in urban areas, several States in FHWA's Region 4 have considered or constructed a seven-lane urban street with the center lane used as a continuous two-way left turn lane.

Georgia has recently converted a seven-lane urban arterial to a six-lane facility with a raised median, allowing left turns or U-turns at signalized intersections only. Attached is a preliminary report summarizing the change in accident rate for the first year. Although the report does not include the statistics, there were no fatalities on the highway during its first year after the median was installed. The average fatality rate for the previous eleven years was approximately one per year with five of the fatalities being pedestrians.

We believe the study results support a policy that a seven-lane section with a continuous two-way left turn lane should not be considered acceptable. We will be happy to discuss this matter further should you so desire.

Sincerely yours,

Roy C Shelton

For Nicholas L. Graf, P.E.
Division Administrator

THIS REPORT OF ACCIDENT STATISTICS IS AVAILABLE FROM TOM S. FOR ANYONE WHO IS INTERESTED

cc:
Mr. G. T. Shearin, P.E., NCDOH
Mr. L. J. Ward, P.E., NCDOH
Mr. J. M. Lynch, P.E., NCDOH