

Proposed Median Opening – McKercher Drive and Duncan Crescent (South) Intersection

ISSUE

In 2010, a Pedestrian Actuated Signal (PAS) was installed at the intersection of McKercher Drive and Mount Allison Crescent. This eliminated the ability to complete a legal U-turn at that intersection. Within a few years, it is expected a traffic signal will be installed at the intersection of McKercher Drive and Degeer Street. This will eliminate the ability to complete a legal U-turn at that intersection. These two changes to the road network impact the mobility of the residents on Duncan Crescent.

RECOMMENDATION

That Option 2 – Median Opening and Option B – Full Median Opening be constructed at the intersection of McKercher Drive and Duncan Crescent (south) to allow all movement access to and from Duncan Crescent (south), in conjunction with the installation of traffic signals at the intersection of McKercher Drive and Degeer Street.

BACKGROUND

There are two Duncan Crescent intersections with McKercher Drive. For purposes of this report, they have been labelled Duncan Crescent (south), and Duncan Crescent (north).

Access to Duncan Crescent (south or north) is provided only via right turns to or from the northbound lanes on McKercher Drive. There is a raised median that prohibits left turns from the southbound lanes of McKercher Drive to Duncan Crescent, and also prohibits left turns from Duncan Crescent (south or north) onto McKercher Drive.

Prior to 2010 drivers intending to head south on McKercher Drive would be able to turn right from Duncan Crescent (south or north) onto McKercher Drive, and then complete a legal U-turn at the Mount Allison Crescent intersection,

In 2010, a Pedestrian Actuated Signal (PAS) was installed at Mount Allison Crescent to improve pedestrian safety. As outlined in *The Traffic Safety Act*, U-turns are prohibited at signalized intersections. Since the installation of this device, northbound drivers on McKercher Drive have to make a U-turn at Acadia Drive or turn left onto Mount Allison Crescent to drive to destinations south. Turning left onto Mount Allison Crescent increases short-cutting traffic on Mount Allison Crescent or Anderson Crescent depending on which route drivers chose to access Balfour Street. At Balfour Street, drivers are able to turn left or right on McKercher Drive depending on their destination. Over time, complaints have been received from residents living on Anderson Crescent about short-cutting traffic.

In 2018, the College Park and College Park East Neighbourhood Traffic Review (NTR) was completed. The traffic review recommended that traffic signals be installed at

McKercher Drive and Degeer Street to improve safety and traffic flow. Once the traffic signals are installed, U-turns are prohibited at this intersection according to *The Traffic Safety Act*. Once these traffic signals are installed, this will force drivers destined for Duncan Crescent (south and north) to turn right from southbound McKercher Drive onto Mount Allison Crescent, turn left onto Anderson Crescent or continue on Mount Allison Crescent, turn left onto Balfour Street and then turn left onto McKercher Drive to be able to approach Duncan Crescent (south and north) from the south where right-turns are available. The traffic signals are tentatively scheduled for installation in 2026 or 2027 pending the next multi-year budget deliberations.

Duncan Crescent residents are concerned about both the existing and future scenarios, and access to and egress from Duncan Crescent (south and north). In 2022, a meeting was held with Duncan Crescent residents to discuss their concerns, which are summarized as follows:

- The raised median prevents left turn access to and egress from Duncan Crescent;
- U-turn restrictions at the signalized intersection (McKercher Drive and Mount Allison intersection) causes shortcutting on Anderson Crescent and/or Mount Allison Crescent;
- Difficult to make legal U-turns at Acadia Drive (northbound on McKercher Drive) and Degeer Street (southbound on McKercher Drive); and
- A request to make U-turns legal at signalized intersections.

DISCUSSION

Traffic Operations

Traffic signal warrants and pedestrian assessments were conducted for the study area. The analysis confirmed:

- A Pedestrian Actuated Signal is appropriate for the south leg of the Mount Allison Crescent/McKercher Drive intersection due to pedestrian volumes and desire lines; and
- A full traffic signal at the intersection of McKercher Drive and Degeer Street, as recommended through the College Park and College Park East NTR, is appropriate.

Long List of Options

A preliminary list of potential options to improve access to and egress from Duncan Crescent was developed, including:

- Roundabouts;
- Signs to allow U-turns;
- Traffic signals;
- Pedestrian devices;
- Geometric modifications;
- Median openings; and
- Other revisions (parking restrictions, pedestrian ramps, etc.).

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The preliminary options were evaluated using several criteria including: allow U-turns, fits within the right-of-way, improves access to/from Duncan Crescent, improves traffic flow, improves pedestrian safety, impacts to safety, potential to reduce shortcutting, aligns with policy, bylaw, etc. and aligns with design standards.

Based on the evaluation, the roundabouts, signs to allow U-turns and a median opening at Duncan Crescent (north) were eliminated from further analysis.

Short List of Options

The following options were short-listed and presented to the community for feedback.

- Option 1 – Pedestrian device revisions at Mount Allison Crescent to accommodate U-turns; and
- Option 2 – Median opening at Duncan Crescent (south).

Both options are feasible and will improve access to Duncan Crescent. Option 2, a median opening, would only be considered if supported by the community.

As part of the March 2023 engagement, a survey was provided to Duncan Crescent residents. Of the 13 responses submitted, approximately half supported a new median opening.

Median Opening Options

Based on the community's response, several median opening options were reviewed:

- Option A – No Median Opening
- Option B – Full Median Opening
- Option C – Left-In Only Median Opening
- Option D – Left-Out Only Median Opening
- Option E – Do Nothing

Median opening options were evaluated using the following criteria: improves access to/from Duncan Crescent, operations on McKercher Drive, environmental impacts, parking impacts, community feedback and estimated cost.

The full median opening option was identified as the preliminary preferred option because it provides full access to/from Duncan Crescent and maintains the Mount Allison Crescent pedestrian device on the south side of the intersection along the desire line.

To determine the level of community support for the full median option, an additional survey was delivered to the residents in Duncan Crescent. In May 2024, thirty-eight surveys were delivered to the residents on Duncan Crescent and 11 completed surveys were received. The results are summarized below.

- Nine were supportive of the full median opening at Duncan Crescent (south); and
- Two were unsupportive of the full median opening at Duncan Crescent (south).

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A full median opening on McKercher Drive at Duncan Crescent (south) would improve access to and from Duncan Crescent and would permit all movements.

Alignment with Policy

The criteria for a median opening as outlined in City Council Policy C07-012, Median Openings was reviewed. Ten of the 11 criteria are met with the exception of proximity to the existing intersection at Degeer Street and to the existing intersection at Duncan Crescent (north):

Critical criteria set forth in the policy are met, in particular:

- “iv) The occurrence of median openings must be minimized, while at the same time having due regard for access/egress requirements of adjacent land use; and
- ix) Median openings must not negatively impact adjacent/neighbouring residential properties (such as creating shortcutting of traffic through a neighbourhood).”

The proposed location for the median opening will not pose a safety hazard to roadway users nor will it induce shortcutting traffic through the neighbourhood.

The concept plan was finalized based on the feedback received from residents and includes parking restrictions, pedestrian accessible ramps and speed display boards. The recommended option to improve access to and egress from Duncan Crescent is a full median opening to allow for all turning movements. A plan view of the proposed median opening is included as Appendix 1.

A detailed summary report of considerations, options and engagement are included in Appendix 2.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

There were several opportunities for public and stakeholder engagement, including:

Date	Timeline
January 18, 2018	College Park – College Park East Neighbourhood Traffic Review Meeting #1. 40 attendees
September 18, 2018	College Park – College Park East Neighbourhood Traffic Review Meeting #2. 36 attendees
September 22, 2022	Onsite meeting for Duncan Crescent residents to discuss their concerns with access. 25 attendees
March 30, 2023	Community Open House event and survey to gather input on draft traffic plan and short-list options. 40 attendees
May 2024	Flyer and survey to gauge support for full median opening option. 11 completed surveys. Nine support, two do not support a full median opening.

In addition, numerous informational flyers, phone calls and e-mails have occurred between residents and the Administration discussing the issue.

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The concept plan showing the median opening was circulated to civic departments, which included Saskatoon Fire Department, Saskatoon Light and Power, Saskatoon Transit, Communications and Public Engagement, Parking Services, Planning and Development, Roadways, Fleet and Support Services and Urban Forestry. Any identified issues or concerns were addressed in the design process.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The estimated cost of the recommended option, not including the traffic signals at the intersection of McKercher Drive and Degeer Street, is \$140,000. This work would be funded from Capital Project #2288 Transportation Safety Geometric Modifications. A funding request will be submitted through a future Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget process.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Public Notice is required for consideration of this matter, pursuant to Section 3 (subsection b) of Policy No. C01-021, The Public Notice Policy. The following notice was provided:

- Advertised in The StarPhoenix on June 8, 2024 and June 10, 2024 (Appendix 3);
- Posted on the City Hall Notice Board on June 8, 2024;
- Posted on the City of Saskatoon website on June 8, 2024; and
- Mailed to nearby residents (Appendix 4) June 7, 2024.

There are no social or environmental implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

If approved, construction will proceed once capital funding is available to complete the project. Construction of the median opening will occur in the same season as the installation of the traffic signals at McKercher Drive and Degeer Street.

APPENDICES

1. Proposed Median Opening - McKercher Drive and Duncan Crescent (South)
2. McKercher Drive – Duncan Crescent Access
3. Public Notice – Proposed Median Opening – McKercher Drive and Duncan Crescent (South)
4. Map of property owners mailed Public Notice

Report Approval

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