

# City of Avondale Estates Intersection Improvement/Roundabout and Road Diet Feasibility Study

## MID-BLOCK CROSSINGS

### **How do mid-block crossings work?**

Mid-block crossings allow pedestrians a formally designated place to cross a street when intersections are spaced too far apart to be convenient. Transportation planners and engineers often assume that pedestrians cross streets at intersections, though in many locations this is not always the case.

### **What are their benefits?**

Well-designed crossings offer numerous safety benefits to pedestrians when placed in proper locations. They all need to include some form of traffic control, even if this is just a sign pointing out the crossing to motorists, but when more advanced traffic control is used they are even safer.

### **What needs to be considered in placing mid-block crossings?**

Mid-block crossings should not be too close to an intersection: this can be confusing to motorists and can impede traffic flow in a way that compromises safety at the intersection—for both motorists and bicycles.

### **How can mid-block crossings be enhanced and made safer?**

One widely-used option for midblock crossings is placing a median island in portions of the roadway that are not moving travel lanes, such as a two-way left turn lane. This allows pedestrians refuge between the different directions of moving traffic and allows crossings of busier roads to be completed in stages.

Mid-block crossings may also have illuminated traffic control devices installed, such as rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) or pedestrian hybrid signals, both of which are activated by pushing a button and both of which are used increasingly throughout the Atlanta region and Georgia.



#### **Crossings with Curb Extensions**

Mid-block crossings can provide a shortened crossing distance for pedestrians when combined with curb extensions. This is critical on busy roadways where pedestrians may not feel comfortable away from intersections but want to cross at a location far enough from an intersection that they take the risk regardless.



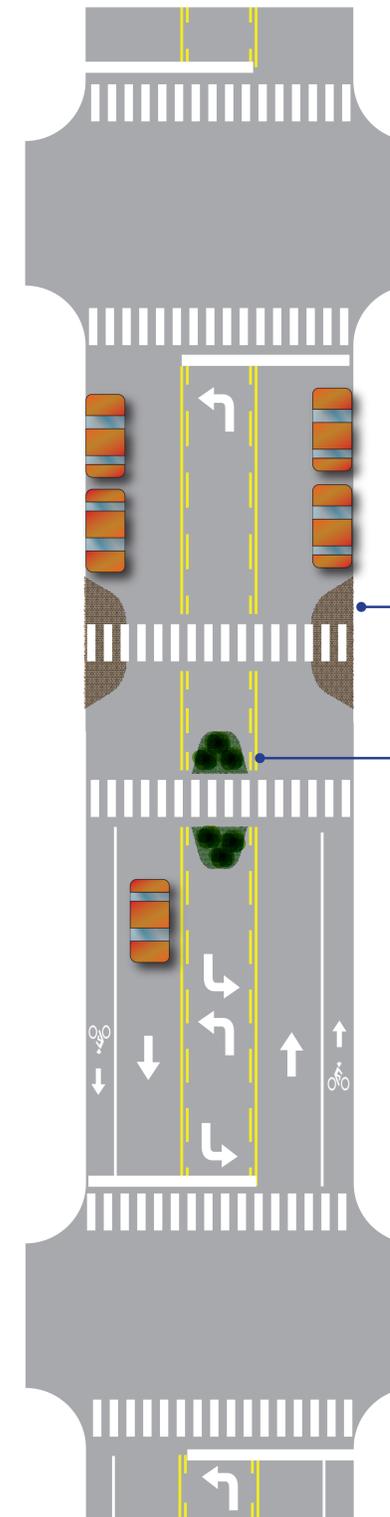
#### **Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs)**

RRFBs are emerging as a tool to further protect midblock crossings. Pedestrians activate a flashing signal by pushing a button before crossing. Traffic is required to yield to pedestrians, but once pedestrians have passed traffic does not need to remain at a full stop.



#### **Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons**

These are a form of traffic signal activated by pedestrians pushing a button. Traffic comes to a full stop and once the pedestrian crossing time has finished, the red light signal turns off and traffic flows as normal. Pedestrian hybrid beacons are typically installed only when pedestrian volumes and traffic volumes are high enough to warrant them, and these requirements are stricter than those for RRFBs.



#### **Distance from Intersections**

Mid-block crossings need to be placed an adequate distance from intersections to avoid confusion and disruption to traffic flow. This is generally a minimum of 200 feet, depending on the roadway context and speed.

#### **Curb Extensions**

When midblock crossings are combined with a road diet, a curb extension that shortens crossing distance might be considered, especially when the extra space from the road diet is used for on-street parking or landscaping.

#### **Medians**

Medians can be another useful way of shortening crossing distances and providing refuge for pedestrians. If the extra space from a road diet allows bike lanes to be added, medians provide this refuge without interrupting the flow of the bike lane (which curb extensions might do).