

DNCC U-LOOP PROGRAM

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It is not often that I have the opportunity to write about some specific short term relief program for Dhaka's transport problems that is expected to be implemented shortly. Today I can mention of such a proposed program. Recently, the Mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation, Annisul Huq, made some announcements about introducing a set of U-Loops (path ways where vehicles can make an about turn in the opposite direction) on a major north south transport artery from Joydebpur Chourasta to Satrasta intersection on Shaheed Tajuddin Sharani by June 2016. The aim is to lessen the traffic jams on this route by a method that can also be implemented in a relatively short period of time. The cost out lay compared to many is also modest, not requiring more than sixty million dollars.

A series of specifically designed U-loops systems from Telepra (about 600 meters north of Joydebpur Chourasta) to Satrasta intersection on Shaheed Tajuddin Sharani for a signal free motorised travel is proposed to be built. The broad intention is to provide for faster motorised travel by providing largely signal free motor vehicle movements at all intersections on this alignment. There are 63 road cuts on this alignment. Of these 20 are major road intersections. To quicken the traffic flow, all right hand turnings at all intersections will be closed and by providing right hand turnings through U-loops at points before and after the intersection points.

In all there shall be 22 pairs of (44) (or double U-loops) at 22 locations on the route. Two types of U-loop designs will be built for the purpose. A larger and wider type, Type A' U-Loop shall provide turnings for all vehicles includ-



Type A U- loop, a CAD Image for buses and cars turnings

ing buses, double decker buses, trucks as well as smaller vehicles such as cars and auto rickshaws. A smaller U-loop, Type B's, shall provide right hand turnings for smaller vehicles such as cars, and auto rickshaws.

The U-loops will be located in three broad sections on the proposed road alignment.

A. On the Dhaka-Mymensingh Road, at: 1. Telepara; 2. Autpara; 3.

Easter Bypass-east side; 4. Eastern by Pass-west side; 5. Millat Madrasha; 6. Matsha Beej; 7. Open University; 8. People's Ceramic Industry; 9. Ahsanullah Master Stadium.

B. The next nine U-loop locations will be on the Dhaka Airport road from Tongi Bridge to Mohakhali Flyover at: 10. Abdullahpur Intersection; 11. House Building/Muscat Plaza; 12. Rajlakshmi Shopping Centre/North of Jasimuddin

Intersection; 13. RAB 1; 14. Flying Academy/Civil aviation; 15. Army Golf Club/Radisson Hotel; 16. Under Banani Rail Crossing Underpass; 17. Banani/Kakali Rail Station; 18. Chairman Bari; 19. Under Mohakhali Flyover

C. On Shaheed Tajuddin Sharani, at: 20. Moakhali Inter-District Bus Terminal; 21. Kohinoor Chemicals Company; 22. Satrasta Intersection under Mogh Bazaar Flyover.

The proposed U-Loops will be accommodated within existing road allowances and with minimal land acquisitions from some other government departments. No private land acquisitions will be required.

Some of the anticipated benefits can be summarised as follows;

- Reduce traffic jams on this arterial corridor
- Faster and signal free motorised travel should save about 30% to 40% in travel time
- This program can be built for a comparatively lower cost (the preliminary cost estimate is under taka 60.00 crores for the entire 32.5 km distance including 22 pairs of double loops, intersection closures' and some with pedestrian crossovers).
- Construction and implementation period is also relatively short, with minimal disruptions to traffic during construction periods.
- A needed companion dedicated bus lane program can and should be integrated with U-Loop program. Modifications to U-loop locations and designs can be made easily
- Reduced carbon emissions expected, because of faster traffic movement and lesser and fewer traffic jams and vehicle emissions, is a positive result and will help in positive climate

change actions.
• People will notice a visible positive change in motorised travel on this major transport route.

Implementing the U- Loop program on a single transport artery, will be a first step towards freeing of traffic jams in Dhaka. If the program is to be successful, other major commuter arteries such as the Mirpur Road from Gabtali to New Market, Manik Mia Ave. and the Airport Road artery from Mohakhali to Sonarganon Hotel and beyond should be brought under its integrated realm. To extend this program to Dhaka South City area for greater benefits, the two city corporations have to co-operate on this program.

The U-loop program will be more successful when it will be combined with and is integrated with the development of a revitalised public bus system program. For this we need companion programs that include a revitalised bus system along with dedicated bus lanes. The number of cities with dedicated bus lanes and revitalised bus programs are increasing every year worldwide. Buses carry more than 70% of all motorised traffic commuter volume in Dhaka and will remain so for years to come. But we need to revamp the entire bus system.

A combination of the two programs is not only possible but very necessary under current and future urban transport plan and mass commuter travel in Dhaka.

The author is an architect, an urban transport specialist. He was a member of STP, Dhaka Advisory Committee, Senior Consultant to DTCC (2010-2011) and prepared the Institutional Management structure for the MRT line 6 and its rerouting plan from Shahab intersection to the Bangladesh Bank. Email: tanwir.nawaz@yahoo.com



Type B U-loop, for cars and smaller vehicles only

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