

Road Diets

What Is a Road Diet?

A Road Diet is a technique in transportation planning when the number of car lanes and/or the width of the road is reduced to better serve the full range of people using it. You may hear a road diet also referred to as a “lane reduction”, “road re-channelization”, or “street right-sizing”.

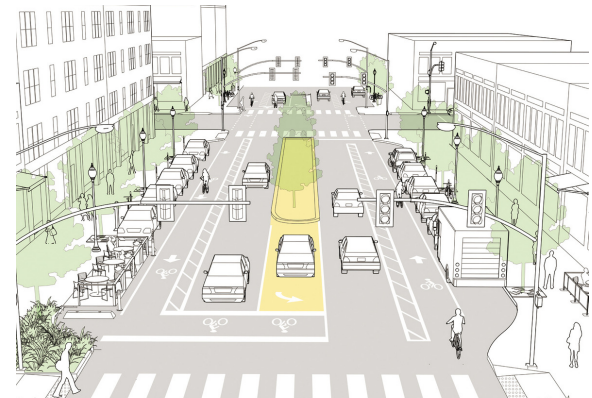


Image: NACTO

Benefits of a Road Diet



Economic Vitality: For local businesses, a road diet can boost economic vitality by changing the corridor from a place that people “drive through” to one that they “drive to” (or now also have the option to safely bike or walk to!)

Community Livability: Road diets create more livable communities with safer intersections and crosswalks. A road diet can reduce the risk of crashes and serious injuries by allowing people walking to cross only one lane of traffic at a time — rather than up to four or more lanes. At the same time, people in cars experience a shorter delay while waiting at traffic lights and other crossings.



Traffic Calming: A road diet can reduce speeding-related crashes and improve overall roadway safety. Successful road diets have demonstrated a 70 percent decrease in the frequency of people driving more than 5 mph over the speed limit.¹

Won't a Road Diet Just Make Traffic Worse?

It's natural to assume that fewer car lanes might equal more traffic, but road diets are designed to benefit drivers as well as people walking and biking.

- Through traffic mixes less with turning traffic, resulting in more predictable movements and fewer rear-end, side-swipe, and left-turn crashes.
- There are fewer lanes to cross for side-street drivers, reducing the rate of right-angle crashes.
- Improved signal timing and a dedicated turning lane help drivers spend less time waiting at intersections.

¹ AARP Livability Fact Sheet - Road Diet:

<https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/documents-2014/Livability%20Fact%20Sheets/Road-Diets-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

Quick Facts

Road Diets

Two Case Studies²



Prospect Park West, Brooklyn, NY:

One-way travel lanes reduced from 3 to 2. A two-way bikeway added, protected by a parking lane. New signal timing, loading zones, and pedestrian islands added.

Outcomes:

- The percentage of vehicles on the street breaking the speed limit was reduced from 74% to 20%
- Injuries to all street users decreased 21%
- Cyclists riding on the sidewalk decreased from 46% to 3%



Edgewater Drive, Orlando, FL:

Travel lanes reduced from 4 to 3 lanes, including a two-way left turn lane, which minimizes lane weaving and speeding, making the road safer for all users. Bike lanes added.

Outcomes:

- 34% reduction in crashes
- Pedestrian volumes increased 23%
- Bicycle volumes increased 30%
- Vehicle volumes were reduced, but generally not displaced to nearby streets

What You Can Do



Advocate: Participate in public meetings and speak up about the benefits of road diets.



Educate: Share this fact sheet, talk to neighbors, build community support and then meet with decision makers, the media, experts and others to discuss the benefits of road diets.



Activate: Encourage municipal leaders to launch a pilot road diet in an area that has light traffic. This will give drivers a chance to get comfortable with the concept and allow them to document what works and what doesn't.

² Source: Federal Highway Administration, Road Diet Case Studies: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/case_studies/roaddiet_cs.pdf