

# ROAD DIET

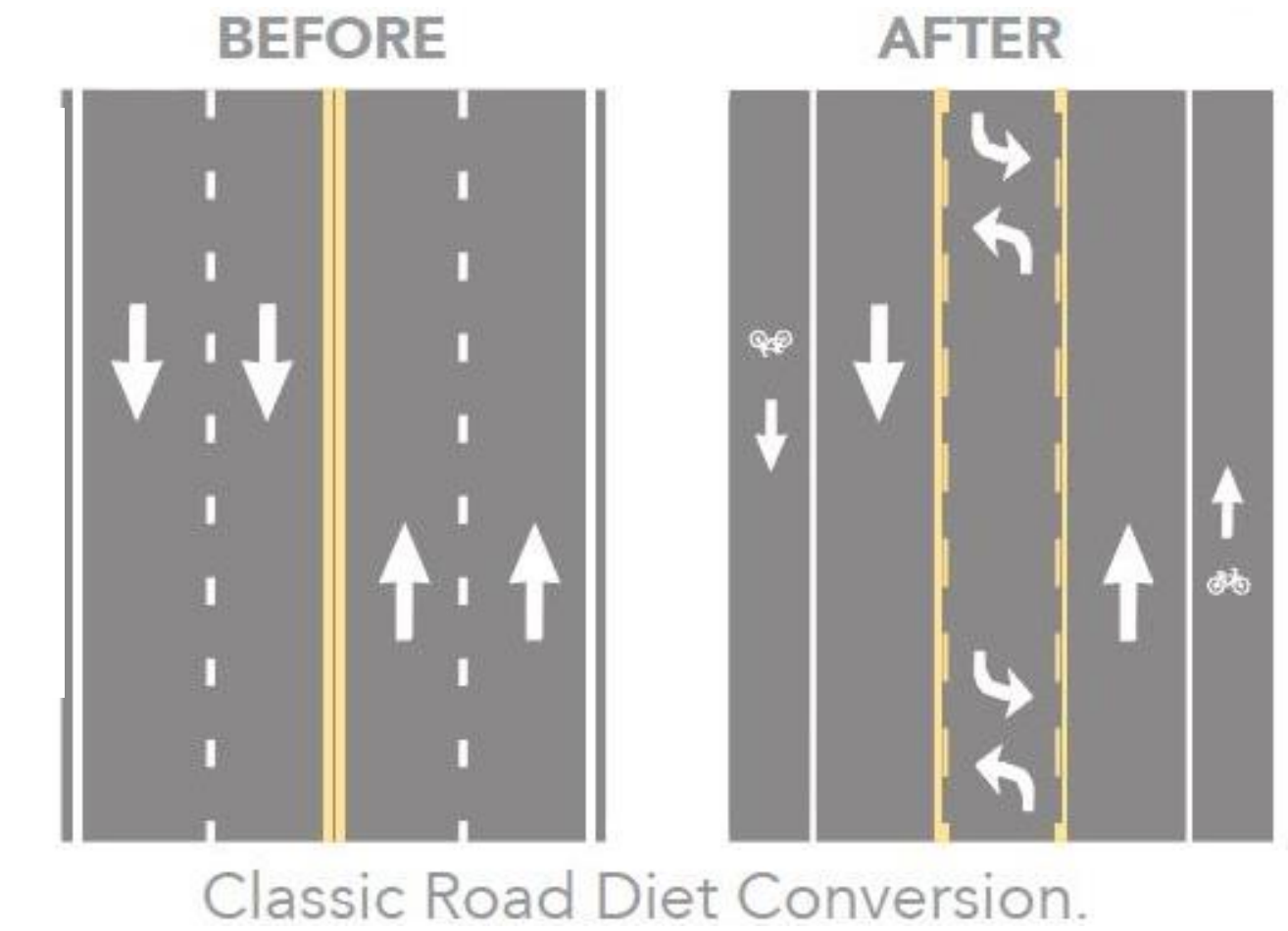


Safety | Livability | Low Cost

## Road Diet FAQ

### Q What is a Road Diet?

A Road Diet repositions pavement markings to better meet the needs of all road users. A classic Road Diet converts a four-lane undivided roadway to a three-lane roadway, but there are many other reconfigurations being used by States and locals. For example, a Road Diet could convert the roadway space from five to three lanes, two to three lanes, or vary lanes of a three-lane roadway.



### Q What are the effects of Road Diets on emergency response services?

Multi-lane undivided roads can be problematic for emergency responders, as drivers may not be aware of protocols for allowing emergency vehicles to pass. Road Diets can significantly improve response times by allowing emergency vehicles to bypass traffic by using the center two-way left-turn lane. For examples of how Road Diets have positively affected emergency response times, check out FHWA's flyer on Road Diets and Emergency Response: Friends, Not Foes<sup>8</sup>.

### Q How do Road Diets improve roadway safety?

A study conducted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) found that four-lane to three-lane Road Diet conversions reduce the total number of crashes by 19 to 47 percent.<sup>2</sup> Several features of a Road Diet contribute to this safety improvement.

- **A reduction in the number of through lanes** can calm traffic, reduce weaving, reduce the number of lanes for pedestrians to cross, and reduce left-turn conflicts.
- **A two-way left-turn lane (TWLTL)** may reduce head-on crashes by dividing opposing traffic and reduce rear-end crashes by providing left-turning vehicles their own lane.
- **Wider shoulders** provide recovery room should drivers depart the travel way. They can also provide buses or mail trucks room to pull out of the travel lane, allowing vehicles to pass.
- **Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Facilities** provide a dedicated space for these users, which can increase motorists' recognition that they are using the roadway. Dedicated bicycle/transit lanes and pedestrian refuge islands provide visible cues that can improve driver awareness.

### Q How does a Road Diet affect businesses?

A Road Diet can improve economic vitality by changing the corridor from a place people "drive-through" to one that they "drive-to." Replacing vehicle travel lanes with on-street parking options, walking areas, and bicycle lanes can make the street a more attractive "park once" place. With these improved facilities, a motorist is more likely to park, walk around, shop, and enjoy the setting. For examples of how Road Diets have positively affected surrounding businesses, check out FHWA's flyer on Road Diets' Economic Impacts<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> FHWA, Evaluation of Lane Reduction "Road Diet" Measures on Crashes. FHWA Report No. FHWA-HRT-10-053. Washington, D.C. 2010. Accessible at: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/10053/>.

<sup>8</sup> FHWA, "Road Diet and Emergency Response: Friends, Not Foes." FHWA-SA-17-020, Washington, D.C. 2016.

<sup>9</sup> FHWA, "Road Diets' Economic Impacts." FHWA-SA-17-019, Washington, D.C. 2016.