



# Building Safer Routes to School



Every day, children and their parents walk or ride their bicycles to school. However, busy roads can mean the difference between being able to walk or ride a bike to school or needing to ride in a car.

Children face unique limitations when crossing roads. Because of their small body size and developing minds, they often have difficulty detecting and judging speed and safe gaps in traffic. Speed management is key near schools, parks, and other settings with large numbers of children. Slower speeds give motorists more time to react.

Road Diets can improve roadway conditions near areas children frequent, like schools and parks. In these locations, safety can be drastically improved for motorists by calming traffic and improving the line of sight for children and drivers alike.

**“Today more than ever, there is a need to provide options that allow all children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school safely.”**

— National Center for Safe Routes to School

## Road Diets are a Proven Safety Practice

Road Diets are a proven safety countermeasure that keep traffic flowing while reducing crashes, reducing high-risk speeding, and addressing safety concerns. Implementing a Road Diet is an easy and cost effective way to manage and improve mobility and accessibility for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and those using public transportation. This is done by reconfiguring roadways using pavement marking modifications.

## Why go on a Road Diet?

Road Diets have the potential to improve safety, convenience, and quality of life for all road users. These are the most common benefits of Road Diets:

- Increased safety / reduced collisions
- Improved traffic flow
- Improved mobility, connectivity, and access to essential services



Ocean Park Boulevard Road Diet, Santa Monica

**Collisions were reduced by 65%** near schools as a result of this Road Diet.

Eileen Fogerty,  
City of Santa Monica<sup>1</sup>

### Case Study: Santa Monica, California – Ocean Park Boulevard

The City of Santa Monica recently installed a Road Diet on Ocean Park Boulevard with hopes of improving safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, including school motorists, in the area. Extending 1.1 miles, the Road Diet comprised of restriping, bicycle lanes, and on-street parking. The corridor is a transit route and carries approximately 23,000 vehicles per day. The speed limit on the corridor is 35 mph, with a school zone area of 25 mph when children are present.

#### Addressing Safety Concerns

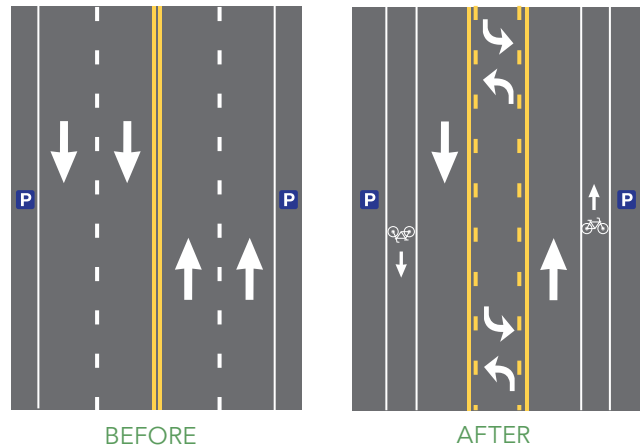
The Will Rogers Elementary School, John Adams Middle School, and recreational facilities are located near Ocean Park Boulevard. With such a high volume of student activity in this area, vehicles speeding and a recent increase in crashes were a major cause for concern.

#### Results

In the first 9 months following the reconfiguration, crash data indicated there was a 65 percent reduction in collisions— as compared to the same 9-month period in the year prior to the Road Diet installation. Furthermore, many people appreciated the improved conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians. Read more online: [Ocean Park Blvd Road Diet](#)

#### Funding Road Diets

A Road Diet can be a low-cost safety solution, particularly in cases where only pavement marking modifications are required to make the traffic control change. In other cases, the Road Diet may be planned in conjunction with reconstruction or simple overlay projects, and the change in cross section allocation can be incorporated at no additional cost.



Road Diets are typically eligible for Surface Transportation Program (STP) Set-Aside, Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) or other Federal-aid funds such as any remaining SAFETEA-LU SRST funds. Other funding sources available vary widely from state and local sources, including such sources as Safe Routes to School grants, state DOT pedestrian and bicycle funds, and Federal Transit Administration program grants.

**Get more information about Road Diets:** [www.safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road\\_diets](http://www.safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets)

1. Santa Monica Information Item: Fogarty, Eileen (2011, Feb 28). Ocean Park Boulevard Reconfiguration. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/579771/Downloads/Ocean\_Park\_Blvd.pdf