



MEDIANS AND PEDESTRIAN CROSSING ISLANDS IN URBAN AND SUBURBAN AREAS

WHAT IS THE COUNTERMEASURE?

A *median* is an area between opposing lanes of traffic, excluding turn lanes. Medians in urban and suburban areas can either be open (pavement markings only) or they can be channelized (raised medians or islands) to separate various road users.

Pedestrian crossing islands (or refuge areas) – also known as center islands, refuge islands, pedestrian islands, or median slow points – are raised islands placed on a street at intersections or midblock locations to separate crossing pedestrians from motor vehicles.

There are several types of medians and pedestrian crossing islands, and if designed and applied appropriately, they improve the safety benefits to both pedestrians and vehicles in the following ways:

- They may reduce pedestrian crashes by 46 percent and motor vehicle crashes by up to 39 percent.
- They may decrease delays by greater than 30 percent for motorists.
- They allow pedestrians a safe place to stop at the mid-point of the roadway before crossing the remaining distance.
- They enhance the visibility of pedestrian crossings, particularly at unsignalized crossing points.
- They can reduce the speed of vehicles approaching pedestrian crossings.
- They can be used for access management for vehicles (allowing only right-in/right-out turning movements).
- They provide space for supplemental signage on multi-lane roadways.

The FHWA recommends raised medians (or pedestrian refuge areas) be considered in curbed sections of multi-lane urban roadways, particularly where pedestrians, high traffic volumes (exceeding 12,000 average daily trips per day), and intermediate or high travel speeds occur together. Medians/refuge islands should be at least four feet wide, but preferably eight feet for pedestrian comfort and safety. They should also be of adequate length to allow the anticipated number of pedestrians to stand and wait for gaps in traffic before crossing the second half of the street.

City of Berkeley



City of Lancaster



City of San Francisco (under construction)



WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

The FHWA California Division, in conjunction with the Resource Center, recently delivered a workshop on speed management for pedestrian safety for the California SHSP Challenge Area team #8 for pedestrian safety. This safety countermeasure was analyzed in terms of its safety and operational benefits, cost effectiveness and the level of implementation on and off the state highway system.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO? – SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES, LESSONS LEARNED, POINTERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Like the other pedestrian safety countermeasures, local agencies are much more interested and more advanced in the implementation of this countermeasure. Local agencies' willingness to take more risks in traffic calming and urban revitalization projects play a key role in their level of accomplishment in the implementation of this countermeasure.

City of Stockton



Z-Crossing, City of San Luis Obispo

