



Curb extensions

Definition

Curb extensions or ‘bulb outs’ are extensions of the curb line into the street, across the parking lanes to the edge of the travel lane. They are appropriate only where there are on-street parking lanes.

Objective

Curb extensions or ‘bulb outs’ are extensions of the curb line into the street, across the parking lanes to the edge of the travel lane. They are appropriate only where there are on-street parking lanes.

Advantage

Reduces the distance and time that pedestrians travel in the street.

Increases pedestrian visibility and the ability to see oncoming traffic.

Adds sidewalk space, which can be used for various pedestrian or ancillary uses, including the installation of curb ramps/landings on narrow sidewalks or additional greenspace/landscaping.

Helps slow the speed of turning vehicles by tightening corner radii.

Prevents drivers from parking too close to a crosswalk.

Has significant traffic-calming effects, and potential for streetscaping/street beautification projects.

Challenge

Eliminates the buffer (parked cars) between the pedestrian waiting at the curb and passing vehicles.

May be difficult to for moving vehicles to see and creates an obstacle for street sweepers and snowplows.

May require landscaping or other means to guide visually-impaired pedestrians to crosswalks.

May result in the loss of on-street parking.

May create drainage problems or trash accumulation

May increase the potential for conflicts between bicyclists and motorists on some (higher speed) roads.

Impacts the turning ability of trucks and other large vehicles. (This issue, however, can be mitigated by the use of mountable apron/curb area. For an example of this type of adaptation, see ‘pillow’ type curb extension discussed at <http://seattletransitblog.com/2013/01/31/a-pillow-of-cement/>.)

Resources

Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities, 1st Edition, AASHTO, 2004
https://bookstore.transportation.org/item_details.aspx?id=119.

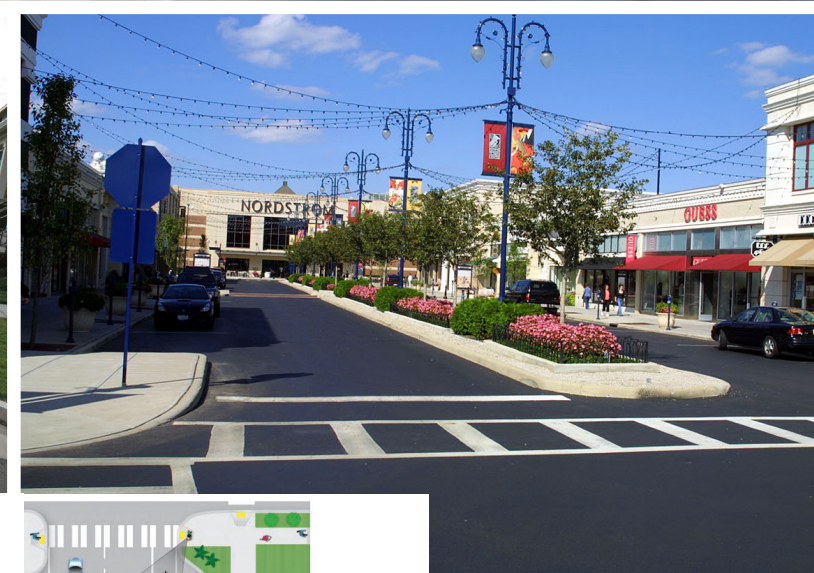
FHWA Context Sensitive Solutions

http://contextsensitivesolutions.org/content/topics/css_design/design-examples/flexible-design-elements/curb-extensions-m/.

Pedestrian Safety Impacts of Curb Extensions: A Case Study http://contextsensitivesolutions.org/content/reading/impacts_curb_ext/resources/PedSafetyCurbExt/.

Safe Routes to School Guide

http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/pdf/SRTS-Guide_full.pdf
 (Chapter 3, pp. 39-40).



Integrating curb extensions and on-street parking into the sidewalk corridor enhances pedestrian safety and the walking experience.
 (Credit: Michele Weisbart)



Curb extensions
 (Credit: Michele Weisbart)



Images (clockwise from main image):

Example of a curb extension.
 Source: National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), Flickr.

Additional examples:
 Sources: Dan Burden, pedbikeimages.org; Michelle Weisbart, Living Streets; Dan Burden, pedbikeimages.org; Dan Burden, pedbikeimages.org; Michelle Weisbart, Living Streets; Dan Burden, pedbikeimages.org.