



Raised center median/pedestrian refuge island

Definition

Center median refuge islands are raised barrier areas placed in the center of the roadway separating opposing lanes of traffic, through which a crosswalk passes.

Objective

To provide a place for pedestrians crossing a street to wait safely for a suitable gap in traffic or for the WALK phase of a pedestrian signal.

Advantage

Enables pedestrians to focus on crossing one side of a roadway, with traffic moving in one direction only, at a time.

Divides crossings in shorter segments.

Can improve visibility of pedestrians.

May help slow vehicle speeds by making the roadway appear narrower.

Can serve access management goals, such as preventing or limiting left-turns.

Can help beautify streets with plantings and landscaping.

Challenge

Can complicate snow plowing/removal.

May require additional ROW and/or narrowing of vehicle lanes.

Resources

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, Raised Medians <http://www.walkinginfo.org/engineering/crossings-crosswalks.cfm>.

FHWA Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access: Part II Best Practices Design Guide http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/publications/sidewalk2/sidewalks208.cfm (Section 8.7).

Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) <http://www.access-board.gov/prowac/nprm.htm> (See Chapters R305.2.4).

Signalized Intersections: Informational Guide (FHWA) <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/04091/08.cfm#chp81> (Section 8.1).

ITE Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach <http://www.ite.org/css/> (Chapter 9).

PEDSAFE Case Studies: Medians http://www.walkinginfo.org/pedsafe/pedsafe_curb1.cfm?CM_NUM=12.

City of San Francisco Better Streets Guide <http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/pedestrian-safety-and-traffic-calming/traffic-calming-overview/medians-and-islands/>.

Pedestrian Refuge Island Safety Audit <http://www.ite.org/Membersonly/techconference/2001/CCBo1A31.pdf>.

FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures: Medians and Crossing Islands http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/fhwa_sa_12_011.htm.



Images (clockwise from main image):

Cyclist utilizing a center median/pedestrian refuge island.
Source: Dan Burden, pedbikeimages.org.

Additional examples:
Source: Dan Burden.