

Median Guidelines – Fact Sheet

Raised center medians offer advantages in terms of roadway safety and capacity, and are promoted by transportation experts for their ability to reduce conflict points and improve streetscape aesthetics. At the same time, business owners often oppose raised medians out of fear of business loss due to access changes or restrictions.

The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) performed a study on several recent projects to evaluate the effects of raised medians on local retail sales both before and after construction.



Projects Studied:	County
US-89/US-91; Main Street Logan 100 W to 900 S	Cache
US-89; State Street 9000 S to 10000 S	Salt Lake
SR-9; State Street 3700 W to 300 W	Washington

Data from the corridors studied showed:

- An increase in corridor-area retail sales
- An increase in sales per square foot (between 5 and 100 percent) depending on the corridor
- No evidence of a negative impact on retail sales due to installation of raised median

It is important to note that not every business within the corridor did better following installation of the median. In some cases the retail mix changed in response to the economy, new area competition and other contributing factors.

While most businesses did not experience a negative impact as a direct result of the raised median, different business types experienced impacts to varying degrees. The study determined that the following factors influenced an individual business' level of impact:

- location on the block
- quality of access management
- business model

The study also surveyed business owners to gauge perception of impacts caused by raised median installation. It was found that business owner expectations before the installation were more pessimistic than experience revealed. They also reported neutral to negative perceptions of sales impacts, however, sales tax data shows an average overall increase of 32 percent.

Raised Median Facts:

- Significant delay for vehicles travelling the corridor (up to 30 percent)
- Reduction in crash rate (26 to 40 percent average) after median installation
- Reduced and uniform speeds help lower vehicle emissions and improve air quality
- Provide visual relief from pavement through height, texture and color contrast
- Maintained landscaped medians provide an aesthetically pleasing corridor
- Improvements can increase property values and retail sales