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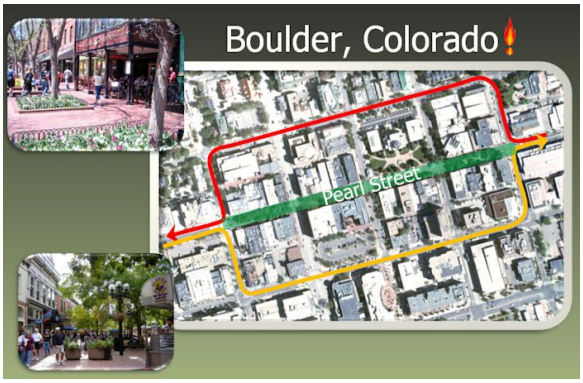
TOP TEN — Top Ten Advantages of One-Way Couplets, Relative to Stroads

10. **Cheap Capacity!** Couplets do not need left-turn arrows, which means traffic can have much more green-time. When each lane is more efficient, there is less need for widening, or might convert a lane to Complete Street uses.

9. **Drivers obey the speed limit!** Couplets can have near-perfect signal coordination. People quickly discover that if you drive exactly the speed limit, you hit all the green lights! Set speed for "walkable" and you'll get compliance.

8. **They're HOT!** Summerlin – Las Vegas; Daybreak – Salt Lake; Stapleton Airport – Denver; San Marcos – CA: Many of the largest New Urbanist developments are incorporating couplets to create mixed-use "Places" using narrower, pedestrian-friendly streets that can also manage high levels of traffic.

7. **They're Proven!** Portland, Denver, Boulder, Palm Springs, New Orleans – couplets are much of the reason our most popular high-density, mixed-use environments succeed.



6. **A Triplet is even better!** Denver's 16th Street Mall and Boulder's Pearl Street are both Triplets – a street between two couplets that can be used for pedestrians, transit, angle parking – whatever. Great transit, combined with great vehicle access, sets the stage for higher-density infill and redevelopment.

5. **Frees up Right-of-Way!** Couplets move more vehicles per lane, and there is no need for a "center left turn" lane. The former left-turn lane can be put to other uses, and you may even be able to move the same traffic with fewer through lanes!

4. **Drive Slower, Travel Faster!** Which is faster? 50 mph between signals, then watching the light turn red many times as you inch to the front? Or "cruise control" at 25 mph through a sensitive pedestrian environment as green lights fall like dominoes!

3. **Friendlier and safer for pedestrians!** Narrow one-ways are easier to cross than Stroads. Pedestrians have far fewer movements that threaten to strike them. Slower traffic is less dangerous and less intimidating. Studies show couplets are usually safer!

2. **Town Center "Placemaking**:" Couplets expand connectivity and increase accessibility. Good visibility from more streets encourages mixed-use growth beyond just a single arterial. High density areas need good accessibility across all modes to thrive, including by vehicle. Punish drivers and they will leave, taking development with them!

1. **It's How Mother Nature Works!** What would happen to our bodies if arteries carried blood in both directions? We'd have high blood pressure and find ourselves "widening" our two-way blood vessels to avoid stunted growth. Nature discovered that smooth, healthy circulation requires two separate "pipes" – one for delivery; one for return. High density areas are the same.

Addressing Arguments Against Couplets: Search and you'll find plenty of arguments against couplets. Many are valid, but many inaccurately target couplets for problems that have more to do with poor design. See back of this sheet for rebuttals to common complaints. See great drawings and learn more at www.InnovativeIntersections.org.

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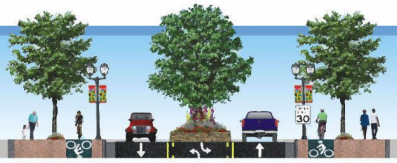

TOP TEN

Addressing Ten Arguments Against One-Way Couplets

10. **"One-Ways require out-of-direction travel!"** A minor issue when separated by only a short distance. Reduced congestion will save more time and reduce more emissions than a single block added VMT can save.

9. **"Unfamiliar drivers will make mistakes!"** Good signs, low-speed design, and routing algorithms help drivers avoid mistakes, or correct mistakes without serious incident. Statistics show couplets are safer (compared to Stroads).

8. **"Couplets encourage speeding!"** True and False: *True* when the two-way alternatives have just one lane in each direction, making it impossible to pass slower drivers. *False* – when compared to 5-7-lane Stroads. Why? **1)** "Can't Pass" argument doesn't apply; **2)** Traffic calming applies to either one-way or two-way; **3)** Couplets have perfect signal synchronization, so it is easier to get compliance with lower speed limit.

7. **"Couplets create blight!"** *False*: High speeds and bad design creates blight – one-way or two-way is irrelevant. Want a 25-mph result? Sync signals to 25 mph, and drivers will comply. There are great examples of wonderful one-ways in Palm Springs, Boulder, Portland, San Francisco, NYC and a myriad of other locations.

6. **"Converting two-way to one-way cuts traffic in half, which is bad for business!"** Due to latent demand, and existing traffic on the companion street, "half" may be overstated. In the first few years, fast food, gas stations, and a few other impulse-based, auto-oriented businesses may see some loss. Destination and pedestrian-oriented businesses will either be better off or see no significant change. Soon enough, most property will increase in value due to improved access and capacity by all modes, and due to premium street trees and aesthetics.

5. **"The trend is away from couplets!"** Some cities say, "We eliminated couplets and business improved!" But those conversions often included Complete Street beautification and traffic calming, so it's not a fair experiment. Past couplets were high-speed and auto oriented, but it is easy to design a one-way "Complete Street," often with even better results for business and livability. For making Stroads walkable, almost nothing is better than couplets!

4. **"Converting to couplets is political suicide!"** Couplet proposals are always controversial and filled with skeptics, as people prefer the congestion-devil they know to the uncertainty-devil they don't. Don't commit suicide but do make a good case with good 3D simulations of huge Stroads vs. narrower, more walkable one-ways. This, along with "Driver Slower, Travel Faster" analysis will go a long way toward changing public opinion.

3. **"Couplets increase traffic near homes!"** If the candidate companion street has homes, this may be true. Do you want to expand your Activity Center and replace homes with walkable mixed-use? If so, it may help to show homeowners their property values will increase. But higher traffic isn't necessarily worse for existing homes, as it is easier to get in/out of driveways when traffic is only coming from one direction.

2. **"Couplets have twice as much pavement to maintain":** True and False: Say today has 5-lanes owned by the State on the primary street, and 3-lanes owned locally on the candidate companion street: 8-lanes. A comparable couplet will do well with 3-each direction, or a total of 6-lanes, but it might be all owned by the State. There is more for the state to maintain (6 vs 5, so true), but less overall (6 vs 8, so also false).

1. **"Couplets increase the number of signals & violate access management guidelines":** Counterintuitive, but couplets move traffic better with **more** signals, even at low speeds, because it is easier to hold platoons together and synchronize signals. Frequent signals create more crossing opportunities for pedestrians. Access mgt is less necessary with one-way systems, so two-way guidelines don't apply. Safety and overall delay will be significantly improved with a couplet system than with a large two-way arterial.

Learn more at UrbanInnovators.com, or InnovativeIntersections.org