

900 West
Salt Lake City

Road Diet Disaster

Transportation Division

Poplar Grove Neighborhood Alliance

In the fall of 2017, the Salt Lake City Transportation Division completed its 900 W. Road Diet project, spanning North Temple to 1700 South (2.5 miles). Glendale and Poplar Grove residents noticed an immediate increase in accidents along the corridor. Salt Lake City Transportation officials refused to meet with residents about their concerns and instead, initiated a social media campaign, denying an increase in accidents: *“Based on crash data we have pulled from reported (to SLCPD) crashes, the numbers are lower than 2016 numbers, and the same as 2015 numbers...”* [1]



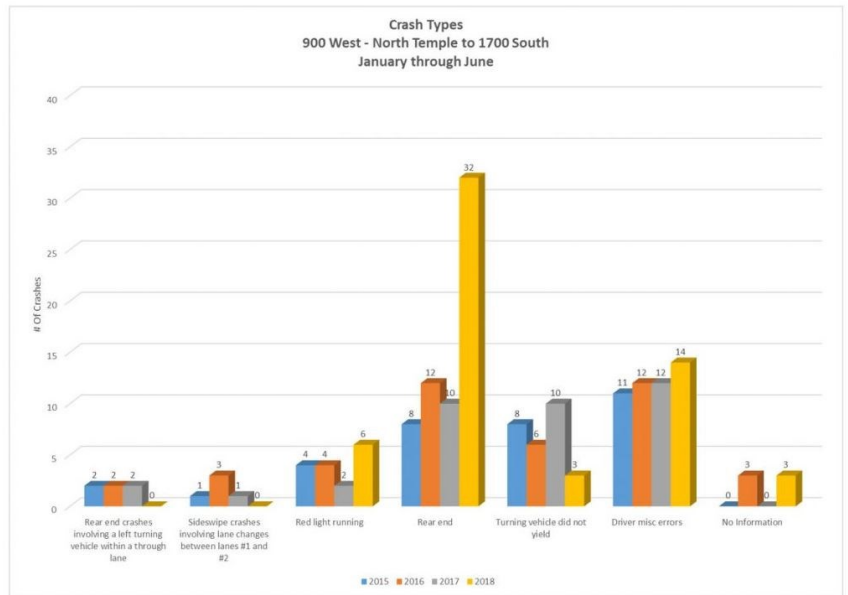
BALANCING SAFETY AND CAPACITY FOR ROAD DIET

After filing a series of GRAMA requests, [2] residents were able to determine that the SLC Transportation Division was not being truthful as car crashes had actually tripled since the inception of the lane reduction project. [3] This is significant because the SLC Transportation Division claimed: *“traffic volumes on 900 W are within the range of other successful lane reconfigurations...”* [4] In our latest, GRAMA request, we asked for a copy of the 900 W. feasibility study the most recent traffic counts (no feasibility study was conducted). [5] The traffic counts showed that **900 W.**, on a weekday can experience a little over 17,000 vehicles a day and about **1,400 vehicles during the afternoon peak**. Current research findings suggest that the threshold for a successful Road Diet is a street with less than 10,000 vehicles per day. The research also states that *“peak-hour traffic volume is a much more critical indicator”*, suggesting that a peak-hour volume of 1,000 vehicles as a maximum threshold for implementing road diets should be used.[6] Reducing lanes on a road that exceeds the recommended thresholds will create a cause and effect scenario: A general increase in congestion will result in an overall increase in car crashes. [7]

At the July 2018, Ballpark Community Council it is reported:

“Kevin Young of Salt Lake City Transportation presented other examples of Road Diets in Salt Lake City that have resulted in safer roads, including...900 West” [8]

In September of 2018, the Salt Lake City Transportation Division published accurate crash data on their web page, stating the following: *“Due to elevated community interested regarding crashes in this corridor after project implementation, the city is providing...before and after comparison of crashes that have occurred during the first six months of each year, 2015-2018”* [9]



Distorting the Safety Data

The Salt Lake City Transportation Division claimed that that the Road Diet would “increase safety” on 900 W. as a result of “a 19% to 29% reduction in crashes after implementation...” The reality is, estimates of a 19% total crash reductions were obtained from Road Diet conversions conducted in eight different cities in California and Washington that had an average daily traffic volumes (ADT) ranging from 5,500 to 24,000 vehicles. A 47% reduction in accidents was documented in an Iowa study that included 15 cities of rural highways passing through small urban areas with a 8,000 ADT. A combined estimate of 29% in total crash reductions resulted for all the Iowa, Washington State and California sites combined. [10]

QUALITIES OF DESIGN EXCELLENCE

The 900 West Road Diet is a **DISASTER** because the Salt Lake City Transportation Division failed to meet the following standards for successful lane reduction projects:

1. The project satisfies the purpose and needs of all stakeholders.
2. The project is safe for both the user and the community.
3. The project is in harmony with the community.
4. The project exceeds the expectations of both designers and stakeholders.
5. The project involves efficient and effective use of the resources of all involved.
6. The project is designed and built with minimal disruption to the community.
7. The project is seen as having added lasting value to the community [11]

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POPLAR GROVE NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE

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References

1. SLC Transportation Division Tweet @slcmoves
2. Government Records Management Act (GRAMA)
3. GRAMA Response: SLCPD Accident Reports
4. SLC Traffic Division web page : 900 West Lane Reconfiguration
5. GRAMA Response: Feasibility Study & Traffic Counts
6. Road Diet Conversions: A Synthesis of Safety Research
7. Guidelines for the Conversion of Urban Four Lane Roadways
8. Salt Lake City’s 1700 S May Get Overhaul, Cycling West
9. SLC Traffic Division web page : Roadway Configurations
10. Evaluation of Lane Reduction “Road Diet” Measures on Crashes
11. Road Diet Informational Guide