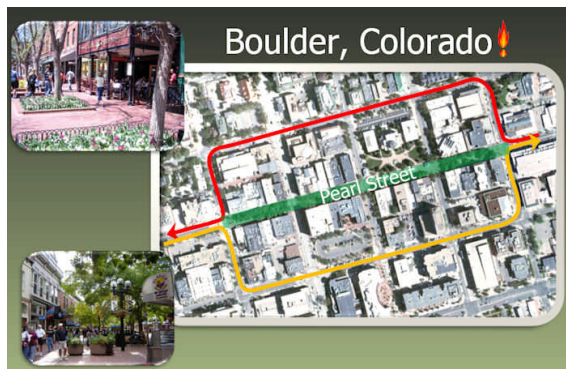


A Letterman-style list of the Advantages of Town Center Intersections & One-Way Couplets

10. Cheap Capacity! Couplets do not need left-turn arrows, which means traffic can have up to 30% more overall green-time. Since each travel lane carries more overall traffic, you may be able to avoid widening, or you might be able to convert a lane to Complete Street uses. Assuming you have eligible streets, or a Greenfield setting, this can be very low-cost capacity!

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 will hit all the green lights!

8. They're HOT! Summerlin – Las Vegas; Daybreak – Salt Lake; Stapleton Airport – Denver; Many of the largest New Urbanist developments are incorporating couplets as a way to create mixed-use “Places” using narrower, pedestrian-friendly streets that also allow good traffic circulation.



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 are succeeding.

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 green many times as you inch forward to the front? Or “cruise control” at 25 mph through a sensitive pedestrian environment as green lights fall like dominoes! 11ft or even 10ft lanes barely reduces capacity, but definitely calms traffic through sensitive areas. Plus you may still end up traveling faster because congestion delay is minimized.

3. Friendlier and safer for pedestrians! Major two-way arterials with left-turn arrows are not only extremely wide, confusing, and intimidating, but they also have many more conflict points and a lot more for everyone to pay attention to – a safety problem for drivers and pedestrians. Narrower one-ways are easier to cross; pedestrians have far fewer movements that threaten to strike them; slower traffic is less dangerous and less intimidating; and studies show couplets are usually safer!

TOP TEN

Top Ten Advantages of One-Way Couplets

2. Town Center, “Place Making:”
 Couplets expand the grid and increase accessibility. Good visibility from more streets encourages mixed-use growth beyond just a single arterial. If instead of couplets you cause traffic to leave the area entirely due to bypasses, road-diets, etc., many businesses may suffer, and your Town Center could grow slower. High density areas need good accessibility across all modes to thrive.



1. It's How Mother Nature Works!
 Our bodies and our cities rely on “arterial circulation.” What would happen to our bodies if a single artery tried to carry blood in both directions? High blood pressure, “widened” arteries, and stunted growth would result. Nature discovered that smooth, healthy circulation requires two separate “pipes” – one for delivery; one for return. High density areas are the same.



“Ok, so you think couplets are great. But what about those who argue they aren't so great?”

Search and you'll find plenty of arguments against couplets. Many are perfectly valid, but many inaccurately target couplets for problems that probably have little to do with couplets, and more to do with design.

Even when couplets are possible, they are not necessarily the best option. We simply contend that couplet solutions are too often easily dismissed, partly for fear of change, and partly from a misunderstanding what couplets have to offer when well designed. Couplets are an important part of the Sustainable Communities toolbox. See our companion list of [“Addressing the Top Ten Arguments Against One-Way Couplets.”](#)

Metro Analytics develops and analyzes multi-modal circulation solutions for mixed use, high-density environments. Metro Analytics believes that couplets can often play an important role in Complete Streets and Place-Making, while at the same time handling the higher traffic volumes that these places often generate, or must accommodate.

Contact us at 801-860-2409, or mbrown@metroanalytics.com for information or to arrange for a presentation.