

HOW DOES ACCESS MANAGEMENT WORK?

The purpose of an access management program is to reduce conflict points associated with traffic turning into or leaving properties abutting the highways.

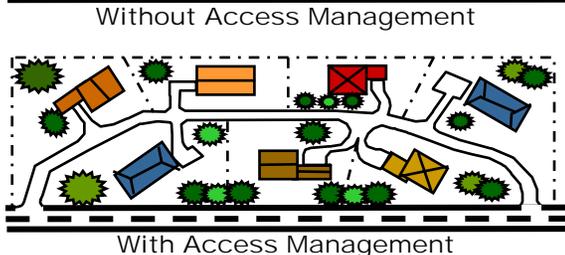
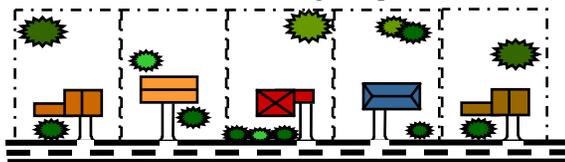
Conflict points can be eliminated or reduced with techniques such as consolidating driveways, providing left-turn lanes, frontage and backage roads, and proper driveway design.

The primary design techniques used in access management focus on the control and regulation of the spacing and design of:

- Driveways and streets
- Medians and median openings
- Traffic signals
- Freeway interchanges

A good access management program will do the following:

- Limit the number of conflict points at driveway locations
- Separate conflict areas
- Reduce the interference of turning traffic with through traffic
- Provide sufficient spacing between at-grade signalized intersections
- Provide adequate storage and circulation for traffic on abutting properties
- Limit direct access on higher speed roads



THE BENEFITS OF ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Transportation officials and planners are showing more interest in access management because of increasing traffic congestion, traffic safety issues, and the rising costs of road improvements. Good access management can accomplish the following:

- Reduce crashes and crash potential
- Preserve roadway capacity and the useful life of roads
- Decrease travel time and congestion
- Improve access to properties
- Maintain travel efficiency and related economic benefit
- Reduce the need for more new roads
- Preserve public investment in the transportation infrastructure

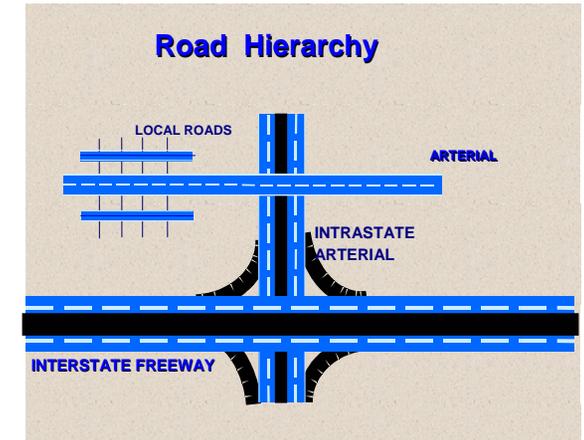
WHERE ACCESS MANAGEMENT IS USED

The need for better access management is most obvious in strip commercial areas where driveways are found every few feet. Too many driveways can confuse drivers, who become uncertain as to when turns into or out of driveways will be made. Their existence results in a large number of turning movements and conflict points, increasing the potential for traffic accidents. In addition, where there are no turn lanes, each turning vehicle slows traffic and reduces the carrying capacity of the road. Unfortunately, once an access management problem is obvious, it is often too late to correct. By managing access to the highway system during project development, safe access can be provided while preserving traffic flow.

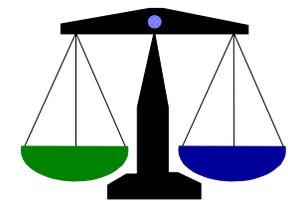
Access management can benefit properties in all communities and along all types of roads. Its principles have been a part of roadway design for many years. For example, freeways or interstate highways function to move large volumes of traffic at high speeds for long distances because access is

limited. In contrast, residential streets function primarily to provide access to homes.

The key to effective access management is linking appropriate access design to roadway function. Successful access management protects and enhances property value while preserving the public investment in our roads.



Access management balances mobility and access. Properties with direct access to the highway are often seen as most valuable, however; when access occurs too close to an intersection the access can become blocked by standing traffic making the property inaccessible over certain periods of time. Clearly, property has a greater value if its driveway locations are well planned and designed. So the goal of access management is to achieve a safe and efficient flow of traffic along a roadway while providing reasonable access to abutting properties.



Mobility Access

VERMONT'S ACCESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

(In the development stage)

The Vermont Agency of Transportation has practiced the principles of access management in varying degrees since the early 1980s through the use of various access management techniques. These techniques have been used on Agency projects and through access permitting to mitigate the effects of development along various segments of highways. With renewed interest in corridor preservation as a method of reducing the need for transportation improvements to increase capacity, the Agency has developed an Access Management Classification System and Standards. This system will allow the Agency to manage the State highway system in terms of levels of service and functional integrity in a coherent and coordinated manner.

The classification system and standards are intended to protect and promote safety of the traveling public, provide for the mobility of people and goods by preserving reasonable levels of service (LOS) and the functional integrity of the State Highway System. All segments of the State Highway System will be assigned an access category and standards. The standards shall be the basis for access permitting and the planning and development of Agency construction projects that further the goals of Access Management.

There are six (6) levels of access control called categories. The number, spacing, type, and location of access and traffic signals have a direct and often significant effect on the capacity, speed, and safety of the highway and are managed by this six level category system. The design standards within each category are necessary to ensure that the highway will continue to function at the level (category) assigned. The goal of all new access permitting and other access design decisions shall be to meet the design standards for the assigned category of the highway or segment of highway.

The Access Management Program Guidelines recognize that there are many existing

conditions that cannot be changed to any meaningful degree. The Guidelines provide consistent flexibility by describing what latitude will be taken with the design standards when these non-conforming conditions are present. As an example: The Access Spacing Standard is used when the spacing between successive accesses can be attained in conformance with the guidelines. When spacing cannot be attained because of property limits or physical restrictions on the property, spacing is optimized by equally placing an access between two existing accesses. Likewise for corner clearance, when the frontage of the property abutting the highway at an intersection is less than the Corner Clearance Standard, then the distance is maximized by placing the access close to the property boundary. In all of the standards, corner sight distance is never sacrificed for access spacing. The Guidelines further recognize that Traffic Signal Spacing is important in urban areas and that it is often more important to equally space successive signals than it is to adhere to a hard and fast spacing requirement.

The Guidelines do not unreasonably restrict access to properties but are an attempt to balance mobility and access. They are more restrictive on higher class, higher speed, and more congested roads where it is more important to create a safer traveling environment and less restrictive on roads with lower levels of traffic.

The Agency works with Zoning Administrators and Planning Commissions in the interest of making coordinated decisions that benefit the applicant and local and state governments. The Agency is working to improve that relationship and provide communities with ongoing information concerning access to properties and preserving a safe traveling environment through Access Management.



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Access Management

“a process that provides or manages access to land development while simultaneously preserving the flow of traffic on the surrounding road system in terms of safety, capacity needs, and speed.”

Goal of Access Management

*“ safe and efficient
flow of traffic along
a roadway while
preserving reasonable
access to abutting
properties.”*

