



5I-1 General Access Management

A. General information

The efficiency and safety of a street or highway depends largely upon the amount and character of interruptions to the movement of traffic. The primary cause of these interruptions is vehicular movements to and from businesses, residences, and other developments along the street or highway. Regulation and overall control of access is necessary to provide efficient and safe highway operation and to utilize the full potential of the highway investment.

The Jurisdictions reserve the right to make exceptions to the criteria where the exercise of sound and reasonable judgment indicates that the literal enforcement of the criteria would cause an undue hardship to any interested party.

B. Access permit procedure

An Access Permit must be obtained from the Jurisdictional Engineer for any public or private access constructed to a public street. The Jurisdictional Engineer will stipulate the permit form to use. Access to streets or highways under the jurisdiction of the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) will be governed by requirements of the Iowa DOT with Jurisdictional review. (See Section 5J-1, Figure 1)

In addition to specific details, the following general criteria will be used by the Jurisdiction when reviewing an access request:

1. Safety to the traveling public
2. Preservation of the traffic-carrying capacity of the highway
3. The impact upon the economy of the area
4. Protection of the rights of the traveling public and of property owners, including the rights of abutting property owners

C. Definitions

The following terms, when used herein, shall have the following meanings:

1. **Access.** A means of ingress or egress between a highway or street abutting property.
2. **Acquisition.** To receive title by gift, purchase, or condemnation.

3. **Built-up area.** An area adjacent to a roadway that meets the following general criteria:
 - a. The lots or area abutting the roadway does not have sufficient setback for the construction of a frontage road, and the development in depth precludes the establishment of a frontage-type road to the rear of the lots or area.
 - b. When a "built-up area" exists on one side of roadway, the other side of the road is also considered to be "built-up" for the purpose of determining access requirements.
4. **Controlled access highway.** "A highway or street especially designed for through traffic, and over, from or to which owners or occupants of abutting land or other persons have no right or easement of access, or only a controlled right or easement of access, by reason of the fact that their property abuts upon such controlled access facility or for any other reason. All primary highways are controlled access highways." ¹
5. **Entrance.** A physical connection between a highway or street and abutting property for the purpose of access.
6. **Fringe area.** A suburban-type area adjacent to a roadway that meets the following general criteria:
 - a. The layout of the lots or area abutting the roadway including intermittent or unrelated development, permits construction of a frontage road in front of, or a frontage-type road to the rear of, the development.
7. **Frontage.** The length along public road right-of-way of a single property tract. Corner property at an intersection of two public roads has separate frontage along each roadway.
8. **Frontage road or backage road.** A public road or street auxiliary to and usually located alongside and parallel to a roadway for maintaining local road continuity and for control of access.
9. **Median.** The portion of a divided highway or divided entrance separating the traveled ways from opposing traffic. Medians may be depressed, raised, or painted. Openings in the roadway median to accommodate entrances are governed by the following:
 - a. New median openings should not be permitted except to accommodate intersecting local public roads or streets or large traffic generating facilities, such as large shopping centers or industrial plants. Median openings may be permitted in these instances if satisfactorily justified and in the public interest.
 - b. If a median opening existed prior to the construction of a driveway of local public road or street, the opening may be modified to accommodate the turning movements of the traffic expected.
 - c. Costs incurred for adding or modifying median openings shall not be borne by the Jurisdiction.
 - d. The Jurisdiction reserves the right to close an existing median opening when the Jurisdiction deems it is necessary.

¹ Iowa Administrative Code, Chapter 306A.2

10. **Normal peak hour traffic (NPHT).** The number of vehicles, based on the 30th highest hour, found to be entering and leaving an entrance during 60 consecutive minutes, excluding holidays.
11. **Predetermined access location.** A location of access reserved for the adjacent property at the time access rights are acquired.
12. **Primary road or primary highway.** A road or street designated as a "primary road" in accordance with Iowa Code subsection 306.3(8). This definition includes primary road extensions in municipalities.
13. **Private accessway.** A private commercial or industrial frontage street usually located along side and parallel to a roadway for maintaining adjacent business connections and control of access.
14. **Recreational trail.** Refer to Chapter 8 - Recreational Trails and Sidewalks.

D. Entrance type

1. **Type "A" entrance.** An entrance developed to carry sporadic or continuous heavy concentrations of traffic. An entrance of this type would normally consist of multiple approach lanes and may incorporate a median. Possible examples: racetracks, large industrial plants, shopping centers, subdivisions, or amusement parks. (Normally carries 150 vehicles or more per hour (NPHT)).
2. **Type "B" entrance.** An entrance developed to serve moderate traffic volumes. An entrance of this type would normally consist of one inbound and one outbound traffic lane. Possible examples: service stations, small businesses, drive-in banks, or light industrial plants. (Normally carries at least 20 but less than 150 vehicles per hour (NPHT)).
3. **Type "C" entrance.** An entrance developed to serve light traffic volumes. The entrance would not normally accommodate simultaneous inbound and outbound vehicles. Possible examples: residential, farm or field entrances. (Normally carries less than 20 vehicles per hour (NPHT)).

E. Access management criteria

A variety of access management, location, and design practices and policies can be used to improve the safety and operations of the roadway within a state's, city's, or county's jurisdiction.

The following are access management principles to improve safety and traffic operation:

1. **Limiting the number of conflict points.** This group of techniques recognizes that more mistakes are made and collisions increase when drivers are presented with complex situations. Conversely, simplifying the driving task will contribute to improved traffic operations and the driving task will contribute to improved traffic operations and fewer collisions. This is accomplished by limiting the number and type of conflicts between vehicles, vehicles and pedestrians, and vehicles and bicycles.
2. **Driveway spacings.** These access management techniques provide sufficient time for drivers to address one potential conflict problem before facing another. For a given driver's perception-reaction time, the necessary spacing increases as speed increases. This also simplifies the driving task and contributes to improved operations and safety.

3. **Driveway design criteria.** These criteria allow drivers to maneuver on to the major roadway more efficiently and safely.
4. **Removing turning vehicles from the through traffic lanes.** These techniques reduce the severity and duration of conflicts between turning vehicles following through vehicles.
5. **Reducing the number of turning movements.** The provision of cross-circulation between adjacent properties and the provision of service roads allows intersite movement without reentry to the abutting major roadway. The elimination of short distance, slow movements reduces the number of vehicle-vehicle, vehicle-pedestrian and vehicle-bicycle conflicts along the major roadway.
6. **Improving traffic operations on the roadway.** This group of techniques is primarily of a policy nature, which is intended to preserve the functional integrity of the roadway. Thus, while a given technique may apply to a range of collector and major roadways, higher standards are commonly applied to the higher categories of roads.
7. **Pedestrian safety.** These techniques are just as valuable for pedestrians as they are for motorists and include limiting the number of driveways per block and increased separation between driveways.

Some of these techniques may fit more than one category. For example, right-turn bays are used primarily to remove turning vehicles from the through traffic lanes (#4). However, they also contribute to improved traffic operations on the roadway (#3) because right-turning vehicles do not destroy traffic progression when a turn bay is present. Right-turn bays may also contribute to improved traffic operations and access drives.