

A Brief Guide to the Model Access Management Overlay Ordinance

This guide briefly explains how your community can benefit from access management and how the model overlay ordinance can be used to support future growth and economic development.

What is access management?

Access management is the planning, design, and implementation of land use and transportation strategies that maintain a safe flow of traffic while accommodating the access needs of adjacent development. This includes the systematic control of the location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street connections.

Why manage access?

Too many driveways, intersections, and closely spaced traffic signals along major roadways cause problems for local residents, businesses, and all those traveling through your community. Access management can help your community by:

- Reducing congestion and crashes;
- Improving travel times;
- Preserving highway capacity;
- Easing movement to destinations both in Hutchinson and beyond; and
- Supporting local economic activity by:
 - Assuring safe access to development,
 - Expanding market area,
 - Protecting neighborhoods,
 - Preserving tax base, and
 - Enhancing community appearance.

Why adopt an access management overlay ordinance?

Mn/DOT regulates access to the state trunk highway system by permit. However, only local units of government can regulate development adjacent to the highway system. Successful access management requires a partnership between Mn/DOT and your community. It starts with the actions your community takes to regulate land use and ensure the development of a connected local street network. To do this, access should be addressed in your plans and ordinances and should be considered every time a proposed development is reviewed.

This model ordinance is designed to complement your existing zoning and subdivision regulations. Similar to shoreland zoning, it is an overlay that does not change the current zoning of any property. In addition, it only applies to new development or redevelopment. Until changes in the existing land use or its access are requested, this ordinance will not require any change to existing access.

Although this overlay ordinance is designed for use along a single trunk highway corridor, it could be modified to apply to multiple corridors or to local roadways.

Begin with Mn/DOT's access management policy

Working jointly with city and county representatives, Mn/DOT has developed guidelines for managing access to the state highway system. These guidelines provide a starting point for regulating private access and developing the local road system in your community.

Under Mn/DOT's guidelines, every highway segment has been assigned an access category based on the highway's function and strategic importance within the state highway system. These access categories are:

1. High Priority Interregional Corridor
2. Medium Priority Interregional Corridor
3. Regional Corridor
4. Principal Arterial in a Metro Area or a Primary Trade Center
5. Minor Arterial
6. Collector

Along with the above categories, each segment was also assigned to a subcategory based on the existing and planned land use of the surrounding area.

- A. In **Rural** areas agriculture, forestry, or very low density residential uses predominate and the network of supporting local roads may be limited. Direct access to homes and farms should be provided by the local road network when possible. However, when that is not possible, limited direct access from a state highway may be allowed.
- B. **Urbanizing** areas are developing areas beyond the urban core. A complete network of appropriately spaced local streets should serve these areas, with all direct access to homes and businesses provided by that local street network.
- C. **Urban Core** areas are fully developed with a tightly woven network of public streets. Public street spacing is based on block length, usually between 300-660 feet. Spacing between private accesses should provide adequate stopping sight distance.

Mn/DOT's recommended spacing for public streets and allowance for private access vary with the specific access category assignment. These recommendations are provided in Mn/DOT's *Access Management Policy: Highway Access Category System and Spacing Guidelines (Technical Memorandum No. 02-10-IM-01)*.

Because Mn/DOT's guidelines serve as the basis for the model overlay ordinance, access that meets the standards of the ordinance will generally meet Mn/DOT requirements as well.

Key Concepts of the Model Overlay Ordinance

- Existing zoning does not change.
- Existing access is grandfathered -- the ordinance applies when changes are requested.
- The ordinance provides for the development of an interconnected street network.
- Ordinance standards vary with the highway's function, the character of the surrounding land use, and the type of access.
- The ordinance streamlines the development process:
 - It is administered as part of existing development review process.
 - Local review includes Mn/DOT review.
 - Approved access will generally be consistent with Mn/DOT guidelines.
- A Modification of Standards allows approval of appropriate access in cases where spacing or allowance standards cannot be met due to circumstances unique to the property. This also eliminates the need for variances for access.
- All access to the state trunk highway system still requires a Mn/DOT access permit.