

MODEL ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN

MINNESOTA TRUNK HIGHWAY 7

(HUTCHINSON SEGMENT)

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT



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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this plan is to provide consistent access management in the Trunk Highway 7 Corridor through McLeod and Carver Counties. To do this, it provides a framework for the coordination of land use and transportation along those portions of the Corridor under the jurisdiction of Carver and McLeod Counties, the cities of Hutchinson and Silver Lake, and the Hutchinson Area Joint Planning Board (the Trunk Highway 7 Communities).

Trunk Highway 7 is the primary transportation route serving these communities, connecting them to one another, to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, and to Greater Minnesota. Thus, maintaining the safety and mobility of Trunk Highway 7 is critical to their long term health, safety, and economic vitality. In addition, safe and convenient access to and from Trunk Highway 7 and the surrounding area is important for community livability and continued local economic development.

In order to maintain the safety and mobility of Trunk Highway 7 while providing safe and convenient access to private property, it is essential that the Trunk Highway 7 Communities plan for and regulate land use, access, and local circulation in a consistent and coordinated manner. This plan sets forth policies and guidelines that ensure existing and planned land uses are served by convenient and suitable access. It also ensures that Trunk Highway 7 will continue to operate safely and efficiently. To accomplish these goals, this plan provides for the development of an inter-connected network of state, county, and local streets and highways. By adopting this common framework as part of local comprehensive plans and incorporating it into local zoning and subdivision decisions, the Trunk Highway 7 Communities can achieve the consistency and coordination necessary to protect this valuable transportation asset.

### Organization of the plan

This plan is organized in four parts

1. Background
2. Existing and Future Land Use and Highway Conditions
3. Access Management Planning Areas and Policies
4. Implementation Strategy

Almost 10 years ago, in 1994, Mn/DOT conducted a corridor study of Trunk Highway 7 between the cities of Hutchinson and Excelsior. That study was undertaken with the support of the Trunk Highway 7 Coalition, which sought to develop a comprehensive transportation plan that would address both short and long term needs in the corridor. To accomplish this, a steering committee comprised of interested citizens and representatives from adjacent cities, counties, the Metropolitan Council, the Mid-Minnesota RDC, the Trunk Highway 7 Coalition, and Mn/DOT was formed. The committee's objectives included:

- Identifying affordable short-term highway improvement projects,
- Preserving the viability of long-term road improvements,
- Improving traffic safety,
- Promoting growth and orderly development,
- Maintaining the economic viability of communities, and
- Improving traffic flow.

The study was completed in February, 1996. Recommendations for implementation included:

- Identifying and prioritizing intersections and roadway segments in need of improvement,
- Continuing coordination between the Trunk Highway 7 Communities and Mn/DOT on access management issues,
- Continuing coordination between the Trunk Highway 7 Communities and Mn/DOT to identify access deficiencies, develop alternatives, and implement mitigation measures, and
- Requesting that Mn/DOT develop a model zoning ordinance and work with communities in the corridor to adopt access management ordinances for Trunk Highway 7.

Shortly after these recommendations were developed, Mn/DOT initiated a statewide evaluation of access management policies and practices. This initiative identified the need for a common set of access management categories and spacing guidelines and led to the adoption of an Access Management Policy for the state trunk highway system in March of 2002.

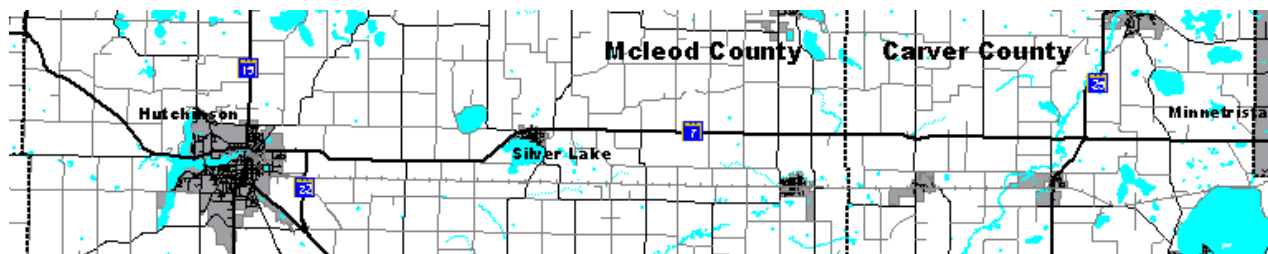
During that time, the Highway 7 Coalition requested that Mn/DOT also work with their communities to incorporate access guidelines into an access management plan and ordinance. The Land Use and Access Management Unit in Mn/DOT's Office of Investment Management provided technical assistance in developing access standards that could be incorporated into existing plans and ordinances. Planning and engineering staff from the Trunk Highway 7 Communities served on the working group that developed this plan and ordinance.

# EXISTING AND FUTURE LAND USE AND HIGHWAY CONDITIONS

For purposes of this plan, the Trunk Highway 7 Corridor is defined as the area within one mile on either side of Trunk Highway 7, from the Hennepin/Carver County boundary on the east to the McLeod/Meeker County boundary on the west. This segment is approximately 40 miles long and runs through the western portion of Carver County and the entire length of McLeod County, including the cities of Hutchinson and Silver Lake.

**Figure 1** shows the extent of the Trunk Highway 7 Corridor.

**Figure 1: The TH 7 Corridor**



## Highway characteristics

Trunk Highway 7 is classified as a Principal Arterial from the Hennepin/Carver County boundary west to its intersection with Trunk Highway 15 in Hutchinson. It is classified as a Minor Arterial from Trunk Highway 15 westward. Within the state trunk highway system, Trunk Highway 7 is designated as a Regional Corridor that links regional trade centers such as Hutchinson and Montevideo to each other and to the Twin Cities. As such, Trunk Highway 7 is expected to carry traffic safely and efficiently. The planned minimum operating speed outside of urban areas is 50 mph.

In most of the Corridor, Trunk Highway 7 is a two lane, undivided highway with occasional passing lanes. Public intersections generally have right-turn lanes and many also have left-turn or bypass lanes. In these rural areas, there are no plans to expand the highway during the 20-year planning period.

Within Hutchinson, Trunk Highway 7 has continuous two-way center left turn lanes. Mn/DOT has a reconstruction project planned for Highway 7 through Hutchinson that would expand portions of the highway to five lanes, including a center turn lane. The only existing signals in the Corridor are located in Hutchinson at Bluff Street, Trunk Highway 15, and School Road.

Typical traffic volumes through most of the Corridor are in the range of 7000 to 8000 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT). The highest volumes are found within the city of Hutchinson, where local trips increase the AADT on some segments to 10,600. These are also the areas where the largest increases in volume are anticipated in the next 20 years. The AADT for selected Corridor segments is provided in **Table 1**.

**Table 1: Traffic Volumes for Selected Segments**

<b>MNTH 7 Traffic Volumes*</b>			
<b>Segment Description</b>	<b>AADT in 2000</b>	<b>Projected AADT in 2018</b>	<b>Projected Increase</b>
Hutchinson, west of TH 15	10600	17220	62%
Hutchinson, east of TH 15 to Bluff Street	8420	13346	59%
McLeod County, between Hutchinson and Silver Lake	6943	9799	41%
<i>Mn/DOT</i>			

Within the City of Hutchinson, the number of crashes occurring on Trunk Highway 7 between Trunk Highway 15 and the eastern city limits is higher than the state average.

**Land use in the corridor**

Trunk Highway 7 runs to the north of the downtown area in Hutchinson, where most of the adjacent property is either fully developed for commercial use or planned for such development. Beyond the city’s corporate limits, Trunk Highway 7 runs through the Hutchinson Joint Planning District. This district was established to plan for nearly 50 years of potential urban growth and land use and is jointly administered by Hutchinson and the surrounding townships.

Due to Hutchinson’s relatively solid economic base, it is likely that the city will continue to grow over the next 20 years. However, the amount of land available for industrial development within the city is limited, so much of that future development is likely to occur in the Joint Planning District.

Future transportation system improvements are planned in the Hutchinson area to support the development of a connected local road network. These improvements include:

- Extension of Trunk Highway 22 as a county arterial north of Trunk Highway 7,
- Construction of County Road 59 as an arterial intersecting with Trunk Highway 7 west of Hutchinson, and
- Construction of a new local arterial and collector system to support development in the eastern portion of the Joint Planning District.

## ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLANNING AREAS AND POLICIES

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.

The ability of people and goods to move safely and efficiently is essential to Minnesota’s economic vitality. However, suitable access to property adjacent to highways is also important, as this is a key component of economic development. By applying access management principles within the Trunk Highway 7 Corridor, mobility can be maintained while providing the access necessary to support local growth and economic development.

### ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLANNING AREAS

This plan sets forth policies regarding the location of public intersections and private property access in the Trunk Highway 7 Corridor. For purposes of access management, three planning areas are identified: Rural, Urbanizing, and Urban Core. These planning areas are based on the existing and planned land use and are consistent with Mn/DOT’s Access Management Category System. Some policies apply to all planning areas, while others vary with the specific Access Management Planning Area.

Designated Access Management Planning Areas are provided in **Table 2** and illustrated as **Figure 2**.

**Table 2: Land Use Areas By Local Jurisdiction**

Highway Segment	Jurisdiction	Length (miles)	Access Management District
Vale Avenue to County Rd 59 future alignment	Joint Planning Board	1.0	Rural
future CR 59 alignment to west Hutchinson limits		1.2	Urbanizing
west Hutchinson city limits to School Road	Hutchinson	0.5	
School Road to 5th Avenue NE		1.8	
5th Avenue NE to east Hutchinson city limits		0.7	
east Hutchinson city limits to Omega Avenue	Joint Planning Board	1.1	Urbanizing
Omega Avenue to Nickel Avenue	Joint Planning Board	1.0	Rural
TOTAL Miles in Corridor Area =		7.3	





While specific access policies apply in each of the designated access management areas, in general this plan supports the development of an interconnected local road network in conjunction with local growth. This network is necessary both to support traffic movement and to provide direct private property access. To ensure development of this network and provision of adequate private access, all new public and private access in the Trunk Highway 7 Corridor should conform to the policies in this plan.

All existing public and private access may remain in use. To the extent possible, existing access that does not conform with this plan should be brought into conformance at the time the property is developed or redeveloped or when highway improvements are made.

### URBAN CORE ACCESS MANAGEMENT AREAS

Urban Core areas extend through fully-developed city centers where the road network is characterized by short blocks and a grid system of intersecting streets. Individual lots are typically small and buildings may be located close to the street. Sidewalks, pedestrians, and on-street parking are common. Speeds are generally 30-35 mph.

In the Trunk Highway 7 Corridor the Urban Core designation applies in the fully-developed area of Hutchinson, from 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE to School Road. The area between Bluff Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue is a typical Urban Core area, while the area to the west, although fully developed, has a less dense grid system. The posted speed is 35-40 mph.

### Access Management Policies

Public street spacing is based on block length. In some situations, direct private property access may be allowed at mid-block. New pedestrian-oriented development should be designed and oriented toward local streets rather than Trunk Highway 7.

1. Public street connections should be located at 300-600 foot intervals, consistent with the established block length.

Existing public street connections that do not conform with spacing provisions may remain in use, but may be subject to modification or closure when adjacent property is redeveloped or highway improvements are made. The general location of all conforming and non-conforming street connections is illustrated in [Figure 2](#).

New public street connections should be constructed with turn lanes on Trunk Highway 7, consistent with Mn/DOT guidelines.

2. Direct private access to Trunk Highway 7 is discouraged. Existing access to private property that does not conform with access policies may remain in use, but may be subject to modification or closure when the land use is intensified, the property redeveloped, or the highway improved.

New access to private property should be provided by the existing local road network whenever possible. If reasonably convenient and suitable access is not attainable from the local road network, the parcel may be allowed one direct access to Trunk Highway 7. Adjoining commercial properties may be required to share a common access in order to provide adequate stopping distance between accesses.

Urbanizing areas generally lack the block-length grid structure of an Urban Core. However, these areas are currently urbanized or planned for future urbanization with a full range of urban services, including a supporting local road network.

In the Trunk Highway 7 Corridor, Urbanizing areas are located in the city of Hutchinson and portions of the Hutchinson Area Joint Planning District. Existing access in these areas is characterized by unevenly spaced public intersections and direct private access to some commercial uses. Posted speeds in these Urbanizing areas range from 30 to 55 mph.

### **Access Management Policies**

Designated Urbanizing areas are where most of the growth and development in the Trunk Highway 7 Corridor is occurring now and is anticipated to continue in the future. As such, these areas provide an opportunity to develop a well-designed local street network that is safe, convenient, and minimizes congestion on Trunk Highway 7. To do this, local streets should form an interconnected network that provides alternate routes for travel within the community. This local network also supports development by providing access to adjacent property. Direct private property access to Trunk Highway 7 is discouraged.

1. Full-movement public streets connections to Trunk Highway 7 should be spaced at ½ mile intervals. They should be designed as arterials or collectors that connect to the local street network and support further development of that network.

If additional street connections are necessary, they should be spaced ¼ mile from the nearest full-movement intersection and may be subject to turning movement restrictions.

Existing public street connections that do not conform with spacing standards may remain in use, but may be subject to modification or closure when the adjacent property is redeveloped or highway improvements are made. The general location of all conforming and non-conforming street connections is illustrated in **Figure 2**.

New public street connections that do not conform with spacing provisions should be provided only if there is no other alternative for providing access to areas isolated by topography or unique natural features.

New public street connections should be constructed with turn lanes and/or bypass lanes on Trunk Highway 7, consistent with Mn/DOT guidelines.

2. New subdivisions should be designed to connect with and take access from the existing and planned local street network. Subdivisions should be designed to:
  - Provide an internal street system that connects to and coordinates with existing and planned streets outside the subdivision; and
  - Provide access to all individual lots via the internal street system.
3. Direct private access to Trunk Highway 7 is discouraged. Existing direct access to private property may remain in use, but may be subject to modification or closure when the land use is intensified, the property redeveloped, or the highway improved.

New access to private property should be provided from the existing local road network whenever possible. If reasonably convenient and suitable access is not attainable from the local road network, a parcel may be allowed one direct access to Trunk Highway 7. Adjoining commercial properties may be required to share a common access in order to provide adequate stopping distance between accesses.

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## RURAL ACCESS MANAGEMENT AREAS

Rural areas are characterized by the existence of long-term agricultural uses and limited residential and commercial development. Trunk Highway 7 is planned to operate at higher speeds through this area, typically at 50 mph or more.

Beyond the Hutchinson Joint Planning Area, most of the Trunk Highway 7 Corridor is designated as Rural. Although generally agricultural in nature, this area also includes scattered large lot residential and isolated commercial/industrial development. Existing public access is generally located at one mile intervals. Most existing private property access serves single family rural residential or agriculture uses, although there is also some private access serving commercial/industrial uses. Generally, the posted speed in the Rural area is 55 mph.

### **Access Management Policies**

To the extent possible, access to Trunk Highway 7 should be provided by existing public street connections. However, due to low densities and the scattered nature of development in Rural areas, a fully interconnected local road network is not planned. Thus, it may be necessary to provide direct private access to some properties. However, an additional public intersection or private access point should be introduced only where it can be clearly demonstrated that it is not feasible to attain access from the local road network.

1. Public street connections should be spaced at one-mile intervals.

Existing public street connections that do not conform with spacing provisions may remain in use, but may be subject to modification or closure when the adjacent property is redeveloped or highway improvements are made. The general location of all conforming and non-conforming street connections is illustrated in **Figure 2**.

New public street connections that do not conform with spacing provisions should be provided only if there is no other alternative for providing access to areas isolated by topography or unique natural features.

New public street connections should be constructed with turn lanes and/or bypass lanes on Trunk Highway 7, consistent with Mn/DOT guidelines.

2. Direct private access to Trunk Highway 7 is discouraged. Existing access to private property that does not conform with access policies may remain in use, but may be subject to modification or closure when the land use is intensified, the property redeveloped, or the highway improved.

New access to private property should be provided by the existing local road network whenever possible. If reasonably convenient and suitable access is not attainable from the local road network, a parcel may be allowed one direct access to Trunk Highway 7.

3. Changes in zoning to provide for additional commercial development should occur only in areas where direct property access is available from the existing local road network.

Implementation of these policies will be undertaken by each Trunk Highway 7 Community as follows:

1. Adopt this plan as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. This provides a guide for the development of a connected local street network and the location of public intersections and private property access within the Trunk Highway 7 Corridor.
2. Incorporate these policies into an Access Management Overlay Ordinance to regulate public and private access to Trunk Highway 7. Under the Overlay Ordinance, existing zoning provisions continue to apply, however, additional provisions specifically related to access also apply to any new development, redevelopment, or expansion of an existing land use located within the Trunk Highway 7 Corridor.
3. Review all proposed development or redevelopment for conformance with this plan.
4. Continue to work with the other TH 7 Communities, the Trunk Highway 7 Coalition, and Mn/DOT to ensure effective coordination in the management of access to Trunk Highway 7.