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Frequently Asked Questions HIGHWAY ACCESS



What is Access Management?



What is access management?

Access management is the process of balancing the need for traffic movement with property access.



Roads serve two primary purposes—to provide mobility and access. Mobility is the efficient movement of people and goods. Access is getting those people and goods to specific properties. A roadway designed to maximize mobility typically does so in part by managing access to adjacent properties.

Most state highways serve a function somewhere between interstate highways, which have very limited access and high mobility, and local residential roads, which provide numerous accesses to properties but are not appropriate for long-distance travel. One of the Idaho Transportation Department's (ITD) most important responsibilities is to ensure that the design of each state highway properly balances access and mobility. Access management is the tool used to provide this balance.

How does access management improve safety?

From 2008 through 2010, 56 percent of all crashes and 29 percent of fatal crashes on the state highway system were classified as intersection or driveway-related.

ITD's access standards are designed to balance access and mobility by reducing points of traffic conflict. Conflict points are the locations on a road where two or more vehicles potentially can cross paths. At a four-way intersection, there may be as many as 32 conflict points, each of which represents the location of a possible crash.



Drivers can be overwhelmed by a large amount of conflict points, increasing the potential for accidents. Good access management strives to separate conflict points by providing a reasonable distance between driveways and median openings, and restricting certain movements at some median openings.

Poor access management compromises the safety and efficiency of the highway and can result in increased accidents, commute times, vehicle emissions and fuel consumption.

Will access management hurt my business?

ITD recognizes the time and money investment business owners put into establishing and growing their business. Both successful businesses and a safe and efficient highway system are crucial ingredients for the economic prosperity of our state.

The movements that occur at driveway locations can make it difficult for through traffic to flow smoothly at desired speeds when those driveways are too closely spaced. Through access management, traffic flow becomes efficient and congestion decreases, resulting in increased exposure to roadside businesses. It can also delay the need to widen a road for several years. Even in situations where this creates a slightly longer route for customers to access a business, national

studies have found that customers will drive a greater distance, including negotiating U-turns, to access a "destination" business (specialty retail stores, service-oriented businesses) if they think it will be safer to do so.

In the case of "pass-by" businesses (gas stations, fast-food restaurants, etc.), studies have shown that as long as reasonable access is provided, access management modifications have little effect on their success.

Poor access management hurts businesses by creating congested, high-accident roadways. Closely spaced and poorly designed driveways make it more difficult for customers to enter and exit businesses safely, and access to corner businesses may be blocked by backed up traffic. Newer businesses will seek out locations that have fewer access and congestion problems, and customers will patronize businesses with safer, more convenient access.

How can I be involved in planning my future access?

ITD encourages and seeks public input for roadway planning projects. Access management is always an important part of these discussions.

Opportunities to give project input are publicized through the media, newspaper advertisements and direct mailings. We encourage you to get involved!

Anyone concerned with access management or requesting a new access to the state highway system may also contact their ITD district office. Questions and comments are welcome.

