

Policy briefs call attention to important statewide policy considerations, relationships, and guidance for use by planners, engineers, implementers and community members.



Driveway Spacing and Design

This policy brief helps to show the relationship between driveway spacing policies in the Oregon Highway Plan, and the design of such facilities to assure safe and efficient multimodal movement as identified in the Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

The policy framework for driveway spacing and design

The Oregon Highway Plan (OHP) and state statute set policy guidance for access to and from the state roadway system, including the spacing and geometry of driveways (OHP Policy 3A). In the Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, policy states that driveway designs should minimize elevation changes to the sidewalk. The pairing of the policies from each plan is intended to improve multimodal movement on roadways, including for those using mobility devices.

Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 374.310 states that:

(1) The Department of Transportation shall adopt rules consistent with this section and ORS 374.312 to govern the process of application for issuance of permits for approach roads to state highways by owners of property abutting highways. However, the department may not issue a permit for the construction of any approach road at a location where no rights of access exist between the highway and abutting real property.

(2) The rules and permits shall include provisions, terms and conditions that in the judgment of the department are in the best interest of the public for the protection of the highway and the traveling public (...).

For the full ORS, visit [ORS 374.310](#).

Applicable driveway spacing and design policies

Plan	Policy
Oregon Highway Plan	<p>Policy 3A: It is the policy of the State of Oregon to manage the location, spacing and type of road and street intersections and approach roads on state highways to assure the safe and efficient operation of state highways consistent with the classification and function of the highways.</p> <p>Action 3.A.1: Manage access to state highways based on highway classification, traffic volumes, speed, safety and operational needs to protect the function of each highway classification as explained below.</p> <p>Action 3.A.2: Establish spacing standards on state highways based on highway classification, type of area and speed. The tables in Appendix C show the access spacing standards which consider urban and rural highway classification, traffic volumes, speed, safety, and operational needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These standards shall be applied to the development of all ODOT highway construction, reconstruction or modernization projects, approach road and private road crossing permits, as well as all planning processes involving state highways, including corridor studies, refinement plans, state and local transportation system plans and local comprehensive plans.

<p>Oregon Highway Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These standards do not retroactively apply to legal approach roads or private road crossings in existence prior to January 1, 2012, except or until any change of use, or highway construction, reconstruction or modernization project affecting such legal approach roads or private road crossings occurs. At that time the goal is to meet the appropriate spacing standards, if possible, but at the very least to improve current conditions by moving in the direction of the access management standards (Access Management Rule). • When infill development occurs, the goal is to meet the appropriate access management standards. In some cases this may not be possible, and at the very least the goal is to improve the current conditions by moving in the direction of the access management standards. Thus, infill development should not worsen current approach road spacing. This may involve such options as joint access. • In some cases new access will be allowed to a property at less than the designated spacing standards, but only where a right of access exists and the designated spacing cannot be accomplished. If possible, other options should be considered such as joint access. • If ODOT action causes a property to become landlocked (no reasonable access exists) and no other means of providing access is, or can be made available, ODOT might be required to purchase the property. (Note: If a hardship was created by the property owner or his predecessor in title, such as by partitioning or subdividing a property, ODOT does not have responsibility for purchasing the property.) <p>Appendix C: Access Management Spacing Standards – The following tables show the access spacing standards for the access management classifications listed in Goal 3, Policy 3A: Classification and Spacing Criteria, Action 3A.1.</p>
<p>Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan</p>	<p>Strategy 3.1B: Design driveways for sidewalks, minimizing elevation changes in order to increase ease of use for pedestrians using mobility devices, strollers, etc. and to increase overall user comfort.</p>

Why policies on driveway spacing and design matter

Driveways provide access to the places travelers want to go. More driveways for a single site increase access to and from that site, but can create safety or queuing issues on adjacent roadways. Planners and engineers consider driveway spacing trade-offs, including impact on site access to safety and delay. Safety issues related to frequent driveways include increased opportunities for right or left hook collisions from turning vehicles into pedestrians or bicycle riders. Changes in elevation as sidewalks cross driveways make it more difficult for pedestrians, especially those using mobility devices such as walkers or wheelchairs, to navigate the driveway crossing in a safe manner.



Source: FHWA.dot.gov

When to consider driveway spacing policies

Design and Project Delivery

When using ODOT's driveway spacing standards, planners and engineers consider implications of elevation changes on the sidewalk – for example, cross-slope of sidewalks crossing driveways. Uneven or steep cross-slopes can make walking difficult and unsafe for pedestrians, including people using mobility devices. Consult policies related to driveway spacing from the [Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan](#) for additional information in maintaining pedestrian and bicycle mobility and comfort while accommodating vehicle access.

Professionals should consult project delivery guidance for expectations in implementing access management in transportation projects. ODOT has provided instructions regarding timing, notification, and type of engagement with local jurisdictions and property owners, prior to and during project decision-making. ODOT's [Access Management Strategy](#) includes a Design Acceptance Memorandum which outline access management features such as driveway consolidation.

Other helpful guidance and tools

[Oregon Highway Plan Spacing Standards Table](#)

[NCHRP Guide for Geometric Design of Driveways](#)

[Oregon Access Management Manual](#)