



MEMORANDUM

Date: January 24, 2014 Project #: 13172.3

To: Jacob Graichen, City of St Helens and Naomi Zwerdling, Oregon Department of Transportation

From: Matthew Bell and Chris Brehmer, P.E.

Project: US 30 & Columbia Boulevard/St Helens Street Corridor Master Plan

Subject: Final Technical Memorandum #2 – Access Management

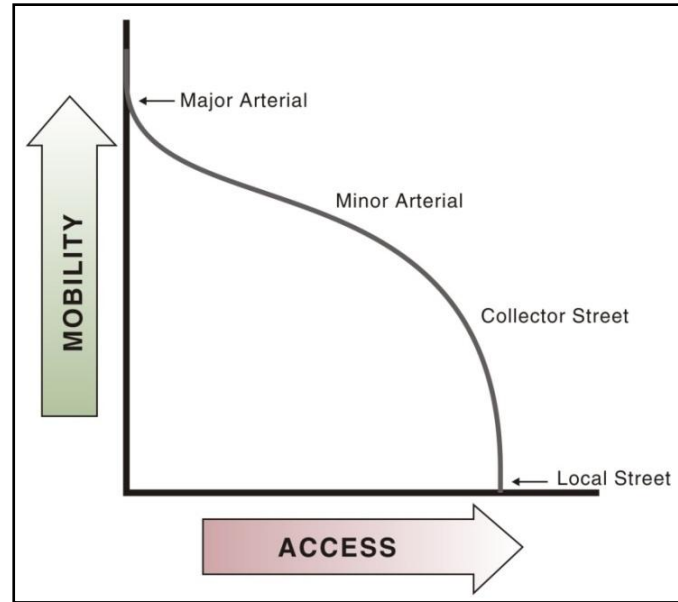
This memorandum summarizes information related to City of St. Helens (City) and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) access management policies and standards. This information is provided to help inform the identification of alternatives and policies developed as part of the US 30 & Columbia Boulevard/St Helens Street Corridor Master Plan. Much of the information presented in this memorandum was obtained from the City's 2011 Transportation System Plan (TSP), prepared by Kittelson & Associates, Inc. (KAI) in conjunction with the City, Columbia County, and ODOT. The current corridor planning process must be consistent with the City and ODOT's access management guidelines and identify solutions that help facilitate access management goals.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT BACKGROUND

The Oregon Highway Plan (OHP) defines access management as a set of measures regulating access to streets, roads, and highways, from public roads and private driveways. Measures may include but are not limited to restrictions on the siting of interchanges, restrictions on the type and amount of access to roadways, and use of physical controls, such as signals and channelization including raised medians, to reduce impacts of approach road traffic on the main facility. The OHP requires that new connections to arterials and state highways be consistent with designated access management categories. The intent of this requirement is to provide guidance on the spacing of future extensions and connections along existing and future streets that are needed to provide reasonably direct routes for bicycle and pedestrian travel.

The City's access management policy maintains and enhances the integrity (capacity, safety, and level of service) of city streets while conforming to ODOT's requirement for US 30. The TSP identifies access management techniques and strategies that help to preserve transportation system investments and guard against deteriorations in safety and increased congestion. The City's approach to access management seeks to balance the need for land use activities and property parcels to be served with appropriate access while preserving safe and efficient movement of traffic.

The City's access management standards vary depending on the functional classification and purpose of a given roadway. Roadways on the higher end of the functional classification system (i.e. arterials and collectors) tend to have higher spacing standards, while local streets allow for more closely spaced access points. These standards apply to new development or redevelopment. Existing accesses are allowed to remain as long as the land use does not change and no safety problem is posed. *As a result, access management implementation within an existing developed area is generally viewed as a long-term process in which the desired access spacing to a street evolves over time as new development or redevelopment occurs.*



In implementing access management standards, parcels cannot be land-locked; they must have some way of accessing the public street system. This may mean allowing closer access spacing than would otherwise be allowed or providing shared access with a neighboring parcel, where possible. Where a property has frontage on two roadways, access on the roadway of lower classification is preferred, all other things being equal. The following discussion presents the hierarchical access management system for roadways in the St. Helens UGB.

ODOT Access Management Standards

Oregon Administrative Rule 734, Division 51 establishes procedures, standards, and approval criteria used by ODOT to govern highway approach permitting and access management consistent with Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS), Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR), statewide planning goals, acknowledged comprehensive plans, and the OHP. The OHP serves as the policy basis for implementing Division 51 and guides the administration of access management rules, including mitigation and public investment, when required, to ensure highway safety and operations pursuant to this division.

Access management standards for approaches to state highways are based on the classification of the highway and highway designation, type of area, and posted speed. The OHP classifies US 30 as a Statewide Highway and a designated Freight Route. Future developments along US 30 (new development, redevelopment, zone changes, and/or comprehensive plan amendments) will be required to meet the OHP access management policies and standards. Table 1 summarizes ODOT's current access management standards for US 30 per the OHP. It is important to note that the information presented in Table 1 reflects recent updates in ODOT's access management policies and standards that occurred following the adoption of the TSP. These updates allow for closer spacing along US 30 in areas where posted speeds at less than 50 mph.

Table 1: US 30 Access Spacing Standards

Posted Speed (MPH)	Spacing Standards (Feet) ¹
≤ 25	350
30 and 35	500
40 and 45	800
50	1,100
≥ 55	1,320

¹ These access management spacing standards do not apply to approaches in existence prior to April 1, 2000 except as provided in OAR 734-051-5120(9).

City Roadway Access Standards

Table 2 summarizes the minimum public street intersection and private access spacing standards for the city’s roadway network as they relate to new development and redevelopment. Minimum and maximum standard widths for private driveways are summarized in Table 3.

Table 2: City Street Access Spacing Standards

Functional Classification	Public Street (feet)	Private Access Drive (feet)
Local Street	150	50
Collector	300	100
Minor Arterial	350 or block length	200 or mid-block

Table 3: Private Driveway Width Standards

Land Use	Minimum (Feet)	Maximum (Feet)
Single Family Residential	12	24
Multi-Family Residential	24	30
Commercial	30	40
Industrial	30	40

The portions of US 30, Columbia Boulevard, and St Helens Street located within the project area currently have multiple access points that do not meet their respective access spacing standards for new construction. As private properties redevelop in the future, ODOT and the City will have to review driveway spacing with respect to access spacing requirements and determine if the proposed changes in land use require the consolidation or reconfiguration of existing accesses. ODOT and the City retain the legal authority to close or restrict driveways on an as-needed basis if safety or other conditions warrant. In the interim, many of the existing driveways that do not conform with the access spacing standards may continue to operate acceptably due to: 1) relatively slow travel speeds, 2) separation of left and right-turn movements at many of city’s the major intersections, and 3) the presence of a two-way left-turn lane (TWLTL) along US 30 and Columbia Boulevard east of St Helens Street.

Access Spacing Variances

Access spacing variances may be provided to parcels whose highway/street frontage, topography, or location would otherwise preclude issuance of a conforming permit and would either have no reasonable access or cannot obtain reasonable alternate access to the public road system. In such a situation, a conditional access permit may be issued by ODOT or the City, as appropriate, for a connection to a property that cannot be accessed in a manner that is consistent with the spacing standards. The permit can carry a condition that the access may be closed at such time that reasonable access becomes available to a local public street. The approval condition might also require a given land owner to work in cooperation with adjacent land owners to provide either joint access points, front and rear cross-over easements, or a rear access upon future redevelopment.

The requirements for obtaining a deviation from ODOT's minimum spacing standards are documented in OAR 734-051-3050. For streets under the City's jurisdiction, the TSP (pages 115-116) indicates that the City may reduce the access spacing standards at the discretion of the City Engineer if the following conditions exist:

- Joint access driveways and cross access easements are provided in accordance with the standards;
- The site plan incorporates a unified access and circulation system in accordance with the standards;
- The property owner enters into a written agreement with the City that pre-existing connections on the site will be closed and eliminated after construction of each side of the joint use driveway; and/or,
- The proposed access plan for redevelopment properties moves in the direction of the spacing standards.

The City Engineer may modify or waive the access spacing standards for streets under the City's jurisdiction where the physical site characteristics or layout of abutting properties would make development of a unified or shared access and circulation system impractical, subject to the following considerations:

- Unless modified, application of the access standard will result in the degradation of operational and safety integrity of the transportation system.
- The granting of the variance shall meet the purpose and intent of these standards and shall not be considered until every feasible option for meeting access standards is explored.
- Applicants for variance from these standards must provide proof of unique or special conditions that make strict application of the standards impractical. Applicants shall include proof that:
 - Indirect or restricted access cannot be obtained;

- No engineering or construction solutions can be applied to mitigate the condition; and,
 - No alternative access is available from a road with a lower functional classification than the primary roadway.
- No variance shall be granted where such hardship is self-created.

Access Management Measures

From an operational perspective, access management measures limit the number of redundant access points along roadways. This enhances roadway capacity and benefits circulation. Enforcement of the access spacing standards should be complemented with provision of alternative access points. Purchasing right-of-way and closing driveways without a parallel road system and/or other local access could seriously affect the viability of the impacted properties. Thus, if an access management approach is taken, alternative access should be developed to avoid “land-locking” a given property.

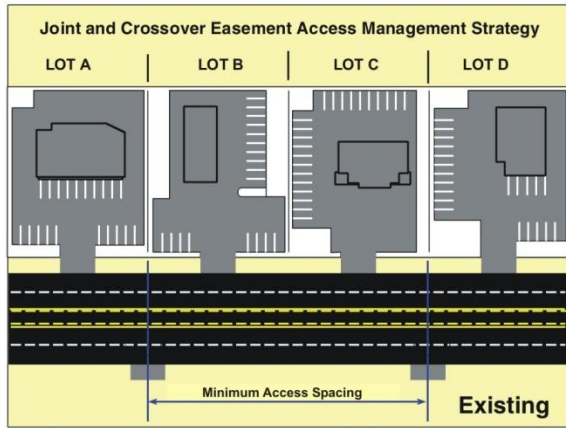
As part of every land use action, the City should evaluate the potential need for conditioning a given development proposal with the following items in order to maintain and/or improve traffic operations and safety along the arterial and collector roadways.

- Provision of crossover easements on all compatible parcels (considering topography, access, and land use) to facilitate future access between adjoining parcels.
- Issuance of conditional access permits to developments having proposed access points that do not meet the designated access spacing policy and/or have the ability to align with opposing driveways.
- Right-of-way dedications to facilitate the future planned roadway system in the vicinity of proposed developments.
- Half-street improvements (sidewalks, curb and gutter, bike lanes/paths, and/or travel lanes) along site frontages that do not have full build-out improvements in place at the time of development.

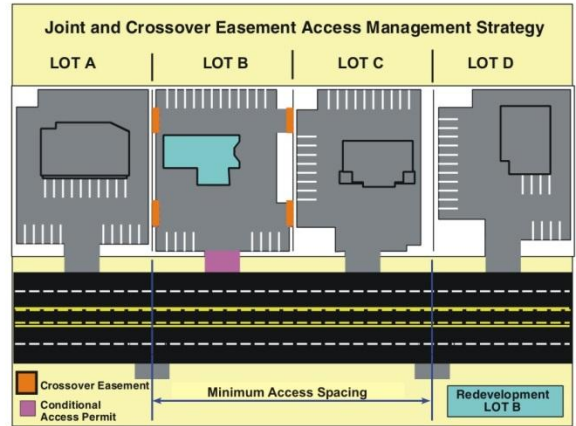
Exhibit 1 illustrates the application of cross-over easements and conditional access permits over time to achieve access management objectives. The individual steps are described in Table 4. As illustrated in the exhibit and supporting table, by using these guidelines, all driveways along the highways can eventually move in the overall direction of the access spacing standards as development and redevelopment occur along a given street.

Exhibit 1: Cross Over Easement

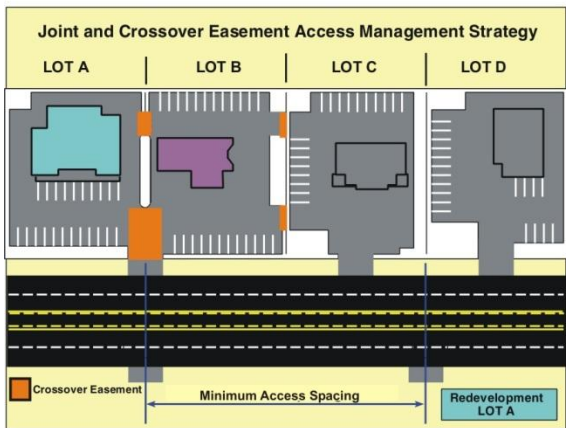
Proposed Access Management Strategy



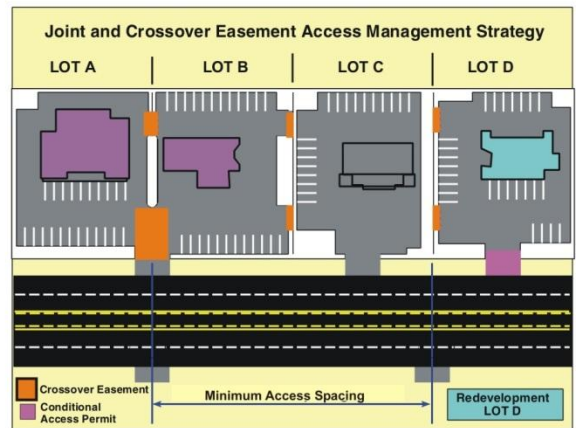
Step 1



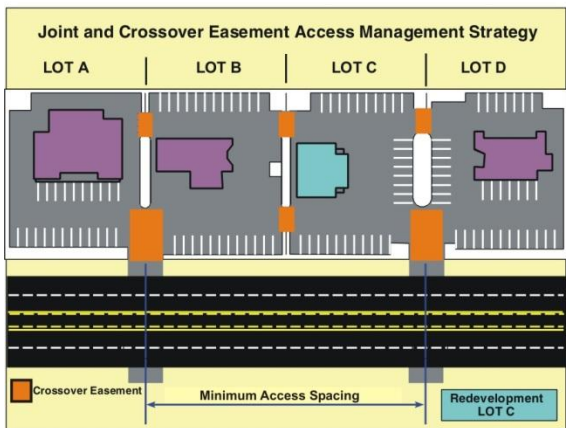
Step 2



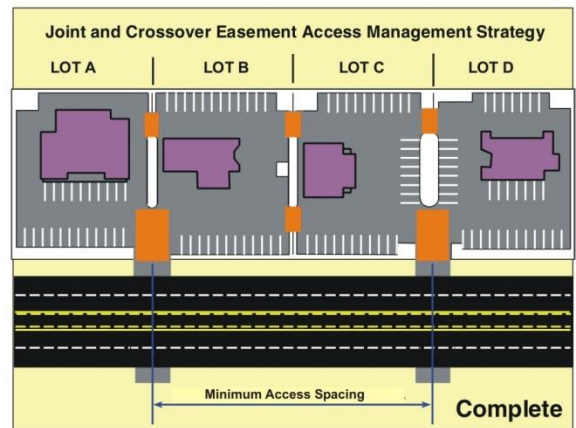
Step 3



Step 4



Step 5



Step 6

Table 4: Example of Crossover Easement/Indenture/Consolidation

Step	Process
1	EXISTING – Currently Lots A, B, C, and D have site-access driveways that neither meet the access spacing criteria of 500 feet nor align with driveways or access points on the opposite side of the highway. Under these conditions motorists are into situations of potential conflict (conflicting left turns) with opposing traffic. Additionally, the number of side-street (or site-access driveway) intersections decreases the operation and safety of the highway
2	REDEVELOPMENT OF LOT B – At the time that Lot B redevelops, the City would review the proposed site plan and make recommendations to ensure that the site could promote future crossover or consolidated access. Next, the City would issue conditional permits for the development to provide crossover easements with Lots A and C, and ODOT/City would grant a conditional access permit to the lot. After evaluating the land use action, ODOT/City would determine that LOT B does not have either alternative access, nor can an access point be aligned with an opposing access point, nor can the available lot frontage provide an access point that meets the access spacing criteria set forth for segment of highway.
3	REDEVELOPMENT OF LOT A – At the time Lot A redevelops, the City/ODOT would undertake the same review process as with the redevelopment of LOT B (see Step 2); however, under this scenario ODOT and the City would use the previously obtained cross-over easement at Lot B consolidate the access points of Lots A and B. ODOT/City would then relocate the conditional access of Lot B to align with the opposing access point and provide and efficient access to both Lots A and B. The consolidation of site-access driveways for Lots A and B will not only reduce the number of driveways accessing the highway, but will also eliminate the conflicting left-turn movements the highway by the alignment with the opposing access point.
4	REDEVELOPMENT OF LOT D – The redevelopment of Lot D will be handled in same manner as the redevelopment of Lot B (see Step 2)
5	REDEVELOPMENT OF LOT C – The redevelopment of Lot C will be reviewed once again to ensure that the site will accommodate crossover and/or consolidated access. Using the crossover agreements with Lots B and D, Lot C would share a consolidated access point with Lot D and will also have alternative frontage access the shared site-access driveway of Lots A and B. By using the crossover agreement and conditional access permit process, the City and ODOT will be able to eliminate another access point and provide the alignment with the opposing access points.
6	COMPLETE – After Lots A, B, C, and D redevelop over time, the number of access points will be reduced and aligned, and the remaining access points will meet the access spacing standard.

SUMMARY

The access management information presented in this document provides an overview of the City and ODOT requirements that the current planning process should consider while developing improvement alternatives. While the current corridor planning process is not intended to develop or implement a detailed parcel-by-parcel access management plan, the planning effort should seek to facilitate access management and develop alternatives that don't preclude realization of City and ODOT access goals. Any proposed modifications to existing access points should move in the direction of meeting, or ideally satisfy, the City and ODOT's access management standards.