



ACCESS MANAGEMENT IN MARYLAND

A Publication of the Maryland State Highway Administration

Types of Access Control

The State Highway System consists of facilities with varying degrees of access control:

- **Fully Controlled Facilities (freeways)** - only permit access via interchanges (like I-95) where there is no direct access from private driveways or at-grade intersections
- **Partially Controlled Facilities** - may only permit access via public roads e.g., MD 5 north of US 301 in Prince George's County where access is at selected interchanges and at-grade public roads. Median breaks will be permitted for emergency use only. Both MD 2/4 in Calvert County and US 50 on the Eastern Shore are examples of highways being developed as partially controlled access facilities with public road access; however, in this scenario, private driveways may remain until redevelopment of the parcel occurs. Then access will be provided via public roads.
- **Uncontrolled Facilities** - have no controls of access e.g., US 301 through Prince George's and Charles County.

What Is Access Management?

Access management is the process of balancing access for land development while preserving safe operation and mobility along the highway system.

A major tool of access management is highway access control, which denies private entrances. Besides access control, access management can include a variety of techniques such as:

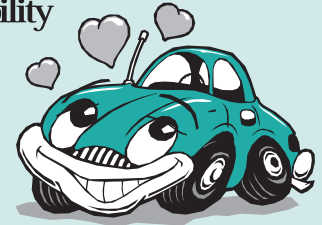
- Consolidating private entrances so that adjacent properties share common driveways;
- Issuing "temporary" private access permits, pending location of future alternate access;
- Limiting the location and number of median openings;
- Restricting turning movements into and out of properties which limits the number of conflict points at driveway locations; and
- On corner parcels allowing access only to the lower functioning roadway where possible.



Access Management Benefits

The purpose of access management is to maintain or improve the traffic carrying capacity and safety of Maryland's highway system.

- Improved Safety
- Reduced Travel Time and Increased Mobility
- Improved Traffic Capacity/Operation
- Orderly Land Use
- Improved Air Quality
- Energy Savings



Why Is Access Management Important?

The purpose of access management is to maintain or improve the traffic carrying capacity and safety of Maryland's highway system.

Access controls and traffic engineering techniques may be applied retroactively to a highway while providing sufficient accessibility for economic development. Eliminating vehicular conflicts often enhances the overall economic development potential of the corridor being served. Access management is currently used to preserve and enhance many uncontrolled corridors on the Maryland Primary Highway System. Protecting these corridors is a high priority of the Maryland Department of Transportation and the State Highway Administration (SHA).

Our Most Important Concern Is Your Safety!

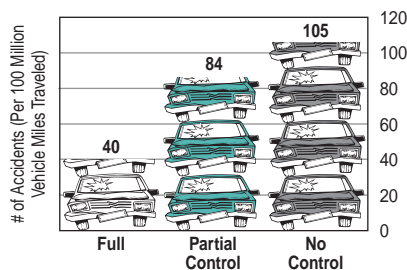
Safety is closely linked to the number of access points along a highway.

The chart to the left shows the relative comparison of typical accident rates on rural State highways in Maryland with differing degrees of access control. Accident rates on uncontrolled facilities are significantly higher than those for controlled access facilities.

How Access Management Is Accomplished

The State Highway Administration's Access Management Team was formed with the objective of maintaining and/or enhancing key primary highways in Maryland. As part of a local government's planning and permit process, the Access Management Team evaluates access provided or proposed for new or redeveloping properties. The team consists of representatives from the SHA's Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering, Office of Real Estate, Office of Traffic and Safety, Division of Engineering Access Permits, and Office of Counsel. Regular meetings are held to review opportunities for improving access along selected State highway corridors.

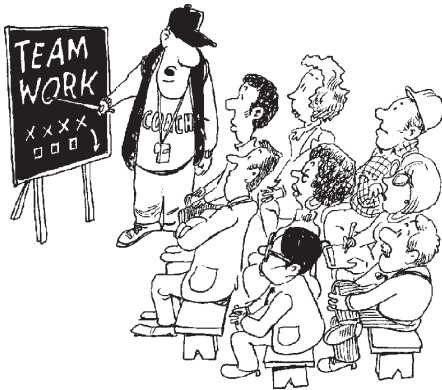
MARYLAND ACCIDENT RATES



Based on Rural Highway Statistics:

- Full Control Rate-
40 Accidents Per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled
- Partial Control Rate-
84 Accidents Per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled
- No Control Rate-
Jumps to 105 Accidents Per 100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled

Source: Maryland State Highway Administration, Office of Traffic and Safety



The most common misconception of a draft access management plan is that it will be implemented immediately and property owners will lose existing access to the highway.

This is not the case.

The Access Management Team pursues access improvements in a variety of ways. Access improvements are developed during the review of subdivision plans, site plans, building permit applications, and access permit applications. Using limited funding allocated to some corridors in the Consolidated Transportation Program, recommendations are also developed for the acquisition of property or control of access from willing sellers. In rural areas, the SHA's Office of Real Estate actively purchases controls along agricultural properties along selected highway corridors. The Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering, working closely with local governments and other SHA offices, has developed access control concept plans along several corridors to guide future access decisions.

Access Management Plans

Access management plans are used as a guide for State and local agencies in providing a consistent means to address the requests for access from development/redevelopment properties along state highway corridors. The goal is to develop plans that will allow for economic growth and rational development while maintaining or improving mobility, safety and capacity of the existing roadway. The SHA and local governments are actively developing plans and access guidelines along selected highway corridors to prepare for development taking place today or many years in the future.

The most common misconception of a draft access management plan is that it will be implemented immediately and property owners will lose existing access to the highway. This is not the case. These plans are flexible and will

be implemented through the local development process. There will be circumstances that will lead to changes in the proposed approach in a particular area. Each property will be examined independently to determine its relationship to the plan/policy and what is needed to maintain a corridor.

Local Involvement

The State Highway Administration works cooperatively with local governments to manage access through the local land use planning process. Specific actions local governments can take to help integrate highways with development plans include:

- Developing master plans with emphasis on protecting State Primary Highway System corridors;
- Developing local zoning ordinances that require dedication/reservation of land for future transportation improvements when right-of-way needs are known;
- Developing local service road concepts in coordination with the Maryland Department of Transportation to enhance land access and provide auxiliary support for the primary highway. This could include the construction of service roads as a condition for site development (site plan or subdivision approval). Implementation would occur through the local development approval process;
- Requiring adequate setbacks through local building ordinances to minimize future right-of-way costs; and
- Adopting adequate public facilities legislation.

Close coordination between the local planning and development approval processes and the State Highway Administration planning and permitting processes is necessary to allow for economic development, while maintaining traffic operations.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONCERNING ACCESS MANAGEMENT



What is access management and what effect will it have on me?

Access management is the coordination of land use and access to the highway. Access management along existing highways occurs over a period of time through the county development process, by directing newly developing or redeveloping parcels to new access points, future service roads or public roads that are compatible with long term goals. If you are not redeveloping, your access will remain the same.

Are there any existing laws that support access management policies?

The Annotated Code of Maryland, under Transportation Sections 8-620 and 8-625, aids the SHA in managing access points along the state highway system.

The 1997 General Assembly passed legislation that allows SHA to deny NEW access to our highway system when alternate access is available.

- This is a major change in access policy. In the past, SHA was obligated to approve access to parcels that front on state highways or purchase controls even if other reasonable access was available.
- SHA's policy is to apply this authority along the Primary System, but it may be applied to other State routes as well, where safety is a predominant factor. Generally, this policy will be applied outside Priority Funding Areas designated by the counties under Smart Growth. Representatives of SHA met with all the county planning directors to explain the application of the law in detail and will work through the county development process to manage access to the State Highway Primary System.
- The law will only be applied if a local government's development approval process fails to deny access to the State System.

Who will close access points?

Access points may be closed and/or relocated through the county development process, often in accordance with an access control plan developed jointly between the SHA and local government. Access for developing parcels may be redirected to existing or planned public roads.

Who issues access points?

Access points are issued by the SHA after coordination through the local development process.

How long does it take to implement the Access Control Plan?

These plans are usually implemented through the local development process as development or redevelopment occurs. It could take as long as 20 to 30 years or more. There is no set time for implementing an Access Management plan; the pace of development within the corridor will determine the schedule for implementation.

What does control of access mean?

Control of access ranges from full control, where access to the roadway would be via interchanges, to no control of access. Partial control limits access only to public road intersections.



Maryland Department of Transportation
State Highway Administration



ACCESS MANAGEMENT ALONG US 301 IN CHARLES COUNTY

Access management plans are being developed for the US 301 corridor within Charles County. The SHA



Access Management Team is working together with the Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management and the Town of La Plata to develop an access management policy that will provide a fair and consistent means of evaluating access points onto US 301. This access

management plan policy will have minimal impacts on existing developed properties; will be compatible with planned area land use and the US 301 Implementation process; and will carry out US 301 South Corridor Transportation Study Task Force recommendations consistent with the objectives of Charles County, the Town of La Plata, and SHA. The US 301 access management plan will be implemented through the Charles County development approval process and the State Highway Administration's access permit process immediately. The Town of La Plata is reassessing its development and transportation needs.

The access management strategy throughout Charles County along US 301 has been divided into two segments. Each segment has unique characteristics that will be reflected in the draft access management guidelines.

As properties are developed or redeveloped, temporary access may be permitted with the condition that future access will be compatible with a long term goal of public road access for only US 301.

1) Smallwood Drive to the Potomac River (Harry Nice Bridge)

The goal in this section is to create an access management plan in the future to guide development adjacent to US 301. As a National Highway System corridor and based on recommendations of the US 301 South Corridor Transportation Study Task Force, this section of US 301 is planned to be ultimately upgraded to partial control of access. This access management plan will identify and evaluate alternative concepts that will result in a draft plan with public road access points only, including a service road system that is compatible with area land use plans and the MDOT implementation process to upgrade US 301. The draft plan will be presented publicly and used by Charles County, the Town of La Plata and the State Highway Administration to guide the location of access points. The Town of La Plata's section will be broken out as part of the US 301 demonstration project, and when complete included in the overall access management plan.

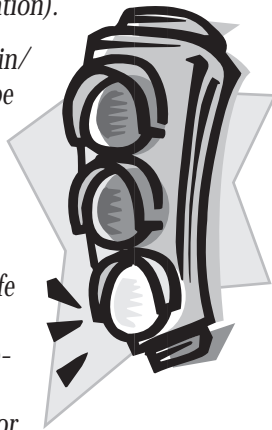
The US 301 access management guidelines for the Smallwood Drive to the Potomac River area are summarized below:

- *Intersection spacing - the goal is to provide a minimum of 1,500 feet of spacing for road crossings where practical in rural areas. In village centers and the Town of LaPlata, intersection spacing may be closer. Many public road intersections will be right-in right-out only.*
- *Median breaks - the goal is to minimize the number of median breaks along US 301. Median breaks will be permitted at major road intersections to allow for U-turns without creating a safety concern.*
- *To provide access on corner parcels via the lower functioning road, unless denial of that access creates a safety problem.*

2) Prince George's County Line to Smallwood Drive

Along US 301 in Waldorf, access management guidelines will be applied when parcels develop or redevelop. Since most of this segment is extensively developed, an access management plan will not be developed, outside of the future project planning study which will examine the feasibility of upgrading the existing roadway. Instead a series of policy guidelines will be adopted for managing access. The following draft policy guidelines have been proposed for SHA and County implementation through the County development process.

- *Major Intersections - Spacing will be a minimum of 1,500 feet for signalized full movement intersections (the goal is to minimize signalization).*
- *Other intersections - Right turn-in/right turn-out intersections will be permitted and median breaks may allow left turn-in or U-turn movements only.*
- *Driveway spacing - 500 feet minimum where practical and safe for new development. Entrances will be consolidated on redeveloping properties and interparcel connections will be encouraged for parcels to minimize the number of entrances where practical.*
- *Median Breaks - The goal is to minimize the number of median breaks along US 301. Median breaks will be permitted at major road intersections and to allow for U-turns without creating safety concerns.*
- *On corner parcels, access may be via the lower functioning road, unless that access creates a compelling safety problem.*



For both US 301 corridor segments, existing permitted entrances may remain as long as no change in land use or traffic operation problems occur. These private entrances will be reconsidered when alternative access is provided.

Local Development Review Process

Both Charles County and the Town of La Plata have subdivision, site plan and building permit review processes in place. For further information regarding the development process in Charles County contact:

Charles County:/
Department of Planning and Growth Management/
County Government Building/
P.O. Box B/
La Plata, Maryland, 20646/

Town of La Plata:/
Town Manager/
P.O. Box 1038/
La Plata, Maryland 20646/

For information regarding a permit to access US 301 you may contact:

The Maryland State Highway Administration/
Engineering Access Permits Division/
P.O. Box 717/
Baltimore, MD 21202/



ACCESS MANAGEMENT ALONG US 301 IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

Access management plans are being developed for the US 301 corridor within Prince George's County.



The SHA Access Management Team is working together with the Prince George's County Department of Public Works, the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission, and the City of Bowie to develop an access management policy that will provide a fair and consistent means of evaluating access points onto US 301. This access management plan policy is being developed in accordance with the Prince George's County master plan. It will carry out the US 301 South Corridor Transportation Study Task Force recommendations consistent with the objectives of Prince George's County, the City of Bowie, and SHA. The US 301 access management plan will be implemented through the Prince George's County and Bowie development approval processes and the State Highway Administration's access permit process.

The access management strategy throughout Prince George's County along US 301 has been divided into two segments. Each segment has unique characteristics that will be reflected in the proposed access management techniques.

As properties are developed or redeveloped, temporary access may be permitted with the condition that future access will be compatible with a long term goal of public road access for only US 301.

1) US 50 to TB

Along US 301 between US 50 and TB the US 301 Task Force recommended a 6 lane fully controlled access highway (free-way) with service roads. A draft concept has been prepared using the Prince George's County Master Plan as a basis for development of the concept. The concept was prepared by SHA in coordination with Prince George's Department of Public Works, M-NCPPC, and City of Bowie.

The concept will be used:

- To identify where access controls need to be purchased
- To identify where right-of-way will need to be purchased to preserve options for longterm improvements
- Will identify location of service roads that will run adjacent to US 301
- To identify where median access breaks may be located for emergency use only
- To establish building set back requirements

In much of this segment of US 301, portions of the existing roadway will be used as a service road.

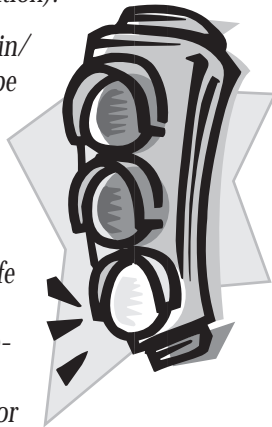
The draft concept will be used to guide development decisions until formal studies are complete. It is our intent to maintain the economic viability of properties along the corridor while protecting the right of way from development/redevelopment that adversely impacts the concept plan.

2) TB to Charles County Line

For the segment of US 301 from TB south to the Charles County Line, access management guidelines will be applied similar to those being proposed for Waldorf.

Access management guidelines will be applied when parcels develop or redevelop. Since much of this segment is developed, an access management plan will not be developed, outside of the future project planning study which will examine the feasibility of upgrading the existing roadway. Instead a series of policy guidelines will be adopted for managing access. The following draft policy guidelines have been proposed for SHA and County implementation through the County development process.

- *Major Intersections - Spacing will be a minimum of 1,500 feet for signalized full movement intersections (the goal is to minimize signalization).*
- *Other intersections - Right turn-in/right turn-out intersections will be permitted and median breaks may allow left turn-in or U-turn movements only.*
- *Driveway spacing - 500 feet minimum where practical and safe for new development. Entrances will be consolidated on redeveloping properties and interparcel connections will be encouraged for parcels to minimize the number of entrances where practical.*
- *Median Breaks - The goal is to minimize the number of median breaks along US 301. Median breaks will be permitted at major road intersections and to allow for U-turns without creating safety concerns.*
- *On corner parcels, access may be via the lower functioning road, unless that access creates a compelling safety problem.*



For both US 301 corridor segments, existing permitted entrances may remain as long as no change in land use or traffic operation problems occur. These private entrances will be reconsidered when alternative access is provided.

Local Development Review Process

Both Prince George's County and the City of Bowie have subdivision, site plan and building permit review processes in place. For further information regarding the development process in Prince George's County contact:

Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Department of Public Works and Transportation/
Inglewood Center III, Suite 300,
9400 Peppercorn Place/
Largo, MD 20774/

City of Bowie/
Division of Planning and Economic Development/
2614 Kenhill Drive/
Bowie, MD 20715/

For information regarding a permit to access US 301 you may contact:

The Maryland State Highway Administration/
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