

Ease Traffic Congestion

The best way to ease traffic congestion is with a three-prong approach: limit accesses along major roads, disperse vehicles on interconnected secondary street systems, and mix certain land uses closer together to encourage alternatives to the automobile.

Curing traffic congestion is difficult when every movement means getting into a car. Spread-out suburban development patterns often require us to drive a vehicle almost wherever we go, which can waste a half gallon of gas to purchase a gallon of milk. The typical answer to congestion which involves more lanes of asphalt, has proven to induce more traffic, so all too soon the wider roads become clogged again.

Uncontrolled access with multiple driveways along major roads can lead to traffic tie-ups and accidents caused by frequent turning movements. The path from suburban congestion to smoother circulation involves a movement toward mixed land use patterns and the consistent application of “access management” strategies to keep traffic moving smoothly, increase/maintain safety, visually improve the roadway, and avoid expensive road expansion projects.

For some examples: a wide access drive vs a narrow drive refer to the below photos; while two examples of multiple connections among commercial sites, and an example of compact mixed use interconnected areas vs separate land uses with cul-de-sacs (with limited connectivity) are shown on the back of the page.



Access examples: overlay wide access drive (top) allows unpredictable turning movements, often at unsafe speeds. One narrower entrance (below) will slow entering and exiting vehicles and provide yard space for street trees and landscaping (up to 24 feet wide for two way



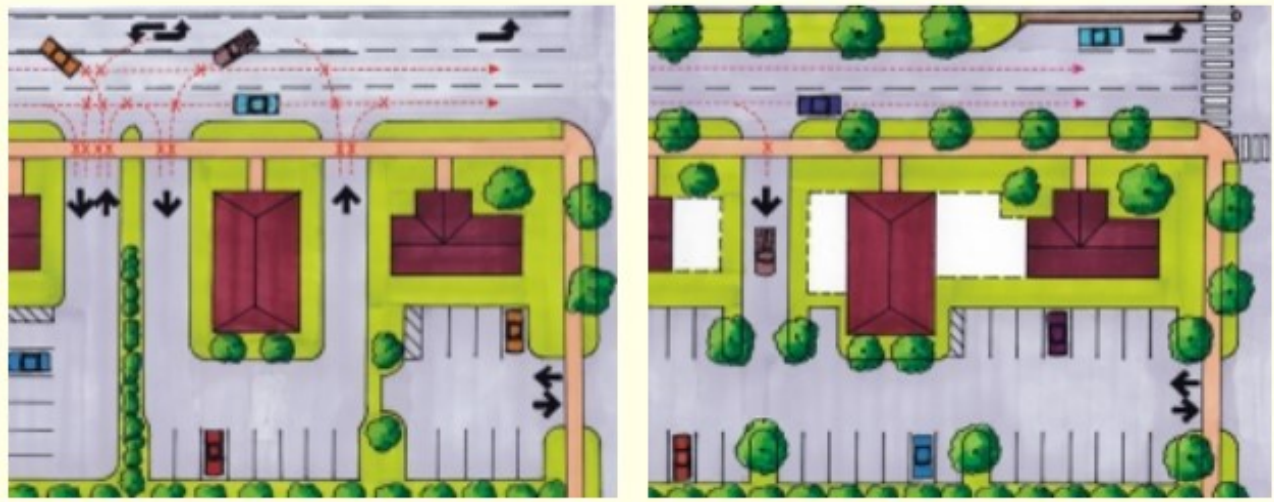
MINIMIZE DRIVEWAYS ON MAJOR ROADS

- ✓ Limit access drives to at most one per parcel unless a traffic analysis or unique conditions fully justify another curb cut.
- ✓ Limit excessive numbers of entrances and narrow overly wide driveways during any new site plan approval.
- ✓ Share access with neighbors whenever possible.
- ✓ Place entrance at the edge of the parcel so driveways can be shared.

“Planning and development along road corridors should incorporate effective traffic management techniques, such as reduction of curb cuts, shared access points, etc., to maintain the function and capacity of the area’s highway network.”

Growth and Development Guidelines, Jefferson County Planning Board - 2005

Landscaped Medians (right) allow controlled left hand turn lanes, provide safe refuge for pedestrian crossings, and result in attractive boulevards. Approximately two thirds of accidents involve left turns. Raised medians in suburban areas have significantly fewer accidents than central two-way left turn lanes



Center medians combined with shared access drives (right) can ease congestion and dramatically reduce potential accident points (X). Fewer driveways also allow space for businesses to expand, creating a more continuous pedestrian friendly frontage.

Images: Dutchess County Planning

BUILD CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SITES

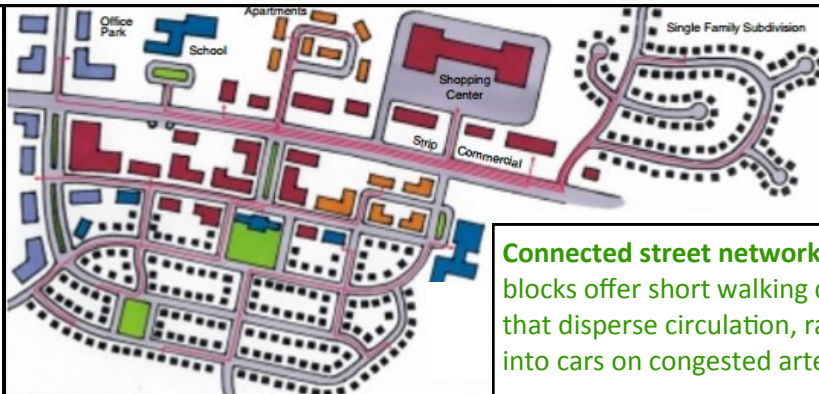
- Cluster buildings and develop depth with common entrances and internal circulation;
- Link adjacent parking lots and build continuous service roads toward the rear of properties;
- Provide temporary stub drives to connect to adjacent parcels when they are developed;
- Locate structures and parking lots to facilitate secondary streets based on a block system.



Connections example: service roads between shopping centers connect multiple large retailers, grocery store, bank, convenience store, restaurants and several smaller retail outlets without having to enter the public road system.

Image: Dutchess County Planning

Compact, mixed use areas with interconnected streets, sidewalks, and transit linkages are the best long term solution for traffic congestion (as shown on the bottom half).



Separated land uses along arterials (top half) force all trips, including short ones onto the main road, creating traffic back-ups.

Connected street networks (bottom half) with small blocks offer short walking distances and multiple routes that disperse circulation, rather than funneling drivers into cars on congested arterials.