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**Driveway and Access Rules**

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# Driveway and Access Rules

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## 3.1 PURPOSE & USE

Charlotte's public street network is one of the key pieces of City infrastructure that provides access to a wide array of users. These users include, but are not limited to, motorists, pedestrians, transit users, and cyclists. All users enter the public street system with an expectation of safety and freedom from unnecessary conflicts with other users. The location, quantity, and type of driveways that connect to the public street can significantly shape the experience of users from both a safety and operational perspective. Therefore, the Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) has developed the following Driveway and Access Rules (DAR) to help provide the greatest amount of safety and operational efficiency for the users of the public street network. The key objectives of the DAR are as follows:

1. Provide minimum driveway design and access management requirements and guidance to private landowners and/or developers that seek access to the public street
2. Effectively link appropriate driveway type to the surrounding land-use context
3. Create a tool that allows for the consistent administration of the driveway requirements and policies that govern access to the public street system

City Staff will administer the regulations and guidance set forth in the DAR in all of the land development activities occurring in the City of Charlotte that include, but may not be limited to:

- Commercial Plan Review
- Subdivision Review
- Rezonings
- Comprehensive Transportation Review (CTR)

## 3.2 REGULATORY AUTHORITY

Chapter 19 of the City Code of Ordinances provides the City with the authority to create and maintain the DAR in Article II, Section 19-36, which states that the "Director/Engineer has the authority to adopt, amend, and repeal rules and regulations governing driveway connections to public streets and issue and revoke driveway connection permits."

## 3.3 POLICY BACKGROUND AND RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING PROCESSES

The DAR reflects Charlotte's adopted policies related to driveways and access, including The City of Charlotte's [Transportation Action Plan](#) (TAP) *Policy Objective 2.10.5* which states:

"The City will continue to implement comprehensive access management and context-sensitive sight triangle and site design requirements, consistent with the Urban Street Design Guidelines."

The DAR is also intended to be used in concert with other regulatory documents that influence site access such as the City of Charlotte's City Code, The 2040 Charlotte Future Comprehensive plan (2040 Plan), The 2040 Policy Map, the Charlotte Streets Map, the Unified Development Ordinance, and the "Specifications & Standard Provisions" section of the [Charlotte Land Development Standards Manual](#). Moreover, the requirements contained within this document will be applied to public and private street connections to the public street system, respectively.

### 3.4 DRIVEWAY PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

A private land owner/developer seeking access to the public right-of-way has two City Land Development processes for obtaining a driveway plan approval. A driveway plan approval can be obtained via the City's [Commercial Plan Review Process \(Commercial\)](#), and/or the City's [Subdivision Review Process \(Subdivision\)](#). It is important to note that the approval of the development plan (Commercial or Subdivision) provides approval of each of the driveways/street connections proposed as a part of the subject development plan. This means that no separate driveway approval document will be issued as a part of the land development plan approval, unless any of the access points connect to a public street maintained by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). These connections will need to obtain a physical driveway permit from the North Carolina Department of Transportation's District 2 Office. Further information can be found on the [Development Services webpage](#).

A new driveway plan approval will also be required for non-residential change of use development plans if they meet any of the following criteria.

1. Current driveway is in disrepair and does not meet City minimum design
2. In cases where the existing driveway does not meet ADA accessibility requirements
3. As determined by the UDO under article 32.3A.3

### 3.5 DESIGN CRITERIA AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT

#### General Criteria

An overarching goal of the DAR is to provide an access pattern that helps link the operational needs of each site to the public street system and helps to align access patterns with the City's goal of creating complete communities, as described in the Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan (2040 Plan) and reflected on the 2040 Policy Map. This means that the appropriate/approved driveway types, quantities, and appropriate spacing will vary based on Place Type and street type.

#### Place Types

The 2040 Plan uses ten Place Types to holistically provide guidance for land use and transportation issues. The ten Place Types are:

- Neighborhood 1
- Neighborhood 2
- Parks and Preserves
- Commercial
- Campus
- Manufacturing and Logistics
- Innovation Mixed-Use
- Neighborhood Center
- Community Activity Center
- Regional Activity Center

Place Types are intended to help create complete communities by articulating desired physical characteristics with context-sensitive application across the city. The ten Place Types provide high-level guidance for transportation topics such as street network, pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities, mode share, and access, and can be organized into neighborhoods, employment areas, and centers. Place Types can also be categorized as being lower-intensity or higher intensity, based on the degree of development on a site. The higher-intensity Place Types are Neighborhood 2, Innovation Mixed-Use, Neighborhood Center, Community Activity Center, and Regional Activity Center.

Access determinations in higher-intensity Place Types will prioritize pedestrian safety and multimodal transportation, and will generally allow more access across arterial streets than in lower-intensity Place Types, which are Neighborhood 1, Parks and Preserves, Commercial, and Manufacturing and Logistics. The Campus Place Type can be characterized as either higher-intensity or lower-intensity based on its location and zoning district.

## Street Types

CDOT controls access along many arterial streets, collector streets, and local streets within the City. Along with Place Types, the characteristics of each street type influence CDOT's approach to regulating access location, access amount, access restrictions, and driveway type, and also influence the likelihood of traffic mitigations.

Table 2.1 Street Types			
Type	Description	On Streets Map	Design Standards
<b>Arterial Street Types</b>			
Parkway	Streets that provide efficient regional multimodal connectivity with limited direct access to adjacent land uses.	Location and Cross-Section	Arterial Street Type Design and Dimensional Standards
Boulevard	Streets that provide efficient city-wide multimodal connectivity with direct access to and supporting adjacent land uses.	Location and Cross-Section	Arterial Street Type Design and Dimensional Standards
Avenue	Streets that provide access between neighborhoods and activity centers in a range of land uses, balancing all modes of transportation.	Location and Cross-Section	Arterial Street Type Design and Dimensional Standards
Main Street	Streets that provide multimodal access to centers of civic, social, and commercial activity, designed to provide the highest level of pedestrian comfort and support mixed use activity.	Location and Cross-Section	Arterial Street Type Design and Dimensional Standards
<b>Additional Street Types</b>			
Limited Access	Regional and/or interstate highways or freeways designed exclusively for vehicular traffic with limited development access.	Location Only	Under State and/or Federal design and access control
Collector	Streets that provide local vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle connections to multiple destinations and land uses.	Location Only	Charlotte Land Development Standards Manual (CLDSM)
Locals	Streets that provide local vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle connections to a range of adjacent land uses.	Any street not mapped as an Arterial, Limited Access, or Collector	Charlotte Land Development Standards Manual (CLDSM)
<b>Special Facilities</b>			
Greenway On-Street (Arterials)	Designated greenway facilities identified by the City or County that provide necessary on-street connections for larger greenway corridors.	Location and Cross-Section	Arterial Street Type Design and Dimensional Standards
Greenway On-Street (Collectors and Locals)	Designated greenway facilities identified by the City or County that provide necessary on-street connections for larger greenway corridors.	Location Only	Charlotte Land Development Standards Manual (CLDSM)

## Driveway Selection Guidance

Table 2.2 provides a comprehensive overview of driveway selection guidance and criteria, based on Place Type and street type, that should be considered during the commercial driveway review process. While site specific conditions will have an influence on how CDOT will review and approve commercial driveways, these tables will serve as the basis for CDOT's general expectations regarding the appropriate driveway type, access amount, and general position on access management. It will be the designer's responsibility to demonstrate why a respective site cannot meet the conditions outlined in the tables below, when a development proposes a different access arrangement.

The table below includes common terms that will repeat throughout the various place types covered in the table. The following list of terms and corresponding definitions have been provided to assist the various users of the tables below as to what CDOT's goals and objectives are when approving access to specific street types given a site's place type.

*Access Location* – generally is defined as the locations where CDOT desires/ will approve access along a site's public/private street frontage relative to other driveways on-site, across the public/private street, and/or adjacent to the proposed driveway.

- **Maximize Spacing** – refers to approving site access in a manner that limits the amount of closely spaced driveways across a given street frontage, and favors the use of a more centralized driveway(s) that can be shared by multiple uses.
- **Intermediate Spacing** – where feasible shared access will be encouraged, however, individual parcel access will be approved provided all other minimum driveway requirements (i.e. sight distance, property line separation, separation distance from adjacent driveways), are met.
- **Minimal Spacing** – contemplates smaller parcels per a given street frontage that will pursue individual parcel access to the public street system.

*Access Amount* – is generally defined as the quantity of driveways that will be approved along a site's public street frontage.

- **Limited Direct Access** – promotes the use of the lower volume side street (where present) being CDOT's preferred site access location, and the prohibition of direct access to the higher volume street. Direct access to the higher volume street will only be approved where no such lower volume side street exists.
- **Minimize Additional Access** – one driveway per site frontage will generally be approved unless there's a significant case that the site's circulation/operations do not work with a single access.
- **Allow Additional Access** – provided the site meets all other applicable requirements for access (i.e. sight distance, property line separation, separation distance from adjacent driveways), CDOT will generally permit more than one driveway across a site's public street frontage.
- **No Direct Access** – All access will need to be provided via a lower volume side street, and/or a shared driveway that consolidates multiple land-uses.

*Access Restrictions & Traffic Mitigations* - refers to the likelihood that either access will be restricted to vehicular movements less than full movement, and whether any associated public infrastructure (medians, turn lanes, traffic signals) will be required as a condition of the driveway permit plan approval.

- Refer to Article 3.11 of this document for a detailed description of when both access restrictions will be implemented, and traffic mitigations will be considered.

Table 2.2 Driveway Selection Guidance

Place Type	Street Type	Access Location	Access Amount	Preferred Driveway Type	Access <sup>4</sup> Restrictions	Traffic Mitigations <sup>4</sup>
<b>Centers, Innovative Mixed-Use, Campus (IC-2 District)</b>	Parkway	Maximize Spacing	Limited Direct Access	Type III	High	High
	Boulevard			Type III/Type II Modified		
	Avenue		Minimize Additional Access		Medium-High	Medium - High
	Main <sup>2</sup>	N/A	Not permitted	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Collector	Intermediate Spacing	Minimize Additional Access	Type II Modified/Type II	Low	Low
	Local	Minimal Spacing	Allow Additional Access			
<b>Commercial, Campus (IC-1, OFC Districts)</b>	Parkway	Maximize Spacing	Limited Direct Access	Type III	High	High
	Boulevard			Type II modified/Type II		
	Avenue		Minimize Access		High-Medium	
	Main <sup>2</sup>	N/A	Not permitted	NA	N/A	N/A
	Collector	Minimal Spacing	Allow Additional Access	Type II Modified/Type II	Low	Low
	Local					
<b>Manufacturing &amp; Logistics</b>	Parkway	Maximize Spacing	Limited Direct Access	Type III/Type IV	High	High
	Boulevard					
	Avenue		Minimize Access		High-Medium	
	Main <sup>2</sup>	N/A	Not permitted	NA	N/A	N/A
	Collector	Minimal Spacing	Frequent Access	Type III/Type IV	Low	Medium
	Local					Low

Table 2.2 Driveway Selection Guidance (continued)						
Place Type	Street Type	Access Location	Access Amount	Preferred Driveway Type	Access <sup>4</sup> Restrictions	Traffic Mitigations <sup>4</sup>
Neighborhood 1	Parkway	Maximize Spacing	Limited Direct Access	Type III	High	High
	Boulevard		Intermediate Access	Type III/Type II Modified		
	Avenue				Not permitted	NA
	Main <sup>2</sup>	N/A	Intermediate Access	Type II modified/Type II	Low	Low
	Collector	Intermediate Spacing	Frequent access			
	Local	Minimal spacing				
Neighborhood 2	Parkway	Maximize Spacing	Limited Direct Access	Type III	High	High
	Boulevard		Intermediate Access	Type III/Type II Modified		
	Avenue				Not permitted	NA
	Main <sup>2</sup>	N/A	Intermediate Access	Type II Modified/Type II	Low	Low
	Collector	Intermediate Spacing	Allow additional			
	Local					
Parks and Preserves	Parkway	Maximize Spacing	Limited Direct Access	Type III	High	High
	Boulevard		Minimize Additional Access	Type III/Type II Modified		
	Avenue				Not permitted	NA
	Main <sup>2</sup>	N/A	Intermediate Access	Type II Modified/Type II	Low	Low
	Collector	Intermediate Spacing	Allow additional			
	Local					

**Table 1: Access within Place Types**

- 1 Access to Parkways will be approved primarily through the use of public/private street connections. Individual parcel access to the Parkway will be discouraged, and access will be encouraged from the lower volume side street
- 2 Access to Main Streets will be extremely limited, as these streets are pedestrian-oriented to complement development next to the street.
- 3 Type III driveways will be limited to public/private street connections and large commercial shopping centers where internal access is shared among the tenants.
- 4 No direct parcel access will be permitted to Main Streets. Access will be provided via access to the side streets. Direct site access will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis if no side street is present.
- 5 Access restrictions and Traffic Mitigations will be determined based on the safety and operational needs of the street for which access is desired.

### 3.6 DRIVEWAY DESIGN CRITERIA

#### General Criteria

The final decisions regarding the appropriate driveway type, placement, and quantity of driveways per site are based on various factors including but not limited to the proposed land-use, traffic characteristics of the adjacent public street, existing site conditions, proposed density, and other environmental factors and considerations. In general, the Charlotte Department of Transportation will follow national design criteria identified in the latest version of the **AASHTO Policy on Geometric Design** when regulating the minimum requirements for driveway design and driveway placement.

To that end, the City of Charlotte has published a series of standard driveway designs provided in the [Charlotte Land Development Standards Manual](#) (CLDSM) that have a proven record of meeting the traffic demands for most land development projects seeking commercial driveway access to the public street system. In cases where the standard driveway designs do not meet the development's site-specific needs, the site designer can provide a non-standard driveway design to CDOT for review and consideration.

In cases where a site-specific driveway design is proposed, the site designer should anticipate a review time longer than the typical 5 or 15-business day commercial plan review timeframe. The site designer is encouraged to do as much advanced coordination of such design as is practical before the construction documents are officially submitted for review to prevent the official permitting schedule for the site from being negatively impacted.

The following Table, "Standard Driveway Types" will provide a brief description of each driveway type, its general applicability, and provide a link to the technical CLDSM standards. CDOT reserves the right to require a different driveway type than what a designer proposes based on safety, proper alignment of the specific driveway type to its appropriate geographic/land-use context (i.e. The Policy Map), coordination with the public street that the driveway accesses, and the influence of the specific driveway on site design.

Driveway Type	Description	Place Type Application	CLDSM Standards
<b>Type I</b>	Driveways designed for lower density residential development, including single-family residences, townhomes, duplexes, and triplexes. Driveway should be at least 20' of pavement from right-of-way to building.	N1	10.24 A,B,C; 10.25 A, C; 10.27
<b>Type II</b>	Drop-curb concrete ramp driveway providing access to lower-intensity office, retail, recreational, industrial, or institutional buildings, and multi-family.	N1, N2, Parks and Preserves, Commercial, M&L, and Campus; (20-100 trips per day); High pedestrian activity.	10.24 A, B, C; 10.25 B, D; 10.26
<b>Type II Modified</b>	Drop-curb concrete ramp driveway that serves land uses in higher-intensity place types. Medium to moderate vehicle trips with moderate pedestrian expectation.	NC, CAC, RAC, IMU, N2; High pedestrian activity.	10.25 E
<b>Type III</b>	Street-type driveway with radius returns for facilities with moderate to high number of vehicle turning movements, or where a substantial number of truck movements are expected. Suitable for shared driveways in higher-intensity place types.	Commercial, M&L, NC, CAC, RAC, IMU	10.28
<b>Type IV</b>	Street-type driveway designed to accommodate high truck activity.	M&L	1025F

### 3.7 CONVENIENCE STORES AND GAS STATIONS

From both an on-site circulation and driveway access perspective, access for convenience stores/fillings stations presents a unique challenge for balancing the needs of the users of the subject facility and to provide safe access to the public street system. It has been CDOT's experience that convenience stores' primary desire is to have corner access near signalized intersections (Figure 1).

In all situations, no Type III driveways will be permitted for access to convenience stores/gas filling stations due the combination of the trip generation of this land-use and poorly defined on-site circulation. CDOT will work with the site designers to ensure these site plans offer the highest degree of on-site traffic organization and vehicular circulation.

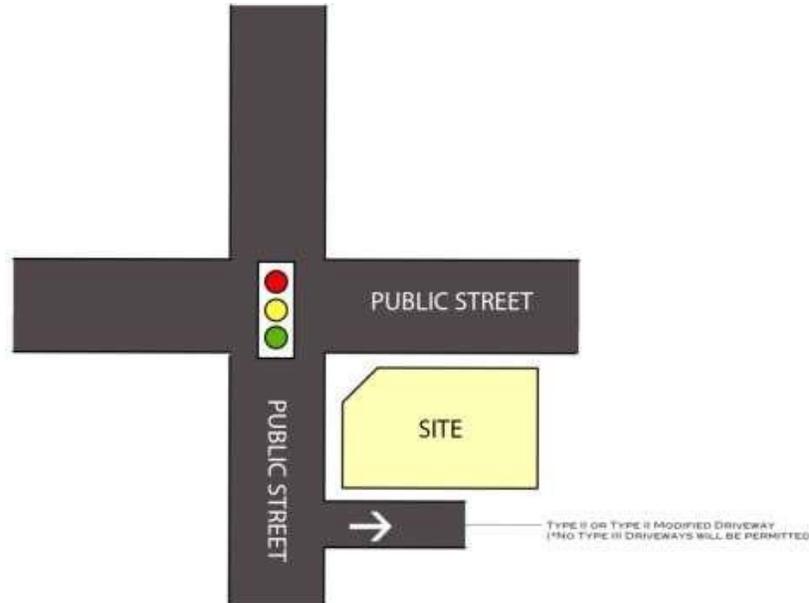


Figure 1: Access for Convenience Stores and Gas Stations

### 3.8 CHANNELIZATION & INTERNAL DRIVEWAY ACCESS

Appropriate driveway channelization length aids in the effectiveness of commercial driveways by helping to organize entering and exiting traffic without introducing excessive maneuvering within the functional area of the driveway. In all circumstances, 50' will be considered the minimum channelization for commercial site access to the public street. This dimension will be measured from the back of the driveway apron into the subject site. For larger commercial shopping centers, and higher density mixed-used developments 100' will be the minimum channelization required. No internal driveways will be permitted within the channelized portion of the subject driveway that accesses the public street system. In access where a commercial driveway provides access to a signalized intersection, 200' will be the minimum internal channelization dimension.

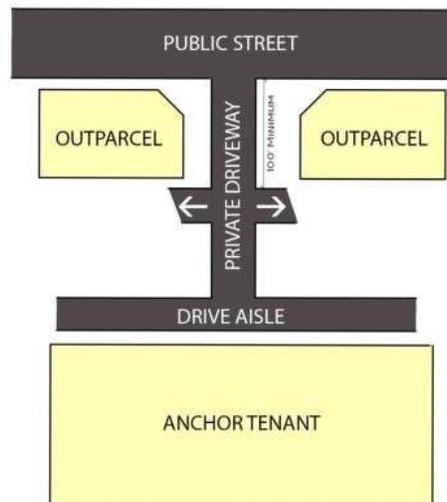


Figure 2: Driveway Channelization

### 3.9 DRIVEWAY ALIGNMENT

Driveway access alignment and street connection alignment will follow Article 32.3 of the UDO.

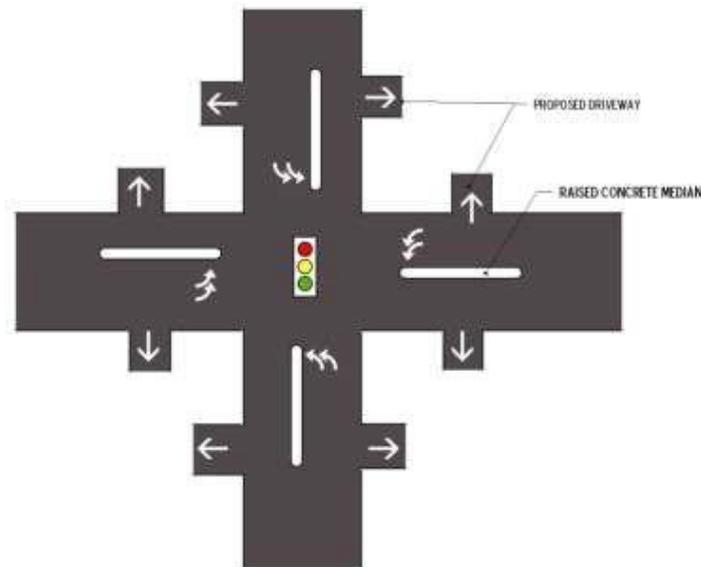
### 3.10 ACCESS MANAGEMENT

#### Driveway Placement

##### *Separation from Signalized Intersection*

Traffic signals are a critical component of the transportation system, Traffic signals aid in alleviating congestion, metering traffic, and organizing the various transportation demands that motorists and pedestrians place on the public street system. Introducing driveways in close proximity to a signalized intersection can degrade the intersection's capacity, safety, and operations. Therefore, special consideration will always be given to driveways that are proposed in a location that could affect an existing or proposed traffic signal. Driveway location will be based on Article 32.3 of the UDO.

Where dual left turns are present at signalized intersections, any new driveway proposed within the functional area of the intersection will be restricted to right turn-in, and right turn-out (commonly referred to as "right-in/right-out") vehicular movements. This will be accomplished via the installation of a raised concrete median island



**Figure 3: Access within functional area of intersection**

Developers will be required to enter into a [Signal Installation/Modification Agreement](#) when the proposed development either warrants a new traffic signal, or the development alters an existing traffic signal. This includes but is not limited to the modifications/impacts to existing loop detectors, controller cabinet, pull boxes, wood poles, strain poles, and mast arms. The Signal Installation/Modification Agreement will be required to be executed and any associated fees paid prior the construction plan approval.

### Separation from Adjacent Driveways

Driveways too closely spaced to one another have the ability to create sight distance problems and introduce unnecessary conflicts within the public street network (Figure 4). In circumstances where access is proposed to a non-median divided public street that is classified as a Collector Street or higher, the minimum driveway separation will be 50 ft. This dimension can be reduced to 20 ft when access is proposed to a median-divided public street classified as a Collector Street or higher. **Note that the previously mentioned driveway spacing will not accommodate every situation, and CDOT reserves the right to modified/adjust these dimensions based on the existing/proposed site and roadway conditions.**

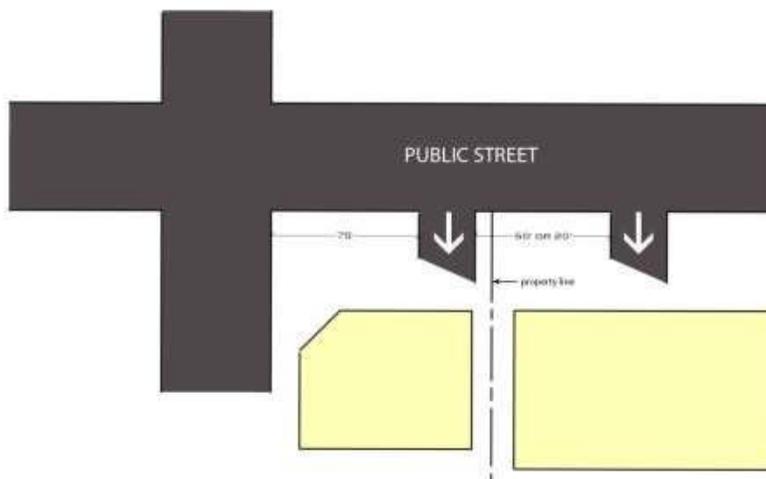


Figure 4: Driveway Separation from adjacent driveways

### Separation from Property Line

In general, ten feet (10') is the minimum driveway separation from a site's property line. This distance is measured from the property line to the radius point of the driveway. In cases where there is no radius for the driveway (Type II, and Type IV), the ten-foot measurement will be taken from the tie-in location of the taper to the existing roadway pavement. The application of the ten-foot property line separation requirement should ensure a minimum of twenty feet (20') between driveways. In cases where an existing driveway is located closer to the property line than ten feet, CDOT may require additional separation from the property line for the proposed driveway to ensure a minimum of twenty feet of driveway separation is provided (Figure 5).

In an urban infill scenario, the property line separation requirements may be reduced on a case-by-case basis to determine an access plan for the site that minimizes any harmful impacts of the driveway to the street system and still allows the site to achieve other urban design objectives. Where practical, CDOT will encourage the use of shared driveway access between the individual properties to help produce a more organized and pedestrian oriented form of access management.

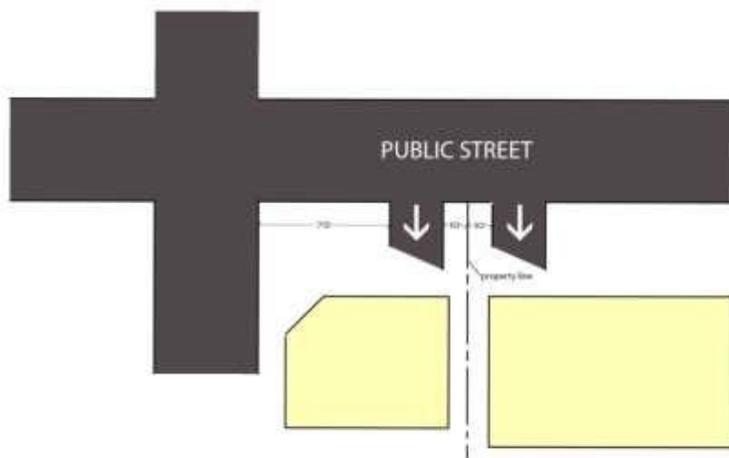


Figure 5: Driveway Separation from property line

## Turn Lane Warrants

Under North Carolina General Statute [§160A-307 “Curb cut regulations”](#), the City has the authority to require certain transportation infrastructure including but not limited to raised medians, and accelerations and deceleration lanes to ensure the safe and efficient operations of the public street network. In addition, Article 32.3 of the UDO gives authority to require turn lanes for private development.

### Left-turn Lanes

Generally, a left-turn lane will be required for sites that generate 50 or more left turns from a thoroughfare during the peak hour. Left-turn lanes will generally not be required for streets classified lower than a thoroughfare, but exceptions may include higher volume collector streets or streets that have known operational, safety, or sight distance deficiencies. Within Centers Place Types, a left-turn may not be required even if the subject site exceeds the 50 peak hour left threshold. The Urban Street Design Guidelines provides additional information on the appropriateness of left-turn turn lanes based on street type. Left-turn lanes may also be required as part of the Comprehensive Transportation Review Guidelines.

### Right-turn Lanes

Generally CDOT does not require nor support mid-block right-turn deceleration lanes as a condition of the driveway plan approval. Right-turn lanes provided at mid-block locations have the potential degrade the pedestrian and cyclist experience due to the frequent interruptions in the continuous bike path, and the higher entry speeds that exclusive right- turn lanes allow into the respective developments.

Right – turn lanes may be required and are generally more appropriate in the Manufacturing and Logistics Place Type where there’s an anticipated higher volume of industrial truck traffic that will access the subject uses, however, right-turn lanes are generally not appropriate in higher-intensity Place Types unless they are being provided at signalized intersections.

Right-turn lanes may also be required as part of the Comprehensive Transportation Review Guidelines.

### Access Restrictions

While providing adequate public safety and ensuring efficient street operations will be the overarching criteria in determining whether or not CDOT restricts site access, there are a few specific criteria where a property owner and/or private developer should expect for their respective site access to be restricted to vehicular movements less than full-movement, as described in the UDO Article 32.3. The criteria in the UDO is not intended to represent a comprehensive list of every situation where CDOT will restrict site access; however, it provides a general framework of the most common situations where property owners and/or private developers should expect limited site access.

## 3.11 SCHOOLS

The regulations and design criteria provided within this document will be used by CDOT staff during the review of new school construction plans. Each proposed school will be required to submit a completed NCDOT [Municipal School Transportation Assistance \(MTSA\)](#) vehicular queue calculator to insure adequate on-site vehicular stacking exists, and vehicular queuing does not spill onto the public right-of-way.

Schools will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to identify that on-site vehicular storage exists. These sites may be requested to submit a CTR based on the number of students, adequacy of the existing public infrastructure to accommodate the increase in traffic volume, proposed bell times, and future student population growth potential. Transportation improvements and reimbursements will follow N.C.G.S. § 60A-307.1.

## 3.12 RESIDENTIAL DRIVEWAYS

In most cases, residential driveways will be approved via the submittal and subsequent review/approval of a single-family subdivision plan. However, there are cases where residential access to the public right-of-way is being proposed independent of a large tract subdivision plan. In those cases, CDOT’s Public Service Division (704-336-3894) will provide the approval of the residential driveway. Note that an individual lot inspection fee will be administered by the City’s Planning, Design and Development Department to inspect these driveways.

Outside of the review/approval process for a Subdivision Plan, a commercial driveway review/approval will be required in cases where a single-family residential driveway seeks access to any arterial street.

### **3.13 SIGHT DISTANCE**

One of the most important criteria necessary to provide safe access to the public street system is the presence of adequate available Sight Distance. As such, all existing and proposed driveway entrances must conform to the latest version of CDOT's Sight Distance Policy.

### **3.14 PAVEMENT MARKINGS AND SIGNAGE**

All traffic control signs and pavement markings placed on driveway entrances and within the public right-of-way must conform to the latest edition or revision of both the "[Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices \(MUTCD\)](#)," and CDOT's latest version of the [Pavement Marking Standards](#) and shall be located and maintained in accordance with the approved site plan.

### **3.15 TRAFFIC CONTROL**

All traffic control signs and pavement markings placed on driveway entrances, and within the public right-of-way must conform to the latest edition or revision of the "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)," and CDOT's latest version of the [Work Area Traffic Control Handbook \(WATCH\)](#) and shall be located and maintained in accordance with the approved site plan.