



## The Benefits of Access Management

*Road access, mobility, and safety are major goals of federal and state transportation agencies. "One of the most important responsibilities of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is to ensure that the design of each state road properly balances access and mobility. Access management is used to provide this very important balance."*

**A**ccess Management is the careful planning and systematic control of the location, design, spacing, and placement of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street connections and traffic signals. The goal of access management is to reduce traffic conflicts caused by increased traffic congestions and delays, increase public safety, and provide access to land development to preserve the efficiency of the transportation system. FDOT has stated that a basic principal of access management is "to limit the number of conflict points along a roadway by limiting the number of driveways and median openings and restricting certain movements at some median openings." To that end, FDOT has utilized the national standards that are based

on 40 years of comprehensive research and experience, in development of its access management standards. These standards are intended to protect public safety, provide for mobility of people and goods, and preserve the State Highway System.

While access management has been around for decades as a way to improve the safety and performance of our roadways, access management is often underutilized as an effective tool to improve the safety, mobility, and productivity of our highways. In fact, in the fall of 2006, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) conducted a domestic management scan tour in order increase awareness of access management and to provide an opportunity for local jurisdictions to exchange information, share implementation strategies, and best practices.

Undoubtedly, access management is vitally important for a number of reasons. Without good access management, increased traffic congestion, delays, and vehicle collisions result. Additionally, pedestrians and cyclists are at a greater risk as more cut-through traffic results in residential areas. Limiting access management often leads to a decrease in roadway efficiency and an increase in overburdened roadways. This in turn leads to greater fuel consumption, commuting time, frustrated motorists, and traffic delays.

Florida's Access Management Act codifies FDOT's authority to regulate connections to the State Highway System and to adopt standards for connections. The Access Management Act requires owners of property abutting the State Highway System to obtain a permit from FDOT in order to construct or alter a connection to the State Highway System. It authorizes FDOT to alter or close connections determined to be harmful to public safety. Property owners are entitled to a direct connection to the abutting State Highway but may be required to use alternative access, if available, when a direct connection poses a safety problem. FDOT has additional authority to restrict access to roads that are part of the Florida Intrastate Highway System established pursuant to Section 338.001, Florida Statutes.

While citizens may have concerns that access management minimizes accessibility to roadways, studies have shown that access management projects and improvements do not negatively impact business. In Florida, studies have shown that business owners' anticipation of negative impacts due to access management were much less than anticipated. Access management strategies can improve

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roadways and provide many benefits to citizens including efficient traffic flow, improved safety, safer medians, intersections, interchanges and driveways and improved accessibility as traffic congestion is relieved.

It should be noted that left turns through median openings can often be a matter of contention, but FDOT has taken a firm position that it alone regulates the location and characteristics of medians and median openings. FDOT regulations state that median openings are not connections to the State Highway System, and that an abutting property owner has no vested interest in median openings. FDOT employs minimum spacing between medians and limitations on turning movements through median openings to ensure adequate storage space for turning vehicles, to avoid conflicts due to unique

traffic patterns, and to ensure that drivers perceive a predictable driving environment that enhances public safety.

In conclusion, implementing access management in an agency's transportation planning process provides a cost-effective approach to promote and preserve safety, mobility, access, and roadway efficiency. It also protects our investment in our highways and businesses.

**For additional information, please contact:**

Thornton J. Williams  
Managing Partner  
Williams Wilson & Sexton, P.A.  
Telephone (850) 224-3999  
E-Mail: twilliams@twalaw.com

projects is also needed.

Airports, the FAA and the entire aviation community find it essential that the Airport and Airway Trust Fund (AATF), together with a proper and equitable level of financial support from the general fund, are both needed to provide the necessary support for FAA's capital accounts, including Facilities & Equipment and AIP.

Airports require that Congress reform the tax treatment of airport bonds, recognizing that they are by their nature governmental, not private purpose.

Other witnesses at the hearing included: Kirk Schaffer, associate administrator for airports, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA); Gerald Dillingham, director, physical infrastructure issues, U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO); and Chip Barclay, president, American Asso-

ciation of Airport Executives (AAAE). On a separate panel, several airport executives joined Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport's Piccolo, including: Elaine Roberts (Columbus), John Clark (Jacksonville, FL), James Bennett (Reagan National and Dulles International) and Nuria Fernandez (Chicago O'Hare and Midway). ■

# APF? Shh...

Naples (APF) is a very motivated, noise-sensitive community. Preserving aviation access to *our* community means getting as much compliance as possible with our voluntary curfew and noise abatement procedures, not just from pilots, but from the business professionals they serve, as well.

But right now, preserving aviation access *throughout the country* means getting FAA reauthorization from Congress *immediately*, before current funding expires.

If you want to make some noise that will do some good, tell your representatives that letting FAA funding expire this year would be a disaster, and not just for pilots, but for the business professionals they serve, as well.



Naples Airport Authority  
160 Aviation Drive North, Naples, FL 34104  
239-643-0733 fax 239-643-4084