

RESOURCES

Local Government Commission

<http://www.lgc.org/>

Neighborhood Street Design Guidelines: An Oregon Guide for Reducing Street Widths. Public Policy Dispute Resolution Program and Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) Program (November 2000), Oregon Department of Transportation and Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development <http://www.oregon.gov/LCD/TGM/publications.shtml>

New Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update (and other Bicycle/Pedestrian Resources) <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/commuter/bike/resources.shtml>

NJDOT Local Technical Assistance Grants <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/business/localaid/>

Planning for Street Connectivity: Getting From Here to There, American Planning Association <http://www.planning.org>

Roadway Connectivity: Creating More Connected Roadway and Pathway Networks, Victoria Transport Policy Institute <http://www.vtpi.org/tgm/tgm116.htm>

Smart Growth, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency <http://www.epa.gov/dced/>

Transportation and Growth Management, Oregon Department of Transportation and the Department of Land Conservation and Development <http://www.oregon.gov/LCD/TGM/index.shtml>

Walkable Communities, Inc. <http://www.walkable.org>

Route 57 is the backbone that connects many communities in Warren County. This route through the Musconetcong Valley has been a vital link for centuries—as a Lenape trade route, a railroad and trolley line, the Morris Turnpike, and, today, as a state highway. Although Route 57 serves its purpose as a state highway that can move vehicles between different municipalities, connectivity is also essential within the towns, villages, and other developed areas along the corridor.

WHAT IS STREET CONNECTIVITY?

Street connectivity is a measure of how well the roadway network connects what planners call origins and destinations. In layman's terms, good street connectivity means providing a *variety* of ways to get from Point A to B. The traditional grid-style street layout of older towns provides excellent connectivity. Streets are interlinked at numerous points, intersections are closely spaced, and there are few dead-ends. This not only provides a more direct route to any destination, but also helps to disperse traffic. The presence of a grid pattern and alternate parallel streets allows the state highway and other major roads to serve their main purpose—moving vehicles over longer distances—while shorter trips can take place on local streets. Closely spaced intersections, slower vehicle speeds, and the sidewalk networks typical of these towns also help create more opportunities for walking.

The way that many communities have developed since the mid 20th century has been very different, however. Individual, isolated cul de sac developments often mean that almost every outing—even a short hop to school or to buy a newspaper—requires a separate car trip on the state highway. This type of suburban development inhibits walking and bicycling by both adults and children, and

“Regardless of their size, communities can realize three major benefits from better connectivity: shorter trips; a wider variety of travel choices; and more cost-effective public services and infrastructure. Creating more direct connections shortens travel time, which effectively brings people closer to their destinations. With more available connections, community residents can get to schools, shopping centers, and other spots that may have simply been off their radar before—not because these places were too far away, but because they were too far out of the way.”

Hannah Twaddell, Making the Connection, from Planning Commissioners Journal (No. 58, Spring 2005) <http://www.plannersweb.com/216free.pdf>

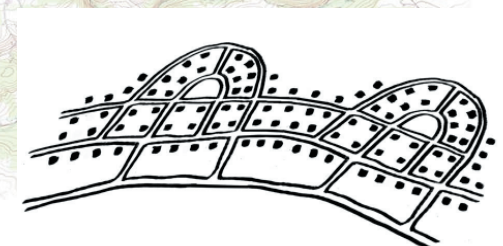
often results in parents driving their children to a school that would otherwise be within walking distance. In addition, the hierarchical street systems typical of these newer developments create congestion by overloading the limited number of intersections provided.

A lack of connectivity is one reason for the serious congestion on so many of New Jersey's main arterials, such as Route 31 in Hunterdon County and Route 9 in Ocean County. As New Jersey's planners and communities have become more aware of the link between connectivity and traffic flow, some are questioning cul-de-sac development and once again considering traditional grid or “spider web” street patterns. As the Route 57 communities plan for future growth, there is an opportunity to begin developing an enhanced network of parallel and intersecting routes to serve shorter trips within the region. An enhanced network will not only improve travel options for local residents, but will also help Route 57 continue to function effectively into the future. Planning for future connectivity should be addressed as each municipality updates its Master Plan and Circulation Element.



Discouraged

Well-connected areas promote pedestrian and bicycle activity by making connections between destinations accessible and convenient. Small blocks help to create a comfortable scale for pedestrians by creating an increased sense of location and direction, breaking down the space between intersections and destinations, and providing increased visibility for businesses and offices.



Encouraged



This image compares two typical suburban residential neighborhoods. The diameters of the circles are 1/4 mile, or about a 5 minute walk, which studies have shown to be the maximum distance most people are willing to walk to reach local destinations. Residents of the top neighborhood cannot walk to any nonresidential destinations within this radius. Thus, these residents are far more likely to use their cars for local trips than are those of the bottom neighborhood, who can easily walk to other houses, parks, and shops.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

Providing people with opportunities to walk and bicycle where they want to safely and conveniently is one of NJDOT's primary goals. The NJDOT, through its Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update, seeks to create an environment where people choose to walk and bicycle, and can do so with confidence and a sense of security in every community.

Today, many short trips that could be made by bike or on foot are made by car simply because of poor connectivity. Creating better connectivity for these modes can improve an area's vitality and sense of place, reduce traffic congestion, enhance economic vitality, and improve residents' health. A variety of projects can be considered to address the need for connectivity. Examples include:

- Filling gaps in the sidewalk network;
- Adding bike lanes or wide, bicycle-compatible shoulders to local roads;
- Creating new low volume roadways to connect existing cul de sac communities;
- Linking existing residential developments to a multi-use trail or greenway.

NJDOT offers Local Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grants to help municipalities assess their needs and set priorities to improve local conditions for walking and bicycling.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT AND CONNECTIVITY

Traffic flow and safety can be radically improved through the systematic control of the spacing and design of driveways, curb cuts, medians/auxiliary lanes, and signalized street connections along principal roadways. Taken as a group, these techniques are known as **access management**. Access management methods can be used to direct the bulk of turning movements to intersections, instead of providing numerous mid-block driveways that impede the flow of through traffic. This helps to strengthen and support the integrity of the street network.



Access management achieves a variety of benefits:

- Improving public safety through better, more efficient design of connections to/from the principal roadway;
- Avoiding frequently spaced driveways that interrupt sidewalks and create conflict points for cyclists and pedestrians;
- Improving the appearance and quality of the built environment by discouraging erratic strip development, which tends to produce turning traffic at many points (and thus impedes traffic flow on the principal roadway);
- Extending the lifecycle of the principal roadway without widenings.

Municipalities along the Route 57 corridor should encourage future developers to provide multiple access points into their sites, preferably including access to and from side streets. Moreover, instead of each separate building or store having its own isolated parking lot, adjacent and contiguous structures should be encouraged to share driveways and parking areas through improved site design, building placement, and internal site circulation. The Design Guidelines included in this Toolkit provide more detailed suggestions for parking layout and site designs. Together with access management, these design principles can help limit future congestion and promote a more walkable environment.

NJDOT Access Code and Access Management Plans

The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT)'s State Highway Access Management Code (NJAC 16:47) requires business and property owners seeking access along Route 57 and other state highways to apply for an Access Permit. As part of this process, they may be required to prepare an Access Plan showing how future traffic will be accommodated. Depending on the outcome, some developers are required to provide infrastructure improvements to address the impacts of their proposed developments.

NJDOT also offers municipalities the opportunity to establish a formal Access Management Plan for a state highway corridor. Access Management Plans help municipalities manage traffic growth and site development characteristics on the affected roadways. At this time, approved NJDOT Access Management Plans include the Access Management Plan for Route 72 in Stafford Township, Ocean County and the Access Management Plan for Route 34 in Colts Neck, Monmouth County.