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WESTERN AUSTRALIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION

## BACKGROUND NOTES

1. This policy addresses matters relating to the control of development adjacent to regional roads. The policy refers to related policies DC 1.4 and DC 1.7 and brings them together in one document for the information of all involved in planning for, and determining applications which include, vehicular access to Regional Roads.
2. The policy was developed from Policy No. 2 "Access to Regional Roads" of the former Metropolitan Region Planning Authority, which was adopted in November, 1982. It also contains provisions from the Commission's Policy SPC 31, which accompanied its March, 1987 resolution regarding the determination of development applications abutting land reserved under the Metropolitan Region Scheme.
3. The Commission reconsidered and updated this policy in June 1998.
4. Related policies of the Commission are:  
Policy No. DC 1.4 - Functional Road Classification for Planning  
Policy No. DC 1.7 - General Road Planning

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This policy sets out the principles to be applied when considering proposals for vehicle access to or from developments abutting regional roads. It is intended to inform government agencies, local government and prospective developers of these principles and to act as guidelines for the exercise of development control powers in this regard.
- 1.2 For the purpose of this policy, the following terms have the meanings assigned to them:
- "Access" means both entry to and exit from either a road or abutting development by a vehicle.
- "Driveway" is that part of the vehicle access to an abutting property between the edge of the carriageway and the road reserve boundary.
- "Junction" is the meeting point of two or more roads.
- "Regional Road" means any road reserved under the Metropolitan Region Scheme or under any other regional regional planning scheme as well as any other road classified as primary or district distributors in accordance with the Commission's Policy No. DC 1.4 Functional Road Classification for Planning.
- 1.3 It is clearly inappropriate to use the term driveway for accesses to large developments which justify their own system of internal access roads leading to car parks. Paragraph 3.3.4 describes the internal road system for such developments.

## **2. POLICY OBJECTIVES**

- To outline planning principles to be applied in the determination of proposals for vehicle access to regional roads.
- To ensure that vehicle access to regional roads and the type of abutting developments is controlled and conforms with sound town planning principles.
- To improve traffic flow and safety on all regional roads, either new or existing, by minimising the number of junctions or driveways.

## **3. POLICY MEASURES**

### **3.1 Safety**

- 3.1.1 A safe environment and an efficient road system require compatibility between development abutting the road and vehicular and pedestrian traffic movement. As regional roads are principally for traffic movement, ideally there should be no vehicular access to or from abutting properties.
- 3.1.2 However, many existing regional roads perform two functions: they carry through traffic and, at the same time, give direct access to properties fronting the road. Furthermore, there has been a tendency for frontage properties to be developed for commercial uses which attract higher volumes of turning traffic than do residential uses.
- 3.1.3 With the continued growth of traffic in the metropolitan region and those regions subject to regional planning schemes, it is clear that the provision of access is not compatible with the requirements of vehicular movement for the following reasons:
- Turning traffic (both leaving and entering the road) causes conflict and is thereby a contributory cause of accidents. Research shows that the majority of accidents happen adjacent to junctions and driveways where most turning movements occur. Accident rates are consistently higher on roads where access is permitted than on roads with full or partial access control. Furthermore, the accident rate increases as the number of access points along the road increases.
  - Junctions and driveways contribute to delays and congestion, as turning vehicles both slow and interrupt the free flow of traffic. Where commercial development abuts the road, these effects are greater because commercial development generates more turning traffic than residential developments.
- 3.1.4 In summary, the capacity of regional roads to carry traffic, the safety of that traffic, and the free flow of traffic are all related to access - the fewer the number of driveways and junctions, the smoother the traffic flow and safer the road.

### 3.2 Function

- 3.2.1 The functional classification of roads and streets is an essential first stage in the establishment of a network which can satisfy the requirements of both traffic movement and development. There is no universally recognised standard defining different types of roads. The Commission has, therefore, adopted the road classification system outlined in Policy No. DC 1.4, "Functional Road Classification for Planning", namely primary distributors, district distributors, local distributors and access roads.
- 3.2.2 The access control requirements of this policy apply to Primary and District Distributors, which includes all categories of regional roads designated in the Metropolitan Region Scheme and in areas subject to other regional planning schemes. However, many District Distributors are not classified in a scheme and control of development on these roads according to this policy is the responsibility of local governments.

### 3.3 Development Requirements

- 3.3.1 In considering applications for access on regional roads, the effects of the proposals on traffic flow and road safety will be the primary consideration. The more important the regional road, the greater the importance attached to these factors. In general, the Commission will seek to minimise the creation of new driveways on regional roads and rationalise existing access arrangements.
- 3.3.2 Where regional roads are constructed or planned to freeway standards, no access to frontage development is permitted. On regional roads not constructed or planned to freeway standards, there is a general presumption on traffic and safety grounds against the creation of new driveways or increased use of existing accesses to these roads. Where alternative access is or could be made available from side or rear streets or from rights of way, no access shall be permitted to the regional road unless special circumstances apply.
- 3.3.3 An arrangement whereby adjoining owners enter into cross-easement agreements to provide reciprocal rights of access across adjacent lots may be required as a means of rationalising access to the regional road.
- 3.3.4 The types of development that would be allowed access to a regional road include large traffic generators such as major shopping,

recreation or community centres. These would justify either a local distributor or access road, leading from a junction with the regional road to car parks servicing the centre.

- 3.3.5 In determining applications for development involving the formation, laying out or alteration of a means of access to regional roads, the following must be considered:
- i) the effects of the development on traffic flow and safety, the character and function of the road, the volume and speed of traffic, the width of the carriageway and visibility; and
  - ii) the volume and type of traffic generated by the development.
- 3.3.6 Where access is permitted, conditions may be imposed prescribing the location and width of the junction or driveway to ensure adequate visibility and to provide for the safe and convenient movement of vehicles both entering and leaving the traffic stream. In determining design requirements for junctions and driveways, the Commission has regard to standards recommended by both the National Association of State Road Authorities and Main Roads Western Australia.

### REFERENCES

1. Main Roads Department - Interim Policy Manual for Driveways in Urban Areas, March 1987.
2. National Association of Australian State Road Authorities (NAASRA) Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice, Part 5, Intersections at Grade, 1988.