

Incorporating Aesthetics into Access Management

Access management projects often involve widening existing roadways to add either an additional two-way-left-turn lane (TWLTL) or a raised median. Such projects can lead to a wide expanse of concrete and asphalt. An aesthetically pleasing treatment, however, does not need to run counter to sound access management practices. In fact, aesthetics can and should be incorporated into access management project plans.

Why are aesthetics important?

Access management projects are much more likely to be accepted by the public and by business owners of adjacent properties if they look good as well as improve safety and traffic flow.

What are some possible aesthetic treatments for access management projects?

In conjunction with access management improvements such as consolidating driveways, installing raised medians, or constructing TWLTLs, many aesthetic treatments are possible. These include

- landscaping the raised median
- adding pavement textures and designs to parking areas
- adding well designed retaining walls where needed to prevent erosion
- planting street trees and other vegetation *outside* the clear zone
- removing signs from the clear zone and otherwise modifying commercial signs to make them less obtrusive
- adding uniform, well designed street lights and other hardware
- placing utility lines underground to eliminate them from view and reduce the need for utility poles

Such aesthetic treatments can, when combined with access management, create a much more attractive roadway corridor that is also highly functional and safer.

See top photograph for an example of an access management project that incorporates aesthetic considerations (and the photograph below for contrast).



This access management project in Ankeny, Iowa, incorporates a number of positive aesthetic features, including a landscaped median with brick paving, utilities placed underground, street trees planted outside the clear zone, and unobtrusive business signs.



Contrast the Ankeny street (top) with a nearby corridor with no landscaping, numerous power poles and utility lines next to the street, and obtrusive business signs. Which corridor would you rather drive, walk, or own a business along?