



# 10 Common Traffic Related Site Design Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

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We've reviewed thousands of site plans in our careers, and more importantly, reviewed traffic on sites after they have been built. Here's a quick list of some of the lessons we've learned related to improving traffic within developments.

## 1. PUTTING SIGNS, BUILDINGS AND LANDSCAPING ON AN INTERSECTION CORNER THAT BLOCKS THE VIEW OF VEHICLES AND PEDESTRIANS.

Blocked sight lines lead to safety problems and congestion. The solution is to keep the sight corners clear at driveways and intersections. A good rule of thumb is to draw a triangle on each corner going thirty feet down each road/drive aisle and keep that triangle clear of obstructions in the two to six feet high range.

## 2. PLACING A SITE DRIVEWAY OR ACCESS ROAD OFFSET FROM THE DRIVEWAY OR ROAD ACROSS THE STREET.

Offset intersections lead to safety problems as vehicles must move over through the intersection and they lead to confusion as vehicles stop on the public road to turn into the site. Align accesses from internal roads to driveways/streets across the adjacent public road. This also applies internally – keep drive aisles and roads squared up at intersections.

## 3. DESIGNING EACH PARCEL OR OUTLOT AS AN ISLAND.

Forcing pedestrians through hedgerows or vehicles to go out to the road to go from one side of the development to the other leads to unnecessary congestion or folks skipping a trip all together. Provide connectivity through the entire site for both vehicles and pedestrians.

#### 4. FORCING ALL TRAFFIC BY THE FRONT DOOR.

Too many conflicts within the site can cause vehicle stacking out of the site onto the public road as well as pedestrians uncomfortably mixing with vehicle traffic. Attempt to minimize crossing conflicts.

#### 5. NOT THINKING THROUGH TRUCK AND TRASH LOADING ZONES.

Provide separate loading zones/docks at the back of buildings for deliveries and trash removal with a separate access road from the parking areas. If that's not possible, work with vendors so deliveries happen outside of the development's peak periods.

#### 6. THINKING ONLY ABOUT VEHICLE PARKING.

Provide convenient bike racks near front doors to promote bicycling.

#### 7. HAVING TRAILS AND SIDEWALKS DEAD END IN OR NEAR THE SITE.

Be sure to tie into nearby trail and sidewalk systems. Look out beyond the parcel you're working with to connect to the city's biking/walking infrastructure.

#### 8. NOT CONFORMING WITH ADA REQUIREMENTS.

Make sure your pedestrian ramps and handicap parking conform with all legal requirements. Retrofits can be expensive.

## 9. PUTTING EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TURN LANES AT THE DEVELOPMENT'S ACCESS POINTS.

As the site designer, skip right turn lanes. They are rarely needed to improve traffic flow and they unnecessarily widen pedestrian crossings. Only provide right turn lanes when a traffic analysis proves they're needed.

## 10. DESIGNING DRIVE LANES AND ROADS TOO WIDE, WHICH LEADS TO SPEEDING PROBLEMS.

Design traffic calming into the development with narrow drive lanes, raised tables at crosswalks, parking bumpouts, and/or speed humps. Signs don't control speeds and it's very expensive to retrofit for traffic calming. Get it right the first time.