

# Access Design Requirements

First Edition

April 8, 2026

City of Ottawa, Planning, Development and Building Services Department



## REVISION RECORD

This table will outline changes to the document. All future revisions to this document will be numbered and dated consecutively.

Revision No.	Date of Revision	Entered By

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

REVISION RECORD.....	2
1.0 SCOPE AND GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	4
1.1 GENERAL.....	4
1.2 DEVIATIONS / EXCEPTIONS .....	4
1.3 RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES, AND BY-LAWS.....	4
1.4 RELATED STANDARDS.....	5
2.0 PERMIT REQUIREMENT.....	6
3.0 DESIGN REQUIREMENTS.....	6
3.1 VEHICULAR ACCESS.....	6
3.2 PEDESTRIAN ACCESS .....	10
3.3 ACCESS CULVERTS .....	10
3.4 GENERAL REQUIREMENT .....	11

## **1.0 SCOPE AND GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **1.1 GENERAL**

This document has been prepared under the authority of the Access By-law (No. 2026-139), whereby the General Manager has been delegated the authority to establish requirements that set out the design, size, location, or other aspect of an Access.

The information presented in this document sets out the base requirements to be satisfied in the design and location of vehicular and pedestrian Accesses. The design must also comply with the Access By-law and construction standards which are provided in the City's *Standard Tender Document for Unit Price Contracts* (the Standards) and Ontario Provincial Standard Specifications. Access construction must comply with the Road Activity By-law (2003-445), including the receipt of a road cut permit where required.

Capitalized terms throughout this document are as defined in the Access By-law. The terms arterial, major collector and corridor are as defined in the Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan.

### **1.2 DEVIATIONS / EXCEPTIONS**

If the Owner of Private Property is seeking to construct, reconstruct, relocate, alter, remove or close an Access and wishes to deviate from the requirements provided in this document, then the onus shall be upon the Owner or their representative to justify the proposal or resolve any concerns to the satisfaction of the City.

The City reserves the right to provide the final decision regarding the interpretation and intent of the requirements as well as the acceptability of deviations/exceptions from the requirements proposed by the Owner or their representative.

### **1.3 RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES, AND BY-LAWS**

This section provides a summary of relevant legislation, policies, and by-laws related to the design, location and construction of vehicular and pedestrian Accesses. This is not an exhaustive list, and it is the responsibility of the Owner, representative and/or contractors to ensure compliance with all existing legislation, policies and by-laws.

#### Provincial legislation

- *Ontario Municipal Act*, 2001
- *Ontario Underground Infrastructure Notification System Act*, 2012 (Ontario One Call)
- *Drainage Act*, 1990
- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2005
- *Integrated Accessibility Standards* (O.Reg. 191/11)

### Local by-laws and policy documents

- *Access By-law* (By-law No. 2026-139)
- *Zoning By-law* (By-law No. 2026-50)
- *Road Activity By-law* (By-law No. 2003-445)
- *Encroachment By-law* (By-law No. 2003-446)
- *Tree Protection By-law* (By-law No. 2020-340)
- *Official Plan and Secondary Plans*
- *Transportation Master Plan*
- *Ottawa Sewer Design Guidelines*
- *Ditch Alteration Policy*

## 1.4 RELATED STANDARDS

This section provides a summary of City Standards related to the design, location and construction of vehicular and pedestrian Accesses. This is not an exhaustive list as Standards may be updated. It is the responsibility of the Owner, representative and/or contractors to ensure compliance. To request access to the City's Infrastructure Standards and Guidelines, including the technical drawings listed below, email [standardssection@ottawa.ca](mailto:standardssection@ottawa.ca).

- SC4 Typical Concrete Sidewalk in Boulevard
- SC7.1 Curb Return Entrances – Uncontrolled Intersections
- SC7.4 Curb Return Entrances – Controlled Intersections
- SC8 Traditional Vehicle Access Crossing
- SC8.1 Traditional Vehicle Access Crossing Transitions for Various Distances Between Accesses
- SC13 Ramp Style Vehicle Access Crossing
- SC13.1 Continuous Vehicle Access Ramp
- SC36 Typical Cycle Track and Sidewalk at Private Entrance – Unconstrained Conditions
- SC36.1 Typical Cycle Track and Sidewalk at Private Entrance – Constrained Conditions
- SC37.1 Typical in-Boulevard Cycle Track and Sidewalk at Commercial Entrance – Uncontrolled Intersection
- SC37.2 Typical Cycle Track and Sidewalk with Intermediate Boulevard at High Volume Commercial Entrance
- S26 Private Entrance Detail – Ditch

## 2.0 PERMIT REQUIREMENT

Except where authorized under Section 20 (3) of the Access By-law, an access Permit is required to construct, reconstruct, relocate, alter, close or remove an Access. Information on access permit applications is available online at [ottawa.ca/driveways](http://ottawa.ca/driveways).

## 3.0 DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

### 3.1 VEHICULAR ACCESS

#### 3.1.1 Surface material

A vehicular Access shall be finished with a surface that is in accordance with Subsection 601(5) of the Zoning By-law.

#### 3.1.2 Location – General

In addition to the requirements of the Access By-law:

- 3.1.2.1 No Municipal Tree may be removed, or work conducted with the critical root zone of a Municipal Tree, to accommodate the construction of an Access, without prior approval from the City.
- 3.1.2.2 Properties with access on an open and City-maintained lane shall have their primary Access located off the lane.
- 3.1.2.3 On a lot abutting on more than one Roadway, and one such Roadway is an arterial, major collector or designated corridor, the General Manager shall determine if access will only be provided on the lower-tiered or non-designated Roadway.
- 3.1.2.4 No Access shall be constructed:
  - within an intersection;
  - on the corner radius of an intersection or within 1.5 metres of the point of tangency of such radius; or
  - so that the distance between the nearest limit of an Access and the intersecting Highway Line or its extension is less than 6 metres.
- 3.1.2.5 Where the entire property Frontage is situated within an intersection or within 6 metres of the limits of an intersection, an Access may be permitted provided that the Access is not located within the area used or intended to be used as a pedestrian crossing.
- 3.1.2.6 If an Access is requested on a Roadway classified as an arterial or higher, a Traffic Impact Assessment may be required to determine whether the Access will be permitted, and if so, the most appropriate location and design.

3.1.3 Location – Access to one to three parking spaces

In order to maintain appropriate drainage between lots, an Access to one to three parking spaces shall be setback a minimum of 0.3 metres from an adjoining Property Line, measured at the Highway Line, except in the case of vertically attached dwellings or a shared access serving two adjacent private properties. Where there is a Culvert, the setback is measured from the edge of the Culvert pipe or Headwall.

3.1.4 Location – Access to properties with Parking Lots

In addition to the requirements of the Access By-law, vehicular Accesses to properties with a Parking Lot are subject to the following:

3.1.4.1 The maximum number of vehicular Accesses permitted on a Frontage shall be as set out in Table 1

**Table 1: Maximum vehicular access to properties with parking lots per frontage**

FRONTAGE WIDTH (METRES)	NUMBER OF VEHICULAR ACCESSES
Up to 34	one (1) two-way Access
More than 34 up to 45	one (1) two-way Access OR two (2) one-way Accesses
More than 45 up to 150	two (2) two-way Accesses OR two (2) one-way Accesses
More than 150 up to 240	two (2) two-way Accesses OR one (1) two-way Access and two (2) one-way Accesses
More than 240	one (1) two-way Access OR two (2) one-way Accesses for each additional 90 metres of Frontage above 240 metres

3.1.4.2 There shall be no more than two (2) one-way vehicular Accesses on any given 35 metres of Frontage.

3.1.4.3 Despite any requirement to the contrary, the General Manager may determine that a secondary vehicular Access is required for the purposes of emergency vehicle access.

3.1.4.4 The distance between the nearest limits of an Access intended for two-way vehicular traffic and any other vehicular Access to the same property shall be a minimum of 9 metres measured at the Highway Line, and at the curb line or Roadway edge.

3.1.4.5 The distance between the nearest limits of any two Accesses intended for one-way vehicular traffic to the same property shall be a minimum of 2 metres measured at the Highway Line, and at the curb line or Roadway edge.

Where, in the opinion of the General Manager, it is desirable to provide a median between two Accesses intended for one-way operation, such median shall have a minimum width of 2 metres. Where a median is provided, the length of the median on Private Property shall be determined by the General Manager.

3.1.4.6 Location requirements on or near arterials and major collectors

1. Where a property abuts on, or is within 46 metres of, a Roadway classified as an arterial or major collector as designated in the City of Ottawa Official Plan, no vehicular Access shall be constructed:

- so that the distance between the nearest limit of the Access and the nearest intersecting Highway Line or its extension is less than the distance set out in Column 2 of Table 1; or
- so that the distance between the nearest limit of an Access intended for two-way vehicular traffic and any other Access intended for vehicular traffic to the same property is less than the distance set out in Column 3 of Table 1; and
- all distances so referred to shall be measured at the Highway Line

**Table 2: Location requirements on or near arterials and major collectors**

COLUMN 1 NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES	COLUMN 2 DISTANCE BETWEEN THE ACCESS AND NEAREST INTERSECTING HIGHWAY LINE	COLUMN 3 DISTANCE BETWEEN A TWO-WAY ACCESS AND ANY OTHER VEHICULAR ACCESS
Up to 49	18 metres	15 metres
50 to 99	30 metres	30 metres
100 to 199	45 metres	45 metres
200 to 299	60 metres	60 metres
300 or more	75 metres	75 metres

2. Where the Owner whose property abuts two or more Roadways is unable to comply with this requirement, an Access shall be permitted

only on the Roadway carrying the lesser volume of vehicular traffic and the Access shall be located as far from the nearest Intersections as possible. In cases where the vehicular traffic volumes are essentially equal, an Access shall be permitted only on the Roadway which allows the Access to be located as far from the nearest intersection as possible.

- 3.1.4.7 A vehicular Access serving a Parking Lot shall be setback a minimum of 3 metres from an adjoining Property Line, measured at the Highway Line and at the curb line or Roadway edge. Where there is a Culvert, the setback is measured from the edge of the Culvert pipe or Headwall.

Where the property abuts only one Roadway and the width of the Frontage does not allow an Access width as required by the Access By-law in addition to the 3-metre setback, the General Manager may reduce the required setback to 0.3 metres provided the proposed Access is located:

- a safe distance from the Access serving the adjacent property;
- in such a manner that there are adequate sight lines for vehicles exiting the property; and
- in such a manner that the Access does not create a traffic hazard.

An Access may be constructed in such a manner that it is less than 3 metres from an adjoining Property Line if it is approved through Site Plan Control.

### 3.1.5 Grade

- 3.1.5.1 The Grade of any part of an Access, excluding any Sidewalk or other In-Boulevard Active Transportation Facility, shall:

- not be less than 2 per cent (%);
- not exceed 8 per cent (%); and
- descend in the direction of the Roadway.

- 3.1.5.2 The Grade of a vehicular Access serving a Parking Lot with less than 50 Parking Spaces shall not exceed 8 per cent (%) within the Private Property for a distance of 6 metres from the Highway Line or future Highway Line.

The Grade of a vehicular Access serving a Parking Lot with more than 50 Parking Spaces shall not exceed 8 per cent (%) within the Private Property for a distance of 9 metres from the Highway Line or future Highway Line.

The General Manager may approve an Access despite this requirement provided that the proposed Access is located:

- a safe distance from the Access serving the adjacent property;
- in such a manner that there are adequate sight lines for vehicles exiting the property; and
- in such a manner that the Access does not create a traffic hazard.

3.1.5.3 The Grade of an Access used for the passage of vehicles or animals to a farm field shall not exceed 10 per cent (%).

### 3.1.6 Signage – Access to parking lots and parking garages

All one-way vehicular Accesses to Parking Lots shall be designated with suitable signs erected in a conspicuous location adjacent to the Highway to indicate the direction of traffic for which the Access is intended, and all signs shall be erected and maintained by the Owner to the satisfaction of the General Manager and in accordance with City by-laws.

## 3.2 PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

### 3.2.1 Design

3.2.1.1 A pedestrian Access shall have a width no greater than the adjoining walkway as provided for in the Zoning By-law, or as approved through Site Plan Control.

3.2.1.2 Where approved for the purpose of multi-residential waste collection services, no curb depression on a pedestrian Access shall be greater than 1.0 metres in width.

## 3.3 ACCESS CULVERTS

### 3.3.1 Culvert design and installation

3.3.1.1 Ditches are part of a designed drainage system. Culverts under accesses must be adequately sized and maintained to convey design flow through the ditch system. The design of access culverts shall adhere to the Ottawa Sewer Design Guidelines and applicable City standards and O.P.S.S.

3.3.1.2 In addition to the setback from an adjoining property line outlined in section 2.1.3.2, in the case of an Access with a culvert, there shall be a minimum setback of 2 metres from the edge of the culvert pipe or headwall to the nearest edge of an adjacent culvert pipe or headwall. If the required setback cannot be met, a design may be approved that allows for two Accesses to abut with a shared culvert pipe.

### **3.4 GENERAL REQUIREMENT**

#### **3.4.1 Priority for active transportation**

All Accesses shall be constructed to maintain the priority and continuity of existing in-boulevard active transportation facilities, such as sidewalks, cycle tracks and multi-use pathways, including continuity of material and width of existing facilities. The height of existing in-boulevard active transportation facilities relative to road grade should be maintained as much as is feasible, consistent with access construction standards.