



Cross Access Connections Zoning - **Approved!**

Overview

Update June 10, 2009:

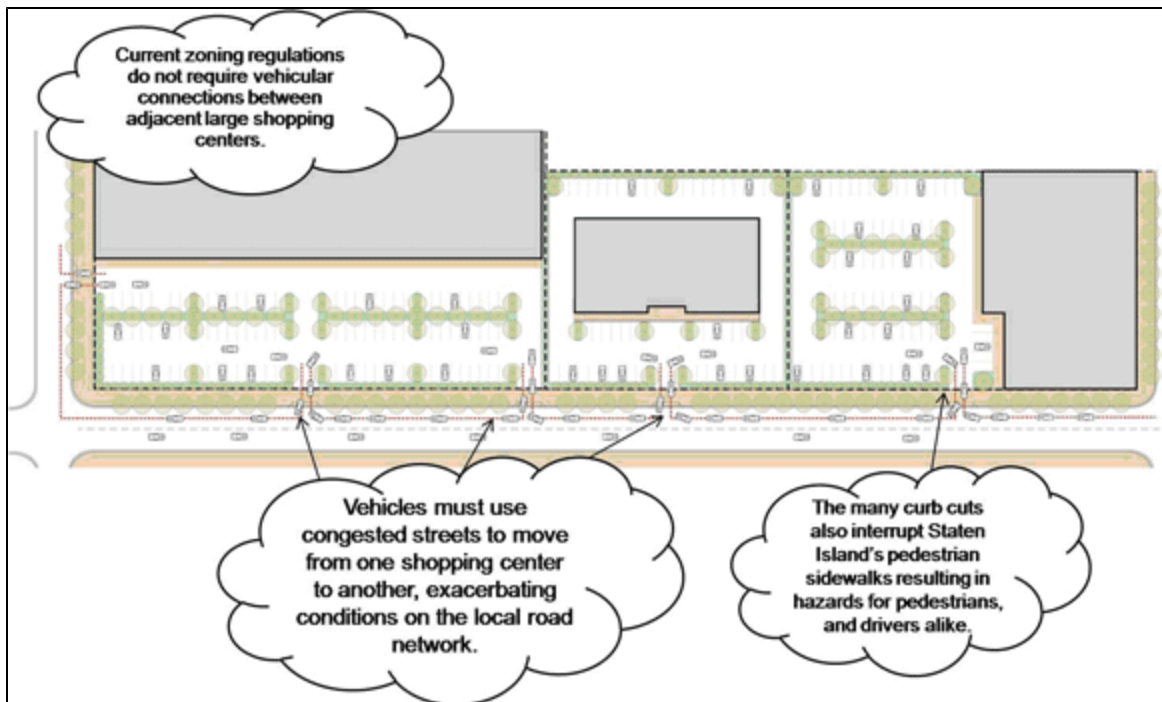
On June 10, 2009, the City Council adopted the Cross Access Connections Text Amendment. [View the adopted text amendment](#). The text changes are now in effect.

Overview

The Cross Access Connection zoning text amendment is a joint effort of the Department of City Planning and the Mayor's Staten Island Transportation Task Force. The Task Force consists of the Staten Island Borough President of Staten Island, City Council Members, all three Community Boards, the NYC Department of Transportation and other city and state agencies. Staten Island is home to several regional shopping areas, which are characterized by large parking lots due to the borough's dependence on autos. Most of these shopping centers are designed with fences or landscaped buffers surrounding their parking lots. The concentration of autos in these areas, combined with a lack of driveways between parking lots create congested streets as shoppers must use the local road network to get to the next store. These traffic movements coming in and out of parking lots exacerbate road conditions, slowing both buses and commuters. This traffic pattern also creates hazards for pedestrians as drivers must cross sidewalks more often than necessary. Unlike many other cities, current zoning regulations do not require vehicular connections between adjacent large shopping centers.

The proposed Zoning Text Amendment has two main objectives.

- Reduce traffic in regional shopping areas by allowing vehicles to move between retail or community facility developments without re-entering the public street.
- Create a safer pedestrian and vehicular environment by providing direct vehicular connections between abutting commercial developments.



Large retail developments with numerous curb cuts and unconnected parking lots

Cross Access Connections Zoning - **Approved!** Proposed Text Amendment

Applicability

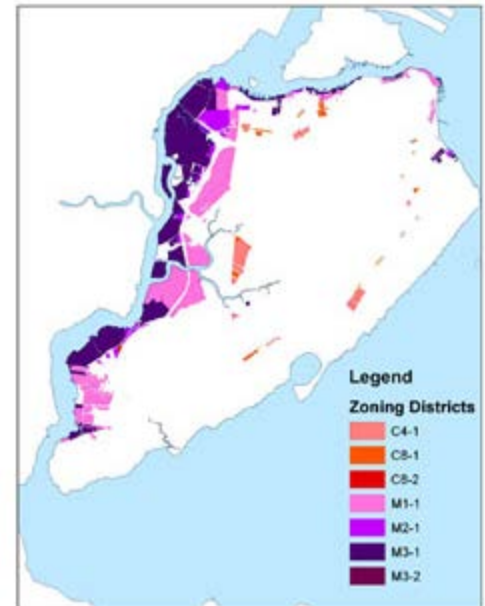
The Cross Access Connection text would apply to commercial and community facility developments and enlargements in those zoning districts where large developments with large parking lots can be built: C4-1, C8, and M districts in Staten Island. The proposal would require that adjacent parking lots be connected to each other so traffic could move from one parking lot to another without re-entering roads.

For new developments the requirements would apply when:

- 70 percent or more of the floor area (FAR) would be occupied by a commercial or community facility use; and
- At least 18 accessory parking spaces or at least 6,000 sq. ft. of parking area is provided.

For enlargements the requirements would apply when:

- At least 70 percent of the resulting floor area would be occupied by a commercial or community facility use; and
- The enlargement would result in a total of at least 18 accessory parking spaces or a total of at least 6,000 sq. ft. of parking area.



Requirements

The proposed text would require that before the Department of Buildings issues a building permit for a project requiring a Cross Access Connection, the Chair of the City Planning Commission must certify that:

- The connection connects with an open parking area to either an existing open parking area that has at least 18 accessory outdoor parking spaces or is greater than 6,000 square feet or connects to an adjacent vacant zoning lot.
- Connections are provided at zoning lot lines that are coincident for at least 60 feet with another zoning lot.
- The connection is at least 22 feet in width and at least 23 feet from a street line.
- The connection is an extension of a travel lane in the proposed parking lot and the connection aligns with a Cross Access Connection that has been previously constructed on an adjacent property.
- The connection has a slope of no greater than 15 percent.
- The connection is not placed where a building on an adjacent property is within 50 feet of the lot line which would hamper traffic movements within the parking lot.
- The connection is placed in an area which will not require the removal of significant natural features such as wetlands or trees with a caliper of six inches or more.

When a Cross Access Connection is required an easement for ingress and egress to adjacent lots must be recorded by the property owner at the Richmond County Clerk.

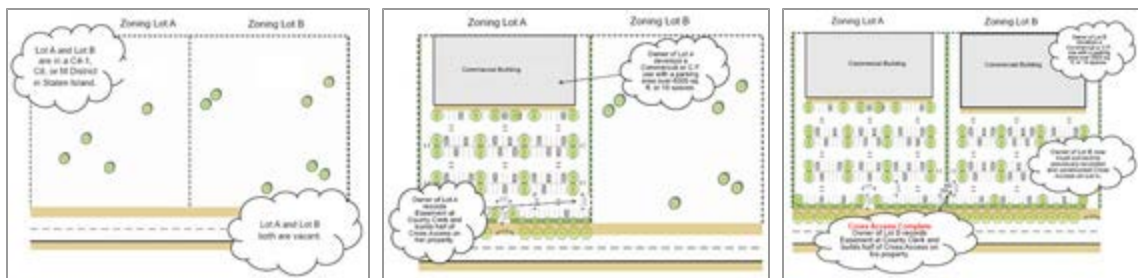
The Chair of the City Planning Commission can, by certification to the Department of Buildings, waive the cross access connection if:

- Grade changes between adjacent properties would cause a connection of greater than 15 percent;
- There are buildings or other structures on an adjacent lot that are within 50 feet of the subject property, or
- Significant natural features like 6" caliper trees or wetlands exist on the site

Construction of Cross Access Connections

The construction of a Cross Access connection is a two-part process that requires separate actions by two different property owners. The requirements only apply when a property owner builds a new development or enlarges an existing development. The first property owner would be required to record an easement and build their half of the connection. The adjacent property owner would be required to build their half, if and when they build a new development or enlarge an existing development. In the interim, the first property owner may use the location of the Cross Access connection for up to three required parking spaces. These spaces would no longer be required when the Cross-Access Connection is provided.


Illustrative Examples of a Cross Access Connection



1. Two Vacant Lots in a C4-1, C8, or M district in Staten Island.

 [View a larger image.](#)

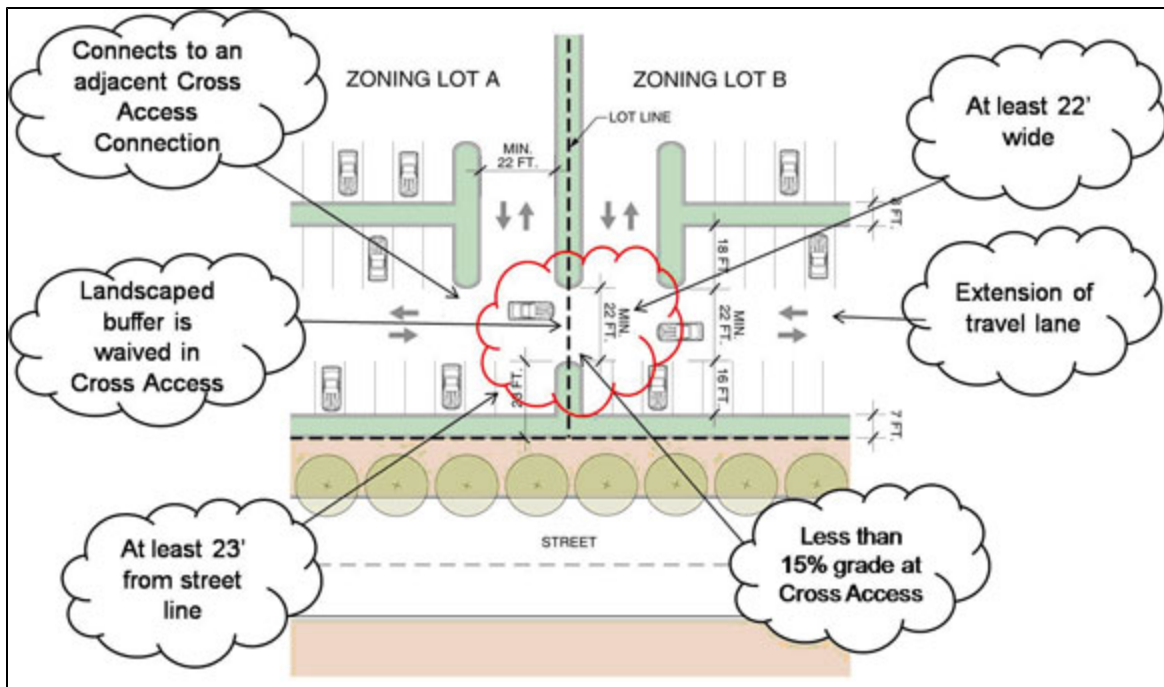
2. When Lot A is developed, the owners must record an easement and build their half of the Cross Access Connection on their property. The location of the Cross-Access may be used for required parking until the Connection is opened to the adjacent lot. Lot B remains vacant. Note, if Lot B were occupied by an existing development and parking lot, the owners of Lot B would not be required to open the Cross Access until they proposed to enlarge their existing operations.

 [View a larger image.](#)

3. When Lot B is developed, the owners must record an easement and build their half of the Cross Access to connect to the previously recorded Cross Access Connection on Lot A.

 [View a larger image.](#)

Cross Access Detail



Authorization

In situations where constructing a Cross Access Connection would be difficult due to site constraints, the City Planning Commission may, by Authorization allow a waiver of the requirement or the adjustment of the dimensions of the Cross Access Connection. The Commission would be able to request reports from license engineers or landscape architects when considering modifications or waivers. In order to grant the Authorization the Commission must find that::


- The irregular shape of the lot precludes the construction of the connection; or
- Site constraints necessitate the placement of a building or an enlargement that precludes a cross access connection.


South Richmond Special District (SSRDD) Changes

As part of the text amendment the SSRDD requirements for Planting and Screening for Open Parking Areas would be changed. Specifically, the zoning lot line landscaped buffer will be reduced from seven feet to four feet within SSRDD. The street line landscaped buffer will remain unchanged at 7 feet, as will all other regulations pursuant to the recently adopted design regulations for parking lots.

Cross Access Connections Zoning - **Approved!** Public Review

On January 20, 2009 the proposed zoning text amendment (N 090185 ZRR) was referred to all Staten Island community boards, the Staten Island Borough Board and the Borough President for a 60 day review period.

On May 6, 2009 the City Planning Commission adopted the text amendment with modifications* (read the  [CPC report](#)).

On June 10, 2009, the City Council adopted the Cross Access Connection Text Amendment.  [View the adopted text amendment](#). The text changes are now in effect.


* City Planning Commission Modifications

In response to concerns raised during the public review, the following modifications were made:

- Recognizing that small parking lots may have difficulty meeting the proposed regulations, Section 36-591 has been modified to change the text's applicability threshold from 18 parking spaces or 6,000 square feet of open parking area to 36 parking spaces or 12,000 square feet of parking area.
- Since the developer of the second lot to develop will have limited design options because an easement location has already been selected for the first lot to develop, Sections 36-592 and 36-594 has been modified to allow more design flexibility by requiring the first zoning lot to develop to provide Cross Access easements at the end of all traffic lanes where applicable. The referred text required that the developer choose only one location. This modification allows the second developer to choose that Cross Access location which works best.
- In order to allow owners of existing adjacent developed lots to have the ability to establish a Cross Access Connection between their sites and to allow the removal of existing required landscaping and parking. Section 36-594 has been modified to allow the Cross Access Certification to be available to existing sites. Consequently, such owners would be able to take advantage of the parking and landscaping waivers available under the Cross Access Certification.

For additional information, contact the Department of City Planning's Staten Island Borough Office at 718.556-7240.

Related Notes

-  Items accompanied by this symbol require the [free Adobe Acrobat Reader](#).