

The *Design Manual* is for use by Washington State Department of Transportation engineering personnel. It provides policies, procedures, and methods for developing and documenting the design of improvements to the transportation network in Washington. It has been developed for state facilities and may not be appropriate for all county roads or city streets that are not state highways.

The *Design Manual* supplements the engineering analyses and judgment that must be applied to Improvement and Preservation projects. It provides uniform procedures for documenting and implementing design decisions.

The Federal Highway Administration has agreed to approve designs that follow the guidance in the *Design Manual*; therefore, following the guidance is mandatory for state highway projects. When proposed designs meet the requirements contained in the *Design Manual*, little additional documentation is required.

The design environment changes rapidly, often without warning to the practitioner. To track every change, and to make improvements based upon each change, is not feasible. The intent of this manual is to provide recommended values for critical dimensions. Flexibility is permitted to encourage independent design tailored to individual situations. However, when flexibility is applied to a proposed design and the critical dimensions do not meet *Design Manual* criteria, additional documentation is required to record the decision-making process.

The addition of new or modified design criteria to the *Design Manual* through the revision process does not imply that existing features are deficient or inherently dangerous. Nor does it suggest or mandate immediate engineering review or the initiation of new projects.

The *Design Manual* emphasizes cost-effective, environmentally conscious, and context sensitive design. Designers are encouraged to view the highway corridor beyond the vehicular movement context, so guidance regarding the use of the highway corridor by transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists is included. To accommodate multimodal use, the criteria provided for one mode is to be appropriately adapted to individual locations.

The complexity of transportation design requires the designer to make fundamental trade-off decisions that balance competing considerations. Although this adds to the complexity of design, it acknowledges the unique needs of specific projects and the relative priorities of various projects and programs. Improvements must necessarily be designed and prioritized in light of finite transportation funding.

Updating the *Design Manual* is an ongoing process and revisions are issued regularly. Comments, questions, and improvement ideas are welcomed. Use the comment form on the following page or the online version at the Design Policy Internet Page: www.wsdot.wa.gov/design/policy

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