

Foreword

The *Design Manual* is for use by Washington State Department of Transportation personnel, consultants and contractors engaged in transportation design. 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 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 Manual* supplements the engineering analyses and judgment inherent with practical design and provides uniform procedures for documenting and implementing design decisions. The *Design Manual* emphasizes practical design as a means to produce environmentally conscious, sustainable, context-based designs that achieve the purpose and need for the lowest cost. Practical design considers the needs of all users, fostering livable communities and modally integrated transportation system. The *Design Manual* also embraces Complete Streets as an approach to planning, designing, building, operating, and maintaining the transportation system that enables safe and convenient access to destinations for all people, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders.

The complexity of transportation design requires designers to make fundamental trade-off decisions and sometimes incremental approaches to balance competing spatial considerations with available resources. 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.

Updating the *Design Manual* is an ongoing process and revisions are issued regularly. The addition of new or modified design criteria to the *Design Manual* through the revision process does not imply that existing features are deficient in any way, nor does it suggest or mandate immediate engineering review or initiation of new projects. Comments, questions, and improvement ideas are welcomed. Use the [WSDOT Design Manual – Comments and Revision Suggestions](#) form or simply email the [Manual Manager](#).

Mark Gaines, P.E.



Director & State Design Engineer,
Development Division