


Foreword

The *Design Manual* is for use by Washington State Department of Transportation engineering personnel and consultant workforces. 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 inherent with practical design. 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 complexity of transportation design requires designers to make fundamental trade-off decisions that balance competing spatial 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. Projects are designed in light of finite transportation funding. 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. Implementing practical design considers the needs of all users, fostering livable communities and modally integrated transportation systems used safely by all, including motorists, freight haulers, transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

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 or inherently dangerous. Nor does it suggest or mandate immediate engineering review or initiation of new projects. Comments, questions, and improvement ideas are welcomed. Use the comment form on the next page or the contact information on the Design Policy Internet Page:  www.wsdot.wa.gov/design/policy

/s/ Jeff Carpenter

Jeff Carpenter, P.E.

Director & State Design Engineer,
Development Division

