

- [100.01 Overview](#)
- [100.02 Presentation and Revisions](#)
- [100.03 Practical Solutions](#)
- [100.04 Manual Applications](#)
- [100.05 Manual Use](#)
- [100.06 Manual Organization](#)

100.01 Overview

The *Design Manual* sets the policy, procedures, and criteria to develop projects on state highways. The Design Manual facilitates the development of a highway system consistent with the needs of the multimodal traveling public.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has found the procedures and guidance in the Design Manual to be acceptable for use on federal aid projects. Deviations from the Design Manual must be approved following the procedures outlined herein.

The information, guidance, and references contained herein are not intended as a substitute for sound engineering judgment. The *Design Manual* is not a comprehensive textbook on highway engineering, nor does it attempt to cover all the possible scenarios Washington's highways present. It is recognized that some situations encountered are beyond the scope of this presentation.

The Headquarters (HQ) Design Office occasionally issues Project Delivery Memorandums (PDM), which represent interim updates that supersede policy in this manual. The HQ Design Office also issues Design Bulletins (DB), which do not change policy, but are intended to provide clarifications about the interpretation of existing policy and guidance for manual users. Check for active PDMs and DBs on a regular basis – they are posted at <https://wsdot.wa.gov/engineering-standards/all-manuals-and-standards/manuals/design-manual>. Note that both PDM's and DB's are eventually retired, once their content is incorporated in the Design Manual, or they become no longer relevant.

If you have design questions not answered by the *Design Manual*, contact the Headquarters (HQ) Design Office.

100.02 Presentation and Revisions

The *Design Manual* is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the:

- WSDOT Home Page: www.wsdot.wa.gov/
- Design Policy Web Page: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/engineering-standards/design-topics/design-tools-and-support>
- Active Design Manual Revisions Web Page: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/engineering-standards/all-manuals-and-standards/manuals/design-manual#ActiveDesignRevisions>
- Publications Services Web Page: www.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/manuals/index.htm

The online version of the manual enables you to conduct a word search of the entire manual. Opening an individual chapter is faster, but a word search is limited to that chapter.

The *Design Manual* is continually revised to reflect changing processes, procedures, regulations, policies, and organizations. Feedback from users is encouraged to improve the manual for everyone. Comments may be submitted by any method that is convenient for you. There is a comment form in the front of the manual, or comments may be made via the contact names on the Design Policy Internet page (see link above).

Note that the Design Policy Internet page includes a link to an errata page, which provides a list of known technical errors in the manual. Manual users are encouraged to view this page on a regular basis.

A contents section lists all chapters and the major headings of the sections/pages. The exhibits section lists all the exhibits in the manual.

Most chapters include a list of references, including laws, administrative codes, manuals, and other publications, which are the basis for the information in the chapter. The definitions for terms used in the *Design Manual* are found in the Glossary.

100.03 Practical Solutions

WSDOT deploys Practical Solutions to enable incremental, flexible and sustainable transportation investment decisions as outlined in Executive Order (EO) E 1090.01, Advancing Practical Solutions. This data-driven approach uses tools, data analytics, performance measures, and stakeholder input to (1) seek lower-cost approaches and efficiencies in expanding and operating the multimodal transportation system to reduce travel demand and the need for building costly new infrastructure, (2) identify, evaluate, analyze, and manage risk to WSDOT's strategic objectives, and (3) identify and implement agency efficiencies. The goal is to identify and solve needs as quickly and cost-effectively as possible.

WSDOT uses practical solutions throughout the project development process, from planning through operation and maintenance. Examples of Practical Solutions strategies used in design include Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO), off-system solutions, transportation demand management, and incremental strategic capital solutions. (See [Chapter 1100](#) for more information.)

100.04 Manual Applications

The Design Manual incorporates and interprets the FHWA adopted design requirements found in 23 CFR 625 and [49 CFR 37.9](#) that apply to projects on the NHS and provides guidance for uniform application of design details under normal conditions. It also guides users through the project development process used by WSDOT. The *Design Manual* is used by the department to:

- Interpret current design principles, including American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and other appropriate policy sources, findings, and federal and state laws.
- Develop projects that address modal and community performance needs.
- Balance the competing performance needs of highway construction projects.
- Design for low-cost solutions.

The *Design Manual* allows for flexibility in design for specific and unusual situations. For unusual circumstances, the manual provides mechanisms for documenting the reasons for the choices made.

The *Design Manual* is developed for use on Interstate and state highways and may not be suitable for projects on county roads or city streets.

100.05 Manual Use

The WSDOT *Design Manual* is intended to be used for design of department-owned facilities, especially the transportation facilities associated with state highways as designated by [RCW 47.17](#).

For state highway routes, projects are designed using the *Design Manual* practical design approach (see [Chapter 1100](#) and Division 11). If WSDOT guidance is not used on a project, appropriate documentation and approvals are required (see [Chapter 300](#) and [Chapter 1100](#)).

When WSDOT designs facilities that will be turned over to local jurisdictions, those facilities are to be designed using appropriate local geometric design criteria.

When local jurisdictions design any element of state highway facilities, the *Design Manual* must be used. Local jurisdictions are free to adopt this manual for their local criteria or to develop their own specialized guidance for facilities not on state highway routes.

100.06 Manual Organization

The *Design Manual* is organized into a series of divisions that address a portion of the project development and design processes. The divisions are composed of chapters that address the general topic in detail and are, in some cases, specific to a particular discipline.

Division 1 – General Information: Presents an overview of the Design Manual, its contents and application, as well as a chapter on Design-Build projects.

- [Chapter 100](#) – Manual Description: Chapter content/resources within the Design Manual.
- [Chapter 110](#) – Design-Build Projects: How the Design Manual applies to design-build projects: includes terminology and reference to design-build contract documents.

Division 2 – Hearings, Environmental, and Permits: Provides the designer with information about the Community Engagement and hearings process, the environmental documentation process, and the permit process.

- [Chapter 210](#) – Community Engagement and Hearings: Developing a project-specific Community Engagement plan; the ingredients of an effective Community Engagement plan; and methods for Community Engagement.
- [Chapter 225](#) – Environmental Coordination: Provides a summary of the relevant provisions in the *Environmental Manual*. Gives designers a brief overview and direction to environmental resources.

Division 3 – Project Documentation: Provides designers with information on project management, value engineering, traffic and safety analysis, design documentation, and approvals.

- [Chapter 300](#) – Design Documentation, Approval, and Process Review: Building the Project File (PF) and the Design Documentation Package (DDP) and recording the recommendations and decisions that lead to a project by preserving the documents from the planning, scoping, programming, and design phases (includes permits, approvals, contracts, utility relocation, right of way, advertisement and award, and construction). Links to websites to download documentation templates.
- [Chapter 301](#) – Design and Maintenance Coordination – Best Practices: Means and methods for coordinating design with maintenance concerns and needs.
- [Chapter 305](#) – Project Management: Brief description and links to WSDOT project management resources.
- [Chapter 310](#) – Value Engineering: A systematic, multidisciplinary process study early in the project design stage to provide recommendations to improve scope, functional design, constructability, environmental impacts, or project cost—required by federal law for high-cost, complex projects.
- [Chapter 320](#) – Traffic Analysis: Procedural guidance and general requirements for conducting traffic analyses.
- [Chapter 321](#) – Sustainable Safety Analysis: Informational and procedural guidance for conducting safety analyses, within the current extent of the applications.

Division 4 – Surveying: Includes criteria for surveying, mapping, and monumentation requirements.

- [Chapter 400](#) – Surveying and Mapping: The procedures within WSDOT for project surveying.
- [Chapter 410](#) – Monumentation: The requirements and procedures for Monumentation.

Division 5 – Right of Way and Access Control: Provides guidance on right of way considerations; access revision report; limited/managed access; and fencing.

- [Chapter 510](#) – Right of Way Considerations: The right of way and easement acquisition process.
- [Chapter 520](#) – Access Control: WSDOT Access Control program information.
- [Chapter 530](#) – Limited Access Control: Clarification on full, partial, and modified limited access control.
- [Chapter 540](#) – Managed Access Control: The classes of managed access highways and the access connection permitting process.
- [Chapter 550](#) – Freeway Access Revision: The process for interchange access revisions on freeways and the steps for producing an access revision report.
- [Chapter 560](#) – Fencing: The purpose of fencing, types of fencing, and fencing design criteria.

Division 6 – Soils and Paving: Presents guidance for investigating soils, rock, and surfacing materials; estimating tables; and guidance and criteria for the use of geosynthetics.

- [Chapter 610](#) – Investigation of Soils, Rock, and Surfacing Materials: The requirements for qualifying a materials source, geotechnical investigations, and the documentation to be included in the Project File.
- [Chapter 620](#) – Design of Pavement Structures: Estimating tables for the design of pavement structures.
- [Chapter 630](#) – Geosynthetics: The types/applications of geosynthetic drainage, earthwork, erosion control, and soil reinforcement materials.

Division 7 – Structures: Provides guidance for the design of structures for highway projects, including site data for structures, bridges, retaining walls, and noise walls.

- [Chapter 700](#) – Project Development Roles and Responsibilities for Projects With Structures: WSDOT's project development process: roles and responsibilities for projects with structures during the project development phase of a project.
- [Chapter 710](#) – Site Data for Structures: Information required by the HQ Bridge and Structures Office to provide structural design services.
- [Chapter 720](#) – Bridges: Basic design considerations for developing preliminary bridge plans and guidelines on basic bridge geometric features.
- [Chapter 730](#) – Retaining Walls and Steep Reinforced Slopes: Design principles, requirements, and guidelines for retaining walls and steep reinforced slopes.
- [Chapter 740](#) – Noise Barriers: Factors considered when designing a noise barrier.

Division 8 – Hydraulics: Addresses the issue of hydraulics and serves as a guide to highway designers to identify and consider hydraulic-related factors that may impact the design.

- [Chapter 800](#) – Hydraulic Design: Hydraulic considerations for highway projects involving flood plains, stream crossings, channel changes, and groundwater.

Division 9 – Roadside Development: Provides guidance on the portion of state highways between the traveled way and the right of way boundary.

- [Chapter 900](#) – Roadside Development: Managing the roadside environment, including the area between the traveled way and the right of way boundary, unpaved median strips, and auxiliary facilities such as rest areas, wetlands, and stormwater treatment facilities.
- [Chapter 950](#) – Public Art: Policies and procedures for including public art in state transportation corridors.

Division 10 – Traffic Safety Elements: Introduces the designer to traffic safety elements such as work zone traffic control, signing, delineation, illumination, traffic control signals, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).

- [Chapter 1010](#) – Work Zone Safety and Mobility: Planning, design, and preparation of highway project plans that address work zone safety and mobility requirements.
- [Chapter 1020](#) – Signing: The use of signing to regulate, warn, and guide motorists.
- [Chapter 1030](#) – Delineation: The use of pavement markings to designate safe traffic movement.
- [Chapter 1040](#) – Illumination: Illumination design on state highway construction projects.
- [Chapter 1050](#) – Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS): Applying computer and communication technology to optimize the safety and efficiency of the highway system.
- [Chapter 1060](#) – Worker Fall Protection: Evaluate and design needed permanent worker fall protection related to eventual maintenance and operation activities that will be required during and after construction.

Division 11 – Practical Design: Provides practical design guidance for WSDOT projects.

- [Chapter 1100](#) – Practical Design: Includes an overview and description of the WSDOT Practical Solutions initiative, the practical design process, and the relevant chapter information necessary to complete each process step.
- [Chapter 1101](#) – Need Identification: Includes guidance on accurate and concise identification of project needs for practical design.
- [Chapter 1102](#) – Context Identification: Guidance provided to help determine the highway’s land use context and transportation context.
- [Chapter 1103](#) – Design Control Selection: Provides guidance on design controls used in WSDOT projects.
- [Chapter 1104](#) – Alternatives Analysis: Discusses how information determined from planning phases and Design Manual chapters is utilized in alternative solution formation, and how to evaluate the alternative solutions developed.
- [Chapter 1105](#) – Design Element Selection: Provides guidance on selecting design elements for projects.
- [Chapter 1106](#) – Design Element Dimensions: Discusses the practical design approach to selecting design element dimensions.
- [Chapter 1120](#) – Preservation Projects: Provides scoping links and elements and features to be evaluated in preservation projects.
- [Chapter 1130](#) – Development Services: Provides policy, procedures, and criteria for WSDOT, SEPA lead agencies, private developers and consultants about how WSDOT reviews and interacts with proposed land use development projects on the State transportation system.

Division 12 – Geometrics: Covers geometric plan elements; horizontal alignment; lane configurations and pavement transitions; geometric profile elements; vertical alignment; geometric cross sections; and sight distance.

- [Chapter 1210](#) – Geometric Plan Elements: The design of horizontal alignment, lane configuration, and pavement transitions.
- [Chapter 1220](#) – Geometric Profile Elements: The design of vertical alignment.
- [Chapter 1230](#) – Geometric Cross Section – Basics: Roadway cross section introductory chapter; guide to other cross section chapters; provides jurisdictional guidance.
- [Chapter 1231](#) – Geometric Cross Section – Highways: Geometric cross section guidance for all highways except freeways.
- [Chapter 1232](#) – Geometric Cross Section – Freeways: Cross section guidance for freeways and Interstates.
- [Chapter 1238](#) – Geometric Cross Section – Streetside and Parking: Provides information on parking and streetside elements.
- [Chapter 1239](#) – Geometric Cross Section – Shoulders, Side Slopes, Curbs, and Medians: Provides information on geometric cross section components common to many facility types. Cross section elements include: shoulders, medians and outer separations, side slopes, and curbing
- [Chapter 1240](#) – Turning Roadways: Widening curves to make the operating conditions comparable to those on tangent sections.
- [Chapter 1250](#) – Cross Slope and Superelevation: Cross slope design information is provided as well as superelevating curves and ramps so design speeds can be maintained.
- [Chapter 1260](#) – Sight Distance: Stopping, passing, and decision sight distance design elements.
- [Chapter 1270](#) – Auxiliary Lanes: Auxiliary facilities such as climbing lanes, passing lanes, slow-vehicle turnouts, shoulder driving for slow vehicles, emergency escape ramps, and chain-up areas.

Division 13 – Intersections and Interchanges: Addresses the design considerations of at-grade intersections, roundabouts, road approaches, railroad grade crossings, and traffic interchanges.

- [Chapter 1300](#) – Intersection Control Type: Guidance on preliminary intersection evaluation and selection of control type.
- [Chapter 1310](#) – Intersections: Designing intersections at grade, including at-grade ramp terminals.
- [Chapter 1320](#) – Roundabouts: Guidance on the design of roundabouts.
- [Chapter 1330](#) – Traffic Control Signals: The use of power-operated traffic control devices that warn or direct traffic.
- [Chapter 1340](#) – Driveways: The application and design of road approaches on state highways.
- [Chapter 1350](#) – Railroad Grade Crossings: The requirements for highways that cross railroads.
- [Chapter 1360](#) – Traffic Interchanges: The design of interchanges on interstate highways, freeways, and other multilane divided routes.
- [Chapter 1370](#) – Median Crossovers: Guidance on locating and designing median crossovers for use by maintenance, traffic service, emergency, and law enforcement vehicles.

Division 14 – Managed Lanes: Provides design guidance on managed lanes.

- [Chapter 1400](#) – Managed Lanes: Includes an overview and introduction of managed lanes.
- [Chapter 1410](#) – High-Occupancy Vehicle Facilities: Evaluating and designing high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) facilities.
- [Chapter 1420](#) – HOV Direct Access: Design guidance on left-side direct access to HOV lanes and transit facilities.
- [Chapter 1430](#) – Part-Time Shoulder: Guidance, considerations and design associated with part-time shoulders.
- [Chapter 1440](#) – Metered Shoulder: Guidance and design of metered shoulders.

Division 15 – Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities: Provides guidance on pedestrian and bicycle facility design.

- [Chapter 1510](#) – Pedestrian Facilities: Designing facilities that encourage efficient pedestrian access that meets ADA.
- [Chapter 1515](#) – Shared-Use Paths: Guidance that emphasizes pedestrians are users of shared-use paths and accessibility requirements apply in their design.
- [Chapter 1520](#) – Roadway Bicycle Facilities: Selecting and designing useful and cost-effective bicycle facilities.

Division 16 – Roadside Safety Elements: Addresses design considerations for the area outside the roadway, and includes clear zone, roadside, safety mitigation, traffic barriers, and impact attenuator systems.

- [Chapter 1600](#) – Roadside Safety: Clear zone and roadside design, mitigation guidance, and roadside safety features, including Rumble Strips.
- [Chapter 1610](#) – Traffic Barriers: Design of traffic barriers.
- [Chapter 1620](#) – Impact Attenuator Systems: Permanent and work zone impact attenuator systems.

Division 17 – Roadside Facilities: Provides design guidance for the area outside the roadway, including rest areas and truck weigh sites.

- [Chapter 1710](#) – Safety Rest Areas and Traveler Services: Typical layouts for safety rest areas.
- [Chapter 1720](#) – Weigh Sites: Guidance on designing permanent, portable, and shoulder-sited weigh sites.
- [Chapter 1730](#) – Transit Facilities: Operational guidance and information for designing transit facilities such as park & ride lots, transfer/transit centers, and bus stops and pullouts.

