Chapter 1230  Geometric Cross Section Basics

1230.01 General

The geometric cross section is composed of multiple lateral design elements such as lanes, shoulders, medians, bike facilities, and sidewalks. The designer’s task is to select, size, and document these elements appropriately. There is flexibility in the selection of design element dimensioning.

All WSDOT routes, regardless of context, are referred to in the Design Manual as “highways.” Under this definition, freeways are a subset of highways while Interstate freeways are one specific type of freeway.

Refer to the Design Manual Glossary for many of the terms used in this chapter. See Chapter 300 for design documentation requirements.

1230.02 Guidance for Specific Facility Types

Guidance regarding geometric cross sections is located in various Design Manual chapters. The chapter depends on the facility type. Examples of specific facility types include:

- Highways (general)
- Freeways
- Ramps
- Auxiliary lanes
- Collector-Distributor lanes
- Service lanes
- Frontage roads
- HOV facilities
- Median U-turns and crossovers
- Transit facilities including bus pull-outs
- Enforcement areas
- Slow vehicle turn-outs
- Truck weighing facilities
- Shared use paths
- Sidewalks
- Bicycle Facilities

Exhibit 1230-1 shows some common facility types along with the corresponding chapter that geometric cross section guidance can be found in.
Exhibit 1230-1 Geometric Cross Section - Guide to Chapters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Type</th>
<th>Lane width</th>
<th>Turning roadway width</th>
<th>Shoulder width</th>
<th>Median width</th>
<th>Lateral clearance to curb or barrier</th>
<th>Side slope</th>
<th>Cross slope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highways (General)</td>
<td>1231</td>
<td>1240</td>
<td>1231</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>1250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeways</td>
<td>1232</td>
<td>1240</td>
<td>1232</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>1250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramps</td>
<td>1360</td>
<td>1240</td>
<td>1360</td>
<td>1360</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>1360 &amp; 1250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliary lanes</td>
<td>1270 or [1]2 1360</td>
<td>1240</td>
<td>1270 or 1360 [1]</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>1270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-D roadways</td>
<td>1360</td>
<td>1240</td>
<td>1360</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>1360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOV lanes, ramp bypass lanes, etc.</td>
<td>1410</td>
<td>1410</td>
<td>1410</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1410 &amp; 1239</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>1410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left-side direct HOV access (DHOV) facilities</td>
<td>1420</td>
<td>1420</td>
<td>1420</td>
<td>1420 (for DHOV)</td>
<td>1420 &amp; 1239</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>1250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared use path</td>
<td>1515</td>
<td>1515</td>
<td>1515</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1515</td>
<td>1515</td>
<td>1515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

General guidance for curb design is in Chapter 1239. Guidance for curb is also found for numerous types of facilities (Chapter 1310 and others.)

[1] Passing and climbing lanes, see Chapter 1270; Auxiliary lanes between interchanges see Chapter 1360.

Exhibit 1230-1 is not a comprehensive list of guidance associated with either a facility or a design element. It is intended to be a quick reference to the chapter containing the primary guidance related to the specific element and facility type.

For guidance related to intersections see Chapter 1310. For guidance related to sidewalks see Chapter 1510. For guidance related to bicycle facilities see Chapter 1520. For guidance related to bridges see Chapter 720.

1230.03 Common Elements

In addition to the guidance specific to the facility type, also see the general guidance related to cross-sectional elements that are common to various facility types:

- Lanes Chapter 1231
- Shoulders, side slopes, medians & curbs Chapter 1239
- Lateral clearance to curb and barrier Chapter 1239
- Parking & streetside (behind the curb) elements Chapter 1238
- Cross slope and superelevation Chapter 1250
1230.04 Jurisdiction for Design and Maintenance

On all state highways in locations outside of cities or towns and within limited access design areas, geometric design is to be consistent with this Design Manual.

On state highways within an incorporated city or town, develop design features in cooperation with the local agency. For NHS routes, use the Design Manual. For non-NHS routes, the Local Agency Guidelines may be used for dimensioning design elements.

Cross-sectional design within incorporated cities or towns can get complicated due to the joint-jurisdictional authority. WSDOT typically has jurisdiction between the backs of curbs, and cities typically have jurisdiction outside the backs of curbs (see Exhibit 1230-2). When no curb is present, the city or town holds responsibility for the roadside outside the paved shoulder. Despite the jurisdictional differences, it is extremely important to cooperatively determine a cross-sectional design.

Refer to Chapter 301 for additional information on jurisdictional maintenance responsibilities and considerations for maintenance agreements.

Exhibit 1230-2 State and City Jurisdictional Responsibilities
1230.05 References

**1230.05(1) Design Guidance**

*Highway Runoff Manual*, M 31-16, WSDOT

*Local Agency Guidelines* (LAG), M 36-63, WSDOT

*Plans Preparation Manual*, M 22-31, WSDOT

*Standard Plans for Road, Bridge, and Municipal Construction*, M 21-01, WSDOT

*Standard Specifications for Road, Bridge, and Municipal Construction*, M 41-10, WSDOT

**1230.05(2) Supporting Information**

*Understanding Flexibility in Transportation Design – Washington*, WA-RD 638.1, Washington State Department of Transportation, 2005

[www.wsdot.wa.gov/research/reports/fullreports/638.1.pdf](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/research/reports/fullreports/638.1.pdf)


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