

DCM Updates, Chapter 1 and 6, Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting #1 Summary

Date: February 10, 2026 2:00 pm- 4:30pm

Attendees: See attached list

Subject: Stakeholder Meeting DCM Introduction

Summary

The first Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) meeting focused on the process and considerations associated with updating the Design Criteria Manual (DCM). Brandon Telford from MOA Public Works, who is leading the DCM update, led two presentations focused on a DCM introduction and street standards. Attendees discussed the DCM process and update goals, including code and DCM dynamics, funding requirements, safety priorities, and long-term community values.

Introduction to the DCM Discussion

Holly reviewed the stakeholder's roles, responsibilities, and agreements and the DCM timeline and process. The SAG can anticipate five meetings and site visits, and this process is meant to gather input on any concerns, goals and changes for the DCM updates.

Brandon presented on the DCM, focusing on the following:

- Street design criteria: Operations, planning, geometrics & drainage, materials & pavements
- DCM Review: Application and road ownership, relationship to OSHP, Industry Standard Guidance & regulation

The beginning of the presentation prompted discussion about the relationship between municipal code and the DCM, and how to sequence updates moving forward. Attendees expressed interest in understanding how recent and current projects have adhered to the DCM after its last update in 2007.

Right-of-way acquisition was identified as a key challenge, particularly given associated funding constraints. The group discussed the need to balance practical limitations, such as cost, maintenance capacity, and snow removal realities, with aspirations for safer, well-designed streets.

There was also discussion about the values shaping the update process and how those values should be reflected in the DCM. Attendees discussed developing a clearer street hierarchy and improving alignment between long-range planning documents and implementation through code and the DCM. Full comments and questions are included on page 2.

Street Standards Discussion

After a short break, Brandon moved to talk about Street Standards which included:

- Use of ROW
- Design Vehicle: Control, Design, Managed, Passenger and delivery, buses and transit, fire apparatus access road, maintenance

- Menti and Streetmix Activity: Interactive exercise to develop a typical street section

During this presentation, attendees discussed challenges related to ROW constraints and roadway infrastructure. The group also discussed firefighting access and safety in relation to roadway design, including emergency vehicle needs, required clearances, and snow clearing operations.

The Streetmix activity prompted additional discussion about target speeds and safety, sidewalk sizing, and the importance of incorporating land use and context into street design decisions.

Next Steps

The second stakeholder meeting will be scheduled in the coming weeks to continue discussion.

Stakeholders should submit any questions or comments on the DCM update on the comment form [here](#).

DCM Introduction Questions and Comments

Q: What is the timeline for the DCM update process?

A: Q3 of 2027 is when it should be fully completed, with assembly approval.

Q: What is the relationship between the DCM and code? Is the DCM considered code?

A: The DCM was adopted as regulation and is separate from municipal code, but they are similar, and code has more regulatory weight.

Q: What code are you referring to?

A: Title 21

Comment: If federal funds are being used, like for DOT or AMATS funded projects, we have to adhere to federal and state regulations and requirements.

Q: How often is the DCM amended?

A: The DCM hasn't been amended since 2007, although there was an attempt in 2014.

Q: How does the order of operations work for the DCM and code?

A: Both require Assembly approval and they could be advanced together depending on changes.

Comment: For DOT projects on MOA roads, we first have to conform to FHWA requirements, as well as the pre-construction manual, and then the DCM. The DCM is typically the most restrictive and the FHWA and pre-construction manual are flexible enough to allow DOT projects on MOA roads to follow the DCM. We don't use the DCM on DOT roads, but it can be used as a reference.

Q: Is the MOA looking to acquire DOT roads?

A: There are some roads currently in discussion, but the MOA would prefer the DOT to manage their own roadways.

Comment: There is a DOT functional classification system for roads, and OSHP has a prescriptive model for roads, rather than descriptive.

Q: How should the DCM and code work?

A: We could try to include references in the DCM to applicable code sections, but if code changes the DCM will fall out of date. Another option is to incorporate the criteria from code into the DCM during the update and repeal those sections of code to make the DCM a one stop shop as intended.

Q: Is there a prioritization process for these different industry standard guides? What happens when they conflict with each other or our fiscal reality?

A: We're hoping to rely on the expertise of our stakeholders and staff to see what can fit with our current maintenance and fiscal resources.

Q: Some of these design standards and guidance are in the current DCM, are we planning to get rid of them?

A: That's part of the responsibility of the project management team to figure out, based on feedback from stakeholders, we don't have a set plan yet.

Q: How will projects adhere to guidelines that aren't in the DCM?

A: Projects have flexibility within established ranges and minimums but can also use Context Sensitive Solutions to determine what best meets the needs of a corridor. Design teams can apply relevant guidelines while coordinating with Maintenance and Public Works, and designs are developed iteratively.

Q: Is there a scorecard on DCM project compliance? Do we know which roads have followed the DCM?

A: No, there is currently no tracking of DCM project compliance. It's likely that projects after 2007 have followed the DCM.

Q: Does the DCM update process include incremental changes?

A: It can, and has in previous versions; we're not fully sure where this process will go and can include that in our discussion.

Comment: It's important to consider funding sources, especially if we adopt standards that require additional ROW. The language of the DCM ("shall" vs. "may/should") matters, and using public funds to acquire ROW can be challenging.

Comment: How can we balance our practical capabilities with our aspirations for well-designed, safer streets? We should prioritize safety, accessibility, and active transportation, and not use ROW challenges or snow storage as excuses for avoiding safer design. I think snow removal is a separate issue that should be addressed through maintenance and should not dictate design decisions. I also think this work can help inform broader policies and regulations and shouldn't default to past design and guidelines.

Comment: It is disappointing that there is no available data on how recent and current road projects have adhered to the DCM, or where they have deviated. What is the value of continuing to update the DCM if we don't understand how the current version is doing in practice?

Q: Does ROW acquisition limit full sidewalks on streets?

A: Not always, but ROW can be a factor, along with utilities. It's a case-by-case basis.

Q: What are the values that are shaping our conversation here?

A: We're hoping this is a values-based discussion while learning about the technical aspects of the DCM.

Comment: We always seem to have enough money to design and develop for one mode of travel, vehicles, while there's never enough for other modes.

Comment: Updating the DCM isn't going to solve all our problems, it's a guiding document.

Comment: The DCM should establish a preferred treatment or standard, rather than simply setting minimum requirements, which don't clearly communicate what we want to achieve.

A: The DCM currently has that.

Comment: When you use federal funding for ROW acquisition, you need to ensure you have a strong legal basis that is consistent to minimize legal repercussions.

Comment: It would be helpful to include a decision tree in the DCM—potentially on a chapter-by-chapter basis depending on the level of public interest. A front-facing, transparent decision-making process would be beneficial.

Comment: The DCM should reflect what the community needs now and remain adaptable and not set in stone.

Q: How much new building is going to happen, isn't Anchorage built out already?

A: In the Anchorage Bowl there is less new development, but Eagle River is seeing new subdivisions and continued construction.

Comment: The long-range transportation strategy has a prioritization road strategy that should be incorporated in the DCM.

Comment: Title 21 changes for site access have impacted sidewalk requirements, thresholds, school walking routes, and traffic volume considerations. PM&E have noted the importance of optimization, context-sensitive design, and balancing feasibility and safety, along with less sidewalks.

Street Standards Questions and Comments

Comment: The Long-Range Transportation Strategy set a modal hierarchy and recommends its implementation in code and the DCM.

Comment: Sometimes roads are designed around a specific, rare use, such as emergency access or peak vehicle capacity, which ends up dictating how the road functions all the time. How can we look to prioritize movement over place?

Comment: Acquiring additional ROW reduces the tax base. The MOA should see that as a liability rather than an asset, resulting in a net loss.

Comment: The long-range transportation strategy has a prioritization road strategy that should be incorporated in the DCM.

Comment: We should reconsider the road in its larger context, instead of just how can we travel down it as fast as possible.

Comment: Fire trucks do not need to use travel lanes for stabilizers and can use sidewalks.

Comment: The option to put the stabilizer on the street is preferable to a parking lot or sidewalk.

Q: How far does the fire trucks' aerial water spray? Can they reach beyond adjacent structures?

A: There are minimum and maximum distances and ranges in the fire code.

Comment: The MOA should look to other cities with topographic and infrastructure constraints for design and policy changes to implement here.

Q: A lot of cities have amendments to the fire code, will that be part of the DCM?

A: Code currently includes some local amendments to the IFC. The project management team could propose additional amendments if they find justification for amending the IFC. There will be communication with the fire department.

Q: If each lane is 10 feet wide, is the 27 feet reached because of fire access, or because we want to add other elements to the street?

A: Yes, there are many factors that make the road wider.

Q: Where does the 27-foot width come from?

A: There are fire and hydrant regulations that are part of it, but also maintenance and other factors.

Q: How much parking is occurring on local road?

A: It depends on the neighborhood and the context. Typically, higher density neighborhoods have more on street parking, which can impede snow removal.

Q: In reference to the unobstructed 20 feet of road, does that include a pathway or gutters? How does the DCM interpret that?

A: It depends on the roadway context and how the space is delineated. However, a curb would not be considered unobstructed, as it can interfere with snow clearing and removal operations.

Attendees:

Name	Agency
Jessie Doherty	AK DOH
Anna Bosin	AK DOT & PF
Connor Eshleman	AK DOT & PF
Dalton Perry	AK DOT & PF
Alex Read	AK DOT & PF
Jamie Benson	Alaska Trucking Association
Aaron Jongenelen	AMATS
Emily Weiser	AMATS
Radhika Krishna	Anchorage Downtown Partnership
Andre Spinelli	Anchorage Home Builders Association
Heather Philip	ASD
Erin Baldwin Day	Assembly
Daniel Vollanad	Assembly
Alexa Dobson	Bike Anchorage
Tyler Robinson	CIHA
Jason Norris	Community Council
Jade Powell	Community Council
Renee Whitesall	DOWL
Stephanie Mormilo	HDL Engineering
Colin Singleton	ITE Alaska
Will Webb	Kinney Engineering
Graham Downey	Mayor's Office
Kent Kohlhasse	MOA
Paul LaFrance	MOA Development
Michael Nti Ababio	MOA Planning
Mélisa Babb	MOA Planning
Donna Brechan	MOA PM&E
Tim Hunting	MOA PM&E
Melinda Kohlhaas	MOA PM&E
Kyle Pettibone	MOA PM&E
Shawn Wilson	MOA PM&E
Eric Armagost	MOA Public Works
Brandon Telford	MOA Public Works
Donavan Camp	MOA Traffic
Zak Hartman	MOA Traffic
Lindsey Hajduk	NeighborWorks
Bart Ruldoph	Transit
Brandon Marcott	Triad Engineering
Renée Eddy Harvey	Huddle
Holly Spoth-Torres	Huddle