

Foreword

In the late 1980s, sixteen central Iowa public agencies, including the City of Des Moines, surrounding cities, and two counties, began meeting to discuss developing common urban design standards and construction specifications.

Developing common standards among several jurisdictions was breaking new ground in Iowa, and the group made slow but deliberate progress.

Their efforts came into focus when, in 1995, Governor Terry Branstad assembled the “Blue Ribbon Task Force on Transportation” to investigate ways to use Iowa’s Road Use Tax Fund more efficiently. One of the task force’s recommendations was that agencies “adopt common standards for construction specifications” By 1998, the central Iowa group (then known as the Central Iowa Committee) had expanded to 34 Iowa jurisdictions, including several communities outside the Des Moines area, and had published their design guidelines and standard specifications.

In 2000, the effort was underway to further expand the number of cities using the Central Iowa Committee’s manuals and to convert them to statewide manuals, eventually known as the Statewide Urban Design and Specifications (SUDAS) program.

A statewide steering committee, comprised of various stakeholder groups, including Iowa’s cities and counties, the Iowa DOT, engineering consultants, and industry representatives, was organized in 2002 to oversee the new SUDAS program. Iowa State University’s Center for Transportation Research and Education (CTRE) was chosen to manage the program.

In 2004, a new nonprofit entity was created to establish a mechanism for statewide ownership: the Iowa SUDAS Corporation. The Board of Directors for the corporation consisted of members who formerly served on the statewide steering committee, with the addition of a few others. CTRE continued to manage the program.

On February 17, 2005, the Central Iowa Committee acted to officially transfer ownership of the manuals to the Iowa SUDAS Corporation. Statewide ownership of the manuals makes them truly the statewide standards for urban public works improvements.