

## INSTRUCTIONAL MEMORANDUMS To Local Public Agencies



To: Cities	Date: July 7, 2023
From: Local Systems Bureau	I.M. No. 3.215
Subject: Urban Design Guides	

**Contents:** This Instructional Memorandum (I.M.) provides design guidelines for urban public improvement projects. Please note the following:

- These guidelines will be used by the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) to review the proposed design values of Federal-aid road or bridge projects.
- For Primary or Interstate roadways, or routes on the National Highway System (NHS), refer to the [Iowa DOT Design Manual](#).
- For new construction or reconstruction of road or bridge projects on rural collectors and rural local roads, refer to [I.M. 3.210](#), Rural Design Guidelines.
- For 3R Guidelines for both rural and urban projects, refer to [I.M. 3.220](#), 3R Guidelines.
- For Bridge or Culvert design, refer to [I.M. 3.500](#), Bridge or Culvert Plans.

### Introduction

The Statewide Urban Design and Specifications (SUDAS) program, a nonprofit corporation, provides uniform design guidelines and construction specifications for Iowa's urban public improvement projects. Iowa is the only state to develop and implement uniform urban design standards and construction specifications that are used statewide. A statewide steering committee, comprised of various stakeholder groups, including Iowa DOT, cities, counties, and consultant and industry groups oversee the SUDAS program. The [SUDAS Design Manual](#) and Specifications Manual are frequently updated and can be found here: <https://iowasudas.org/>.

### SUDAS Design Guidelines

SUDAS design guidelines should be used for developing urban public improvement projects. Urban road or bridge projects should follow SUDAS Design Manual [Section 5C-1 - Geometric Design Tables](#). The "Preferred" tables should be used as the basis for design wherever the conditions permit. For Federal-aid projects, the Project Engineer shall identify any design values that do not meet or exceed the "Preferred" tables and shall explain the reasons for not meeting these values. This documentation is not a formal design exception but should be included with the Concept Statement submittal. For Federal-aid projects, a design exception as detailed in [I.M. 3.260](#), Design Exception Process, is required for any values less than those in the "Acceptable" tables. These design guidelines will be used by the Iowa DOT to review the proposed design values of Federal-aid road or bridge projects.

### SUDAS Specifications

Please note that SUDAS and individual community SUDAS Supplemental Specifications are NOT acceptable by reference, for Iowa DOT Lettings. To be incorporated into any project let through Iowa DOT, SUDAS Specifications shall be added by Special Provision (SP). This includes Federal-aid and Federal-aid Swap projects. Additional information on SPs can be found in [Attachment A to I.M. 3.700](#), Check and Final Plan Guidelines. Previously used SPs can be found at: <https://iowadot.gov/specifications/Special-Provisions-SP/2023>

### Pedestrian/Bicycle Accommodations on Bridges

Under 23 U.S.C. 217(e), all projects with Federal financial participation that replace or rehabilitate a highway bridge deck are required to provide safe accommodation of pedestrians or bicyclists, as applicable, on the bridge, when both of the following conditions are met:

- The bridge is located on a highway on which pedestrians or bicyclists are allowed to operate at each end of the bridge, and
- FHWA determines that safe accommodation can be provided at reasonable cost.