

**CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION 98-086  
MARCH 16, 1998 AGENDA**

**SUBJECT:**

**CITY OF DES MOINES STANDARD  
SPECIFICATIONS**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

**HAROLD SMITH  
CITY ENGINEER**

**SYNOPSIS –**

The Urban Standard Specifications for Public Improvements, 1998 Edition, shall replace all previous printings of the standard specifications and addenda. This totally new standard specification was created as a joint effort of 16 local jurisdictions, including the City of Des Moines.

**FISCAL IMPACT –**

N/A

**RECOMMENDATION –**

**Adopt the Urban Standard Specifications for Public Improvements, 1998 Edition.**

**BACKGROUND –**

In June 1989, City Engineer Harold Smith initiated informal meetings with Des Moines Metropolitan Area technical representatives to explore interest in preparing a Design Standards Manual that would provide uniform criteria and procedure for public improvements construction. The idea was recognized to be in the best interest of the entire Metropolitan Area with substantial benefit to be derived, and on February 26, 1990, a 28E Intergovernmental Agreement was entered into with the City of Des Moines and the following entities:

Cities: Altoona Johnston Urbandale  
Ankeny Norwalk Waukee  
Bondurant Pleasant Hill West Des Moines

Clive Polk City

Water Works: Des Moines  
West Des Moines

Counties: Dallas  
Polk

Greater Des Moines Home Builders Association

The above entities formed a Des Moines Metropolitan Design Standards Committee made up of technical representatives and builders, consultants, and contractors representing the Home Builders Association. The City of Des Moines Engineering Department agreed to administer a consultant contract, which, after a selection procedure, was entered into by Roll Call No. 90-852 on February 26, 1990, with the firm of Snyder & Associates, Inc.

Monthly and sometimes bi-monthly meetings were held by the Committee and Snyder & Associates, Inc. to complete the Design Standards Manual. The result of all of these efforts was a Design Standards Manual which was adopted by City Council on December 9, 1991, Roll Call No. 91-5095, and reviewed and revised in 1993.

After completion of the Des Moines Metropolitan Design Standards Manual, the Greater Des Moines Home Builders Association chose to not fund future efforts of the committee.

In 1995, the Des Moines Metropolitan Design Standard and Specifications Committee commenced work on developing a specification manual for the area, and retained Snyder & Associates, Inc. to develop the 1998 Urban Standard Specifications for Public Improvements. In 1997 the committee was renamed the Urban Standards and Specifications Committee to include members from Central Iowa.

Due to the complexity of the task, the range of possible construction specification considerations, and a need to achieve consensus, a continuing commitment by the participants was and will continue to be required. The result of these efforts has resulted in a Standard Specification Manual that is to be updated annually and provides a uniform construction standard throughout the Central Iowa area. It is the goal of the Committee that the manual provide standard specifications that ensure public improvements will function adequately, reduce maintenance problems, are durable and safe, and most of all cost effective to the public which finances the improvements.

Knowledgeable professionals acting in conscience have provided the valued judgments needed to conceive the standard specifications. This was accomplished as the result of the exchange of information and common problems, the review of new products and procedures, and new governmental regulations from state and federal governments. The composite committee has expended hundreds of man-hours developing this set of standard specifications.

The Committee views this manual as a beginning and not a conclusion. The manual is not a

static, but a dynamic publication, which will require annual updates and the development of new sections to contain and improve upon current construction standards. Periodically the Committee will meet to discuss the appropriate changes and any additions to the specifications that will be issued on an annual basis. A new 28E Agreement will provide for this ongoing effort.

In order to minimize the ongoing updating cost, a schedule of buy-in fees has been established and additional jurisdictions have been solicited to join. In addition to the original 16 jurisdictions remaining, the following 12 jurisdictions have indicated an interest to join:

Ames Grimes Newton  
Boone Knoxville Pella  
Creston Marshalltown Perry  
Fort Dodge Nevada Webster City

The implementation and control of the Urban Standard Specifications for Public Improvements is left to each jurisdiction. It is suggested that each jurisdiction adopt the manual into their respective ordinances. Conflicting ordinances and requirements such as subdivision ordinances need to be changed or made subservient to the standard specifications.