



CONTEXT SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS

**A PROVEN WAY OF DOING BUSINESS THAT HELPS AGENCIES
PERFORM BETTER AND MORE EFFICIENTLY**

PROJECTS GET DONE FASTER

Integrating **Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)** into your agency as the way of doing business can help you accomplish your goals by substantially improving the performance of your project delivery process. CSS can create significant cost and time savings in completing projects while improving the credibility of and public trust in your agency.

- **CSS can help your agency move away from the DAD (Decide, Announce, and Defend) approach towards the POP approach (Publicly Owned/Optimized Projects);** an approach that increases public acceptance and trust. The CSS approach helps build political acceptance and the “will” to leverage added support and resources for funding our programs.
- **CSS can define public measures of success such as: 1) community acceptance, 2) environmental compatibility, 3) functionality, 4) financial feasibility, 5) timeliness of delivery, and 6) sustainable decisions and investments.**

- **CSS can help designers “mine” the flexibility in design manuals to create safe facilities that fit into the community and environmental context.** CSS can also create more flexibility by fostering careful consideration of appropriate design speeds and levels of service standards and yet preserve roadway safety for transportation agency projects and the communities in which they are proposed.
- **CSS can provide a framework for integrating the competing needs of the Transportation, Community, Environmental, Financial and Political Contexts in your agency mission and strategic plan.**

“Our highway and bridge and public transit systems are critical to the economic well-being and success of our businesses and communities. PennDOT is committed to “right sizing” projects. These solutions provide a sound transportation system that will not only benefit the economy of the commonwealth, but will also enhance the quality of life for all our residents. That is what CSS is all about.”

–Al Biehler, Secretary, Pennsylvania DOT



Route 31, New Jersey

- **CSS can minimize costly process and project delays, and rework cycles.** CSS advocates collaboration with a full range of stakeholders, not only in project design, but in the early stages of project planning. This will engender consensus, thereby saving your agency money and time.

- **CSS can assist your agency in selecting balanced investments that meet transportation and economic needs with sensitivity to communities and the environment.** This can be done by providing a guiding philosophy for working together early and collaboratively with MPOs, regional planning organizations, communities and resource agencies.

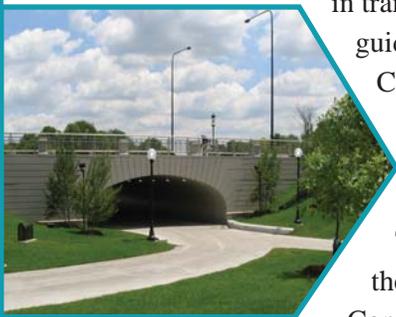


DRIVING TO SUCCESS WITH CSS

THE MAINSTREAMING OF CSS: WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

The core principles of CSS can be found in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The CSS concept gained significant momentum in 1998 when the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) jointly sponsored the “Thinking Beyond the Pavement” national conference. This conference generated the first working definition of Context Sensitive Design (CSD) along with a set of 15 principles for excellence

in transportation design to guide the application of CSD in state transportation programs.



South Lake Shore Drive, Illinois

Since the “1998 Thinking Beyond the Pavement Conference”, CSD

has evolved from solely a design focused process into the total business approach of CSS where transportation activities are conducted in a collaborative and responsive manner with the stakeholders impacted by the transportation decision. Both AASHTO and FHWA have undertaken program initiatives to continue to promote CSS as a business model for agencies responsible for the effective development, delivery, operation and maintenance of transportation projects. State transportation agencies have pursued CSS at different levels and rates. States that pursue CSS have experienced success in saving project costs and time while building credibility and trust with stakeholders.

On September 6-8, 2006, in Baltimore, Maryland, the AASHTO/FHWA Peer Exchange on Context Sensitive Solutions engaged participants from 49 transportation

“FHWA is committed to advancing CSS as a way of doing business. It will help us ensure a safe and efficient transportation system while keeping communities and the environment strong. CSS is, simply put, doing the right thing for the right reasons.”

—J. Richard Capka, Administrator, Federal Highway Administration

agencies to assess the national experience with the implementation and integration of CSS and the applicability of the 1998 CSS definition and principles.

On October 26, 2006 in Portland, Oregon, a working group assembled in conjunction with the AASHTO Standing Committee on Highways annual meeting to continue the dialogue on the institutionalization of CSS at state transportation agencies and the refining of the 1998 CSD definition and principles.



North Shore Highway, Minnesota

“From the DOTs that have been successful at implementing and integrating CSS as a way of doing business we have identified five key elements in their efforts: identifying a champion, learning together through self discovery, moving forward with appropriate policy changes, recognizing the role of the public, and recognizing that using liability as an excuse for rejecting CSS is a myth that must be overcome.”

—Neil Pedersen, Administrator, Maryland SHA

INSTITUTIONALIZING CSS

The business case for institutionalizing CSS can be made by a transportation agency’s need to:

- Improve customer/stakeholder relationships
- Reduce agency costs of doing business in delivering its projects, programs and services
- Deliver projects on time and within budget

All of these play critical roles in determining the credibility and accountability of your agency within the community, environmental, financial and political contexts in which it operates.



Coahoma Archeology, Mississippi



DRIVING TO SUCCESS WITH CSS

WHY IMPLEMENT AND INTEGRATE CSS INTO YOUR AGENCY?

- CSS can save your agency time and money by shortening the project delivery process and dealing with stakeholder concerns (gaining consensus) upfront during the decision making process.

MDOT's stakeholder engagement process is an excellent example of CSS collaboration that has helped strengthen our credibility and led to stronger stakeholder relationships. The commitment to on-going stakeholder dialogue will have lasting value for the organization. The process has helped formalize what was once informal and helped build a firm foundation for future CSS success.

—Michigan Institutionalization Of CSS 2006 Application

- CSS can help eliminate project delivery problems such as last minute surprises and design changes.

- CSS helps your agency prioritize competing project needs and allocate

limited transportation funds by securing commitments to the process and the decisions.

- CSS builds trust through consensus and partnering with the public and resource agencies throughout the development of your projects.



New Pueblo Freeway, Colorado

By pursuing a balanced transportation plan that integrates a variety of modes, the Eastern Corridor plan will: eliminate more than 50 million vehicle miles of travel from the region's highway network each year, with accompanying air and fuel emission savings; significantly increase peak hour transit use to nearly 5 percent of all peak-period travel; reduce congestion during peak hours; and, reduce travel delays by nearly 4 million hours annually. Investments in the Eastern Corridor are projected to result in a net total increase of \$23 billion to the gross regional product of the region over the life of the project, including significant increases in jobs and population.

—Eastern Corridor Ohio DOT 2006 CSS Application

- CSS facilitates and streamlines the NEPA process.
- CSS solutions add lasting value to the community, environment and transportation system; CSS solves transportation problems while improving communities and the environment.

KEYS TO SUCCESS IN CSS:

- State transportation leaders and CSS practitioners during recent national CSS meetings identified the following principles as key elements of successful CSS projects and integration efforts:
- Strive towards a shared stakeholder vision to provide a basis for decisions.

“For CSS to be successful, we as DOTs need to develop strong meaningful partnerships with stakeholders and establish clear and frequent communication to minimize misinformation and knowledge gaps. Meaningful public involvement doesn't mean that we will always agree, only that we commit to work together to achieve solutions that serve the greatest public good.”

—Victor Mendez, Director, Arizona DOT

- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of contexts.
- Foster continuing communication and collaboration to achieve consensus.
- Exercise flexibility and creativity to shape effective transportation solutions, while preserving and enhancing community and natural environments and highway safety

CSS IS NOT:

- Compromising safety or standards due to community pressure. CSS is a collaborative process amongst stakeholders with the DOT ensuring safety and operational concerns.
- Spending a lot more money. Collaborating with parties interested in the project can also bring other sources of funding to the effort and produce a more comprehensive solution within shorter time frames and with fewer do-overs.



DRIVING TO SUCCESS WITH CSS

- Taking a lot more time. By using an effective outreach process, project issues can be identified and resolved early in a projects development. The alternative is a process where previously ignored issues can derail a project late in the process.

“Context Sensitive Solutions is more than an initiative, it is a fundamental change in the way we do business. As each of us come to understand the elements of CSS, it will be woven into the way we do our work and become an integral part of the UDOT culture.”

—John Njord, Executive Director, UDOT

- Creating winners or losers. With a successful outreach process, everyone is able to understand how the final solution was chosen.

WHERE CAN YOU GET INFORMATION OR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO INTEGRATE THE CSS WAY OF DOING BUSINESS INTO YOUR AGENCY?



Grand Loop Road, Washington

- Listening to the loudest voices...Like the squeaky wheel. A good process allows an opportunity for every voice to be heard.

Contact:
AASHTO Engineering Division
 202-624-5800.

- Doing what every stakeholder wants. A compromise for consensus is almost always required to reach a solution that best fits everyone’s needs.

Federal Highway Administration
 Office of Infrastructure
 202-366-0494
 Office of Planning,
 Environment and Realty
 202-366-2065



Glenwood Bridge, North Carolina

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
 STATE HIGHWAY AND
 TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS

AASHTO
 THE VOICE OF TRANSPORTATION



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration