

Federal Highway Administration Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) Program

Current Activities Report

July 2007

This report reflects the current and planned future activities of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) CSS program. This summary includes the CSS related activities being sponsored or championed by the FHWA Offices of Federal Lands Highway; Infrastructure; Planning, Environment and Realty; Resource Center; and Safety. For additional information about these or other activities, contact the points of contact identified for each activity. Additionally more information may be available on the FHWA CSS program web site at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/csd>.

Table of Contents

Page

I. Building CSS Capacity – Training and Education

A. FHWA CSS Training Course	2
B. Integrating CSS into University Curricula	2
C. Integration of CSS into NHI and FHWA Training Courses	2
D. CSS Training Assessment and Program Guide	2
E. FHWA Training Action Plan	2

II. Toolbox to Apply CSS

Planning:

A. Integration of CSS in Transportation Planning	2
B. Land Use and Transportation Training Course	3

Project Development & Design:

C. CSS in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities	3
D. The Ecological Guide	3

Construction:

E. Integrating CSS in Construction - State-of-the-Practice Report	3
---	---

III. Raising Awareness and Advancing CSS Implementation

A. CSS Clearinghouse Website	3
B. FHWA CSS Technical Assistance & Training	4
C. CSS Primer and Outreach Materials	4
D. Guanella Pass CSS Lessons Learned Video	4
G. CSS Self Assessment Guide & Workshops	4
F. CSS Pooled Fund Study	4
G. FHWA CSS Implementation Assessment	

IV. CSS National Dialog

A. CSS National Dialog	5
B. ASCE CSS Conference	5
C. CSS Webinars to Raise ITE Members Awareness	5
D. Green Highways Initiative	5

FHWA CSS Program Current Activities Report

I. Building CSS Capacity – Training & Education

- A. FHWA CSS Training Course (NHI Course # 142050)** - The purpose of this introductory course is to provide participants with a general appreciation and understanding of the CSS philosophy and principles. This course provides participants with a general overview of the opportunities to apply CSS in all phases of the planning, development, design, and implementation of transportation improvement projects. This three-day course is available for delivery. For information or to schedule this course, contact nhitraining@dot.gov. FHWA is reviewing this course based on the experiences of agencies with applying CSS over the past couple of years, to determine what changes may be appropriate to this course. It is expected that any revisions to this course would be available in late 2008.
- B. Integrating CSS into University Curricula** - The Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE), based at North Carolina State University, is working in conjunction with FHWA to develop a graduate-level focused CSS course. This initiative will also: 1) create a template for integrating CSS philosophy and principles into transportation curricula, 2) develop an academic network to provide feedback into the development of this template and encourage the integration of CSS into undergraduate and graduate curricular, and 3) develop and offer an undergraduate-level CSS course for civil engineering and transportation planning students. Delivery is expected in 2008. FHWA contact: keith.moore@dot.gov.
- C. Integration of CSS into NHI and FHWA Training Courses** – The purpose of this project is to review NHI training courses currently being offered to ensure that CSS philosophy and principles are appropriately integrated into these courses. FHWA contact: keith.moore@dot.gov
- D. CSS Training Assessment and Program Guide** – The purpose of this project is to develop a guide and tool to assist agencies in assessing their current and planned future CSS training activities. This guide will assist agencies in assessing and developing plans to enhance their CSS training courses, activities and multi-year capacity building programs. The draft of this guide is expected to be available in late 2007. FHWA Contact: barbara.bauer@dot.gov.
- E. FHWA CSS Training Action Plan** – The purpose of this project is to develop a multi-year strategy and plan to raise the awareness of the importance of CSS and to train staff within FHWA. The resulting plan will address the range of strategies and approaches that would be appropriate for a more comprehensive capacity building program to continue to raise the awareness and train staff on CSS within FHWA. The draft of this guide is expected to be available in the fall of 2007. FHWA Contact: barbara.bauer@dot.gov.

II. Toolbox to Apply CSS

Planning:

- A. Integration of CSS in the Transportation Planning Process** –The Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE) at the North Carolina State University conducted an FHWA-sponsored research project to determine best practices associated with integrating context sensitive solutions (CSS) into the transportation planning process. An annotated bibliography includes sections on current research

initiatives, and applications and policies at national, state, and regional agencies. Deliverables also include an assessment of CSS as applied to planning, a tool-kit of fact sheets, Q&As, and case studies for both States and communities. A report summary includes findings and recommendations on ways to incorporate CSS into transportation planning based on research and case study evaluations. To view the final report go to <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/csstp/csstransplan.htm>. FHWA contact: danyell.diggs@dot.gov.

- B. Land Use and Transportation (NHI Course # 151043)** – This three day course assists practitioners in developing a multi-modal transportation system that supports desired land uses and helps shape land uses to support the transportation system. The course assists participants in understanding the relationships between transportation and land use; the processes through which transportation and land use issues can be jointly addressed, and; implementation steps to ensure that transportation and land use systems are designed in a compatible, mutually supportive manner. National Transit Institute has several offerings of the course in 2007 and National Highway Institute plans to start offering it in 2008. FHWA contact: jodi.mccullough@dot.gov.

Project Development & Design:

- C. CSS in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities** – The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) has developed this guide in cooperation with The Congress for New Urbanism, EPA and FHWA. ITE has published this guide as a recommended practice. A key feature of this guide is the use of context zones, thoroughfare types, and functional classification in the planning for and design of the traveled way, roadside and intersections. It also provides guidance on how CSS may be applied in the network or corridor planning that is conducted around which individual projects will result to improve specific sections of an urban thoroughfare. This guide and supporting outreach material are available electronically at: <http://www.ite.org/css>. FHWA contacts: keith.harrison@dot.gov and barbara.bauer@dot.gov.
- D. The Ecological Guide** – The purpose of this guide is to raise the awareness of practitioners involved in developing transportation facilities to be more sensitive to wildlife and ecosystems issues and considerations. The guide will also provide examples and identify available resources to assist with integrating the stakeholders representing these issues and considerations into processes involved with the planning for and development of these projects. FHWA contact: shari.schaflein@dot.gov.

Construction:

- E. Integrating CSS in Construction - State-of-the-Practice Report** – The purpose of this project is to develop a State-of-the-practice report identifying how the CSS philosophy and principles are being applied in the construction of transportation facilities. The State-of-Practice Survey is available. Contact keith.moore@dot.gov. The draft Report will be available in Fall 2007.

III. Raising Awareness and Advancing CSS Implementation

- A. CSS Clearinghouse Website - Context Sensitive Solutions.Org** – The purpose of the CSS Clearinghouse is to serve as THE source to nationally access CSS information and resources. It has been developed to provide a one-stop location to find information, find successful practices, locate technical resources, ask your peers a question, find training, and exchange information. The content posted and services supported by this clearinghouse is based on the information and examples

practitioners submit for posting, in addition to the funding industry provides to support its operation and continued evolution. Availability is expected in 2008. FHWA contact: keith.moore@dot.gov.

- B. FHWA CSS Technical Assistance & Training** - Members of the Environmental and Safety/Design Technical Service Teams Team members are available to consult with and provide training tailored to the needs of individual agencies and/or projects to assist with the implementation of CSS principles. In addition to formal CSS training, team members are available to provide presentations at professional conferences along with briefings to executive leadership, MPOs, elected officials, other transportation officials. FHWA contacts: klynn.berry@dot.gov and keith.harrison@dot.gov.
- C. CSS Primer and Outreach Material** – The purpose of this project is to produce outreach material to assist with raising awareness of CSS philosophy and principles. This Primer is aimed at conveying the CSS philosophy and principles; benefits; challenges, importance and opportunities to integrate CSS within an organization; and apply CSS in the process of planning and developing transportation facility improvement projects. Other material to be produced will be a presentation, tri-fold brochure, questions and answers, and briefing paper. Draft products are expected to be available late 2007. FHWA contact: jon.obenberger@dot.gov.
- D. Guanella Pass CSS Lessons Learned Video** – This 30-minute DVD entitled “Thinking Beyond the Pavement” explains how CSS philosophy and principles were used to facilitate delivering one of the FHWA Federal Lands Highways most difficult and challenging projects. The video explains how the CSS principles were successfully applied on this Colorado Forest Highway project. The video features diverse project stakeholders explaining, in their own words, the challenges that were faced and overcome, and provides valuable lessons learned to assist other agencies faced with similar challenges. The video will be distributed in the fall of 2006. The project website is <http://www.cflhd.gov/projects/co/guanella/index.cfm>. FHWA contacts: mark.taylor@dot.gov, jennifer.corwin@dot.gov and charles.luedders@dot.gov.
- E. CSS Self Assessment Guide & Workshops** – The purpose of this project is to develop a guide to assist agencies with identifying how, or to assess their progress, with advancing CSS implementation. This guide will assist agencies in assessing how the CSS philosophy and principles have been institutionally integrating within their agency, progress with advancing the application of these principles on all transportation improvement projects, or by a group of stakeholders involved in the development of a specific project. The draft guide, assessment tool and outreach material will be available in late 2007. FHWA Contact: barbara.bauer@dot.gov.
- F. CSS Pooled Fund Study (PFS)** – The purpose of this activity is to provide a mechanism for agencies to pool their resources to develop technical resources and services to assist practitioners with advancing the integration of CSS within their agency and on transportation improvement projects. The intent of the CSS PFS is for the funding that is provided by agencies is to go 100% into the development of the projects and activities the members collectively support. FHWA’s expected contribution will include the staff to manage the CSS PFS along with the contract to provide the technical and administrative support to administer the PFS and managing the projects and activities that will be initiated. Availability expected in early 2008. FHWA contact: jon.obenberger@dot.gov.
- G. FHWA CSS Implementation Assessment** - This assessment tool is being developed to help FHWA gauge progress with achieving its Vital Few Goal (EN3 Objective) to improve the quality of transportation decision-making through implementation of CSS in all states and Federal Lands

Highway Divisions. This project will review our current assessments and products being developed and tested during 2007 in response to an Agency decision to consider 2007 a transition year to work with and understand a new assessment approach. This new approach uses a metric that reflects progress made and a philosophy that improvements can always be made to processes and practices in implementing CSS in programs and projects. Availability is expected in early 2008. FHWA contact: barbara.bauer@dot.gov

IV. CSS National Dialog - Sharing Information

- A. CSS National Dialog** – The purpose of this activity is to facilitate a dialog to raise CSS awareness and provide a network to share information and experiences within industry. This activity is expected to build off of the success that has occurred with the coordination and dialog that initiated at conferences that has taken place in 2006 with AASHTO, ITE, and ASCE. This dialog is expected to involve outreach to the professional organizations representing the range of stakeholders and technical disciplines that are involved in the planning and development of transportation improvement projects. Initial discussions are expected to occur in late 2007 to gauge the interest of key professional organizations to participate. FHWA contact: jon.obenberger@dot.gov and shari.schaftelein@dot.gov.
- B. ASCE CSS Conference** “CSS In Practice: What You Need to Know” was held on November 16-17, 2006 in Atlanta, Georgia. This two-day hands-on conference was for professionals engaged in the planning and designing of roadways and other transportation facilities. The goal of the course was to advance the practice of CSS, provide tools for practitioners to use every day, and discuss promising ideas and future action. Conference information is available at: <http://content.asce.org/conferences/css06/welcome.html>
- C. CSS Webinars to Raise ITE Members Awareness** - This effort involves a series of webinars that highlight key opportunities for agencies to implement CSS within their agency and facilitate CSS focused sessions at ITE District Meetings. ITE will also develop a white paper identifying opportunities for ITE members to advance the implementation of CSS, what type of resources may be needed in a CSS toolbox, along with activities to advance CSS within ITE Technical Committees. The first webinar entitled “*CSS Design Phase of the Project Development Process*” was held on Nov. 30, 2006. The second webinar, “*Successful Application of CSS Principles in Transportation Planning*” was held on April 25, 2007 and the third webinar, “*CSS Implementation: Debunking the Myths*” is scheduled for August 1, 2007. FHWA contacts: danyell.diggs@dot.gov and barbara.bauer@dot.gov.
- D. Green Highways Initiative** – The purpose of this initiative is to promote streamlining and market-based approaches to meet transportation needs while promoting innovative environmental stewardship. This initiative supports the CSS philosophy and principles into stewardship focusing on watershed management, recycling, and ecosystem management. The EPA and FHWA has sponsored this initiative, in partnership with resource agencies in the Mid-Atlantic region, to strengthen stronger partnerships. Information on the Green Highways Initiative can be accessed at: <http://www.greenhighways.org/>. FHWA contact: shari.schaftelein@dot.gov.