




U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

Memorandum

Subject: Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)
Philosophy Statement

Date: March 12, 2008

From: 
John R. Baxter, P.E.
Associate Administrator for
Office of Federal Lands Highway

In Reply Refer To: HFPD-3

To: Office of Federal Lands Highway

“Federal Lands Highway (FLH) is well known for delivering projects that meet the varied needs of our many partners. We are expected to solve and manage unique challenges in environmentally sensitive locations through engineering solutions that are sensitive to the context of the land. Whether it is building highly visible and politically sensitive projects, constructing roads that are national landmarks, or providing critical access using low-cost transportation facilities, FLH is at the forefront of consistently delivering distinct, sensitive and sound engineering projects.”

Federal Lands Business Plan, 2008-2012

This introduction to our Business Plan recognizes CSS as a key business principle. The Business Plan continues by listing CSS implementation as one of six program effectiveness measures and a core feature of program delivery. To support this key business principle and our Business Plan, I am pleased to issue the attached FLH Philosophy on CSS.

I also want to take this opportunity to formally introduce the CSS Team that was formed early last year to provide focused leadership in this area. Team members include:

Brian Allen, Environment Discipline Leader, FLH
Pete Field, Planning Engineer, WFL
Sam Holder, Project Development Engineer, CFL
John Seabrook, Design and Construction Operations Engineer and
Construction FDL, FLH
Mark Taylor, Design Discipline Leader, FLH
Don Tuggle, Director of Program Administration, EFL
Jack VanDop, Environment Technical Specialist, EFL

**AMERICAN
ECONOMY**

Please support the CSS Team in accomplishing the following tasks:

- Incorporate CSS principles into program and project guidance as stated in the CSS philosophy.
- Develop a stronger web presence to showcase CSS implementation in FLH.
- Conduct annual self-assessments of CSS implementation and report results to the Leadership Team.
- Conduct CSS training in each Division by the end of FY 2009.
- Represent FLH in Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and AASHTO CSS activities and initiatives.

Last year, our Divisions and the State Departments of Transportation conducted CSS self-assessments using a tool prepared by FHWA. Our results (3.6 out of 5 or considered a mature program) are positive but there is ample room for improvement and our goal is to move closer to an exemplary program score of 4.7 over the term of the Business Plan. By furthering our implementation of CSS principles we will better meet the needs of our partners and customers and deliver our programs more effectively. Our projects will have stronger purpose and need and our project alternatives will be more compatible with the human and natural environment. When we are truly sensitive to the context of our projects we are more likely to deliver successful projects that add lasting value to communities.

I am confident that FLH will continue to be a leader in the implementation of Context Sensitive Solutions. Our future depends on it.

Attachment

Philosophy on Context Sensitive Solutions
Office of Federal Lands Highway
December 2007

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) is a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders to provide a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility. The CSS is an approach that addresses the total context within which a transportation facility is planned, implemented, maintained and operated.

The Federal Lands Highway (FLH) will continue to implement a CSS approach in all aspects of its mission and will document and share its vision and lessons learned. The FLH will continue to incorporate CSS principles in program and project guidance. The FLH Project Development and Design Manual (PDDM) provides direction for the development of all FLH projects. Key principles of CSS, specified in the PDDM, include:

- Be respectful of the land, partner and agency goals, tribal values, cultural significance of landforms and sites, wildlife, and habitat.
- Provide safe passage for residents, travelers, tourists, recreationists, and wildlife by working cooperatively to integrate safety as a basic business principle in all activities.
- Minimize impacts to existing features and conditions in a manner that lays “lightly on the land” and minimizes construction impacts on the traveling public.
- Use interdisciplinary project development teams to develop cost-effective creative solutions that fit into the natural and human environments while functioning efficiently and operating safely.
- As appropriate, actively communicate and employ early, continuous, and meaningful participation of the public and all stakeholders throughout the transportation planning, program development, and project delivery processes in an open, honest, and respectful manner.
- Satisfy the project vision, purpose and need as developed and agreed upon early in the process by a full-range of stakeholders.
- Demonstrate clearly defined, effective decision-making and implementation that meets commitments.
- Deliver a quality transportation solution with efficient and effective use of everyone’s resources including cost, time, effort, and material.

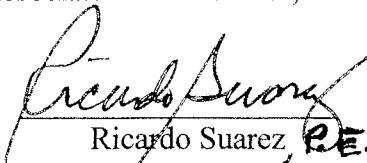
Every phase of FLH program and project delivery will continue to include the active engagement and collaboration of stakeholders and technical specialists, open discussion, creativity, respect for a diversity of perspectives, and effective weighing of choices to implement appropriate context sensitive solutions.



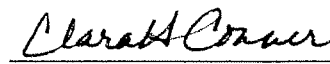
John R. Baxter, P.E.
Associate Administrator, HFL-1



Melisa L. Ridenour
Division Engineer, EFL



Ricardo Suarez P.E.
Division Engineer, CFL



Clara H. Conner
Division Engineer, WFL