



Integrating CSS in Planning and Project Development



CSS Quick Facts – How CSS Developed

The roots of CSS go back to the landmark National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (signed into law in 1970). NEPA established a framework for environmental planning and decision-making by Federal agencies based on a set of fundamental objectives that include environmental protection, interagency coordination and cooperation, and public participation in planning and project development. All of these are key elements of CSS. Since 1969 there have been several events that have been instrumental in the development and expansion of CSS concepts, including federal transportation legislation (ISTEA, TEA-21 and SAAFETEA-LU), the “Thinking Beyond the Pavement Conference” sponsored by FHWA and AASHTO in 1998, and the 2006 Peer Exchange sponsored by AASHTO and FHWA.

Milestones in the Development of CSS	
Date	Milestone
1970	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEPA signed into law, establishing a foundation for integrating environmental issues and concerns into planning and project delivery.
1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) passed, establishing new requirements for multimodal transportation planning and meaningful community involvement in transportation decision making. ISTEA expanded the Federal transportation focus from constructing roads to providing diverse surface transportation options with consideration of environmental enhancements and a focus on community issues and livability initiatives.
1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHWA Environmental Policy statement issued, “it is FHWA policy to: Avoid, minimize, and mitigate to the fullest extent possible adverse effects. . .of projects on the neighborhood, community and natural resources. Seek opportunities to . . .implement innovative enhancement measures to help projects fit harmoniously within the community and natural environs.”
1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1994 AASHTO Policy: NHS System Design Standards – Be it further resolved. . . AASHTO will work . . .with interested parties on design criteria and a design process for routes that integrate safety, environmental, scenic, historic, community and preservation concerns, and on standards which also foster access for bicycles and pedestrian traffic along with other transportation modes.
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHS Act, Section 304 of the 1995 NHS Designation Act re-emphasized and strengthened the direction that Congress gave in ISTEA; stated in part (a) In General – The Secretary shall ensure that the plans and specifications for each proposed highway project under this chapter provide for a facility that will – (1) adequately serve the existing and planned future traffic of the highway in a manner that is conducive to safety, durability, and economy of maintenance; and (2) be designed and constructed in accordance with criteria best suited to accomplish the objectives described in paragraph (1) and to conform to the particular needs of each locality. The 1995 NHS act takes into account constructed and natural environment; scenic, aesthetic, historic, community and preservation impacts of the activity and access for other modes of transportation. The NHS Act still did not require the development of special standards for projects that involve or impact scenic, historic, environmental or cultural values.
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHWA’s Flexibility in Highway Design was published, which identified and explained opportunities, flexibilities, and constraints facing designers and design teams responsible for the development of transportation facilities. The guide builds on flexibility in current laws and regulations to explore opportunities to use flexible design to help sustain important community interests without compromising safety.
1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thinking Beyond the Pavement: a National Workshop on Integrating Highway Development with Communities and the Environment, was held in May 1998. This conference, hosted by the Maryland DOT, AASHTO and FHWA, developed an initial definition for Context Sensitive Solutions, identified qualities of excellence in transportation design, and characteristics of the process which would yield excellence, and identified barriers to implementation of CSS. Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) passed, which strengthened and enhanced requirements for public involvement in decision making and integration of planning and environmental considerations in the decision making process. It included improvements for the transportation planning and programming processes and specific linkages between NEPA, transportation and land use.

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Date	Milestone
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> President Bush signs Executive Order 13274, which promoted environmental stewardship in the nation's transportation system, and streamlines environmental review and development of transportation infrastructure projects.
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHWA and partners launch www.ContextSensitiveSolutions.org, an on-line resource center for information about Context Sensitive Solutions, and its applications. A Guide to Best Practices for Achieving Context Sensitive Solutions (NCHRP Report 480) published. The guide demonstrates how transportation agencies can incorporate context sensitivity into their transportation project development work. AASHTO's Guide for Achieving Flexibility in Highway Design published.
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAFETEA-LU enacted. Section 6008 authorizes the Department of Transportation to consider CSS in establishing standards to be used on the National Highway System. SAFETEA-LU also included new provisions for public involvement, guidelines for State DOT and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) public involvement activities; and the requirement for MPOs to develop a public participation plan in consultation with interested parties.
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Peer Exchange held in Baltimore, MD (9/2006). American Society of Civil Engineers "Context Sensitive Solutions in Practice: What You Need to Know" - Conference held in November 2006. Institute of Transportation Engineers publishes Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities.
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AASHTO and FHWA report on Context Sensitive Solutions Strategic Planning Process published.
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHWA sponsored Peer Exchanges (IN, NV) provides CSS action planning grants and extensive technical assistance and training
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FHWA launches the National Dialog on Context Sensitive Solutions, in partnership with multiple agencies, NGOs and community groups.
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of Integration Guide, Training Guide and CSS Primer; NCHRP 15-32; www.contextsensitivesolutions.org expanded to become online Community of Practice; hosts CSS webinar series and provided dozens of new case studies and content pages.

Adapted from Chronology of Events,

http://environment.transportation.org/environmental_issues/context_sens_sol/#bookmarks subWhereDidCSSComeFrom