



Illinois Department of Transportation

Departmental Policies

D&E-21

Effective Date: March 6, 2017
Review Date: March 6, 2022

CONTEXT SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS

1. POLICY

It is the policy of the Department of Transportation to embrace the principles of a Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process in the planning, design, construction and operation of all projects involving new construction, reconstruction, or major expansion of transportation facilities. This is pursuant to [605 ILCS 5/4-219](#).

2. PERSONS AFFECTED

Office of Highways Project Implementation
Office of Intermodal Project Implementation
Office of Program Development

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for defining the CSS process and its uses.

4. GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- A.** The CSS process seeks to provide cost-effective transportation facilities which involve:
- 1) A balance between mobility, community needs, and the environment while keeping safety paramount.
 - 2) Involving stakeholders in the decision-making process early and continuously throughout the development of the project.
 - 3) Addressing all modes of transportation in the planning and design of the project.
 - 4) Using all appropriate disciplines to help plan for and design the project.
 - 5) Applying the flexibility inherent in our design standards to fit a project into its surroundings and add lasting value to the communities it serves.
 - 6) Incorporating aesthetics as part of basic design.

- B.** At the point where a feasibility study or Phase I study will be placed in a Multi-Year Program, a decision shall be made whether to implement or not implement the CSS process for that project. The districts shall confirm the decision by memorandum to that effect signed by the Regional Engineer. The signed memorandum shall be placed in the project file.
- C.** The CSS process shall include Stakeholder Involvement Processes that are:
 - 1) Applicable to a wide range of projects.
 - 2) Flexible and modular.
 - 3) Simple enough to avoid adding another layer of process to an already lengthy planning and design schedule.
- D.** The department is ultimately responsible for the safety and integrity of the state transportation system and therefore must make the final decisions regarding any and all aspects of the projects.
- E.** The department will establish an internal training program to educate its staff on CSS policy, approaches, and techniques.
- F.** Project elements, developed through the CSS process, may require cost participation from sources outside of the department.
- G.** The department will encourage local agencies to use CSS as a best practice in the development of local projects.
- H.** In order to determine the project's scope, elements and funding, the CSS process should commence at the earliest stages of the project's development.
- I.** In urbanized areas, the department will solicit the assistance of the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) with the CSS process on eligible state projects within their jurisdictions.
- J.** State projects under expedited timeframes may preclude the use of a comprehensive CSS process. However, stakeholders will be involved with such projects to the extent possible under the constrained schedules.
- K.** Design elements developed by the CSS process must be constructed and maintained. Changes to the scope of such projects can only be made after additional stakeholder involvement.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A.** The **Bureau of Design and Environment** is responsible for preparing and maintaining this policy. Each signatory office or division is responsible for implementing and assuring compliance with the provisions of this policy affecting operations or policies under their jurisdiction.

- B.** The **Office of Highways Project Implementation, Office of Intermodal Project Implementation, and Office of Program Development** are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

6. REVISION HISTORY

Changes to this policy included in this version include:

- updated office names to reflect the new organization chart, and
- deleted “Signature: On file” line under the Closing Notice.

Archived version of this policy may be obtained by contacting the Bureau of Design and Environment.

CLOSING NOTICE

Supersedes: Department Policy D&E-21 Context Sensitive Solution,
Effective: November 26, 2013