

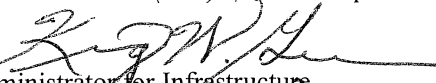



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

Memorandum

Subject: **ACTION:** *A Guide to Best Practices for Achieving Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) NCHRP Report 480* **Date:** February 7, 2003

From: King W. Gee 
Associate Administrator for Infrastructure
Cynthia J. Burbank 
Associate Administrator for Planning, Environmental and Realty **Reply to**
Attn. of: HIPA/HEPE

To: Resource Center Managers
Division Administrators
Federal Lands Highway Division Engineers

Recently the Transportation Research Board (TRB) issued the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) report titled *A Guide to Best Practices for Achieving Context Sensitive Solutions* (NCHRP Report 480). This guide provides information on how transportation agencies can incorporate context sensitivity into their transportation projects. This guide also provides suggestions on how a project development process can be structured to institutionalize practices that lead to context sensitivity.

The information in this guide comes from the five States that had agreed to initiate pilot efforts to institutionalize context sensitive design/context sensitive solutions principles in their project development procedures. This guide is divided into several sections that cover parts of the project development process. They are: Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Context Sensitive Design (CSD); Effective Decision Making; Reflecting Community Values; Achieving Environmental Sensitivity; Ensuring Safe and Feasible Solutions and; Organizational Needs.

The CD-ROM included with the printed report reorganizes the material into a matrix of project development process steps and issues related to context sensitivity. It also includes significant background material drawn from actual projects (e.g., evaluation criteria, public involvement plans, aesthetic design guidelines, and animated views of design alternatives) that provide concrete examples of CSD/CSS.

This report is currently the most definitive and comprehensive guide on CSD/CSS. We urge you to study this report and use it, along with FHWA's Flexibility in Highway Design publication, as a basis for establishing a dialogue with your State DOT. This dialogue should, in part, focus on what you can do together to embrace and further establish the concepts of CSD/CSS into the transportation project development process.



You should have already received a copy of the report directly from the TRB. If you have not, copies may be purchased directly from the TRB and can be ordered through the Internet at: <http://www.national-academies.org/trb/bookstore>. The price is \$21.