

Guidelines For Stakeholder Engagement Michigan Department of Transportation

MDOT and Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has embraced CSS as a way of delivering on its mission of “providing the highest quality integrated transportation services for economic benefit and improved quality of life.” MDOT has a decentralized structure comprised of 7 Region offices and 26 Transportation Service Centers (TSC) throughout Michigan to encourage better working relationships between stakeholders and staff. This structure lends itself to a CSS approach to project development, construction and maintenance by providing ease of access to MDOT staff for stakeholders in addressing their community’s transportation needs from offices in or near their communities.

MDOT’s CSS policy consists of three fundamentals: Stakeholder Engagement, Flexibility, and Effective Decision Making. These fundamentals have been presented in on-going MDOT staff training since 2005. As a companion to the formal training, MDOT is currently working on tools to assist our region office staff in addressing local community needs and to help in building partnerships.

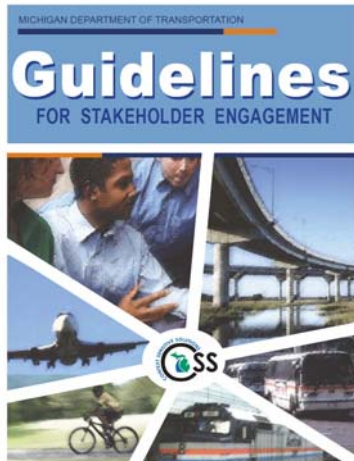


MDOT staff, at the TSC and Region offices, asked for assistance in how to conduct stakeholder engagement activities for their projects. The major issues facing MDOT project managers are:

- When should I start the engagement process?
- How do I identify all stakeholders?
- What professional staff expertise do I need and when do I need it?
- What kind of engagement is needed on my project and how do I make this determination?
- How do we maintain consistent stakeholder engagement processes on a statewide basis, while still addressing local issues?

To address these issues, MDOT released “The Guidelines For Stakeholder Engagement” in February, 2009. An internal interdisciplinary team assembled the guidance and presented it to the CSS Steering Committee, which is comprised of representatives from MDOT, and nineteen local, state, and federal organizations. The Steering Committee provided valuable input while learning about MDOT’s commitment to CSS and how it is used in our decision-making processes.

The resulting document provides MDOT staff with suggestions and techniques to engage local stakeholders early and often during project development. The document is structured to allow flexibility in engagement approaches to best suit diverse Region and TSC office needs, while maintaining a consistent process for implementing stakeholder engagement statewide.



Guidelines For Stakeholder Engagement addresses:

- Why outreach to stakeholders is an important part of MDOT's CSS policy.
- Key concepts of how to implement stakeholder engagement.
- How to determine the level of effort appropriate to the scope and scale of the project.
- When and how often engagement should take place.
- Identifying stakeholders and types of engagement techniques.
- How to follow-up and evaluate stakeholder satisfaction.

“Guidelines For Stakeholder Engagement” is posted on the CSS page of the MDOT public website as well as MDOT's internal intranet for easy staff accessibility. The document is formatted so it can be easily updated and kept current with FHWA and MDOT policies, strategic goals, and feedback from staff and stakeholders. “The success of the Guidelines For Stakeholder Engagement” document has initiated an effort by local agencies along with MDOT to create a companion tool focused on how to help local stakeholders engage MDOT on transportation issues. This effort is currently underway and is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2009.