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410.04.01 General

Because the U.S. Highway System is completely woven into every corner of our national boundaries, from densely urban areas through suburban neighborhoods to open wilderness areas, each proposal to build new highways or re-build existing facilities has a profound impact on the surrounding environs. Those impacts have been positive in the astounding mobility which U.S. Citizens enjoy and negative in the attendant loss of many natural, historical, cultural and neighborhood resources. The public demand for more context cognizant projects has spurred the highway industry to develop a more “context sensitive” project implementation methodology.

Context Sensitive Solutions is a holistic approach to project development and implementation that involves a multi-disciplinary team of professionals working closely with interested local citizens to produce a project that fits into the surrounding environment rather than carving through it with no regard for what is lost in the process.

410.04.02 References

- NHS Designation Act was enacted in November 1995.
 - Section 109 of Title 23, United States Code. The relevant portion of that policy is:
 - A design for new construction, reconstruction, resurfacing...restoration, or rehabilitation of highway on the National Highway System (other than a highway also on the Interstate System) may take into account...[in addition to safety, durability and economy of maintenance]...
 - A. the constructed and natural environment of the area;
 - B. the environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, community, and preservation impacts of the activity; and
 - C. access for other modes of transportation.

410.04.03 Definitions

The professional team consists of:

1. Design Engineers
2. Environmental Scientists
3. Historical/Archaeological Specialists

4. Landscape Architects
5. Planners
6. Construction Engineers
7. Maintenance Specialist

The citizen's group can consist of:

1. Elected officials
2. Local professional staff
3. Interested citizens

410.04.04 Policy

It is the policy of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation that when a project's Scope-of-Work is at, or above, the reconstruction level of effort (as defined by DPM 450.00) the process of Context Sensitive Solutions will be used in its most complete form for project development and construction. Projects of a lesser Scope-of-Work will select elements of the process that will insure the final result is accomplished in a context sensitive manner acceptable to the Department and the local community. The Project Managers and Project Engineers should understand that the concepts and principles of CSS are applicable to every project, large and small.

410.04.05 Procedures

Working together, the professional team and the citizens group develop the project from beginning through construction and maintenance as a project that:

1. Is a safe, functional transportation element (highway, bicycle path, rail-road station, trail, etc.).
2. Meets Federal, State and Community goals for environmental, cultural and neighborhood preservation.
3. Fits into the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and stays reasonably within budget.
4. Is a project that can be built with a minimum of disruption using materials that are available and durable.
5. Maintenance crews can take care of in an economical and expeditious way without excess burden on personnel or budgets.
6. That makes a long-term positive addition to the community and safe infrastructure.

The Project Managers and engineers in responsible charge of the project through its various stages of development and service life must be able to blend attention to the

functionality of the facility with, and into, the detail of its impact on the abutting community culture and environment.