Context Sensitive Solutions

Definition:
Context sensitive solutions (CSS) is a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders in providing a transportation facility that fits its setting. This approach leads to preserving and enhancing scenic, aesthetic, historic, community, and environmental resources, while improving or maintaining safety, mobility, and infrastructure conditions.

Principles:
These core principles apply to transportation processes, outcomes, and decision-making:

- Strive toward a shared stakeholder vision to provide a basis for decisions.
- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of contexts.
- Foster continuing communication and collaboration to achieve consensus.
- Exercise flexibility and creativity to shape effective transportation solutions, while preserving and enhancing community and natural environments.

Why does MaineDOT utilize CSS?
Transportation facilities (highways, bridges, airports, walking trails, intermodal facilities, etc.) impact communities in ways beyond facilitating travel from one point to another. These facilities are integral components to the regional landscape and as such construction or modifications to them could have positive or adverse impacts. MaineDOT's utilization of CSS is a dynamic process reflective of the uniqueness of different communities in Maine as well as features that may be exclusive of a specific transportation facility.

CSS projects in Maine typically follow these steps:

1. Problem Identification

2. Formation of Multidisciplinary Teams

3. Stakeholder Identification

4. Purpose and Need Identification

5. Stakeholder Outreach Plan

6. Alternative Identification and Evaluation

7. Policy Decision

8. Inter-local Agreement

9. Design

10. Construction

11. Evaluation

The CSS process leads to outcomes that:

- Are in harmony with the community and preserve the environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, and natural resource values of the area.
- Are safe for all users.
- Solve problems that are agreed upon by a range of stakeholders.
- Meet or exceed the expectations of both designers and stakeholders, thereby adding lasting value to the community, the environment, and the transportation system.
- Demonstrate effective and efficient use of resources (people, time, budget, etc.) among all parties.

For more information:

www.contextsensitivesolutions.org

www.fhwa.dot.gov

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/

www.nepa.gov

http://www.maine.gov/mdot/planning-documents/stpa/index.htm