I-70 Mountain Corridor CSS
Starting a Project

Project managers, consultants, members of the Project Leadership Team (PLT), and other stakeholders on the I-70 Mountain Corridor should become familiar with the I-70 Mountain Corridor Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) Guidance as they initiate a project or study. The CSS Guidance Web site provides a tutorial to help familiarize users with the content; and the Context Statement and Core Values inform users about important concepts to address in project initiation and implementation.
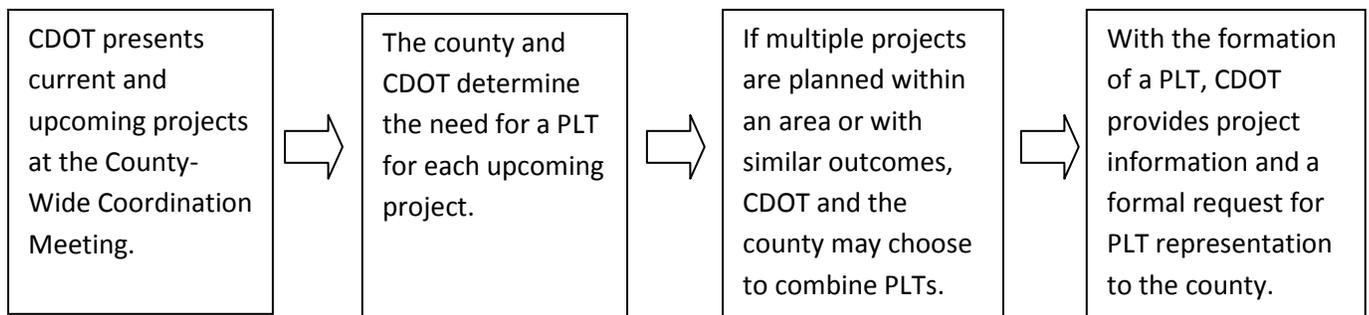
This document outlines some important considerations in developing projects. Project managers should also consult the Project Manager Checklist and the PLT Checklist for additional information. These two checklists -- available on the CSS Guidance Web site -- provide links to information, templates, and tools to support project management.

Identifying Known Issues

Use the Interactive Maps on the CSS Guidance Web site to develop an initial list of issues for the project area. Input the limits of the project, using mile posts, and print a report of potentially affected resources. This will provide information on resources, Areas of Special Attention, and Design Segments.

Forming the PLT

Every project in the I-70 Mountain Corridor will form a PLT to lead the project. Outreach to county officials through the County-Wide Coordination Meeting should occur prior to finalizing a scope or advertising for consultant services to ensure the involvement of community leaders in developing the request for proposal and selecting the consultant or contractor. Formation of a PLT follows these steps:

| CDOT presents current and upcoming projects at the County-Wide Coordination Meeting. | → | The county and CDOT determine the need for a PLT for each upcoming project. | → | If multiple projects are planned within an area or with similar outcomes, CDOT and the county may choose to combine PLTs. | → | With the formation of a PLT, CDOT provides project information and a formal request for PLT representation to the county. |

Achieving the Purpose of a PLT through Other Mechanisms
The purpose of the PLT is to ensure that decisions are made collaboratively. This multidisciplinary team is responsible for leading the project, ensuring that the project follows the 6-Step Process and CSS Guidance, and facilitating decision making. If there are standing groups or PLTs for other projects that can take on these responsibilities in a multidisciplinary and collaborative manner, they can fulfill the role of the PLT for smaller or related projects upon agreement between the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the county.

If agreement is reached that no PLT is needed, the CDOT project manager is responsible for ensuring that the project follows the CSS 6-Step Process, including public involvement and documentation.

Making Decisions Using the CSS 6-Step Process
Decisions made on the I-70 Mountain Corridor should follow the 6-Step Process outline on the CSS Guidance Web site. Principles inherent in the CSS decision-making process include the following:

Collaborative – I-70 Mountain Corridor CSS is built on a commitment to collaborative decision making. The key principles of collaborative decision making are principle-based, outcome-driven, and multidisciplinary.

Teams - The PLT is a collaborative stakeholder team that focuses on the decision-making process and moving the process forward. The Project Staff, a multidisciplinary team of technical experts, focuses on the day-to-day work of the project. Optional project teams include a Technical Team and Issue Task Forces, which may address specific issues as they arise on the project.

6-Step Process - The 6-Step Process is used for projects on the I-70 Mountain Corridor to ensure collaboration. It is consistent with Decision Science principles and can be followed on all projects from corridor-wide planning to construction change orders. The 6-Step Process includes the following steps: define desired outcomes and actions; endorse the process; establish criteria; develop alternatives or options; evaluate, select, and refine alternative or option; and finalize documentation and evaluate process. Each of the steps must be completed in the order defined.

Following State and Federal requirements
In addition to the CSS Guidance and 6-Step Process, projects on the I-70 Mountain Corridor must ensure that state and federal requirements are met. Projects that are completed as part of the Tier 2 environmental process must follow CDOT's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Manual and its Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Program. These documents are consistent with CSS and direct projects that meet

state and federal requirements. As a project initiation activity, all such regulatory requirements that apply to the project should be identified and documented.

Scaling the 6-Step Process to Meet the Scale of the project
The 6-Step Process can be scaled to meet the size and complexity of any project or study. A complex environmental study could take a year or more to complete the process, while the development of an operational plan may be able to combine several steps in a one-hour meeting. One important part of the 6-Step Process is that each of the steps is used in the defined order. Using the 6-Step Process ensures that decisions address a clearly defined problem in a collaborative, multidisciplinary, and consistent manner.

Resolving Disagreements
The PLT is responsible for identifying who must be involved in making the decision, bringing the decision makers together, and facilitating approaches to keep the project moving forward. If the Technical Team and/or Project Staff are unable to make a recommendation on an element of the alternative, the PLT reviews the issue and develops an approach to make the recommendation. The CSS Guidance Web site provides an Issue Resolution Process and an Issue Diagnostic Tool to assist in reaching a collaborative resolution.

Ensuring that All PLT Members are Actively Engaged
There are several considerations and opportunities to ensure active participation of all PLT members. The first is to engage the right members. By allowing the county to select representatives from the county to participate, the county can help ensure that its representatives are committed to the project and CSS principles. Agencies should also be asked to appoint representatives with a strong interest in the project and its success through CSS.

An important activity in building commitment and engagement is chartering. The CSS Guidance Web site provides information and resources for the chartering session, including a planning checklist and sample agenda.

Maintaining commitment is achieved through the effective and meaningful use of participants' time. Outcome-driven meetings clearly articulate the purpose of the meetings and desired products or outcomes. Careful consideration of the timing of meetings and the development of the agenda encourage active participation.

Providing continuous and timely information also builds commitment to a project by keeping all PLT members engaged.

Documents Critical to Starting a Project

The following four documents – available on the CSS Guidance Web site -- are critical to starting a project on the I-70 Mountain Corridor. These documents should be reviewed prior to project initiation:

- Project Manager Checklist
- PLT Checklist
- Project Leadership Team Overview
- Technical Team Overview

Project Manager Checklist

The role of the Project Manager (PM) is to deliver and lead the project, champion CSS, and enable decision making. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are the lead agencies and final decision makers for projects on I-70. To ensure that these projects meet the commitment that FHWA and CDOT have made to CSS, a collaborative approach should be used that involves a wide range of disciplines and stakeholders. The following checklist was developed to help the PM fulfill these responsibilities. The list is not in any particular order. Some activities may occur in a different order or concurrently.

☐ Apply the CSS Guidance.
  ☐ Review the Context Statement, Core Values, and Interactive Maps on the CSS Web site.
  ☐ In the Interactive Maps, input the mile post limits of the project, then print a report of the potentially affected resources.
  ☐ Review "Is It CSS Yet?" to apply CSS principles to your project.
  ☐ Remember that the CSS Guidance is not the only source of information for the project and that it is only the first step in scoping.
  ☐ For more information on developing National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) documents, see the CDOT NEPA Manual and check with the CDOT Regional Environmental Lead.
☐ Initiate the 6-Step Process for Decision Making.
  ☐ Review the 6-Step Process.
  ☐ Review the matrix of representative tasks based on the project type (Life Cycle Phase).
  ☐ Identify whether the project lies in an Area of Special Attention.
  ☐ Review existing plans, agreements, and legal requirements.
  ☐ Determine project outcomes and initial scope of work.
  ☐ Form the Project Leadership Team (PLT).
☐ Establish a PLT at the beginning of the project that includes community representatives, designated by the affected community(ies).
  ☐ Follow the CSS Guidance on establishing a PLT.
  ☐ Charter the PLT.
  ☐ Lead the PLT in developing the Context Statement for the project.
  ☐ Involve the PLT in developing the Scope of Work or Request for Proposal (RFP) for the project.
  ☐ Involve the PLT in selecting a consultant.
☐ Take a multidisciplinary approach to all aspects of the project by involving representatives from all of the disciplines that may be interested in or affected by your project. Involve the PLT in identifying the appropriate disciplines and gain PLT endorsement.
  ☐ Engineering

- ☐ Planning
- ☐ Environmental
- ☐ Operations
- ☐ Maintenance
- ☐ Public involvement
- ☐ Public relations and government affairs
- ☐ Landscape architecture
- ☐ Parks and open space
- ☐ Historic
- ☐ Economic
- ☐ Community development
- ☐ Other project-related disciplines
- ☐ Other governmental agencies
- ☐ Develop a Project Work Plan.
  - ☐ Use the Project Work Plan Template, task matrix, and guidance found on the CSS Web site.
  - ☐ Develop a project schedule that follows the 6-Step Process.
  - ☐ Streamline the work by scaling the 6-Step Process as appropriate.
  - ☐ Gain PLT endorsement of the Project Work Plan.
- ☐ Develop a Stakeholder Involvement Plan.
  - ☐ Develop a Stakeholder Involvement Plan that supports the Project Work Plan and project schedule.
  - ☐ Use the Stakeholder Involvement Plan Template and guidance found on the CSS Web site.
  - ☐ Employ techniques that focus on stakeholder involvement and collaboration in decision making, not just solicitation of input.
  - ☐ Involve stakeholders in identifying community values and desired outcomes as the basis for developing the project vision and goals.
  - ☐ As appropriate, develop a Public Information Plan using the Public Information Plan Template.
  - ☐ Develop and utilize a project Web site for project information sharing.
  - ☐ Consider social network options through Twitter and Facebook. If appropriate, identify an entity to develop and administer a social networking program.
- ☐ Consider engineering and planning elements completed in earlier Life Cycle Phases.
  - ☐ Geotechnical report
  - ☐ Construction staging
  - ☐ Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) plans
- ☐ Conduct contextual analysis.
  - ☐ Review the Interactive Maps and update the Interactive Maps on the CSS Guidance Web site as additional data are collected for the project.
  - ☐ Review the Context Maps.
  - ☐ Review existing plans, agreements, and legal requirements.
  - ☐ Review previously documented issues and comments.
  - ☐ Review photos in the Design Segment slideshow.

- ☐ Identify teams.
    - ☐ Review the Team Roles by Life Cycle based on the project type (Life Cycle Phase).
    - ☐ Work with the PLT to identify appropriate teams and membership.
    - ☐ Include a list of teams on the project Web site.
- ☐ Develop your alternative evaluation process.
    - ☐ Review the Alternative Evaluation Guidance.
    - ☐ Develop evaluation criteria that reflect stakeholder interests and concerns.
    - ☐ Gain endorsement of the evaluation process from the PLT and stakeholders.
- ☐ Develop alternatives or options to meet the project goals.
    - ☐ Work with the PLT, stakeholders, and the public to identify full range of potential options.
    - ☐ Capture, consider, track, and document all suggestions.
- ☐ Evaluate, select, and refine alternatives and options.
    - ☐ Apply the alternative evaluation process to the full range of alternatives and options.
    - ☐ Involve the stakeholders in selecting and refining an alternative.
    - ☐ Clearly document how each idea was evaluated and provide a record of how each idea was evaluated and possibly modified.
- ☐ Consider the following design questions:
    - ☐ Is your project in an Area of Special Attention?
    - ☐ What are the design criteria for the transportation elements?
    - ☐ Does your project include new roadway or retrofit?
    - ☐ How will the design accommodate noise attenuation?
    - ☐ What are the key considerations for the interchange design?
    - ☐ How will the Design Guidance be included in the project?
- ☐ Document each step of the 6-Step Process.
- ☐ Conduct evaluation of the project and the CSS process.

Project Leadership Team Checklist

The Project Leadership Team (PLT) is a multidisciplinary team that includes community representatives and experts in planning, design, landscape architecture, operations, environment, public process, and communication. The lead agency's project manager will establish a PLT at the beginning of a project and will facilitate the team throughout the life of the project. The role of the PLT is to lead the project, champion Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS), and enable decision making. Each member is equal in his/her position on the team, and each member shares responsibility for the success of the project.

The PLT does not make the final selection or endorse project recommendation(s).

The following checklist should be used by the PLT to help it fulfill its responsibilities.

- ☐ All members will commit to active and regular involvement on the PLT throughout the project.
- ☐ Identify and review all relevant materials for the project, including, *but not limited to*:
    - ☐ I-70 Mountain Corridor CSS Guidance
    - ☐ I-70 Mountain Corridor Aesthetic Guidance
    - ☐ I-70 Mountain Corridor Historic Guidance
    - ☐ I-70 Mountain Corridor Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)
    - ☐ I-70 Mountain Corridor Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) (i.e., the Stream and Wetland Ecological Enhancement Program (SWEEP), A Landscape Level Inventory of Valued Ecosystems (ALIVE), etc.)
    - ☐ I-70 Mountain Corridor 106 Programmatic Agreement
    - ☐ Previous plans and studies, including local government comprehensive plans
- ☐ As a team, preliminarily identify the actions and decisions needed to reach the project goals.
- ☐ Provide input into requests for proposal.
- ☐ Participate in the selection of the consultant, if applicable.
- ☐ As a team, develop a charter for the PLT through a chartering workshop that includes, but is not limited to:
    - ☐ Project context and goals
    - ☐ PLT membership
    - ☐ Meeting attendance
    - ☐ Participant roles and responsibilities
    - ☐ Team performance evaluation

- ☐ Team decision making and issue resolution processes
- ☐ Team communication
- ☐ Schedule and milestones
- ☐ Coordination with project teams and the public
- ☐ Stakeholder and constituent communications
- ☐ Ensure that the CSS Guidance, Context Statement, and Core Values are integrated into the project.
- ☐ Define the context for the project.
- ☐ Review and endorse a Project Work Plan based on the 6-Step Process.
  - ☐ Approve the project-specific, collaborative decision-making process for the project.
  - ☐ Ensure that the decision-making process is clear, transparent, accessible to the public and stakeholders, and designed to develop consensus.
  - ☐ Ensure that the process is streamlined by scaling the process to scope of the project.
- ☐ Review and endorse a Public Involvement Plan, designed to meet project-specific needs and ensure early, continuous, and meaningful involvement.
- ☐ Ensure that all project stakeholders are engaged in:
  - ☐ Step 1: Define Desired Outcomes and Actions
  - ☐ Step 2: Endorse the 6-Step Process
  - ☐ Step 3: Establish Criteria
  - ☐ Step 4: Develop Alternatives or Options
  - ☐ Step 5: Evaluate, Select, and Refine Alternative or Option
- ☐ Identify what teams would support your project's stakeholder involvement objectives (e.g., Technical Team or Issue Task Force).
- ☐ Assist in staffing the other project teams.
- ☐ Review and endorse a Public Information Plan to ensure that:
  - ☐ The public will receive regular communication at key decision points.
  - ☐ A full range of appropriate media and tools is used for communication.
- ☐ If policy issues arise that cannot be resolved with the project teams, identify and implement steps to resolve the issues (facilitate decision-making rather than make decisions).
- ☐ Facilitate formal actions required by councils, boards, and/or commissions to keep the project moving forward.

Project Leadership Team

Every project in the I-70 Mountain Corridor will form a Project Leadership Team (PLT) to lead the project. The formation of a PLT can only be waived with formal county approval. The formation and membership of the PLT will be agreed upon by both the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the county.

The Mission of the PLT:
The PLT is a collaborative stakeholder team that leads the project, champions Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS), and enables decision making.

The PLT facilitates the decision-making process and focuses on moving the process forward. The PLT ensures that the 6-Step Process is followed and that decisions are made collaboratively among stakeholders on all project teams and during project activities. The PLT steps in to analyze and formulate a process to move forward when other project teams find themselves at an impasse.

The PLT does not make the final selection or endorse the project recommendation(s). Rather, the PLT ensures that the recommendation is developed in an open, collaborative process.

Roles and Responsibilities:
The PLT's primary roles are to:

- **Lead the Project:** The PLT will identify all relevant materials for the project -- such as the CSS Guidance, Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS), other environmental documents, and local plans. The PLT will discuss the surrounding context, establish project goals, and identify the actions and decisions needed to reach those goals. These elements will be documented in a Context Statement for the project.

   The PLT may assist in developing a request for proposals (RFP).

   The PLT will also determine the teams needed to reach the project outcomes and will identify the members needed for each team. If consultants are used on the project, the CDOT project manager and community leaders will join the consultant selection team.

   Along with the Project Staff and attendees at County-Wide Coordination Meetings, the PLT will assist in staffing the other teams needed for the project.

- **Champion CSS:** The PLT will ensure that the CSS Guidance, the Context Statement, the Core Values, and the 6-Step Process are integrated into the

project. The PLT will identify CSS checkpoints as events in the project timeline upon completion of a formal review for consistency with CSS.

The PLT will have primary responsibility for ensuring that Step 1: Define Desired Outcomes and Actions and Step 2: Endorsing the Process are accomplished with all project stakeholders.

The PLT will review and endorse required CSS elements such as the Project Work Plan and associated Project Schedule, Context Map Reviews, the Stakeholder Involvement Plan, and the Public Information Plan.

- **Enable Decision Making:** The PLT will approve the project-specific decision-making process for its project. This process will detail the interaction between teams, the Stakeholder Involvement Plan, and the Public Information Plan. The PLT will be responsible for keeping the project on track with each of these plans.

   When policy issues arise that cannot be resolved within the project teams, the PLT will identify and implement the steps needed to resolve the issue and make a decision. The PLT is not empowered to make policy decisions. Instead, it is responsible for identifying who must be involved in making the decision, bringing the decision makers together, and facilitating solutions or approaches to keep the project moving forward.

   The PLT will facilitate formal actions required by councils, boards, and/or commissions to keep the project moving forward.

Membership:
The PLT is the leader of the project and consists of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), CDOT, and corridor leaders. The following entities will have representation on the PLT:
- FHWA (1 – 2)
- CDOT program engineer (1)
- CDOT project manager (1)
- Community leaders (1 – 2)
- CDOT environmental lead (1)
- Open seat based on individual project needs (1)
- Contractor project manager, added during the construction phase of a project (1)
- Consultant project manager as facilitator
- Consultant staff for technical expertise as needed

Community leaders will be identified by the county with consideration given to local municipalities directly adjacent to the project.

If a consultant is engaged for the project, the consultant project manager will facilitate this team.

The primary mission of the PLT -- to lead the project, champion CSS, and enable decision making -- will be best accomplished by maintaining a PLT of 10 to 12 members.

Forming the PLT:
The PLT should include representatives from each of the entities listed above. Every effort should be made to keep the members of the PLT consistent throughout all phases of the project. Each of the agencies and affected communities should be contacted early in the project initiation and asked to identify its representative(s) for the PLT. Outreach to county officials and local municipalities should occur prior to finalizing a scope or advertising for consultant services to ensure the involvement of community leaders in developing the request for proposal and selecting the consultant or contractor.

Members of the PLT should make every effort to attend all meetings in person rather than appoint alternate members, and each should be able to adequately represent his or her agency's interests on the PLT.

Meetings:
The PLT will meet regularly, perhaps monthly, through active times of the project. The PLT will remain intact through all the phases of the project. Periods of low activity may occur, particularly between Life Cycle Phases.

Technical Team

The Technical Team will be a multidisciplinary team that includes experts in all of the Core Values.

Roles and Responsibilities:
The roles and responsibilities of the Technical Team include:
- Assuring that local context is defined and integrated into the project
- Recommending and guiding methodologies involving data collection, criteria, and analysis
- Preparing and reviewing technical project reports
- Supporting and providing insight with respect to community and agency issues and regulations
- Assisting in developing criteria
- Assisting in developing alternatives and options
- Assisting in evaluating, selecting, and refining alternatives and options
- Assisting in the formation of the final recommendation
- Coordinating and communicating with respective agencies
- Presenting the final recommendation to the Project Leadership Team (PLT)

Documents provided for review will identify what input is needed, how the input will affect the project, and the timeframe requested for response.

Membership:
The Technical Team will be comprised of experts in the Core Values relevant to the project goals. These may include, but are not limited to, technical staff such as planners, engineers, maintenance personnel, historians, emergency providers, and environmental specialists.

Technical Team membership will be comprised of representatives from:
- Cities and towns within the project limits
- Counties encompassed by the project limits
- Non-governmental organizations relevant to the project goals
- Federal and state agencies with responsibilities relevant to the project

The project manager will be responsible for organizing and facilitating the Technical Team.

Meeting Topics/Format:
The Technical Team's meeting topics will generally parallel the project-specific decision-making process. This process will detail the interaction between teams, the Stakeholder Involvement Plan, and the Public Information Plan.

The meeting format will be structured for open conversations and information sharing.