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.
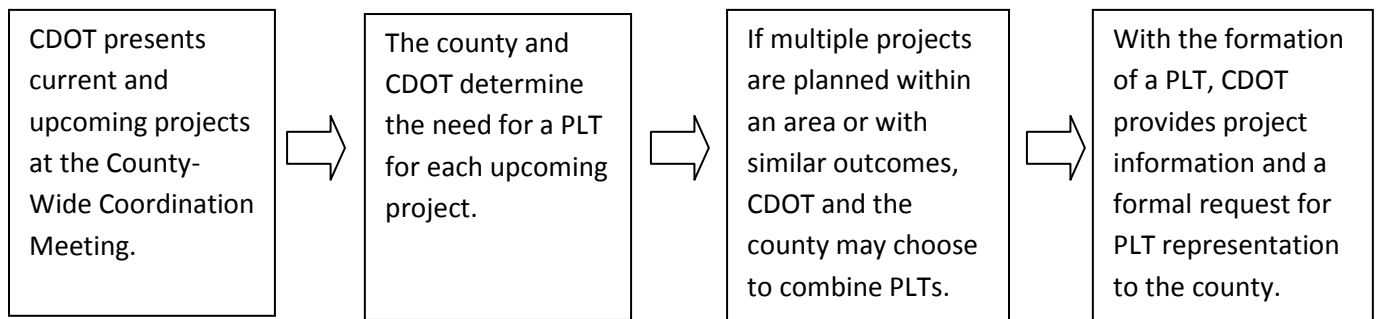
This document outlines some important considerations in developing projects. Project managers should also consult the Project Manager Checklist and the PLT Checklist for additional information. These two checklists -- available on the CSS Guidance Web site -- provide links to information, templates, 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