



Context Sensitive Solutions: Federal Perspective

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CSS and PEL – What is the Connection?

CSS is about both process and outcomes.
CSS is always:

- **Collaborative** – stakeholders work together to solve problem
- **Interdisciplinary** – project team includes experts from a variety of disciplines
- **A tailored approach** – every CSS process is different

Planning and Environment Linkages represent an approach to transportation decision-making that considers environmental, community, and economic goals early in the planning stage and carries them through project development, design, and construction.

This can lead to a seamless decision-making process that *minimizes duplication of effort, promotes environmental stewardship, and reduces delays in project implementation.*

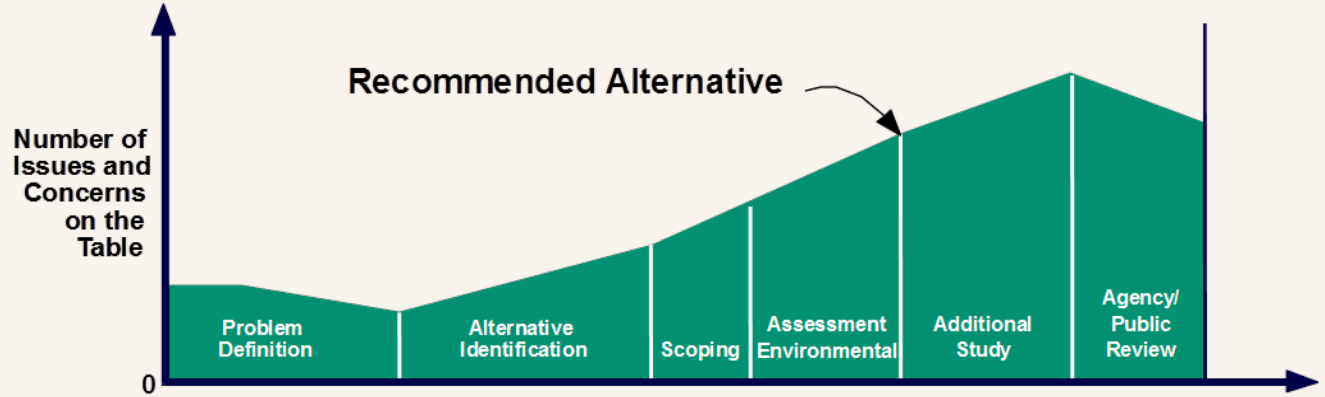
How CSS Helps the Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) Process

During Planning, CSS can be used:

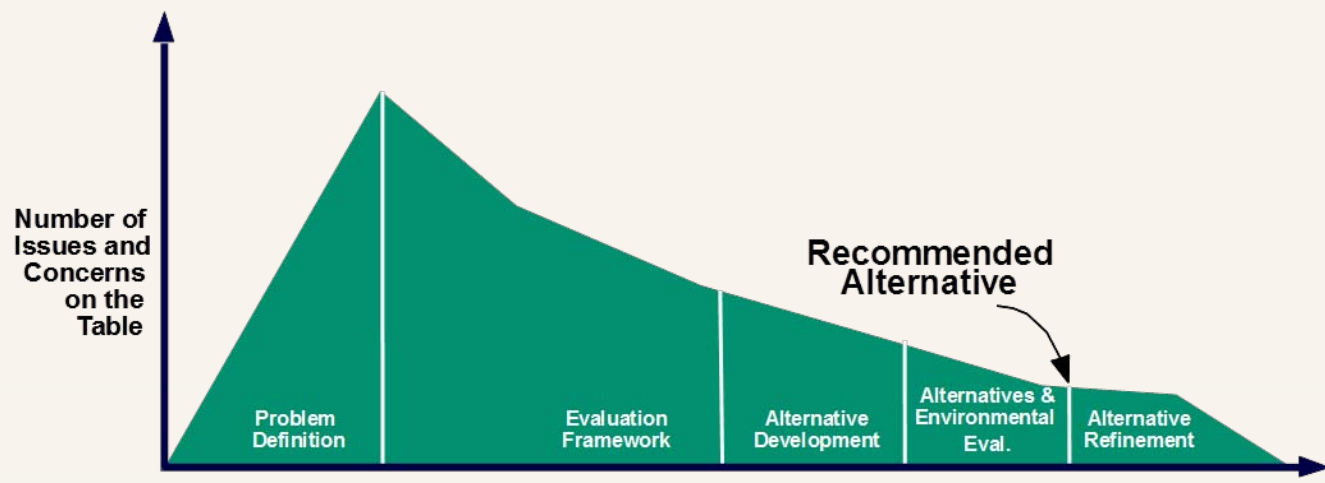
- To develop a vision.
- To identify and achieve broader community goals.
- To develop Context based community performance measures.
- To influence NEPA class of action and documentation.

Differences between Traditional Decision Making and CSS/PEL

Traditional Approach – Addresses major issues late



CSS/PEL Approach – Identifies and addresses major issues early



CSS Integration Guide, Chapter 3.2


- A sound transportation planning process is the primary source of the project purpose and need.
- The transportation planning process also provides a potential forum to define a project's purpose and need by framing the scope of the problem to be addressed by a proposed project.
- In a CSS planning process, all stakeholders are encourage to help frame a purpose and need that fits the context of the community taking into account broader community goals.



The transportation planning process can be utilized to develop the purpose and need in the following ways:

- Goals and objectives;
- A general travel corridor or general mode or modes;
- A financial plan; or
- The results of analyses from management systems.

- The use of these planning-level goals and choices must be appropriately explained.
- Consistent with NEPA, the purpose and need statement should be a statement of a transportation problem, not a specific solution.



There are two ways in which the transportation planning process can begin limiting the alternative solutions to be evaluated during the NEPA process:

- Shaping the NEPA Purpose and Need for the project; or
- Evaluating alternatives during planning studies

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In a CSS process stakeholders are informed about the decision-making process and can have a role in evaluating alternatives

The section of the EA or EIS that discusses alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed consideration should:

- Identify any alternatives eliminated during the transportation planning process,
- Briefly summarize the reasons for eliminating the alternative; and
- Include a summary of the analysis process that supports the elimination.

Overlapping Strategies, Tools, and Philosophies:

- Flexibility
- Livability
- Sustainability
- Community impact assessment
- Scenario planning
- Land use and transportation
- Smart growth
- Walkable communities
- Walkable Thoroughfares
- Healthy neighborhoods
- Transit-oriented development (TOD)
- Complete Streets
- Context-Sensitive Solutions (CSS)

- Context helps determine which streets should have a full complete street design.
- A complete street means different things depending on what context you are in.
- A CSS approach promotes taking a look at all modes/users and safely accommodating them.

CSS will continue to support improving PEL and streamlining.

CSS will continue to support things like health analysis, sustainability, environmental justice, and the deployment of performance measures.

- [contextsensitivesolutions.org](https://www.contextsensitivesolutions.org)
- [cssnationaldialog.org](https://www.cssnationaldialog.org)



Questions?

