STATE OF MICHIGAN

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LANSING

JOHN D. CHERRY, JR.
LT. GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE
No. 2003 – 25

CONTEXT SENSITIVE DESIGN FOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

WHEREAS, under Section 1 of Article V of the Michigan Constitution of 1963, the executive power of the State of Michigan is vested in the Governor;

WHEREAS, under Section 8 of Article V of the Michigan Constitution of 1963, each principal department of state government is under the supervision of the Governor unless otherwise provided by the Constitution;

WHEREAS, Michigan's transportation system connects our communities and citizens, alters the shape of the communities, affects our ecosystems, and impacts the quality of life for Michiganians;

WHEREAS, Section 109 of Title 23 of the United States Code permits a design for new construction, reconstruction, and resurfacing of highways on the National Highway System to take into account the constructed and natural environment of the area, the environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, community, the preservation impacts of the activity, and access for other modes of transportation;

WHEREAS, the use of context sensitive design for transportation projects can enhance both the quality of transportation and the vitality of communities;

WHEREAS, initial efforts by the Michigan Department of Transportation to implement context sensitive design have demonstrated that appropriate use of context sensitive design for transportation projects can be achieved without undue costs or scheduling burdens;

WHEREAS, the Michigan Department of Transportation has established a team to examine procedures and practices relating to context sensitive design for transportation projects;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor of the State of Michigan, pursuant to the power vested in the Governor by the Michigan Constitution of 1963 and Michigan law direct:

A. The Michigan Department of Transportation ("MDOT") shall:

1. Incorporate context sensitive design into transportation projects whenever feasible.

2. Review procedures, organizational structure, and staffing to encourage and institutionalize context sensitive design for transportation projects.

3. Create educational programs for staff and consultants that develop the attitudes and skills necessary to implement context sensitive design for transportation projects, including highway design, communications skills, and process improvements.

4. Analyze the tools necessary for expanded use of context sensitive design for transportation projects, including but not limited to three-dimensional presentation tools.

5. Develop policies and procedures to expand the use of context sensitive design for transportation projects, including but not limited to each of the following:

a. Guiding principles for context sensitive design, such as qualities of excellence in transportation design and characteristics of the design process contributing to excellence.

b. Criteria for the application of context sensitive design.

c. Guidelines for implementation of context sensitive design.

d. Partnering relationships with transportation interest groups, advocacy organizations, and other interested parties early in the planning and design phase of transportation projects.

e. Communications strategies designed to address and inform transportation interest groups, advocacy organizations, and other interested parties throughout the planning and design process.

B. In the development of policies under Paragraph 5, MDOT shall invite participation by representatives of environmental groups, groups representing non-motorized interests, local governments, road builders, the business community, organized labor, transit agencies, users of public transportation, transportation interest groups, and other interested parties. This collaboration shall include a

dialogue to ensure that concerns about safety, mobility, liability, the environment, and other issues are addressed.

      C.   State departments and agencies shall assist MDOT as necessary in implementing this directive.

      D.   MDOT shall encourage local transportation agencies to utilize context sensitive designs for transportation projects whenever feasible.

      E.   MDOT shall report to the Governor on its progress in implementing this directive not later than September 30, 2004.
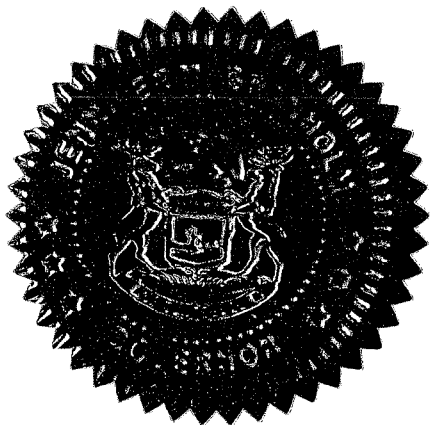
      F.   As used in this directive:

      1.   "Context sensitive design" means a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach involving stakeholders for the development of a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility

      2.   For National Highway System routes under MDOT jurisdiction, "context sensitive design" also includes the context sensitive design principles enacted by the federal government under Section 109 of Title 23 of the United States Code.

This directive is effective immediately.

The assistance of state departments and agencies in implementing this directive and the continued hard work of state employees are appreciated.

Given under my hand this 23rd day of December, 2003.

Jennifer M. Granholm
GOVERNOR