The Resource Team in a
Context Sensitive Solutions Process

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I. Introduction

The focus of this report is on the core citizen team – sometimes called the Resource Team – in a Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) process. The report is based on the experiences and observations of the author, as described in Section II (Background). This report does not deal centrally with the many other considerations in a CSS process, such as the selection of the CSS consultant or facilitator, the roles and relationships of other consultants and public agencies, etc.

Section III of the report (Lessons Learned) provides advice on the following nine topics:

1. General Structure of the CSS Process

2. Guidance from the Agency and the CSS Consultant to the Team

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II. Background

TDOT's Commitment to Context Sensitive Solutions

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) are flexible processes that involve a range of stakeholders, often with different interests and affiliations, consulting with a multi-disciplinary professional team to consider alternative solutions to issues posed by a transportation project. Ideally undertaken from the earliest stages of project development, the CSS process may be applied in other situations as well. Typically, the process is scaled to the physical and social complexity of the project.

The Tennessee Department of Transportation has adopted CSS as a central philosophy. According to TDOT's "CSS Statement of Commitment":

> The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) uses Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) as a process to plan, design, construct, maintain and operate its transportation system in order to establish and achieve transportation, community, and environmental goals. Context Sensitive Solutions balances safety and mobility and the preservation of scenic, aesthetic, historic, environmental and other community values. CSS is a philosophy of doing business that impacts both the project development process and project outcomes.
>
> http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/css/

Beginning in late 2003, TDOT initiated CSS processes on several projects. Two were the Knoxville Regional Parkway project and the US 127 North project. Both were among 15 controversial highway projects halted by TDOT Commissioner Nicely shortly after taking office in 2003. AT TDOT's request, the 15 projects were extensively reviewed by a UT team in mid-2003. (I was a member of that team.) The projects were then internally reviewed by TDOT. Commissioner Nicely announced his decisions on the projects in Fall 2003. Included were the Knoxville Regional Parkway project and the US 127 North project.

The Knoxville Regional Parkway Project

As proposed, the Knoxville Regional Parkway (State Route 475) will be a new road linking I-75 near Lenoir City with I-75 north of Knoxville, bypassing the congested stretch where I-75 and I-40 join together. Following what was known as the "Orange Route" (so-called in prior studies of alternative alignments to the west of Knoxville), the new beltway will be roughly 25 miles long.

In his November 2003 decision, Commissioner Nicely specified that a CSS process should be used to refine the Orange Route alignment and other design features of the new route. The CSS process was to be conducted within three parameters: (1) The Team was given a 1000-foot-wide Study Corridor and was charged with placing a 300-foot-wide roadway alignment within it, with the possibility of only minor deviations outside the corridor. (2) The roadway had to meet freeway design criteria – i.e., a divided highway with a minimum of two lanes in each direction and with full access control. (3) Interchanges were required at the southern and northern termini of the route; the Team was charged with recommending additional interchanges, if any. Of these three parameters, the first was the most controversial.

TDOT selected Palmer Engineering as the CSS consultant, working with a number of other design consultants on various sections of the proposed beltway and with staff members of TDOT headquarters and its Region 1 Office. Members of a citizen-based CSS team – called the "Design Resource Team" – were, at TDOT's request, recommended by the Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization and were hen appointed by TDOT. Nineteen members were appointed; one withdrew from the process due to time commitments; two others were replaced early in the process.

The first meeting of the Design Resource Team was held in April 2004. The process ran through early April 2006, with a total of 15 Team meetings. In addition, in Fall 2004, four "regional subcommittees" and four "issue groups" were formed at the suggestion of the CSS consultant, with the Team's agreement and input on their composition. The regional subcommittees covered the four roadway sections along the beltway corridor and included both Team members and other selected citizens. The issue groups covered four topics important to the corridor as a whole (interchanges and land use; air and noise; caves and streams; and bicycles, pedestrians, and greenways). The issue groups were made up of Team members and regional subcommittee members. Public workshops were held in August 2004, June 2005, and February 2006. Each workshop was conducted at four locations along the corridor.

In April 2006, the Team made its recommendations to the Commissioner in the form of a 10-page report that was drafted by the CSS consultant and then reviewed and modified by the Team members. All of the Team members signed the report, with the caveat that:

> *The members of the Regional Parkway Design Resource Team do not unanimously agree on the need for the roadway or the selection of the Orange Route Corridor. Nevertheless, within the constraints of its charge from TDOT, the Team has reached consensus to submit this set of recommendations. If SR 475 is constructed in the Orange Corridor, we recommend it follow the attached alignment and include the design features noted herein.*

A number of the Team members also submitted minority reports. (For the recommendation report, see

) In June 2006, Governor Bredesen and Commissioner Nicely announced that they accepted all of the Team's recommendations set forth in the recommendation report.

The US 127 North (State Route 28) Project

This highway project is approximately 14 miles long through a predominantly rural area in Cumberland and Fentress counties. The project begins at the intersection of US 127 with I-40 in Crossville and ends at State Route 62 in Clarkrange. It was initiated in 1999, apparently at the request of local elected officials, in part out of concern about the safety of the current US 127.

In 2000 and 2001, TDOT conducted public meetings to discuss preliminary alternative alignments: one following US 127; the other to the west of the existing roadway. Late in 2001, TDOT announced that it was only going to consider the new alignment. The Cumberland and Fentress County Commissions then passed resolutions requesting that TDOT reinstate consideration of the other alternative. Following the UT review of the project in 2003, Commissioner Nicely announced that TDOT would proceed with the project, using a CSS process and with no foregone conclusions about the alignment.

In December 2003, TDOT asked Cumberland County, Fentress County, the City of Crossville, the Upper Cumberland Development District, and Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM, a non-government environmental advocacy organization) to recommend people to serve on a "Citizens Resource Team" (CRT) for the CSS process. TDOT also asked the Mayor of Fentress County to provide a list of people to serve on a Clarkrange Working Group (CWG). The teams were appointed by Commissioner Nicely in March 2004.

Parsons Brinckerhoff, an engineering/planning consultant firm, was hired to facilitate the CSS process and prepare environmental documents required. Groundwork for the CSS process was laid by Sally Oldham of Oldham Historic Properties, Inc., who provided CSS orientation for the CRT, the CWG, and TDOT as well as CSS technical advice to TDOT during the project. TDOT staff (the Project Manager and other staff representing various project planning and development areas) were also closely involved.

In October 2004, the US 127 North Citizens' Resource Team (CRT), the Clarkrange Working Group (CWG), and TDOT hosted two Public Information Meetings to show the public the alternatives developed by the CRT and CWG and hear what the public had to say about the proposed alternatives. The two proposed alternatives basically followed the existing roadway. Alternative 1 proposed a 5-lane roadway; Alternative 2 proposed a 4-lane divided roadway.

In August 2005, the CRT, CWG, and TDOT hosted two more Public Information Meetings to show the public an additional alternative that was developed to address concerns voiced after the 2004 Public Information Meetings and a request by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to develop an alternative that minimized housing impacts.

In June 2006, Commissioner Nicely announced that it had accepted the recommendations of the teams, as set forth in their report. That report recommended a route that basically follows the existing alignment, with the exception of a re-alignment at the crossing of Clear Creek near the northern end of the project. The CRT recommended using a CSD approach on specific design issues such as the bridge over Clear Creek and the entrance to Clarkrange. The majority of the route is recommended as a four-lane divided highway with a grass median, replacing the existing two- and three-lane roadway.

As of 2006, environmental studies for the route were underway, and hearings were to be held in 2007 in fulfillment of NEPA requirements. Following the hearings, TDOT intends to announce the final alignment for the design phase.

My Roles

These two projects – one predominantly suburban and intended to create a new roadway; the other predominantly rural and intended partly to improve an existing roadway – provided an excellent opportunity to assess best practices for local involvement in CSS. Under contract with TDOT, I observed CSS meetings on the two projects and provided comments to TDOT staff following each meeting. I approached this analysis with questions such as the following in mind:

- Is the team's charge and degree of decision-making authority clear to all involved?
- Is the local team representative of the affected area? Should it be?
- How far should the team's scope of inquiry extend? Who should set the agendas for the team meetings?
- How much information should team members have, in order to be effective participants? How much background experience, if any?
- How should the team interact with members of the public who attend team meetings? How should it interact with local officials during the course of its work?
- Assuming the team is supposed to reach decisions that it will then propose to TDOT and/or the community, how should these decisions be reached? For example, is consensus essential, or should decisions by majority vote be an option? Should minority views be carried forward as part of the team's official reports?

With the Knoxville Regional Parkway project, my role evolved: As of early 2005, I was asked to become the facilitator for the Design Resource Team. This request came from the Team, with the agreement of TDOT and Parsons Engineering, following a "mid-course check" that I had done in November 2004 at TDOT and Parsons Engineering's request. An early (May 2004) check had been conducted by TDOT by phone with individual Team members. (See Appendix A for an example protocol.) The mid-course check was precipitated by some difficulties that had arisen since May. It involved extensive, semi-structured individual phone interviews with the Team members concerning various aspects of the CSS process. (See Appendix B for that interview protocol.)

This Report

The report at hand is based on personal knowledge gleaned from the CSS processes on the Knoxville Regional Parkway and US 127 North. The purpose of the report is to briefly summarize key aspects of local involvement in CSS processes, including opportunities as well as pitfalls that may arise. I hope that this report will be useful to those undertaking CSS processes, such as Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) as well as state agencies.

Other Resources

This report is one of several that may be helpful to those undertaking CSS processes in Tennessee. Other key resources include:

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). 2005. *Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making.* http://www.planning.dot.gov/PublicInvolvement/pi_documents/toc-foreword.asp This is a 256-page reference work on a variety of public involvement techniques.

FHWA. 1998. *Flexibility in Highway Design.* http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/flex/index.htm This document laid the technical groundwork for CSD, which in turn paved the way for CSS.

Tennessee Department of Transportation. February 2006. *Public Involvement Plan: A Complete Guide to Public Involvement in Decision-Making.* http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/documents/pip0206.pdf TDOT's Community Relations Division developed this plan in cooperation with three main bureaus of TDOT (Environment and Planning, Engineering, and Administration), in order to facilitate public involvement and outreach in the state.

Transportation Research Board, National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP). 2002. NCHRP Report 480, *A Guide to Best Practices for Achieving Context Sensitive Solutions.*
http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/nchrp_rpt_480.pdf

For the FHWA's website on CSD, see:
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/csd/

For a CSS Online Resource Center, see:
http://www.contextsensitivesolutions.org/

For the website of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), which includes information on CSS and CSD, see:
http://www.transportation.org/

III. Lessons Learned

1. General Structure of the CSS Process

Complexity of the structure

The structure of the process should be tailored to the social and physical complexity of the project. For example, the simpler the social and physical setting of the project, the less need there may be for subcommittees. However, the process still should adhere to basic good practices, including adequate representation on the Team of diverse perspectives and input from public meetings to the Team.

Assembling the Team

Prospective Team members may be identified in various ways. For example, key local officials may play a major role, or the MPO may recommend members. In any event, as discussed under #4, it is important to seek diverse perspectives on the Team.

Facilitator

The facilitator, along with agency staff and the CSS consultant, plays a central role in setting the tone for the Team of mutual respect and dispassionate inquiry. A key function of the facilitator, together with the CSS consultant, is to help the Team identify and explore key issues as well as areas of agreement and disagreement. As a general rule, the facilitator should preserve his/her neutrality. If an issue arises where the facilitator wishes to advocate a particular course of action, s/he should note that s/he is temporarily stepping out of the role of facilitator.

Establishing and following procedural rules

Procedural rules may be established by those leading the CSS process, either on their own or in consultation with the Team. The extent to which the Team can set and change procedural rules needs to be made clear at the outset.

In general, once procedural rules have been set for a CSS process, they should be followed consistently. If diverging from the rules seems appropriate on a particular occasion, the facilitator should note that divergence to the Team.

2. Guidance from the Agency and CSS Consultant to the Team

Although the agency and the CSS consultant may favor having the Team develop its own procedures, some guidance is needed at the outset on the following issues.

Scope

The scope of (1) the Team's inquiry and (2) the Team's authority needs to be clearly defined at the outset.

The CSS process within the agency's larger decision context

The relationship of the CSS process to the agency's larger decision process should be explained to the Team at the outset. This explanation should include studies, decisions, etc. that have preceded the CSS process, and studies, decisions, etc. that will occur after the process is completed. In addition, activities relevant to the CSS process that are occurring simultaneously with it – e.g., an environmental impact assessment – should be clearly explained, as should their relationship to the process.

Deadlines and their flexibility

Having the CSS process work well is generally more important than keeping to a strict schedule. While the process needs a target end date, the date should – barring unusual circumstances – be somewhat flexible. During the process, the intermediate milestones should be adjusted as needed by the CSS consultant in consultation with the agency and the facilitator. When schedule adjustments are made, Team members and other participants should be kept informed of what is happening and why.

Making Team recommendations as a package or piecemeal

In general, it may be preferable to have Team recommendations sent to the agency as a final package, because a recommendation cannot be adequately evaluated unless it is part of a whole. If, however, a proposed recommendation falls outside the previously stated scope of a CSS process (e.g., a new interchange where none originally was planned), it would be a good idea for that recommendation to be sent to the agency's senior management to ensure that they are willing to entertain it, even if they do not yet give their formal blessing.

Taking options "off the table" during the CSS process

If the Team – after receiving adequate information – decides that it is going to recommend eliminating an option, it needs to know whether it can give that option no further study and drop it from subsequent public meetings, etc.

Decision process for recommendations

The agency should make explicit to what extent, if any, the Team has the discretion to determine the decision process for arriving at recommendations.

Agency use of Team recommendations

The agency should be as explicit as possible about the types of recommendations sought and how they will be used. For example, it may be important to clarify that conceptual or functional recommendations are sought from the Team, and that staff members will translate those recommendations into detailed designs.

Open meetings

The agency and the CSS consultant should make clear at the outset that all Team meetings will be open for the public to observe. To honor that openness, and to ensure that the process is fair and inclusive, Team members should not hold small, private "side meetings."

3. The Team's Decision Process

Consensus

Consensus is a hallmark of the CSS process. It can be defined, not as universal agreement, but as reaching a decision that people can live with. Even with this relaxed definition, however, consensus may not always be reached. If it cannot be reached after a sustained effort, a back-up plan may be needed to allow the CSS process to move forward – for example, using a "super-majority" vote (e.g., a 3/4 vote of all Team members, not just those present).

Whether using consensus or some other decision mechanism, it is important to identify which issues are to be decided by the Team and which are to be decided by the agency and/or the CSS consultant.

Polling as a technique to help move toward consensus

Team members can be polled by the facilitator to see whether they are approaching consensus. If a polling technique is used, the facilitator should emphasize that the poll is not a formal vote; instead, it will help to clarity the current level of agreement. The polling technique may be fairly simple – for example, after discussion, the facilitator may summarize the apparent consensus in a statement and then ask whether any Team members cannot live with it. If an objection is raised, the statement then may be revised to accommodate the objection, and the polling repeated.

On some key issues, however, more elaborate polling techniques may be needed. Where a choice must be made among more than two options, one useful technique is "multi-option preference polling." This technique is summarized in Appendix C.

Realistic expectations regarding possible areas of agreement

Often, Team members can reach agreement on key issues – e.g., the location of interchanges – even though they may disagree on the need for the project or other fundamental aspects of the project. This makes it all the more important for the agency, the CSS consultant, and the facilitator to make explicit which issues are "on the table" and which are not.

Basis for making recommendations

The agency and the CSS consultant needs to make clear whether they expect that the Team recommendations will be backed by substantiated facts, or whether the beliefs and opinions of Team members are a sufficient basis for the Team's recommendations. One possibility is to request, first, that recommendations be backed if possible by facts; and second, that when they are supported simply by unsubstantiated beliefs and opinions, that should be so noted.

Criteria for decisions

Informal or formal criteria typically are used in a decision-making process, especially on key substantive issues. A criterion might be as simple as a qualitative expectation (e.g., "attractive landscaping"), or it might be as complex as a quantitative standard (e.g., "will not exceed 50 decibels at a distance of 100 feet"). The way in which criteria are developed needs to be clear at the outset – in particular, what the respective roles are of the Team, the CSS consultant, and the agency. In addition, when criteria are used, it should be clear whether a criterion is a "threshold" criterion (i.e., a criterion that must be met for an option to move forward) or a "balancing" criterion (i.e., an additional criterion that identifies desirable features). Finally, criteria usually should be set with an understanding that they may be revisited and revised.

The final report: author(s), level of specificity, consensus v. minority views

Early in the CSS process, it should be made clear who will draft the final report and how detailed it will be. (For example, will it be 10 pages? … 100 pages?) In addition, deliberation and decision making during the CSS process are made somewhat easier if it is clear whether the final report will include a section that identifies areas where consensus could not be reached and summarizes differing views.

4. Role(s) of Team Members and Other Participants

Representation

In a CSS process, Team members typically are chosen to represent different communities, interest groups, public agencies, and perspectives. Especially if the project's geographic and social setting is large and complex, it can be difficult to keep the Team size to a manageable number. For this reason, some members may be chosen who have more than one relevant affiliation (e.g., they live in the project vicinity and they are connected with a regional interest group).

Still, issues may arise about whether the Team members are supposed to simply be "delegates" representing their own constituencies, or whether they are supposed to be "trustees" advocating for the long-term welfare of the project area and region as a whole. The CSS process may work best if this tension is made explicit to Team members at the outset and they are encouraged to keep both roles in mind.

Alternates

The question of whether Team members may have alternates should be addressed at the outset. If alternates are permitted, related questions will need to be addressed as well: Who chooses the alternate? When serving as a substitute, does the alternate have all of the powers of the Team member? Will the agency and CSS consultant include the alternate on their informational mailing list, or is it the Team member's responsibility to keep his or her alternate "up to speed"?

Attendance

Attendance guidelines should be established at the outset of the process. While this could be a matter for Team deliberation, attendance requirements may be a relevant consideration for someone who is asked to serve on the Team. For this reason, it may be preferable for the CSS consultant and the agency to establish attendance guidelines before the Team is formed.

Stepping down as a Team member

One or more Team members may find that unanticipated commitments, health problems, etc. prevent their attending regularly. In this event, the Team member may choose to step down as a member (or may be encouraged to do so). Subsequently, if the Team member

wishes to show support of the set of recommendations developed, the question may arise whether s/he can be a signatory to the recommendations. A harder question arises if the former Team member wants the document to reflect his or her dissent with the recommendations. The agency and the CSS consultant should address both possibilities early in the CSS process, to determine how they will be handled if they arise.

Formation of subcommittees

Subcommittees to the Team can have three possible compositions. They can be made up (1) exclusively of Team members, (2) partially of Team members and partially of others, or (3) exclusively of non-Team members. To provide adequate linkage to the Team, (3) perhaps should be avoided. With (2) or (3), the decision of who selects the subcommittee members using what criteria will have to be considered.

Treatment of subcommittee recommendations

If subcommittees are used, discussion may be needed of the extent to which the Team is expected to defer to the subcommittees' recommendations. One possibility is to have the Team seriously consider subcommittees' recommendations while not automatically "rubber stamping" them.

Participation of non-Team members in Team meetings

Team meetings typically are open for members of the public to attend and observe. Whether and when they may speak out should be made clear. These policies regarding impromptu participation of non-Team members should apply, not only to members of the public at large, but also to people who have various roles in the process (e.g., alternates, subcommittee members, agency staff members) but are not at the table as members of the Team. Informational questions may, of course, be directed toward non-Team members, seeking their knowledge on relevant issues.

5. Information Provided to the Team

Efficient information transfer

During a CSS process, a lot of one-way information transfer may be needed, to give adequate background to Team members. Their time is valuable, however: Often, Team members are taking time away from work or family to participate. In addition, some Team members may already be much better informed than others. Thus, efficient means of information transfer are important. For example, some of the information needed by Team members can be standardized into a handbook, rather than spending extensive meeting time on lengthy presentations.

Full disclosure

Full disclosure of relevant, available information, at least in synopsis form, is essential to build trust and a working partnership between the Team members on the one hand and the agency and CSS consultant on the other. Similarly, if information requested by a Team member is not provided, the reason(s) why should be explained.

Experts

Who counts as an "expert" is an issue that may arise. While the agency and the CSS consultant may have a roster of experts that they would like the Team to hear from, some Team members may have their own ideas about experts who should speak to the Team. This is largely an issue that will need to be dealt with as it arises. It is important, however, to recognize that all experts (including those provided by the agency and the CSS consultant) have points of view; no one is "totally objective" or "simply factual." For example, experts decide which data are relevant to their conclusions.

6. Involvement of Team Members in Public Meetings

One or more public meetings or workshops typically will be held during the CSS process. These meetings usually are held for two-way exchange: They provide information to members of the public about the project and options being considered, and they seek input from members of the public on the project and its options.

Expectations regarding participation

Early in the CSS process, the participation of Team members in public meetings should be discussed. If the CSS consultant and the agency expect that Team members will attend most or all public meetings and actively participate (e.g., by fielding questions from people attending), that expectation should be made clear and the Team members should have the opportunity to react.

Planning and publicizing public meetings

The respective roles of the CSS consultant, the agency, and the Team members in planning and publicizing public meetings should be discussed. If there are two or more rounds of public meetings, these roles may want to be revisited after the first round, to discuss in the Team setting how well the meetings went and ways in which they could be improved.

7. The Team's Use of Input from Public Meetings and Other Public Formats

Formal input from public meetings may take the form of (1) responses to closed-ended questions or (2) open-ended comments (either written or taken by a recorder and then transcribed). Similar input may be possible through surveys that are mailed or made available on-line. In any case, two key issues may arise.

Compilation of responses

Closed-ended questions can be easily tabulated, although double-counting may be a problem (e.g., because some participants may fill out more than one response form). With open-ended comments, the CSS consultant is faced with the question of whether to synopsize and categorize the comments, or whether to simply present them verbatim to the Team. Either approach has drawbacks: synopsizing is time-consuming, and judgments must be made about what to include; verbatim comments may, because of their cumulative length, be hard for the Team members to digest.

Mandates versus guidance

The question may arise whether input from the public should be counted as "votes" and treated as mandates, or whether this input should be treated as guidance to be given serious consideration as the Team develops its recommendations. Each Team member will need to decide for him or herself to what extent public input should influence the recommendations made. It may be useful, however, to remember that the procedure of gathering public input is different from a public ballot, and also that the Team has been constituted to develop its own collective wisdom about recommendations to be made.

Developing recommendations with open minds

Team members should be encouraged to keep open minds and to consider carefully what they hear, not only from each other and experts, but also from members of the public.

8. Other Opportunities for Input to the Team

Special-interest groups or individuals

Special-interest groups or individuals may seek to present their arguments to the Team. The agency and CSS consultant will need to decide how such requests should be handled.

One option is to make these groups or individuals available to interested Team members in sessions that are distinct from the formal Team meetings. That option, however, has the disadvantage of presentations only to self-selected Team members. Another option is to allow a discrete amount of time at Team meetings for groups or individuals who wish to speak to the Team. As the CSS process draws to a close, however, much usually remains to be done, even as several groups or individuals may seek audiences with the Team. In this event, it may be preferable to have "special interest" messages put in writing, for circulation to all members of the Team.

9. Evaluations

During the CSS process

With any CSS process, evaluation forms should be available at all meetings, so that Team members can provide real-time feed-back on what they do and do not like about the process. In addition, an early check with each Team member on how well the process is working may be advisable. (See Appendix A for an example phone script.) Especially if the process is encountering difficulties, a mid-course check may be advisable as well. (See Appendix B for an example protocol.) Both the early check and the mid-course check should, if possible, be conducted by a neutral third party. The results should be summarized (with anonymity assured) and shared with the Team members as well as the agency, CSS consultant, and facilitator.

Post-process

If time and funds are available, a post-process check may be useful to the agency, the CSS consultant, and the facilitator, to help learn from the CSS process.

Appendix A

Early Check on the CSS Process:
Draft script for phone calls to Team members

Hi – I'm calling on behalf of …. As you know, the CSS process is a fairly new experience for all of us. We are trying to learn from it, and we are trying to make sure it works well. Now that the first few meetings have taken place, this is a good time to check in with you.

[If evaluation forms have been used: I know you've been asked to fill out evaluation forms at the meetings, but sometimes those get overlooked.] If you have the time, I'd like to ask you a few questions about the Resource Team process so far. It'll probably take about 10 minutes. If this a good time to talk? [If not: Can we set a time for me to call you back?]

[When you proceed with the phone call, go on to the following:]

I hope you will speak frankly. I'm calling all of the Resource Team members. Everyone's comments will remain anonymous, but your feedback is really important to us.

1. So far, what have you *liked* about the process and the way it has been managed? Are there one or two things that stand out as really good?

2. So far, what have you *not* liked about the process? Again, please speak frankly.

3. Do you have suggestions for how the process could be *improved* for either you or the Team as a whole?

4. Are there any *other* important process issues that you'd like to mention?

Thanks very much for taking the time to talk. [If appropriate: We may not be able to make all the changes you suggest, but we'll be taking your suggestions into account.] Thanks also for all the time you are taking to participate on the Team.

Appendix B

Mid-Course Check on the CSS Process:
Protocol for phone interviews with Team members

Hello, this is _____. I'm calling at the request of _____ to do a "mid-course" check on the CSS process for _____. I'll be talking with each of the Team members individually and compiling their responses into a short report for _____. You will get a copy of the report as well. No comments will be attributed to individual team members, so I hope you will speak frankly to me.

This is likely to take about 20 minutes. Is this a good time to talk, or can I schedule a time to call back?

There are total of 15 questions, covering five topics:

- Information
- Use of your time
- Use of the Team's input
- Team process
- Improving the process

Information

1. Has information from [the agency] and other public agencies been reasonably accurate, adequate, and timely?

2. Has information from [the CSS consultant] been reasonably accurate, adequate, and timely?

3. In particular, for the purpose of developing recommendations, has the information provided to the Team been too much, too little, or about right?

Use of Your Time

4. So far, has the CSS process utilized your time effectively?

5. If you have been unable to attend meetings, what are the key reasons?

   a) Lack of adequate notice and/or reminders?
   b) Schedule conflicts?

      c) Felt meeting was not important, based on the publicized agenda?
      d) Uncomfortable with the group's dynamics?
      e) Other?

Use of the Team's Input

6. Has [the agency] made a good-faith effort to accept and utilize the input of Team members?

7. Has [the CSS consultant] made a good-faith effort to accept and utilize the input of Team members?

Team Process

8. Do you think that you and your Team members have a clear understanding of the process and how it works? Specifically:

      a) Are the roles and responsibilities of Team members and others clear?
      b) Is the objective of the process clear?

9. Do you think the Team as a whole is committed to the process and reaching its objective?

10. What does consensus mean to you?

11. Do you think that reaching decisions by consensus is a workable approach in this process? … If not, what approach would you prefer?

12. So far, how valuable have the facilitator's services been?

13. What do you think about the breadth of the CSS process? Is it too large and cumbersome, not broad enough, or about right?

Improving the Process

14. In general, how well do you think the Team is functioning?

      a) What is working well?
      b) What difficulties has the Team encountered?
      c) Looking back, could these difficulties been avoided?

15. What, if anything, could [the agency and the CSS consultant] do at this point to improve the process?

Appendix C

Multi-Option Preference Polling

When there are more than two options being considered, multi-option preference polling can be a useful technique. It can help to reveal choices that may be the most mutually satisfactory, by taking into account participants' second-order preferences.

In multi-option preference polling, options are ranked and assigned points. In the approach described here, a participant's first-place option gets 2 points and his or her second-place option gets 1 point. (To avoid gamesmanship, if a participant refuses to name a second-place option, his or her first-place option only gets 1 point.) The points are then totaled. If there is no "majority winner" – i.e., if no option gets more than 50 percent of the total available points – a "run-off" is held between the two options with the most points.

Below is an example with 20 participants and options A, B, C, D, and E:

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
1st place	9 participants (18 points)	4 participants (8 points)	6 participants (12 points)	0 participants (0 points)	1 participant (2 points)
2nd place	2 participants (2 points)	16 participants (16 points)	2 participants (2 points)	0 participants (0 points)	0 participants (0 points)
Total points	20	24	14	0	2

In this example, no option got a majority of the points possible (31 out of 60), so there'd be a run-off polling. Note that the run-off would be between *A and B*, with C, D, and E eliminated. If a "regular" procedure had been used, the run-off would have been between *A and C*, with B, D, and E eliminated.