
Issue 8: Project Initiation Documents

Governor's Budget

The Administration requests to shift 96.5 positions and \$12.5 million from State funding (State Highway Account) to local reimbursement for department workload associated with Project Initiation Documents (PIDs), or initial planning documents, for locally-funded projects.

Background

Project ideas are identified in the long-range plans. Before potential projects can be developed and constructed, however, detailed project planning work must first be completed. Initial project plans, called PIDs, contain specific information, including the identification of the transportation problem that is to be addressed an evaluation of potential alternatives to address the problem, and the justification and description of the preferred solution. Each PID also includes the estimated cost, scope, and schedule of the project—information needed to decide if, how, and when to fund the project.

Currently, PIDS for locally funded projects are funded by the Department. In last year's budget discussions, the Department was required to convene meetings with stakeholders to find efficiencies in the PID process and report those findings to the Legislature by March 1, 2010. Additionally, the 2009-10 budget reduced the Planning Divisions budget by roughly \$15 million for developing PIDS

LAO Comments

Caltrans and the Department of Finance have indicated that an April Finance Letter is being considered which would address the workload of Caltrans' entire Planning Program, including the PID development efforts discussed in this request. Therefore, the LAO recommends holding this item open until the Finance Letter is submitted so that these decisions about funding sources and workload can be coordinated more effectively.

Staff Comments

Budget bill language in the 2009 Budget Act requires Caltrans to provide a report to the Legislature by March 1, 2010, with options to share costs, lower costs, streamline procedures, and reduce delays associated with PIDs. That report was due March 1, so the subcommittee would have the benefit of that information as it held its March and April Subcommittee hearings; however, the report had not been provided as this agenda was finalized.

Additionally, staff and the LAO are currently reviewing a recent April Finance Letter proposal that has been proposed to replace the Governor's budget proposal. Given that this proposal is being replaced by the April Finance Letter and the Administration has not yet submitted its report on PIDs, staff recommends that the subcommittee reject this request and reopen consideration, as warranted, once the April Finance Letter once the report has been received.

Staff Recommendation: Reject this request