

Deputy Directive

Number: DD-83

Refer to
Director's Policy: DP-04
Environmental Policy
DP-07
Project Delivery
DP-16
Program Management

Effective Date: March 2004

Supersedes: NEW

TITLE Project Purpose and Need

POLICY

The California Department of Transportation (Department) ensures consistency in project purpose and need from a comprehensive planning process through project construction, at the appropriate level of detail commensurate with the stage of project development. The Department develops a concise, well-defined Purpose and Need Statement for its projects through: outreach to customers, coordination with local and regional planning agencies, early formation of multi-functional project development teams, and retention and transmission of relevant supporting data. A project's Purpose and Need Statement exhibits continuity from planning through project approval and beyond; the designed and constructed project reflects its intended purpose and need. Ultimately, the project's purpose and need reflects the customers' needs.

DEFINITION/BACKGROUND

A project's "Need" is an identified transportation deficiency or problem, and its "Purpose" is the set of objectives that will be met to address the transportation deficiency. A reasonable solution or range of solutions is developed and evaluated based on these objectives.

A clear, concise, well justified Purpose and Need Statement is the foundation of every transportation project. It is critical for identifying a reasonable range of project alternatives; it expedites project delivery; and, it leads to more precisely defined project cost, scope, and schedule. Just as importantly, it explains to the public, stakeholders and decision makers that the expenditure of funds is necessary and worthwhile, and that the project's priority relative to

other transportation projects is warranted. It ensures that the right project is built.

A quality Purpose and Need Statement also meets the requirements of federal and State regulations: an environmental impact statement shall "briefly specify the underlying purpose and need to which the agency is responding in proposing the alternatives including the proposed action" (40 CFR §1502.13); an environmental impact report shall "contain a statement of objectives sought by the proposed project" and it "should include the underlying purpose of the project" [14 CCR §15124(b)].

A project's basic purpose and need must be founded in a transportation planning document and will remain consistent throughout project development. As supporting data and input are assembled during the project approval process, these can be used to refine the solutions being considered, thereby permitting a more focused analysis of those solutions that truly address the problem to be solved. All subsequent project activities must reflect this final project purpose and need. Key factors in the successful development and refinement of a sound Purpose and Need Statement include broad participation from functional units and stakeholders. It is also crucial that project data are transmitted and retained for each phase of the project development process.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief Deputy Director:

- Establishes policy for Purpose and Need Statements.
- Utilizes established incentive and award programs to recognize those departmental individuals, teams, and projects that advance the goals of this policy.

Deputy Directors, Planning and Modal Programs and Project Delivery:

- Ensure development of strategies to facilitate early development of quality Purpose and Need Statements.
- Require training of staff in the development of Purpose and Need Statements.
- Ensure that manuals, guidance, and procedures reflect this policy.
- Ensure development of strategies for retention and transmission of project documentation from planning through maintenance.

