

California Transportation Commission

The Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017

SB 1 Accountability and Transparency Guidelines

Discussion Draft

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- DISCUSSION DRAFT -

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I. BACKGROUND

The Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017 (Senate Bill [SB] 1, Chapter 5, Statutes of 2017) provides the first significant, stable, and on-going increase in state transportation funding in more than two decades. The Legislature has provided additional funding to and increased the California Transportation Commission's (Commission) role in several existing programs, and created new programs for the Commission to oversee.

SB 1 creates new and augments existing programs including, but not limited to, the Active Transportation Program, the Local Partnership Program, the Local Streets and Roads Program, the Solutions for Congested Corridors Program, the State Highway Operation and Protection Program, the State Transportation Improvement Program, and the Trade Corridor Enhancement Program.

SB 1 states that “it is the intent of the Legislature that the Department of Transportation and local governments are held accountable for the efficient investment of public funds to maintain the public highways, streets, and roads, and are accountable to the people through performance goals that are tracked and reported.”

The Commission's responsibility for the accountability of SB 1 program funds is focused on the identification and reporting of expected and actual benefits of the projects along with the delivery of projects within their approved scope, cost, and schedule, and reporting these findings to the Legislature and the public in a transparent and timely manner.

II. APPLICABILITY

With exception to the Local Streets and Roads Program, these Accountability and Transparency Guidelines (Guidelines) are applicable to all Senate Bill 1 programs as listed in Section IV. The Guidelines are intended to supplement the Commission's programmatic guidelines for each SB 1 Program. In the event of a conflict between the provisions outlined in these Guidelines and those provided in specific programmatic guidelines adopted by the Commission, the provisions of these Guidelines will govern. These Guidelines are effective immediately upon approval by the Commission and may be amended at any time subject to a Commission action at a duly noticed Commission meeting. While the Commission is authorized to program and allocate funding for SB 1 programs, the California Department of Transportation (Department) provides the administrative oversight for SB 1 Programs and ensures that the terms and conditions of the Commission's guidelines and subsequent programming, allocation, reporting, and other actions are followed.

III. PURPOSE

SB 1 funded projects include but are not limited to highway, transit, active transportation projects, local streets and roads, congestion relief, trade corridor and other related projects, some of which are significantly complex, representing significant costs, constrained schedules, and are subject to many project delivery processes each with considerable impacts to timely project delivery. These Guidelines are intended to communicate the Commission's expectations and specifically emphasize program and project accountability. Specifically, as described in these Guidelines, the Commission intends to exercise programmatic oversight for the delivery of SB 1 projects with regard to benefits, scope, cost, and schedule consistent with the program objectives and executed agreements.

IV. SB 1 PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY

Modelled after certain aspects of the Proposition 1B Accountability Implementation Plan, the Commission's SB 1 Accountability and Transparency Guidelines describe the Commission's accountability structure that is intended to allow for transparent and effective decisions and the timely delivery of transportation system improvements and resulting benefits. The following describes the components of this accountability structure:

A. Front-End Accountability

The Commission will require project Baseline Agreements (Attachment A) for the following programs:

- Active Transportation Program – only for projects with a total project cost of \$25 million or greater or a total programmed amount of \$10 million or greater.
- Local Partnership Program (Competitive) – only for projects with a total project cost of \$25 million or greater or a total programmed amount of \$10 million or greater.
- Solutions for Congested Corridors Program.
- State Highway Operation and Protection Program – only for projects with a total project cost of \$50 million or greater or a total programmed amount (in right-of-way and/or construction) of \$15 million or greater.
- Trade Corridor Enhancement Program.

Each Baseline Agreement shall be signed by a duly authorized officer of the Nominating, Sponsor, and Implementing Agencies, the Department's Director, and, the Commission's Executive Director.

The Baseline Agreements set forth the agreed upon expected benefits, project scope, schedule, and cost, and provide a benchmark for comparison to the current status of the project for reporting purposes. These Baseline Agreements also include the estimated cost of and the start and completion dates for the right-of-way, design, and construction phases of the project, and will identify the agency responsible for meeting the reporting requirements as outlined in Section V. The Baseline Agreement is considered the front-end document that forms the foundation for the Commission's in-progress and follow-up accountability.

For all SB 1 Program projects, the Commission requires that the Department enter into agreements (cooperative or funding) with implementing agencies that in pertinent part will include the accountability and transparency principles and best management practices outlined in these Guidelines along with any specific requirements in the individual programmatic guidelines. The Commission is not a signatory to cooperative or funding agreements described in this section.

The Commission shall approve all (executed) Baseline Agreements at a regular Commission meeting within three months after a project has been adopted into one of the aforementioned programs except in the following instances:

- For projects that have not received environmental clearance, the Baseline Agreements are due three months after completion of the environmental document.
- For projects requesting an allocation at the May 2018 and June 2018 Commission Meetings, for a component other than environmental, the Baseline Agreement shall be approved by the Commission at the August 2018 meeting.

The Commission may delete a project for which no Baseline Agreement is executed. The Commission will not consider approval of a project allocation, except for the environmental component, without an approved Baseline Agreement.

B. In-Progress Accountability

The following outlines the in-progress accountability steps the Commission intends to employ to assure that SB 1 funded projects are successfully delivered consistent with the respective program guidelines, Commission programming and allocation actions, and cooperative or funding agreements by and between SB 1 funding recipients and the Department.

1. Ongoing Program Monitoring and Review

Implementing agencies are responsible for managing the scope, cost, and schedule of the project consistent with the adopted programs and executed agreements. Commission staff shall receive routine program and project progress reports from the Department as outlined in Sections V and VI. Commission staff may also schedule routine status meetings with implementing agencies, and will perform routine assessments of project progress as compared to the executed agreements. The purpose of this assessment is to identify possible issues of concern, establish an understanding of related impacts, and prepare agenda items for the Commission. Commission Staff anticipates placing projects that are unable to maintain delivery and cost commitments on a "watch list" and expects these projects be identified in the progress reports.

2. Program or Project Amendments

The Commission will consider program or project amendments at its regular meetings. Program or project amendments requested by implementing agencies shall receive the approval of the same entities that originally signed the agreements before presentation to the Commission and will be processed in accordance with the respective programmatic guidelines.

3. Allocation of Funds

The Commission will allocate funds only when the implementing agency requests an allocation that has been prepared in accordance with the respective programmatic guidelines. The Commission will consider allocation requests on its regular agenda.

V. PROGRAM REPORTS

A. Progress Reports

The Department, in cooperation with signatory agencies to the Baseline Agreements, will report to the Commission each quarter on the status of every project that is subject to the Baseline Agreement requirements in Section IV. The first progress report will be presented to the Commission during the October 2018 meeting. Subsequent reports will be presented to the Commission every December, March, May and August, based on the state fiscal year. Beginning in July 2019, progress reports will become semi-annual and will be presented to the Commission during the March and August meetings.

The progress report shall be written in plain language and include information appropriate to assess the current state of the overall program and each project as compared to the previous report.

For each project, the progress report will include the following:

- The current cost, schedule, scope and expected benefits as compared to the cost, schedule, scope and expected benefits approved under the Baseline Agreement or for projects that have not yet cleared environmental, as approved at the time the project was adopted into the respective program.
- A summary describing any changes to the scope, cost, schedule and benefits of the project and a corrective action plan.
- Expenditures to date for all project component costs, segregated by fund type.
- Identification and discussion of any significant issues that may impact implementation of the project including financial constraints and commitments, and programmatic risks and impacts.
- Status of the Final Delivery Report submittal for completed projects or completed project segments.

The progress report will also include an overall program summary identifying total programmed and un-programmed funds, total dollars allocated, number of projects allocated, number of completed project, and a discussion of the actual benefits achieved with the completed projects.

Commission staff will use this progress report to identify issues and concerns that may be presented to the Commission for further action.

B. Annual Reports

The Commission will provide in its annual report to the Legislature a summary of its activities relative to the administration of the SB 1 Programs. This report may also discuss significant issues with these programs, and may recommend legislative proposals that could facilitate their implementation.

VI. FOLLOW-UP ACCOUNTABILITY

A. Completion and Final Delivery Reports

Within six months of construction contract acceptance or the project becoming operable (open to the public), the Department shall provide a Completion Report to the Commission on the scope of the completed project, its estimated final cost, duration, and project benefits as compared to those included in the executed project agreements. Additionally, the Completion Report shall describe the methodologies used to evaluate how the project benefits were evaluated as compared to the methodologies used in the executed project agreements. In the event the project benefits identified in the project completion report differ from those identified in the executed program agreements, the difference must be noted, quantified, and explained. The Completion Report should not be delayed due to claims or plant establishment periods.

A Final Delivery Report will be provided at the conclusion of all remaining project activities beyond the acceptance of the construction contract to reflect final project expenditures, any changes that occurred after submittal of the Completion Report and an updated evaluation of the benefits if necessary. The Commission may include this information in its annual reports to the Legislature.

For projects receiving SB 1 program funds for pre-construction components only, the Department shall provide the Completion Report to the Commission within six months of the conclusion of the pre-construction component. The Completion Report will include the scope of the project component, its final cost, and duration as compared to those included in the executed project agreements. Additionally, the Completion Report shall provide an updated schedule, a description of how the project will progress to actual construction, and a discussion on how the project will continue to provide the benefits described in the executed project agreements.

For projects delivered in segments, a Completion Report will be required for each segment and note that a summary Completion Report will be provided when the final project segment is complete. An audit may be done on one or all segments of a segmented project.

The Department shall ensure a Completion Report is approved prior to paying the final invoice for the respective SB 1 program funds.

B. Audits of project expenditures and outcomes

The Department shall audit a selection of projects from each of the respective SB 1 programs. The audits of project expenditures and benefits shall be performed in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards promulgated by the United States Government Accountability Office. These audits shall provide a finding on the following:

- Whether project costs incurred and reimbursed comply with the executed project agreements or approved amendments thereof; state and federal laws and regulations; contract provisions, and Commission guidelines.
- Whether project deliverables (outputs) and outcomes are reasonable in comparison with the project cost, scope, schedule and benefits described in executed project agreements or approved amendments thereof.

At a minimum, the following audits shall be performed. Additional audits, if deemed necessary, may be requested by the Commission during the implementation phases of the project.

C. Semi-final Audit

Within six months of the project completion report of the project (or when the project is substantially completed and open to traffic), the Department shall provide the Commission with a semi-final audit report for projects in the SB 1 Programs.

D. Final Audit

Within six months of the date of project completion, the Department shall provide the Commission with a final audit report for the project. This report shall be a supplement to the semi-final report and shall provide findings on total project expenditure and final project benefits.

For purposes of these audits, project completion occurs after all project activities beyond the acceptance of the construction contract are completed.

E. Yearly Audit Summary

By October 1 of each year, the Department shall provide the Commission with a report on the audited projects, summarizing their findings and status of any corrective action.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Project Baseline Agreement Template and attachments – under development. Will be included in the proposed final guidelines.