

Design-Sequencing

Design-sequencing is defined as a method of construction contracting that enables the sequencing of design activities to permit each project construction phase to commence when design for that phase is complete, rather than requiring design for the entire project to be completed before commencing construction. Current law, as established under AB 405 (Knox), Chapter 328, Statutes of 1999, authorizes Caltrans to conduct a five-year demonstration program involving the completion of up to six transportation projects utilizing the design-sequencing alternate method of project delivery. Under the demonstration project "design" was defined as a plan completed to a 30 percent level. Other parameters and requirements were established for the operation of the demonstration project as well.

Upon completion of all the authorized design-sequencing contracts, Caltrans is required to establish a peer review committee to prepare and submit to the Legislature an evaluation report on the program. In 2000 the Legislature enacted AB 2607 (Knox), Chapter 340, Statutes of 2000, that increased the number of permitted projects from six to 12. SB 1210 (Torlakson), Chapter 795, Statutes of 2004, authorizes phase two of this pilot project, allowing an additional 12 projects to be selected under the program until January 1, 2010.

Under the AB 405 pilot program, Caltrans must balance geographical areas among test projects as well as pursue diversity in the types of project undertaken. The department must prepare a status report each year on the program in addition to the peer review committee assessment of the entire design-sequencing program after completion of all 12 projects. As of January 2006, Caltrans indicates that, under the phase one program, seven projects have been completed and three projects are still under construction. Two projects were unable to be selected within the phase one deadline. The selected projects are all highway-related and included interchange construction and expansions, freeway and soundwall construction, high-occupancy-vehicle lane additions, truck and climbing lane additions, freeway widenings and landslide stabilization. According to the latest annual Caltrans report to the Legislature on the status of the program, "A preliminary analysis of the completed projects has been done and the results appear positive... completed projects have an average time savings of five months. Preliminary results from the completed projects indicate that Design-Sequencing has not resulted in an increase in capital construction costs compared to traditional delivery methods. However, support costs have been two to six percent greater when using Design-Sequencing. To date, there has been no reduction in the utilization of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises when using Design-Sequencing."

Under the SB 1210 phase two pilot project, four projects have been chosen and are currently in the design phase.

Under the Governor's proposal, an additional four projects would be allowed under phase two and the pilot program would be extended to January 1, 2012. The proposal would also require an annual status report as well as a final report by a peer committee to evaluate the effectiveness of the design-sequencing method of contracting.