

Program Management Tip

February 2010:

How do you prioritize projects in a program?

No matter how much money you have in your capital outlay program, it seems like there's never enough. So, how do you prioritize which projects you'll undertake or even what scopes of work you'll focus on? Balancing the needs and desires of multiple stakeholders can be challenging. If you've passed a bond measure there will be some direction contained within that language. Of course, you'll be required to comply with the intent of that bond. But, you'll also have expectations from the community since you'll have had meetings and provided information to your constituents as you've worked towards the successful passage of the bond measure. And then there are the District support staff and leadership, as well as site staff, who may have competing needs. If you're fortunate enough to have lots of flexibility, then the task to prioritize will be even more difficult.

CPM has helped many of our clients sift through the options and alternatives of what projects or what scopes of work to complete. A recent example of this was working with Long Beach Unified School District to develop a prioritization strategy for their recent Measure K bond. We looked to the District's Strategic Plan, its Facility Master Plan and the recently completed Technology Master Plan – all Board-approved. We then overlaid the Measure K language as the final test to confirm if a project or scope of work was supported by the overarching goals and objectives of the District. This could lead to hundreds of possible projects. Working with Long Beach Unified School District staff, we then developed a strategy to take all the overarching goals and objectives and sift the possible projects through various primary and influencing criteria, which led to a listing of possible project sites from which we've been developing project scopes.

The strategy for Long Beach Unified School District is unique to its goals and needs. It will allow the District to further define and develop projects and their scopes in a clear and fully compliant manner. The strategy also affords the District with a solid foundation for project and scope justification, which will permit the project teams to more fully focus on project development.

The solution for your District will be different. CPM brings an objective and experienced perspective to the prioritization process and can assist your District in developing strategies for prioritizing your projects so they will best meet the needs of your stakeholders.