

Planning for Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) Projects

The CMAQ section of the [Regional Transportation Investment Policy](#) (RTIP) was amended via Resolution 2007-010 (see appendix 13 of the RTIP for a copy of the Resolution).

Background and Purpose

The CMAQ program is the result of the partnership between NOACA and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). ODOT receives CMAQ funds at the state level. The funds received are proportional to the severity of pollution and the population exposed to it in the state's various nonattainment areas.

However, ODOT is not required to suballocate CMAQ funds to the region. It does so because it believes NOACA is better able to judge the needs and merits of proposed CMAQ projects in its area. In return, NOACA provides an annual report of its CMAQ uses within the region to ODOT as part of its cooperative agreement (WIN agreement) with ODOT.

NOACA directs and manages the CMAQ program consistent with federal regulations and guidance. As expressed in federal guidance, the CMAQ program supports two important goals: improving air quality and relieving congestion. It is the explicit intent of NOACA to use CMAQ funds to help achieve transportation and environmental goals and objectives.

Application

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) establishes the projects and programs that are eligible for CMAQ funds. Please see the NOACA or FHWA Web sites for the most recent lists of eligible project and/or program types.

Project applications will be reviewed consistent with Section II.C. of this document. Interested potential project sponsors can find the most current application forms on NOACA's web site. Individual applications for less than \$100,000 in federal funds or for more than one-third of an annual CMAQ allocation to NOACA will not be processed. In addition to the general application information, eligible sponsors are required to submit any additional information needed by NOACA staff to technically assess their proposed CMAQ project upon request.

Project Review and Project Scoring

After initial application review, all proposed projects are scored according to the following criteria:

A. Air Quality (AQ) cost effectiveness

- This factor measures improvements to air quality in relationship to the project's cost.

B. Congestion Management (CM) cost effectiveness

- This factor measures improvements to congestion management in relationship to the project's cost.

C. Geographic scale

- This factor measures the scope and scale of the project. Projects that impact the region, for example, are given more points than projects that impact a local area.

D. Population impact

- This factor measures the affected population. Projects that impact large numbers of persons receive more points.

Proposed projects that receive 0 to 10 points will not be processed further. Proposed projects that receive 10 or more points are eligible to be processed through Project Planning Review (PPR), which includes committee review, public involvement and Intergovernmental Review and Consultation. (See Section II.C. of the RTIP for more information on PPR).

Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Transportation Plan

If a proposed project has successfully passed PPR, it is eligible to be placed on NOACA's Transportation Plan (Plan). The overall status of the CMAQ account will be a determining factor regarding a project's placement on the Plan. Projects may be amended to the Plan quarterly.

TIP

Only CMAQ projects that are on the Transportation Plan are eligible to be placed on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Plan projects will be assessed annually to coincide with the development of the annual priority list. To be eligible for TIP placement, the project sponsor must first:

- Provide evidence the final plan package will be ready for submittal within the next four years, or that the contract will be awarded within that time frame.
- Agree to a final not-to-be exceeded federal funding amount, not to exceed 80 percent federal funding.

Staff will prepare a draft CMAQ project list using the results of the scoring system noted above. Eligible projects will be prioritized according to their score and available funds.

A joint task force of the Regional Transportation Investment Subcommittee (RTIS) and the Air Quality Subcommittee (AQS) will review the project list. The task force will review the draft list and consider the following: urban core/environmental justice, modal balance, environmental priorities and project innovation. The task force will submit a recommended list for the committee review, public involvement, Intergovernmental Review and Governing Board approval.

Once a project is selected for the TIP, the project sponsor is expected to deliver the project at the agreed upon time. However, NOACA may need to shift projects within the four year program to maintain fiscal balance within available appropriations. Additionally, NOACA reserves the right to strategically advance certain CMAQ projects to help ensure long-term air quality. CMAQ projects on the TIP may need to be rescheduled at times to help ensure Transportation Conformity, or to augment efforts to attain or maintain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Project sponsors will be notified of any potential changes in scheduling at least one year prior to the project's projected sale date.