



**2009 - 2010
CONGESTION MITIGATION &
AIR QUALITY PROGRAM
APPLICATION & GUIDANCE**

*November 2009
Bureau of Planning & Community Assistance*

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Please contact the following NHDOT staff with any questions regarding this application:

Tom Jameson
Program Manager
P: 271.3462
E: Tjameson@dot.state.nh.us

William Rose
Senior Planner
P: 271.6581
E: Wrose@dot.state.nh.us

WELCOME!

The State of New Hampshire has been administering the Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) Program since 1994 – making this the 15th year. In that time, there have been approximately 160 projects planned and constructed using these Federal funds.

We're pleased that your municipality or organization is interested in the CMAQ Program as a potential funding source to complete your eligible project. This document was created to help point you in the right direction as you develop an application for funding consideration. If you have had the benefit of CMAQ funding for a project in the past, you will note that several changes have been made to the program starting this year. These changes are aimed at increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the program to deliver quality projects on budget and in a timely manner.

Key changes include:

- Letters of Interest (LOI) and mandatory training as part of the application process;
- Increased emphasis on the cost benefits for proposed projects and on project planning to ensure quality benefits are delivered in a timely fashion;
- Improved application criteria and review processes;
- Increased role for Regional Planning Commissions; and
- Creation of a 'Tenth Region' for State Agencies wishing to apply for these funds.

IS MY PROJECT ELIGIBLE FOR CMAQ FUNDS?

In order to determine eligibility, applicants need to be able to answer 'yes' to the following questions:

- 1) Will my project offer air quality benefits in the State's non-attainment or maintenance areas?

NH has a single ozone non-attainment area that encompasses much of Southern and Seacoast NH (please see the map included in the guidance document for specific towns and cities) and two carbon monoxide (CO) maintenance areas: the City of Nashua and the City of Manchester. To be eligible for CMAQ funding a project must demonstrate air quality benefits to the non-attainment or maintenance areas.

Projects *may* be physically located in geographic areas outside the non-attainment or maintenance area **if** they will provide benefits within the eligible areas. In the ozone non-attainment area projects must demonstrate reductions in one or both of the ozone precursor pollutants, Volatile Organic

Compounds (VOCs) and Nitrogen Oxides (NOx). Projects within the CO maintenance areas should also be analyzed for changes in CO emissions.

2.) Does my project meet one of the sixteen eligible project categories?

Your project must fall under one of the following eligible categories:

- 1.) Traffic Control Measures (TCM)
- 2.) Extreme Low-Temperature Cold Start Programs
- 3.) Alternative Fuels & Vehicles
- 4.) Congestion Reduction & Traffic Flow Improvements
- 5.) Transit Improvements
- 6.) Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities & Improvements
- 7.) Travel Demand Management
- 8.) Public Education & Outreach Activities
- 9.) Transportation Management Associations
- 10.) Carpooling & Vanpooling Programs
- 11.) Freight/Intermodal
- 12.) Diesel Engine Retrofits & Other Advanced Technologies
- 13.) Idle Reduction
- 14.) Training
- 15.) Inspection/Maintenance Programs
- 16.) Experimental Pilot Projects

Additional information regarding project eligibility may also be found on-line in the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) CMAQ Program Guidance located here: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/cmaqpgs/08guide.htm#elig>

Your Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is available to assist you in developing an air quality analysis for this project. Should you have questions about air quality issues in your proposed project area or on the process for conducting an air quality analysis, please contact your RPC or the following individuals:

Nicholas Alexander

P: 271.3280

E: nalexander@dot.state.nh.us

Chris Skoglund

P: 271.7624

E: christopher.skoglund@des.nh.gov

GETTING STARTED WITH THE APPLICATION

First things first: in order to be eligible to apply for funding through the CMAQ Program, you will first need to submit a Letter Of Interest (LOI) to the NHDOT & your RPC. The letter need not be overly long or detailed – rather it only needs to:

- List the municipality or organization that will be applying for funding;
- Identify the project contact person, mailing address, phone & email;
- Provide a brief description of the potential project for which you'll be applying for funding;
- Provide information regarding which of the eligible CMAQ activities you believe applies to your project; and
- Estimate the amount of funding necessary to complete the project.

These letters are completely non-binding. By providing NHDOT & the RPCs with this information, it allows for proper program planning – everything from what topics would be germane to the required municipal project management workshop to better fiscal planning of the available funding. It also ensures that all potentially interested parties are placed in the communications loop with NHDOT & their RPC and are able to fully participate in the process.

These letters are required however. Failure to submit the required letter by the **12:00 PM January 8, 2010**, deadline will result in your project having to wait until the next funding cycle to apply. While this may seem overly harsh, a large and complicated program like this requires detailed planning to enjoy success, and administering projects that are federally funded carries many far more detailed requirements.

OK, THE LETTER WAS SENT, NOW WHAT?

Within a month of the reception deadline for letters of interest, notification will be sent out to the project contacts identified in those letters about the Mandatory Municipally Managed Project Workshops (MMPWs). **Please Note: Each applicant must have someone that will be directly involved in the management of their project attend one of these CMAQ specific MMPWs that will be held throughout the state. Attendance at a previous MMPW will not satisfy this eligibility requirement.** In an effort to facilitate ease of attendance, NHDOT staff will select locations in those areas most convenient to the largest number of applicants. In addition, the MMPW held prior to application submission will be an abbreviated version of the standard full day course – taking only about an hour and a half to complete.

Attendance at a workshop is required. **Those projects that have no certification of representation at a MMPW will be deemed ineligible for CMAQ program funds for the application period.** There are many requirements involved in administering federal transportation dollars, and this is the easiest way to ensure that everyone has the correct information about these requirements

THE MMPW WAS GREAT – WHAT’S NEXT?

Once the Letter of Intent and Municipally Managed Project Workshop tasks are completed, it’s time to move on to the application itself. **Please note that a completed application form is required in order for your application to be considered complete.** If you have participated in the CMAQ application process before, you will note that there have been substantial changes to the program application for this year. One major change is the manner in which the application review will be conducted.

The Review Process

Beginning with the 2009 Application Cycle, NHDOT staff will be conducting a review and statewide ranking of project applications for the Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Advisory Committee’s (CMAQAC) consideration as part of their recommendations to the Commissioner of Transportation, who makes the decision regarding which projects will be awarded funding.

The NHDOT staff review will involve award of bonus points for projects that demonstrate the most cost effective emissions reductions, proper project planning and strong community/ regional support. While all eligible applications will be accepted and reviewed, those projects earning the greatest amount of bonus points will be the most competitive and will rank highest overall – increasing the likelihood of obtaining funds. The amount of bonus points available and an explanation of the information requested under each criterion is detailed on pages 5-10.

The Application Process

Another change in the 2009 application process is the application submission process. In the past, applications were submitted to the RPCs for their review and comment before being sent from the RPCs to NHDOT. This year, applications will now be submitted to both the RPCs and NHDOT at the same time. This will allow NHDOT staff additional time to review applications, particularly the resource bureaus at NHDOT to identify any potential issues that may have been missed by the applicant. The goal of this revised process is to ensure submission of more realistic project estimates and accurate air quality analyses. It will also allow the RPCs additional time to review and rank projects

prior to submitting them to NHDOT – thereby strengthening the role of the regions (and consequently the communities within each region) in the process.

The Application

A summary of the application form and an explanation of the information each question is soliciting follows.

1.) Contact Information

Applicant: The name of the entity applying for the funds – the name of the community or organization hoping to be the recipient of the monies applied for – and the entity responsible for providing matching funds.

Contact: The person who will be involved in the management of the project and who will be able to answer any questions that might come up regarding the project.

Sponsoring Regional Planning Commission: The RPC that serves your community or the area where the project is to be located is considered your ‘sponsoring RPC’.

Attachments: The respective RPCs will forward their regional ranking for the proposed project and identify any additional project related comments from the RPC.

Beginning with this application cycle, projects will be assigned bonus points for both the Cost Benefit offered by the air quality improvement proposed (explained on page 12) as well as on the priority ranking determined by the appropriate regional planning commission. The regional ranking bonus points will be assigned as identified below:

For Regional Rankings:

Rank	Points
1	45
2	15
3	5

**** For State Agency Projects:** Those projects that will be match-funded and managed by a NH State Agency will be evaluated by NHDOT staff as a State Agency Project (SAP). SAPs will be evaluated under the auspices of a ‘Tenth Region’ by NHDOT staff, and the same scoring and evaluation criteria applied to projects in the other nine regions will be applied to SAPs.

While RPCs are welcome to review and provide comments regarding any SAPs proposed for their region, they will not be asked to rank any of the SAPs for scoring purposes.

****For Inter-regional Projects:** For those projects that will involve communities in different RPCs – applicants will need to submit their applications to all of the RPCs involved. The evaluation of this type of projects will involve a review of the respective projects ranking by each of the regions involved.

2. Project Planning (12 points)

Beginning in the 2009 application cycle, the CMAQ program will be emphasizing strong project planning. This will allow for proper project planning considerations to be made prior to application to ensure more rapid movement of projects through design, resource review and construction phases. The changes are also intended to result in more accurate financial projections that should ultimately lead to improved financial planning for the program that will result in an overall increase in the number of projects constructed.

Those projects receiving the largest amount of bonus points in this category will be more successful in the overall process. The intent of this question is to gauge whether proper planning questions have been considered in the development of the project that funding is requested for.

The first part of this section asked applicants to please identify whether the proposed project has undergone any previous planning efforts, either as part of a larger study or as an individual study.

If the project has been studied previously, please identify the title of that study and the year the study was conducted and don't forget to attach a copy of the plan, or pertinent section of the plan as well.

NHDOT will be looking for evidence that proper planning considerations have been made by applicants concerning their projects. The aim is not to require the of hiring engineers to complete an engineering study for the projects – as that typically takes place in a more formal manner as part of the design process after the project has been awarded funding. Rather, NHDOT is looking to ensure that appropriate questions are considered in the development of the project concept submitted for funding consideration, that public input has been solicited – and support has been obtained and documented.

Attached to your application on as many separate sheets as necessary, please identify whether the project sponsor has considered and developed responses to the following planning considerations:

- **Identify the project's purpose and need:**
What is the issue in need of resolution? What benefit does addressing that need provide?
- **Provide an overview of existing conditions:**
This information will explain the current situation around the project location, including how much of what types of traffic, intersection level of service analysis, any accident data, identification of any natural or cultural resources that might be impacted, etc. to familiarize reviewers with the proposed project area and to aid in making the case for there being an issue in the proposed project area that requires a resolution eligible for CMAQ funds to assist with.
- **Demonstrate consideration of proposed project alternatives:**
Is the proposed option the only one that has been considered? Have there been others? Is there a particular reason why this option seems to be the best option available to resolve the purpose and need?

Applicants should provide details concerning the answers to these questions as well as an investigation of what would the result be if nothing is changed in the project area.

Applicants should use this opportunity to explain how the proposed project best meets the identified purpose and need for the proposed project. This information will be needed during the environmental review portion of the design process, in the even that your project is awarded funding.

- **Provide a conceptual design:**
In general detail, what would the preferred alternative look like and where will it be located? Please provide concept/sketch plans of the proposed project to be funded through this process. If no construction will result from this process, please provide a narrative detailing the benefits of project implementation.
- **Provide an estimated budget:**
What do you think your proposed project will cost to complete as planned?

Please break the project budget out into 3 categories:

- 1.) *Preliminary Engineering:* This involves everything from the engineering study to formalize the project details, to project design, permitting and environmental review.
- 2.) *Right-of-Way:* Will any property rights need to be procured in order to accomplish the proposed project? All of the costs associated with

purchase of land, easements, surveying, document development and legal representation would be identified in this category.

- 3.) *Construction*: This category covers all of the expenses associated with construction/purchase of the project. This line item would include the costs of construction engineering and inspection services.

Please note: Construction costs should include close to full-time construction inspection cost estimates for all CMAQ projects. This is a departure from the past practices of municipalities to fund only part-time inspection, and is reflective of new guidance issued by FHWA.

- **Document public input:**

Public input and support for projects is vital to successful project implementation. Those projects that are successful in obtaining funds and then implementing their projects owe that success to the sustained support provided by the public. As a result, NHDOT is looking for evidence that the planning process for your project includes opportunities for public involvement and input. If this has been done for your project, please be sure that the summary of the public input provided is attached, and an overview of the public process is as well.

Each of these items completed will result in 1.5 bonus points each, for a possible total bonus score of 12 points. Projects receiving the full allotment of points under this item will be the most competitive.

3. Plan Support (10 points)

A yes answer to this question means that:

- This project is in conformance with the State Long Range Transportation Plan;
- The project is in conformance with the goals, policies and objectives established in the Municipal Master Plan(s) for the proposed project area;
- The project is in conformance with the goals, policies and objectives in any natural or cultural resource plans;
- The project is in conformance with the goals, policies and objectives of the Regional Land Use Plan; and
- The project is in conformance with the planning strategies identified in any local, regional or statewide Corridor or Modal Plans.

Please note that a 'yes' response to this question is a 'yes' answer to all of the above statements. A 'no' response to any of the above results in a 'no' response

to question #3. In the event that any of the plans identified above do not exist, then the project is assumed to be in conformance.

Additional points (up to 12) may be awarded by NHDOT upon review in instances where projects are designed to implement specific projects identified in adopted plans.

*****Reminder: Don't forget to attach copies of pertinent plan sections. NHDOT does not need the entire plan, just a copy of the cover and of the pertinent page(s).***

4. Congestion Mitigation & Alternative Transportation (20 points)

For those projects proposing to address congestion issues through the use of increased or improved alternatives transportation offerings, applicants are asked to respond to the following questions:

- *Will the project result in reduced congestion?*

Applicants wishing to claim this benefit from their project will need to provide additional detail demonstrating the traffic analysis used to determine the benefits.

- *How many surface transportation modes will this project serve?*

In order to ensure maximum strategic value of the CMAQ dollars invested, those projects that offer enhancements to the greatest number of Surface Transportation modes will receive the highest number of points under this category. On a separate sheet, please be as creative and detailed as possible in taking credit for bonus points available. The surface transportation modes are pedestrian, bicycle, transit, rail & automobile. Those applications lacking credible details for points requested will not be credited with those points. Should you have questions regarding this question, please contact your RPC or:

Tom Jameson, Project Manager
P: 271.2107
E: Tjameson@dot.state.nh.us

William Rose, Senior Planner
P: 271.6581
E: Wrose@dot.state.nh.us

- *Does the project encourage use of alternative transportation modes?*

Similar to the previous criterion, this section seeks to award points for those projects proposing implementation of strategies aimed at reducing the reliance on Single Occupancy Vehicles (SOVs) as the primary mode of

transportation in the air quality impairment area. Applicants should be as detailed as possible using additional sheets to describe the alternative sources of transportation proposed.

- *Does the project result in use of trip reduction practices?*

In the interest of promoting innovative approaches to addressing air quality and congestion issues, applicants may benefit from additional points awarded for proposed projects result in practices that reduce vehicle trips in non-attainment areas, including any educational/outreach campaigns.

5. Sponsor/Project Record (15 points)

Seeking to build upon past program success, affirmative response to this criterion will result in additional bonus points for applicants that have demonstrated successful implementation of past municipally managed projects.

- *Will the project be municipally managed?*

While municipal management of CMAQ projects is not an eligibility requirement, it is strongly encouraged. Those projects that will be managed by a municipality (or other non-DOT entity) will be more competitive in the application process than those that will not. The one exception to this are NHDOT projects proposed and managed by other Bureaus within the department.

- *Does the sponsor propose to provide matching funds in excess of the required 20% minimum match?*

This criterion espouses the concept of maximizing the number of potential projects/funding the largest projects possible. As such, those projects that propose to take on a larger share of the local match will be rewarded additional bonus points as a result. A total of one point for every 5% above the minimum match of 20% will be rewarded, for a possible total of five additional points.

- *Has the sponsor managed previously funded CMAQ projects that are now successfully completed and closed out?*

Those applicants that can demonstrate past CMAQ success will benefit from the possible award of up to five additional bonus points to ensure past successes are repeated.

6. Overall Suitability (15 Points)

- Is the project realistic in terms of construction, operation and service delivery?

Responses to this criterion will be judged against the planning evidence provided in response to previous criteria, the air quality and traffic analysis, performance record of the project sponsor and reasonableness of the estimated expense.

- Are the maintenance provisions for the proposed project/service/facility adequate?

This criterion speaks to the proposed maintenance plan for the project following project completion. Applicants need to describe the plans for maintenance of the project for three years following completion. This information should include details such as which entity will be responsible for maintenance and the funding provisions for this maintenance.

- If this is a transit project, is the plan for funding after the 3 year threshold is crossed adequate and appropriate?

Given the specific language contained in the CMAQ guidance regarding transit new-starts, applicants for new-start transit projects should provide details re: continued funding for the 3 year period following project implementation.

7. Project Description

On a separate sheet(s), provide a map of the project area that shows the proposed project location.

Additionally, please provide a narrative description of the project that identifies (as appropriate):

- 1.) Period of time over which air quality benefits are anticipated
- 2.) Seasons that the project will operate: winter, spring, summer, fall or year round.
- 3.) The hours of the day that the project will operate.

8. Project Funding

This section will identify how much funding you will be requesting from the CMAQ program. While municipal management of projects under the CMAQ program is not required, it is looked upon favorably and is therefore eligible for bonus points in the application process.

Please identify the estimated budget for the three categories identified in the application – Preliminary Engineering, Right-of-Way & Construction. In the section following the program budget, please identify the reimbursable portion of the project funding and the local match to be provided. **Please be sure to attach official correspondence from the entity that will be responsible for providing the anticipated match that obligates them to provide the matching funds indicated in the application, in the event that the funding application is successful.**

9. Air Quality Benefits (55 points)

One of the criteria projects will be evaluated on is the cost effectiveness of the pollutant reduction benefit. This will be calculated based on the information provided under section 8 and section 9 of the application. Every application submitted will have a cost to benefit ratio calculated based on the estimate and air quality analysis. The cost/benefits ratio will be measured up against all of the other applications by rank- with the best ratio ranking first. Bonus points will then be assigned to the top ten projects as follows:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20	15	10

10. Regional Planning Commission Sign-off

The section that follows is to be completed and signed by the RPC (or NHDOT for Tenth Region applications). This information acknowledges that a planning professional has reviewed the public participation process for the proposed project, the project plans & air quality analysis. It also serves to verify that the public has been invited to participate, was solicited for input on the proposed project and that the planning process & air quality analysis used to arrive at the proposed project were valid and effective.

11. Project Match

This section is where the applicant will provide details regarding the matching funds source and its appropriateness. Applicants will also utilize this section to identify the entity responsible for maintaining the project once completed.

12. Previously Awarded CMAQ Projects

This section is aimed at determining the applicant's previous 'record of accomplishment' in regards to CMAQ program funding. Please attached separate sheets that indicate that funding has been previously sought by your organization or municipality, a description of the project, the amount awarded (if any) and the completion status of the project.

Please note that all current (active) CMAQ projects awarded in 2004 and before will receive additional scrutiny by NHDOT during the application review. If the project has not been completed due to inaction by the managing entity, new applications for funding may be denied as a result. This will not affect those projects dating to 2004 and before that have not been completed due to issues beyond the control of the municipality/sponsor.

I've finished the Application - now what?

After completing this application, you will need to submit it to your RPC & NHDOT by **3 pm, April 1, 2010**, for the next part of the process. Please note that applications submitted after 3pm on April 1 cannot be considered for funding. Incomplete applications – as identified by NHDOT - will also be returned as ineligible for funding consideration.

For more information on the process or program, please refer to the TE/CMAQ Program Guidebook. You may also contact NHDOT staff indicated below:

Tom Jameson, Program Manager
P: 271.2107
E: Tjameson@dot.state.nh.us

William Rose, Senior Planner
P: 271.6581
E: Wrose@dot.state.nh.us

Send completed application to the attention of the staff listed above at the following address:

NHDOT – Bureau of Planning & Community Assistance
John O. Morton Building
7 Hazen Drive, PO Box 483
Concord, NH 03302-0483

You can also contact your local RPC staff at the numbers listed below:

North Country Council	444.6303	Strafford RPC	742.2523
Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC	448.1680	Nashua RPC	424.2240
Lakes RPC	279.8171	Southern NH RPC	669.4664
Southwest RPC	357.0557	Rockingham PC	778.0885
Central NH RPC	226.6020		

Following submission of completed applications, NHDOT and RPC reviews will take place March through May, with RPC's providing project rankings & comments through May 2010. The CMAQAC will meet to discuss projects and recommend awards in the early summer of 2010.