



AIR QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS IN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

How does air quality relate to transportation?

The transportation choices we make have a big impact on the air we breathe. Increased use of cars and trucks over the years has contributed to pollution proven to be harmful to the environment and to human health.

The Federal Clean Air Act establishes standards to protect air quality and reduce air pollutant emissions, including those that are produced from motor vehicles. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has set limits on the amount of certain harmful pollutants allowed in the air we breathe. These limits, referred to as **National Ambient Air Quality Standards** (NAAQS), apply to six air pollutants: ozone, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, and sulfur dioxide. Areas that exceed the limits for any of these pollutants are known as non-attainment areas. Twenty counties in the Atlanta region are in non-attainment for **ozone** and **fine particulate matter (PM)**.

Why is air quality important in transportation planning?

States that fail to meet air quality standards are required to establish and adhere to a Motor Vehicle Emissions Budget (MVEB). The MVEB is part of the **State Implementation Plan (SIP)** — an EPA-required document addressing how a state will achieve Clean Air Act requirements. This means that any transportation improvements identified as part of the **Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)** and the **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** must not cumulatively contribute to poor air quality in the future.

The process of determining a transportation project's impact on air quality is known as transportation conformity. A positive conformity determination — one where analysis proves that pollutants will not further degrade air quality — is required in order to receive federal funding for projects. The Atlanta region continuously monitors the impact that transportation projects have on the levels of ozone and particulate matter in the atmosphere. Promoting programs that reduce vehicle emissions — such as carpooling, walking, teleworking, and transit — is one way to achieve cleaner air.

WHAT IS PLAN 2040?

PLAN 2040 is metro Atlanta's long-range planning process for land development and transportation needs through the year 2040. It will guide growth by addressing not only land use and transportation issues, but economic, environmental, housing and human services challenges, as well.



ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION



How is the ARC planning for cleaner air?

ARC is the agency responsible for air quality planning and transportation conformity determination in metro Atlanta. ARC conducts technical analysis to illustrate transportation projects' impact on air quality in the region. It also sponsors and participates in programs designed to raise public awareness of the impact transportation choices have on air quality and to promote transportation alternatives that help reduce emissions. These programs and initiatives include:

- **ARC RideSmart**
- **Green Communities Program**
- **Livable Centers Initiative Program**
- **Clean Air Campaign**
- **Southeast Diesel Collaborative**
- **FHWA Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program**

How can someone participate in developing Plan 2040?

Metro Atlanta residents can participate in ARC's Plan 2040 activities in several ways:

- Regularly visit the Plan 2040 Web site at www.atlantaregional.com/plan2040 for the latest information about the planning process. Check the "Get Involved" section of the site for discussions, meetings and other ways to share thoughts and ideas.
- Email comments to ARC at plan2040@atlantaregional.com
- Share ideas at ARC's group page on LENS on Atlanta at www.lensonatlanta.org
- Call ARC with comments or questions:
 - 404.463.3272
 - TTY number is 404.463.3272

Helpful links for more info

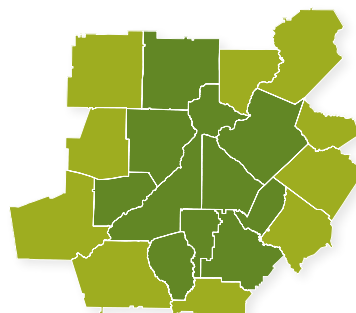
- **ARC Air Quality Programs**
- **AASHTO Center for Environmental Excellence — Air Quality**
- **US EPA Office of Transportation and Air Quality**
- **FHWA — Air Quality**
- **Air Quality Index and Forecast**

This document can be found on ARC's Web site at www.atlantaregional.com/plan2040. For assistance in viewing this document, contact plan2040@atlantaregional.com or 404.463.3272.



ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

40 COURTLAND STREET, NE
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303
ATLANTAREGIONAL.COM



WHAT IS THE ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION?

ARC is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the **10-county** metropolitan area. For transportation planning, ARC's area of responsibility includes all or parts of **20 counties** and the City of Atlanta.