

Atlanta Regional Commission Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PROGRAM RESOURCES AND APPLICATION

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I. Program Background

Administered by the Atlanta Regional Commission through a competitive selection process, the Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality program (CMAQ) is a federal funding program authorized as part of MAP-21 (23 U.S.C. 149). At the national and regional level, CMAQ is focused on reducing congestion and improving air quality in areas that do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter. As a region that is in nonattainment with these standards of the Clean Air Act, qualified projects in the region that meet program goals are eligible for federal funds.

II. Program Goals & Principles

- **Emissions / Congestion** - CMAQ funds will be prioritized for projects that best meet the overriding goals and intent of the federal program, which is to provide significant reductions in emissions and congestion. The focus areas for funding consideration were defined with this outcome in mind and were developed in consultation with GDOT staff and TAQC members. Other projects and programs not identified as a priority for CMAQ funding will be given priority under other ARC programs (e.g., Transportation Alternatives, Last Mile Connectivity, Roadway Safety and Operation, Freight Safety and Operation, Livable Centers Initiative and Transit Capital and Preventive Maintenance).
- **Impact** - Projects and programs will be prioritized partially based on their ability to noticeably improve congestion and reduce emissions for the broadest geographic area possible. Projects and programs which produce a measurable emissions and/or congestion benefit immediately upon their completion / implementation are preferred over those which rely on longer-term behavioral or travel pattern shifts to deliver their full benefits.
- **Deliverability** - Funded projects must be deliverable on the schedule as proposed. Potential obstacles (both current and future) to deliverability should be identified by the applicant on the Letter of Interest so that an honest assessment can be made of the viability of the concept

before federal funds are committed. Projects and programs with major implementation challenges (e.g., vaguely defined scopes, significant public opposition or lack of a committed funding match) are less likely to be funded.

III. Program Emphasis Areas

Within the Atlanta region, the CMAQ program is administered through a competitive selection process by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC). Total anticipated funding for the program is depicted in the chart below, divided into fiscal years. In order to allow for future project calls, the latter years of the TIP will not be fully programmed. The cumulative total available funding is expected to be \$124.1 Million. Due to federal requirements, projects will be prioritized based on their ability to produce a measurable reduction in ozone, carbon monoxide, and/or particulate matter immediately upon completion / implementation.

CMAQ Funding Availability*	
2014	\$18.6 Million
2015	\$13.3 Million
2016	\$15.8 Million
2017	\$28.6 Million
2018	\$25.4 Million
2019	\$22.4 Million

*Funding estimate as of 7/2013; dollar amount may change

Given the stringent requirements to produce a measurable impact, as well as federally-defined project types that are eligible for this funding category, the ARC has developed five activities / project type Focus Areas to achieve the CMAQ program objectives:

- **Travel Demand Management** – A diverse set of activities that focus on physical assets and services that provide real-time information on network performance and support better decision-making for travelers choosing modes, times, routes, and locations. These projects should be designed to reduce SOV use and/or reduce congestion. Up to 3 years of operating assistance to administer or manage new or expanded TDM programs are eligible.
- **Clean Vehicle & Technology Programs** – Funds may be used to purchase alternative fuel vehicles; costs associated with converting fleets to run on alternative fuels are also eligible. Transit operators and government agencies will receive highest priority consideration for any clean vehicle and technology program funding.
- **Transit Service Start-up Operation** – New transit facilities are eligible if they are associated with new mass transit service, as are new transit vehicles (bus, rail, or van) that will expand the system’s coverage area. Operation assistance (3 year maximum) for a new type of transit service, service to a new geographic area, or an expansion of existing service providing additional hours of service or reduced headways are also eligible.

- **Roadway ITS / Operations / Incident Management** – Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) projects, such as traffic signal synchronization, traffic management, and traveler information systems are eligible. Please visit the [FHWA Office of Operations Program Areas](#) webpage for detailed discussion of the benefits associated with various operational improvements, as well as a list of eligible activities.
- **Managed Lanes** – FHWA broadly promotes highway congestion pricing and the development of an area-wide system to demonstrate its effectiveness. The realization of congestion pricing systems in the Atlanta region is in the form of managed lanes. Eligible expenses may also include: tolling infrastructure, such as transponders and other electronic fare payment systems; roadway modifications to enable tolling, marketing, public outreach, and support services, such as transit in a newly tolled corridor.

Multi-jurisdictional Support – In conjunction with the emphasis areas defined above, projects will be assessed on their level of regional impact; this emphasis was developed in consultation with GDOT staff and TAQC members. An example of regional impact is the geographic footprint of the project itself and whether the boundaries cross jurisdictional lines. A second characteristic of regional impact is the scope of benefits (air quality and/or congestion relief) that affect multiple jurisdictions. A third aspect is the level of support, whether financial and/or conceptual in nature, from other jurisdictions. Sponsors of short-listed projects may be asked to provide a letter of support from jurisdictions that are either affected by the project, conceptually support the project, or who will provide a financial contribution to the delivery of the project.

Other projects of significant scope or impact in the Atlanta region that aid in reducing congestion and emissions may be eligible; elements may include any additional aspect of federally-eligible CMAQ project types, which can be found on the FHWA [CMAQ webpage](#).

IV. Project Submission Process

The Atlanta Regional CMAQ project solicitation will be conducted through a competitive, two-stage selection process comprised of:

- Letters of Interest from potential project sponsors
- Proposal documents which provide additional detail on the need, scope, and implementability or proposed projects

Letters of Interest are requested from interested project sponsors to establish the size, scope, and benefit of potential projects. A project shortlist will be selected by a team comprised of ARC staff and board members. *LOI submissions will be shortlisted based on the following criteria:*

- Adherence to the Program Goals & Principles (listed in *section II*)
- Alignment with Project Emphasis Areas (listed in *section III*)

- Deliverability of proposals on schedule
- Ability to scale project
- Flexibility to program funds over multiple fiscal years (if appropriate)
- Proposed implementation schedule's alignment with funding availability in a given fiscal year

Shortlisted submissions will then be invited to submit a more thorough proposal to receive federal funds, including detailed information on the need, scope, and implementability of proposed projects. Sponsors will be required to outline a realistic financing plan for all stages of a project, including phases not funded with federal grant money. It is anticipated that ARC staff will take an active role in working with applicants during proposal development to ensure projects meet all goals and criteria for the CMAQ program. The format and content of each proposal will be determined by joint agreement of ARC staff and the applicant, and tailored to each project.

Successful proposals will provide both qualitative and quantitative information on project impacts, regional significance, implementation logistics, supporting data, anticipated outcomes, and detailed funding estimates demonstrating available funding for implementation of the requested project. Regional significance may be demonstrated based on the need of the project and the ability to meet the goals and criteria of the CMAQ program.

V. Project Submission Timeline *(All dates are tentative and subject to change)*

- 09/27/2013 – LOI submittal deadline
- 10/18/2013 – Short list announced; proposal development begins
- 11/15/2013 – Proposals due
- December 2013 – Funding recipients announced; projects programmed in TIP

VI. Additional Resources

CMAQ program development was conducted through outreach meetings with ARC's agency partners, board members, and community stakeholders. Additional program materials and guidance are available on the program's website: www.atlantaregional.com/cmaq

For questions or additional information, please contact:

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