

Update on Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program

SNHPC MPO Meeting
September 26, 2017

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Deputy Executive Director





What is the CMAQ Program?

- The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program is a core federal-aid transportation funding program to reduce congestion and improve air quality.
- New Hampshire apportionment of federal CMAQ funding totals approximately \$10 Million per year.
 - Approx. 25% of New Hampshire's CMAQ funding is being transferred to support "other needs" until FY 2021.
- The CMAQ Program is now eligible statewide in New Hampshire.
 - Previously CMAQ eligibility was limited to (former) air quality non-attainment areas in New Hampshire.



Eligible CMAQ Activities

- Non-transit alternative fuel projects (e.g. refueling or charging facilities).
- Projects that improve traffic flow (e.g. signal optimization, HOV lanes, and intersection improvements).
- Projects that implement Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technology (e.g. real-time traffic or transit information).
- Transit capital investments (e.g. vehicle acquisitions and new facilities).
- Transit operating assistance for new services or the incremental cost of expanded services.
- Non-recreational bicycle and pedestrian improvements that provide a reduction in single-occupant vehicle travel.
- Rail network improvements.



Current CMAQ Solicitation

- NHDOT announced a solicitation in July 2017 for \$13.5 Million in CMAQ funding.
- Project requests must demonstrate a 80/20 federal/local funding split with the federal (CMAQ) funding capped at \$1.2 Million per project.
- Letters of Interest were due to NHDOT on July 7, 2017.
 - The only Letter of Interest in the SNHPC region was from the City of Manchester for signalization improvements on the South Willow Street and Granite Street corridors.



Changes to the CMAQ Project Evaluation and Selection Process

In the past, there was a collaborative, multi-disciplinary process to evaluate and prioritize CMAQ projects.

NHDOT Evaluation (33% of Overall CMAQ Score)

RPC/MPO Evaluation (33% of Overall CMAQ Score)

CMAQ Advisory Committee Evaluation (33% of Overall CMAQ Score)

Statewide Recommended CMAQ Project Priorities

(For Review and Concurrence by the Commissioner of the NHDOT and the Executive Council).



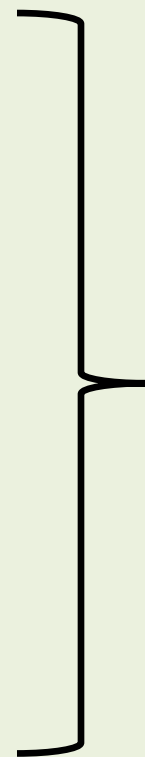
Changes to the CMAQ Project Evaluation and Selection Process

Projects submitted for the current CMAQ round will be evaluated solely by NHDOT staff (no formal consideration of local or regional priorities).

NHDOT Evaluation (33%)
100% of Overall CMAQ Score

~~**RPC/Municipal Advisory Committee (33%)**
of Overall CMAQ Score~~

~~**CMAQ Advisory Committee**
Evaluation of Overall~~



Statewide Recommended CMAQ Project Priorities
(For Review and Concurrence by the Commissioner of the NHDOT and the Executive Council).



Changes to the CMAQ Project Evaluation and Selection Process



August 2, 2017

Hon. David Wheeler, Chair
Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal
Transportation
107 North Main Street
State House, Room 207
Concord, NH 03301

Ms. Victoria Sheehan
Commissioner
New Hampshire Department of Transportation
John O. Morton Building
PO Box 483 | 7 Hazen Drive
Concord, New Hampshire 03302-0483

Re: Proposed 2018 - 2020 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program Project Evaluation Process

Dear Councilor Wheeler and Commissioner Sheehan,

New Hampshire's Regional Planning Commissions have joined together to express our mutual concerns with the proposed approach to evaluating and selecting Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) projects in this solicitation round. At the recent Ten-Year Transportation Improvement Plan kickoff meeting in Gilford, Regional Planning Commissions heard for the first time the proposed process. Although we understand the desire and need for process improvements, the new approach presented at last week's GACIT meeting does not consider regional project priorities or evaluation and omits the CMAQ Advisory Committee from the project evaluation process. In its place, it substitutes a ranking that will be made by the NHDOT alone before action by GACIT. Doing so leaves out input from RPCs whose long-established role have been to provide local context in this decision making. We believe you should have and consider that input before deciding on CMAQ projects. Proceeding without RPC input is inconsistent with both the Ten Year Plan process, and with federal guidance about how such decisions should be made.

Consideration of Regional Project Priorities

Historically, a portion of CMAQ project scoring has reflected the regional priority of proposed projects. This has allowed municipalities, working through their Regional Planning Commissions, to jointly determine local CMAQ priorities and ensure that those local priorities are fairly considered during the statewide project selection process.

NHDOT proposes that their own staff be solely responsible for reviewing and prioritizing all CMAQ applications. With the NHDOT providing selection criteria as well as project review and scoring, stakeholders may well perceive bias in favor of applications submitted by the NHDOT and against projects submitted by municipalities, transit providers, and other partner agencies. While we have faith that the Department would approach this in an honest and unbiased way, the appearance of this proposed process is problematic. We recommend a more balanced approach be used in the evaluation that includes consideration of local evaluation and prioritization as well as regional considerations.

- In response to the changes to the CMAQ project evaluation and selection process, all nine Regional Planning Commissions sent a joint letter to the NHDOT and GACIT expressing significant concerns.
- No response has been received, and it is unlikely that there will be any reconsideration of the changes made to the CMAQ process.



Criteria Established by the NHDOT/GACIT for this CMAQ Round

- **Project Readiness and Support (20 Points Max.)**
 - Is there a Letter of Support from applicant's Governing Body? (10 Points Max.)
 - Does the local Point of Contact have NHDOT LPA Certification? (5 Points Max.)
 - Is there support for project in local and/or regional plans? (5 Points Max.)
- **Financial Readiness (20 Points Max.)**
 - Is there a written commitment that local match funds are already appropriated? (15 Points Max.)
 - Is there a written plan to receive approval to fully fund project within 6 months of project award? (10 Points Max.)
 - Does the applicant's most recent audit show any findings or material weaknesses? (5 Points Max.)



Criteria Established by the NHDOT/GACIT for this CMAQ Round

- **Stewardship/Sustainability (25 Points Max.)**
 - If the project is for transit operations, is there a plan that demonstrates a long-term commitment for the service to continue after CMAQ funding is exhausted?
 - If the project is for transit capital, is there a long-term maintenance and replacement plan for the vehicle(s) or facility?
 - If the project is for infrastructure, how will the applicant maintain the infrastructure? Does the applicant have similar infrastructure, equipment, or operations in place that accommodate this infrastructure improvement?
- **Air Quality Benefits (35 Points Max.)**
 - Based on a quantitative Air Quality Analysis of the project.



“Regional Equity” in this CMAQ Round

**NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
CONGESTION MITIGATION & AIR QUALITY PROGRAM
2017 APPLICATION FOR FUNDING**

Sponsor Information (*Sponsor is the municipality or organization that is applying.*)
Contact is the person who will be in responsible charge of the project.

Sponsor Name:
Mailing Address:

Telephone:
Email:

Contact Name and Title:
Mailing Address:

Telephone:
Email:

Governing Regional Planning Commission:
Executive Council District:

RPC and Executive Council information is important because final selections may be adjusted to provide regional equity

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- Notwithstanding the criteria to be used in this CMAQ round, there is guidance on the first page of the application that *“final selections may be adjusted to provide regional equity.”*
- This may mean that the GACIT wishes to fund at least one CMAQ project in each Executive Council District.
- **The City of Manchester is likely to be the only applicant in Executive Council District 4.**



Next Steps in this CMAQ Round

- CMAQ Applications are due to NHDOT by 4:00 PM on October 20, 2017.
- The NHDOT's stated goal is to make CMAQ award announcements by the end of the calendar year.
- **Please Remember**: SNHPC staff are always available to provide assistance to municipalities and transit agencies in developing CMAQ applications and conducting air quality analyses.



Questions?