



The New Direction of the Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) Program at NCDOT

- Follow Up from August 2008 -

Terry Arellano, PE
Transportation Planning Branch
October 1, 2008

Since August 2008 EPPC Meeting...

- Shared proposal with several groups
 - Interagency Partners (FHWA, FTA, EPA, NCDENR)
 - Division Engineers
 - Affected MPOs and RPOs
 - NC Associations of MPOs / NC Associations of RPOs
- Made presentations / held discussions
 - NCDOT Operations Staff Meeting (September 2, 2008)
 - NCAMPO Quarterly Meeting (September 11, 2008)
- Received comments / questions from numerous partners
 - MPOs / RPOs
 - NCAMPO / NCARPO
 - FTA
 - Southern Environmental Law Center
 - Current Project Sponsors
- Actual comments & summary posted on TPB website
 - <http://www.ncdot.org/~tpb//services/air.html>



Programming Unallocated Target Funds

Summary of process:

- Allows MPO/RPOs with a target balance from 2004 call for projects to submit eligible projects for funding
- Any funds not programmed will revert to the general CMAQ balance, subject to revised CMAQ project programming guidelines
- Process will not include Statewide projects – requests for new statewide projects will be submitted through the new process

Summary of comments:

- Generally favorable comments received
- One request to include statewide projects with process

Recommendation:

- Proceed with process as currently proposed
- 



CMAQ Project Fast-Tracking

Summary of process:

- Allowed under the 2007 Energy Act
- Allows full Federal funding for projects that can meet the preliminary engineering completion deadline
- Applicable to existing projects or those resulting from the process to program unallocated funds

Summary of comments:

- Favorable comments received
- One comment that this process would allow “haste to make waste”

Recommendation:

- Proceed with process as currently proposed
- 

Minimum Project Cost Threshold

Summary:

- Proposed minimum cost of \$250,000 for all CMAQ projects

Summary of comments:

- Concerns that minimum cost is too high because it would eliminate small scale projects (such as sidewalk construction)
- Concerns that smaller areas within MPO/RPOs would not be able to generate required local match (\$250,000 project → \$50,000 local match)
- Comments that emphasis should be on cost-effective strategies rather than those that meet minimum cost threshold

Recommendation:

- Modify minimum project cost threshold to \$100,000

Allocation of Funds

Summary:

- Proposed formula calculates targets for entire AQ region, rather than for individual MPO/RPOs
- Includes minimum yearly allocation of \$125,000 per year for any AQ region whose yearly allocation resulting from this formula is less than \$125,000.

Summary of comments:

- Concerns that regional allocation would cause confusion and frustration at the local level
- Concerns that regional allocation is geared more towards projects in large MPOs as opposed to smaller MPOs and RPOs

Recommendation:

- Request EPPC to determine if regional allocations should be implemented or individual MPO/RPO allocations should be retained



Interagency Review Team

Summary:

- Proposed team comprised of FHWA, FTA, EPA, NCDOT and NCDAQ members
- Role of IRT is to evaluate project proposals for CMAQ eligibility as outlined under Federal guidance
- IRT will make no recommendations on programming beyond CMAQ eligibility

Summary of comments:

- Comments that MPO and RPO Associations should have designated members to participate on IRT

Recommendation:

- Retain currently proposed representation on IRT
- 



New CMAQ Guidelines

Summary:

- Guidelines for CMAQ funding available in years 2013 and beyond
- Coincides with the STIP development process
- Implement with development of 2011 – 2017 STIP

Summary of comments:

- Requests to delay implementation of this process pending further consultation with MPO/RPOs

Recommendation:

- Move forward with the process for the 2011-2017 STIP
- 



Other Comments

- Suggestions to provide emissions calculation guidance with the application
 - TPB recognizes deficiencies of the application used in the 2004 Call for Projects process and is committed to modifying the application to address these
- Comments suggesting need for training for project sponsors to address Federal-aid process & requirements
 - TPB agrees that more education is needed and will look into developing informational sessions to address these concerns as the program moves forward





Request for EPPC Today...

- Determine the allocation method that should be applied to future targets
 - Regional?
 - Individual MPO/RPO?
 - Approve revisions to CMAQ process
 - Programming Unallocated Target Funds?
 - Project Fast Tracking?
 - New CMAQ Guidelines (Post 2012 Projects)
 - Original proposal?
 - Original proposal with TPB modifications?
 - Something else?
 - Recommendation to BOT for approval
- 