

Chapter 9 – Air Quality

A. Introduction

To receive transportation funding or approvals from the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, state and local transportation agencies with plans, programs, or projects in nonattainment or maintenance areas, must demonstrate that they meet the transportation conformity requirements of the federal Clean Air Act, as implemented in specific federal and state transportation conformity rules.

To meet the requirements, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) must show that the anticipated emissions resulting from implementation of transportation plans, programs, and projects are consistent with and conform to the purpose of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality. A SIP is a plan mandated by the Clean Air Act and developed by the state that contains procedures to monitor, control, maintain and enforce compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). SIPs are required to be developed once a region has violated the standards. See map 9-1 AQMA boundaries.

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Within the MRMPO area, demonstration of conformity to two SIPs is required: a carbon monoxide (CO) limited maintenance plan, or SIP, within the Grants Pass Central Business District (CBD), and a particulate (PM₁₀) limited maintenance plan within the Grants Pass Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

1. Carbon Monoxide Status

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) developed a Carbon Monoxide Limited Maintenance Plan (LMP) for the Grants Pass area, which was submitted to EPA on April 22, 2015 and went into effect on September 28, 2015. To be eligible for CO LMP, an area has to have a design value at or below 7.65 ppm. Based on ODEQ’s review of the 2002 – 2005 CO emissions data for Grants Pass the area meets the requirements for an LMP.

As an area with a limited maintenance plan, the MRMPO is no longer required to perform emissions analysis for CO but still must demonstrate conformity as discussed below.

2. PM₁₀ Status

Grants Pass has been below the NAAQS for PM₁₀ since 1988. Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) developed a PM₁₀ Limited Maintenance Plan (LMP) for the Grants Pass area, which was submitted to EPA on April 22, 2015 and went into effect on September 28, 2015.

As an area with a limited maintenance plan, the MRMPO is no longer required to perform emissions analysis for PM₁₀ but still must demonstrate conformity as discussed below.

According to federal rules, while areas with approved limited maintenance plans are not required to perform a regional emission analysis, they are required to demonstrate conformity of the transportation plans as stated in 40 CFR Part 93, Subpart A.

3. Conformity Findings

The air quality conformity determination (AQCD) for this plan shows that with the implementation of the MRMPO 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan and 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program current federal air quality standards for regional transportation conformity will continue to be met in the Grant Pass CO and PM₁₀ Limited Maintenance Areas.

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4. How the MRMPO Demonstrates Conformity

An AQCD is required whenever the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) or Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is updated, or every four years, whichever comes first. USDOT must make the conformity determination before the plan and program can go into effect.

In the MRMPO area, the conformity document must show that through the horizon of the plan and program transportation conformity requirements will be met. These requirements (CFR 40 Part 93 Subpart A) and how the MRMPO is meeting regulations in regards to the adoption of the 2040 RTP are presented below.

- a. Transportation plans and projects provide for timely implementation of SIP transportation control measures (TCMs) in accordance with 40 CFR 93.113;
 1. The equivalent State Rule is OAR 340-252-0140.
 2. There are no TCMs identified in the SIPs for the Grants Pass PM₁₀ and CO Maintenance areas.
- b. Transportation plans and projects comply with the fiscal constraint element per 40 CFR 93.108;
 1. The equivalent State Rule is OAR 340-252-0090.
 2. As required by federal regulations, the adopted MRMPO 2040 RTP is financially constrained, containing only those projects that funds are identified for or ‘reasonably expected’ to be available over the time frame of the plans.
 3. The financial constraint assumptions developed for the MRMPO 2040 RTP are shown in Chapter 8 of the RTP.
- c. The MPO’s interagency consultation procedures meet applicable requirements of 40 CFR 93.105;

1. The equivalent State Rule is OAR 340-252-0060.
 2. A draft of the AQCD document was circulated to ODOT, EPA, Oregon DEQ, FHWA, and FTA prior to adoption.
- d. Conformity of transportation plans is determined no less frequently than every four years, and conformity of plan amendments and transportation projects is demonstrated in accordance with the timing requirements specified in 40 CFR 93.104;
1. The equivalent State Rule is OAR 340-252-0050 which currently specifies conformity to be determined every four years.
- e. The latest planning assumptions and emissions model are used as set forth in 40 CFR 93.110 and 40 CFR 93.111;
1. The equivalent State Rule is OAR 340-252-0110 for the latest planning assumptions.
 2. Estimates of population and employment for the area have been made, which are based on the adopted comprehensive plans and TSPs for the MRMPO area. Assumptions regarding the financial situation the MRMPO area is anticipated to face over the next 24 years have been updated, in conjunction with ODOT, Josephine Community Transit, and the local jurisdictions.
 3. Equivalent State Rule is OAR 340-252-0120 regarding the latest emissions model.
 4. The Grants Pass area is designated as attainment for PM₁₀ and carbon monoxide. Limited maintenance plans for carbon monoxide and PM₁₀ for the area went into effect on September 28, 2015. As such, no regional emissions modeling is required for the conformity determination.
- f. Projects do not cause or contribute to any new localized carbon monoxide or particulate matter violations, in accordance with procedures specified in 40 CFR 93.123; and
1. Projects included in the MRMPO 2040 RTP that are required to perform hot spot analysis will have this conducted by the project sponsors during the appropriate phase of the project.
- g. Project sponsors and/or operators provide written commitments as specified in 40 CFR 93.125.
1. Project sponsors and operators will conform to the CAA requirements.

Response to the applicable conformity criteria and procedures as they apply to the MRMPO 2040 RTP, as per State of Oregon conformity rules (OAR 340-252-0010 et seq.), is made in the following text. This checklist is provided to assist in the state and federal review of this conformity determination and the consultation requirements of OAR 340-252-0060.

5. Actions to be taken

The MRMPO Policy Committee, as the policy board for the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization, must formally adopt the findings described in the AQCD. Then, USDOT and the federal Environmental Protection Agency confer on the analysis. Ultimately, USDOT will make a conformity determination based on the AQCD. At that time, the MRMPO's 2020-2045 plan will go into effect, as well as the 2021-2024 TIP.

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Map 9-1 – Air Quality Maintenance Areas



