

Chapter 9 – Air Quality

On December 26, 2023, MRMPO has reached the end of the maintenance period and is considered to be in attainment. When an area is designated as "attainment area," it means that the air quality within that region meets or is below the specified levels for all relevant pollutants as defined by the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

In the context of air quality management and transportation planning, the term "attainment area" refers to a geographical area that has achieved and maintains compliance with the (NAAQS) set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These standards are established to protect public health and the environment by limiting the concentrations of specific air pollutants.

Areas that do not meet the air quality standards are classified as nonattainment areas or maintenance areas. And they are subject to additional regulatory requirements and limitations on certain types of development and transportation projects until they achieve compliance.

In summary, when a Metropolitan Planning Organization becomes an attainment area, it indicates that the region has successfully maintained air quality standards, allowing for more flexibility and fewer regulatory restrictions in transportation planning and development projects.

Please refer to Appendix G to see the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) letter documenting the end of the MRMPO maintenance plan and reaching attainment. Also, additional information regarding the end of 20 years of maintenance is presented in the [Office of Transportation and Air Quality's guidance document](#).