



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** RTOC Participants  
**From:** CMAP Staff  
**Date:** February 3, 2011  
**Re:** CMAQ Programming Approach

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CMAP staff tasked RTOC participants to review potential CMAQ projects for how they assist in implementing the goals and action areas identified in GO TO 2040. This was discussed with the RTOC at their January meeting and the committee decided to identify goals, potential performance measures, and projects appropriate for CMAQ purposes and, just as importantly, useful for prioritizing the future RTOC work program. *RTOC participants are strongly encouraged to forward [Claire Bozic](#) a list of performance measures, both qualitative and quantitative, and an operations-related project list before February 9, 2011.* CMAP staff will compile a list of all proposed performance measures and projects to be discussed at the February 18, 2011 RTOC meeting.

### BACKGROUND

The federally funded Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program supports surface transportation projects and other related efforts that **improve air quality** and **relieve traffic congestion**. The program is administered by the MPO in northeastern Illinois.

The MPO Policy Committee recently adopted a new approach for the development of the CMAQ Program. The new "GO TO 2040 focused programming" process will include a five-year program that meets the Federal goals of improving air quality and mitigating congestion but also supports the regional goal of implementing GO TO 2040, the comprehensive regional plan. Localized congestion relief, operational improvements, mode shift and direct emissions reduction are the additional objectives that have been identified to support GO TO 2040. However, the overall goals of the CMAQ Program will remain improving air quality and reducing congestion.

The additional objectives of localized congestion relief, operational improvements and direct emissions reductions can be realized by pursuing recommendations and action areas that are also found in GO TO 2040:

- Adopt best practices in new technologies

- Widely implement traveler information systems
- Establish seamless coordination between modes
- Include transit components as part of major highway capital projects
- Focus investment on maintenance and modernization (projects consisting solely of maintenance are not eligible for CMAQ funding)
- Prioritize and implement the CREATE Program
- Implement high-priority transit projects
- A limited number of major capital expansions on the expressway and transit systems should be pursued. (CMAQ funding can be used to partially fund targeted portions of the project that are eligible for CMAQ funding. It is not feasible to use only CMAQ funds on these types of projects.)
- Many elements of livability can be supported through planning for land use and housing, including support for transportation options including walking, bicycling, and transit.

Four CMAP program focus groups will be responsible for the initial review of proposed CMAQ projects and the identification of projects that advance the regional program goals.

- RTOC is responsible for review of proposed CMAQ projects that cover arterial and intersection improvements, bottleneck relief and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) improvements.
- Bicycle Pedestrian Task Force will identify effective non-motorized projects.
- Transit focus group will review CMAQ projects related to transit facilities, equipment, service and parking.
- Direct Emissions reductions group will review diesel reduction and other related projects.

The Regional Transportation Operations Coalition (RTOC) is composed of individuals who help operate the transportation system in northeastern Illinois and who have a unique set of experience and knowledge in this discipline. RTOC is charged with developing a set of performance measures which can be applied to operations-oriented projects and creating a package of operations related projects, consistent with the CMAQ program and GO TO 2040 goals and objectives, for the CMAQ Project Selection Committee (PSC). The recommended project package must achieve an identifiable goal over the five year program time frame and each project requires a committed implementer.

The final project package will consist of proposed projects arising from both a directed call to eligible government bodies for proposed projects as well as direct project identification by RTOC. Using the group's unique experience and knowledge of transportation operations in the region, RTOC will rate the proposed projects using the pre-determined operations oriented performance measures and an assessment of consistency with CMAQ and GO TO 2040 goals, recommendations and action areas. The performance measures will be both quantitative and qualitative. RTOC will not attempt to make any determination of project eligibility for CMAQ funding. All worthwhile projects should be considered for the package and provided to the CMAQ PSC.

Projects for the direct identification process will be identified from existing plans and programs. Sponsors will be asked to confirm their commitment to these and to submit information regarding their project so an analysis can be completed. Staff anticipates that the direct identification process will occur within broad regional program goals, for example: addressing gaps and/or barriers, reliable and efficient performance, and safety and security of all users. These projects may include funding for the first three years of new operations projects.

The package of projects will then be sent to the CMAQ PSC to consider for incorporation into the CMAQ program. The CMAQ PSC will evaluate each project individually for eligibility and air quality/congestion benefit, and then develop the 5-year CMAQ program which will be recommended to the MPO Policy Committee for approval. Projects that are not selected for CMAQ funding or not eligible will be kept as RTOC priority projects and will be considered for implementation if other funding sources become available.