



MEMORANDUM

To: Regional Stakeholders

From: CMAP Staff

Date: August 9, 2012

Re: Regional support for restoring federal eligibility to use CMAQ Funds at 100 percent federal share

The passage of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) did not continue a provision that helps CMAP efficiently spend Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program funds in our region. Since the CMAQ program started in 1992, the Chicago region has received over \$ 1 billion, enabling implementation of projects in hundreds of communities throughout the area. Many projects are modest – improving an intersection, adding to Metra commuter parking, or creating a bike path – but there have also been larger projects with a significant impact on the region’s transportation and economic vitality. These projects include:

- Belmont Road Grade Separation at Metra BNSF Station in Downers Grove
- IL 132/Grand Avenue at US 41/Skokie Highway Interchange Improvement
- Switcher Engine Retrofits
- Mid-day Shuttle Service on Lake-Cook Road Corridor from Metra Stations
- Millennium Park Bike Station
- New Morgan Station on Green/Pink Lines
- New Oakton Station on Yellow Line
- Oswego Park and Ride
- Pace Express Bus Service on I-55
- Salt Creek Greenway Trail
- Metra North Central Service
- Grand Avenue Railroad Grade Separation in Franklin Park
- I-GO Car Sharing

Because the region has, in the past, funded all phases of a project, many projects have taken a long time to complete; the initial phases have often taken several years as a community addresses unforeseen complications and works out exactly what a project entails and how much it will cost. This policy of funding projects from their start has led to uneven expenditure rates over the years – some years almost \$100 million is obligated; in other years only a few tens of millions of dollars are obligated.

As a good steward of federal funds, our implementing and regulating agencies recently agreed to shift responsibility for the design phase to the project sponsors to improve the performance of our CMAQ program. To compensate for this, and in recognition that the projects will be “shovel ready,” they also agreed to fund the later phases, including construction, at a 100 percent federal share.

Note that this is not 100 percent for the entire project, but rather 100 percent for the later, more expensive phases. The sponsors still have “skin in the game” because they are responsible for the phase where the project is taken from a good idea to a detailed plan.

Using the option to fund (part of) projects at 100 percent federal funding is crucial to improving the completion rate of the region’s projects. During these tight economic times, it will also help local sponsors, since the increased federal funding will help stretch their local dollars. The option took advantage of a provision in the U.S. Code allowing for 100 percent federal funding for CMAQ projects. MAP-21 did not continue this provision.

We are asking your support in restoring the 100 percent CMAQ provision either through a technical corrections bill to MAP-21, expected to be passed in September 2012 or through another legislative vehicle.

Please click [here](#) for additional information about CMAP’s CMAQ programming policies or contact Deputy Executive Director Don Kopec at (312)386-8725 or dkopec@cmmap.illinois.gov.