



October 27, 2021

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee
From: Kelly Clarke, Principal Transportation Planner
Subject: Item 6.c: 2045 Regional Transportation Plan Air
Quality Conformity Determination

Action Recommended: Conduct Public Hearing; Provide Feedback to Staff

Purpose

In areas that have been designated as nonattainment for National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), including those that were redesignated to attainment in the past 20 years (“maintenance areas”), an Air Quality Conformity Determination (AQCD) is required whenever the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is updated. The AQCD must be adopted as part of the RTP adoption process.

The purpose of this agenda item is to:

1. Provide an overview of the AQCD;
2. Hold a Public Hearing on the draft AQCD; and
3. Seek MPC feedback and direction.

Background and Discussion

Within the Eugene-Springfield area, the only air pollutant with a current air quality maintenance plan is that of coarse particulate matter (PM₁₀). In 2013, the Eugene-Springfield area was re-designated by the Environmental Protection Agency (US-EPA) to attainment for PM₁₀ with an approved 10-year Limited Maintenance Plan (LMP). This means that previously poor air quality has improved to the point where it now meets the Clean Air Act National Ambient Air Quality Standards for PM₁₀.

A 20-year maintenance period began in 2013 to ensure that no backsliding occurs and that the PM₁₀ standard continues to be met. Although transportation was found not to be a significant contributor of PM₁₀ pollution (home wood heating and industrial sources were the major contributors), analysis is required of certain transportation projects in order to ascertain that localized impacts (such as at intersections) do not occur. This analysis takes place at the time a project is scoped during design in preparation for construction and is the responsibility of the project sponsor. The AQCD ensures that projects that potentially need to carry out this analysis are identified.

CLMPO staff prepared the draft AQCD report in coordination with the interagency consultation group (IAC) consisting of representatives from several state and federal agencies, including Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Department of Transportation (DOT), Environmental Protection Agency (US-EPA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA), and ODOT.

The MPC, as the policy board for the CLMPO, must formally adopt the findings described in the AQCD. USDOT must then confer with US-EPA and, if the analysis is acceptable, they will issue a positive ruling. The new 2045 RTP may become effective only upon confirmation of this positive ruling.

AQCD Findings

The Eugene and Springfield urban growth boundaries (UGB) form an air quality maintenance area for coarse particulate matter. Under the State's maintenance plan for this area, transportation projects within the two UGBs must be shown to not cause or contribute to local air quality violations. The "Air Quality Status" of each project listed in the draft AQCD indicates those projects that are likely to undergo review and possible analysis prior to release of funds by USDOT.

Measurements show that the PM₁₀ levels within the Eugene and Springfield UGBs remain below the NAAQS. With this demonstration and adequate response to the transportation conformity regulations, the AQCD finds the 2045 RTP to be in conformity with the requirements of the Clean Air Act. The draft 2045 RTP's AQCD is presented as Exhibit A to this memo.

Public Involvement

A public comment period on the draft AQCD is currently open and will close November 30, 2021.

MPO staff met with the federal and state partners for the AQCD's Interagency Consultation September 30, 2021. Comments and feedback from the interagency experts have been received and incorporated into the revised draft AQCD.

Transportation Planning Committee Recommendation

At the October 21st meeting of the MPO's staff advisory Transportation Planning Committee (TPC) there was unanimous support of the draft 2045 RTP's AQCD and a recommendation to release for public comment and a public hearing.

Next Steps

Staff will return to MPC in December to recommend MPC approval of a Resolution adopting the AQCD. Upon adoption, MPO staff will submit the 2045 RTP's AQCD to the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration for approval.

Action Recommended: Conduct Public Hearing; Provide Feedback to Staff