

# Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration



## Public Transportation

The increased use of public transportation can help reduce air pollution and decrease the number of single occupant vehicles (SOVs) and traffic congestion. Public transportation produces a reduction in air pollutants like carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) and particulate matter (PM) by reducing the number of SOVs on the roads.

### How CMAQ Funds May Be Used in Public Transportation

- **Transit Facilities, Systems and Services:** New transit facilities (e.g., routes, stations, terminals, transfer facilities, bicycle/pedestrian facilities/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access improvements to stations or terminals) are eligible if they are associated with new or enhanced public transit, passenger rail, or other similar services and can demonstrate a recognizable air quality benefit.
- **Conventional Bus and Paratransit Replacements:** New transit vehicles (bus, rail, or van, including vehicles for paratransit service) to expand the fleet or replace existing vehicles are eligible. Under the BIL, this eligibility has been expanded to include the purchase of medium or heavy-duty zero emission vehicles and related charging equipment.
- **Bus Service and Fleet Expansion:** New bus service projects work to increase ridership by providing new or expanding bus services. New and expanded bus service improvement projects and fleet expansion improve both air quality and congestion levels in the local community by increasing the use of transit services and reducing the number of auto trips.
- **Passenger Rail Service:** New passenger rail services include establishing new routes, increasing the frequency of current service, expanding the hours of operation, or expanding the overall coverage of transit corridors. New and expanded rail services providing mobility improvements in the form of increased transportation mode options for users in a nonattainment or maintenance area are eligible for CMAQ funding.
- **Operating Assistance:** Operating assistance to introduce new transit service or expand existing transit services is eligible for CMAQ funding. This assistance may include all costs of providing new transportation services including: labor, fuel, administrative costs, and maintenance. When CMAQ funds are used for operating assistance, non-federal share requirements still apply. Under BIL, this eligibility has been expanded to include no time limitation on operating assistance for transit systems in small urban and rural areas.

## Examples of Successful Public Transportation Projects

**Baltimore, MD/Washington, DC:** New higher-capacity coaches were purchased for Maryland's commuter rail service in the Baltimore-Washington region. CMAQ funds covered \$290,000 of the \$7.2 million cost.

- *Estimated emission reductions: 76 kg/day volatile organic compound (VOC) and 255 kg/day of NO<sub>x</sub>*

**Houston, TX:** A reduced transit fare program was offered in August, when ozone readings are typically highest. CMAQ funds covered \$2.6 million of the \$3.5 million cost.

- *Estimated emission reductions: 80.4 kg/day of VOC and 95.2 kg/day of NO<sub>x</sub>*

**Lake Cook, IL:** An employer-sponsored transit shuttle service operated between a commuter rail stop and a business park in a Chicago suburb. CMAQ funds covered \$312,000 of the \$390,000 cost.

- *Estimated emission reductions: 17.6 kg/day of VOC*

**New York City, NY:** The 63rd Street-Queens Boulevard Transit Connection is a subway link constructed to facilitate travel between Queens and Manhattan. The project alleviated congestion on the jammed E and F lines running through Queens and resulted in approximately 31 hours per year in savings for the average Queens rider on the E, F, and R lines. CMAQ funds covered \$44 million of the \$645 million cost.

- *Estimated emission reductions: 91 kg/day VOC, 36 kg/day NO<sub>x</sub>, and 645 kg/day CO*



### For more information, please contact:

U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration  
Office of Natural Environment

1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20590  
202-366-4053

[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air\\_quality/cmaq/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/)