



2026-2030 CONGESTION MITIGATION AND AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CMAQ) GUIDELINES

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APPLICATION SOLICITATION: JUNE 6, 2025 UNTIL SEPTEMBER 8, 2025



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1. Purpose and Description

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program provides a funding source for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) to administer a variety of transportation-related projects that reduce emissions of criteria pollutants and to help improve air quality for areas that are nonattainment or maintenance (former nonattainment areas that are now in compliance) for National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). WisDOT administers CMAQ on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to fund these transportation projects with the program codified at 23 U.S. Code § 149.

Pursuant to 23 U.S. Code § 149, transportation projects that fall into one of the following three broad categories are eligible for CMAQ funding:

1. Projects that reduce the number of vehicle trips and/or vehicle miles traveled (VMT),
2. Projects that reduce emissions related to traffic congestion, and/or
3. Projects that reduce the per-mile rate of vehicle emissions through improved vehicle and fuel technologies.

2. Current CMAQ Program Funding

For the current program cycle, WisDOT is programming projects primarily for State Fiscal Years 2026 through 2030. Once awards are finalized, WisDOT will coordinate, balance and/or move projects within the cycle's period. This will maximize the opportunity to advance higher priority projects and will allow designs to begin earlier where possible. The Department makes multi-year programming commitments to ensure that projects can utilize federal funding immediately as it becomes available and to reflect the necessary timeline for selection and approval of projects.

WisDOT is programming CMAQ projects using the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2025 budget level for each future year of the cycle. The CMAQ program budget and project schedules are subject to change based on federal or state CMAQ legislation.

3. Program Eligibility

Local entities with the taxing authority to guarantee the availability of local match funds are eligible Project Sponsors. Counties, local units of government, transit operators, state agencies, and Indian Tribes are eligible for CMAQ funding.

Eligible projects should take place and produce results in Wisconsin air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas in the following counties: Door, Kenosha, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Sheboygan, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha. Funds may be used for projects in proximity to nonattainment and maintenance areas if the benefits will be realized primarily within the nonattainment or maintenance area.

FHWA has clarified that CMAQ funding may be used for projects in proximity to nonattainment and maintenance areas if the benefits will be realized primarily within the nonattainment or maintenance areas in Wisconsin. The delineation of an area considered "in proximity" should be discussed with the FHWA-WI Division office and elevated to headquarters, if necessary. 23 U.S. Code § 149 establishes

federal contract authority through the federal fiscal year 2026. Future federal contract authority (i.e., 2027 and 2028) for CMAQ will be determined by Congressional action. After contract authority levels are established, Wisconsin program funding levels for CMAQ will be established through the state biennial budgeting process.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines nonattainment areas as “areas of the country where air pollution levels persistently exceed the national ambient air quality standards. . . .”¹ Wisconsin has nonattainment and maintenance counties for ozone (O3) and fine particulate matter (PM2.5), two criteria pollutants by which nonattainment areas are defined and measured.²

4. Project Eligibility

From a federal law perspective, CMAQ-eligible projects must include all three of the following elements:

1. It must be a transportation project.
2. It must be located in or benefit a nonattainment or maintenance area.
3. It must generate an emissions reduction.

Funds may be used for a transportation project or program that is likely to contribute to the attainment or maintenance of a national ambient air quality standard, with a high level of effectiveness in reducing air pollution. The project must also be included and consistent in the metropolitan planning organization’s (MPO’s) current transportation plan and transportation improvement program (TIP) or the current state transportation improvement program (STIP) in areas without an MPO.

The most recent amendments to 23 U.S. Code § 149 under the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA) continues legislation that calls for PM_{2.5} nonattainment and maintenance areas to use 25% of Wisconsin’s CMAQ apportionment for projects that reduce PM_{2.5} in such areas. PM_{2.5} counties in Wisconsin include Milwaukee, Racine, and Waukesha.

Furthermore, 23 U.S. Code § 149 (k) requires States to prioritize benefits to disadvantaged communities or low-income populations living in or adjacent to such areas, to the extent practicable.³ Projects that reduce or mitigate PM_{2.5} include, but are not limited to:

- Diesel retrofits
- New Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses
- Corridor-based traffic signalization

CMAQ legislation codified at 23 USC 149 continues and expands project eligibility*. The following projects are eligible in Wisconsin:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diesel engine retrofits and other advanced truck technologies• Idle reduction• Congestion reduction and traffic flow improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public education and outreach activities• Transportation management associations• Carpooling and vanpooling• Carsharing• Extreme low-temperature cold start program
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¹ Source: <https://www.epa.gov/green-book>
² Source: <https://www3.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook/anc13.html>
³ [§ 11115(5); 23 U.S.C. 149(k)(1)(A)]

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freight and intermodal • Transportation control measures • Transit improvements • Bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs • Travel demand management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Inspection and maintenance programs • Alternative fuels and vehicles • Innovative projects
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Note: Wisconsin specific state-level eligibility for the CMAQ program may have additional requirements.

- ***NEW under IIJA*** Shared micromobility, including bike sharing and shared scooter systems; [§ 11115(1); 23 U.S. Code § 149(b)(7)]
- ***NEW under IIJA*** Purchase of diesel replacements, or medium-duty or heavy-duty zero-emission vehicles; [§ 11115(1); 23 U.S. Code § 149(b)(8)]
- ***NEW under IIJA*** Modernization or rehabilitation of a lock and dam, or a marine highway corridor, connector, or crossing if functionally connected to the federal-aid highway system and likely to contribute to attainment or maintenance of national ambient air quality standards (capped at 10% of CMAQ apportionment); and [§ 11115(1) and (2); 23 U.S. Code § 149(b)(10), (b)(11), and (c)(4)]
- ***NEW under IIJA*** In alternative fuel projects, vehicle refueling infrastructure that would reduce emissions from nonroad vehicles and nonroad engines used in construction projects or port-related freight operations. [§ 11115(3); 23 U.S. Code § 149(f)(4)(A)]

Priority consideration for funding is emphasized federally for cost-effective projects that result in the greatest emissions reductions for the least cost, and prioritizes, but does not mandate, the selection of diesel retrofit, electric, and natural gas infrastructure projects. Other eligible projects include:

- Verified technologies for non-road vehicles and non-road engines that are used in port-related freight operations including marine vessel engines and technology.
- The installation of vehicle-to-infrastructure communications equipment.
- Electric vehicle and natural gas vehicle infrastructure.
- Infrastructure located on electric vehicle charging, hydrogen, propane, and natural gas fueling corridors designated under 23 U.S.C. 151.
- Bicycle facility projects constructed in conjunction with road-related work (e.g., bicycle lanes).
 - The bike-related work is an eligible CMAQ expense, road work is not eligible.
- Stand-alone sidewalk projects.

The following are examples of some projects that are **not** eligible:

- Streetscaping projects such as street furniture, decorative lighting
- Reconstruction of existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Projects that add new capacity for SOVs unless construction is limited to high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes
- Routine maintenance and rehabilitation projects (e.g., replacement-in-kind of track or other equipment, reconstruction of bridges, stations, and other facilities, and repaving or repairing roads)

WisDOT requires the inclusion of WisDOT's staff delivery (i.e., design, preliminary engineering, or construction oversight) costs in total project costs. WisDOT highly recommends that Sponsors review

FHWA CMAQ guidance prior to submitting any funding application(s) to WisDOT or to their MPO. Guidance is available from WisDOT Region staff or the following FHWA websites:

- [FHWA Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program](#)
- [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law CMAQ Fact Sheet](#)
- [2024 CMAQ Program Interim Guidance](#)
- USC: [OLRC Home \(house.gov\)](#)
- CFR: [Title 23 of the CFR – Highways](#)

4.1 All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV), Snowmobile, and Equestrian Use

Eligible CMAQ projects focus on daily, utilitarian transportation uses rather than purely recreational activities. Program applicants are encouraged to invest in projects that enhance the condition of streets, highways, and bridges and make them safe for all users, while at the same time modernizing them so that the transportation network is accessible for all users, provides people with better choices across all modes, accommodates new and emerging technologies, is more sustainable and resilient to a changing climate, and is more equitable. As a matter of policy, **ATVs are generally not allowed on trails funded by WisDOT CMAQ funds. However, snowmobiles are allowed only by local ordinance**³ WisDOT may require Sponsors to maintain CMAQ-funded trails by snowplowing them in the winter. This is often the case if year-round bicycle and pedestrian use seem warranted, such as when a bicycle path is used for commuting.

As a matter of policy, WisDOT discourages shared equestrian usage, though it is not forbidden by FHWA. In addition, WisDOT considers trail usage fees as a hindrance to use of a trail for daily transportation purposes. FHWA has determined that trail fees are permissible only if all fees are used to maintain the trail facility. Applications must clearly indicate whether Sponsors intend to charge fees or allow shared equestrian usage on the proposed CMAQ project.

4.2 Right of Way (ROW)

Before a project application is submitted, if the project area contains or may contain any permanent or temporary ROW acquisitions, WisDOT Region staff must review the potential project. Contact the appropriate WisDOT Regional Real Estate Coordinator found at the end of this document for proposal-specific guidance. The Local Sponsor must obtain any necessary permits and determine applicable federal and state standards regardless of whether federal funds are used to acquire real estate or ROW. WisDOT also recommends Sponsors and applicants review the Real Estate [webpage](#).⁴

4.3 State and Federal Requirements

CMAQ Project Sponsors must comply with all applicable state and federal regulations for each phase of a project. The Sponsor is ultimately responsible for ensuring staff capacity to satisfy all project requirements. FHWA and WisDOT require local units of government to become certified to deliver their Local Programs project. Project Sponsors with approved CMAQ applications for infrastructure projects agree to participate in an online certification training as a condition of receiving project funding. WisDOT offers online certification training to successful applicants after the announcement of approved CMAQ projects. Further information about [certification training](#) is available online.

³ Source: Framework for Considering Motorized Use on Nonmotorized Trails and Pedestrian Walkways under 23 U.S.C. § 217, https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/framework.cfm

⁴ <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/aid/lpa-re-info.aspx>

Awarded projects require the preparation of appropriate environmental documentation as applicable to adhere to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA). Further information about environmental requirements can be found online at WisDOT's [environmental page](#).⁵

Common sources of project delay include the presence of protected historical, natural resource or archaeological resources, contaminated soils, limited resources (i.e., appropriate staffing or funding), and political feasibility to deliver the project. Please direct questions regarding these issues to the WisDOT Regional or Statewide contacts listed at the end of this document.

Other notable state & federal requirements include:

- The proposed project must provide a strong public benefit.
- The project must make the state responsible for protecting the ongoing public interest investment related to the project.
- The project has a six-year sunset from the original schedule date.
- A public agency must have primary control of funded projects, or a contractual relationship must exist between the public agency and a private partner, and private ownership or operation must be cost-effective.
- CMAQ funding cannot be used to fund an obligation imposed upon the private sector, pursuant to the Clean Air Act or any other federal law.
- CMAQ funding is not a permanent source for [administrative and operating costs](#).
- ***NEW*** The IIJA allows CMAQ funds to be used for operating assistance (without time limitation) in association with a transit system located in certain areas. [§ 11115(7); 23 U.S. Code § 149(m)(2)]. Upon application, WisDOT will review this activity.
- WisDOT cannot reimburse funds directly to private organizations or individuals.
- State agencies applying for projects on state-owned land must coordinate with the Department of Administration (DOA) in project management and as co-Sponsors of the Project Agreement.

5. CMAQ Application Guidelines

CMAQ is a multi-year program. WisDOT is soliciting projects in calendar year 2025 for years 2026-2030. In this program cycle, a Sponsor may propose projects for State Fiscal years 2026–2030. For example, a Sponsor may propose a project that involves a design stage in FY 2027, and construction in FY 2029.

WisDOT Region staff determine which projects to program each year based upon evaluation of project progress from previous award cycles. However, because many projects approved in previous award cycles are already programmed for 2026 through 2027, WisDOT will primarily allocate new funding to projects starting in state fiscal year (SFY) 2028 (begins July 1, 2027) and later. Sponsors with projects that do not fit within these time frames should work with a WisDOT Region contact to determine if an earlier fiscal year may be accommodated or consider not applying for funds. WisDOT anticipates recommending CMAQ projects to FHWA in winter 2025 and making formal announcements in spring 2026.

⁵ <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/eng-consultants/cnslt-rsrcs/environment/default.aspx>

6. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Approved CMAQ projects that will benefit and/or take place within a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) must be included and consistent in the appropriate TIP prior to project funding. All projects must be incorporated into the STIP prior to final authorization to incur costs.

Location of Approved Project (County or Counties)	Action Needed
Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee, Washington	Include project in TIP prepared by Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC)
Sheboygan Metropolitan Planning Area	Include project in TIP prepared by Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (BLRPC)
Outside of metropolitan areas: Door, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, rural portions of Sheboygan, Walworth	Include project in STIP

7. Application Form and Instructions

CMAQ applications, guidelines & instructions are available on the [WisDOT CMAQ](#) website. The CMAQ application is accompanied by instructions that discuss additional information that Sponsors must submit prior to consideration for funding.

Sponsors must email completed application(s) and attachments to the appropriate WisDOT Region email address. WisDOT contact information is provided at the end of this document.

Applications are available on June 6, 2025 and are due by September 8, 2025 by 5:00 pm.

8. Application Project Costs Guidelines

Sponsors must include the estimated total project cost including the proposed sources of funding to achieve the expected emissions benefits outlined in the corresponding project application. Sponsors must also identify the funding necessary to complete the below-listed phases of project implementation in accordance with federal aid requirements:

- Preliminary design
- Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Final design
- Real estate
- Utilities
- Construction

CMAQ applications for individual phases of work will not be considered without clear identification and commitment of funding necessary to complete the entire project.

1. [Minimum Project Funding Amounts](#)

Minimum project funding amounts apply to state and locally let CMAQ projects. Funding limitations ensure efficient utilization of local and state resources and that projects have a nexus with air quality improvements.

Construction projects must have a total projected expense of \$200,000 or more, including design, real estate acquisition, and construction engineering work.

Non-construction projects must have a total projected expense of \$50,000 or more. This applies to all non-construction projects including equipment acquisition, public information/education, marketing, demand management, etc. WisDOT Region and MPO staff will only consider exceptions to this restriction before applications are submitted. Construction costs, equipment, and material acquisitions are allowable costs, but the expenses will only be reimbursed after they have been installed or used for the project.

2. [Project Costs and Timeline Recommendations](#)

Project applications must include a detailed breakdown of project costs created in Microsoft Excel or in Google Sheets. This detailed breakdown must clarify assumptions made in creating the budget such that a third-party reviewer would be able to substantiate the assumptions. Sponsors should consult with appropriate WisDOT Region staff to determine if commitments to previously approved projects allow project scheduling as proposed in the Sponsor's application.

Sponsors should submit a separate application and budget for each project or stand-alone project segment, such as a bike trail section that could function as a separate facility. The CMAQ selection committee does not generally consider partial funding of proposed projects for Professional Engineering (PE), ROW or Construction.

9. Emission Reduction Estimations

The CMAQ program improves air quality in Wisconsin's non-attainment and maintenance areas for ozone (O₃) and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). Evaluating agencies—including WisDOT, affected MPOs, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR)—estimate CMAQ project emission reductions and report estimates to FHWA.

Each application should demonstrate how proposed projects would result in new, sustainable, and measurable reductions in transportation emissions, although applicants are not responsible for producing actual emissions reduction calculations. Interested applicants can utilize FHWA's [CMAQ Emissions Calculator Toolkit](#) to estimate emissions reduction for many CMAQ project types for assistance in their project justification. Applicants must cooperate with WisDOT to provide all information necessary for evaluating agencies to accurately calculate potential emissions reductions. Project Sponsors must respond to CMAQ selection committee requests for emissions reduction information, and the committee may request such information before and/or after project approval.

Sponsors and private partners, if applicable, are also required to monitor and report on project implementation and effectiveness.

10. Application Tips

Sponsors should verify the following information prior to application submission:

- Project eligibility
- Sufficient community and political support for the project
- Access to the required 20% Local Sponsor funding match
- All collaborating agencies and organizations agree to project scope, local match shares, roles, and responsibilities
- Availability of an accurate cost estimate calculated with help from accounting staff or consultant. **Local Sponsors are responsible for cost overruns**; therefore, it is imperative that Sponsors consider special situations such as railroad crossings, lack of ROW or presence of historical artifacts, which could add to project costs
- Any bicycle or pedestrian project cost estimates consider American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and the [Wisconsin Bicycle Facility Design Handbook](#)
- Consistency between the amounts requested within the application and the estimated amounts in the budget
- Correct contact information

11. Project Application Review Process and Schedule

11.1 Application Review Process

Local Sponsors accept and review project applications from all departments or private organizations within their jurisdiction. Sponsors are then responsible for prioritizing all submitted project proposals. Each Sponsor incorporates the project(s) into the necessary budget process to ensure availability of matching funds. Sponsors submit applications to the appropriate WisDOT Region office. After a brief period of review, the WisDOT Region forwards all projects in an urbanized area to appropriate MPO staff.

WisDOT Region staff can provide technical assistance to Sponsors. In addition, WisDOT Region and Local Programs and Finance (LP&F) staff review applications for eligibility and can provide technical assistance. **Prior to applying, it is advised that local sponsors consult with their respective WisDOT Region and MPO offices.** The contact information that is provided at the end of these guidelines.

WisDOT LP&F staff prepares a comprehensive list of eligible project applications, which the CMAQ project selection committee reviews and ranks. The CMAQ selection committee consists of MPOs, WisDOT, and DNR staff, as well as representatives from FHWA. The committee ranks projects based predominately on its emissions reduction estimates, technical assessment, quality of responses to the major application questions, priorities provided by MPOs, and available funding.

WisDOT encourages communities to look at a full range of eligible CMAQ activities when designing emission reduction projects. Cost-effectiveness is considered during evaluation of all proposals, and the committee also prioritizes applications that demonstrate one or more of the following factors:

- Produces a high level of vehicle emissions reduction for a project of its type
- Shows significant potential to reduce vehicle trips and/or vehicle miles traveled (VMT)

- Produces sustainable, long-term reduction in traffic congestion and/or vehicle emissions
- Implements a strategy that is incorporated into an MPO Congestion Management Process
- Implements a strategy that is incorporated into Wisconsin's Carbon Reduction Strategy
- Promotes technology-based improvements in vehicle and/or fuel emissions
- Stimulates inter-jurisdictional/inter-organizational coordination and cooperation that is otherwise unlikely
- Improves connections between travel modes and/or efficiency of the transportation system
- Involves collaboration of the public and private sectors to improve air quality and mobility
- Expands scope, convenience, and/or level of service of a public transportation system, or reinstates a canceled route not previously funded by the CMAQ program
- Implements a comprehensive, well-planned overall trip reduction strategy
- Is innovative, and has the potential for widespread implementation
- Implements local and regional transportation planning goals
- If the project is an alternative fuel dispenser, it will be located close to a freeway or other concentrated source of potential users, and will be open to the public
- Demonstrates high levels of utilitarian (non-recreational) trips (bicycle and pedestrian facilities)
- If the project involves traffic control, it is a comprehensive effort of corridor, area, or system-wide scope. In general, stand-alone signals or roundabouts at individual intersections will not be funded

WisDOT and the affected MPOs consult with DNR, and FHWA to determine which CMAQ application projects meet federal criteria based on application information alone. Selection committee members evaluate the suitability and priority of submitted applications as described above and with reference to the following factors:

- Is resource allocation timely?
- Are emissions benefits realistic, measurable, and sustainable?
- Is other funding committed to implement the project on schedule if the total project costs exceed the amount of available CMAQ funds?
- Does the project provide the most emissions reductions per dollar invested?
- Is the project consistent with the goals of the MPO transportation plan?

As part of the effort to have a balanced program of projects, the percentage of funds committed to one category of projects may play a factor in project selection. The selection committee provides a list of recommended projects to the WisDOT Secretary. When the Secretary approves the recommended CMAQ projects, the projects are forwarded to FHWA and FTA for concurrence of eligibility, and after confirmation from FHWA and FTA, the State notifies Sponsors of approval.

11.2 Tentative Schedule for CMAQ Project Approval

- Applications Due to WisDOT Region Office: **September 8, 2025**
- Technical Assessment Timeline: **October – December 2025**
- Review Committee Begins: **January 2026**
- Awards Approved and Announced: **Late spring 2026**

11.3 Project Issues and Post-Approval Process

Once project awards are announced, WisDOT sends Local Sponsors a project agreement, called a State-Municipal Agreement (SMA), for signature from an authorized Sponsor representative. WisDOT Region staff will notify Sponsors when to proceed with each phase of a project, because each project phase must be authorized for charges by FHWA before costs are reimbursable.

Sponsors pay for costs as incurred and seek reimbursement through the WisDOT Region Office. Included in the project cost are WisDOT activity costs for delivery and oversight. Oversight and delivery costs are split 80% federal and 20% local. Any locally funded design work must meet all applicable federal and state requirements and standards. Locally funded designs must pay the entire cost of state staff oversight.

The Sponsor is responsible for completing the entire project in accordance with local, state, and federal laws and regulations. If a project is sponsored on behalf of a private organization, the Public Sponsor retains ultimate responsibility for the project. However, the Public Sponsor will enter into a legal agreement with the private organization to ensure that the private party complies with all applicable requirements and provides the necessary local match funding.

Once the Sponsor enters into a project agreement with the appropriate WisDOT Region office, the Project Sponsor's funding must be approved in the appropriate TIP and/or STIP. The WisDOT Region then initiates paperwork authorizing the project for federal charges. Sponsors are responsible for all project costs incurred prior to notification that federal project authorization has occurred. **Receipt of the Governor's letter announcing the project award does not carry with it the authority to begin work on the project. Sponsors must not begin work on each phase of the project until receipt of notification from the WisDOT Region office that this work can begin to incur costs. The Sponsor will not receive any reimbursement for expenses incurred before receipt of this necessary notification from the Region.**

The WisDOT [Sponsor's Guide to Non-Traditional Transportation Project Implementation](#) provides important information about the CMAQ project development process and requirements. Transit projects must comply with FTA requirements that may differ from FHWA requirements. Sponsors must review the Sponsor's Guide carefully prior to project implementation.

Sponsors must develop approved projects in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations. Applicable laws and regulations include but are not limited to:

- Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) process for design and engineering services
- Federal and state real estate acquisition requirements
- State and federal environmental requirements
- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) participation goals
- Competitive bidding of construction work, including federal Davis-Bacon wage rates where applicable or state wage rates and use of American-made materials
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities must comply with the applicable requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ADA Accessibility Guidelines
- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) projects must demonstrate consistency with the regional ITS architecture

WisDOT Region staff can provide technical aid in meeting the above-listed requirements. Environmental review beyond identification of likely air quality impacts is not required prior to application submission.

Sponsors must design and develop CMAQ projects in accordance with industry technical standards. The Sponsor must also apply WisDOT technical standards when applicable. When specific WisDOT standards do not exist, Sponsors should follow industry standards. For example, projects involving alternative fuels must be designed in accordance with National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) standards and all applicable local codes and regulations. Bicycle projects are designed in accordance with a current version of the *Wisconsin Bicycle Facility Design Handbook*, which is available at: <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/projects/multimodal/bike.aspx>.

WisDOT urges Sponsors to review the Sponsor's Guide to Non-Traditional Transportation Project Implementation to become familiar with all relevant technical standards. Sponsors should conduct a site visit prior to developing project budgets and timelines. Allow ample time for state and federal review of environmental documents, plans, specifications, construction estimates, etc. All costs exceeding approved State/Federal amounts are the responsibility of the Local Sponsor. Each approved CMAQ project will involve one or more of the following project phases:

1. Preliminary Engineering and Design

Because CMAQ projects are let for competitive bid, Local Sponsors must develop a plan to ensure proper construction of the project. Local governments may use their own staff or staff from other government units, including planning staff, provided the staff is qualified to perform the necessary work. If a Sponsor does not have adequate and qualified staff to prepare the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E), the Sponsor may hire a qualified private consulting firm that is familiar with all applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and procedures. For example, a Sponsor should hire an engineer to work on the project design and construction of bicycle amenities, and an architectural historian could consult on historic rehabilitation.

Sponsors must follow federal Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) procedures for hiring a private consultant. Sponsors may not simply hire a local firm or a firm that has routinely performed work for the Local Sponsor. WisDOT Region staff can answer questions about applicable federal and state requirements.

2. Real Estate

Federal and state real estate requirements may complicate CMAQ projects. As such, real estate project costs under \$100,000 must be entirely locally funded. Sponsors should consult with the appropriate [WisDOT Regional Real Estate Coordinator](#) to ensure compliance with all federal and state requirements of the real estate acquisition process, including the Uniform Act.

WisDOT recommends Sponsors and applicants review the real estate webpage at: <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/astnce-pgms/aid/lpa-re-info.aspx>.

3. Railroad Crossings

If a project has a rail crossing within 1,000 feet of the project limit, Sponsors must coordinate with the WisDOT region railroad coordinator to ensure state and federal laws are followed regarding crossing surface and crossing warning devices. See the [WisDOT Regional Railroad Coordinators Map](#) for contact information. The railroad company or its contractors will perform the necessary work. Early railroad coordination is encouraged because railroad agreements are a requirement prior to project award.

To learn more, please contact Kris Sommers, Railroad Engineering and Safety Supervisor at (608) 266-3341 or kristen.sommers@dot.wi.gov.

4. Construction

12. Matching Requirements and Financial Procedures for Approved Projects

CMAQ is a reimbursement program, not a grant program. The Project Sponsor initially finances the entire project through their local budget process. WisDOT reimburses up to 80% of the project cost after the Sponsor submits invoices for project expenses. **The Sponsor is responsible for all project costs beyond the approved federal government funding share.** Local match funds may come from local funding sources and private contributions. Sponsors may also use non-transportation related federal government funds to provide the requisite local match. Sponsors may provide funds beyond the required match, but this usually does not affect funding decisions.

12.1 Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

CMAQ funds may be used to establish public-private partnerships. Private entities may apply for funding through an eligible Public Sponsor. Collaborating with private entities may help communities raise the minimum 20% match that is required for CMAQ projects.

12.2 Project Lets

Most projects will be Locally Let to the lowest cost qualified bidder. Consult the appropriate WisDOT Region office for details on bid-letting procedures and requirements such as advertising, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goals, federal and state wage rate requirements, and awarding the bid. If the project is in federal highway right-of-way, Local Sponsors must follow Davis-Bacon wage rate requirements requiring Sponsors to pay prevailing union wage rates for labor. For projects where Davis-Bacon wage rates do not apply, state “white sheet” rates still require payment of the prevailing union wage rates in parts of Wisconsin where the project is located. **Sponsors should consider the cost impact of these requirements on their project when developing project estimates.**

WisDOT may administer a local project as State Let under some circumstances. For example, it may be more efficient to administer a CMAQ project as State Let when installing a local bicycle or pedestrian facility in conjunction with a larger state highway project. For complex projects or projects with a cost estimate of \$1,000,000 or more, a State Let may be required. It is possible to use voluntary labor or donated materials if appropriate guidelines are followed and preapproval is received from WisDOT.

If WisDOT carries out the local project as a State Let, the Local Sponsors will be charged accordingly. **Certain state review and administration costs are incorporated into approved project budgets after project review and determination of appropriate add-on amounts.** It is not possible to assign an accurate cost prior to project review because design and administration costs vary with project complexity. As a general rule, state review constitutes a higher percentage of low-cost projects because many review costs are fixed. The cost of local project administration must be 100% locally funded. Local project administration includes project agreement review, attending project meetings, and other administrative work.

WisDOT expects Sponsors to maintain records and reports for a minimum of seven years, such as payroll documents and material specifications pertaining to construction activities, in the event of an audit.

13. Project Changes

Sponsors must contact WisDOT Region staff if a project cannot be implemented as outlined in an original application. CMAQ funding is both limited and competitive, so communities with project change requests may have to re-compete for funds for the newly requested work scope. Contact WisDOT DTIM Local Programs & Finance for additional details.

14. Funding Reimbursement and Project Completion

Sponsors should periodically submit reimbursement requests to the appropriate WisDOT Region office, along with supporting documents, for payment of the federal share of the project. Most Sponsors submit invoices on a quarterly basis. The state then submits bills to the federal government for the reimbursement of money paid to the Sponsor. **Sponsors who do not submit for reimbursement after six months of authorized funds are at risk of being placed on the federal inactive list and risk losing federal funding.** WisDOT ensures consistency with FHWA procedures by adhering to a reimbursement process that requires the Sponsor to pay the full amount of the contractor's interim billing as the project progresses.

Private sector grantees must receive reimbursement through a collaborating Public Sponsor. More information regarding the reimbursement process is available in [The Sponsor's Guide to Non-Traditional Transportation Project Implementation](#). Public transit projects are transferred to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and are administered by WisDOT as part of the annual Transit Capital and Operating Assistance Grant.

WisDOT will make the final reimbursement payment on a project only after a field certification verifies that all CMAQ-funded work was completed in accordance with project requirements. Design firms may provide construction oversight only if there is a responsible local official in charge who can certify that the project was completed according to plan.

14.1 Timeline for Project Completion and Maintenance

Sponsors of 2026-2030 CMAQ projects must complete projects and submit a project completion within six years, according to the timeline memorialized in State-Municipal Agreements (SMAs). WisDOT will grant extensions only for extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Project Sponsors must submit a written extension request that provides a specific revised timeline for project completion and indicates the reason that an extension is necessary. Sponsors of CMAQ construction projects should make every effort to ensure that project construction occurs in a timely manner in relation to the receipt of federal funding and must be completed by the sunset date as indicated in the SMA.

Sponsors are required to maintain awarded projects. Failure to do so, or the sale of a property without written authorization requires partial repayment of federal funds or execution of legal guarantees that protect the projects' public benefit.

15. Additional Resources

Sponsors are responsible for review and knowledge of reference materials. There are various limitations on building separated paths adjacent to urban and suburban roadways. WisDOT Region staff can provide technical assistance and documentation. Bicycle-pedestrian projects must be consistent with the Wisconsin Bicycle Facility Design Handbook.

US Code, Title 23 – Highways:

<https://uscode.house.gov/browse/prelim@title23&edition=prelim>

WisDOT Sponsor's Guide to Non-Traditional Transportation Project Implementation:

<https://wisconsindot.gov/pages/doing-bus/local-gov/lpm/sgmanual.aspx> The Americans with

Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Transportation Facilities:

<https://www.access-board.gov/ada/>

US Department of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation:

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/stand.htm>

WisDOT Facilities Development Manual (FDM):

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/eng-consultants/cnslt-rsrces/rdwy/fdm.aspx>

Wisconsin Bicycle Facility Design Handbook:

<https://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/projects/multimodal/bike/facility-toc.pdf>

15.1 WisDOT Contact Information

If you have questions about the CMAQ program and the application guidelines, please consult the appropriate contact listed on the following page.

WisDOT Region	Contact	Phone	Email
DTIM Central Office	Stephanie Mertens	(608) 266-9507	stephanie.mertens@dot.wi.gov

WisDOT Region	Contact	Phone	Email
SE Region	Tyler Beinlich	(262) 548-5856	tyler.beinlich@dot.wi.gov
NE Region	Kelsey Lorenz	(920) 492-0142	kelsey.lorenz@dot.wi.gov

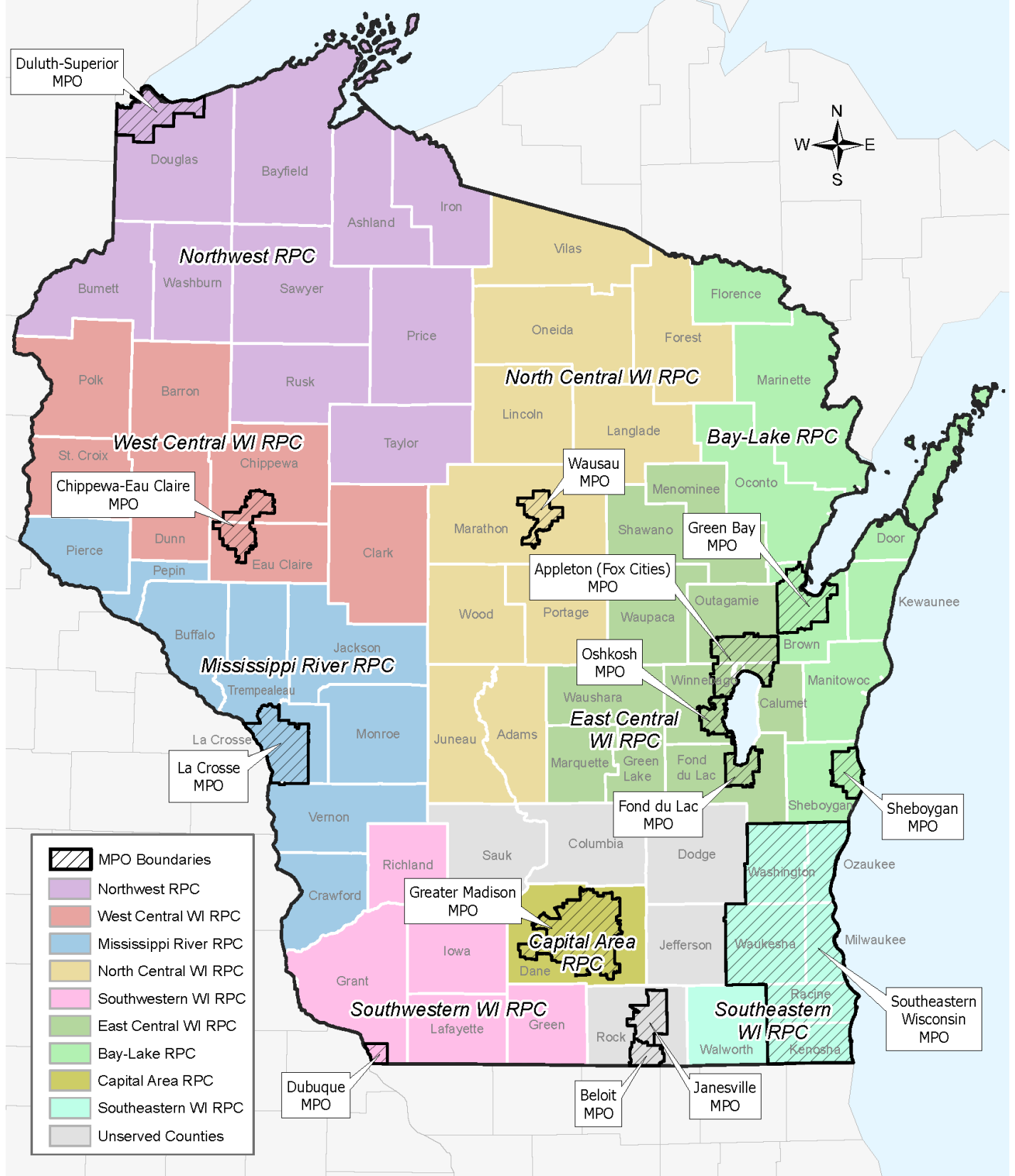
WisDOT/Real Estate staff		
Southeast (SE)	Nicole Mauch	(262) 521-5295
Northeast (NE)	Joua Dorner	(921) 492-5997
Statewide	Megan Munden	(715) 392-7962 (Office)

15.2 MPO Contact Information

MPO Contact	Contact	Phone	Email
Bay-Lake RPC	Heena Bhatt	(920) 448-2820	hbhatt@baylakerpc.org
SEWRPC	Chris Hiebert	(262) 953-3227	chiebert@sewrpc.org
	Ryan Hoel	(262) 953-4285	Rhoel@sewrpc.org

To determine if a proposed CMAQ project is located an MPO area, visit the following website or refer to the map in the next page: <http://wisconsindot.gov/Documents/doing-bus/local-gov/plning-orgs/map.pdf>

Wisconsin RPCs and MPOs





Wisconsin Department of Transportation

2026-2030 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program Guidelines

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