

# Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## CMAQ Funding Examples



Source: NPS

### Washington, D.C. Capital Bikeshare

In 2010, Washington, D.C. launched the Capital Bikeshare program after receiving a grant of \$6.4 million in CMAQ funding. At a cost of \$55,000 per dock and \$1,200 per bike, the District was able to fund 1,500 bikes at 169 solar-powered docking stations, which has since grown to 370 stations and over 3,100 bikes. The bike share system is owned by the local District government and several stations are located on NPS units, including the National Mall.

## Key Resources and Contacts

- [Federal Highway Administration Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program](#)
- [Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program and National Park Service Primer Research](#)
- [NPS Transportation Branch and regional transportation coordinators](#)
- [National Park Service Air Resources Division](#)
- [Federal Highway Administration nonattainment area maps](#)
- [Environmental Protection Agency nonattainment and maintenance areas](#)

Published: April 2017

*The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program, a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding program, provides funding for eligible transportation projects, programs, and operational strategies that reduce emissions and contribute to the attainment or maintenance of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone, carbon monoxide and particulate matter. Examples of eligible projects include transit vehicle replacement, transit facility development, non-recreational trails, and bicycle sharing programs. Parks can cooperate with state departments of transportation (DOTs) or metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to secure funding for all eligible projects. Detailed information on the CMAQ program and CMAQ project eligibility is available on FHWA's website, which is listed under Key Resources below.*

## How can parks access CMAQ funding?

CMAQ funds are apportioned to the states and are administered through state DOTs and/or MPOs. Each State or MPO has its own CMAQ project selection process, through which the NPS is eligible to apply. These entities determine how to select CMAQ projects, but FHWA requires an analysis of project emissions benefits as part of the funding criteria. To determine the local CMAQ project selection process, reach out to your area MPO or state DOT to begin the discussion. If available, sign up for their email newsletters for funding announcements. CMAQ typically requires a 20 percent local match. State funds, donations from non-federal third parties, or in-kind donations from local governments may be used to satisfy the local match. In most cases the NPS' core transportation program funds (Federal Land Transportation Program, or FLTP) may be used towards this match in coordination with NPS regional transportation coordinators.

## What projects are eligible?

Every CMAQ project must meet three basic criteria: 1) be a transportation project, 2) generate a reduction in emissions, and 3) be located in or benefit a nonattainment or maintenance area for ozone, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter. States without nonattainment or maintenance areas may use CMAQ funds for Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) eligible projects. All CMAQ projects must also meet all applicable requirements and must be included in the MPO's current transportation plan and Transportation Improvement Program, where applicable, and in the current State Transportation Improvement Program.

Park units should specifically consider the eligibility of their bicycle, pedestrian, and transit related projects. Criteria for transit projects includes new transit service, system or service expansion, new vehicles, or fare subsidies when these efforts are part of an area-wide strategy for reducing emissions. CMAQ can also be used for diesel retrofits in particulate matter nonattainment and maintenance areas.

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### Rocky Mountain National Park and Estes Park Transit System

Rocky Mountain National Park worked with the town of Estes Park to leverage \$329,000 of Colorado DOT's CMAQ funding to expand the number of parking spaces at the Estes Park Transit Facility. The transit hub serves as a stop for the Rocky Mountain National Park Hiker Shuttle, and expanded parking has encouraged greater use of the transit system and thus further reduced congestion and emissions contributed by personal vehicle use.



### Air Quality at Rocky Mountain National Park

Source: NPS and Colorado State University via EPA

## Program Details

### How is NPS affected by air pollution?

Air pollution, even in relatively low levels, affects ecological health, visibility, scenic views, visitor experience, and human health. Motorized transportation use, on both paved and unpaved roads, and visitation are directly linked to air quality in parks. Relevant projects could improve air quality within the park as well as help the state or metropolitan region meet federal air quality goals. As of 2010, 70 NPS park units are partially or fully located in ozone nonattainment areas. When NPS park units fall within a nonattainment area, all proposed transportation and road construction projects must undergo an evaluation to assess whether the project-related activity would contribute to air quality violations or potentially delay attainment of air quality standards. Seven of these parks are within Class I areas, which include national parks larger than 6,000 acres, in existence on August 7, 1977, as defined by the Clean Air Act. Class I areas have strict pollution compliance laws and receive the highest degree of protection under the law.

### What is a nonattainment or maintenance area?

Nonattainment areas are those that have failed to meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). These standards are set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and cover six common air pollutants including particulate matter and ground level ozone. Maps of some nonattainment areas can be found on the FHWA website. Maintenance areas are former nonattainment areas that have reached the federal air quality standards, but must have plans for how air quality will be maintained. Nonattainment and maintenance areas are available on EPA's website at <https://www.epa.gov/green-book>.

## NEXT STEPS

### Build relationships with state and local governments

Ongoing collaboration with state DOTs, MPOs, and local governments is the best way to remain aware of potential funding opportunities both from CMAQ and other funding programs.

### Determine if your park is in a nonattainment or maintenance area

Consult with the [NPS Air Resources Division](#) to determine if your park is in a nonattainment or maintenance area. You can also contact your NPS regional transportation coordinators, consult with EPA's website, or review the FHWA nonattainment area maps to determine if your park is located in an area that makes your project eligible for these funds.