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 particular 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.
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.

For more information, visit https://www.nps.gov/transportation