

BRTB CMAQ Program Discussion Items for Updated Program Guidelines

The following topics are offered for discussion to improve upon the existing BRTB Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Competitive Selection Process. It is recommended a discussion, followed by an approved process be put in place prior to the next funding cycle. These topics were suggested by CMAQ review participants, award recipients and staff in consultation with the Executive Committee.

- When a project is identified as a transit project, there needs to be early action to ensure a timely transfer of funds from highway (SHA) to transit (MTA) to reduce delays. Howard County is still in the process of getting funding approved through MTA for their hybrid buses.
- There should be language in the BRTB CMAQ Competitive Selection Process documentation that says that if a project which has been approved by the BRTB for CMAQ funding is not able to move forward as described in the scope, the funding will be referred directly back to the BRTB. The BRTB would then have an opportunity to allow a change in scope or determine how to redistribute some or all of the funding.
- Determine whether the BRTB supports “flexing” of funds between the state and sponsoring jurisdictions. On the downtown circulator support project, Baltimore City and MTA determined that the City project could “flex” non-federal funds from another MTA project, to reduce the amount of paperwork that would have been necessary if they had used the federal CMAQ funds.
- The amount of paperwork and coordination between state, federal, and local agencies required appears considerable, particularly given the small funding amounts of some of the projects. There was no minimum amount required for applications for the FY 08 and FY 09 process. It is recommended that a minimum amount of CMAQ dollars requested be applied at a \$250,000 level. This will hopefully result in projects that will have emission reduction impacts on a wider scale, and the local jurisdiction applicant will see a greater result from the level of staff effort required to complete necessary application paperwork. In addition, this will reduce the number of project applications selected, so that the appropriate parties can focus on moving the BRTB-selected projects through the federal funding approval process. At a funding level of \$1,000,000 total, this would presumably lead to the funding of four mid-sized CMAQ projects.
- The level of review for the BRTB CMAQ competitive selection process in its first two years was extensive. It is suggested that the review process be trimmed where appropriate in order to match the level of review effort (especially when combined with the effort of federal funding approval) to the level of funding provided.

- For potential applicants:
 - Keep a CMAQ page on the web site year-round to have general information on what the BRTB process is and a place for interested parties to register contact information.
 - Make sure that it is clear who is eligible to apply for funding, and if there will be priority given to local governments over state government, etc.
 - Make sure they are aware of potential paperwork they will need to prepare once gaining federal funding approval, in the case that they are selected by the BRTB.
- In the future, consider investing in post-project analysis for larger projects to determine the levels of emission benefits achieved for the cost. This could help to inform the BRTB in future CMAQ project selection processes by providing benchmarks of success.