

Air Quality Subcommittee (AQS) Meeting Notes

January 8, 2015

Attendees

Kevin Black, FHWA (teleconference)
Deanna Cuccinello, DNREC
Marc Dixon, FHWA (teleconference)
Heather Dunigan, WILMAPCO
Mike DuRoss, DelDOT
Jay Gerner, DelDOT (teleconference)
Tamika Graham, WILMAPCO
Valerie Gray, DNREC
Larry Kivar, Resident
Molla Sarros, MDE (teleconference)
Cathy Smith, DTC (teleconference)
Bill Swiatek, WILMAPCO
Rachel Yocum, DNREC
Tigist Zegeye, WILMAPCO

AQS Roles and Responsibilities

- Mr. Swiatek and Ms. Dunigan provided an overview of this agenda item.
- Meeting packet is available at: www.wilmapco.org/aqs. *TIP Development Process; Overall Project Prioritization Process; CMAQ Project Prioritization Process; Delaware Conformity Rule; Regionally Significant Project Guidelines*
- Mr. Swiatek said today's meeting would be an informal review of the responsibilities of the Subcommittee.
- Ms. Dunigan provided an example of the typical **TIP Development Process (packet page 1)**. Specific to air quality, in March, the WILMAPCO staff provides draft technical scores for the projects in the project prioritization processes. The AQS reviews and finalizes these scores the following month.
- Ms. Sarros asked what the Maryland process was, as it is not shown on the handout. Ms. Dunigan answered that since Maryland projects are typically areawide (paving, safety, etc.) WILMAPCO does not have multiple projects to prioritize. Instead, local priorities are collected during the statewide tour process with the Maryland Sec. of Transportation. This occurs in September and October.
- Ms. Dunigan continued her description of the typical TIP development process. In May the Council approves the prioritized list of projects. These projects are then prioritized by DelDOT over the summer, using a separate prioritization process.

Also during the summer, the current year's TIP is amended following activity by the Delaware Bond Bill. This amendment process may trigger a revised conformity analysis¹.

- Ms. Dunigan said that in October DelDOT provides revisions to the project funding and descriptions for discussion. The AQS reviews this revised list for conformity triggers in October or November. A determination is completed in December, potentially with a new conformity analysis². In January (new year) the TIP, including any necessary conformity analysis, is released for public comment. The AQS will recommend approval of that analysis in February with Council adoption in March.
- Ms. Sarros again asked if Ms. Dunigan could address the timeline for the Maryland projects. Ms. Dunigan replied that Maryland has difficulty providing financial information for the full four-year program, so projects are amended piecemeal. In terms of air quality, all amendments go through the AQS to determine if a revised conformity analysis is necessary.
- Ms. Gray requested a schedule for the FY 2017, moving forward. Mr. DuRoss suggested adding the AQS touch points as well. Ms. Dunigan said she would provide that.
- Ms. Gray and Ms. Sarros also requested that meeting materials be provided as early as possible ahead of scheduled AQS meetings. Mr. Swiatek said WILMAPCO would do their best to accommodate this.
- Ms. Dunigan reviewed the **project prioritization process (packet page 2)**. In March, staff provides the draft technical scores for projects which are reviewed in April by the Committees. These are approved by Council in May. Ms. Dunigan reviewed the air quality technical scoring scale, shown on the following page.

¹ This occurs when a new, regionally significant project is added, or if there is a change in the in-service year of an existing regionally significant project that would lead to an adjustment of its modeled year.

² A new conformity analysis would be required here if a new, regionally significant project is added, or there is a change in the in-service year of an existing regionally significant project that would lead to an adjustment of its modeled year. The development of a new RTP, the adoption of new conformity budgets, the availability of a new conformity model, etc. may also trigger a revised conformity analysis here. Otherwise, a conformity determination can be made based on the previous conformity analysis.

Air Quality – Project expected to improve air quality by:

- reducing emissions
- reducing VMT (Vehicle Miles Traveled)
- not adding capacity
- increasing access to non-auto modes

3	Project expected to substantially improve air quality (all four bullets apply)
1	Project expected to slightly improve air quality (2-3 bullets)
0	No expected air quality impact (does not add capacity)
-3	Negative air quality impact expected

- Ms. Dunigan said that air quality was the only qualitative measure in a very quantitative project prioritization process. There have been discussions about making this measure more quantitative, with the introduction of project modeling software. The concern she has always had is whether it is worth the financial cost and trouble when air quality is only a small piece of the overall prioritization process. She trusts the opinions of the air quality committee and she normally agrees with them.
- Ms. Gray shared that Mr. Simons was on a TRB panel to discuss a model he was familiar with which could be used in the prioritization process. No one at the meeting was familiar with what the exact model was she mentioned. Mr. Swiatek said this could be discussed at the next AQS meeting.
- Mr. Swiatek reviewed the **CMAQ project prioritization (packet page 6)**. This process provides scores for CMAQ eligible projects already on the books, as detailed on the following page.

Interim CMAQ Project Prioritization Process - Methodology

1. Rank projects by type, based on emissions reporting within FHWA's National CMAQ database and federal guidance. Priority by type is: 1. Diesel Retrofits and Replacements, 2. Transit, 3. Shared Ride, 4. I/M and other TCMS, 5. Traffic Flow, 6. Pedestrian/Bicycle
2. Within project types, sort by quantitative emission benefits for diesel projects and qualitative benefits for others. Quantitative benefits can be determined from EPA calculators. An index determining the qualitative benefit follows.

*Qualitative Index

Reduce VMT - negligible (0); moderate (3); significant (6)

Cost - >2 million (0); \$500,000 - \$2 million (3); <\$500,000 (6)

Life expectancy - <5 years (0); 5-10 years (3); >10 years (6)

- This process occurs in tandem with the overall project prioritization process, in March and April. This prioritized list is submitted to DelDOT for consideration. DelDOT makes CMAQ funding proposals over the summer.
- Ms. Gray asked when new projects submitted for CMAQ funding ought to be submitted? Ms. Zegeye answered that if there is a project in New Castle County, it should be submitted to WILMAPCO in January – no later than March.
- There was a discussion about the unresolved differences between how DelDOT views CMAQ program versus the AQS. The AQS is interested in maximizing emissions benefits within the program, while DelDOT uses the program as one many layers to maximize transportation spending. Ms. Dunigan said this difficulty will continue as WILMAPCO's policy is that DelDOT should maximize spending, regardless of the pool. Ms. Zegeye said the DelDOT is trying to have emissions benefit information to the AQS sooner for final proposed projects.
- Ms. Sarros asked if there was any CMAQ funding for Cecil County projects. Ms. Zegeye answered that there are no CMAQ projects in Cecil County, as all the money goes to other places in Maryland.
- Ms. Zegeye reviewed the **Delaware Conformity Regulation (packet page 7)**. Specific to regionally significant projects, guidance was taken directly from the federal agencies. The text is found on the next page.

“Regionally significant project” means a transportation project (other than an exempt project) that is on a facility which serves regional transportation needs (such as access to and from the area outside of the region, major activity centers in the region, major planned developments such as new retail malls, sports complexes, etc., or transportation terminals as well as most terminals themselves) and would normally be included in the modeling of a metropolitan area’s transportation network, including at a minimum all principal arterial highways and all fixed guideway transit facilities that offer an alternative to regional highway travel.

- Ms. Gray said that the definition is vague. Several weeks ago, she was trying to figure out how regionally significant projects were determined from the larger list of projects. Ms. Zegeye answered that this goes back to the TIP process, and it is determined through the AQS. Moving forward, regionally significant projects will be called out with an asterix in project lists. Mr. Swiatek said that when new projects are received, staff reviews them to see if they could possibly be a conformity trigger. These are put in front of the AQS. This discussion took place in May 2014 for the recent 2040 RTP/FY 2016 TIP conformity analysis. Ultimately, the regionally significant project list, including brief project descriptions, is included in the conformity documents.

Other

- Mr. Swiatek noted that no public comments were received on the 2040 RTP/FY 2016 TIP conformity documents. Staff will be seeking Council for approval this evening.