

Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC)

**Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)
and Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)
Policies and Procedures**

September 1, 2023

BACKGROUND

Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) is a federal program, whose primary goals are to improve air quality and reduce congestion. CMAQ provides funding for transportation projects or programs that will contribute to attainment or maintenance of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone, carbon dioxide, and particulate matter (both PM 10 and PM 2.5).

Per the federal CMAQ program guidance, project/program eligibility criteria are as follows:

- It must be transportation-related
- It must generate an emissions reduction
- It must be located in or benefit a nonattainment or maintenance area

Designated as nonattainment for ozone and PM 2.5, and attainment for PM 10, the Madera County region receives CMAQ apportionments, which are administered by the Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC). Federal CMAQ apportionment levels are provided to regions for the Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) quadrennial period. The MCTC Governing Board programs these CMAQ funds to eligible projects.

The Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) is a federal funding program created through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). CRP was created to reduce transportation emissions through the development of State carbon reduction strategies and by funding projects designed to reduce transportation emissions. Project eligibility is essentially identical to the CMAQ program, including the provisions that projects do not involve the construction of new capacity.

Some examples of eligible projects include:

- Transit capital
- Transit improvements
- Transit management systems
- (some) Traffic flow improvements
- Bicycle and pedestrian projects
- Alternative fuels – certain vehicles, infrastructure

- Ridesharing, carpooling, and vanpooling
- Traffic signal synchronization

MCTC has programmed CMAQ funds for a variety of purposes including transit projects and programs, bicycle and pedestrian projects, and traffic flow improvements.

PROGRAM GOALS:

- Goal #1:** Achieve air quality conformity. This includes funding transportation control measures as needed.
- Goal #2:** Obligate all CMAQ and CRP funding allocated, losing no apportionments.
- Goal #3:** Supplement transit service as needed.
- Goal #4:** Implement the San Joaquin Valley Cost-Effectiveness Policy threshold.
- Goal #5:** Fund quality of life projects which are usable by the general public.
- Goal #6:** Fund projects that reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.
- Goal #7:** Fund projects that benefit Disadvantaged Communities.
- Goal #8:** Fund projects that prioritize safety in all investments and in all appropriate projects.

To ensure quality of life and economic health in Madera County, the primary objective of the transportation system must be the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. Public transit is an economically and environmentally sound alternative to transportation by single occupancy vehicles (SOV's). Within Madera County, travel by public transit, by bicycle, and on foot must be an attractive alternative. MCTC shall continue to promote the use of regional transit and the continued development of an integrated, reliable, regional public transportation system.

CMAQ/CRP PROGRAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES:

1. Projects in jeopardy of failing to meet obligation deadlines may be postponed to the next fiscal year, and other projects that can be delivered quickly may be advanced, as necessary. As capacities permit, these adjustments may be made at any time.
2. A CMAQ/CRP committee may be convened as necessary to review project implementation and make recommendations for programming adjustments.
3. Transportation Control Measures (TCMs) and/or other air quality projects may be funded as needed to demonstrate federally-required, air quality conformity.

4. Effort will be made to use at least 20% of each four-year CMAQ total for highly cost-effective projects and programs (“HCE projects”). This is currently defined as those which cost \$45 or less per pound of criteria pollutant reduced. Priority will be given to HCE projects when applications are being considered.
5. Emission benefits and cost-effectiveness will be calculated using the methods of the California Air Resources Board (ARB) or Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), or other approved methodologies.
6. A “Call for Projects” shall be issued, as needed, when CMAQ/CRP capacity is available for programming. Unless unforeseen circumstance warrants, the “Call for Projects” will occur every two years, which is when a new FTIP with two additional years of programming capacities is being developed. CMAQ/CRP committee shall review and evaluate project applications and recommend projects for programming.
7. Projects will be evaluated on a region-wide competitive basis with no geographic equity guarantees.
8. All project applications must document all of the following information:
 - Project total cost and CMAQ/CRP cost, by phase and by year
 - Total emission reductions
 - Cost-effectiveness of CMAQ/CRP dollars
 - Project schedule
9. The FTIP will be programmed with funding for the entire project based upon project delivery and funding availability.
10. If a project has a cost overrun, no additional CMAQ/CRP funds will be available.
11. Delays and advancements of projects will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
12. If project funding or savings gets deprogrammed, then it goes back into the overall CMAQ/CRP balance for reprogramming for projects on the contingency list, at the MCTC Board’s discretion.
13. Given available CMAQ/CRP capacity, priority is given to the delivery of existing, programmed projects. Some examples include:
 - Programming priority will be given to projects that have completed prior programmed phases and are ready to proceed to their next phase

- If a project (phase) is ready, then the project (phase) may be advanced
14. MCTC requires assurance of timely delivery of programmed CMAQ/CRP projects. Each project application must include a formal council/board action indicating that the project will meet project delivery schedules and that staff be directed to achieve those project milestones (i.e. federal environmental clearance; right-of-way certification; final project specifications, and engineering).
 15. If the project's Construction is programmed in the FTIP quadrennial period and if the project demonstrates construction-readiness (Federal environmental clearance and Right- of-way Certification), MCTC will consider usage of Expedited Project Selection Procedure (EPSP) to advance the construction funding.
 16. If the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) deobligates (removes) a project's CMAQ funds, then MCTC will not restore the CMAQ funding, and subsequent phases will not be funded and programmed. This FHWA deobligation of federal funding may be due to the lack of project progress and "activity," which occurs when the project sponsor does not submit regular invoices to Caltrans for federal reimbursements of eligible work activities.
 17. Electric vehicle charging stations, made available to the public, will be eligible, according to the funding source. To ensure good use of public funding, a minimum of four charges per day is required for dual port charging stations. The project applicant must be a member jurisdiction (City of Chowchilla, City of Madera, County of Madera).
 18. MCTC will include a list of contingency projects for CMAQ and CRP, ranked in priority order based on the project's evaluation score. MCTC intends to fund projects on the contingency list should there be cost savings or if a project is deleted. Projects on the contingency list may also be funded using available apportionment to ensure project delivery and regional needs of the current FFY are met. This contingency list will be in effect only until the adoption of the next programming cycle.

CMAQ EVALUATION COMMITTEE:

The purpose of this Committee is to evaluate and score CMAQ/CRP applications as submitted during the "Call for Projects." The Committee will make a recommendation to the MCTC Policy Board of projects/programs to award and program.

Membership of this Committee shall be composed of one representative from each of the following agencies: City of Chowchilla, City of Madera, County of Madera, Caltrans District 6, and MCTC staff (2 members).

PROJECT APPLICATION SCORING:

When sufficient CMAQ/CRP capacity warrants, staff will seek the MCTC Policy Board’s approval to release a competitive “Call for Projects.” Staff will review and assess project applications for their completeness and CMAQ/CRP eligibility. The CMAQ/CRP Evaluation Committee will be convened to evaluate and score project applications and make a recommendation for programming. The following scoring factors will be used to rank the project applications.

Maximum 5 Points	Trip Reduction
	Project reduces vehicle trips and/or vehicle miles traveled.
Maximum 5 Points	Congestion Relief
	Has impact on congestion and increases service capacity and/or reliability.
Maximum 20 Points	Air Quality Emission Reduction
	Incorporates transportation control measures and/or reduces air pollution emissions of organic compounds, oxides of nitrogen, and/or particulate matter.
Maximum 40 Points	Cost Benefit Ratio
	Quantified annual air emissions reduction (pounds per year) divided by annualized project cost.
Maximum 10 Points	PM 2.5 Reduction
	Achieves a quantifiable PM 2.5 reduction.
Maximum 5 Point	Disadvantaged Community
	Project is located in an identified Disadvantaged Community per the most currently available CalEnviroScreen or utilizing Justice40 's environmental burden indicator for disadvantaged communities.
Maximum 10 Points	Active Transportation Plan
	Project is identified in the Madera Region Active Transportation Plan.
Maximum 5 Point	Safety
	Project is located in priority locations identified in a data-driven analysis/plan such as Local Safety Plan, SSAR, etc.
100	TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE