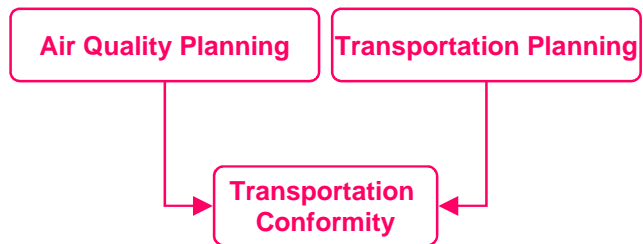


Transportation Conformity

What is transportation conformity?

Transportation conformity (“conformity”) is a way to ensure that Federal funding and approval goes to those transportation activities that are consistent with air quality goals. Conformity applies to transportation plans, transportation improvement programs (TIPs) and projects funded or approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in areas that do not meet or previously have not met air quality standards for ozone, carbon monoxide, particulate matter or nitrogen dioxide. These areas are known as “nonattainment areas” or “maintenance areas,” respectively.

A conformity determination demonstrates that the total emissions projected for a plan or program are within the emissions limits (“budgets”) established by the air quality plan or State Implementation Plan (SIP), and that transportation control measures (TCMs) are implemented in a timely fashion.



Who makes a conformity determination?

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) policy boards make initial conformity determinations in metropolitan areas, while State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) usually do so in areas outside of MPOs. Conformity determinations must also be made at the Federal level by FHWA/FTA.



How often are conformity determinations required?

Conformity determinations must be made at least every three years, or when transportation plans or TIPs are updated.

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Federal Highway Administration
HEPN, Room 3240
Washington, DC 20590

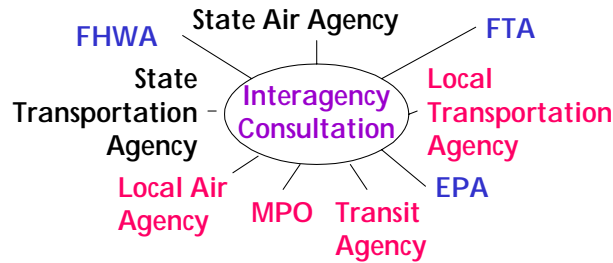
www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Who is involved in determining conformity?

A formal interagency consultation process involving the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), FHWA, FTA and State and local transportation and air quality agencies is required in developing SIPs, TIPs and transportation plans, and in making conformity determinations.



How do we involve the public?

Conformity analysis is made available to the public as part of the MPO and/or State DOT planning processes. MPOs are required to make transportation plans, TIPs, and conformity determinations available to the public, accept and respond to public comment, and provide adequate notice of relevant public meetings. Project sponsors must also include appropriate public involvement during project development.

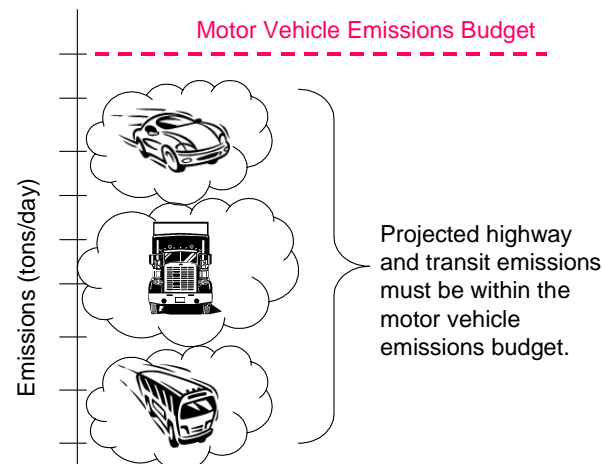
How do we determine conformity?

Regional emissions are estimated based on highway and transit usage according to transportation plans and TIPs. The projected emissions for the plan and TIP must not exceed the emissions limits (or "budgets") established by the SIP. Also, the MPO is required to demonstrate that TCMs are implemented in a timely fashion.

What are emissions budgets?

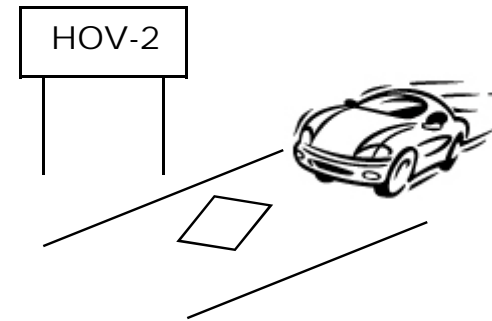
The SIP places limits on emissions of each pollutant for each source type (mobile, stationary and area sources). Projected emissions from highway and transit usage must be less than or equal to the emissions limits for on-road mobile vehicles that are established by the SIP. These emissions limits for motor vehicle emissions sources are called "budgets."

Budgets are developed as part of the air quality planning process by State air quality/environmental agencies, and approved by EPA. Transportation agencies participate in this process.



What are transportation control measures (TCMs)?

Areas can include TCMs in their SIPs. TCMs are specific programs designed to reduce emissions from transportation sources by reducing vehicle use or changing traffic flow or congestion conditions. Examples include programs for improving public transit, developing high occupancy vehicles (HOV) facilities, and ordinances to promote non-motor vehicle travel.



What are some options that can be considered in transportation plan and TIP development to offset or reduce motor vehicle emissions?

Examples of methods for reducing motor vehicle emissions include: transit improvements, HOV lanes, signal timing, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and land use planning.

What happens if a conformity determination is not made?

When a conformity determination is not made according to schedule, there is a conformity lapse and the use of Federal-aid funds is restricted. Exceptions include: safety projects, certain mass transit projects, transportation control measures in approved SIPs, and projects that are already authorized.

What is project-level conformity?

In carbon monoxide and particulate matter nonattainment and maintenance areas, additional localized or microscale analysis may be necessary to determine project-level conformity for Federally funded or approved highway and transit projects. These projects must come from a currently conforming transportation plan and TIP. This analysis is sometimes referred to as "hot-spot analysis".