



Air Quality Conformity - air essentials

Why are we providing this document?

Federal law sets air quality standards under the Clean Air Act. This means that, whenever a transportation project list for a region is updated, many local governments have to make a determination (“Air Quality Conformity Determination” or AQCD) to show that their area complies with these standards. In the Eugene-Springfield area, the law requires that we address *carbon monoxide* (CO), which comes mostly from vehicle emissions and home wood heating.

The good news is that since 1994 our area has met CO air quality standards, but we must show over a 20-year period that we continue to meet these standards. The AQCD is the document local governments develop to demonstrate that area projects will not lead to a violation of the CO air quality standard.

After approval by the local Metropolitan Planning Organization, the US Department of Transportation and the US Environmental Protection Agency must approve the conformity determination before the projects can be undertaken.

How is the determination made?

Computer models analyze and project the amount of carbon monoxide that vehicles would produce within the planning area over designated periods. The analysis takes into account land use patterns, population and employment numbers and distribution, trips taken by other modes of transport, vehicle age and type, congested speeds, and environmental conditions, given the existing transportation network and the proposed project list. Opportunity must be provided for public comment on the AQCD and the Public Participation Plan guides this effort.

What are the results of the latest Air Quality Conformity Determination?

The AQCD shows that with the implementation of proposed plans current federal air quality standards for carbon monoxide will continue to be met. Measured CO levels in this area back up this analysis: they have been steadily decreasing and, in 2007, reached a level that is less than one-fourth of the Federal standard – a trend attributed to improvements in car and wood stove technologies, as well as implementation of this area’s home wood heating advisory programs.