Transportation Conformity: Regionally Significant Roadway Definition
Ozone Standard Compliance Status  
San Antonio-New Braunfels MSA,  
2014 - 2016 (as of August 7, 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulatory Monitor Site</th>
<th>4th Highest Reading, ppb</th>
<th>Current 3 Year Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camp Bullis C58</td>
<td>72 80 63</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Antonio NW C23</td>
<td>69 79 66</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calaveras Lake C59</td>
<td>63 68 60</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As of April 8, the San Antonio area’s ozone values exceeded the 2015 ozone threshold of 70 ppb. This places the area in violation of the standard and, if the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designates areas in 2017 based on the 2014 – 2016 averaging period as scheduled, this indicates the San Antonio area would be designated nonattainment for ozone.

Source: Alamo Area Council of Governments
Transportation Conformity

A non-attainment designation for ozone will require the MPO to undertake Transportation Conformity.

Transportation Conformity means evaluating future transportation projects to ensure they do not cause further harm to air quality.
Interagency Consultation and Responsibilities

- The MPO has primary responsibility for demonstrating transportation conformity.
- For this process to be completed it requires significant interagency consultation that includes the:
  - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
  - Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
  - Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
  - Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)
  - Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
  - MPO, VIA, AACOG, local governments and the general public.
When is Conformity Required?

If designated as non-attainment for ozone:
• There is a one year timeframe in which to complete, submit and approve transportation conformity

Then conformity would be required:
• Every time a new or amended MTP or TIP, which includes new projects, is adopted (unless only exempt projects are added)

• Currently, the TIP is updated every two years and amended quarterly. If designated non-attainment, such amendments could trigger conformity determinations – making it very difficult to continue amending the TIP on a quarterly basis
If conformity is not demonstrated the region enters into a “lapse”:

• Federal funds for highway and transit improvements can be delayed
• Only a few projects can move forward in a lapse:
  – Safety Projects
  – Rehabilitation Projects
  – Other projects that can be shown to not have a negative impact on the region’s air quality
Current Schedule

October 2016

- State’s recommendations on areas of non-attainment designation are due to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

October 2017

- Formal non-attainment designations are scheduled to be made by the EPA

May - June 2018

- The MPO will be required to complete and submit a transportation conformity determination on its Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

October 2018

- Transportation conformity will need to be approved in order to avoid a lapse
Regionally significant project means a major transportation project that is on a facility which serves regional transportation needs

At a minimum, this includes all principal arterial highways and all fixed guideway transit facilities that offer a significant alternative to regional highway travel.
Regionally Significant Roadways

Regionally significant roadways are not:

• eligible for more funding than other functionally classified roadways
• necessarily more congested
• necessarily targeted for transportation improvements
Regionally Significant Definitions

Regionally Significant Projects Definitions

North Central Texas Council of Governments

Source: 23 CFR § 450.104

Definition:
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.

Regionally Significant Roadways Include:
- Freeways and tollways documented in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Grade-separated interchange projects on regionally significant roadways where no access existed previously
- Regionally Significant Arterials, as defined by the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRCS Principal</td>
<td>Roadways identified as principal arterials in the Federal Functional Classification System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS/Intermodal</td>
<td>Roadways and intermodal connectors included in the federally-adopted National Highway System (NHS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Highways</td>
<td>Roads designated as SH or US routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Connection</td>
<td>On-system roadways that provide direct, continuously-signed connections between nearby or adjacent census-defined urbanized areas, urban clusters, and population centers with more than 5,000 people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity Center</td>
<td>Roadways that serve as primary regional connector to an otherwise unserved regional activity center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staged Facilities</td>
<td>Roadways serving regional transportation needs within a limited-access corridor unless mainlines are constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route Completion</td>
<td>Extension of RSA with non-connecting termini to a nearby junction with a Regionally Significant Roadway, where feasible or, extension over continuous roadway to population center or freeway.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Regionally Significant Roadways, the MTP documentation will include the number of lanes for each air quality conformity analysis year. Design concept and scope modifications to these roadways will require an air quality conformity analysis. For non-regionally significant roadways, the MTP will document the number of lanes recommended in proposed improvements only and are not subject to conformity determination.

El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization

Source: 40 CFR Section 93.101

Definition:
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.

NOTE: NCTCOG and El Paso share the same regionally significant project definition.

Houston-Galveston Area Council

Regionally Significant Roadway Projects
Non-exempt projects on regionally significant roadways will be treated as regionally significant projects if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

a) Proposed roads that will likely meet federal criteria for all-arterial or higher functional classification
b) Upgrade to arterial or higher functional classification
c) An added capacity project being constructed on new alignments as a bypass to a principal arterial/interstate
d) Addition of through traffic lanes of 1 mile or more on roads that are functionally classified as an arterial or higher as defined in the travel model

e) New interchanges on roads that are functionally classified as an arterial or higher, that represent new connections; and/or
f) Adding or extending freeway auxiliary/meandering lanes from one interchange to a point beyond the next interchange.

Regionally significant roads are identified as: interstate/toll roads, other urban freeways or expressways, rural principal arterials, and urban minor arterial roads or streets. As traffic conditions change in the future, the MPO’s in consultation with the interagency consultation group, will consider regional significant all future roadway facilities that carry an average of 11,000 vehicles per day for a 2 lane facility and 20,000 vehicles per day for a 4 lane or greater facility between logical termini.

Regionally Significant Transit Projects
Any fixed guideway transit service including light rail, commuter rail, or portions of bus rapid transit that involve exclusive right-of-way (including barrier separated HOV lanes) shall be considered regionally significant.

Other Projects
The regional significance of non-exempt projects not addressed in the above statements will be decided on a case-by-case basis through the interagency consultation process. The consultation will occur before taking the plan to TPC (either plan or TIP revision), and prior to the environmental determination.
Regionally Significant Projects include:

- Roadways that are federally functionally classified as interstate freeways, other freeways, or principal arterials
- Roadways and intermodal connectors included in the federally adopted National Highway System
- Roadways designated as SH or US routes
- Fixed guideway transit facilities
Interstate freeways, other freeways and expressways
Added State Highways (SH) and US Highways (US)
Added Intermodal Connectors (Ports, RR)
Added Community Connectors (5,000+ population)
Added Activity Center Linkages (Military Bases, Toyota, Malls, Colleges, Universities)
Added Route Completion Linkages
Outlier Roadways Proposed to not be Included
Verification of Regionally Significant Roadways to Activity Centers
Verification of Regionally Significant Roadways to Communities with 5,000+ Population
Verification of Regionally Significant Roadways to Park & Rides and Transit Centers
Next Steps

• The Air Quality Master Schedule work group has reviewed and provided input from January through July 2016
• Technical Advisory Committee review and input
  – January 8, 2016
  – May 6, 2016
  – June 3, 2016
  – June 23, 2016 (TAC work group meeting)
  – August 5, 2016
• Consultative partners will provide input into our proposed definition in early September
• Action is scheduled for September 2016
Upcoming items

- **August 22**: Regionally significant roadways are presented to the TPB; TxDOT/TTI presents “Transportation Conformity for Elected Officials”
- **August 31**: FHWA/EPA Air Quality Training at AACOG
- **September 1**: Statewide TWG (Mobile Source Emissions) meeting at AACOG
- **September 9**: Action by TAC on the regionally Significant Roadways definition; presentation by TxDOT/TTI on “Congestion Mitigation for Air Quality: Timing and Benefits”
- **September 12**: Transportation Conformity and State Implementation Plan presentations at the AIRCo Tech Meeting at AACOG
- **September 26**: Action by TPB on the regionally Significant Roadways definition; presentation by TxDOT/TTI on “Congestion Mitigation for Air Quality: Timing and Benefits”