

Interim Conformity Determination for Chattanooga Area PM_{2.5} Non-Attainment FACT SHEET

A plan sponsored by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Transportation Planning Organization.



Study Overview



Study Background

In January 2005, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated the Chattanooga region as a particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) non-attainment area. This designation means that currently the Chattanooga region exceeds the allowable amount of PM_{2.5} set by the EPA. Particulate matter air pollution refers to microscopic, invisible airborne particles made up of dust, soot, smoke, and liquid droplets. Particulate

matter can vary in size, but according to the EPA, particles less than 2.5 micrometers (PM_{2.5}) are believed to pose the greatest threat to human health.

Study Description

The PM_{2.5} non-attainment area includes Hamilton County in Tennessee, Catoosa and Walker Counties in Georgia and a portion of Jackson County, Alabama. A primary purpose of this study is to identify alternatives to decrease the amount of PM_{2.5} in the Chattanooga metropolitan area. In addition, this study will produce the first conformity determination report for the Chattanooga metropolitan area. A conformity determination report demonstrates that the total PM emissions expected to be produced in the Chattanooga metropolitan area are within the emission limits ("budgets") established by the state for air quality.

Furthermore, the report demonstrates that specific programs and policies that are designed to improve air quality are implemented in a timely fashion. Essential to the development of this report is the list of regionally-significant transportation projects proposed in the non-attainment area. When implemented, the transportation projects identified in the conformity determination report will not only improve mobility but also help the Chattanooga region achieve its air quality goals.

Study Time Frame

The study began in September 2005 and will be completed in April 2006.

Work Activities

The study will include the following work tasks:

1. Identify current transportation projects affecting *regional* air quality.
2. Organize transportation data from Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama.
3. Produce a model to accurately predict Chattanooga area emission amounts.
4. Evaluate model results for accuracy.
5. Prepare conformity determination report for agency and public review.

Study Contacts

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ICC Members

The Interagency Consultation Committee (ICC) is the coordinating body for this study. The ICC includes 18 federal, state, and local agencies representing highway, transit and air quality areas. ICC agencies are listed below:

- Alabama Department of Environment Management
- Catoosa County, GA
- Chattanooga, TN
- Chattanooga-Hamilton County/ North Georgia Transportation Planning Organization
- Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority
- Chattanooga Hamilton County Air Pollution Control Bureau
- Coosa Valley Regional Development Center
- Department of Transportation for Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Federal Highway Administration for Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee
- Federal Transit Administration
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- Georgia Regional Transportation Authority
- Hamilton County, TN
- Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation
- Walker County, GA