

Air & Noise

Air – Document Preparation

Air Assessment for Federal-Aid Projects
Air Assessment for State-Funded Projects
Additional Documentation
NEPA Documentation of Air Assessments

AIR ASSESSMENT FOR FEDERAL-AID PROJECTS

For all federal-aid highway projects, an Air Assessment will be prepared. The assessment documents that the project complies with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act, and the State Implementation Plan (SIP).

The assessment is meant to be understood by the public and will be prepared in a “reader-friendly” style. For the purposes of this assessment, the style involves framing section headings as questions where possible (e.g. “What criteria pollutants are studied?”). It also involves the frequent use of tables, graphs, and figures.

The assessment will contain the following content:

- > Executive Summary,
- > Introduction:
 - The proposed project,
 - The criteria pollutants,
- > Ozone (O₃),
- > Carbon Monoxide (CO),
- > Particulate Matter (PM)_{2.5},
- > Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSATs),
- > Construction effects on air quality, and
- > Conclusions

The assessment's appendices will include the following attachments, as needed:

- > Traffic diagrams,
- > Traffic volume inputs,
- > Documentation of Quantitative MSAT Analysis,

AIR ASSESSMENT FOR STATE-FUNDED PROJECTS

An Air Assessment will be prepared for all state-funded projects. The assessment documents if the project adversely or significantly impacts air quality according to guidance set forth by the Georgia Environmental Policy Act (GEPA). The primary difference between this assessment and that for federal-aid projects is that this assessment does not have a MSAT analysis.

As with the assessment for federal-aid projects, this assessment uses the “reader-friendly” style.

The assessment will contain the following sections:

- > Executive summary,
- > Introduction:
 - The proposed project,
 - The criteria pollutants studied,
- > O₃,
- > CO,
- > PM_{2.5},
- > Construction effects on air quality, and
- > Conclusions

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Additional documentation, through memorandums to agencies or memorandums to the project file may be needed. Generally, these may be needed to document minor changes to the project or other conditions. There may also be broad documentation that applies to the entire transportation program.

NEPA DOCUMENTATION OF AIR ASSESSMENTS

Any project that requires air modeling specific to the project's impact to air quality (e.g., a hot-spot analysis) has "involvement" with air quality. Whether there is involvement or no involvement, the NEPA document should summarize the results of the Air Assessment. This summary should include the conclusions regarding CO, O₃, PM_{2.5}, and MSATs.

PM_{2.5} analyses for projects located in nonattainment/maintenance areas should include the interagency coordination/concurrence documentation for the project (concurrence emails from FHWA & EPA), as well as the Letter of Determination for projects determined to require a qualitative or quantitative analysis as a result of the interagency coordination.

For Environmental Assessments (EA) and Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) with low or high potential MSAT effects, the discussion should include the basis for the determination with a description of the factors considered. The discussion regarding MSATs should also include a reference to the latest FHWA guidance regarding MSAT analyses in NEPA documents (including the date of the latest guidance). If a quantitative MSAT analysis is required, assumptions and methodology should be documented.

Additionally, the air section of the effects evaluation should refer the reader to the appropriate attachment or appendix for report coordination and correspondence related to the Air Assessment resources. The reference should include the dates the assessments or addendums were transmitted and, if applicable, the dates that FHWA or other agencies provided concurrence.

Guidebook Revision History

Revision Description	Relevant Sections	Revision Date
Initial Publication	All	5/22/2019
Revision Table Added	Last Page	9/14/2020
Removed references to CO analyses, updated text for PM _{2.5} and MSATs, and added GHGs	All	12/06/2024
Removed all discussion of GHGs due to the changes to the 2023 CEQ guidance	All	3/28/2025