

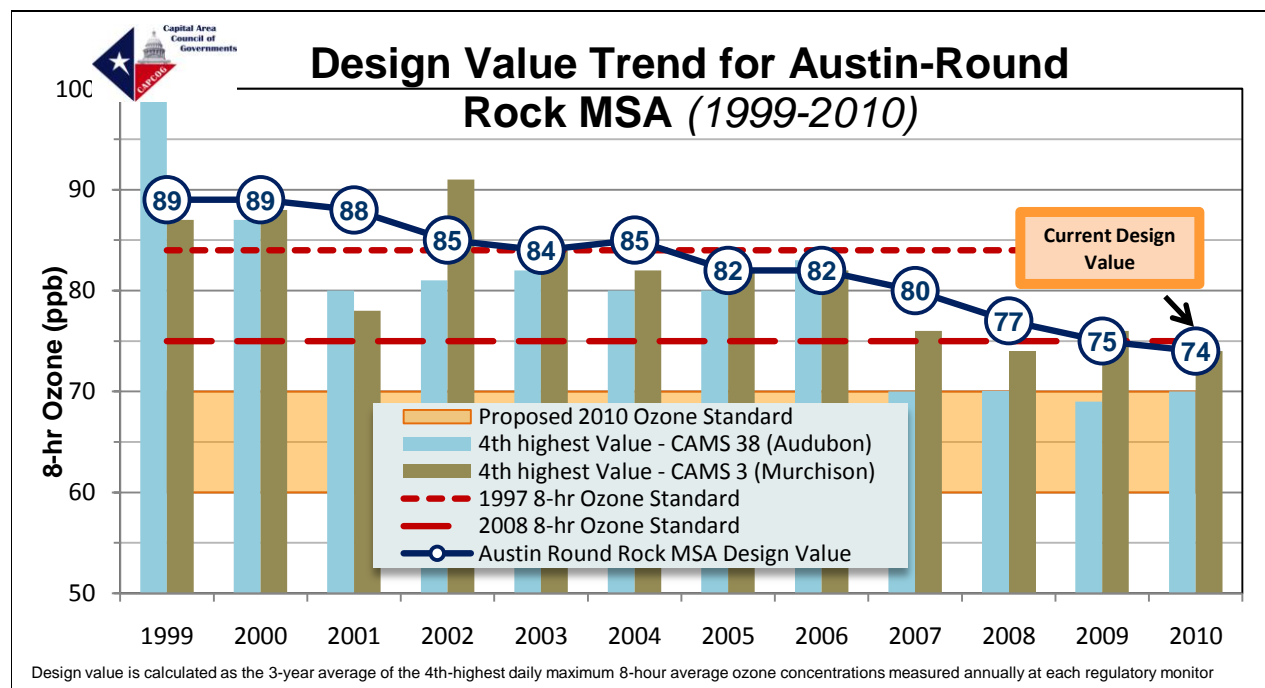
## CAPCOG Seeking Local Funding for Air Quality Program

**CAPCOG is seeking up to \$100,000 in local funding for air quality planning activities to help offset a proposed \$259,650 cut in annual state funding.** Without additional funding, CAPCOG's air quality program will need to be significantly scaled back. CAPCOG believes that local jurisdictions will benefit from providing funding for the program.

### Rider 8 Near-Nonattainment Area Grant - Austin/Round Rock MSA

**Voluntary, Locally-Driven Ozone Attainment Plans.** With the assistance provided by local air quality funding from the legislature through the Rider 8 Near-Nonattainment Area grant since 1999, the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos MSA has been able to attain and maintain EPA's ozone air quality standards. The area has attained the 1997 eight-hour ozone standard since 2005 and has attained the 2008 standard since 2009. The Rider 8 funding has enabled CAPCOG to provide the technical support that was necessary for local officials to develop voluntary plans to control local ozone levels, including the current 8-Hour Ozone Flex Plan (8-O3 Flex), the Early Action Compact State Implementation Plan (SIP) in 2004, and the 1-Hour Ozone Flex Plan in 2002. The voluntary initiatives implemented through the region's air quality plans have allowed the region to address regional ozone problems proactively with locally supported solutions, rather than wait to address them through the prescribed federal nonattainment process.

**Monitoring data is indication of success.** As shown in the figure below, since local plans have been implemented in conjunction with TCEQ and EPA, the Austin Area has seen a steady decrease in monitored ozone levels and has avoided being designated nonattainment of the 1997 federal ozone standard. These local plans have been crucial in helping the Austin area achieve a 17 percent reduction in ozone levels despite a 49 percent increase in the population.



**New EPA Air Quality Standards Coming Soon.** In January 2010, the EPA proposed new, more restrictive ozone standards that the Austin area is currently exceeding. EPA expects to finalize the primary standard in July 2011, and the Austin area will likely be designated a nonattainment area in 2012. If and when the area is designated a nonattainment area, the TCEQ will be required to develop a SIP for the area to attain and maintain the new standard. EPA is also taking action on greenhouse gases, with permitting on existing sources required starting later in 2011.

## **Funding Is Critical for Technical Support to Clean Air Coalition**

The technical support CAPCOG provides to TCEQ and the region includes operating six of the region's eight ozone monitors, developing and refining emissions inventories, and performing ozone modeling and data analysis. CAPCOG has been able to plan and coordinate the kind of modeling and data analysis that has enabled owners of large point sources in the area such as Austin Energy and Texas Lehigh to implement the most cost-effective methods of reducing their emissions. Staff has provided assessments of proposed State and EPA actions, including the new ozone standards, and prepared comments on behalf of the Clean Air Coalition (CAC) for submittal to the respective agencies.

In addition to funding the necessary technical support for SIP development, the Rider 8 grant has also provided an invaluable tool for the involvement of local jurisdictions in air quality planning. Regardless of any EPA nonattainment designation, the state has entered into an agreement with local governments in the Austin Area and EPA to continue implementing emission reductions through 2013 under the 8-Hour Ozone Flex Plan. Continued funding enables CAPCOG to provide the staff support to assist the CAC and to help the local jurisdictions fulfill their commitments under the Plan. Successful implementation of this plan will ensure continued voluntary emission reduction measures, which will in turn reduce the need for costly and burdensome regulations and will help ensure that the area attains the new ozone standards as quickly as possible. The quicker the area attains the standard, the less of a burden there will be on businesses and economic development, and the less impact on public health there will be from ozone levels. Without sufficient funding, the local jurisdictions will lose a valuable capability to be able to independently plan and carry out proactive air quality improvement strategies.

## **Proposed 50% Cut in Local Air Quality Program Funding**

If the Rider 8 funding is cut by 50% as proposed in both the Senate and the House State budget documents, CAPCOG's air quality program's two-year budget would be reduced from \$1,038,600 million to \$519,300 (\$259,650 annually). If this were to happen, CAPCOG would have to shut down all six monitors, would not be able to perform any local ozone impact modeling, would not be able to procure any contracted support for conducting air quality modeling or developing emissions estimates, and would not be able to fund the program as currently staffed for the entire biennium. Technical support activities for the 8-O3 Flex Program would be significantly curtailed about a year prior to the 8-O3 Flex Plan's termination on December 31, 2013. The likely results would be to reduce local involvement in the air quality planning process and increased reliance on TCEQ.

## **Potential Activities that Could be Funded by Local Governments**

Upon recommending a 50% cut in the Rider 8 funds, the LBB representative testifying in legislative hearings stated that air planning activities curtailed as a result of the Rider 8 cut could be done with local funds if local areas were interested and financially able to support such efforts. Local funding would allow certain planning activities to be under local control and at direction of local officials, rather than TCEQ or EPA. Its use would be subject to CAPCOG procurement policy and Executive Committee approval. The following are examples of the types of air quality technical support work CAPCOG could provide for a local jurisdiction with local funding, along with a general estimate for the cost of undertaking each type of work:

- Pollution control strategy and control measure analysis (\$35,000);
- Monitoring projects for ozone or other pollutants (\$50,000);
- Emissions estimation projects (\$40,000);
- Air quality modeling (\$40,000);
- Coordinate local stakeholder involvement in air quality planning activities (\$15,000);
- Analysis of local air quality implications of pending legislative and regulatory actions (\$10,000).