9. Coordination Best Practices

This section discusses the opportunities, objectives, and methods of conducting agency coordination in support of the airport air quality assessment process. Such coordination between the FAA, the reviewing agencies and other stakeholders will help foster a common understanding towards meeting the goals of the assessment and help to avoid unnecessary delays and setbacks. For the purposes of this discussion, three common methods for conducting this coordination are addressed: (i) the Scoping Process, (ii) the Air Quality Assessment Protocol, and (iii) the Coordination and Review Process.

9.1. Scoping Process

Under NEPA, "scoping" is an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed in an EIS and identifying the significant issues related to a project/action. Typically, the responsible FAA official (or representative) takes the lead in the scoping process, inviting the participation of affected federal, state and local agencies and any other interested persons. Although there is no standard approach to public scoping, it is also traditional that scoping facilitate public participation in the process. If appropriate, a scoping meeting(s) is/are held to collect this feedback from agencies and the public. Consultation with appropriate agencies having jurisdiction by regulation or special expertise is usually initiated at this point as well.

Scoping serves the additional purpose of identifying those environmental impact categories that do not require detailed analysis and for such things as setting the temporal/geographic boundaries for those that do require an assessment.

In the case of air quality, scoping provides an opportunity for reviewing agencies and the public to submit comments and provide suggestions on the overall scope of the assessment, including the analysis methods, the endpoints, and any other particular concerns or expectations among the respondents.

9.2. Air Quality Assessment Protocol

Another useful means of enhancing agency coordination is the development and application of an "Air Quality Assessment Protocol". The overall purpose of the protocol is to document the scope, establish the endpoints, and resolve any areas of uncertainty regarding the assessment prior to its undertaking. An example of the contents of such a protocol follows:

- *Project Description* - This section provides a general overview of the purpose and scope of the project/action, including the alternatives.
- *Regulatory Setting* - This section provides information pertaining to regulatory conditions in the project area. For example, information on attainment/nonattainment designations, SIPs, and applicable regulatory criteria and/or thresholds that will be applied to the results of the air quality assessment can be included.
- *Air Quality Assessment* - This section describes the overall approach, specific methodologies and models, data sources and assumptions, and other supporting information that will be used in conducting the air quality assessment.