

NCDOT Division Fourteen Project Solicitation and Ranking Process Prioritization 3.0



Introduction

The NCDOT Division Engineers are required by STI legislation to develop a local input methodology for all transportation projects (highway, bike and pedestrian, public transportation, aviation, rail and ferry) within their respective areas that may compete for state funding. In conjunction with our continuous, cooperative and comprehensive planning relationship with local Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs), NCDOT Division 14 has developed the following project solicitation process and local input methodology.

Applicability

The project solicitation process will apply to all projects submitted by the Division Engineer, and the local input methodology will apply to all projects (regional impact and division needs) to be ranked by the Division Engineer within their geographic boundaries (and adjacent boundaries if a given project spans more than one Division).

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Schedule Details

Project Solicitation:

Each transportation Division will solicit candidate projects for 30 days prior to the project submittal deadline. **The results of this process will be reviewed with each of the MPOs and RPOs in the Division, appropriate NCDOT Transit Division (all modes) staff, and local aviation, rail and public transit operators prior to submitting new candidate projects.** Project suggestions received will be shared and coordinated with the respective MPO and/or RPO in each Division and with appropriate NCDOT transit division staff to avoid duplication and ensure maximum number of project submittals per Division is not exceeded. The Division will then submit the selected project list using NCDOT's SPOT On!ine tool (web based system) for quantitative scoring no later than the project submittal deadline.

Project Ranking:

The Division 14 Engineer will evaluate the full list of new and previously evaluated projects for the Division between June and August 2014 using this methodology and assigning local input points in consultation with the MPOs and RPOs in the division, and appropriate NCDOT Transit Division (all modes) staff for submission to the Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation (SPOT) by August 29th, 2014.

Public Input Process

Project Solicitation:

The Division will announce a 30 day project solicitation period to all governments, MPOs, RPOs, NCDOT staff, local airport, rail and transit operators, and interested persons in the Division's geographic boundaries using methods approved by the NCDOT Communications Office. In addition, the Division will host public hearings at a central location within each Division during the 30 day project solicitation period. Information regarding the public hearing and specific methods for providing input (email, phone, mail, etc.) will be advertised to stakeholders using methods approved by the NCDOT Communications Office. Comments received via public hearings and other methods approved by the NCDOT Communications Office will be posted to the NCDOT website. **The results of the 30 day project solicitation period and the public input received will be reviewed by the Division Engineer in consultation with the MPOs and RPOs in the Division, appropriate NCDOT transit division staff, and local aviation, rail and transit operators.** Through this collaboration, the Division Engineer will determine the list of candidate projects to submit for technical evaluation, while avoiding duplicate project submissions and ensuring the maximum number of project submittals is not exceeded. The Division Engineer will be able to submit new

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transportation projects (across all modes) based upon the P3.0 Workgroup and Department's agreed upon allowances.

Project Ranking:

The Division Engineer will receive the quantitative scores for the projects eligible for local input points in May of 2014. The Division Engineer will be responsible for assigning local input points to regional impact and division needs projects for their area (statewide mobility projects will be evaluated based solely on their technical scores). The Division Engineer will publish his/her local input methodology which will be used as the basis to assign preliminary points to all regional impact and division needs projects within their division and/or adjacent divisions using methods approved by the NCDOT Communications Office. Each Division Engineer's office will then announce a 30 day comment period to solicit input on this information and the preliminary local input point assignments and provide specific methods for providing input (email, phone, mail, etc.) as approved by the NCDOT Communications Office. The 30 day comment period will vary by Division, and will take place during the 90 day window (June 2nd – August 29th, 2014) for assigning local input points. During this period, each Division will host public drop-in/workshop sessions at a central location within each Division prior to the final assignment of local input points by August 29, 2014. Advertisement soliciting input during the 30 day comment period and for the drop-in/workshop sessions will be made to the public and to MPOs, RPOs, NCDOT staff, local airport, rail and transit operators, and interested persons in the Division's geographic boundaries using methods approved by the NCDOT Communications Office.

The Division Engineer will review comments received in accordance with his/her local input methodology and in consultation with the MPOs and RPOs in the Division, appropriate NCDOT Transit Division (all modes) staff, and local aviation, rail and transit operators. **Through this evaluation and collaboration, the Division Engineer will determine the final local input point assignments per eligible regional impact and division needs project within their division and/or to projects in adjacent divisions to submit for final evaluation.** All final point assignments will be published using methods approved by the NCDOT Communications Office.

Ranking Process

Introduction:

The criteria outlined below will be used to create a ranking of projects in the regional impact and division needs categories that will be used by the Division Engineer in determining preliminary and final local input point assignments for projects within their division and/or to projects in adjacent divisions. **The Department's quantitative scores for projects and this ranking process will act as a guide and first step in determining a preliminary rank-ordered list of projects.**

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The second step is to apply the Division Methodology to all projects in the preliminary rank-ordered list of projects. This application may reorder the ranking of the projects. The third step is to apply qualitative points to specific projects according to the methodology outlined later.

Below is the standardized list of criteria used in developing a set of ranking criteria for Division 14. The combination of criteria selected for the regional impact and division needs ranking processes is most reflective of the needs and priorities for Division 14. For each criterion selected, a detailed description is provided (including any pertinent information regarding data sets to be used). In developing the list of criteria for Division 14, a minimum of four criteria were chosen from the standardized list and the weight for each criteria is such that the total possible points for a given project is equal to 100. The Division Engineer will publish their specific set of criteria using methods approved by the NCDOT Communications Office prior to/in conjunction with posting preliminary point assignments for projects within the Division and/or to projects in adjacent divisions.

Standard Criteria – Descriptions:

- **Safety Score:** a calculation based on the crash frequency and severity along sections of a particular roadway. The safety score is the score generated in the quantitative scoring process and is calculated in accordance with the SPOT calculation detailed in appendix 1 of this document.
- **Cost Effectiveness:** a calculation of the cost per vehicle to improve a road one mile. This calculation allows different types of roads to be compared based on how much it costs to improve the road per individual vehicle.
- **Freight Volume:** the number of trucks or equivalent vehicles that utilize the facility on a daily basis. Percentage of truck volume of average daily traffic converted to a number of trucks or equivalent.
- **Transportation Plan Consistency:** a yes or no question to determine if the proposed project is found in an existing adopted transportation plan for the area.
- **Corridor Continuity:** a measure of the project completing or continuing improvements on a defined transportation corridor.
- **Multimodal Accommodations:** a yes or no measure of the incorporation of pedestrian, bicycle or transit elements into a project.
- **Serves Activity Center(s):** a yes or no measure of the project serving a large employment center, trauma center, institution of higher learning, tourist center or other high traffic facility/site.
- **Shoulder Width:** a measure of the existing paved shoulder width versus the DOT design standard.
- **Lane Width:** a measure of the existing lane width versus the DOT design standard

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- **Airport Passenger Service:** a yes or no measure of the project materially improving an airport’s ability to increase passenger service capacity.
- **Transit Expansion:** a yes or no measure of the project expanding passenger service on existing routes or opening new routes for increased service.

Regional Impact Ranking:

Certain highway, aviation, ferry, transit, and rail projects are scored at the regional impact level, as well as any projects that cascade into the regional impact category from the statewide mobility category.

Below is a standard ranking of criteria eligible for use by the Division 14 Engineer in evaluating projects in the regional impact category. The resulting scores and rank order will be used by the Division Engineer in developing preliminary and final local input point assignments for projects within their division and/or to projects in adjacent divisions. The Department’s quantitative scores for projects and this ranking process will act as a guide and first step in determining a preliminary rank-ordered list of projects. The Division Engineer will use the preliminary rank-ordered list of projects along with local knowledge as well as information gathered through collaboration and consultation with MPOs, RPOs, local airport, rail and transit operators and input from other interested stakeholders to determine the actual assignment of qualitative points.

Regional Impact Standard Ranking – Criteria and Weights				
<i>(Note: Choose minimum of four criteria and determine percent weights; total points for any given project cannot exceed 100)</i>				
Criteria	0 Points	10 Points	15 Points	20 Points
Safety Score 20 (% weight)	SPOT safety points less than 30	SPOT safety points between 31-50	SPOT safety points between 51-65	SPOT safety points greater than 66
Criteria	0 Points	2 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Cost Effectiveness 5 (% weight)	Cost per Veh./equivalent greater than \$1500 per mile	Cost per Veh./equivalent between \$1000-\$1500 per mile	Cost per Veh./equivalent between \$500-\$999 per mile	Cost per Veh./equivalent less than \$499 per Mile
Criteria	0 Points	5 Points	10 Points	
Freight Volume 10 (% weight)	Less than 500 trucks/ equivalent per day	Between 500 - 1000 trucks/ equivalent per day	More than 1000 trucks/ equivalent per day	
Criteria	0 Points	15 Points		
Transportation Plan Consistency 15 (% weight)	Project is not in CTP of TP	Project is in CTP or TP		

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Criteria	0 Points	15 Points		
Corridor Continuity 15 (% weight)	Project does not complete of continue corridor improvement	Project does continue corridor improvement		
Criteria	0 Points	10 Points	15 Points	
Serves Activity Center 15 (% weight)	Serves employment centers of fewer than 500 employees, trauma centers, institutions of higher learning, or tourist centers	Project adds new capacity to serve employment centers of 500 to 1500 employees, trauma centers, institutions of higher learning or tourist centers	Project adds significant new capacity to serve employee centers with more than 1500 employees, trauma centers, institutions of higher learning or tourist centers	
Criteria	0 Points	5 Points	10 Points	
Shoulder Width 10 (% weight)	Project does not widen shoulder	Project widens shoulder to 50%> of DOT standard	Project widens shoulder to DOT standard	
Criteria	0 Points	10 Points		
Lane Width 10 (% weight)	Project does not increase lane width	Project widens lane width to DOT standard		

Division Needs Ranking:

Certain highway, aviation, bicycle and pedestrian, ferry, transit, and rail projects are scored at the division needs level, as well as any projects that cascade into the division needs category from the regional impact category.

Below is a standard ranking of criteria eligible for use by the Division 14 Engineer in evaluating projects in the division needs category. The resulting scores and rank order will be used by the Division Engineer in developing preliminary and final local input point assignments for projects within their division and/or to projects in adjacent divisions. The Department's quantitative scores for projects and this ranking process will act as a guide and first step in determining a preliminary rank-ordered list of projects. Each Division Engineer will use the preliminary rank-ordered list of projects along with local knowledge as well as information gathered through collaboration and consultation with MPOs, RPOs, local airport, rail and transit operators and input from other interested stakeholders to determine the actual assignment of qualitative points.

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Division Needs Standard Ranking – Criteria and Weights					
<i>(Note: Choose minimum of four criteria and determine percent weights; total points for any given project cannot exceed 100)</i>					
Criteria	0 Points	4 Points	8 Points	12 Points	15 Points
Safety Score 15 (% weight)	Spot safety points less than 30	Spot safety points between 31 and 50	Spot safety points between 51 and 65	Spot safety points between 66 and 80	Spot safety points greater than 80
Criteria	0 Points	4 Points	6 Points	8 Points	10 Points
Cost-Effectiveness 10 (% weight)	Cost per daily user greater than \$4,000 per user per unit per mile	Cost per daily user between \$2,000-\$4,000 per user per unit per mile	Cost per daily user between \$1,500-\$1,999 per user per unit per mile	Cost per daily user between \$1,000-\$1,499 per user per unit per mile	Cost per daily user less than \$999 per user per unit per mile
Criteria	0 Points	15 Points			
Transportation Plan Consistency 15 (% weight)	Project is not in adopted land use, transportation, transit or other plan	Project is in an adopted land use, transportation, transit or other plan			
Criteria	0 Points	10 Points			
Multimodal Accommodations 10 (% weight)	Project does not include bike/ped/transit facilities	Project includes bike/ped/transit facilities			
Criteria	0 Points	10 Points	15 Points		
Serves Activity Center 15 (% weight)	Serves employment centers of fewer than 500 employees, trauma centers, institutions of higher learning, or tourist centers	Project adds new capacity to serve employment centers of 500 to 1500 employees, trauma centers, institutions of higher learning or tourist centers	Project adds significant new capacity to serve employee centers with more than 1500 employees, trauma centers, institutions of higher learning or tourist centers		

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Criteria	0 Points	5 Points	10 Points		
Shoulder Width 10 (% weight)	Project does not widen shoulder	Project widens shoulder to 50%> of DOT standard	Project widens shoulder to DOT standard		
Criteria	0 Points	10 Points			
Lane Width 10 (% weight)	Project does not increase lane width	Project widens lane width to DOT standard			
Criteria	0 Points	5 Points			
Airport Passenger Service 5 (% weight)	Project does not increase capacity	Project increases capacity			
Criteria	0 Points	5 Points			
Airport Safety 5(% weight)	Does not improve airport safety	Does improve airport safety			
Criteria	0 Points	5 Points			
Transit Expansion 5(% weight)	No service expansion	Expands service			

The result of the application of the ranking methodology will be a list of projects in priority order. The next step is to assign the Division’s qualitative points to specific projects. Division 14 has 1,700 points to allocate among Regional projects and 1,700 points to allocate among Division projects.

The Division’s 14 will assign its Regional points among modes and project types according to the following target allocation:

All of Division 14’s 1,700 “Regional Needs” points shall be awarded to projects either partly or fully within the Division 14 area. It is noted that Division 13 has 2,000 “Regional Needs” points and it is expected they will all be for Division 13 projects. Division 14 will coordinate with Division 13 to ensure both Divisions do not attempt to exceed the 100 point per project limit (for projects within both Divisions).

Because Division 14 does not have any eligible Aviation, Transit, or Bike/Ped projects in the Regional Needs Category, all of its Regional points will be for Highway Mode Projects.

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Any project which will be funded in the “Statewide Needs” category before cascading into the “Regional Needs” category will not receive Regional points since the Regional points are not needed for funding of that project.

To achieve Regional equity across Division 14, the highest ranking “Regional Needs” project in each county shall be awarded 100 points. There are 10 counties within Division 14. Therefore, this equals 1,000 Regional points. After this, the next highest ranking “Regional Needs” project in each District shall be awarded 100 points. There are three Districts within Division 14. Therefore, this equals 300 Regional points.

After the above point distribution, the two ranked projects that did not receive Regional points from the above process shall then be awarded 100 points each.

In recognition of significant Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) funding available to complete the ADHS Network and the historical need to complete this System in the Appalachian Region, Division 14 will reserve 200 Regional points to consider awarding to projects that accomplish completion of parts of the ADHS network.

Summary of Regional Point distribution:

- 1,000 points to the remaining highest ranked “Regional Needs” project in each of the 10 counties within Division 14.
- 300 points to the remaining highest ranked “Regional Needs” project in each of Division 14’s three Districts.
- 200 points to the highest ranking remaining “Regional Needs” projects in the Division.
- 200 points to ADHS eligible projects

Lack of Local Government Support for a project:

Division 14 will not award Regional points to any projects which the affected local governments do not support. This lack of support must be documented by a resolution from the current standing governing board of the affected local governments that do not want and/or support the project.

The Division’s 14 will assign its Division points among modes and project types according to the following target allocation:

Any project which will be funded in the “Statewide Needs” category before cascading into the “Division Needs” category will not receive Division points since the Division points are not needed for funding of that project.

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Modal Split for Division points:

- 100 points for Aviation projects - 25 points each will be assigned to the four highest ranking Aviation projects.
- 100 points for Transit projects - 25 points each will be assigned to the four highest ranking Transit projects.
- 200 points for Bike/Ped projects - 25 points each will be assigned to the eight highest ranking Bike/Ped projects.
- 1,300 points for Highway projects – As noted above 200 points will be reserved for ADHS eligible projects. After this, 100 points each will be assigned to the highest ranking Highway project in each county. The remaining 100 points will be designated for the highest ranking “Division Needs” project in the Division.

In recognition of significant Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) funding available to complete the ADHS Network and the historical need to complete this System in the Appalachian Region, Division 14 will reserve 200 Division points to consider awarding to projects that accomplish completion of parts of the ADHS network.

Summary of Division Point distribution:

- 100 points for Aviation projects - 25 points each will be assigned to the four highest ranking Aviation projects.
- 100 points for Transit projects - 25 points each will be assigned to the four highest ranking Transit projects.
- 200 points for Bike/Ped projects - 25 points each will be assigned to the eight highest ranking Bike/Ped projects.
- 1,100 points for Highway projects – 100 points each will be assigned to the highest ranking Highway project in each county. The remaining 100 points will be designated for the highest ranking “Division Needs” project in the Division.
- 200 points to ADHS eligible projects

Lack of Local Government Support for a project:

Division 14 will not award Division points to any projects which the affected local governments do not support. This lack of support must be documented by a resolution from the current standing governing board of the affected local governments that do not want and/or support the project.

The specific reasoning behind the allocation of qualitative points will be documented by Division 14 and posted to NCDOT’s website.

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During the period that the draft point assignment is released for public comment, Division 14 may make further adjustments to the qualitative point assignment recommendation based on the above factors as well as:

- coordination with planning organizations within the Division on the assignment of points; and
- public input and support as evidenced through public comments submitted to NCDOT, Division 14's public workshop, public involvement efforts of local governments, and local referenda.

Approval of Ranking Points

Division 14 will release the draft Project Priority Ranking and application of qualitative points for public comments and hold a public hearing within the 90 day public comment period between June and August 2014. After review and public comment, Division 14 will finalize the application of qualitative points based upon:

- the number of eligible projects within the Division within each funding mode /project type/category;
- the likelihood of receiving funding through STI considering the amount of funding available within each Division or Region, historical funding levels for the mode, and the normalization limitations that have been adopted;
- the effect that receiving funding for a project may have on the likelihood of other projects being funded in the Division or Region considering the limitations set by the STI legislation;
- geographic and jurisdictional balance;
- coordination with planning organizations within the on the assignment of points;
- public input and support as evidenced through public comments submitted to NCDOT, Division 14's public hearing, public involvement efforts of local governments, and local referenda;
- Division Engineer's knowledge of the transportation needs of their Division.

If the Division varies from the recommended allocation of qualitative points, we will document the rationale and will post on NCDOT's website.

STI will allow us to use our existing resources more efficiently and effectively and help us move forward with important projects that will enhance mobility and revitalize communities throughout the state. The new process encourages us to think from a statewide and regional perspective while also providing flexibility to address local needs.

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With this in mind, it is important now more than ever to coordinate with all of the key stakeholders in Division 14. The following is a list of our key stakeholders:

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)/ Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs):

French Broad River MPO
Isothermal RPO
Land of Sky RPO
Southwestern RPO

Public Airports

Macon County Airport Jackson County Airport Western Carolina Regional Airport

Public Transit Operators

Cherokee County Transit Clay County Transportation
Graham County Mountain Projects, Inc.
Western Carolina Community Action Jackson County Transit
Macon County Transit Services Polk County Transportation Authority
Swain County Focal Point on Aging, Inc. Transylvania County Transit

County Government

Cherokee County Clay County Graham County
Haywood County Henderson County Jackson County
Macon County Polk County Swain County
Transylvania County

Municipal Government

Andrews	Murphy	Hayesville
Robbinsville	Lake Santeetlah	Fontana
Waynesville	Canton	Maggie Valley
Hendersonville	Laurel Park	Flat Rock
Fletcher	Mills River	Sylva
Dillsboro	Forest Hills	Webster
Franklin	Highlands	Columbus
Tryon	Saluda	Bryson City
Brevard	Rosman	

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Tribal Government

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

NCDOT Divisions

Transportation Division 13

Rail Division

Public Transportation Division

Bicycle and Pedestrian Division

Division of Aviation

Transportation Planning Branch

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