

High Country RPO

HIGH COUNTRY RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION (RPO) 2014 STIP PROJECT SOLICITATION AND RANKING PROCESS

Introduction

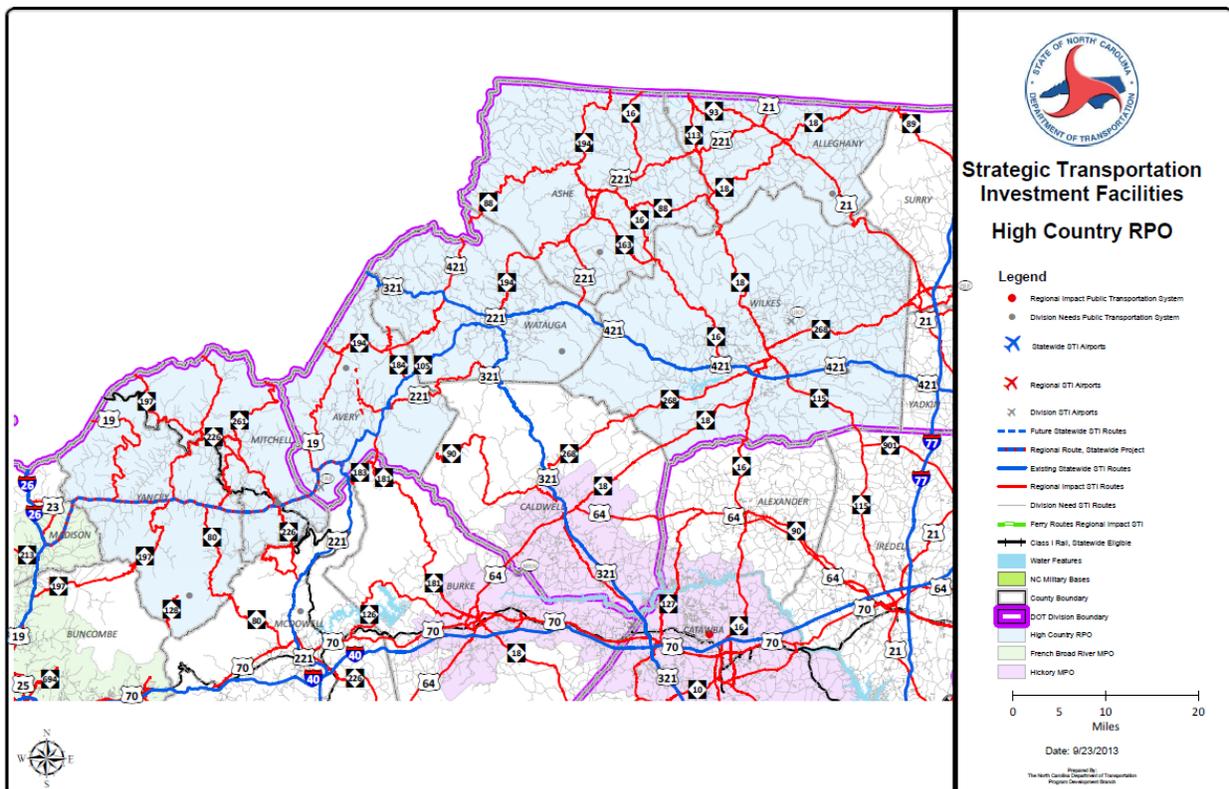
The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and North Carolina General Assembly have required that all rural planning organizations develop a project solicitation and ranking process to evaluate projects for the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for highway, bicycle & pedestrian, public transportation, aviation, and rail modes of transportation. This process has been approved by the NCDOT to ensure compliance with the legislative intent of the mandate.

The methodology for ranking projects will include the following steps:

1. Submittal of new projects to NCDOT
2. Solicitation of transportation project priorities from the counties in the High Country RPO region
3. Ranking of solicited projects received from High Country RPO counties for the development of a priority needs list
4. Assignment of 1400 points to top projects on the priority needs list

Applicability

This process would apply to all projects ranked by the High Country RPO in Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey counties that fall in the regional and division levels as defined in the 2013 Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) legislation and depicted in the map below.



Statewide mobility projects will be 100% quantitative data driven by NCDOT with no local input from the RPO. Regional projects will be 70% quantitative data driven by NCDOT with 30% local input (15% NCDOT Division 11 or 13 and 15% RPO). Division level projects will be 50% quantitative data driven by NCDOT with 50% local input (25% NCDOT Division 11 or 13 and 25% RPO). Other factors like local government priorities will also be considered. RPO scores for all modes are due to SPOT by July 31, 2014.

New Project Solicitation

High Country RPO staff will request new projects from the seven High Country Counties and the Town of Boone, and submit them to the SPOT office for inclusion in the P3.0 Project list. RPO staff will also request Counties to identify projects to be removed from the P3.0 Project list.

RPO Steps	Schedule
Staff to solicit new transportation projects from County Managers (highway, bicycle & pedestrian, public transportation, aviation, and rail modes)	October 10, 2013 – November 8, 2013
New projects scheduled for RTCC consideration and recommendation of approval to RTAC	November 20, 2013
New projects scheduled for consideration and recommendation of approval to RTAC	December 18, 2013
RPO staff submittal of approved RTCC/RTAC new projects to NCDOT by 2/24/13 for project evaluation and scoring	February 24, 2014

Public Input Process

Public input for the TIP prioritization process shall be in accordance with the High Country RPO Public Participation Plan. The scoring and ranking methodology will be shared with the public through press releases and posting on the High Country RPO website at <http://www.regiond.org/TRANSPORT.html> and will consider any public input into the ranking. The RPO will issue a press release regarding the adoption of the Priority Needs list and provide for public comment at applicable RTCC and RTAC meetings. The prioritization of projects from the Priority Needs list will be accomplished at applicable RTCC and RTAC meetings and will include a public hearing component. The results of prioritizing the Priority Needs list and associated public comments received will be posted on the High Country RPO website at <http://www.regiond.org/TRANSPORT.html>. In addition, any comments received during a public hearing held by the High Country RPO’s RTCC or RTAC will be included in the meeting minutes and included as appendices in formal documents for which they were made. The final assignment of points by the RPO will also be available via the High Country RPO’s website.

Solicitation of Projects for Ranking

High Country RPO staff will request 30 projects from the seven High Country counties and the Town of Boone to be ranked. The number of projects per county is based on population, area, and primary road mileage. The number of projects per county (and Town of Boone) is:

Alleghany – 3; Ashe – 5; Avery – 3; Mitchell – 3; Watauga – 4; Wilkes – 7; Yancey – 4; Town of Boone - 1

Proposed Scoring Methodology

Projects submitted will be evaluated by the criteria and scoring as detailed in the **High Country RPO 2014 Project Prioritization Criteria Definitions and Scoring** system identified on pages 4 - 7. The resulting project scores and ranks will be adopted by the RPO as the High Country RPO Priority Needs List and will serve as the basis for assignment of points to transportation projects which include all modes of transportation.

Local Point Assignment Methodologies

The Priority Needs List will guide in the assignment of points. After projects are prioritized, the top 14 projects receive 100 points each. The top 14 projects in the regional tier receive 100 points and the top 14 projects in the division tier will receive 100 points. If a project is not funded at the State level it will shift down to the Regional level for RPO scoring and ranking.

Regional Level Projects: Eligible Regional needs routes in the High Country RPO include parts of US 19E, US 21, US 221, and US 421 not otherwise eligible at the statewide level. In addition, all NC routes (NC 197, NC 194, NC 16, NC 18 ...). The Class I railroad in Mitchell County is also an eligible regional rail line.

Division Level Projects: Eligible Division needs routes in the High Country RPO include all SR routes, all other modes of transportation (bicycle/pedestrian, remaining rail, airport, and transit projects).

Schedule

RPO Steps	Schedule
The High Country RPO staff to submit draft methodology for ranking and scoring of projects to NCDOT for review and approval by 2/17/13	February 17, 2014
Draft methodology available for public comment through press releases and the posting of the document on the High Country RPO website at http://www.regiond.org/TRANSPORT.html	February 17, 2014 – March 17, 2014
Consideration and approval of methodology by the RTCC & RTAC on 3/19/14	March 19, 2014
RPO staff to solicit projects for a priority needs list from local governments for ranking and scoring	March 19, 2014 – May 1, 2014
The priority needs list and associated point allocation will be available for public comment through press releases and the posting of the document on the High Country RPO website at http://www.regiond.org/TRANSPORT.html	May 1, 2014 – May 19, 2014
Consideration and approval of priority needs list and point allocation at 6/18/14 RPO meetings	June 18, 2014
RPO staff to enter the RPO's approved data into NCDOT's online project submittal system for consideration and inclusion into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)	June 18, 2014 – July 31, 2014
All public comments received and all final point assignments including any justification for point assignment which deviates from this local methodology will be placed on the High Country RPO website at http://www.regiond.org/TRANSPORT.html by the end of July 2014	July 31, 2014

HIGH COUNTRY RPO

2014

Project Prioritization Criteria Definitions and Scoring

Highway

Volume to Capacity

Current Average Daily Traffic (ADT) count as ratio to road's capacity - based on most recent ADT rates and road capacity figures available from NCDOT

1.5 <=	15 points
1.0 - 1.49	10 points
.5 - .99	5 points
<.5	0 points

Crash Incidence

Measure of total crashes from NCDOT's 2006-2010 crash data.

150 +	15 points
100 – 149	12 points
50 – 99	9 points
25 – 49	6 points
0 – 24	3 points

Upgrade Existing Facility

Improves currently deficient roadway to meet minimum NCDOT standards

Yes	15 points
No	0 points

CTP or Thoroughfare Plan Consistency

The project is identified in an adopted Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) or Thoroughfare Plan

Yes	10 points
No	0 points

Project Status

The project is in one or more of the following stages of development: Funded in TIP, Concurrence on Project Purpose and Need, Final Environmental Documents completed.

None	0 points
Funded (TIP)	3 points
Purpose/Need	8 points
Env. Documents	10 points

Connectivity

Project is part of larger system improvement – project is a coordinated phase of a proposed/scheduled improvement

Project completes final portion of phased facility improvement	5 points
Project connects to another phase of scheduled facility improvement	3 points
Project is initial phase of a scheduled facility improvement	2 points
Independent project	0 points

Access to Community Facilities

(school/hospital/emergency care/fire dept. /police dept. /employment destinations (more than 100 employees)) - Project connects to educational, health care, emergency service, or employment facilities

Direct access	5 points (driveway connects to project)
Indirect access	3 points (within 1 mile)
No access	0 points (greater than 1 mile)

Truck Traffic

Average daily number of large freight movers (tractor trailers, etc) on a road.

0-200	1 point
201-400	2 points
401-800	3points
801-1000	4 points
1001 +	5 points

Local Priority Project

Local priority to be determined as follows: 1) the number of projects to be submitted per county will be determined through a system that considers NCDOT's 2012 Primary Road Mileage data, 2012 US Census population data, and county square mileage data. 2) County projects selected for consideration to be chosen from NCDOT's Existing Projects List and the most recently approved New Projects List by the RTCC and RTAC.

First priority	20 points
Second priority	15 points
Third priority	10 points
Fourth priority	5 points
Fifth priority	0 points

Bicycle and Pedestrian

Access

Project provides access to school, medical center, shopping center, residential development, or major employment center (100+ employees)

Directs access	15 points
Indirect access (within 0.25 mile)	10 points
Greater than 0.25 mile	0 points

Connectivity

Project provides connection to existing bike or pedestrian facility

- Yes 15 points
- No 0 points

Safety

Project attempts to improve safety (score all that apply)

- 1 or more bicycle or pedestrian crashes along corridor during last 5 years 10 points
- Project is separated from roadway by at least 5 feet 10 points
- Posted speed limit on roadway is greater than 35 mph 10 points

Plan Consistency

Project is identified in an adopted CTP, bicycle, pedestrian, or greenway plan

- Yes 20 points
- No 0 points

Local Priority Project

Local priority to be determined as follows: 1) the number of projects to be submitted per county will be determined through a system that considers NCDOT’s 2012 Primary Road Mileage data, 2012 US Census population data, and county square mileage data. 2) County projects selected for consideration to be chosen from NCDOT’s Existing Projects List and the most recently approved New Projects List by the RTCC and RTAC.

- First priority 20 points
- Second priority 15 points
- Third priority 10 points
- Fourth priority 5 points
- Fifth priority 0 points

Aviation

Aviation projects will be scored as follows:

The NCDOT’s Division of Aviation’s raw score (100 point scale) X .8 + Local Priority Project score.

Local Priority Project

Local priority to be determined as follows: 1) the number of projects to be submitted per county will be determined through a system that considers NCDOT’s 2012 Primary Road Mileage data, 2012 US Census population data, and county square mileage data. 2) County projects selected for consideration to be chosen from NCDOT’s Existing Projects List and the most recently approved New Projects List by the RTCC and RTAC.

- First priority 20 points
- Second priority 15 points
- Third priority 10 points

Fourth priority	5 points
Fifth priority	0 points

Transit

Public Transit projects will be scored as follows:

The NCDOT's Division of Public Transit's raw score (100 point scale) X .8 + Local Priority Project score

Local Priority Project

Local priority to be determined as follows: 1) the number of projects to be submitted per county will be determined through a system that considers NCDOT's 2012 Primary Road Mileage data, 2012 US Census population data, and county square mileage data. 2) County projects selected for consideration to be chosen from NCDOT's Existing Projects List and the most recently approved New Projects List by the RTCC and RTAC.

First priority	20 points
Second priority	15 points
Third priority	10 points
Fourth priority	5 points
Fifth priority	0 points

RURAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RTAC) FLEXABILITY

The methodology shall serve as a guide for the RTAC to assign points to projects located within the High Country RPO planning jurisdiction and the RTAC will have the flexibility to assign points as the committee desires. However, deviation from the methodology shall require justification/rationale to be made during a public meeting of the RTAC as advertised.