

Isothermal RPO

Isothermal Rural Planning Organization Prioritization 3.0 Project Solicitation, Local Point Assignment, and Ranking Process

Introduction: The North Carolina legislature and NC Department of Transportation require all rural and metropolitan planning organizations (RPOs and MPOs) to develop a local ranking process for projects across all modes of transportation (highway, bicycle/pedestrian, public transit, aviation, rail, and ferry). The following process will need to be approved by the NCDOT's Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation (SPOT), be made available to the public for their comment and finally, adopted by Isothermal RPO's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), to ensure compliance with the legislative mandate.

Applicability: This process applies to all projects ranked by Isothermal RPO in McDowell, Polk or Rutherford counties that are ranked as "Regional" or "Division" funding level projects. Funding levels are as defined in the 2013 Strategic Transportation Investments law.

SCHEDULE

PHASE I: Develop STIP Methodology/Submit New Candidate Projects to SPOT 3.0

- Sub-Committee on draft scoring methodology January 8, 2014
- Distribute draft methodology to TAC/TCC January 14, 2014
- Submit draft scoring methodology to NCDOT for review January 17, 2014
- Period of Public Comment January 25-February 26
- Submit any new highway, and/or bike and ped. projects to SPOT 3.0 By February 17, 2014
- TAC approves scoring methodology February 26, 2014

PHASE II: Assign Points & Final Rankings

- NCDOT scores released May 1, 2014
- TAC Approval of draft priority rankings and scoring May 28, 2014
- Public information open house/Period of Public Comment Early June 2014
- TAC approves final ranking July 2014
- Submit scored projects to NCDOT July 31, 2014

Project Solicitation: Isothermal RPO has solicited candidate projects from local government entities and departments (counties, towns, transit departments, airports, etc.) since Fall 2013. The RPO Coordinator has also made herself available for direct receipt of proposed projects from all local government entities and departments.

The results of the project solicitation were reviewed by the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) at their December 4 meeting. The TAC then endorsed this project list for submittal to the NCDOT on December 17. Since the new project submissions did not exceed the allowed 11 new highway projects or the maximum of twenty (20) bicycle/pedestrian projects, the TAC stated that the RPO Director could accept additional projects for submission on a first come first served basis until January 17, 2014.

Local Point Assignment Methodologies: This process and the point assignment methodology described herein will be presented to the TAC for their approval at the February 26 meeting. Before that meeting, a sub-committee of IRPO will have developed a draft methodology. This draft methodology will be then be

sent to the SPOT office for their comment. The draft methodology will be made available for public comment. The comment period will be for a minimum of 30 days. The final, approved methodology will be sent to the SPOT office for their final approval no later than May 1, 2014.

Project Ranking: The TCC and TAC will evaluate the full list of new and previously-evaluated projects for the three counties from March to May 2014. Final approval, point assignment, and submission to the SPOT office will occur by July 31, 2014.

PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Local Methodology: On January 21, 2014, the RPO will release the draft methodology for a 30-day public comment period. This 30-day period will be advertised on the RPO website and via local media, and the methodology will be available on the RPO website, www.regionc.org. The process will be conducted in accordance with the RPO's Public Involvement Plan, which was updated in December 2013. The results of the public comment period will be presented to the TCC and TAC at their February 2014 meeting, during which the public will also be permitted to submit comments. All public comment will be documented and reasonable edits to the methodology may be made prior to final approval by the TAC and submission to the Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation.

Project Ranking: The RPO will present the recommended local points assignments and total scores of all projects to the TCC and TAC at their May 2014 meetings. Upon approval of the TAC, the RPO will release the recommended projects and points assignments for a 30-day public comment period. This 30-day period will be advertised on the RPO website and via local media, and all relevant documents will be available on the RPO website. The process will be conducted in accordance with the RPO's Public Involvement Plan. The results of the public comment period will be presented to the TCC and TAC at their July 2014 meeting, during which the public will also be permitted to submit comments. All public comment will be documented. In July 2014, the TAC will be asked to approve the project list and final points assignment after which the list and assignment will be available on the RPO website, www.regionc.org. All public comments received and all final point assignments and any justification/rationale for points assignments which deviates from this Local Methodology will be placed on the RPO website, www.regionc.org.

Statewide Projects: Entirely determined by quantitative score. For IRPO, the types of projects that are Statewide category are highway and rail. The Statewide routes in IRPO are US 221, north of US 74 in Rutherford County; US 74; I-26 and I-40. Any project that scores well enough will be removed from the process before IRPO assigns local input points. All other routes will be included in the Regional level process.

Regional Level Projects: US 70, US 64, US 176, US 221 south of US 74, US 221, US 221 Business, all NC routes, and multicounty passenger rail service are evaluated on the Regional Level.

Division Level Projects: Projects involving SR routes, bicycle and pedestrian transportation, transit, and airports are evaluated at the Division Level.

RANKING PROCESS

Regional Level Projects (1300 points maximum, 100 points maximum per project)

Criteria	0 points	5 points	10 points	15 points	20 points
Existing Congestion	Volume to capacity less than 0.25	Volume to capacity b/w 0.25 and 0.5	Volume to capacity b/w 0.5 and 0.75	Volume to capacity b/w 0.75 and 1.0	Volume to capacity over 1.0
	Ratio of how much traffic is on a road versus the maximum traffic that can be on a road and provide an acceptable level of service.				
Crash Frequency	Less than 5 crashes	6 to 9 crashes	10 to 19 crashes	20 to 39 crashes	40 or more crashes
	Number of automobile crashes over the most recently tabulated 5-year period.				
Transportation Plan Consistency	Project is not in STIP, nor in CTP or other locally adopted plan				Project is in STIP, or in CTP or other locally adopted plan
	Is the proposed project part of an existing, adopted transportation plan?				
Destination Served	No direct access to major destination		Direct access to ≥50 employee business, or ≥ 5,000 annual user recreation		Direct access to school, hospital, ≥100 employee business, or ≥ 10,000 annual user recreation
	Does the project connect directly to a critical educational, health care, employment, or recreation/entertainment destination?				
Freight Volume	Fewer than 100 trucks per day	100 to 499 trucks per day	500 or more trucks per day		
	Average daily number of large freight movers (tractor trailers, etc) on a road.				
Multimodal Accommodations	Project does not include bike/ped facilities or connections		Project includes bike/ped facilities or connections		
	Whether the project includes facilities such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, etc, or a connection to these type facilities.				

Division Level Projects(1300 points maximum, 100 points per project)

Criteria	0 points	10 points	15 points	30 points
Existing Deficiency	Existing facility/service available		Existing facility/service available, but contains gap with lower level of service / intermittent service	No existing facility/service available or will provide additional service or alternative capacity to an existing over capacity facility or service
	Does the project address an existing gap in the transportation system?			
Transportation Plan Consistency	Project is not in STIP, nor in CTP, LCP, or other locally adopted plan			Project is in STIP, or in CTP, LCP, or other locally adopted plan
	Is the proposed project part of an existing, adopted transportation plan?			
Destination Served	No direct access to major destination		Direct access to ≥50 employee business, or ≥ 5,000 annual user recreation	Direct access to school, hospital, ≥100 employee business, or ≥ 10,000 annual user recreation
	Does the project facilitate direct connection to a critical educational, health care, employment, or recreation/entertainment destination?			
Multimodal Accommodations	Project does not incorporate or connect to facilities of another mode	Project incorporates or connects to facilities of another mode		
	Whether the project incorporates other modes of transportation (e.g., sidewalk along a road, bike lane extending to a transit facility, etc).			

Ranked List Development:

IRPO staff will use the following process to create a pool of 25 projects, or a Regional Pool List, for the Regional level. The SPOT quantitative score will represent 50% and the score from ranking process above will represent 50%. The 25 projects with the highest score will be added to the Regional Pool list. Next, IRPO will create the draft Regional Ranked Priority list. The top three projects in each county from the Regional Pool list will be initially assigned 100 points. Three more projects will come from the next highest ranked projects. Those projects will also be assigned 100 points each for a total of 1200 points.

The last 100 points will be available for donation to another RPO/MPO for projects that IRPO is interested in supporting. If not assigned at the initial local input points meeting, they will used for the next highest ranking project for a total of 1300 points.

Only projects that originate at the Statewide or Regional Level are eligible for scoring and local points allocation under this methodology.

The same process will be used for the Division level with the exception that one of the twelve ranked projects on the draft Division Ranked Priority list must be non-highway mode, unless no non-highway mode projects made the Division Pool List.

Only projects that originate at the Statewide, Regional or Division Level are eligible for scoring and local points allocation under this methodology.

Use of Public Input and Comments in Final Methodologies and Rankings: Between May and July 2014, the TCC and TAC will review all public comment received. Public comments will be documented, filed by the RPO, and distributed to appropriate local entities to inform future Prioritization processes and transportation plans. No new projects will be added to the current Prioritization 3.0 list, however, as the NCDOT deadline for submitting new projects will have passed.

Final Ranking and Local Points Assignment: At the July 2014 meeting, the TAC and TCC will consider the public comments. They will be able to make changes to the draft Regional Ranked Priority lists at the Regional and Division level. All public comments received and all final point assignments and any justification/rationale for points assignments which deviates from this Local Methodology will be placed on the RPO website, www.regionc.org.