

# Project Prioritization Methodology

## Lumber River RPO

The North Carolina General Assembly and the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) require all Rural and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (RPOs and MPOs) to develop a local ranking process to determine priorities for funding for projects of all modes of transportation (highway, aviation, bicycle/pedestrian, public transit, rail, and ferry). The Lumber River RPO has developed the following methodology to ensure compliance with North Carolina's Strategic Transportation Investments Law and the associated "SPOT" Prioritization 3.0 Process. It will use both quantitative, measurable data and qualitative scoring derived from local jurisdictions and public input.

### PROJECT SOLICITATION

The Lumber River RPO began soliciting candidate projects from local government entities and departments in September 2013. The County Transportation Committee and/or the County Manager in each County have been the primary point of contact for the RPO. The Transportation Committees and/or Managers have, in turn, solicited projects from entities and the public within their respective Counties. Candidate projects were submitted to the Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC) and the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) at their November meetings and may also be submitted at the January meetings. At its January 2014 meeting, the TAC will be asked to endorse the project list for submittal to the NCDOT. The approved projects will be submitted to the NCDOT Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation (SPOT) by March 3, 2014

### DEVELOPMENT OF PRIORITIZATION METHODOLOGY

A Draft Prioritization Methodology was developed by a TCC/TAC sub-committee and reviewed by the TCC and the SPOT office. Comments from SPOT have been incorporated into another Draft, which will be reviewed by the TAC at the January 27, 2014 meeting. Any comments from the January 27<sup>th</sup> meeting will be incorporated into a subsequent Draft and will then be sent to SPOT for further review. Any additional remarks from SPOT and the public will be incorporated into an additional Draft, which will be reviewed by the TCC and TAC at their March meetings. The final TAC approved Methodology must be submitted to the SPOT office no later than May 1, 2014.

#### **Public Input for Prioritization Methodology Development**

In March, the Draft of this Methodology will be advertised for public comment on the Lumber River RPO website (website address: <http://LumberRiverRPO.Ircog.org>). The public is invited to submit comments via the website, email, phone, mail, or in person. A public hearing, which will be advertised on the website and in each county's newspaper, will be held at the March 2014 TAC meeting. All public comments will be documented and discussed with the TCC and TAC and may be incorporated into the final Methodology, which will be posted on the RPO website.

# PROJECT RANKING AND LOCAL INPUT POINTS ASSIGNMENT

## Public Input for Project Ranking and Local Points Assignment

The Lumber River RPO will post the Lumber River Qualitative Score, the County-level Priority Lists and Scores, the Quantitative Score, the Total Score, the recommended local input point assignments, and the final adopted local input point assignments to the Lumber River RPO website (website address: <http://LumberRiverRPO.lrcog.org>). The public is invited to submit comments via email, phone, mail, or in person at the TCC and TAC meetings at any point throughout the process. Additionally, a public hearing will be held at the July TAC meeting after the initial sub-committee/staff recommended local input points assignment, but before the TAC approves the final assignment of points. This public hearing will be advertised in each County's newspapers and on the RPO Website. Any comments provided by the public will be addressed by the TAC before the vote on the assignment of points and those discussions will be documented in the meeting minutes. The TAC will approve the final assignment of local input points in August so that the points can be entered utilizing the SPOT Online tool by August 29, 2014.

## LUMBER RIVER QUALITATIVE SCORE

Each mode will have its own set of Qualitative Measures. All projects in all modes will be assigned 35% of their total score based on the Lumber River Qualitative Score.

$$\text{Lumber River Qualitative Score} = \text{Qualitative Points} * .35$$

## **BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PROJECTS** (Maximum 50 Points)

### Connectivity (Maximum 20 points; may only choose one) –

Project connects 2 unconnected (or inconveniently connected) sections of bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure (missing links) 20 points

Project connects a neighborhood with a school, college, library 20 points

Project is located in or provides a connection with a Central Business district, shopping center, park, hospital or major employment center 20 points

### Consistency with Plan (Maximum 30 points) –

Project is identified in an adopted Bicycle or Pedestrian Plan, or Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) 30 points

## **AVIATION PROJECTS** (Maximum 50 Points)

### Consistency with Plan

Project is identified in the Airport's approved Capital Improvement Plan 50 points

**HIGHWAY PROJECTS** (Maximum 50 Points)

**Benefits Economic Development**

**Proximity of Existing Infrastructure to any Portion of the Project** (Maximum 16 points) – This criterion is a measure of how well the project will promote economic development. The three necessary components for economic development are water, sewer, and transportation. If water and/or sewer were available along any segment of the highway project, the project would receive the highest score.

- Directly accessible to water and sewer 16 points
- Directly accessible to water or sewer 12
- < 1 mile to water and sewer 10
- < 1 mile to water or sewer 8
- 1 – 5 miles to water and sewer 6
- 1 – 5 miles to water or sewer 2
- > 5 miles to water and/or sewer 0

**Benefit to Existing Employment and Potential Employment Growth** (Maximum 8 points) –

Is the project immediately adjacent to or within one mile of an existing industrial park, or certified site?

- Yes 4 points
- No 0

Does the project improve access to existing manufacturing, commercial or service industries and/or access to identified future sites for these activities?

- Yes 4 points
- No 0

**Tourism Benefit/Impact** (Maximum 8 points) –

Is the project immediately adjacent to or within one mile of a tourist facility?

- Yes 4 points
- No 0

Does the project improve access to tourists passing through the region?

- Yes 4 points
- No 0

**Consistency with Plan** (Maximum 18 points) –

- Project comes from an adopted CTP: 18 points
- Project comes from an adopted plan other than a CTP: 15 points  
(such as a Thoroughfare Plan, Land Use Plan, Capital Improvement Plan or other locally adopted plan)

**RAIL PROJECTS** (Maximum 50 Points; only one will apply)

- A Traffic Separation Study been conducted 50 points
- A Feasibility Study has been completed 50 points

**PUBLIC TRANSIT PROJECTS** (Maximum 50 Points)

**Consistency with Plan** (Maximum 35 points) –

Project is identified in an adopted Locally Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan or CTSP 35 points

**Improves Safety or Security** (Maximum 15 points) –

Project improves safety and/or security of passengers (such as camera monitoring system, mobility/ADA assistant, improved lift equipment) 15 points

**FERRY PROJECTS**

There are no current or planned ferry operations in the Lumber River RPO, so no scoring method is presented for this mode.

**QUANTITATIVE SCORE**

The NCDOT has developed an extensive set of quantitative measures for each mode of transportation that will be utilized by the Lumber River RPO. Once received from the SPOT office, the overall SPOT quantitative score for each project will be divided by the maximum possible SPOT score. All projects in all modes will be assigned 35% of their total score based on the SPOT Quantitative Score.

$$\text{Quantitative Score} = (\text{SPOT Project score} / \text{Maximum SPOT score}) * .35$$

**PROJECT RANKING WITHIN COUNTIES – COUNTY SCORE**

When available, each County in the Lumber River RPO will be given a list of all the projects in that County in all transportation modes that are contained in the NCDOT database. Representatives from the County, all municipalities, and all modes must work together to rank in order from highest priority (#1) to lowest priority (#20). It is up to the local jurisdictions to determine the best method for achieving this within each County, however the following rules must be followed:

- All jurisdictions and representatives from all modes must be given an opportunity to participate in the development of the prioritized list of projects.
- The process must include at least one meeting advertised and open to the public that allows for public comment.
- There must be written documentation stating the objective reasoning behind the selected project ranking (this documentation must be submitted to Lumber River RPO for submittal on the website with the County’s project ranking).

This local priority list must be submitted to the Lumber River RPO by April 18, 2014. Each county’s prioritized list will be posted on the RPO website and made available for additional public comment.

All projects in all modes will be assigned 30% of their total score based on the County ranking assigned to each project from the process described above. The points will be assigned as follows:

Project Ranking	Points	Project Ranking	Points
# 1	100	# 11	50
# 2	95	# 12	45
# 3	90	# 13	40
# 4	85	# 14	35
# 5	80	# 15	30
# 6	75	# 16	25
# 7	70	# 17	20
# 8	65	# 18	15
# 9	60	# 19	10
# 10	55	# 20	5

All projects that are not ranked within the top 20 projects in each county will receive one (1) point for this criteria.

$$\text{County Score} = \text{County Project Ranking Points} * .30$$

**TOTAL SCORE**

The Lumber River Qualitative Score, the County Score, and the Quantitative Score will be added together to equal the Total Score.

$$\text{Total Score} = \text{LR Qualitative Score} + \text{County Score} + \text{Quantitative Score}$$

**ASSIGNMENT OF LOCAL INPUT POINTS**

Once the Total Score for all projects in each mode has been determined, the Prioritization subcommittee and RPO staff will develop a ranked list of projects within each county and within the RPO as a whole determined by the Total Score. This ranked list of all projects in all modes will be used to develop the recommended local input point assignments that are presented to the public for comment and to the TCC and TAC for approval.

In the “Regional Impact” category, the recommendation will be that the top two scoring projects in each County (regardless of mode) will be allocated 100 points each. (Note: the “Regional Impact” category may include “Statewide” projects that have ‘cascaded down’ to the Regional level.) The seven next-highest scoring projects within the overall RPO will also be allocated 100 points each to reach Lumber River RPO’s total allocation of 1,500 points. In the event that a project(s) cannot be allocated 100 points because it is only partially in the Lumber River RPO, the remaining points will be allotted to the next highest scoring project. (Note: if a County does not have two projects in this category and/or if the Total Weighted Score of a County’s project is not within the top 70% of the Total Weighted Scores of all RPO

projects in that category, then the next highest scoring project within the overall RPO will be allocated 100 points.)

In the “Division Needs” category, the recommendation will be that the top two scoring projects in each County (regardless of mode) will be allocated 100 points each. (Note: any “Regional Impact” project scoring in the top 60% of all Total Weighted Scores in the regional category may be considered at the “Division Needs” level at the discretion of the TCC and/or TAC). The seven next-highest scoring projects within the overall RPO will also be allocated 100 points each to reach Lumber River RPO’s total allocation of 1,500 points. In the event that a project(s) cannot be allocated 100 points because it is only partially in the Lumber River RPO, the remaining points will be allotted to the next highest scoring project.

(Note: if a County does not have two projects in this category and/or if the Total Weighted Score of a County’s project is not within the top 70% of the Total Weighted Scores of all RPO projects in that category, then the next highest scoring project within the overall RPO will be allocated 100 points.)

These recommended local input point assignments will be presented to the TCC and the TAC for review at their May meetings. A Public Hearing will be held at the July 28, 2014 TAC meeting. The TCC retains the discretion to make recommendations to the TAC regarding changes to the list. The TAC has the final discretion regarding assignment of local points, and retains the flexibility to make changes to these point assignments if it can document a reason for doing so. These changes must be documented and made available as information to the public. Final approval of the local input points assignment will be made at a called TAC meeting in August 2014.

## SCHEDULE

Date	Activity
Fall 2013	Solicitation of new candidate projects
Fall 2013	Development of Draft Prioritization Policy by sub-committee
January 2014	Submit Draft Prioritization Methodology to TCC and SPOT for review, make revisions as needed
January 27 - February, 2014	Present Draft Prioritization Methodology to TAC, incorporate comments, re-submit to SPOT, make revisions as necessary
January 27 – March 3, 2014	RPO staff submits candidate projects to SPOT/NCDOT
March 2014	Advertise Draft Prioritization Methodology at: <a href="http://LumberRiverRPO.lrcog.org">http://LumberRiverRPO.lrcog.org</a> Solicit public comment and incorporate comments.
March- April 2014	Present Draft Prioritization Methodology to TCC, hold Public Hearing, present to TAC. Submit Final Methodology approved by TAC to SPOT/NCDOT by May 1, 2014.
March- July 2014	Counties rank projects and develop Local Priority List, submit to RPO by April 18, 2014. Local Priority Lists will be posted at: <a href="http://LumberRiverRPO.lrcog.org">http://LumberRiverRPO.lrcog.org</a>
May – July 2014	Sub-committee and RPO staff computes LR Qualitative and Quantitative Scores, which will be combined with County Score to determine the Total Score. All scoring categories will be posted at: <a href="http://LumberRiverRPO.lrcog.org">http://LumberRiverRPO.lrcog.org</a>

March – August 2014	Public input on all scoring categories will be considered by TCC and TAC and discussion documented in meeting minutes.
May - August 2014	Total Score will be used to develop the Ranked List of Projects, which will be used to develop the Recommended Local Input Points Assignment. Both will be posted at: <a href="http://LumberRiverRPO.lrcog.org">http://LumberRiverRPO.lrcog.org</a>
May - July 2014	Recommended Local Input Points Assignment will be presented at the May TAC meeting. Public Hearing will be held at the July 28 <sup>th</sup> TAC meeting.
May – August 2014	If TAC wishes to change the Recommended Local Input Points Assignment, the reasons must be documented and posted at: <a href="http://LumberRiverRPO.lrcog.org">http://LumberRiverRPO.lrcog.org</a>
August 2014	TAC approves Final Local Input Points Assignment
August 2014	RPO staff submits Final Points Assignment to SPOT/NCDOT
August 2014	Final Local Input Points Assignment posted at: <a href="http://LumberRiverRPO.lrcog.org">http://LumberRiverRPO.lrcog.org</a>

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