

Rocky Mount MPO

Local Methodology for NCDOT Prioritization 3.0

Introduction

The Rocky Mount Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) will collaborate with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to submit and rank transportation projects under NCDOT's Prioritization 3.0 process. The results of this effort will act as input into the development of the next State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The scoring criteria, measures and weights and assignment of local input points to rank projects in NCDOT's prioritization process were signed into law (referred to as NC Strategic Transportation Investments or STI) by Governor McCrory on June 26, 2013.

NC General Assembly Session Law 2012-84 requires the MPO to adopt a local project ranking process for all modes of transportation. This ranking process is the local methodology of the MPO used to evaluate and determine an assignment of input points towards priority projects to submit to NCDOT. NCDOT has provided guidance for the MPO to identify quantitative and qualitative criteria in its scoring process that is shared and understood by the public and outlined in such a way that the public can ultimately follow how resulting points are assigned to projects across modes of transportation. This document represents the MPO's efforts to follow the guidance and fulfill the law. Additionally the development of the STIP will fulfill the requirements of the Rocky Mount MPO Public Involvement Plan.

The production of the STIP is on a two-year cycle. The current efforts to develop the STIP 2016 - 2025 will conclude in July 2015 with the adoption of the STIP by the North Carolina Board of Transportation. The MPO will collaborate with the Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation (SPOT) of NCDOT as it completes the task of submitting and prioritizing transportation improvement projects which results in input to the new STIP.

For information on other Rocky Mount MPO transportation plans and news of STI and Prioritization visit the MPO website at www.rockymountnc.gov/mpo/ and NCDOT at <http://www.ncdot.gov/strategictransportationinvestments/>.

Local Goal for Prioritization 3.0

The Rocky Mount MPO will submit projects to NCDOT for evaluation in the Prioritization 3.0 process. The Local Methodology will advance needed projects while equitably treating all members of the MPO.

Historically the available funding for the STIP has not been sufficient to advance all projects as quickly as desired. The STIP funding amounts are not anticipated to be significantly increased at this time. Therefore, it is beneficial to be consistent with the request for projects. Changing project priorities from one STIP to the next can lose momentum for projects and the MPO. Once in the STIP a project typically will require five to ten years to reach construction. Remember that deserving projects in the STIP system will require continued support to achieve the final result.

Classification of Transportation Projects

Transportation projects in the Prioritization process fall into one of three categories, *Statewide, Regional, or Division*. The projects are also classified by mode of transportation (i.e. Highway, Aviation, Bike/Pedestrian, Public Transportation, Rail, Ferry). The Strategic Transportation Investments law specifies the percentage of funding allocated to each geographical category:

- Statewide (Mobility) 40%
- Regional (Impact) 30%
- Division (Needs) 30%

Highway projects associated with Interstate 95 or US 64 in the Rocky Mount MPO are classified as Statewide projects. Such projects are evaluated and prioritized by NCDOT solely on quantitative project data provided by the MPO and NCDOT. No local input ranking is applied to Statewide projects.

The Rocky Mount MPO lies within the Region A which is comprised of NCDOT Highway Divisions One and Four. Region A is generally the northeastern part of the state of NC (Dare, Currituck, Camden, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Chowan, Gates, Northampton, Hertford, Bertie, Martin, Washington, Tyrrell, Hyde, Halifax, Nash, Edgecombe, Wilson, Johnston, and Wayne counties). The state is divided into seven regions each having two highway divisions. Regional funds are distributed by population. With about 8% of the state's population, Region A will receive the smallest funding amount in the state for Regional category projects. (Region C, NCDOT Divisions 5 & 6 will receive the largest amount - about 22%)

Rocky Mount MPO Regional highway projects are associated with US 301, NC 4, 43, 48, 58, & 97. All Regional projects (i.e. all modes) will receive a quantitative evaluation by NCDOT. In addition to this quantitative score local input will be added to the project evaluation. For Regional projects, the NCDOT quantitative value will be 70% and the local input will be 30% of the project evaluation.

The Rocky Mount MPO is included in NCDOT Highway Division Four, which includes the counties of Halifax, Nash, Edgecombe, Wilson, Johnston, and Wayne. The 14 Highway Divisions of the state will receive equal funding amounts for Division category projects. Highway projects associated with NC Secondary Routes (i.e. SR #'s) will fall into the Division category. The NCDOT quantitative score for Division projects will comprise 50% of the project evaluation. The local input value for Division projects will be 50% of the project evaluation.

The local input for Rocky Mount MPO Regional and Division projects will come from the MPO and the NCDOT Division Four (i.e. the TAC and Division Four Engineer). In each case (i.e. Regional and Division projects) the local input will be equally divided between the MPO and Division Engineer.

Quantitative and Qualitative Criteria

The State of North Carolina, NCDOT and the MPO will implement transportation projects which fulfill the requirements of the STI law. To ensure that projects of the STIP are beneficial to the community and support the public good, projects in the Prioritization 3.0 process must be evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative criteria.

NCDOT will calculate a quantitative score for all projects submitted to the Prioritization 3.0 process. This number is developed by NCDOT using the project description and supporting project facts provided by the MPO. NCDOT will supply to the MPO this quantitative score by May 1, 2014.

The MPO will have the opportunity to add a local input score to transportation projects in the Regional and Division categories. The local input score must be based on quantitative and qualitative evaluations of the project. The Rocky Mount MPO proposes that the quantitative and qualitative criteria for local input weigh equally in the Prioritization 3.0 process (i.e. 50% each).

The local input quantitative criteria will be the quantitative value calculated by NCDOT and provided on May 1, 2014. Project *Viability* will be the local qualitative criteria used by the Rocky Mount MPO in the Prioritization 3.0 process. Project viability is a qualitative assessment of the practicality and reasonableness of a project.

Although values of quality cannot be measured specifically like tangible quantities, the MPO will assess the viability of a project. The table below identifies the attributes used to describe the viability of a project. Both Regional and Division projects of all modes will be evaluated for viability.

Viability	Score (range)
MTP	0 to 20 (20)*
STIP	0 to 20 (10)
R-O-W	0 to 20 (10)
NEPA	0 to 5 (5)
Multi-modal	0 to 5 (5)
Viability Score (Total)	0 to 70 (50)
	*Score in () represents max for
	Division category projects

The MPO will use the following guidelines to establish the project viability score. The point score shown in () is for Division category projects.

Projects in the MTP (Metropolitan Transportation Plan) will receive points as follows:

MTP Phase One	(2013-2020)	20 points (20)
MTP Phase Two	(2021-2030)	10 points (10)
MTP Phase Three	(2031-2040)	5 points (5)

Projects in the STIP will receive points as follows:

Projects in the current STIP	5 points (2)
Projects in the STIP five years	10 points (5)
Projects in the STIP five plus years	20 points (10)

Projects for Right-of-Way status will receive points as follows:

R-O-W needs established	5 points (2)
R-O-W purchase has started	10 points (5)

R-O-W needs are in hand 20 points (10)

Projects in the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process will receive points as follows:

Project has started NEPA	1 points (1)
Project environmental document complete	3 points (3)
Project Record of Decision made	5 points (5)

Projects with Multi-modal attributes will receive points as follows:

Projects which impact two modes of transportation	2 points (2)
Projects which impact more than two modes	5 points (5)

The MPO and NCDOT are the sources for these qualitative measurements to calculate viability. The MPO and NCDOT's Transportation Planning Branch will use the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, State Transportation Improvement Program and project databases to establish the viability evaluation.

All Rocky Mount MPO projects in the Prioritization 3.0 process will be given a Priority Ranking, which is a number based on the quantitative and qualitative criteria of each project. The Priority Ranking is a number equal to the NCDOT quantitative score plus the project viability total score.

For example the following numbers represent the possible maximum Priority Ranking for Regional and Division category projects:

	Regional	Division
NCDOT Quantitative	70	50
Viability Total	70	50
Priority Ranking number	140	100

Similarly, the Priority Ranking for each transportation project in the Prioritization 3.0 process will be calculated. By sorting the Priority Ranking numbers in descending order of value, a prioritized order of MPO transportation projects in the Prioritization 3.0 process is established. The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) will approve the Priority Ranking numbers of all projects in the Prioritization 3.0 process.

The Priority Ranking number is used to assign local input points, but it is not the value for the MPO transportation projects, which will be reported back to NCDOT in July 2014.

MPO Transportation Projects

The Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation will accept new projects from January 21 to February 17, 2014 from the MPO to be evaluated in the Prioritization 3.0 process. The list of new projects to be submitted for Prioritization 3.0 will be approved by the MPO's Transportation Advisory Committee in an announced public meeting.

Under the Strategic Transportation Investments law, limitations on new project submittals have been established by NCDOT. The Rocky Mount MPO is allowed to submit the following number of new projects:

- New Highway Projects 11
- New Aviation Projects Unlimited
- New Bike/Pedestrian Projects 20
- New Public Transportation Projects Unlimited

- New Rail Projects

The MPO will evaluate highway projects included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for submittal in all three geographical categories (Statewide, Regional, Division).

Projects for the Rocky Mount Wilson Airport fall into the Division category.

Bike/Pedestrian projects are in the Division category.

Rocky Mount MPO public transportation projects in the Regional and Division categories are coordinated with the Tar River Transit.

The MPO will collaborate with NCDOT and the CSX RR for rail projects in the Statewide and Division categories.

Local Input Points

As previously described, projects in the Prioritization 3.0 process will be evaluated with an NCDOT quantitative score and local input scores from the MPO and the Division Engineer. From this evaluation a ranking order of projects is determined. The MPO is permitted to add local input points to these ranked projects.

Based on population, the Rocky Mount MPO has 1,200 local input points for regional projects and 1,200 local input points for division projects. (The state's largest MPO has 2,500 points in each category.) NCDOT guidelines set a maximum number of 100 points that may be assigned to any one project. There is no requirement to assign local input points to projects.

The methodology of the Rocky Mount MPO will be to assign the maximum number (100) of points to a project (i.e. a project will get either 100 or 0 local input points). Hence, the MPO will promote as many as twelve regional and twelve division projects.

The methodology of the Rocky Mount MPO will be to assign the maximum number of local input points (100) to the highest ranking projects (i.e. highest Priority Ranking number) in the following classifications as determined in the quantitative and qualitative project evaluations:

- Highway - Regional
- Highway - Division
- Aviation - Division
- Bicycle / Pedestrian - Division
- Public Transportation - Regional
- Public Transportation - Division
- Rail - Regional
- Rail - Division

The assignment of these points (potentially as many as 300 regional and 500 division points) will promote multi-modal development and will not be restricted by geographical location. Potentially, three regional and/or five division projects may be assigned local input points totaling 800 points. No project receives more than 100 local input points.

The methodology of the Rocky Mount MPO will be to allot points equitably to all government members of the MPO. Each member will have an allotment of points to assign to projects in the Prioritization 3.0 process. These projects will have been ranked in the quantitative and qualitative

evaluation process. The award of points (i.e. 100 points) to a project will enhance the project's competitiveness on the regional or division level. The individual government member of the MPO will be allowed to award its point allotment as the member elects to do. In general the MPO member will be expected to assign points to the highest ranked project within its geographical jurisdiction.

If a MPO member assigns local input points to a lower ranked project (i.e. a project with a lower Priority Ranking number) than a higher ranked project without local input points, a written justification must be provided to the TAC.

The equitable allotment of points will be made with these guidelines based on population:

- Each MPO member will receive no less than 100 points
- Allotments of points will be rounded to the nearest 100 point denomination
- The City of Rocky Mount will receive 65% of remaining points (i.e. points after the highest ranked projects have been awarded 100 points and all MPO members have a 100 point minimum allotment)
- Nash County will receive 20% of remaining points
- The Town of Nashville will receive 6% of remaining points
- Edgecombe County will receive 6% of remaining points
- The Town of Sharpsburg will receive 3% of remaining points

The methodology of the Rocky Mount MPO will be to use all available points to promote the highest ranked projects. Any points not used by a member will be applied to the next highest ranked project.

Timeline for MPO Local Methodology & Implementation of SL 2012-84

January 2014

10th Post an article on the Local Methodology on the Rocky Mount MPO website, www.rockymountnc.gov/mpo/.

21st TAC Meeting - Approve new projects for submittal to NCDOT.

Release Local Methodology for public comment.

Release Prioritization Project List for public comment.

24th Submit new projects to NCDOT

26th Legal Notice for March 17 Public Hearing in local newspaper.

27th Notice of March 17 Public Hearing on MPO website.

February 2014

Receive public comment for Methodology and Prioritization 3.0 projects. MPO staff will receive comments via mail, email, telephone, visitation, MPO website, social media.

March 2014

17th TAC Meeting - Hold Public Hearing for Local Methodology and Prioritization 3.0 Project List. Adopt Local Methodology for SPOT local points.

April 2014

May 2014

1st Receive from NCDOT Prioritization 3.0 projects with quantitative scores.

19th TAC Meeting - Recommend the assignment of local input points to Prioritization 3.0 projects. Release and post on the MPO website the proposed points assignment for public comment.

20th Legal notice for July 21 Public Hearing on the scoring of Prioritization 3.0 Projects.

July 2014

21st TAC Meeting - Adopt final assignment of local input points to Prioritization 3.0 projects.

22nd Send projects to NCDOT with local points assigned. Post Prioritization 3.0 project rankings on the MPO website.

January 2015

20th TAC Meeting - Release Draft STIP 2016-2025 for public comment.

March 2015

16th TAC Meeting - Conduct Public Hearing for STIP.

May 2015

18th TAC Meeting - Adopt STIP.