

Wilmington MPO

MEMORANDUM

TO: TAC Members

FROM: Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director

DATE: January 23, 2014

SUBJECT: **Wilmington MPO Local Input Methodology Process**

The Strategic Transportation Investments is a new formula to determine how the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), in partnership with local governments, will fund and prioritize transportation projects in the state of North Carolina. Under this new formula, all modes will compete for the same funding. This means that roadway projects will compete with ferry projects which will compete with public transportation projects, etc. The Strategic Transportation Investments places projects into three categories: Statewide, Regional and Division levels. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs) and Division Engineers will assign local input points to projects in the Regional and Division levels. MPOs and RPOs are required to develop methodology for the assignment of local input points and NCDOT must approve this methodology.

The following methodology has been developed by the Wilmington MPO for the purposes of determining transportation funding priorities for Prioritization 3.0. This methodology is intended to ensure a process that is both data-driven and responsive to local needs. The methodology has been developed to meet the requirements of Session Law 2012-84 (Senate Bill 890), which requires that MPOs and RPOs have a process including both quantitative and qualitative elements for determining project prioritization.

The MPO's participation in the Strategic Transportation Investments consists of the following steps: (1) selection of projects for consideration in the Statewide, Regional and Division levels; (2) quantitative scoring of submitted projects by SPOT; (3) develop draft qualitative scoring of projects and ranking; (4) public involvement process and (5) finalize project scoring and ranking.

Each of the three categories indentified under the new Strategic Transportation Investments have their own criteria:

Statewide Level

- Projects of statewide significance will receive 40% of the available revenue
- The project selection process will be 100% data-driven/quantitative scoring

Regional Level

- Projects of regional significance will receive 30% of the available revenue based on regional population. Projects on this level compete within specific regions made up of two NCDOT Divisions. The Wilmington MPO is located in Region B.
- Data/ quantitative scoring will comprise 70% of the decision-making process and local rankings will comprise of the remaining 30%

Division Level

- Projects that address local concerns such as safety, congestion and connectivity will receive 30% of the available revenue shared equally over NCDOT's 14 Transportation Divisions. The Wilmington MPO is located in NCDOT Division 3.
- The department will choose projects based 50% on data and 50% on local rankings.

The Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation "SPOT" will be developing quantitative scores for all projects based on the adopted methodology. Default criteria were recommended by the Prioritization 3.0 work group and agreed to by NCDOT to quantitatively score projects across all modes. However, the MPOs, RPOs and the NCDOT's Division Engineers were given flexibility to develop their own highway criteria and formulas for the quantitative evaluation and project scoring in the Regional Projects and Division Projects. SPOT required that any deviation from the adopted criteria had to be unanimously approved by each MPO and RPO in the region and/or division by July 1, 2013. A revised set of criteria was approved unanimously by the members of Region B and Division 3. Below please find these revised criteria:

Regional Projects Evaluation Criteria:

Multi-modal 25%
Safety 25%
Benefit-Cost- 20%
Local Input- 30%

Division Projects Evaluation Criteria

Safety 20%
Congestion 20%
Multi-modal 10%
Local Input- 50%

The aforementioned percentages and weights are used for the roadway mode only and all non-roadway projects will utilize the same criteria statewide.

Wilmington MPO Local Input Methodology Process

While developing the adopted Cape Fear Commutes 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan, the Wilmington MPO's TAC adopted a prioritization process for evaluating projects identified in the plan. Projects were evaluated and scored based on their performance on different evaluating criteria. *Roadway projects* had different evaluating criteria based on the type of problem they addressed (congestion mitigation, quality of life, and safety). The *Congestion Management projects* were evaluated based on specific factors that included Efficient, Safe, Multi-modal, Appropriate, Integrated and Responsible factors. The *Quality of Life projects* were scored based on the average daily traffic (ADT), an ugly factor, existing or planned transit service, gateway to the region, identified in an adopted plan and if the project was within an incorporated municipality. *Safety projects* were scored based on the crash rate from 2005-2009. The prioritization process for the Cape Fear Commutes 2035 Transportation Plan was used as a starting point for guiding the developed of the Wilmington MPO's local methodology for Prioritization 3.0.

The MPO has developed an objective, matrix-based prioritization process for the review of projects submitted to SPOT for consideration in Prioritization 3.0. The MPO proposes to utilize a Local Preference, SPOT Scoring, Consistency with Plans and Status of the Project in the Development as evaluating criteria in assigning these local input points. The WMPO will use the quantitative scores from the SPOT office as part of the prioritization process as well as to guide the TAC in the assignment of local preference points.

Local Preference- The Local Preference is the priority of the project as ranked by the TCC and TAC. The TAC will review and approve a final prioritized list of projects for submission to SPOT assigned by level. These projects will be grouped into High, Medium and Low categories based on approval by the TAC. There are approximately 100 projects to be considered during the evaluation process. A matrix will be used to develop the draft Local Preference points. Below please find an example of this matrix:

		Reduces Mean Travel Time	Reduces Conflict Points	Includes Multi-modal Accommodations	Adopted Local Support	Prioritization 2.0 Points	Total
		Data	(Yes/No)	(Yes/No)	(Yes/No)	Points	Points
Project X							

*Yes= 100 points

*No = 0 points

Reduce Mean Travel Time- is the output data from SPOT’s congestion score for each project.

Reduces Conflict Points- the project reduces the number of conflict points or implements access management strategies. This information will be derived from the TAC’s adopted Problem Statement for the project and/or adopted Long Range Transportation Plan.

Includes Multi-modal Accommodations- the project also includes a bicycle, pedestrian or public transportation component. This information will be derived from the TAC’s adopted Problem Statement for the project and/or adopted Long Range Transportation Plan.

Adopted Local Support- the local municipality and/or county has adopted a resolution supporting the project. The resolution should specify facts / figures which justify the need for the project.

Prioritization 2.0 Points- the amount of local input points the project received during the Prioritization 2.0

The High priority projects will be the Top 20 projects as prioritized by the TAC, the Medium priority projects will be projects 21-50 and the Low priority projects will be projects 51 through the remainder of the list. Each project will be evaluated on a sliding scale.

- High priority projects receiving- 50 points
- Medium priority projects receiving- 30 points
- Low priority projects receiving- 10 points

SPOT 3.0 Score- The SPOT 3.0 score is the score provided by SPOT for each project. Each project will be scored by the MPO on a sliding scale from 20 to 1 based on the SPOT score.

Consistency with Plans- This criterion is used to determine if the proposed project is in an adopted plan. Each project will be evaluated on a sliding scale with the points assigned as follows:

- Projects included in the adopted Long Range Transportation Plan- 20 points
- Projects included in Plans adopted by the MPO- 10 points
- Projects that are adopted in plans by the member jurisdictions but not adopted by the MPO- 5 points

Status of the Project in Development- This criterion will identify which phase the project is in the development of the project. Each project will be evaluated on a sliding scale with the criteria as outlined below:

- Projects that are in the right-of way acquisition or property already acquired by the State of North Carolina- 10 points
- Projects that are in the Design phase- 5 points
- Projects that are in the Planning phase- 3 points

Under this new formula, all modes will compete against each other for funding. Evaluation criteria needed to be developed for roadway, public transportation, aviation, ferry, rail, bicycle and pedestrian projects. Wilmington MPO staff recommends the following criteria and percentages for the evaluation of projects at the Regional and Division levels in Prioritization 3.0: These proposed criteria will be utilized across all modes of transportation with each project able to achieve up to 100 points per each subcriteria in an effort to normalize the project rankings and scores.

Roadway Projects (100 points)

Local Preference (50%)
 SPOT Score (20%)
 Consistency with Plans (20%)
 Status of the Project in Development (10%)

Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects (100 points)

Local Preference (50%)
 SPOT Score (20%)
 Consistency with Plans (20%)
 Status of the Project in Development (10%)

Public Transportation (100 points)

Local Preference (50%)
 SPOT Score (20%)
 Consistency with Plans (20%)
 Status of the Project in Development (10%)

Aviation Projects (100 points)

Local Preference (50%)
 SPOT Score (20%)
 Consistency with Plans (20%)
 Status of the Project in Development (10%)

Ferry Projects (100 points)

Local Preference (50%)
 SPOT Score (20%)
 Consistency with Plans (20%)
 Status of the Project in Development (10%)

Rail Projects (100 points)

Local Preference (50%)
 SPOT Score (20%)
 Consistency with Plans (20%)

Status of the Project in Development (10%)

Each MPO, RPO and NCDOT Division Engineer is allowed to assign local input points that will be used by NCDOT in ranking and scoring each project. The Wilmington MPO will be able to assign up to 1,500 local input points for each (**1500 for Regional Impact and 1500 for Division Needs categories**). The maximum number of points that can be assigned to a project is 100 points. The assignment of local input points will be based on a mathematical sum of the points assigned during the Local Input Methodology Process.

Example:

Project: Project X

Local Preference- Project scores in the Top 20=	50 points
SPOT Score Translated=	20 points
Project Consistency with Plans- Project is in LRTP=	20 points
Status of Project in Development- Project right of way acquisition is complete=	<u>10 points</u>
Total	100 points

The top scoring projects will receive the highest number of points from the Wilmington MPO. The Local Input Methodology shall serve as a guide for the TAC to assign points to projects located within the Wilmington MPO's planning jurisdiction and the TAC will have the flexibility to assign points as the Committee desires. However deviation from the Local Input Methodology shall require the justification/rationale to be made during a public meeting of the TAC as advertised by the open meetings laws and included with the sharing of the points with the public through the public outreach effort.

The Wilmington MPO's TCC and TAC will develop a "draft" project ranking and scoring to assign points based on the aforementioned criteria. The Wilmington MPO will then conduct a public outreach effort. Following the public outreach effort, the MPO will review with the TCC and TAC any comments received during the public participation process. No additional projects will be submitted based on the public participation effort. The TAC will then adopt a Final Project Ranking and Scoring for the Wilmington MPO. This information will then be submitted to the SPOT office.

Public Involvement Process

The Wilmington MPO adopted the most recent Public Involvement Policy on September 9, 2009. The Public Involvement Policy is an umbrella policy encompassing the plans and programs of the Wilmington MPO's transportation planning process. This policy serves as an integral part of the MPO's planning efforts. The Wilmington MPO will utilize this adopted policy to solicit comments on the "draft" Project Ranking and Scoring. These outreach efforts will include regular public input opportunities at TAC meetings, the draft project ranking and scoring will also be posted on the MPO's website and the MPO will solicit public comments. Following the closing of the public participation process, staff will review any comments received with the TCC and TAC. All public comments received and all final point assignments and any justification/rationale for point assignment which deviates from this Local Methodology will be placed on the Wilmington MPO's website at www.wmpo.org.

Prioritization Process Timeline: 2013-2014

- TAC Approves all projects for submittal December 2013
- TAC Reviews "DRAFT" Local Input Methodology January 2014
- Submit Projects to NCDOT February 2014
- TAC Adopts Local Input Methodology February 2014
- NCDOT Scores for New and Existing Projects May 2014
- TAC Approves "DRAFT" Project Ranking and Scoring May 2014

- Conduct MPO Public Input Process May 2014
- TAC Approves Final Project Ranking and Scoring June 2014
- Submit Scored Projects to NCDOT July 2014