

Isothermal Rural Planning Organization

Prioritization 5.0 Project Solicitation and Local Input Point Assignment 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 be submitted for approved to 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: As stipulated by the [STI legislation](#), local input points may be assigned to projects in the Regional Impact and Division Needs categories, but not the Statewide Mobility category. The Isothermal RPO, serving McDowell, Polk and Rutherford counties, may allocate the following number of local points for projects in the eligible categories:

- **0 points-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 at the Regional Level.
- **1300 points-Regional Level Projects:** All projects on routes considered but not funded at the Statewide level **and** 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. Any projects that are funded at the Regional level will be removed from the process before IRPO assigns final local input points for the Division level.
- **1300 points-Division Level Projects:** All projects on routes considered but not funded at the Statewide and Regional levels **and** projects involving SR routes, bicycle and pedestrian transportation, transit, and airports are evaluated at the Division Level. Any projects that are funded at the regional level will be removed from the process before IRPO assigns final local input points.

SCHEDULE

PHASE I: Develop STIP Methodology/Submit New Candidate Projects to SPOT 5.0

- Submitted any new highway, aviation, public transit and/or bike and pedestrian projects to SPOT 5.0 September 29, 2017
- Submit draft scoring methodology to NCDOT for review December 2017
- Distribute draft methodology to TAC/TCC for review January 3, 2018
- 30-day Public Comment Period Begins by Jan. 31, 2018
- TAC approves scoring methodology March 1, 2018

PHASE II: Assign Points & Final Rankings

- NCDOT scores released End of March 2018

- Draft Point Assignments released April 2018
- Public information open house/14-day Public Comment Period April 2018
- TAC approves final point assignments for Regional Projects May 2, 2018
- Submit final local input point assignments to NCDOT By June 30, 2018
- TAC approves final point assignments for Division Projects September 5, 2018
- Submit final local input point assignments to NCDOT By October 30, 2018

Project Solicitation: Isothermal RPO solicited candidate projects from local government entities and departments (counties, towns, transit departments, airports, etc.) in late Spring/early Summer 2017. The RPO Coordinator 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 TAC at their September meeting and 19 highway projects, 3 aviation projects and 8 bike/ped projects were selected from a slate recommended by the TCC to be submitted to SPOT. Since the new project submissions did not exceed the allowed number of new bicycle/pedestrian projects, aviation or public transit projects, the TAC stated that the RPO Director could accept additional projects for submission on a first come, first served basis until September 25, 2017.

Local Point Assignment Methodologies: This process and the point assignment methodology described herein will be presented to the TAC for their approval at their March 2018 meeting. Before that meeting, the methodology will have been sent to the SPOT office for their comment. The draft methodology will also be made available for public comment. The comment period will be for a minimum of 30 days, starting no later than January 31, 2018. The TAC will then approve the methodology at their March 2018 meeting. The conditionally approved methodology will be sent to the SPOT office no later than April 1, 2018.

Project Ranking: The TCC and TAC will then evaluate the full list of new and previously-evaluated projects for the three counties from April to June 30, 2018, using the methodology. Final approval, point assignment, and local input point submission to the SPOT office for Regional projects will be completed by June 30, 2018 and for Division projects, no later than October 31, 2018.

PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Local Methodology: By January 31, 2018, the RPO will release the draft methodology for a 30-day public comment period. Isothermal RPO will accept comments by mail and email. This 30-day period will be advertised on the RPO website and via local media. The methodology will be available on the RPO website, www.isothermalrpo.org. The results of the public comment period will be presented to the TCC and TAC at their March 2018 meeting, during which the public will also be permitted to submit verbal or written 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 in March 2018. The process, summarized here, will be conducted in accordance with the [RPO's Public Involvement Plan](#).

Project Ranking: The RPO will release the Regional and Division Ranked projects' draft points assignments for a 14-day public comment period by April 15, 2018. Isothermal RPO will accept comments by mail or email. This 14-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 results of the public comment period will be presented to the TCC and TAC at their May 2018 meeting, during which the

public will also be permitted to submit verbal or written comments. All public comment will be documented. The process, summarized here, will be conducted in accordance with the [RPO's Public Involvement Plan](#).

In May 2018, the TAC will be asked to approve the Regional final points assignments after which the assignments will be available on the RPO website, www.isothermalrpo.org.

The TAC will approve the Division's final point assignments at their September meeting. All public comments received and all final point assignments and any justification/rationale for local input points assignments which deviates from this methodology will be placed on the RPO website, www.isothermalrpo.org.

RANKING PROCESS

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

Regional		
Criteria	Max. Score Possible	Scoring Methodology
SPOT Quantitative Score	70	Actual SPOT quantitative score from NCDOT
Local Priority	20	Each TCC/TAC member will be given 100 points to assign to projects, with a maximum of 20 points per project. The score will be the average assigned to each project by all TCC/TAC members.
Project Development	10	For Highway Projects (add together all that apply, maximum 10 points): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 points if in CTP or other adopted plan • 5 points if through NEPA process • 5 points if in 2018-2027 STIP
		For Rail Projects (add together all that apply, maximum 10 pts): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 points if in a plan • 5 points if in 2018-2027 STIP
Total	100	

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

Division		
Criteria	Max. Score Possible	Scoring Methodology
SPOT Quantitative Score	50	Actual SPOT quantitative score from NCDOT
Local Priority	30	Each TCC/TAC member will be given 150 points to assign to projects, with a maximum of 30 points per project. The score will be the average assigned to each project by all TCC/TAC members.
Project Tier	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 points if Statewide Tier project • 3 points if Regional Tier project • 5 points if Division Tier project
Cost	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 points if \$100 million or over • 3 points if at least \$25 million but less than \$100 million • 5 points if under \$25 million
Project Development	10	For Highway Projects (add together all that apply, maximum 10 points): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 points if in CTP or other adopted plan • 5 points if through NEPA process • 5 points if in 2018-2027 STIP
		For Bicycle/Pedestrian Projects (add together all that apply, maximum 10): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 points if in more than one plan (no points if only in one plan) • 5 points if in 2018-2027 STIP
		For Rail, Aviation, and Public Transit Projects (add together all that apply, maximum 10 points): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 points if in a plan • 5 points if in 2018-2027 STIP
Total	100	

Draft Point Assignment:

IRPO staff will use the scores from the above methodology to rank the projects at the Regional level from highest to lowest. The top two projects in each county will be assigned 100 points. Six 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, 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 input points allocation under this methodology at this level.

The same process will be used for the Division level with the exception that one of the twelve ranked projects on the draft Ranked list must be non-highway mode project. If there are none, the highest scoring non-highway mode project will be added.

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

Use of Public Input and Comments in Final Methodologies:

Between April and May 2018, 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 5.0 list, however, as the NCDOT deadline for submitting new projects will have passed.

Final Local Points Assignment:

At the May-September 2018 meetings, the TAC and TCC will consider the public comments on Regional and Division projects. The RPO TAC can adjust projects receiving points or adjust the number of points given to a project based on their discretion and/or public input.

The TAC assigns RPO rights to make changes to the final local points assignments for technical or Division coordination reasons, as long as notice is given to the TAC/TCC board beforehand.

All public comments received and all final point assignments and any justification/rationale for local input points assignments which deviates from this Local Methodology will be placed on the RPO website, www.isothermalrpo.org/spot-process before the points are submitted to SPOT.