LAND OF SKY

RURAL
PLANNING
ORGANIZATION

DATE: March 04, 2024
SUBJECT: Prioritization 7.0 (P7.0) – **Draft** Local Input Point Methodology

INTRODUCTION
The NCDOT's Strategic Planning Office of Transportation (SPOT) has been tasked with carrying out the project evaluation process outlined in the 'Strategic Transportation Investments (GS 136-189.10 and .11)' enacted on June 26, 2013. One of the most significant tasks that must be accomplished by each MPO/RPO and NCDOT Division Office is to create a methodology that explains how the MPO/RPO/Division Office will allocate the eligible local input points assigned to projects of all modes (Highway, Bike and Pedestrian, Aviation, Public Transit, Rail and Ferry) in the prioritization database. LOSRPO is only scoring Highway, Public Transit and Bike/Ped projects in this round of prioritization.

As stipulated by the Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) legislation, local points may be assigned to projects in the Regional Impact and Division Needs categories, but not the Statewide Mobility category. The Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization (LOSRPO), serving the rural areas of Buncombe, Haywood, Madison, and Transylvania Counties, may allocate the following number of local points for projects in the eligible categories:
  • 0 points – Statewide projects example (I-26, I-40)
  • 1200 points – Regional Impact projects example (US-64, US-25/70, NC-280, NC-209)
  • 1200 points – Division Needs projects example (SR 1145, Sharp Hollow RD, SR 1512 Ecusta Rd, Bike/Ped and Public Transit Projects)

The contents of this memorandum describe the methodology that LOSRPO proposes to use to allocate its local input points. LOSRPO has no aviation, rail, or ferry projects in this round of prioritization.

NCDOT requires that the methodology include the following components:
  • At least two criteria (with at least one being qualitative)
  • Public involvement (on the proposed methodology, and the preliminary assignment of local input points to projects based on the approved methodology)
  • Dissemination of methodology, local points, and public input on LOSRPO's website (**www.landofskyrpo.org**)

DESCRIPTION OF CRITERIA AND WEIGHTS

Countywide Ranking of Projects

The LOSPRO will use Countywide Ranking of Projects as one criterion for assigning points: Each LOSRPO county and all the local jurisdictions (including the county and any municipalities within the county in the RPO) will work together to develop a ranked list of projects in all modes to submit to LOSRPO for use in the prioritization process. The list must be based on projects submitted to NCDOT for consideration in P7.0, new projects cannot be added at this stage of the process. Projects should be ranked in order from highest priority (#1) to lowest (#10). If there are more than ten projects within a county, then only the top ten should be ranked. It is up to the local jurisdictions, working together, to determine the best method for achieving this within each county; however, LOSRPO and NCDOT staff will assist in the process. Each County must:

- Ensure all jurisdictions are given an opportunity to participate in the development of their county's ranked project list if they choose.
- Provide written documentation stating the reasoning behind the selected project ranking (this must be submitted to LOSRPO and will be posted online along with the project list)

These local ranked priority lists should be developed and submitted to LOSRPO within 14 days after NCDOT releases its draft quantitative scores for projects. Once submitted to LOSRPO, the local priority lists will be posted online and made available for additional public comment prior to the LOSRPO TAC's approval of local input points on projects.

All projects will receive **50%** of their total LOSRPO score based on the ranking assigned to that project by local officials in the above-described countywide rankings. This applies to all modes. These points will be assigned as follows:

# 1 Priority in County	50 points		# 6 Priority in County	25 points
# 2 Priority in County	45 points		# 7 Priority in County	20 points
# 3 Priority in County	40 points		# 8 Priority in County	15 points
# 4 Priority in County	35 points		# 9 Priority in County	10 points
# 5 Priority in County	30 points		#10 Priority in County	5 points

* All other projects (ranked lower or unranked) receive 0 points for this item.

NCDOT P7.0 quantitative score will account for the remaining **50%** of the LOSRPO score the criteria that make up these scores are defined by NCDOT's Prioritization Work Group for each mode and category (see [NCDOT's Prioritization Resources website](#) for more information): Regional Impact: Because all Prioritization 7.0 regional quantitative scores are on a 70 point scale, the final results are multiplied by 0.7143 to convert them to a 50 point scale for use in LOSRPO scoring.

Division Needs: Prioritization 7.0 division quantitative scores are reported on a 50-point scale, so, no rescaling of scores is necessary.

Total Score and Project Ranking Approach/Point Assignment Process

Once all projects in each mode are scored based on the adopted criteria, LOSRPO staff will develop a ranked list of projects within each county then use these to develop the list for the LOSRPO region. This ranked list of all projects in all modes will be used to develop the recommended point assignments that are presented to the public for comment and to the LOSRPO TCC and TAC for approval. There will be separate rankings for the Regional Impact category and the Division Needs category.

Regional Impact Scoring		
Criteria	**Max. Score Possible**	**Scoring Methodology**
SPOT Quantitative Score	50	Actual SPOT quantitative score from NCDOT (P7.0 regional scores on a 70-point scale, final results multiplied by 0.7143 to convert them to a 50-point scale)
County Ranking	50	#1 Priority =50 points #2 Priority = 45 points #3 Priority = 40 points #4 Priority = 35 points #5 Priority = 30 points #6 Priority = 25 points #7 Priority = 20 points #8 Priority = 15 points #9 Priority = 10 points #10 Priority = 5 points
Total	100	

Division Needs Scoring		
Criteria	**Max. Score Possible**	**Scoring Methodology**
SPOT Quantitative Score	50	Actual SPOT quantitative score from NCDOT
County Ranking	50	#1 Priority =50 points #2 Priority = 45 points #3 Priority = 40 points #4 Priority = 35 points #5 Priority = 30 points #6 Priority = 25 points #7 Priority = 20 points #8 Priority = 15 points #9 Priority = 10 points #10 Priority = 5 points
Total	100	

LOCAL INPUT POINTS ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

The following principles will be used for the allocation of LOSRPO's local input points:

- LOSRPO will score Highway projects (both Regional Impact and Division Needs) and Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Public Transit projects with the adopted methodology.

Land of Sky RPO receives 1200 points at the Regional Level and 1200 points at the Division Level to allocate to projects for local prioritization. The maximum number of points any project can receive is 100. After scoring projects with the LOSRPO's approved methodology, the two top-scoring Regional Impact projects within each county will be allocated 100 points each.

The remaining points will be allocated to the next highest scoring projects within the RPO (regardless of county or mode), to reach Land of Sky RPO's total point allocation of 1200 points. In the event any counties do not have at least two Regional Level projects, then additional projects will be selected from the top of the list of remaining projects within the RPO as a whole.

If a county chooses to allocate Regional Impact Points to projects in neighboring MPO's or RPO's they may do so in lieu of allocating points to projects with in LOSRPO. This promotes a regional approach to the prioritization process. Only projects that originate at the Regional level are eligible for scoring and local points allocation under this methodology; Statewide level projects that are not programmed at the Statewide level will not be scored at the Regional level or receive Regional Level local points under this methodology, unless the Land of Sky RPO TAC elects to do so.

Land of Sky RPO receives 1200 points at the Division Needs Tier. After scoring projects with the LOSRPO's approved methodology, the two top-scoring Division Needs projects within each county will be allocated 100 points each. The remaining points will be allocated to the next highest scoring projects within the RPO (regardless of county mode), to reach Land of Sky RPO's total point allocation of 1200 points. In the event any counties do not have at least two Division Level projects, then additional projects will be selected from the top of the list of remaining projects within the RPO as a whole.

If a county chooses to allocate Division Needs Points to projects in neighboring MPO's or RPO's they may do so in lieu of allocating points to projects with in LOSRPO. This promotes a regional approach to the prioritization process. Only projects that originate at the Division Needs level are eligible for scoring and local point's allocation under this methodology; Statewide and Regional level projects that are not programmed at the higher levels will not be scored at the Division Needs level or receive Division Needs local points under this methodology, unless the Land of Sky RPO TAC elects to do so.

Notwithstanding any of the above, however, no local points will be assigned to any project requiring local match if the local government in question expresses no desire to provide the required match and no desire to pursue the project at this time. In this case, points will be assigned to the next highest-ranking appropriate project. Should a county choose to assign maximum local input points to a project that does not score in the top two projects in that county they may elect to do so at their discretion. These changes will be noted in the Local Input Points Assignment Table.

NCDOT allows organizations to flex up to 500 points between the Regional Impact and Division Needs categories. LOSRPO has the option to apply this flexing policy by shifting up to 500 points from the Regional category to the Division category or by shifting up to 500 points from the Division category to the Regional category. The LOSRPO TAC has the discretion to decide whether it wishes to flex any points between categories. If the TAC chooses to flex local input points, LOSRPO must provide documentation of this decision to the NCDOT SPOT Office before the deadline for assigning Regional Impact category local input points.

The LOSRPO TAC can adjust projects receiving points or adjust the number of points given to a project based on their discretion. Any exceptions will be noted on the LOSRPO Final Local Input Points Assignment Tables and be provided to NCDOT SPOT office and be part of an open, public process that complies with Chapter 143, Article 33C of the North Carolina General Statutes. All prioritization documents, lists and Local Input Points Assignment tables will be made available on the RPO's website as required.

SCHEDULE AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

Public Outreach Process for the Prioritization List will include the following steps based on the draft LOSRPO Public Involvement Plan, section VII. Page 14:

- After consideration by the TAC, the draft Prioritization List will be published for a minimum two-week (14-day) public comment period and the notice will be advertised using our media resources provided in Appendix B.
- The LOSRPO TCC/TAC members will consider the draft Prioritization Methodology it will then be published for a minimum four-week (28-day) public comment period and the notice will be advertised using our media resources provided in Appendix B.
- The notices for the public comment period and the public hearing will include an announcement stating that persons with disabilities will be accommodated. Special provisions will be made if notified 48 hours in advance (i.e. having available large print documents, audio material, someone proficient in sign language, a translator or other provisions as requested). The Prioritization List and Prioritization Methodology and virtual meetings access information will be posted on the LOSRPO website. Virtual

meeting access will be available on meeting agendas. Written comments will be received during the comment period and will be directed to the LOSRPO. The LOSRPO's contact person, phone number and e-mail address will be included in the public notice. The LOSRPO will assemble all comments and forward comments to the TAC.

- The RPOTAC will hold a public hearing on the draft Prioritization List and the Prioritization Methodology. The public hearing will be held at a location which is accessible to persons with disabilities. Virtual meeting access will be available on meeting agendas. The RPOTAC will approve a final Prioritization List and Prioritization Methodology after considering the public comments received. The public review periods for the Prioritization List and the Prioritization Methodology will sometimes be concurrent and sometimes will run separately, depending upon which schedule is more practical.

When possible, the Land of Sky RPO is duplicating timelines, meetings, and notices with the FBRMPO

Proposed Schedule for Implementation of Policy in Prioritization 7.0 TCC & TAC adoption of project list to submit to NCDOT –occurred on **October 19, 2023**. Adoption of this policy– Scheduled **May 16, 2024** (with public hearing at TAC meeting) NCDOT has not yet finalized the schedule for the remainder of the Prioritization 7.0 process at the time of this document's adoption. When further schedule details are set, LOSRPO staff will list these on the **www.landofskyrpo.org**. A general outline of the likely schedule follows:

•NCDOT will release quantitative project scores and announce the projects that are funded in the Statewide category.

•Next, each county, working jointly with its municipalities, will approve a ranked list of its top ten projects and submit this list to LOSRPO. This process will repeat for both the Regional Impact and the Division Needs Local Input Point windows.

•Then LOSRPO staff will calculate scores for local point assignment based on this adopted methodology and post the scores and draft point assignments on the LOSRPO website

•LOSRPO staff will post local input point assignments and gather input after the draft scores have been calculated and advertise these for public commit in accordance with the adopted PIP.

•Then, LOSRPO TCC and TAC will adopt Regional Impact category local input point assignments at one of their regular meetings.

•NCDOT will announce the projects receiving funding in the Regional Impact category

•Next, each county will again develop an approve ranked list of its top ten projects and submit this list to LOSRPO.

•Finally, the TCC and TAC will adopt Division Needs category local input point assignments at one of their regular meetings once this process is complete, NCDOT will release a draft Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)based on the outcome of the Prioritization process.

MATERIAL SHARING

All Materials, Local Input Point Methodology, Project Lists, County Ranked Project Lists, P7.0 quantitative score and Local Input Point Assignment Tables, will be made available on the Land of Sky RPO website www.landofsky.org

Email comments to rpo@landofsky.org