

HIGH COUNTRY RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION (RPO) 2015 STIP PROJECT SOLICITATION AND RANKING PROCESS

Introduction

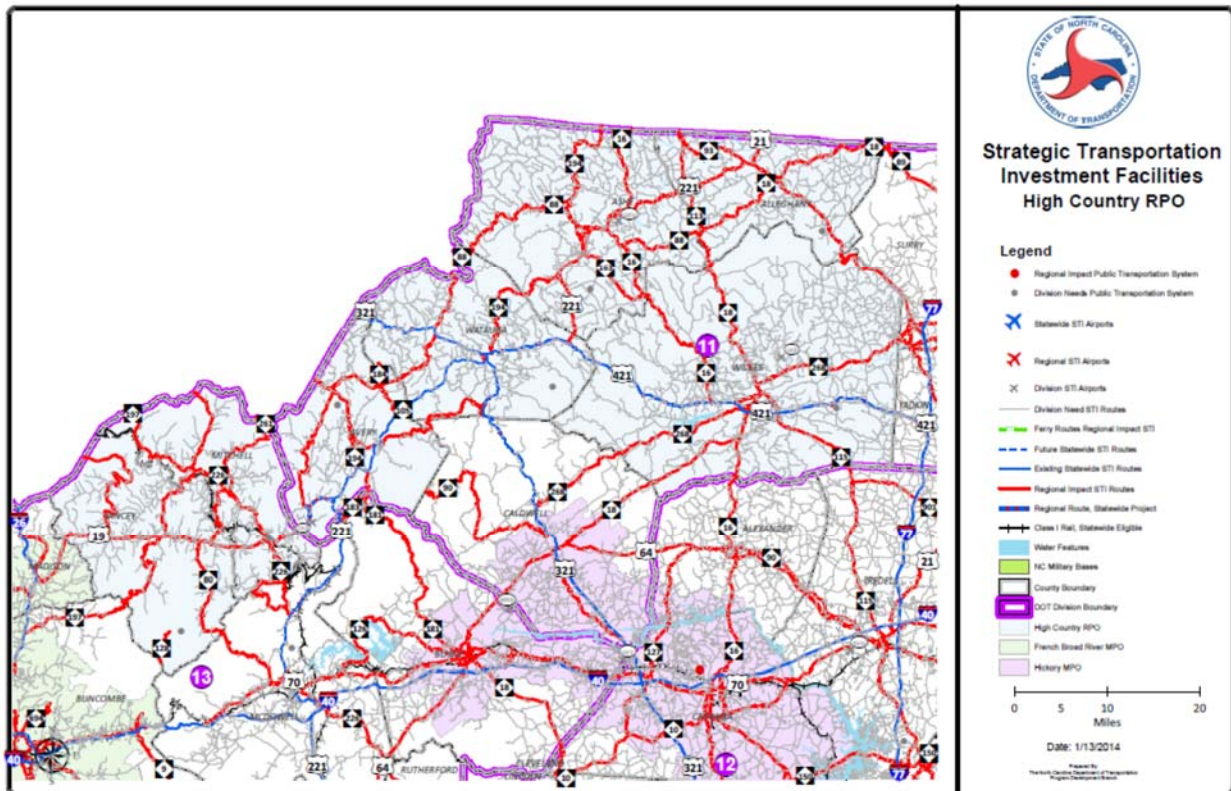
The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and North Carolina General Assembly have required that all rural planning organizations develop a project solicitation and ranking process to evaluate projects for the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for highway, bicycle & pedestrian, public transportation, aviation, and rail modes of transportation. This process has been approved by the NCDOT to ensure compliance with the legislative intent of the mandate.

The methodology for ranking projects will include the following steps:

1. Submittal of new projects to NCDOT
2. Solicitation of transportation project priorities from the counties in the High Country RPO region
3. Ranking of solicited projects received from High Country RPO counties for the development of a priority needs list
4. Assignment of 1400 points to top projects on the priority needs list

Applicability

This process would apply to all projects ranked by the High Country RPO in Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey counties that fall in the regional and division levels as defined in the 2013 Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) legislation and depicted in the map below.



Statewide mobility projects will be 100% quantitative data driven by NCDOT with no local input from the RPO or Divisions. Regional projects will be 70% quantitative data driven by NCDOT with 30% local input (15% NCDOT Division 11 or 13 and 15% RPO). Division level projects will be 50% quantitative data driven by NCDOT with 50% local input (25% NCDOT Division 11 or 13 and 25% RPO). Other factors like local government priorities will also be considered. RPO local input points are due to NCDOT by September 30, 2016.

New Project Solicitation

High Country RPO staff will request new projects from the seven High Country Counties and the Town of Boone, and submit them to the Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation (SPOT) office for inclusion in the P4.0 Project list.

RPO Steps	Target Dates
Staff to solicit new transportation projects from County Managers (highway, bicycle & pedestrian, public transportation, aviation, and rail modes)	June 8, 2015 – July 8, 2015
New projects scheduled for RTCC consideration and recommendation of approval to RTAC	August 19, 2015
New projects scheduled for consideration and approval by the RTAC	August 19, 2015
RPO staff submittal of approved RTCC/RTAC new projects to NCDOT for project evaluation and scoring.	October 19, 2015 - November 20, 2015

Public Input Process

Public input for the STIP prioritization process shall be in accordance with the High Country RPO Public Participation Plan. The scoring and ranking methodology will be shared with the public through press releases and posting on the High Country RPO website at <http://www.regiond.org/TRANSPORT.html> and will consider any public input into the ranking. The RPO will issue a press release regarding the adoption of the Priority Needs list and provide for public comment at applicable RTCC and RTAC meetings. The prioritization of projects from the Priority Needs list will be accomplished at applicable RTCC and RTAC meetings and will include a public hearing component. The results of prioritizing the Priority Needs list and associated public comments received will be posted on the High Country RPO website at <http://www.regiond.org/TRANSPORT.html>. In addition, any comments received during a public hearing held by the High Country RPO’s RTCC or RTAC will be included in the meeting minutes and included as appendices in formal documents for which they were made. The final assignment of points by the RPO will also be available via the High Country RPO’s website.

Solicitation of Projects for Ranking

High Country RPO staff will request 30 projects (highway, bicycle & pedestrian, public transportation, aviation, and rail modes of transportation) from the seven High Country counties and the Town of Boone to be ranked will be in priority order. The number of projects per county is based on population, area, and primary road mileage. The number of projects per county (and Town of Boone) is:

Alleghany – 3; Ashe – 5; Avery – 3; Mitchell – 3; Watauga – 4; Wilkes – 7; Yancey – 4; Town of Boone - 1

Proposed Scoring Methodology

Projects submitted will be evaluated by the criteria and scoring as detailed in the **High Country RPO 2015 Project Prioritization Criteria Definitions and Scoring** system identified on pages 4 - 7. The resulting project scores and rankings will be adopted by the RPO as the High Country RPO Priority Needs List and will serve as the basis for assignment of points to transportation projects which include all modes of transportation.

Local Point Assignment Methodologies

The Priority Needs List will guide in the assignment of points. After projects are prioritized, the top 14 projects receive 100 points each. The top 14 projects in the Regional Impact category tier receive 100 points and the top 14 projects in the Division Needs category will receive 100 points. If a project is not funded at the Statewide Mobility level it will shift down to the Regional level for RPO scoring and ranking.

Regional Impact Projects: Eligible Regional needs routes in the High Country RPO include parts of US 19E, US 21, US 221, and US 421 not otherwise eligible at the statewide level. In addition, all NC routes (NC 197, NC 194, NC 16, NC 18 ...). The Class I railroad in Mitchell County is also an eligible regional rail line. If a project is not funded at the Regional Impact category it will shift down to the Division Needs category for RPO scoring and ranking.

Division Needs Projects: Eligible Division Needs routes in the High Country RPO include all State highways and all other modes of transportation (bicycle/pedestrian, remaining rail, airport, and transit projects).

Schedule

RPO Steps	Target Dates
The High Country RPO staff to submit the updated 4.0 draft methodology for ranking and scoring of projects to NCDOT for review and approval.	September 2015 - October 2015
Draft methodology available for public comment through press releases and the posting of the document on the High Country RPO website at http://www.regiond.org/TRANSPORT.html	October 15, 2015 - November 15, 2015
Consideration and approval of methodology by RTCC & RTAC at November 18, 2015 RTCC meeting and December 16, 2015 RTAC meeting with public hearing	November 18, 2015 and December 16, 2015
RPO staff to solicit priority projects with a supplemental overall project scores list (after scores are released from NCDOT) from local governments for scoring and ranking	April 2016
RPO consideration and approval of Prioritization 4.0 Priority Needs list at RPO meetings with public hearing	May 18, 2016
RPO assigns 100 points to top 14 ranking regional projects	May 2016
RPO assigns 100 points to top 14 ranking division projects	August 2016
All public comments received and all final point assignments including any justification for point assignment which deviates from this local methodology will be placed on the High Country RPO website at http://www.regiond.org/TRANSPORT.html by the end of August 2016	August 2016

HIGH COUNTRY RPO
2015
Project Prioritization Criteria
Definitions and Scoring

Highway

Volume to Capacity

Current Average Daily Traffic (ADT) count as ratio to road's capacity - based on most recent ADT rates and road capacity figures available from NCDOT

Greater than or equal to 1.5	15 points
1.0 - 1.49	10 points
.5 - .99	5 points
<.5	0 points

Crash Incidence

Measure of total crashes from NCDOT's most recent three years prioritization crash data.

150 +	15 points
100 – 149	12 points
50 – 99	9 points
25 – 49	6 points
0 – 24	3 points

Upgrade Existing Facility

Improves currently deficient roadway to meet minimum NCDOT standards

Yes	15 points
No	0 points

CTP or Thoroughfare Plan Consistency

The project is identified in an adopted Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) or Thoroughfare Plan

Yes	10 points
No	0 points

Project Status

The project is in one or more of the following stages of development: Funded in STIP (programmed in years 6-10 of the STIP), Allocation of Preliminary Engineering (PE) Funds, Final Environmental Documents completed. Projects will receive these points based on the most advanced stage of project development listed below.

None	0 points
Funded (TIP)	3 points
PE Funds	8 points
Environmental Documents	10 points

Connectivity

Project is part of larger system improvement – project is a coordinated phase of a proposed/scheduled improvement

Project completes final portion of phased facility improvement	5 points
Project connects to another phase of scheduled facility improvement	3 points
Project is initial phase of a scheduled facility improvement	2 points
Independent project	0 points

Access to Community Facilities

(school/hospital/emergency care/fire dept. /police dept. /employment destinations (more than 100 employees)) - Project connects to educational, health care, emergency service, or employment facilities

Direct access	5 points (driveway connects to project)
Indirect access	3 points (within 1 mile)
No access	0 points (greater than 1 mile)

Truck Traffic

Average daily number of large freight movers (tractor trailers, etc) on a road.

0-200	1 point
201-400	2 points
401-800	3points
801-1000	4 points
1001 +	5 points

Local Priority Project

Local priority to be determined as follows: 1) the number of projects to be submitted per county will be determined through a system that considers NCDOT’s Primary Road Mileage data, US Census population data, and county square mileage data. 2) County projects selected for consideration to be chosen from NCDOT’s Existing Projects List at the time of point assignment.

First priority	20 points
Second priority	15 points
Third priority	10 points
Fourth priority	5 points
Fifth priority	0 points

Bicycle and Pedestrian

Access

Project provides access to school, medical center, shopping center, residential development, or major employment center (100+ employees)

Directs access	15 points
Indirect access (within 0.25 mile)	10 points
Greater than 0.25 mile	0 points

Connectivity

Project provides connection to existing bike or pedestrian facility

Yes	15 points
No	0 points

Safety

Project attempts to improve safety receives points (receive points score all that apply)

1 or more bicycle or pedestrian crashes along corridor during last 5 available years	10 points
Project is separated from roadway by at least 5 feet	10 points
Posted speed limit on roadway is greater than 35 mph	10 points

Plan Consistency

Project is identified in an adopted CTP, bicycle, pedestrian, or greenway plan

Yes	20 points
No	0 points

Local Priority Project

Local priority to be determined as follows: 1) the number of projects to be submitted per county will be determined through a system that considers NCDOT's Primary Road Mileage data, US Census population data, and county square mileage data. 2) County projects selected for consideration to be chosen from NCDOT's Existing Projects List at the time of point assignment.

First priority	20 points
Second priority	15 points
Third priority	10 points
Fourth priority	5 points
Fifth priority	0 points

Aviation

Aviation projects will be scored as follows:

The NCDOT's Division of Aviation's raw score (50 point scale) X 1.6 + Local Priority Project score.

Local Priority Project

Local priority to be determined as follows: 1) the number of projects to be submitted per county will be determined through a system that considers NCDOT's Primary Road Mileage data, US Census population data, and county square mileage data. 2) County projects selected for consideration to be chosen from NCDOT's Existing Projects List at the time of point assignment.

First priority	20 points
Second priority	15 points
Third priority	10 points
Fourth priority	5 points
Fifth priority	0 points

Transit

Public Transit projects will be scored as follows:

The NCDOT's Division of Public Transit's raw score (50 point scale) X 1.6 + Local Priority Project score

Local Priority Project

Local priority to be determined as follows: 1) the number of projects to be submitted per county will be determined through a system that considers NCDOT's Primary Road Mileage data, US Census population data, and county square mileage data. 2) County projects selected for consideration to be chosen from NCDOT's Existing Projects List at the time of point assignment.

First priority	20 points
Second priority	15 points
Third priority	10 points
Fourth priority	5 points
Fifth priority	0 points

Rail

Rail projects will be scored as follows:

The NCDOT's Division of Rail raw score (50 point scale) X 1.6 + Local Priority Project score

Local Priority Project

Local priority to be determined as follows: 1) the number of projects to be submitted per county will be determined through a system that considers NCDOT's Primary Road Mileage data, US Census population data, and county square mileage data. 2) County projects selected for consideration to be chosen from NCDOT's Existing Projects List at the time of point assignment.

First priority	20 points
Second priority	15 points
Third priority	10 points
Fourth priority	5 points
Fifth priority	0 points

RURAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RTAC) FLEXIBILITY

The methodology shall serve as a guide for the RTAC to assign points to projects located within the High Country RPO planning jurisdiction and the RTAC will have the flexibility to assign points as the committee desires. However, deviation from the methodology shall require justification/rationale to be made during a public meeting of the RTAC as advertised.