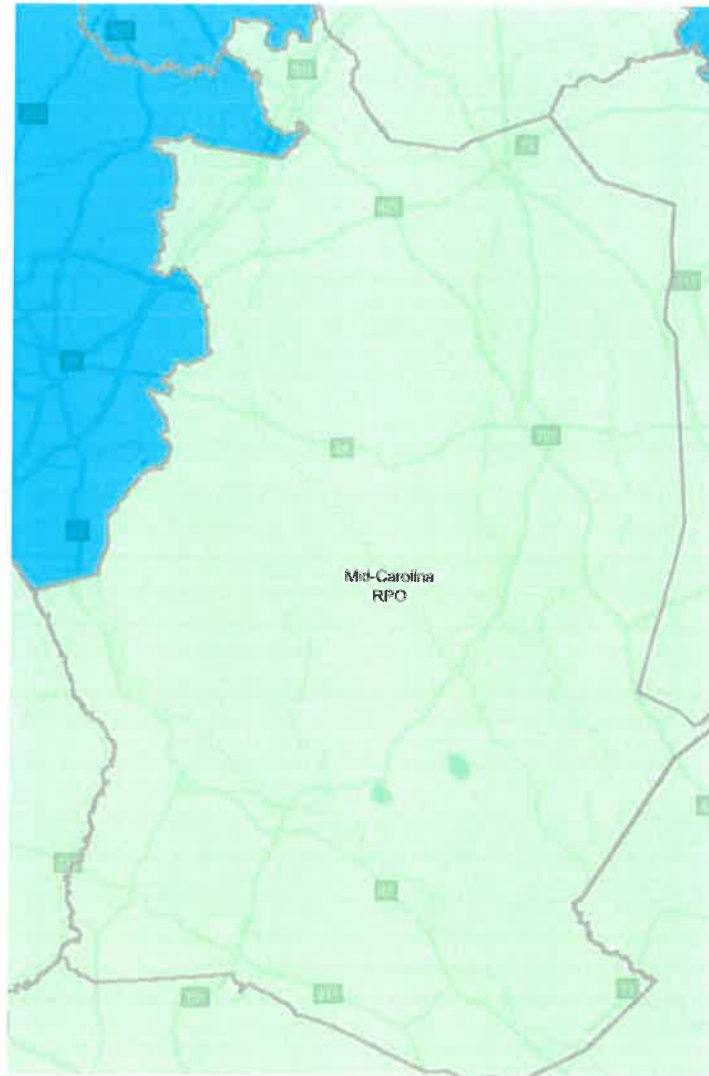


Mid-Carolina Rural Planning Organization

SPOT 8.0 Prioritization Process

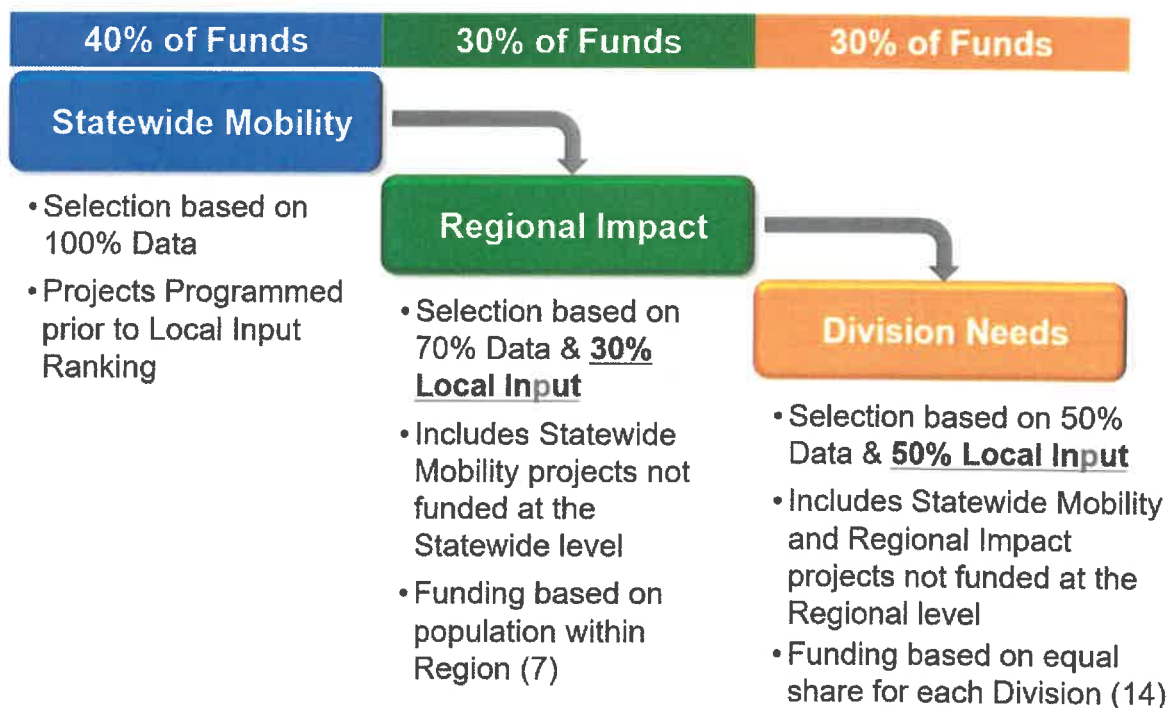


Local Input Point Methodology Overview

The Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) law (GS 136-189.10 and .11), enacted in 2013, directs NCDOT to select and fund major capital improvement projects using a data-driven prioritization process in combination with local input. Under STI, all major capital mobility/expansion and modernization projects across all six modes of transportation compete for funding. Each project is classified into one of three funding categories – Statewide Mobility, Regional Impact, or Division Needs – where it competes for funds with other eligible projects.

Statewide Mobility eligible projects compete against all other projects in this category across the state, and project selection is based 100% on the data-driven quantitative score. Regional Impact projects compete against all other projects in this category within the same funding region (consisting of two NCDOT Transportation Divisions), and selection is based 70% on the quantitative score and 30% on local input (15% MPO/RPO priority and 15% NCDOT Division Engineer priority). Division Needs projects compete against all other projects within the same NCDOT Transportation Division, and selection is based 50% on quantitative score and 50% on local input (25% MPO/RPO priority and 25% NCDOT Division Engineer priority).

The STI law includes an innovative component known as cascading, where projects not funded in the Statewide Mobility category are eligible for funding in the Regional Impact category. Similarly, projects not funded in the Regional Impact category are eligible for Division Needs funds. Projects that cascade down are then subject to the scoring criteria and local input for the respective funding category.



Project eligibility for each STI category, as defined in law, is shown below.

STI Project Eligibility			
Mode	Statewide Mobility	Regional Impact	Division Needs
Highway	- Interstates (existing & future) - NHS routes (as of July 1, 2012) - STRAHNET Routes - ADHS Routes - Uncompleted Intrastate projects - Designated Toll Facilities	Other US and NC Routes	All County (SR) Routes
Aviation	Large Commercial Service Airports (\$500K cap)	Other Commercial Service Airports not in Statewide (\$300K cap)	All Airports without Commercial Service (\$18.5M cap)
Bicycle-Pedestrian	N/A	N/A	All projects (\$0 state funds)
Public Transportation	N/A	Service spanning two or more counties (10% cap)	All other service, including terminals, stations, and facilities
Ferry	N/A	Ferry expansion	Replacement vessels
Rail	Freight Capacity Service on Class I Railroad Corridors	Rail service spanning two or more counties not Statewide	Rail service not included on Statewide or Regional

MPOs/RPOs and Divisions indicate priority by applying local input points to projects. Each organization receives a baseline of 1,000 local input points, with additional points (up to 2,500) based on population. Mid-Carolina RPO has a total of 1,400 points to apply to projects in the Regional Impact category and a total of 1,400 points to apply to projects in the Division Needs category. State law requires NCDOT to approve how each organization will assign points to projects, in a document known as their Local Input Point Methodology.

Schedule and Public Involvement

- **New Candidate Projects:** The Mid-Carolina RPO solicited new candidate projects throughout 2024. The RPO worked with the Mid-Carolina TCC and TAC Boards, and requested projects from local member governments and transportation planning partners (Counties, Towns, transit departments, airports, NCDOT Division offices, etc.). The final new project submittal list was approved at the September 2024 TAC Meeting. Projects were required to be submitted to the North Carolina Department of Transportation SPOT office by October 2024.
- **Project Rankings and Local Point Assignment:** The Mid-Carolina staff will coordinate with local planning partners and the TCC and TAC Boards to evaluate all projects with their respective funding designation upon the release of quantitative scores from NCDOT. Final approval and point assignment by the TAC will take place no later than the SPOT Office deadline.
- **Public Input Process:** This Prioritization Methodology, along with the project rankings and point assignments, will be made readily available to the public. During the point assignment period, public input will be gathered through coordination with our planning partners. The website also provide contact information for the public to reach RPO staff for input.
- **Use of Public Input:** The RPO engages with planning partners, other stakeholders, and citizens to accept public comments and input throughout each stage of the transportation planning process, including the prioritization process. The comments are documented and filed by the RPO and shared with the TCC and TAC Boards for their information and consideration in current and future transportation planning efforts and prioritization process.

**All future dates included in this document are subject to change based on the NCDOT SPOT Office schedule. Any schedule changes received will be posted on the Mid-Carolina RPO website and will be added to this document as an addendum.*

Final Ranking and Local Points Assignment

After scoring of all of the projects using the methodology, points will be assigned to projects. The projects will be ranked based upon the score they receive. The Mid-Carolina RPO has 1400 points to assign toward Regional Projects, and another 1400 points to assign toward Division Projects. Each project can receive a maximum of 100 points (except projects that cross MPO/RPO boundaries, in which case the maximum points correspond to the percentage of the project within the RPO Boundary).

The top scoring projects in the Regional Funding Category and the top scoring projects in the Division Category receive the maximum points each, until the 1400 total points per category have been met. The remaining projects will receive no local input points from the RPO, but will compete based upon the SPOT assigned quantitative scoring system, and may receive points from NCDOT Divisions.

The Mid-Carolina RPO Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) holds final authority over the local points assignment. Adjustments may be made to the points assignment based on public input and the combination of quantitative and qualitative scores, analysis and coordination by RPO and NCDOT staff, and other planning partners. The TAC may modify, based on public input or other documented reasons, the points assignment to maximize the RPO's local input points benefit and projects chances to score best prior to approval. All final point assignments and any final adjustments made to the scoring by the TAC will be posted to the website and will be available for review at the RPO offices.

Materials Sharing

In keeping with the goal of transparency in the transportation planning process, and to facilitate early and often public and stakeholder involvement, the RPO maintains records of data used in scoring projects and assignment of local input points. After points are assigned, the final scoring and points assignments will be available on the RPO's website (www.mccog.org), as well as the RPO's office (6205 Raeford Road Fayetteville NC, 28304).

In the MCRPO area, the following types of projects are eligible for each category of project:

Statewide Mobility	Highway: US 421, NC 87, NC 24-27* Rail: Improvements to NS or CSX freight lines All Other Modes: None
Regional Impact	Highway: Improvements to any NC or US Routes Rail: Improvements to NS or CSX freight lines, non-station passenger rail projects Transit: Multi-county transit routes All Other Modes: None
Division Needs	All Modes: All projects

It should be noted that projects from higher categories are able to “cascade down” for eligibility in lower categories as well, should they be unsuccessful in getting selected for funding at the higher category. Thus, all Statewide projects are also eligible in the Regional and Division competitions, and all Regional projects are also eligible in the Division competition.

MCRPO has 1,400 local input points to assign in both the Regional Impact and Division Needs categories. This document describes the method for selecting projects to which to assign these points.

The local prioritization process consists of three parts: (1) ranking of projects at the countywide level; (2) quantitative scoring of projects; and (3) ranking of scored projects for assignment of points. Each of these is discussed in more detail below.

Description of Criteria and Weights

Countywide Ranking of Projects

Within each MCRPO county, all the local jurisdictions (including the county and any municipalities within the county that are in MCRPO) must work together to develop a single ranked list of projects in all modes to submit to MCRPO for use in the prioritization process. This list must be based on the list of projects that have been previously submitted to NCDOT—new projects cannot be added at this point in the process. These 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, the following general rules apply:

All jurisdictions should be given an opportunity to participate in the development of their county's ranked project list if they choose

- The process must include at least one meeting open to the public that allows for public comment
- There must be written documentation stating the reasoning behind the selected project ranking (this must be submitted to MCRPO and will be posted online along with the project list)

These local ranked priority lists should be developed and submitted to MCRPO within 45 days after NCDOT releases its draft quantitative scores for projects. Once submitted to MCRPO, the local priority lists will be posted online and made available for additional public comment prior to the MCRPO RTAC's approval of local input points on projects.

All projects will receive 50% of their total MCRPO 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 Quantitative Scores

The remaining 50% of the MCRPO score is based on the Prioritization 8.0 quantitative score calculated by NCDOT. The elements 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 8.0 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 MCRPO scoring.

Division Needs: Prioritization 8.0 division quantitative scores are reported on a 50 point scale, so unlike the regional category above, no rescaling of scores is necessary.

Total Score and Project Ranking Approach/Point Assignment Process

Once all projects in each mode have been scored according to the criteria above, MCRPO staff will develop a ranked list of projects within each county and within the region as a whole based on the outcome of the scoring. 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 RTCC and RTAC for approval. There will be separate rankings for the Regional Impact category and the Division Needs category.

The recommendation will call for the three top-scoring projects for Bladen, Cumberland, Harnett, and Sampson Counties (regardless of mode) to be allocated 100 points each. Additionally, the two next-highest scoring projects within the region (regardless of county and mode) will also be allocated 100 points each, to reach MCRPO's Prioritization 8.0 point allocation of 1,400 points. In the event that a county does not have at least three eligible projects, then additional projects will be selected from the top of the list of remaining projects in the other counties. This allows for geographic equity of projects in the MCRPO region.

No projects with a Prioritization 8.0 quantitative score less than 10 will be recommended for points.

Any project that local jurisdictions specifically request not be assigned points during the countywide project ranking process will not be recommended for points.

An example of the ranking process is shown on the next page.

Example – The projects in the Example RPO are ranked as follows:

Project ID	County	County Rank Points (50)	Quantitative Points (50)		Total Score (100)		Recommended for 100 Local Points	
			Regional	Division	Regional	Division	Regional	Division
A000001	County B	50	N/A	40.59	N/A	90.59		Yes – County B #1
B000003	County D	50	N/A	34.14	N/A	84.14		Yes – County D #1
H000001	County A	50	29.34	32.35	79.34	82.35	Yes – County A #1	Yes – County A #1
H000002	County C	45	33.36	33.19	78.36	78.19	Yes – County C #1	Yes – County C #1
B000001	County C	50	N/A	26.23	N/A	76.23		Yes – County C #2
H000008	County D	45	26.02	28.73	71.02	73.73	Yes – County D #1	Yes – County D #2
B000002	County B	45	N/A	27.86	N/A	72.86		Yes – County B #2
A000002	County C	40	N/A	32.67	N/A	72.67		Yes – Rem. #1
H000003	County A	45	25.65	27.15	70.65	72.15	Yes – County A #2	Yes – County A #2
H000010	County D	40	30.59	31.65	70.59	71.65	Yes – County D #2	Yes – Rem. #2
A000003	County C	35	N/A	32.67	N/A	67.67		Yes – Rem. #3
B000004	County D	35	N/A	29.16	N/A	64.16		Yes – Rem.

								#4
B000007	County B	40	N/A	24.06	N/A	64.06		Yes – Rem. #5
B000005	County C	25	N/A	38.00	N/A	63.00		Yes – Rem. #6
H000005	County A	40	N/A	20.63	N/A	60.63		
H000006	County B	35	21.0 4	23.02	56.0 4	58.02	Yes – County B #1	
A000004	County D	30	N/A	27.35	N/A	57.35		
H000011	County A	25	29.1 8	31.34	54.1 8	56.34	Yes – Rem. #1	
H000004	County C	30	23.7 4	25.77	53.7 4	55.77	Yes – County C #2	
H000007	County A	35	N/A	18.17	N/A	53.17		
B000006	County B	30	N/A	22.41	N/A	52.41		
H000017	County D	25	24.8 7	27.21	49.8 7	52.21	Yes – Rem. #2	
B000010	County C	20	N/A	31.69	N/A	51.69		
B000008	County C	15	N/A	36.60	N/A	51.60		
H000019	County D	20	25.3 1	26.22	45.3 1	46.22	Yes – Rem. #3	
H000012	County B	25	N/A	20.59	N/A	45.59		
H000020	County A	20	23.4 2	24.96	43.4 2	44.96	Yes – Rem. #4	
H000009	County A	30	N/A	13.06	N/A	43.06		
B000009	County B	20	N/A	20.44	N/A	40.44		
H000021	County D	15	21.8 9	24.15	36.8 9	39.15	Yes – Rem. #5	
B000011	County C	10	N/A	24.88	N/A	34.88		

H000015	County B	15	14.8 1	16.75	29.8 1	31.75	Yes – County B #2	
H000024	County D	10	19.5 1	20.63	29.5 1	30.63	Yes – Rem. #6	
H000014	County C	0	27.8 5	28.72	27.8 5	28.72		
A000005	County C	0	N/A	24.97	N/A	24.97		
H000026	County D	5	20.1 4	19.89	25.1 4	24.89		
H000025	County B	0	23.5 2	23.70	23.5 2	23.70		
H000016	County C	0	23.0 6	23.07	23.0 6	23.07		
B000012	County B	10	N/A	11.79	N/A	21.79		
H000028	County D	0	20.6 9	20.92	20.6 9	20.92		
H000027	County D	0	18.4 6	19.72	18.4 6	19.72		
H000013	County C	5	N/A	12.57	N/A	17.57		
H000022	County B	5	9.55	11.27	14.5 5	16.27		
B000013	County D	0	N/A	15.71	N/A	15.71		
H000023	County C	0	13.8 9	13.70	13.8 9	13.70		
H000018	County C	0	N/A	12.19	N/A	12.19		
H000029	County D	0	13.1 7	11.76	13.1 7	11.76		
H000 028	County D	0	N / A	11. 67	N / A	11. 67		

In this example:

County A would receive points on 4 Regional Impact projects and 2 Division Needs projects. County B would receive points on 2 Regional Impact projects and 3 Division Needs projects. County C would receive points on 2 Regional Impact projects and 5 Division Needs projects. County D would receive points on 6 Regional Impact projects and 4 Division Needs projects.

Point Flexing Policy

NCDOT allows RPOs to flex up to 500 points between the Regional Impact and Division Needs categories. MCRPO 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 MCRPO RTAC has the discretion to decide whether or not it wishes to flex any points between categories. If the RTAC chooses to flex local input points, MCRPO must provide documentation of this decision to the NCDOT SPOT Office before the deadline for assigning Regional Impact category local input points.

Deviations from Methodology

These recommended point assignments will be presented to the RTCC and RTAC for their review and approval. The RTCC retains the discretion to make recommendations to the RTAC regarding changes to the list. The RTAC has the final discretion regarding assignment of local points and retains the flexibility to make changes to these point assignments if it is able to document a reason for doing so. These changes must be documented and made available to the public via the MCRPO website.

Cascading Projects

MCRPO will submit its Regional Impact local point assignments separately from its Division Needs local point assignments and will be able to learn which projects are funded in the Regional Impact category before assigning points in the Division Needs category. As a result, if there are projects *funded* in the Regional Impact category that would otherwise be in line to receive Division Needs points as a result of this methodology, those Division Needs points will instead be assigned to the next-highest scoring eligible project that has not received points (subject to the rules requiring that at least three projects from Bladen, Cumberland, Harnett, and Sampson County receive points). This process will be clearly explained as part of the public outreach process, and the list of “next in line” projects that could potentially be affected by this rule will be presented at the same time the initial point assignment recommendations are presented.

Point Sharing

On projects that cross outside of the MCRPO planning boundary, MCRPO must coordinate with its neighboring organizations on the allocation of points. By right, MCRPO may only assign the number of points equal to the percentage of the project that is located within the MCRPO boundary—for example, MCRPO could assign a project that was 48% located within its boundary only 48 points by right. However, MCRPO will coordinate with its neighboring organizations to “share” points to ensure that these projects reach a point total of 100 points—in the example above, MCRPO would share 52 points with its neighbors to ensure the project receives 100 points. In the event that point sharing is not necessary on these projects, either because the neighboring organization already plans to assign its full amount of points for the project or because the neighboring organization rejects MCRPO’s offer to share points, MCRPO will only assign the points for the portion within its boundary and the remaining points will be allocated to the next-highest scoring project on the project list that did not already receive full points.

Schedule and Public Outreach/Material Sharing

Public Participation in Project Scoring Process

As part of this project scoring process, MCRPO will post the list of projects being submitted for Prioritization 8.0, the county-level priority lists, , the results of the quantitative analysis, the recommended draft local input point assignments, and the final approved local input point assignments at the following website: <https://mccog.org/rural-planning-organization-rpo.asp> .

The public is invited to submit comments via the website, email, phone, or mail, as well as in person at MCRPO RTCC and RTAC meetings at any point throughout the process. Additionally, at least one public meeting will be held to gather comments at a time after the initial staff-recommended scoring is developed based on this scoring methodology, but before the MCRPO RTCC and RTAC vote on the assignment of points. Any comments provided by the public will be reviewed by the MCRPO RTCC and RTAC before the vote on the assignment of points and those discussions will be documented in the meeting minutes.

Proposed Schedule for Implementation of Policy in Prioritization 8.0

- MCRPO RTCC & RTAC adoption of project list to submit to NCDOT –August 14, 2025
- Adoption of this policy – expected no later than April 23, 2026 (with public hearing at beginning of RTAC meeting)
 - NCDOT will release quantitative project scores and announce the projects that are funded in the Statewide category expected by the end of May 2026
 - Next, each county, working jointly with its municipalities will approve a ranked list of its top ten projects and submit this list to MCRPO – this should happen within 45 days after NCDOT releases the project scores if possible
 - Then MCRPO staff will calculate scores for local point assignment based on this adopted methodology and post the scores and draft point assignments on the MCRPO website—expected by the middle of July 2026
 - MCRPO staff will host public workshop(s) to present local input point assignments and gather input after the draft scores have been calculated, but before the MCRPO RTCC and RTAC must vote on approval of the Regional Impact local input points—expected by August 6, 2026
 - Then, the MCRPO RTCC and RTAC will adopt Regional Impact category local input point assignments at one of their regular meetings—expected at a special meeting in August 2026 meeting
 - NCDOT will announce the projects receiving funding in the Regional Impact category—expected near the end of September 2026
 - Next, MCRPO staff will adjust the draft point assignments if needed in accordance with the cascading policy discussed above—expected by September 30, 2026
 - Finally, the MCRPO RTCC and RTAC will adopt Division Needs category local input point assignments at one of their regular meetings—expected at their October 8 or December 10, 2026 meetings. At the conclusion of this process, NCDOT will release a draft Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) based on the outcome of the Prioritization 8.0 process.

Adoption

A motion was made by Alan McLamb and seconded by Paven Patel for the adoption of this policy, and upon being put to a vote it was duly adopted on 04/29/2026.


Chair, Mid-Carolina RPO RTAC


Secretary, Mid-Carolina RPO RTAC