



Down East Rural Planning Organization

Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation (SPOT) Local Input Point (LIP) Assignment Methodology

Introduction

The Down East Rural Planning Organization (DERPO), covering Carteret, Craven, Jones, and Pamlico Counties, is required by the Strategic Transportation Investments law to develop a local input methodology for prioritizing all transportation projects (aviation, bike and pedestrian, ferry, highway, public transportation and rail) within the RPO boundary that may compete for state and federal funding, and to submit the methodology to the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for approval.

DERPO has developed this prioritization method to satisfy the quantitative, data-driven requirements of the legislation while protecting the discretion of local officials by incorporating subjective, qualitative local input where possible.

This process is intended to be open and transparent. As such, all meetings of the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) are open to the public and public participation will be solicited both at these meetings and through an advertised Public Comment Period. In addition, the draft methodology and preliminary point assignments will be posted at the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments' DERPO webpage: <http://www.eccog.org/derpo-prioritization/> along with instructions for submitting comments. Comments will be collected by the RPO Director and distributed to the TCC and TAC as part of their normal meeting packets.

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.

Table 1: STI Funding Categories and Cascading

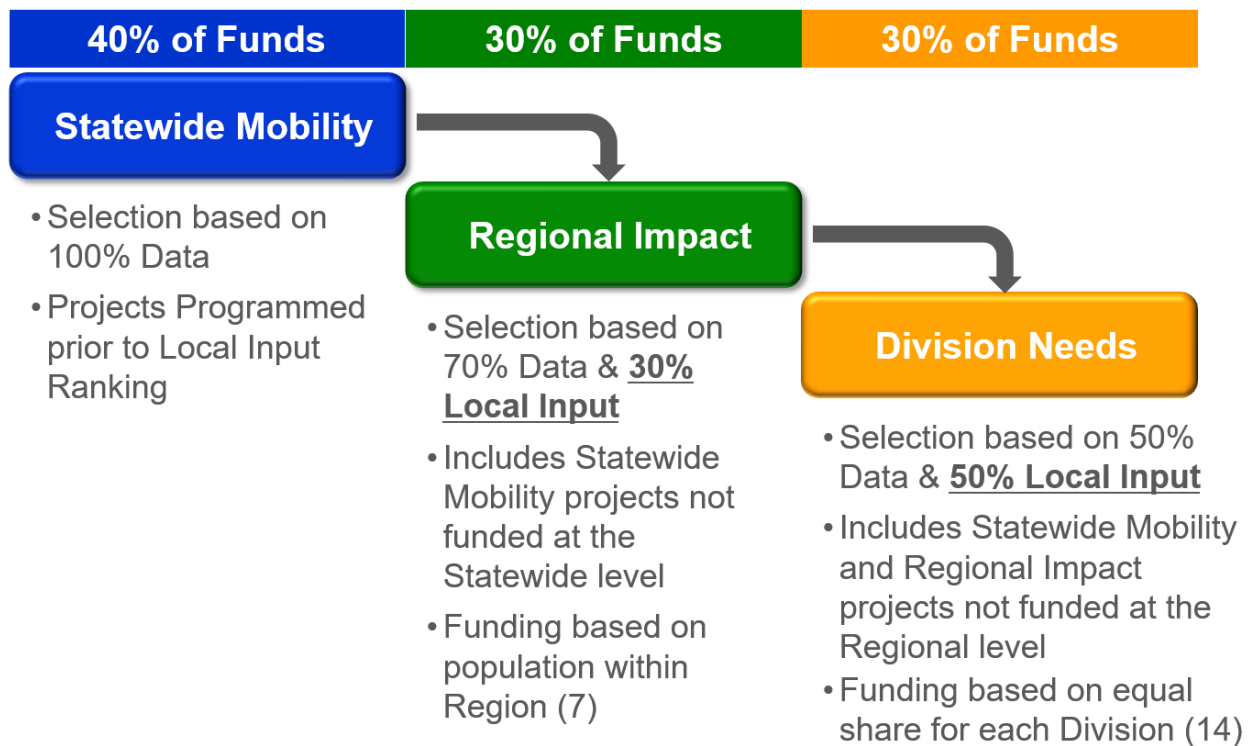


Table 2: Project Eligibility per STI Category

Mode	Statewide Mobility	Regional Impact	Division Needs
Highway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. DERPO has a total of 1,300 points to apply to projects in the Regional Impact category and a total of 1,300 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

During every Prioritization cycle DERPO will create a SPOT Subcommittee where at least one voting TAC and TCC member from each of the four counties will participate, as well as a representative from NCDOT Division 2. This Subcommittee will make the initial draft local point assignments.

At the initial convening of the Subcommittee any changes to Strategic Transportation Improvement legislation or the SPOT formulas, rankings, or process will be reviewed and discussed. Based on that review this methodology will be revisited to make any changes or adjustments necessary to remain in compliance and to optimize our prioritization process to the needs of the DERPO region. Any changes or adjustments will be made available for public comment and subsequently approved by the TCC and TAC prior to being enacted.

When NCDOT opens the window for submission of new candidate projects the Subcommittee will meet to review existing SPOT projects from every transportation mode with the potential to be removed from the system and new candidate projects from every transportation mode with the potential to be submitted to the SPOT scoring system. The recommendations from this Subcommittee will be presented to the TCC and TAC at their next regularly scheduled meeting for approval. This meeting is open to the public.

After Statewide Mobility projects are programmed and quantitative scores are released the Subcommittee will meet to determine point assignments based on the scoring criteria described below and consultation with NCDOT Division staff, local government staff, neighboring MPOs and RPOs, local aviation, ferry, port, rail, and transit operators. As soon as those preliminary scores are calculated they will be posted on the Eastern Carolina Council's DERPO Prioritization webpage: <http://www.eccog.org/derpo-prioritization/> for public review and comment for no less than 30 days. Any public comment gathered during this time will be considered when applying Local Input Points.

The TCC and TAC will review the final Regional Impact Project Scores provided by the Subcommittee and discuss final application of Local Input Points at their meetings, which will be public meetings where public comment will specifically be sought on the final scores and where the public comments, and any others received during the prioritization process, will be a basis for applying points. Local Input Points will be discussed in an open meeting and any points assigned and their justifications will be documented in the meeting minutes. Final adjusted scores approved by the TAC will be posted, with any appropriate justifications necessary, to the RPO website at that time. Final Regional Impact points will be entered into SPOT On!ine at this time.

After the Regional Impact programmed projects are released by NCDOT the Subcommittee will meet to generate the Division Needs Local Input Scores based on the scoring criteria described below and consultation with NCDOT Division staff, neighboring MPOs and RPOs, local aviation, ferry, port, rail, and transit operators. As soon as those preliminary scores are calculated they will be posted on the Eastern Carolina Council's DERPO webpage: <http://www.eccog.org/derpo-prioritization/> for public review and comment for no less than 30 days. Any public comment gathered during this time will be considered when applying Local Input Points.

The TCC and TAC will review the final Division Needs Project Scores provided by the Subcommittee and discuss final application of Local Input Points at their meetings, which will be public meetings where public comment will specifically be sought on the final scores and where the public comments, and any others received during the prioritization process, will be a basis for applying points. Local Input Points will be discussed in an open meeting and any points assigned and their justifications will be documented in the meeting minutes. Final adjusted scores approved by the TAC will be posted, with any appropriate justifications necessary, to the RPO website at that time. Final Division Needs points will be entered into SPOT On!ine at this time.

For Prioritization 7.0 the tentative timeline is as follows:

- Quantitative scores are calculated and released for Prioritization 7.0 projects; Statewide Mobility Projects are programmed by NCDOT (May 24, 2024)
- Window to submit Local Regional Impact input points opens; LIPs are allocated to Prioritization 7.0 projects by DERPO (May 28-August 30, 2024)
- A 30-day public comment period is provided to review and comment on local Regional Impact input point allocations (July 30-August 30, 2024)
- DERPO TAC endorses final local Regional Impact input point allocations and submits them to NCDOT (August 30, 2024)
- SPOT finalizes Regional Impact scores and programs Regional Impact Projects (September 20, 2024)
- Window to submit Local Division Needs input points opens; LIPs are allocated to Prioritization 7.0 projects by DERPO (September 23-November 29, 2024)
- A 30-day public comment period is provided to review and comment on local Division Needs input point allocations (October 22-November 22, 2024)
- DERPO TAC endorses final local Division Needs input point allocations and submits them to NCDOT (November 26, 2024)
- Final scores are issued to Prioritization 7.0 projects and posted on the DERPO website (December 2024)
- NCDOT releases Draft 2026-35 STIP (January 2025)

Process

The ranking process for each mode is based on quantitative data (performance measures resulting in the SPOT score) and qualitative data (ability to be funded or constructed). It is the policy of the Down East Rural Planning Organization that the RPO will, by default, not assign points to any cascading project, but reserves the right to address cascading projects on a case-by-case basis and will provide written explanation and justification for any cascading project that deviates from the original ranking.

Each MPO, RPO, and Division can assign a maximum of 100 points to each project; however, projects receiving zero priority points are still included in the prioritization with their total scores being based solely on their quantitative data points. For projects that span multiple MPOs/RPOs, the maximum points each organization can submit is equal to the percentage of the project in the organization (for a high priority, DERPO would allocate 45 points for a project 45% within the DERPO region). Organizations can donate points to a neighboring MPO/RPO for a project outside of their area that is a high priority.

Local Input Point Flex Policy

DERPO has the option to apply the Local Input Point Flexing Policy. This means that up to 500 Local Input Points can be transferred from one category to the other. If the organization chooses to flex Local Input

Points, DERPO will provide written documentation to the SPOT Office prior to assigning Regional Impact Local Input Points.

Target Modal/County Local Input Point Distribution

To address prioritization across all modes of transportation, DERPO establishes target modal mixes for both the Regional Impact and Division Needs categories. These target point mixes are flexible but provide the initial budget of points per mode. With highway projects, we have also established a target county mix by budgeting at least one highway project per county in both categories. In the absence of a project(s) for a mode or for a specific county, the target modal points shall be awarded to the highest scoring projects regardless of mode or county. Tables 3 and 4 below shows the target modal/county LIP distribution adopted by the RPO for Strategic Prioritization 7.0 for both Regional Impact and Division Needs projects:

Table 3: DERPO Target Regional Impact Modal/County Local Input Point Distribution

County Highway Projects	Points	Regional Highway Projects	Points	Non-Highway Projects	Points	Any Mode Projects	Points
Carteret Highway Project 1	100	Regional Highway Project 1	100	Rail or Ferry Project 1	100	Any Mode Project 1*	100
Craven Highway Project 1	100	Regional Highway Project 2	100			Any Mode Project 2*	100
Jones Highway Project 1	100	Regional Highway Project 3	100			Any Mode Project 3*	100
Pamlico Highway Project 1*	N/A	Regional Highway Project 4	100				
		Regional Highway Project 5	100				
		Regional Highway Project 6	100				
Total	300	Total	600	Total	100	Total	300
TOTAL DERPO REGIONAL POINTS	1300	*There are no Pamlico projects eligible for Regional Impact.					

Table 4: DERPO Target Division Needs Modal/County Local Input Point Distribution

County Highway Projects	Points	Division Highway Projects	Points	Non-Highway Projects	Points
Carteret Highway Project 1	100	Division Highway Project 1	100	Bike/Ped Project 1	100
Craven Highway Project 1	100	Division Highway Project 2	100	Bike/Ped Project 2	100
Jones Highway Project 1	100	Division Highway Project 3	100	Bike/Ped Project 3	100
Pamlico Highway Project 1	100	Division Highway Project 4	100	Ferry, Rail, or Aviation 1*	100
				Ferry, Rail, or Aviation 2*	100
Total	400	Total	400	Total	500

*Can't be same mode for both projects.

TOTAL DERPO DIVISION POINTS	1300
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The DERPO SPOT Subcommittee reviews the target modal and regional mixes for each Strategic Prioritization cycle and recommends adjustments to the targets as necessary. To determine the modal mix for the seventh round of Strategic Prioritization, DERPO’s SPOT subcommittee reviewed the previous cycles of Strategic Prioritization and the number of projects submitted per mode. The TCC and TAC approve the target modal mixes, which allows staff to begin the recommended point allocation.

Scoring Criteria

STI law requires that all planning organizations, including DERPO, use at least two criteria to rank its transportation projects for the purpose of assigning local input points. One criterion is required to be qualitative. DERPO will use four criteria, one quantitative and three qualitative, to create the total score.

Quantitative Criterion – Overall SPOT Score

For all regional and division projects, both highway and non-highway, 30% of the total score will come from the overall SPOT quantitative score. The overall SPOT score is made up of extensive quantitative criteria developed by the NCDOT SPOT Workgroup, and DERPO considers this to be the best quantitative measure of all transportation projects. Therefore, DERPO will make use of the score as its quantitative criterion in ranking projects to assign local input points.

Qualitative Criterion – Local Priority Score

The SPOT Subcommittee as a whole will select the projects they deem to be of most importance to the regional transportation network. For both highway and non-highway projects, each member of the subcommittee will rank all eligible projects for each STI funding category. The top-rated project will receive 100 points, the second rated project will receive 95 points, the third 90 points, and so on in five-point increments. Should there be more than 20 eligible products for that category, all subsequent projects will receive one point. Before the projects are ranked by the subcommittee, key stakeholders will be allowed to speak on relevant projects during meetings. At least one of the meetings will be open to the public and advertised on DERPO's website. The website will also allow for public comment on the local input point process. The total scores for each project will be divided by the number of subcommittee members for the final ranking of the committee as a whole. For highway projects, the local priority ranking will count towards 50% of the final score. For non-highway projects, the local priority ranking will count towards 40% of the final score.

Qualitative Criterion – Division/Stakeholder Priority

For highway projects, DERPO will solicit NCDOT Division 2 to classify all eligible projects in each STI funding category as either HIGH, MEDIUM, or LOW priorities. Projects determined to be high priority will be given 100 points. Those determined to be medium priority will be given 50 points, and those determined to be a low priority will be given 25 points. The division's classification will count towards 10% of the final score. As a reminder, the Division also puts local input points on those projects using their own methodology. For non-highway projects, it is the key stakeholders who will classify related projects. For bike/pedestrian projects, it will be each county, in accordance with its impacted communities, who ranks their relevant projects. For rail projects, it will be the NCDOT Rail Division. For ferry projects, it will be the NCDOT Ferry Division. For aviation projects, it will be our single airport, Michael J. Smith Airport in Beaufort. For SPOT 7.0 there were no public transportation submittals. For non-highway projects, these rankings will count towards 20% of the final score. The Division/Stakeholder Priority rankings will be completed and made available to members of the subcommittee before they vote for their priority projects as a part of the deliberation process.

Qualitative Criterion – Project Development

Projects that are further along in the development process will benefit from higher scores based on this criterion. Projects that are/were on the STIP and/or have had some form of preconstruction work done, such as preliminary engineering, NEPA merger, right of way, etc., will receive 100 points. Sibling projects to projects that have been completed, are under construction, or are scheduled for delivery will also receive 100 points. Projects that are/were on the STIP and have not had any preconstruction work done (or are not sibling projects) will receive 75 points. If a project has not been on the STIP but has been submitted for multiple rounds of SPOT will receive 50 points. If a project has had a feasibility study, or one is currently underway, it will also receive 50 points. All other projects will receive 25 points. We will multiply that score by .10 for the total score.

Table 5: DERPO Local Input Point Criteria (Highway)

Criteria	Percentage of Total Score	Calculation for Total Score																																																
Overall SPOT Score (quantitative)	30%	SPOT Score x .30																																																
Local Priority (qualitative)	50%	<table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr><td>1.</td><td>100</td><td>8.</td><td>65</td><td>15.</td><td>30</td></tr> <tr><td>2.</td><td>95</td><td>9.</td><td>60</td><td>16.</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>3.</td><td>90</td><td>10.</td><td>55</td><td>17.</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>4.</td><td>85</td><td>11.</td><td>50</td><td>18.</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>5.</td><td>80</td><td>12.</td><td>45</td><td>19.</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>6.</td><td>75</td><td>13.</td><td>40</td><td>20.</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>7.</td><td>70</td><td>14.</td><td>35</td><td>21.</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>22.</td><td>1</td></tr> </table> <p><u>Scores from all members</u> = avg. score # of members</p>	1.	100	8.	65	15.	30	2.	95	9.	60	16.	25	3.	90	10.	55	17.	20	4.	85	11.	50	18.	15	5.	80	12.	45	19.	10	6.	75	13.	40	20.	5	7.	70	14.	35	21.	1					22.	1
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				22.	1																																													
Division Priority (qualitative)	10%	HIGH = 100 MEDIUM = 50 LOW = 25																																																
Project Development (qualitative)	10%	STIP w Precon or Sibling = 100 STIP w/o Precon = 75 Multiple SPOTs or feasibility = 50 All others = 25																																																
Total Score	100%	$(SPOT \times .3) + (LP \times .5) + (DP \times .1) + (PD \times .1) = \text{Total Score}$																																																

Table 6: DERPO Local Input Point Criteria (Non-Highway)

Criteria	Percentage of Total Score	Calculation for Total Score																																																
Overall SPOT Score (quantitative)	30%	SPOT Score x .30																																																
Local Priority (qualitative)	40%	<table border="0"> <tr><td>8.</td><td>100</td><td>8.</td><td>65</td><td>15.</td><td>30</td></tr> <tr><td>9.</td><td>95</td><td>9.</td><td>60</td><td>16.</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>10.</td><td>90</td><td>10.</td><td>55</td><td>17.</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>11.</td><td>85</td><td>11.</td><td>50</td><td>18.</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>12.</td><td>80</td><td>12.</td><td>45</td><td>19.</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>13.</td><td>75</td><td>13.</td><td>40</td><td>20.</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>14.</td><td>70</td><td>14.</td><td>35</td><td>21.</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>22.</td><td>1</td></tr> </table> <p><u>Scores from all members</u> = avg. score # of members</p>	8.	100	8.	65	15.	30	9.	95	9.	60	16.	25	10.	90	10.	55	17.	20	11.	85	11.	50	18.	15	12.	80	12.	45	19.	10	13.	75	13.	40	20.	5	14.	70	14.	35	21.	1					22.	1
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Total Score	100%	(SPOT x .3) + (LP x .4) + (SP x .2) + (PD x .1) = Total Score																																																

Material Sharing

The following information, at minimum, will be made available on the Down East RPO website:

- A link to the NCDOT STI Prioritization Resources website.
- The adopted Down East RPO SPOT 7.0 Local Input Prioritization Methodology.
- Highlights of schedule milestones, including public comment periods and public meeting schedules.
- Preliminary and final local input point assignment sheets, including justifications of methodology deviations.

APPROVED BY DOWN EAST RPO TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

26TH DAY OF MARCH 2024.

Brandi Robertson, TAC Chair

Becca Eversole, RPO Secretary