

# Local Input Methodology and Ranking Process P7.0



**Continuing • Cooperative • Comprehensive  
Transportation Planning**

**Adopted XXX**

# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
Classification of Transportation Projects.....	4
Description of Criteria and Weights.....	6
Community Importance Assessment – 40 points maximum .....	6
Project Readiness – 25 points maximum.....	6
Transportation Performance Management National Goals – 20 points maximum.....	7
P7.0 Quantitative Score – 15 points maximum .....	7
Total Score and Project Ranking Approach .....	8
Points Assignment Process.....	8
Final Local Prioritization Input Points .....	8
Deviation Clause.....	8
Flexing Policy .....	9
Use of Public Input and Comments in Final Rankings .....	9
Schedule and Public Outreach .....	9
Project Solicitation .....	9
Public Involvement .....	9
Project Ranking .....	9
Material Sharing.....	10

## Introduction

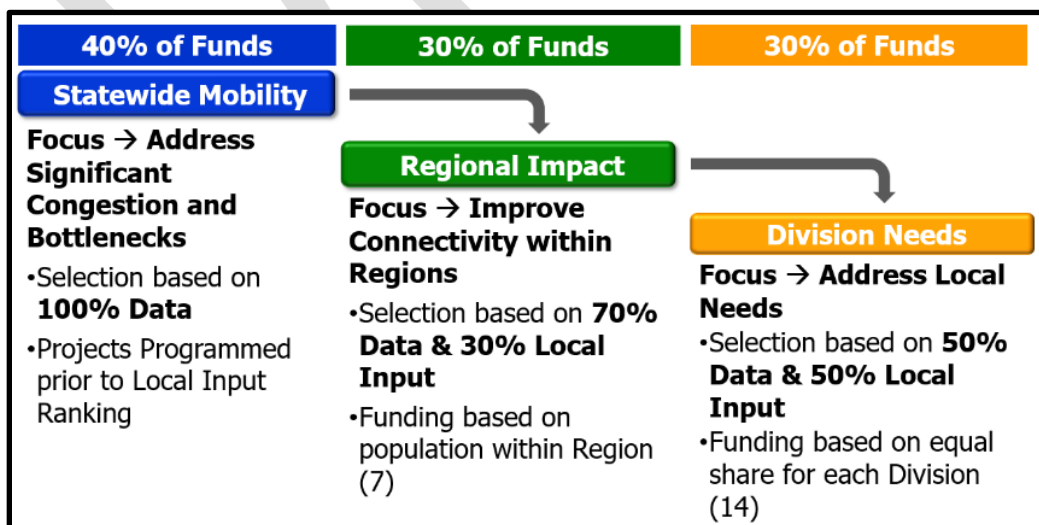
The New Bern Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (NBAMPO) will collaborate with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to submit and rank transportation projects under the NCDOT Prioritization Process. The results of this effort will provide input into the development of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

The Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) law (GS – 136 – 189.10 and .11), enacted in 2013, directs the 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 funding with other eligible projects.

NCDOT provided guidance requested that each planning organization and Division develop and implement a local input point methodology that maintains criteria transparency, material availability, and process documentation and maximizes the opportunity for public review and input. This ranking process is the Local Methodology of the MPO used to evaluate and determine assignment of points towards priority projects that will be submitted to NCDOT. This document represents the NBAMPO’s efforts to follow the guidance and requirements of the NCDOT.

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, and selection is based 70% on the quantitative score and 30% on the local input. Division Needs projects compete against all projects within the same NCDOT Transportation Division, (NBAMPO is in Division 2), and selection is based 50% on quantitative score and 50% local input.

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.



STI Project Eligibility			
Mode	Statewide Mobility	Regional Impact	Division Needs
Highway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interstates (existing &amp; future)</li> <li>• NHS Routes (as of July 1, 2012)</li> <li>• STRAHNET Routes</li> <li>• ADHS Routes</li> <li>• Uncompleted Intrastate Projects</li> <li>• Designated Toll Facilities</li> </ul>	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

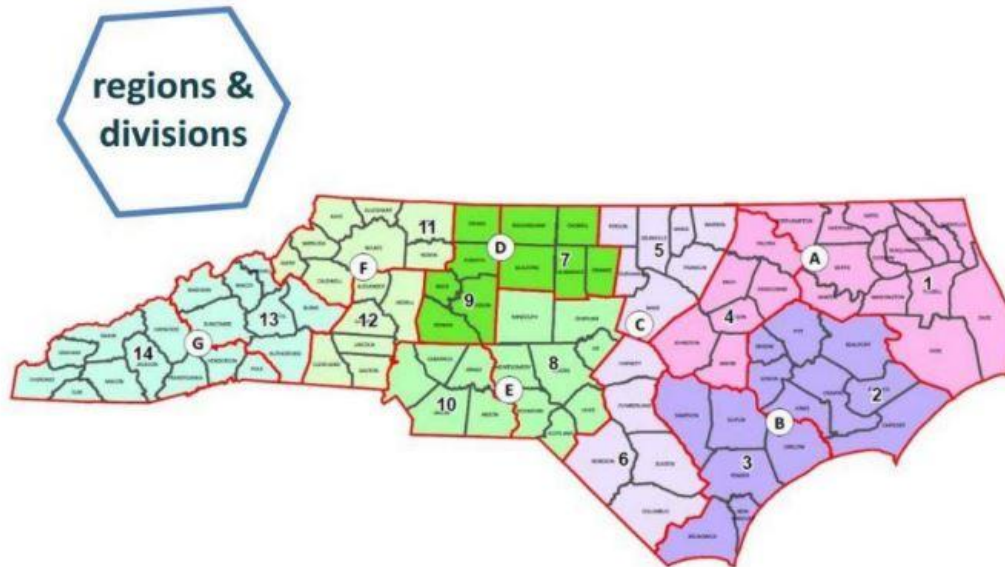
MPOs/RPOs and Divisions indicate priority by applying local input points to projects. Each organization receives a baseline of 1,000 local input points, with additional points based on population. The NBAMPO has a total of 1,200 points to apply to projects in the Regional Impact category and a total of 1,200 points to apply to projects in the Division Needs Category. State law requires NCDOT to approve how each organization will assign points to projects (maximum number of points assigned to any one project cannot exceed 100 points), in a document known as their Local Input Methodology.

Classification of Transportation Projects

Highway projects associated with US Highway 70 (future I-42) are classified as Statewide Projects. These projects are evaluated and prioritized solely by NCDOT and are based on quantitative data provided by the MPO and the NCDOT. No local input ranking is applied to Statewide projects; however, the NBAMPO has the option to assign points to Statewide projects that cascade down into the Regional and Division Needs categories.

The New Bern Area MPO, comprised of the City of New Bern, Town of Bridgeton, Town of River Bend, Town of Trent Woods and portions of Craven County, is in Region B, which consists of NCDOT Highway Divisions two (2) and three (3).

Regional funds are distributed by population. The state is divided into seven (7) regions, and 14 Highway Divisions. Each region has two Highway Divisions, as seen below.



All Regional projects (all modes of transportation) will receive a quantitative evaluation by NCDOT. In addition to this quantitative score, local input will be added to the project evaluation. For Regional projects, the NCDOT quantitative value will be 70% and local input will be 30% of the project evaluation.

The New Bern Area MPO is included in NCDOT Highway Division Two (2), which includes the counties of Beaufort, Craven, Carteret, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Pamlico and Pitt. The 14 Highway divisions of the state will receive equal funding amounts for Division category projects. Highway projects associated with NC Secondary Routes (SR #'s) will fall into the Division category. The NCDOT quantitative score for Division projects will make up 50% of the project evaluation. The local input value for Division projects (all modes) will be 50% of the project evaluation.

The local input for the New Bern Area MPO and Division projects will come from the MPO and NCDOT Division Two (2), (the NBAMPO Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Division Two (2) Engineer). In both Regional and Division projects, the local input will be equally divided between the MPO and Division Engineer.

The Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation accepted new projects from July through October 2023 from the MPO to be evaluated within the Prioritization 7.0 process. The list of new projects submitted for Prioritization 7.0 was approved by the MPO's Transportation Advisory Committee.

Under the Strategic Transportation Investments Law, limitations on new project submittals have been established by the NCDOT. The NBAMPO is allowed to submit 14 projects for each mode of transportation: highway, aviation, bicycle/pedestrian, public transportation, and rail.

The NBAMPO will evaluate highway projects included in their long-range transportation planning document (Metropolitan Transportation Plan: Envision 2045), Craven County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (latest version) or projects that have been identified as a need for the community as part of their project submissions for each funding tier (Statewide, Regional and Division).

Projects for the Coastal Carolina Regional Airport and Bicycle/Pedestrian projects both fall into the Division Needs category.

With the New Bern Area being deurbanized, Craven Area Rural Transit System (CARTS) is working with NCDOT to submit the necessary projects for Prioritization.

## **Description of Criteria and Weights**

The State of North Carolina, NCDOT, and the NBAMPO will implement transportation projects that fulfill the requirements of the STI law. To ensure the projects of the STIP are beneficial to the community and support the good of the public, projects in the Prioritization 7.0 process must be evaluated using a minimum of two criteria. One criterion must be a qualitative criterion and one criterion may either be a qualitative or quantitative criterion.

### *Community Importance Assessment – 40 points maximum*

This criterion allows local discretion, based upon public comment and TAC concurrence, to determine the relative importance of proposed projects to the community and categorize them accordingly. Local knowledge of the merits of proposed projects has been deemed to carry considerable weight in the distribution of preliminary points.

In accordance with the metropolitan planning process, input on proposed projects will be solicited by outreach strategies contained within the adopted Public Involvement Plan which includes the use of the NBAMPO website ([www.nbampo-nc.org](http://www.nbampo-nc.org)), social media, etc.

Project listings of all modes will be published in April 2024 on the MPO website, along with a survey to allow the public to comment on and categorize submitted projects for all modes. The survey will ask respondents to rate projects on a 1 to 5 (lowest to highest) scale based on their level of support. Responses from each project will be added together forming a cumulative score. Comments may also be received from the public by writing, telephone, social media, or in person. All modes ranked from highest score to lowest. The scores will be divided into five equal groupings. Points will be awarded as follows:

- Top group - 40 points
- Second highest group - 30 points
- Middle group - 20 points
- Second lowest group - 10 points
- Lowest group - 0 points

Feedback from the public, including the public prioritization comments, will be provided to the TCC and TAC for consideration.

### *Project Readiness – 25 points maximum*

This criterion encourages local preference scoring based on the ability to construct or implement the project in a timely fashion. All modes are evaluated using the same criteria. In order to compare the different processes, the basis for point distribution will be on the project's readiness for construction or implementation and what phase of the process the project is at the time of evaluation as reported by the project manager.

Projects are assigned points based upon status within the project development process. The phase of project development that has been started will determine the points awarded:

- Feasibility Study – 5 points
- Project Scoping – 10 points
- Environmental – 15 points
- Design – 20 points
- Right-of-way – 25 points

*Transportation Performance Management National Goals – 20 points maximum*

Transportation Performance Management is a strategic approach that uses system information to make investment and policy decisions to achieve national performance goals. The national Federal highway program performance goals as established by Congress are:

1. Safety - To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.
2. Infrastructure Condition - To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair
3. Congestion Reduction - To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System
4. System Reliability - To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system
5. Freight Movement and Economic Vitality - To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.
6. Environmental Sustainability - To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
7. Reduced Project Delivery Delays - To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies' work practices.

This criterion will award 5 points for each goal that is being furthered by the project, with a maximum of 20 total points available. Data sources for this criterion include but are not limited to: P7.0 quantitative data items, the Long Range Transportation Plan or other applicable plan, project studies, purpose and need statements. The source(s) and goal(s) will be listed for each project.

*P7.0 Quantitative Score – 15 points maximum*

This criterion encourages local prioritization scores that work with, not against, P7.0 quantitative results. The P7.0 quantitative score accounts for 70% of Regional Impact and 50% of Division Needs project scores and represents a significant portion of the prioritization process. Local prioritization scores that do not align with P7.0 quantitative results could be counterproductive for funding projects.

The P7.0 data driven score will determine the number of points assigned in each tier. All modes will be combined and projects will be listed in descending order of P7.0 scores. Projects will be divided into four equal groups with the following point assignment:

- Top group - 15 points
- Second highest group - 10 points
- Second lowest group - 5 points
- Lowest group - 0 points

## **Total Score and Project Ranking Approach**

The four criteria scores will be added together for each highway project and become the basis for the TAC to assign the local input points to the top 14 projects. The Community Importance Assessment and P7.0 Quantitative Scores will be added together for each bicycle and pedestrian project and become the basis for the TAC to assign local input points to the top 14 projects.

These top scoring projects for each mode will each receive 100 local input points (or the maximum allowable percentage of points within the MPO for shared projects). The prioritized listing with preliminary local input point assignment (including raw scores) will be publicized using the MPO's Public Involvement Plan to obtain public comment:

- Regional Impact category in June – July 2024
- Division Needs category in October – November 2024

Recommendations for less than the maximum point assignment may be made depending on overall analysis of projects within Region B and/or Division 2. The P7.0 scores and Division Engineer assigned local prioritization input points will also be available to the public at the same time for their review through NCDOT's websites.

## **Points Assignment Process**

All final project rankings, points assigned per project and any rationale/justification for point adjustments which deviate from this methodology will be available on the MPO website in August 2024 for the Regional Impact category and in December 2024 for the Division Needs category. NCDOT final project scores will be released in early 2025 and the draft FY 2026-2035 STIP will be available for public review and comment in March 2025.

### Final Local Prioritization Input Points

The draft local input points for each project will be finalized after public comments have been received and coordination with the Division Engineer is complete. The TCC and TAC will direct the final award of local input points into the P7.0 prioritization process and may, at the board's discretion, award less than 100 points on a project to increase the number of priority projects receiving local input points. The board may also award points to a project that was not shown in the draft listing or remove points from a project that was shown in the listing. The board reserves the right to make adjustments they believe are in the best interest of the metropolitan planning area.

All projects receiving points will receive the maximum 100 points allowed per project or maximum number of points allowed if projects are shared by both MPO and RPO. Points not allocated to projects within the New Bern Area MPO can be transferred to another MPO or RPO assuming both organizations agree to point sharing. If the NBAMPO contributes points to another MPO or RPO, a written agreement will be provided to NCDOT.

### Deviation Clause

The NBAMPO TCC and TAC boards are free to deviate from the preliminary points assignment when finalizing scores, to compensate for situations where the methodology does not accurately reflect the TAC's priorities, and to ensure points assignment to projects at the relevant category. Any variation in point assignments from the preliminary scores must have justifications documented in the meeting minutes and posted on the NBAMPO website. Anticipated justifications include, but are not limited to: project cost, points sharing arrangements, estimated



points required for funding, geographic equity, modal distribution, new information and public comment.

### Flexing Policy

The NBAMPO 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 another. If the NBAMPO determines it has more Division Needs projects than Regional Needs projects, it can move up to 500 points to the Division Needs category. Equally, if the NBAMPO determines it has more Regional Needs projects than Division Needs projects, it can move up to 500 points to the Regional Needs category. If the organization chooses to Flex Local Input Points, NBAMPO will provide written documentation to the SPOT Office prior to assigning Regional Impact Local Points.

### Use of Public Input and Comments in Final Rankings

The TCC and TAC will review all input received through the public input process to confirm the individual candidate project descriptions and details. The TCC and TAC may choose to remove or modify projects before ultimately approving the point's assignments, but no new projects will be added after the NCDOT deadline for submitting candidate projects for evaluation through the SPOT process. Any modifications and rationale for point adjustment will be available for public review on the NBAMPO website when final points per project are posted.

## **Schedule and Public Outreach**

### Project Solicitation

The NBAMPO solicited candidate projects for 30 days in August 2023. The results of this process were presented to the TAC during its September 2023 meeting, where the TAC was asked to endorse the project list for submittal to NCDOT. In the event that the number of new projects exceeded the maximum possible, the TAC chose projects to submit based on Division 2 and NBAMPO staff recommendations. NBAMPO staff will subsequently submit the TAC endorsed projects into NCDOT's SPOT On!ine tool (web based system) for project evaluation and quantitative scoring.

### Public Involvement

The NBAMPO will hold public input sessions in June 2024 and October 2024. Information regarding the public input session and this solicitation period will be advertised through the NBAMPO website and social media applications. The results of the input sessions and all submitted projects will be presented to the TCC and TAC for their review, who will use the input in determining which projects to submit for technical evaluation by the NCDOT's Strategic Prioritization Office for Transportation (SPOT), who calculates the technical scores for candidate projects. All TCC and TAC meetings are advertised and open to the public.

### Project Ranking

Using the methodology described above, the NBAMPO will present the recommended local point assignments for Regional projects to the TCC during their June 2024 meeting. Upon the approval of the TAC, the NBAMPO will release the recommended projects, point assignments, and the methodology used to assign the points for a 30-day public comment period. The 30-day period will also be advertised on the NBAMPO website and social media applications. The results of the public comment period will be presented to the TCC and TAC during their August meetings. At that time, the TAC will be asked to approve the project list with final point assignment for Regional

projects. After approval, the project list with assigned points will be available on the NBAMPO website. The local point assignment for Regional projects will be submitted to SPOT office by the end of August 2024.

September 2024, NCDOT will release a draft list of programmed Regional impact projects and the NBAMPO will begin to evaluate local input point assignment to Division Needs projects. Using the methodology described above, the NBAMPO will present the recommended local point assignments for Division projects to the TCC at their October 2024 meeting. Upon the approval of the TAC, the NBAMPO will release the recommended projects, point assignments, and the methodology used to assign the points for a 30-day public comment period. The 30-day comment period will also be advertised on the NBAMPO website and social media platforms.

The results of the public comment period will be presented to the TCC and TAC during their December 2024 meetings. At that time, the TAC will be asked to approve the project list with final point assignments for Division Needs projects. After approval, the project list with assigned points will be available on the NBAMPO website. The local point assignment for Division projects will be submitted to SPOT office by the end of December 2024.

The Draft STIP will be released in March 2025 and will also be available on the NBAMPO website.

## **Material Sharing**

For information on the New Bern Area MPO Local Methodology (as described above), MPO transportation plans and news of STI and Prioritization, visit the NBAMPO website at [www.nbampo.org](http://www.nbampo.org) and NCDOT at <https://www.ncdot.gov/initiatives-policies/Transportation/stip/Pages/strategic-transportation-investments.aspx>.