



Mid-East RPO - SPOT Local Input Point Assignment Methodology

The Statewide Mobility category in Prioritization 4.0 is 100% data driven. Therefore the remaining Regional Impact and Division Needs categories can involve up to three scoring components: 1) a data driven, quantitatively scored estimate of project need, 2) RPO local priority score, and 3) NCDOT Division Engineer priority score. This document will focus on number two, how the Mid-East Rural Planning Organization (MERPO) assigns its RPO local priority score to projects. The MERPO has 1200 points to expend on projects across modes.

The Mid-East RPO (MERPO), which consist of Beaufort, Martin, and Pitt Counties, is required by state law to develop a local input methodology for prioritizing all transportation projects (highway, bike and pedestrian, public transportation, aviation, rail and ferry) within the RPO boundary that may compete for state and federal funding, and to submit the methodology to the NC Dept. of Transportation for approval.

The MERPO has developed this prioritization method in an effort 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 RTCC and RTAC are open to the public and public participation will be solicited. In addition, relevant documents will be posted to the RPO's website at <http://www.mideastcom.org>. Relevant document include, but are not limited to this draft/final methodology and preliminary and final point assignments. Additionally, instructions for submitting public comments will be provided on the RPO website. Comments will be collected by RPO staff and distributed to the RTCC and RTAC as part of their normal meeting packets.

MERPO Prioritization Process and Timeline

The prioritization process adopted by the RTAC and approved by NCDOT will not be modified without adequate notice and opportunity for public comment. However, the timeline is subject to change for a variety of reasons, many of which are beyond the control of the RPO. Any change to the timeline will be reflected on the RPO website and this document, which will also be available on the RPO website; however modification to the timeline will not require public notice or comment, nor adoption by the RTAC nor approval by NCDOT.

1. Draft prioritization methodology will be developed by RPO staff. [Fall 2015]

2. Draft prioritization methodology will be submitted to the RTCC for recommendation and to the RTAC for preliminary approval. [November 2015]
3. Approved preliminary prioritization methodology will be submitted to NCDOT for conditional approval. [November 2015]
4. Conditionally approved methodology will be recommended for final approval by the RTCC and approved by the RTAC. Approved methodology will be posted to the RPO website once approved by NCDOT and the RTAC. [May 2016]
5. RPO staff will review the Regional Impact quantitative **SPOT SCORE** received for each qualifying project in the RPO area relative to other qualifying projects in the project's region to determine the most viable regional-tier projects in the RPO boundary. [April/May 2016]
6. RPO staff will determine **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT** points for all projects eligible to compete at the Regional Impacts tier. [April/May 2016]
7. RPO staff will discuss projects competing at the Regional Impact tier with the RTCC representative from each RPO county. Each county's RTCC representative will be responsible for assigning a **COUNTY PRIORITY** to each project within the county competing at the Regional Impact tier according to the Project Scoring Criteria below [March/April 2016].
8. RPO staff will discuss projects competing at the Regional Impact tier with the NCDOT Division Engineer(s) and/or Division Planning Engineer(s) for each project to gauge Division priority and ensure mutual high priorities are prioritized appropriately. Division Engineers will assign a **DIVISION PRIORITY** to each project competing at the Regional Impact tier according to the Project Scoring Criteria below. [April/May 2016]
9. Staff will determine whether any projects were funded at the Statewide Mobility tier. Projects funded at the Statewide Mobility tier will not be considered for prioritization at the Regional Impact tier. Statewide Mobility projects not funded at the Statewide Mobility tier will be eligible for points at the Regional Impact tier. [April/May 2016]
10. RPO staff will generate preliminary Regional Impact project scores and point assignments according to the Scoring Criteria. Results will be posted to the MERPO website. [June 2016]
11. RPO staff will discuss with staff of adjacent MPO/RPOs projects competing at the Regional Impact tier that cross the RPO boundaries to discuss point sharing. Any project that crosses the RPO boundary will be eligible for local input points in excess of the percentage of the project within the RPO boundary, up to 100 points, if the adjacent MPO/RPO provides less than their full share of points. The MERPO will endeavor to assign points shared by adjacent MPO/RPOs for projects crossing the RPO boundary that would otherwise not receive MERPO points according to the Project Scoring Criteria. If points sharing is approved, both the MERPO and the adjacent MPO/RPO must agree to the amount of points donated and provide this arrangement in writing to NCDOT's Office of Prioritization. [June 2016]

12. RTCC will recommend and RTAC will make final Regional Impact point assignments at their May meetings. RTCC and RTAC meetings are public meetings where public comment will specifically be sought on the preliminary scores. The RTAC is free to modify final point assignments to provide local oversight to the data-driven process, to compensate for any peculiar scores where the prioritization methodology fails to operate as expected, and to ensure appropriate projects at the relevant tier. Any variation in point assignments from the preliminary point assignments must have justifications documented in the meeting minutes. Anticipated justifications include: project cost, point sharing arrangements, estimated points required for funding, geographic equity, modal distribution, new information, methodology failures, and public comment. [July 2016]
13. Final Regional Impact tier point assignments will be entered into SPOT On!ine and posted to the MERPO website. [July 2016]
14. Staff will determine whether any projects were funded at the Regional Impact tier. Projects funded at the Regional Impact tier will not be considered for prioritization at the Division Needs tier. Statewide Mobility and Regional Impact projects not funded at Regional Impact tier will be eligible for points at the Regional Impact tier. [August-September 2016]
15. RPO staff will review the Division Needs quantitative **SPOT SCORE** received for each qualifying project in the RPO area relative to other qualifying projects in the project's division to determine the most viable Division Needs tier projects in the RPO boundary. [July-August 2016]
16. RPO staff will determine **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT** points for all Division Needs tier projects. [July-August 2016]
17. RPO staff will discuss projects competing at the Division Needs tier with the RTCC representative from each RPO county. Each county's RTCC representative will be responsible for assigning a **COUNTY PRIORITY** to each project within the county competing at the Division Needs tier according to the Project Scoring Criteria below [July-August 2016].
18. RPO staff will discuss projects competing at the Division Needs tier with the NCDOT Division Engineer(s) and/or Division Planning Engineer(s) for each project to gauge Division priority and ensure mutual high priorities are prioritized appropriately. Division Engineers will assign a **DIVISION PRIORITY** to each project competing at the Division Needs tier according to the Project Scoring Criteria below. [July-August 2016]
19. RPO staff will generate preliminary Division Needs project scores and point assignments according to the Scoring Criteria. Results will be posted to the MERPO website. [September 2016]
20. RPO staff will discuss with staff of adjacent MPO/RPOs projects competing at the Regional Impact tier that cross the RPO boundaries to discuss point sharing. Any project that crosses the RPO boundary will be eligible for local input points consistent with #11 above. [September 2016]
21. RTCC will recommend and RTAC will make final Division Needs point assignments at their September meetings, consistent with #12 above. [October 2016]

22. Final Division Needs point assignments will be entered into SPOT Online and posted to the MERPO website. [October 2016]

MERPO Project Scoring Criteria

The following scoring criteria will be used to generate a score for each MERPO transportation project, regardless of mode. Each project will receive a score at the Regional Impact tier and/or Division Needs tier if it competes at that tier.

1. **SPOT SCORE (QUANTITATIVE):** Projects require at least one quantitative criterion. The Mid-East RPO believes that the quantitative SPOT score, calculated using either the default or alternative criteria, is the best quantitative criterion to maximize the funding potential of the transportation projects in the RPO area. Projects that do not score well by the quantitative SPOT scores will have difficulty being competitive, so our local quantitative criteria is the project's quantitative SPOT score for the corresponding tier. *The SPOT Regional Score will be equal to 70% of the Project Regional Score and the SPOT Division Score will be equal to 50% of the Project Division Score.*
2. **DIVISION PRIORITY (QUALITATIVE):** Projects will not compete at the regional or division level unless they have the support of the Division Engineer and rank well by the Division Engineer's scoring criteria. Division Engineers will assign each project a HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NONE priority classification for each tier at which the project competes. Division Engineers should assign priority classifications such that projects are distributed with an approximately equal number of projects in each classification. Projects will be given 100, 50, 25, or 0 points according to their classification. *The Division Priority score will be equal to 15% of the Project Regional Score and 25% of the Project Division Score. Where projects cross division boundaries, points will be allocated based on the share of the project in each division.*
3. **COUNTY PRIORITY (QUALITATIVE):** Projects should have local support. County RTCC representatives are expected to collaborate with other county staff, county elected officials, staff and elected officials of municipalities within their boundaries, and other stakeholders representing county transportation modes or systems, as deemed appropriate by each county's RTCC representative, to develop county priorities. Each county RTCC representative will assign every project within the county a HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NONE priority classification for each tier at which the project competes. County RTCC representatives should assign priority classifications such that projects are distributed with an approximately equal number of projects in each classification. Projects will be given 100, 75, 50, and 0 points according to their classification. If a project is prioritized by more than one county, it will be assigned the average of the points received. *The County Priority score will be equal to 15% of the Project Regional Score and 25% of the Project Division Score.*
4. **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT (QUALITATIVE):** Projects that have had significant planning or development activities completed will be given supplemental points to distinguish them from projects that are simply conceptual. Points will be given cumulative to projects for each of the following criteria as indicated: a completed feasibility study [5 pts.]; an adopted corridor plan or

other project-specific plan [5 pts.]; preliminary engineering [5 pts.]; project in development/merger process (i.e. active OR PRIOR development by PDEA or preliminary design has begun) [5 pts.]; project OR SIBLING funded in current STIP OR COMPLETED [10 pts.]; right-of-way attainment (i.e. acquisition has begun) or right-of-way not required [10 pts.].

5. **MERPO PROJECT SCORE:** Project scores will be calculated as follows:

RPO Regional Impact tier score

= (70% x SPOT Score for tier)

+ (15% x Division Priority Score for tier)

+ (15% x County Priority Score for tier)

+ (Project Development Points)

RPO Division Needs tier score

= (50% x SPOT Score for tier)

+ (25% x Division Priority Score for tier)

+ (25% x County Priority Score for tier)

+ (Project Development Points)

MERPO Point Assignment

Preliminary points will be assigned as follows at both the Regional Impact and Division Needs tiers based on each project's MERPO PROJECT SCORE, up to a total of 1200 points at each tier:

1. Top two scoring highway projects in each RPO county will be eligible for 100 points each (600 points max).
2. Top three scoring non-highway projects will be eligible for 100 points each, regardless of non-highway mode or location (300 points max).
3. Remaining points cascade to next highest scoring projects, regardless of mode or locations, up to 100 points each.
4. Final point assignments may be modified by the RTAC in accordance with #12 of the MERPO Prioritization Process.

APPROVED BY THE MID-EAST RPO TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON 5/25/2016