

Prioritization 8.0 Local Point Methodology for Central Pines RPO

April 9, 2026

Introduction

The following methodology has been developed by the Central Pines Rural Planning Organization (CPRPO) for the purpose of determining regional priorities for transportation funding, as carried out through the State of North Carolina’s Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) law and the associated Prioritization **8.0** process. This methodology is intended to incorporate both measurable data and information about priorities from local jurisdictions, to ensure a process that is both data-driven and responsive to local needs. The Central Pines Rural Planning Organization serves Lee County, as well as the portions of Chatham, Moore and Orange Counties that are not within the planning area of a Metropolitan Planning Organization. This methodology has been developed to meet the requirements of Session Law 2012-84, which requires that MPOs and RPOs have a process for determining project prioritization.

STI divides available state and federal transportation funding into three categories: Statewide Mobility, Regional Impact, and Division Needs. For each category, NCDOT calculates quantitative scores based on a variety of criteria. In the Statewide Mobility category, projects are selected for funding based entirely on the NCDOT quantitative score. However, in the Regional Impact and Division Needs categories part of the final score is based on local points assigned by the MPO or RPO and/or the NCDOT Division Engineer in that area. The local input points assigned by CPRPO (and other MPOs and RPOs) represent 15% of the final score for Regional Impact projects and 25% of the final score for Division Needs projects. Points assigned by NCDOT Division Engineers are also worth 15% of the Regional Impact score and 25% of the Division Needs score.

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

Statewide Mobility	Highway: Improvements to US 1, US 64, US 15-501 (only the portion north of US 64), US 421 (only the portion north of or overlapping NC 87), NC 87 (only the portion south of or overlapping US 421), 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
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*NC 24-27 is only eligible at the Statewide Mobility level for four-lane widening projects. Other types of projects on NC 24-27 are only eligible for Regional Impact and Division Needs.

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.

CPRPO 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 CPRPO county, all the local jurisdictions (including the county and any municipalities within the county that are in CPRPO) must work together to develop a single ranked list of projects in all modes to submit to CPRPO 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 CPRPO and will be posted online along with the project list)

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

All projects will receive 50% of their total CPRPO 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 CPRPO 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 CPRPO 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, CPRPO 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 Chatham, Lee, Moore and Orange 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 CPRPO'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 CPRPO 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	21.04	23.02	56.04	58.02	Yes – County B #1	
A000004	County D	30	N/A	27.35	N/A	57.35		
H000011	County A	25	29.18	31.34	54.18	56.34	Yes – Rem. #1	
H000004	County C	30	23.74	25.77	53.74	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	24.87	27.21	49.87	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	25.31	26.22	45.31	46.22	Yes – Rem. #3	
H000012	County B	25	N/A	20.59	N/A	45.59		
H000020	County A	20	23.42	24.96	43.42	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	21.89	24.15	36.89	39.15	Yes – Rem. #5	
B000011	County C	10	N/A	24.88	N/A	34.88		
H000015	County B	15	14.81	16.75	29.81	31.75	Yes – County B #2	
H000024	County D	10	19.51	20.63	29.51	30.63	Yes – Rem. #6	
H000014	County C	0	27.85	28.72	27.85	28.72		
A000005	County C	0	N/A	24.97	N/A	24.97		
H000026	County D	5	20.14	19.89	25.14	24.89		
H000025	County B	0	23.52	23.70	23.52	23.70		
H000016	County C	0	23.06	23.07	23.06	23.07		
B000012	County B	10	N/A	11.79	N/A	21.79		
H000028	County D	0	20.69	20.92	20.69	20.92		
H000027	County D	0	18.46	19.72	18.46	19.72		
H000013	County C	5	N/A	12.57	N/A	17.57		
H000022	County B	5	9.55	11.27	14.55	16.27		
B000013	County D	0	N/A	15.71	N/A	15.71		
H000023	County C	0	13.89	13.70	13.89	13.70		
H000018	County C	0	N/A	12.19	N/A	12.19		
H000029	County D	0	13.17	11.76	13.17	11.76		
H000028	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. CPRPO 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 CPRPO 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, CPRPO 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 CPRPO website.

Cascading Projects

CPRPO 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 Chatham, Lee, Orange and Moore 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 CPRPO planning boundary, CPRPO must coordinate with its neighboring organizations on the allocation of points. By right, CPRPO may only assign the number of points equal to the percentage of the project that is located within the CPRPO

boundary—for example, CPRPO could assign a project that was 48% located within its boundary only 48 points by right. However, CPRPO 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, CPRPO 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 CPRPO’s offer to share points, CPRPO 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, CPRPO 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://centralpinesrpo.org/strategic-transportation-investments-prioritization-process/> .

The public is invited to submit comments via the website, email, phone, or mail, as well as in person at CPRPO 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 CPRPO RTCC and RTAC vote on the assignment of points. Any comments provided by the public will be reviewed by the CPRPO 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

- CPRPO RTCC & RTAC adoption of project list to submit to NCDOT –August 14, 2025
- Adoption of **this policy** – expected no later than April 9, 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 CPRPO – this should happen within 45 days after NCDOT releases the project scores if possible
- Then CPRPO staff will calculate scores for local point assignment based on this adopted methodology and post the scores and draft point assignments on the CPRPO website— expected by the middle of July 2026
- CPRPO 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 CPRPO RTCC and RTAC must vote on approval of the Regional Impact local input points—expected by August 6, 2026
- Then, the CPRPO RTCC and RTAC will adopt Regional Impact category local input point assignments at one of their regular meetings—expected at the August 13, 2026 meeting
- NCDOT will announce the projects receiving funding in the Regional Impact category— expected near the end of September 2026
- Next, CPRPO staff will adjust the draft point assignments if needed in accordance with the cascading policy discussed above—expected by September 30, 2026
- Finally, the CPRPO 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 Ms. Phyllis Portie-Ascott and seconded by Ms. Rebecca Salmon for the adoption of this policy, and upon being put to a vote it was duly adopted on April 9, 2026.

Kirk Smith

Chair, Central Pines RPO RTAC

Karyl Fuller

Secretary, Central Pines RPO RTAC