



High Country Rural Planning Organization (RPO)

Municipalities and Counties of
Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey

*“Serving North Carolina’s High Country with Continuing, Cooperative, and
Comprehensive Transportation Planning”*



Woodie Young, RTAC Chair

David Graham, Transportation Planner

David Jackson, RTCC Chair

High Country Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) Virtual Zoom Meetings

Wednesday May 19, 2021

2:00 PM

&

Thursday May 20, 2021

3:00 PM

Meeting registration will be emailed to all RTAC Members. Any members of the public who are interested in joining the meeting, please email info@hccog.org for more information.

View the livestream of the RTAC meeting here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1s68WkuUQaeypt82hhCluQ>

Public Comments received by 1 PM on Wednesday May 19, 2021 will be available to be read by RPO staff during the public comment section of the RTAC meeting. RTAC members will have the ability to hear and respond to any public comments.

All public comments for the FY 21-22 Planning Work Program and the High Country RPO Prioritization 6.0 Methodology must be received by 2:30 PM on Thursday, May 20, 2021.

Public comments may be submitted by email to dgraham@hccog.org



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RURAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RTAC)

Agenda

May 19, 2021 at 2:00 PM

&

May 20, 2021 at 3:00 PM

Via Zoom

1. Ethics Statement and Call to Order (Woodie Young, RTAC Chair)

Action Items

2. Approval of February 17, 2021 Minutes (RTAC Chair)
3. Approval of Revision to RTAC Bylaws (David Graham)
4. Public Hearing for FY 21-22 Planning Work Program (RTAC Chair)
*(The public hearing will close in 24 hours in accordance with NC HB 704.
The RTAC will consider public comments and approve the FY 21-22 PWP on May 20, 2021)*
5. Public Hearing for High Country RPO Prioritization 6.0 Methodology (RTAC Chair)
*(The public hearing will close in 24 hours in accordance with NC HB 704.
The RTAC will consider public comments and approve the High Country RPO Prioritization 6.0
Methodology on May 20, 2021)*

Informational Items

6. Prioritization 6.0 Update (David Graham)
7. Project Development Update (David Graham)
8. Division Engineers’ Report (NCDOT Division 11 and Division 13 Representatives)
9. Transportation Planning Division Update (Pam Cook PE, NCDOT)

Other Items

10. Committee Member Comments/Other Business
11. Public Comment
12. Recess meeting until May 20, 2021

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the RTCC is August 18, 2021 at 2:00 PM.

This information is available in Spanish or any other language upon request. Please contact High Country RPO Transportation Planner at (828) 265-5434 ext. 135 or at 468 New Market Blvd. Boone, NC 28607 for accommodations for this request.

Esta información está disponible en español o en cualquier otro idioma bajo petición. Por favor, póngase en contacto con High Country RPO Transportación Planner al (828) 265-5434 ext. 135 o en 468 New Market Blvd. Boone, NC 28607 de alojamiento para esta solicitud.

**High Country RPO
Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC)
February 17, 2021
Minutes**

The Rural Transportation Advisory Committee held their quarterly meeting, February 17, 2021 at 2pm via Zoom. The following members were present:

Rennie Brantz- Town of Boone
Larry Turnbow- Watauga County
Jim Blevins- Town of Lansing
Brenda Lyerly- Town of Banner Elk

Woodie Young - Avery County
Cullie Tarleton- NCBOT
David Harwood- Town of Blowing Rock
Mark Ledford- Yancey County

Others present: Pam Cook- NCDOT TPD, McCray Coates-NCDOT Division 13, Rob Weisz- NCDOT Division 11, Chase Milner, First Tennessee Development District

Guests present were: Amna Cameron-NCDOT Office of Strategic Initiatives and Whitney McFadden-NCDOT Office of Civil Rights Representative.

The following staff members were present from High Country Council of Governments: David Graham- Transportation Planner, Phil Trew- Planning & Development Director, Julie Wiggins- Executive Director, and Angie Holman- Receptionist.

Call to Order

David Graham conducted roll call and read the Ethics Statement. Vice Chair Brenda Lyerly called the meeting to order.

Approval of December 16, 2020 Minutes

Brenda Lyerly asked for a motion for approval of the December 16, 2020 minutes. Motion was made by Larry Turnbow and seconded by Rennie Brantz. Minutes were approved unanimously.

NC First Commission Presentation

Amna Cameron with NCDOT Office of Strategic Initiatives gave a presentation on NC First Commission. Amna stated that the NC First Commission was formed in March 2019 to develop recommendations for sustainable transportation revenue sources. The key findings of the NC First Commission include: NC needs greater investments, recommendations, and options to achieve a “good” infrastructure rating and increase the level of investment by at least \$20 billion over the next 10 years. Amna encouraged the RTCC to spread the word, meet with legislative delegation, participate in mileage-based user fee pilot in Fall 2021, and join the NC Chamber’s Destination 2030.

NCDOT Title VI Program Presentation

Whitney McFadden with the NCDOT Office of Civil Rights gave a presentation that went over what the program is and how it works. Title VI (federal law) specifically states, “No person in the United States shall on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance”. The 1987 Civil Rights Restoration Act states that there will be no discrimination across all NCDOT programs, activities, and modes, whether federally assisted or state-funded with the notable exception of creed/religion. She also covered Title VI protected classes (race, color, sex, national origin, limited English proficiency, disability, low-income, creed/religion and age), What is Discrimination, Discrimination Complaints (what and how they are handled), RPO Responsibilities (compliance review, recognize and review potential Title VI issues, complete and submit Title VI Plans that include but not limited to: a policy statement, complaint procedures, data analysis and public outreach. Regarding Limited English Proficiency (LEP), NCDOT must provide language assistance services free of charge to LEP individuals so they have meaningful access to programs and activities intended to prohibit national origin discrimination. A LEP person is someone who reads, writes, speaks, or understands English “less than very well”). Whitney provided contact information for the NCDOT Title VI program.

Project Development Update

David Graham went over the updates and any changes in the region.

Prioritization 6.0 Update

David Graham went over updates.

Division Engineers’ Report

Rob Weisz gave updates for Division 11 and McCray Coates gave updates for Division 13.

Transportation Planning Division Update

Pam Cook went over the NCDOT TPD Newsletter which covered Traffic Forecasts, Yancey County CTP, NCDOT Traffic Survey Group New Webpage, FHWA News, NCDOT Division of Aviation, First Commission Final Report, The NCDOT Annual Performance Report and Upcoming information and dates.

Committee Member Comments/Other Business

David Graham reminded member to get their annual Statement of Economic Interest and Real Estate Disclosure paperwork turned in by April 15th.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Adjournment

Brenda Lyerly asked for motion to adjourn meeting. Motion was made by Rennie Brantz and seconded by Larry Turnbow. Meeting adjourned.

Woodie Young, Chair

David Graham, Secretary

High Country Rural Planning Organization (RPO) Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) By-Laws

ARTICLE I-NAME

The name of this committee shall be the High Country RPO Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC), hereinafter referred to as the RTAC.

ARTICLE II-PURPOSE

The purpose and goals of this committee shall be to:

- review and approve the High Country RPO Prospectus.
- review and approve the High Country RPO Planning Work Program (PWP), which defines work tasks and responsibilities for the various agencies participating in the High Country RPO.
- establish goals, priorities, and objectives for the rural transportation planning process in the High Country RPO area.
- coordinate work efforts with the High Country RPO Rural Transportation Coordinating Committee (RTCC) in meeting the transportation and economic development needs of the High Country Region.
- make recommendations to the respective local, state, and federal governmental agencies regarding any necessary actions relating to the continuing transportation planning process.
- review and recommend transportation improvement projects that support and enhance inter-county and intra-county transportation serving the High Country RPO area.
- develop and prioritize transportation projects that the High Country RPO recommends for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- develop and amend as necessary the High Country RPO Long-Range Transportation Plan.
- review and recommend to the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) changes to Transportation Plans for the units of government of the High Country RPO.
- provide a forum for public participation in the rural transportation planning process.

ARTICLE III-MEMBERS

Section 1-Membership:

As specified in the High Country RPO Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the High Country RPO and North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), the RTAC shall consist of officials from local and state governmental agencies directly related to and concerned with the transportation planning process for the High Country planning area, which includes Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey Counties, as well as the incorporated municipalities within each County that are members of the High Country RPO. The initial voting membership shall include the following members:

- One County Commissioner representing the County of Alleghany.
- One municipal elected official to represent the interest of all the municipal local governments in Alleghany County.

- One County Commissioner representing the County of Ashe.
- One municipal elected official to represent the interest of all the municipal local governments in Ashe County.
- One County Commissioner representing the County of Avery.
- One municipal elected official to represent the interest of all the municipal local governments in Avery County.
- One County Commissioner representing the County of Mitchell.
- One municipal elected official to represent the interest of all the municipal local governments in Mitchell County.
- One County Commissioner representing the County of Watauga.
- One municipal elected official, from either the Town of Blowing Rock or the Town of Seven Devils, to represent the interest of all the municipal local governments in Watauga County.
- One County Commissioner representing the County of Wilkes.
- One municipal elected official to represent the interest of all the municipal local governments in Wilkes County.
- One County Commissioner representing the County of Yancey.
- One municipal elected official to represent the interest of all the municipal local governments in Yancey County.
- One elected official from each municipality in the RPO with a population of 10,000 or more.
- One member representing the North Carolina Board of Transportation.

Section 2-Term of Membership:

Term of office for all seats on the RTAC is two years. Re-appointment is possible. To facilitate staggered terms and thereby promote continuity, the initial appointments (county and municipal) from Alleghany, Avery, Watauga, and Yancey County to the RTAC shall be for one (1) year. All subsequent appointments shall be for two (2) years.

ARTICLE IV-OFFICERS

Section 1-Officers Defined:

The officers of the RTAC shall consist of a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman serving a two-year term. The High Country Council of Governments (COG) Transportation Planner, as staff to the High Country RPO, shall act as Secretary to the RTAC.

Section 2-Duties of Officers:

2.1 The Chairman shall call meetings of the RTAC to order, and shall act as presiding officer of such meetings. The Chairman shall see that all orders and action items, including amendments, are carried into effect. The Chairman will:

- Sign all official documents of the RTAC.
- Preside at all meetings of the RTAC.
- Decide all points of order or procedure.
- Transmit all recommendations of the RTAC to NCDOT.
- With assistance from the High Country COG Transportation Planner, draft the meeting agendas and make said available to the RTAC members in a timely manner.

2.2 The Vice-Chairman shall conduct the duties of the Chairman in the event of the Chairman's absence.

2.3 The administrative coordination for the RTAC shall be performed by the High Country COG Transportation Planner, as staff for the High Country RPO. The High Country RPO Transportation Planner shall:

- Keep minutes of the RTAC meetings in proper form for the approval of the RTAC at its next regular meeting.
- Mail notices of regular meetings of the RTAC, with a copy of the agenda, in accordance with Article V of these rules.
- Give notice of special meetings called in accordance with North Carolina Open Meetings Law.
- Maintain all files, records, and correspondence of the RTAC.

2.4 Should neither the Chairman nor Vice-Chairman be able to preside at a meeting, the RTAC shall appoint a Chairman Pro-Tem for that meeting or until such time the Chairman or Vice-Chairman can resume their responsibilities.

ARTICLE V-MEETINGS

Section 1-Regular Meetings:

The RTAC shall meet when it is deemed necessary, appropriate, and advisable. The regular meeting of the RTAC shall be held on the third Wednesday of the months of February, May, August, and November at 2:00 PM and December at 11:00 AM. The RTAC shall meet on an as needed (on-call) basis as determined by the Chairman of the RTAC and at a time to be determined by the Chairman of the RTAC. Meeting notice and agenda are to be mailed no later than seven (7) days prior to a determined RTAC meeting date.

Section 2-Special Meetings:

Special meetings may be called by the Chairman, or at the request of three (3) eligible voting members of the RTAC petitioning the Chairman. Notice of special meetings shall be given in accordance with Open Meeting Laws of the North Carolina General Statutes.

Section 3-Workshops:

The RTAC may choose to hold workshops from time to time. Notification of all workshops shall be mailed to RTAC members in the same manner as regular meetings of the RTAC.

Section 4-Attendance:

RTAC members are expected to attend each regular meeting and each special meeting of the RTAC. If a RTAC member is unable to attend a meeting, notice should be given by the member to be absent, to the High Country RPO Transportation Planner. RTAC members are allowed to designate an alternate to attend meetings in their absence, providing such alternate member meets the same membership requirements as the absent member. Should a member fail to attend, or make arrangements for an alternate to attend, Two (2) or more consecutive meetings, that member's seat shall be considered vacant. Vacant seats shall be reinstated upon attendance by a qualifying member of the affected organization.

Section 5- Quorum:

51% of eligible voting members or their alternates shall constitute a quorum. If a quorum is not established, the meeting shall be rescheduled. All business (action or no action items) will not be discussed until a quorum is established at the meeting.

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Section 6-Agenda:

The agenda is a list of considerations for discussion at a meeting. Any member of the RTAC can place items on the agenda prior to its distribution, by notifying the RTAC Chairman and/or the High Country RPO Transportation Planner. Additional items may be placed on the regular agenda at the beginning of the RTAC meeting on the date of the meeting, if approved by a majority vote of the present and eligible voting members.

Section 7-Voting Procedures:

The Chairman may call for a vote on any issue, provided that it is seconded and within the purposes set forth in Article II and provided the issue is on the agenda as outlined in Section 5 of this article. A quorum of 51% of the RTAC is required to call for a vote. Each voting member of the RTAC shall have one (1) vote. A majority vote of the members (or their authorized alternates) present and eligible to vote shall be sufficient for approval of matters coming before the RTAC. Vacant seats shall not be included in the RTAC membership for the purposes of establishing a quorum.

Consideration of RTCC recommendation is required prior to any vote affecting the Planning Work Program (PWP).

The Chairman is permitted to vote. In the event of a tie, where the Chairman has already voted, the Chairman cannot vote again to break the tie and the motion does not pass. Abstentions on issues requiring a vote is permitted, provided members desiring to abstain obtain approval by the RTAC for said abstention by a majority vote of the RTAC members present. Any member present and not voting shall be recorded as a positive vote on the motion. In the absence of any direction from these By-Laws or other duly adopted voting procedures pursuant to certain approval actions, Robert's Rules of Order will designate procedures governing voting.

ARTICLE VI-AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

Amendments to these By-Laws shall require the affirmative vote of 51% of the RTAC's eligible voting members, provided that written notice of the proposed amendment has been mailed seven (7) days prior to the meeting at which the amendment is to be considered and provided that such amendment does not conflict with the letter or fundamental intent of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the High Country RPO, which is the governing document for these By-Laws. In the event of any conflict, the MOU shall carry precedence over these By-Laws.

The High Country RPO Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) approved these amended By-Laws on May 19, 2021.

Woodie Young, Chairman, High Country RPO RTAC

David Graham, Secretary, High Country RPO RTAC

**FY 2021-2022
PLANNING WORK PROGRAM
ANNUAL PROPOSED FUNDING SOURCES TABLE
High Country Rural Planning Organization**

TASK CODE	WORK CATEGORY	RPO PROGRAM FUNDS		
		LOCAL 20%	STATE 80%	TOTAL
I. DATA COLLECTION AND ASSESSMENT				
I-1	DATA COLLECTION AND ASSESSMENT	\$ 1,600	\$ 6,400	\$ 8,000
I-1.1	Highway			
I-1.2	Other Modes			
I-1.3	Socioeconomic			
I-1.4	Title VI			
II. TRANSPORTATION PLANNING				
II-1	COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (CTP) DEVELOPMENT	\$ 6,200	\$ 24,800	\$ 31,000
II-1.1	Develop CTP Vision			
II-1.2	Conduct CTP Needs Assessment			
II-1.3	Analyze Alternatives and Environmental Screening			
II-1.4	Develop Final Plan			
II-1.5	Adopt Plan			
II-2	PRIORITIZATION	\$ 4,200	\$ 16,800	\$ 21,000
II-2.1	Project Prioritization			
II-3	PROGRAM AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	\$ 1,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 5,000
II-3.1	STIP Participation			
II-3.2	Merger / Project Development			
II-4	GENERAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING	\$ 2,900	\$ 11,600	\$ 14,500
II-4.1	Regional and Statewide Planning			
II-4.2	Special Studies, Projects and Other Trainings			
III. ADMINISTRATION OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND POLICIES				
III-1	ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES	\$ 4,191	\$ 16,766	\$ 20,957
III-1.1	Administrative Documents			
III-1.2	TCC / TAC Work Facilitation; Ethics Compliance			
III-1.3	Program Administration			
IV. DIRECT COSTS				
IV-1	PROGRAMMATIC DIRECT CHARGES	\$ 20	\$ 80	\$ 100
IV-1.1	Program-wide Direct Costs			
IV-2	ADVERTISING	\$ 20	\$ 80	\$ 100
IV-2.1	News Media Ads			
IV-3	LODGING, MEALS, INCIDENTALS	\$ 240	\$ 960	\$ 1,200
IV-3.1	Hotel Costs			
IV-3.2	Meal Costs			
IV-3.3	Incidentals			
IV-4	POSTAGE	\$ 10	\$ 40	\$ 50
IV-4.1	Mailings			
IV-5	REGISTRATION / TRAINING	\$ 40	\$ 160	\$ 200
IV-5.1	Conference Registration			
IV-5.2	Meeting / Workshop / Training Fees			
IV-6	TRAVEL	\$ 240	\$ 960	\$ 1,200
IV-6.1	Mileage Reimbursement			
IV-6.2	Car Rental Costs			
IV-6.3	Other Travel Expenses			
V. INDIRECT COSTS				
V-1	INDIRECT COSTS APPROVED BY COGNIZANT AGENCY FY 21-22	\$ 11,251	\$ 45,005	\$ 56,256
V-1.1	Incurred Indirect Costs			
TOTAL		\$ 31,913	\$ 127,650	\$ 159,563

Approved by the TAC on: _____ 20__

Signature, TAC Chairman

Signature, RPO Secretary

**FY 2021-2022
PLANNING WORK PROGRAM
Narrative
High Country Rural Planning Organization**

I. DATA COLLECTION AND ASSESSMENT		
I-1 DATA COLLECTION AND ASSESSMENT		\$ 8,000.00
I-1.1 Highway	Project Mapping, E911 Centerline Database Management	
I-1.2 Other Modes		
I-1.3 Socioeconomic	Maintain Socioeconomic Data for all Counties	
I-1.4 Title VI	Maintain Compliance with Title VI	
II. TRANSPORTATION PLANNING		
II-1 COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (CTP) DEVELOPMENT		\$ 31,000.00
II-1.1 Develop CTP Vision	Complete Yancey County CTP Planning Process, Begin Ashe County CTP Planning Process	
II-1.2 Conduct CTP Needs Assessment		
II-1.3 Analyze Alternatives and Environmental Screening		
II-1.4 Develop Final Plan		
II-1.5 Adopt Plan		
II-2 PRIORITIZATION		\$ 21,000.00
II-2.1 Project Prioritization	Solicitation of Priority P6.0 Projects, Scoring and Ranking of Projects, Development of HCRPO Priority Needs List, Local Point Allocation, Methodology Updates	
II-3 PROGRAM AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT		\$ 5,000.00
II-3.1 STIP Participation	Review and Report Status of STIP projects to RTCC/RTAC, Attend STIP Meetings	
II-3.2 Merger / Project Development	Attend Merger Meetings and Provide Local Input on Projects	
II-4 GENERAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING		\$ 14,500.00
II-4.1 Regional and Statewide Planning	Attend NCARPO Quarterly Meetings	
II-4.2 Special Studies, Projects and Other Trainings		
	NCARPO Administrative Document Committee Participation, NCDOT Resiliency Plan Participation	
III. ADMINISTRATION OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND POLICIES		
III-1 ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES		\$ 20,957.00
III-1.1 Administrative Documents	Prepare, Obtain Approval and Submit PWP and any Necessary Amendments. Prepare and submit quarterly reports to NCDOT TPD	
III-1.2 TCC / TAC Work Facilitation; Ethics Compliance	Facilitate HCRPO Meetings, Membership, and RTAC Ethics Requirements	
III-1.3 Program Administration	Provide Transportation Information and Data, Coordinate with NCDOT staff Regarding Inquiries from Local Officials, Citizens, and RTCC/RTAC Members.	
IV. DIRECT COSTS		
IV-1 PROGRAMMATIC DIRECT CHARGES		\$ 100.00
IV-1.1 Program-wide Direct Costs	Regular Costs of Operation of the HCRPO Program	
IV-2 ADVERTISING		\$ 100.00
IV-2.1 News Media Ads	HCRPO Meeting Notices	
IV-3 LODGING, MEALS, INCIDENTALS		\$ 1,200.00
IV-3.1 Hotel Costs	Costs for Overnight Stays at NCARPO Quarterly Meetings and Other Meetings and Trainings	
IV-3.2 Meal Costs	Meal Costs while on Overnight or Extended Travel	
IV-3.3 Incidentals	Parking, Tips	
IV-4 POSTAGE		\$ 50.00
IV-4.1 Mailings	Costs for Mailing Materials	
IV-5 REGISTRATION / TRAINING		\$ 200.00
IV-5.1 Conference Registration	Conference Registration	
IV-5.2 Meeting / Workshop / Training Fees	Training Registration	
IV-6 TRAVEL		\$ 1,200.00
IV-6.1 Mileage Reimbursement	Reimbursement for Total Miles Traveled (.575 per mile)	
IV-6.2 Car Rental Costs		
IV-6.3 Other Travel Expenses	Parking Etc...	
V. INDIRECT COSTS		
V-1 INDIRECT COSTS APPROVED BY COGNIZANT AGENCY FY 21-22		\$ 56,256.00
V-1.1 Incurred Indirect Costs	Indirect costs incurred for the RPO program	
TOTAL		\$ 159,563.00

MEMORANDUM

To: High Country RPO RTCC/RTAC
From: David Graham, High Country RPO Transportation Planner
Re: HCRPO Prioritization 6.0 (P6.0) Methodology Update

On August 19, 2020 the RTCC approved the formation of the P6.0 Methodology Subcommittee to update the HCRPO process for scoring, ranking, and local input point allocation for local transportation projects for consideration in the 2023-2032 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The following individuals volunteered to serve on the P6.0 Methodology Subcommittee:

- Joe Furman, Watauga County Planning Director
- Ken Noland, Wilkesboro Town Manager
- Stephen Sparks, NCDOT Division 13 Corridor Development Engineer
- Rob Weisz, NCDOT Division 11 Corridor Development Engineer
- Phil Trew, High Country Council of Governments Planning Director
- David Graham, High Country Council of Governments Transportation Planner

The Subcommittee met December 4, 2020 and January 29, 2021 to discuss and update the P6.0 methodology. The following are the main updates recommended by the Subcommittee that have been approved by NCDOT and shown in the updated P6.0 methodology document:

- 1) Allocation of 1500 NCDOT local input points for both Regional Impact and Division Needs projects. (NCDOT had allocated 1400 local input points for the last prioritization cycle (P5.0)).
- 2) Reduced highway scoring criteria from 9 criteria to 4 criteria with emphasis on NCDOT SPOT scores to pick up as many projects as possible at the Regional Impact and Division Needs categories.
- 3) Reduced bicycle and pedestrian scoring criteria from 5 criteria to 4 criteria with emphasis on NCDOT SPOT scores to pick up as many projects as possible at the Division Needs category.
- 4) Maximum of 20 points for bicycle and pedestrian projects connectivity criteria (project provides connection to existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities = 20 points)
- 5) Maximum of 10 points for bicycle and pedestrian projects right-of-way acquisition status (right-of way acquired = 10 points, no right-of-way acquired = 0 points)
- 6) Included NCDOT flexibility provision to transfer up to 500 points between Regional Impact and Division Needs categories

The P6.0 methodology was made available for public comment during the month of April. The RTAC will hold a public hearing on the P6.0 methodology during the May RTAC meeting.

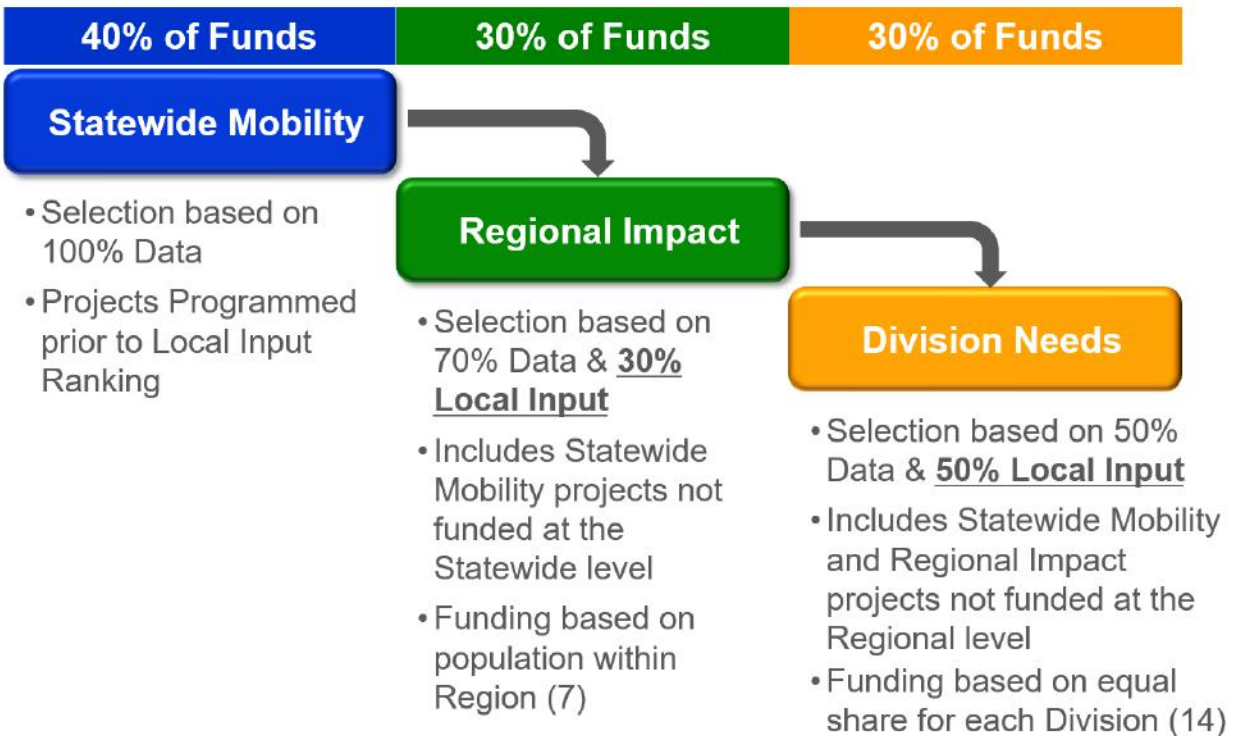
**HIGH COUNTRY RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION (RPO)
PRIORITIZATION 6.0 METHODOLOGY**

Introduction

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.



The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and North Carolina General Assembly have required that all rural planning organizations develop a project solicitation and ranking methodology to evaluate projects for the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for highway, bicycle & pedestrian, public transportation, aviation, and rail modes of transportation.

The methodology for ranking projects will include the following steps:

1. Submittal of new projects to NCDOT
2. Solicitation of transportation project priorities from the counties in the High Country RPO region
3. Ranking of solicited projects received from High Country RPO counties for the development of a Priority Needs list
4. Assignment of 1500 points to the top Regional Impact and Division Needs projects on the Priority Needs list

Applicability

This methodology applies to all projects ranked by the High Country RPO in Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey counties that fall in the regional impact and division needs categories as defined in the 2013 Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) legislation. For example: US 321, US 421, and NC 226 are considered eligible regional impact category facilities. All county State Road (SR) Routes, airports, transit agencies, and bicycle and pedestrian projects are eligible division needs projects.

Statewide mobility projects will be 100% quantitative data driven by NCDOT with no local input from the RPO or Divisions. Regional projects will be 70% quantitative data driven by NCDOT with 30% local input (15% NCDOT Division 11 or 13 and 15% RPO). Division level projects will be 50% quantitative data driven by NCDOT with 50% local input (25% NCDOT Division 11 or 13 and 25% RPO). Other factors like local government priorities will also be considered when scoring, ranking, and allocating local points to projects for the development of a priority needs list.

New Project Solicitation

High Country RPO staff will request new projects from the seven High Country Counties and the Town of Boone and submit them to the Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation (SPOT) office for inclusion in the Project Prioritization (P6.0) Projects list. Each county and the Town of Boone can submit up to the requisite number of new projects within each mode (highway, bicycle & pedestrian, transit, aviation, and rail) as follows:

Alleghany – 2; Ashe – 4; Avery – 3; Mitchell – 2; Watauga – 4; Wilkes – 6; Yancey – 3; Boone - 1

RPO Steps	Target Dates
Staff to solicit new transportation projects from County Managers (highway, bicycle & pedestrian, public transportation, aviation, and rail modes)	June 3, 2019 – July 12, 2019
New projects scheduled for RTCC consideration and recommendation of approval to RTAC.	August 21, 2019
New projects scheduled for consideration and approval by the RTAC.	August 21, 2019
RPO staff submittal of approved RTCC/RTAC new projects to NCDOT for project evaluation and scoring.	October 2019

Solicitation of Priority Projects for Local Scoring and Ranking

High Country RPO staff will solicit priority ranking of all eligible projects in NCDOT’s P6.0 database for the High Country RPO which includes submittals from the RPO, and NCDOT’s Divisions 11 and 13. All eligible projects (highway, bicycle & pedestrian, public transportation, aviation, and rail modes of transportation) from the seven High Country counties and the Town of Boone to be ranked will be in priority order and will serve as the basis for the priority needs list.

Scoring and Project Ranking Approach

Projects submitted will be evaluated by the criteria and scoring as detailed on pages 6 – 8 of the methodology. The resulting project scores and rankings will be adopted by the RPO as the High Country RPO Priority Needs List and will serve as the basis for assignment of points to transportation projects which include all modes of transportation.

Local Point Assignment Process

The Priority Needs List will guide in the assignment of points. Projects not funded at the Statewide Mobility tier will cascade down to the Regional Impact tier for RPO scoring and ranking. After projects are locally scored and ranked, the top 15 projects receive 100 points each. **The top 15 projects in the Regional Impact tier receive 100 points.** The Division Needs category projects including the projects that cascade down from the Regional Impact category will be re-ranked for point allocation. For example: If Ashe County submits 5 Priority Projects for scoring and ranking in priority order (#1 - #5) and only the top 2 projects are funded at the Regional Impact category the remaining projects (#3 - #5) will cascade to the Division Needs category and will be scored and ranked as follows: Project #3 becomes priority #1, Project #4 becomes priority #2, and Project #5 becomes priority #3. Once Division Needs projects are re-ranked for point allocation, **the top 15 projects in the Division Needs category will receive 100 points.** High Country counties and the Town of Boone will have an opportunity to revise division projects if desired.

(1)

(1)

Regional Impact Projects: Eligible regional impact routes in the High Country RPO include US 19, US 19E, US 19W, US 21, US 221, US 321 and US 421 not otherwise eligible at the statewide level. In addition, all NC routes (NC 197, NC 194, NC 16, NC 18 ...). The Class I railroad in Mitchell County is also an eligible regional rail line. If a project is not funded at the Regional Impact category it will shift down to the Division Needs category for RPO scoring and ranking.

Division Needs Projects: Eligible Division Needs routes in the High Country RPO include all State highways, secondary roads, and all other modes of transportation (bicycle/pedestrian, remaining rail, airport, and transit projects).

Public Input Process

Public input for the STIP prioritization process shall be in accordance with the High Country RPO Public Participation Plan. The scoring and ranking methodology will be shared with the public through press releases and posting on the High Country RPO website at <https://hccog.org/planning/#Transport> and will consider any public input. The RPO will issue a press release regarding the adoption of the Priority Needs list and provide for public comment at applicable RTCC and RTAC meetings. The prioritization of projects from the Priority Needs list will be presented at applicable RTCC and RTAC meetings and will include a public hearing component. The Priority Needs list and public input comments received will be posted on the High Country RPO website at <https://hccog.org/planning/#Transport>. In addition, any comments received during a public hearing held by the High Country RPO's RTCC or RTAC will be included in the meeting minutes. The final assignment of points by the RPO and local project scores will also be available via the High Country RPO's website.

Materials Sharing

Materials will be provided on the High Country RPO website at <https://hccog.org/planning/#Transport> and will include: 1) A link to the NCDOT STI Prioritization Resources website. 2) The adopted High Country RPO Prioritization 6.0 Methodology document and 3) Regional Impact and Division Needs local input point assignment documentation. All materials will be posted until adoption of the final STIP by the Board of Transportation.

Schedule

RPO Steps	Target Dates
The High Country RPO staff to submit the updated P6.0 draft methodology for ranking and scoring of projects to NCDOT for review and approval.	March 1, 2021
Draft methodology available for public comment through press releases and the posting of the document on the High Country RPO website at https://hccog.org/planning/#Transport .	April 1 – 30, 2021
Consideration and approval of methodology by RTCC & RTAC at RPO meetings with public hearing during RTAC meeting.	May 19, 2021
RPO staff to solicit priority projects with a supplemental overall project scores list (after scores are released from NCDOT) from local governments for scoring and ranking.	September 1, 2021
RPO consideration and approval of Prioritization 6.0 Priority Needs list at RPO meetings with public hearing during special RTAC meeting.	November 17, 2021
RPO assigns 100 points to top 15 ranking regional projects.	November 30, 2021
RPO assigns 100 points to top 15 ranking division projects.	February 4, 2022
All public comments received and all final point assignments including any justification for point assignment which deviates from this local methodology will be placed on the High Country RPO website at https://hccog.org/planning/#Transport by the end of February 2022.	February 28, 2022

HIGH COUNTRY RPO

Prioritization 6.0 Criteria and Scoring

HIGHWAY REGIONAL IMPACT PROJECTS		
CRITERIA	MAXIMUM POINTS	SCORE METHODOLOGY
SPOT P 6.0 Score	70	SPOT P 6.0 Score
Local Priority	20	1 = 20 2 = 15 3 = 10 4 = 5 5 = 0
Plan Consistency (project identified in a locally adopted plan)	5	Yes = 5 No = 0
Scheduled in current STIP	5	Yes = 5 No = 0
TOTAL	100	

(2)

HIGHWAY DIVISION NEEDS PROJECTS		
CRITERIA	MAXIMUM POINTS	SCORE METHODOLOGY
SPOT P 6.0 Score	50	SPOT P 6.0 Score
Local Priority	20	1 = 20 2 = 15 3 = 10 4 = 5 5 = 0
Plan Consistency (project identified in a locally adopted plan)	15	Yes = 15 No = 0
Scheduled in current STIP	15	Yes = 15 No = 0
TOTAL	100	

(2)

Project Example: If a project scores the maximum or near the maximum number of points for each criterion listed above it will rank near the top of the priority needs list and be allocated 100 points. However, if a project does not score well based on the criteria, it is not likely to be allocated 100 points.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN DIVISION NEEDS PROJECTS		
CRITERIA	MAXIMUM POINTS	SCORE METHODOLOGY
SPOT P 6.0 Score	50	SPOT P 6.0 Score
Local Priority	20	1 = 20 2 = 15 3 = 10 4 = 5 5 = 0
Project Connectivity (project provides connection to existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities)	20	Yes = 20 No = 0
Right-of-way status	10	Right-of-way acquired = 10 None acquired = 0
TOTAL	100	

(3)

(4)

(5)

AVIATION DIVISION NEEDS PROJECTS		
CRITERIA	MAXIMUM POINTS	SCORE METHODOLOGY
SPOT P 6.0 Score X 1.6	80	SPOT P 6.0 Score X 1.6
Local Priority	20	1 = 20 2 = 15 3 = 10 4 = 5 5 = 0
TOTAL	100	

TRANSIT DIVISION NEEDS PROJECTS		
CRITERIA	MAXIMUM POINTS	SCORE METHODOLOGY
SPOT P 6.0 Score X 1.6	80	SPOT P 6.0 Score X 1.6
Local Priority	20	1 = 20 2 = 15 3 = 10 4 = 5 5 = 0
TOTAL	100	

RAIL DIVISION NEEDS PROJECTS		
CRITERIA	MAXIMUM POINTS	SCORE METHODOLOGY
SPOT P 6.0 Score X 1.6	80	SPOT P 6.0 Score X 1.6
Local Priority	20	1 = 20 2 = 15 3 = 10 4 = 5 5 = 0
TOTAL	100	

RURAL TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RTAC) POINT FLEXIBILITY

The methodology shall serve as a guide for the RTAC to assign points to projects located within the High Country RPO planning jurisdiction. The RTAC will have the flexibility to assign points as the committee desires including the use of the Local Input Point (LIP) Flex Policy to transfer up to 500 points between Regional Impact and Division Needs categories. Flexing of Local Input Points between categories will be coordinated with the NCDOT Prioritization Office. Deviation from the methodology shall require justification/rationale to be made during a public meeting of the RTAC as advertised and documented to be posted on the RPO’s website.

(6)

Prioritization 6.0 Update

- The NCDOT Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation (SPOT) is currently in the process of scoring all projects in the state for the prioritization 6.0 (P6.0) cycle.
- The review period of all project data and costs for scoring is scheduled for April 1 to May 31, 2021.
- The programming of Statewide Mobility projects by SPOT is scheduled for the month of August 2021.
- Solicitation of P6.0 priority ranked projects from local governments is scheduled for early September 2021.
- P6.0 schedule is subject to change.

MAY 2021 PROJECT UPDATE

(March NCBOT Amended 2020-2029 STIP)

HIGHWAY PROJECTS

US 221 (R-2915): US 421 to US 221 Business/NC 88 – Ashe County

Description: *US 221, US 421 in Watauga County to US 221 Business/ NC 88 in Jefferson. Widen to four lanes divided*

Section A: Complete
Section B: Complete
Section C: Under Construction
Section D: Complete
Section E: Under Construction

NC 88, NC 88 to NC 194 (R-5832) – Ashe County

Description: *Upgrade roadway.*

Right-of-Way 2022
Construction 2024

US 19E, East of Spruce Pine to Mullin Hill Road (R-2520-A) – Avery/Mitchell Counties

Description: *Widen to multi-lanes.*

Right-of-Way 2029
Construction Future Years – Committed Project

NC 194/US 19E Intersection (R-5911) – Avery County

Description: *Construct right turn lane from US 19E northbound to NC 194 eastbound.*

Right-of-Way 2022
Construction 2022

NC 105 (R-2566B): NC 105, Clarks Creek Road to NC 105 Bypass (Boone) – Avery/Watauga Counties

Description: *NC 105, Old Shulls Mill (SR 1568) to SR NC 105 Bypass (SR1107) in Boone. Widen to multi-lanes (includes R-2566BA - Bridge over Watauga River at Broadstone Road).*

Section B:	Right-of-Way	2022
	Construction	2024
Section BA:	Right-of-Way	In progress
	Construction	Accelerate from 2023 to 2022 (BOT Item N)

US 421/US 321 (R-2615): US 321/US421 Junction Near Vilas to 105 Bypass – Watauga County

Description: *Widen to Multi-Lanes*

Right-of-Way	2024
Construction	2027

US 421 & Poplar Grove Connector Intersection (R-5872) – Watauga County

Description: *Construct Roundabout*

Right-of-Way	2028
Construction	Future Years – Committed Project

SR 1522 (Deerfield Road), State Farm Road to SR 1523 (Wilson Ridge Road) (R-5830) – Watauga County

Description: *Upgrade Roadway.*

Right-of-Way	2024
Construction	2025

Bamboo Road (SR 1514); Wilson Ridge Road (SR 1523), US 421/US221 to Deerfield Road (SR 1522) (U-5810) – Watauga County

Description: *Widen Roadway to 12 foot lanes with 4 foot paved shoulders.*

Right-of-Way	2022
Construction	2024

NC 115, From US 421 to 2nd Street (R-5759) – Wilkes County

Description: *Widen Existing Roadway.*

Right-of-Way	2020
Construction	2024

NC 268 (R-2603): NC 18 to Airport Road – Wilkes County

Description: *NC 268, Multi-lanes east of NC 18 to SR 1966. Widen to multi-lanes.*

Under Construction

SR 1001 (Oakwoods Road), From US 421 to NC268 (East Main St.) (R-5772) – Wilkes County

Description: *Upgrade Existing Roadway.*

Right-of-Way	2026
Construction	2028 – Committed Project

Wilkesboro-North Wilkesboro Bypass, NC 18 to US 421 (R-0616) – Wilkes County

Description: *Construct multi-lane facility, part on new location.*

Right-of-Way	2026
Construction	2029 – Committed Project

US 421 (U-5312): Yadkin River Bridge to Westgate Drive – Wilkes County

Description: *US 421, NC 16 to US 421 Business. Convert existing roadway to superstreet and add service roads.*

Right-of-Way	In Progress
Construction	2023

NC 226, From Blue Ridge Parkway to Summit Avenue (R-5804) – Mitchell County

Description: *Widen Roadway to 3 Lanes.*

Right-of-Way	2029
Construction	Future Years – Committed Project

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Yancey County Transit Facility (TA-6723)

***Description:** Construct office, training, maintenance facility.*

Construction 2022

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN PROJECTS

US 221 Sidewalk from Moses H. Cone Memorial Park to Main Street Blowing Rock (EB-5798)

***Description:** Construct sidewalk along US 221*

Under Construction

Middle Fork Greenway Section I From Blowing Rock along US 321 to the Blue Ridge Parkway (EB-5924)

***Description:** Construct Greenway along US 321*

Right-of-Way 2021

Construction 2022

US 421 Multi-Use Path from Grove Street to Brookshire Road (EB-5983)

***Description:** Construct multi-use path.*

Right-of-Way 2024

Construction 2025

AVIATION PROJECTS

Ashe County Airport (AV-5750)

Description: *Acquire land and existing hangers north of runway 10 threshold and adjacent to airport property*

Right-of-Way in Progress

Ashe County Airport (AV-5848)

Description: *Construct apron expansions*

Construction 2021

Wilkes County Airport (AV-5894)

Description: *Extend runway to 7,000 feet*

Right-of-Way 2022

Construction 2024