

South Carolina Department of Transportation

Planning Directive

Directive Number: PD-15 **Effective:** July 15, 2020

Subject: COG and MPO Project Ranking Process

References: S.C. Code of Laws, Sections 57-1-370 and 57-1-460
SCDOT Regulations 63-10

Purpose: Establish Policy for Ranking MPO and COG Road Widening, Functional Intersection, and New-Location Roadway Improvement Projects in Accordance with Act 114 Criteria

This Directive Applies to: Planning

In 2007, the South Carolina General Assembly enacted Act 114. One of the landmark items in Act 114 was the requirement that the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) establish a project prioritization process. In 2016, the General Assembly enacted Act 275. Act 275 eliminated some of Act 114's requirements but it retained the requirement for project prioritization. This requirement is codified in Section 57-1-370 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, as amended. Additional detail on the process is found in S.C. Code of Regulations 63-10, as amended.

This directive provides the details of scoring and ranking processes for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and Council of Governments (COG) for the following project improvement type classifications: corridor improvement/road widening, new-location roadway, and functional intersection. MPOs and COGs may choose to adopt the state defined ranking templates below or define a similar methodology compliant with Act 114 to prioritize projects. Specific MPO and COG ranking procedures are ratified by the SCDOT Commission.

For all project type classifications, MPOs and COGs must consider the following criteria:

- (a) financial viability including a life cycle analysis of estimated maintenance and repair costs over the expected life of the project;
- (b) public safety;
- (c) potential for economic development;
- (d) traffic volume and congestion;
- (e) truck traffic;
- (f) the pavement quality index;
- (g) environmental impact;
- (h) alternative transportation solutions; and
- (i) consistency with local land use plans.

Corridor Improvements / Widening Projects

Corridor improvement or widening projects will consider criteria in the following manner:

- ***Traffic volume and congestion (35 percent)*** – The traffic volume and congestion score is based on current and future traffic volumes and the associated level-of-service condition.
- ***Located on a priority network (national highway system (NHS), freight, and strategic corridors) (25 percent)*** – The priority network score is based on a project's location in relationship to defined priority networks.
- ***Public safety (10 percent)*** – The public safety score is based on crash rates.
- ***Economic development (7 percent)*** – The economic development score is based off of on an assessment of livability, regional economic development, benefit-cost & cost effectiveness, and system performance. These assessments should be considered but are not limited to.
- ***Truck traffic (10 percent)*** – The truck traffic score is based on current and projected truck percentages.
- ***Financial viability (5 percent)*** – The financial viability score is based on estimated project cost in comparison to the ten-year Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) budget. Additional consideration will be given to projects supplemented with local project funding and/or other federal and state funding.
- ***Pavement quality index (PQI) (3 percent)*** – The PQI score is based on pavement condition assessments.
- ***Environmental impacts (5 percent)*** – The environmental impacts score is based on an assessment of potential impacts to natural, social, and cultural resources.
- ***Alternative transportation solutions (not scored)*** – The criteria is deemed relevant, however, consideration of alternative transportation solutions is confirmed during the NEPA process.
- ***Consistency with local land use plans (not scored)*** – The criteria is relevant, however, verification of consistency with local land use plans are confirmed during project evaluation. If the project is inconsistent with the local land use plans, justification is required.

New-location Roadway Improvements

When considering a **new-location roadway** as a solution to capacity needs, the criteria will be considered in the following manner:

- ***Traffic volume and congestion (40 percent)*** – The traffic volume and congestion score is based on a comparison of network hours of delay between build and no-build scenarios.
- ***Economic development (20 percent)*** – The economic development score is based off of on an assessment of livability, regional economic development, benefit-cost & cost effectiveness, and system performance. These assessments should be

considered but are not limited to.

- **Environmental impacts (15 percent)** – The environmental impacts score is based on an assessment of potential impacts to natural, social, and cultural resources.
- **Connectivity to a priority network (15 percent)** – The priority network score is based on the proposed road's relationship to a priority network.
- **Financial viability (10 percent)** – The financial viability score is based on estimated project cost in comparison to the ten-year Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) budget. Additional consideration will be given to projects supplemented with local project funding and/or other federal and state funding.
- **Alternative transportation solutions (not scored)** – The criteria is deemed relevant, however, consideration of alternative transportation solutions is confirmed during the NEPA process.
- **Consistency with local land use plans (not scored)** – The criteria is relevant, however, verification of consistency with local land use plans are confirmed during project evaluation. If the project is inconsistent with the local land use plans, justification is required.

The new-location roadway criteria are to be applied to projects that have new location design considerations in the project purpose and need, or a new location alignment defined through the NEPA process.

Intersection improvement projects

The MPO and COG functional intersection improvement projects will consider criteria in the following manner:

- **Traffic volume and congestion (35 percent)** – The traffic volume and congestion score is based on current and future traffic volumes and the associated level-of-service condition.
- **Public safety (25 percent)** – The public safety score is based on crash rates.
- **Truck traffic (10 percent)** – The truck traffic score is based on current and projected truck percentages.
- **Located on a priority network (15 percent)** – The priority network score is based on the project's relationship to a priority network.
- **Financial viability (5 percent)** – The financial viability score is based on estimated project cost in comparison to the ten-year Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) budget. Additional consideration will be given to projects supplemented with local project funding and/or other federal and state funding.
- **Economic development (5 percent)** – The economic development score is based off of on an assessment of livability, regional economic development, benefit-cost & cost effectiveness, and system performance. These assessments should be considered but are not limited to.
- **Environmental impacts (5 percent)** – The environmental impacts score is based on an assessment of potential impacts to natural, social, and cultural resources.

- **Alternative transportation solutions (not scored)** – The criteria is deemed relevant, however, consideration of alternative transportation solutions is confirmed during the NEPA process.
- **Consistency with local land use plans (not scored)** – The criteria is relevant, however, verification of consistency with local land use plans are confirmed during project evaluation. If the project is inconsistent with the local land use plans, justification is required.

Using the above weighted criteria, projects will be scored and ranked within each project type classification and adopted into their respective MPO or COG Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). As of the date of this amended directive, all subsequent program projects presented to the SCDOT Commission for approval will abide by the these requirements. All LRTP's that are up to date and are within their current 5 year cycle are not required to utilize the criteria listed above and may continue with the criteria approved in the second revision on August 20, 2015. All other LRTP's must be in accordance with the new criteria listed above.

All LRTP's should take into account regional/local plans and transportation investments of regional significance that are not funded with federal or guideshare funds. Projects that do not fall within an existing LRTP category are not required to be ranked or scored within the LRTP but must be approved by the MPO or COG Board in support for insertion into the LRTP. These projects will be listed into a "Committed by Others" category, or a category similar in nature. Projects receiving federal funds are required to be ranked and scored within the respective MPO or COG LRTP.

Submitted and

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