

October 29, 2015 Minutes

Prioritization Subcommittee Meeting Minutes October 29, 2015

ATTENDING

Marc Hunt, City of Asheville
Eddie Henderson, Town of Fletcher
Josh O'Conner, Buncombe County
Matt Champion, Henderson County
Elizabeth Teague, Town of Waynesville

Karla Furnari, Buncombe County
Kristina Sohlberg, NCDOT Division 13
Ed Greene, NCDOT Division 14

Non-Voting

Tristan Winkler, FBRMPO
Vicki Eastland, LOSRPO

I. Welcome and Housekeeping

A. May Minutes Approval

Motion to Approve: Eddie Henderson, Second: Josh O'Conner. All in favor- agenda approved.

II. Business

SPOT Methodology Timeline

Tristan Winkler gave an overview of the SPOT methodology critical dates. Final methodology has to be approved by the MPO Board and by NCDOT by April 1st. Would like to have a final approval from this committee in January for MPO Board draft review in February and final approval in March.

Tristan next gave an overview of SPOT 4.0 changes. All the modes complete except Operations and Management. There are three different tiers-Statewide Mobility, Regional Impact and Division Needs.

Regional projects include Division 14 and 13. For Changes in SPOT 4.0 (q. form Marc Hunt)—SPOT workgroup recommended some small changes, but still the same tiers of projects, similar criteria as SPOT 3.0

Regional projects: 70% driven by data and 30% local data (Division and MPO/RPO scores)

Division projects: 50% data, 25% Division input and 25% MPO

Tristan-can make SPOT details available separately. Otherwise will highlight some basics.

Highway criteria changes-there will be scaling applied, so that scores will be compared in reference to other projects across the state. Scaling is used for a lot of criteria including benefit-cost, accessibility/connectivity, freight, multimodal, and other parameters.

Peak ADT is more of a focus in SPOT 4.0, vs. regular ADT.

The focus today is how can the MPO determine the methodology to assign local points. Would like to move forward with worthwhile projects, and to prioritize projects which go along with the MPO Mission statement.

Tristan-was not around for SPOT 3.0 methodology. Last time the methodology had a variety of criteria (many more than one quant./one qualitative required.) Today the MPO staff would like to decide on the general approach and evaluate some of the criteria. Ideally the overarching criteria would link back to MTP goals. Many of those are consistent with SPOT 3.0 methodology.

Previously, different criteria in SPOT 3.0 were assigned different weights in scoring. Discussion followed about how the previous score weights were determined. Are there goals that might need to be emphasized more or less? Next Tristan went through an interactive polling exercise to evaluate the importance of different goals for SPOT methodology weight assignment: Improve Safety on Surface Streets and Highways scored the highest, with non-motorized and congestion tied for second place. For second most important, congestion and bottlenecks came in, with safety and non-motorized tied for second place. For third highest goal, non-motorized was first place, with freight for second.

Some of the feedback for SPOT 3.0 heard by MPO staff that it could be a little simpler, and that criteria could be improved (for example, if choosing a criteria based on what the SPOT office was not using, this does not always get at what is important in our region. For example, lane width and shoulder width –this might not get at the safety focus in the best way.

Discussion followed about lane width and whether there is safety benefit. In rural areas, narrow roads could be an issue for vehicles passing.

Elizabeth Teague-road width can also contribute to bicycle safety. What if the criteria were refined to only address very narrow roads?



Ed Green- shoulder width, in the mountains our shoulders are generally much smaller compared to the rest of the state.

Kristina-on many roads, we only have the maintenance limits and we don't own additional ROW. TIP projects could have ROW purchase added, but spot safety improvements would not have that flexibility.

Tristan-overall, if criteria were selected based on what SPOT methodology was not using, those criteria might take us away from key issues.

Tristan-brought the group's attention for a first rough draft put together by MPO staff as a starting point of discussion.

The idea here was to limit the number of criteria per goal to one, to make it simpler, more clear and concise. Also some of the criteria previously were adjusted.

For example, high frequency crash corridors data from NCDOT were used—this puts a lot of emphasis on highways because it does not prorate for traffic volume. Those segments were not the same length and had various traffic volumes. MPO staff did an analysis of crashes per mile.

Kristina Solberg—when DOT does the crash priority corridors, they are comparing similar data across the state for similar corridors.

Tristan-that is an option, to use the critical crash rate as one of our criteria.

Kristina further discussed critical crash rates.

Elizabeth Teague-so we could use NCDOT analysis for critical crash corridors? Tristan-yes, feedback for more simplified criteria. Elizabeth-so using NCDOT critical crash corridors would help us identify comparison for different types of roads?

Tristan-correct, can use NCDOT parameters. Or, can use VMT per million miles traveled. This might show a more accurate overview of the rate of crashes.

Trying to get at a good overview measure rather than just one factor. Ed Green-question about this. Crashes per million VMT—where do percentages fit in?

Tristan-could look at all the projects, look at their raw scores and then scale them and assign a score based on where they fall in the regional list.

One of the questions is whether to develop MPO crash rates or NCDOT critical crash corridors.

Tristan-would like to do an initial run on a few projects to bring back example of score

Lyuba Zuyeva-with looking at Regional and Division projects separately for scale of crash rankings, that might take care of comparing bigger highways vs smaller roads for crashes.



Freight—a more logical approach might be to look at freight data. These data are available for any state-maintained roads where traffic counts are collected. Kristina—is there any coordination with the trucking industry? Kristina discussed the need to talk to the trucking industry.

Josh—Freight criteria should not have as much weight as other criteria.

Elizabeth—what about applying freight criteria to more local roads. On secondary roads, it might not need to be weighted as much?

Tristan—what if we reduced the weight to 6 instead of 10 would that address the issue?

Further discussion followed about freight needs on large highways vs. on local roads. Discussion about interstate highways and how they would largely be funded out of statewide mobility pot and the MPO methodology would not impact those projects at all, unless cascaded down to Regional level.

Ed Green—consider simplifying the methodology by narrowing down the number of points spread per criteria.

Tristan—for congestion, previously volumes were considered. MPO staff would recommend using v/c data instead. Tristan demonstrated several examples of projects in Buncombe County and how they would score against each other.

Question to respect our unique places and environments.

Josh—in support of lowering the points assigned to this score. Also consider a secondary indicator like water/sewer infrastructure and/or residential density.

Kristina—is “respecting unique places and environments” more appropriate in project development.

Tristan—in agreement, this is a vague goal and difficult to find a good measure. Trying to start with a high-level measure to bring more investment to areas that already have a lot of development and infrastructure.

Ed Green—what about non-motorized transportation options? Tristan—this addresses projects which might get complete streets elements. Tristan—this criteria addresses corridors with existing bike ped crash concerns or corridors identified on local bike ped plans.

Question about lowering multi-modal criteria score. Marc Hunt—in support of assigning different weights to different categories

Elizabeth Teague—returned to respecting our unique places and environments. Josh O’Conner—New Leicester highway is an example, and thinking about contextual changes and how it might shift from rural from urban. Trying to avoid shifting land use types, more supporting land use changes that have already occurred.

Can add residential density in addition to high job concentration—Josh O’Conner concur.



Local Priority Points

During last SPOT process, county-level TAC assign points starting with 18 points-was the last one. For other counties, how did this work? Josh O’Conner-it worked out in last round, but it might be easier to give specific jurisdictional points.

Local priority score-Josh O’Conner suggestion not to exceed 20% of total score. Would prefer not to advance projects which are scoring very poorly.

Discussion about allocating priority points by population. Assign points by population and if the jurisdiction does not use their projects, then the county gets to utilize the project priority points if the jurisdiction does not assign them. Then the county can assign them (but to that jurisdiction first).

Cascading and Better Modal Distribution

For cascading: assumed no cascading unless recommended by County TAC.

Recommendation-change language to County TCC delegation members.

Better Modal Distribution

No bike ped projects in the first five years of the STIP through SPOT. Some of the other MPOs set aside points for non-highway projects at the Division level. This could be an approach.

Last time getting local match commitment for bike ped projects was a concern. If no multi-modal projects come forward, points would revert back to highway.

Lyuba-if allocating 300 points, 100 each for aviation, bike ped and transit, those would not have to compete against each other (100 each to transit, bike ped and aviation).

Josh O’Conner-support for separate points for bike ped projects.

Kristina-suggestion to set aside points for “any mode” so that the points are not lost if bike ped or transit projects can not use.

200 for bike ped and 100 for transit –first priority; transit points would drop into bike ped first, all of those would drop into highway if not utilized.

Bike Ped Methodology

Tristan-MPO staff would like to simplify, remove some criteria (geographic equity, support from a local bike/ped group, consistency with adopted plans, public health score and population under 18).

Marc Hunt-in support of simplifying the methodology.

None of this is up for adoption right now.



Marc-moving quickly to simulation would help us review the methodology changes.

Josh O'Conner-suggestion to strengthen the connection to existing infrastructure for connecting to longer networks (reward for projects that fill in gaps). Bonus points for length

Tristan-next meeting date

What about Prioritization on the 19th at 9:30? All concur.

Tristan-Bylaws changes are forthcoming. There will be a lot of changes impacting this subcommittee.

Elizabeth-why Bylaws?

Tristan-without Bylaws, many uncertainties regarding roster-as people change positions, is it the position or the person who are members on the subcommittee? Spell out responsibilities in more concrete terms.

Josh O'Conner-this also gives people more certainty regarding who is sitting around the table and allowed to vote.

No further comments. Meeting adjourned.

