BRUNSWICK COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SUMMIT

Hosted by

FRANK WILLIAMS

BRUNSWICK COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Strategic Prioritization from a layman's perspective

Commissioner Frank Williams

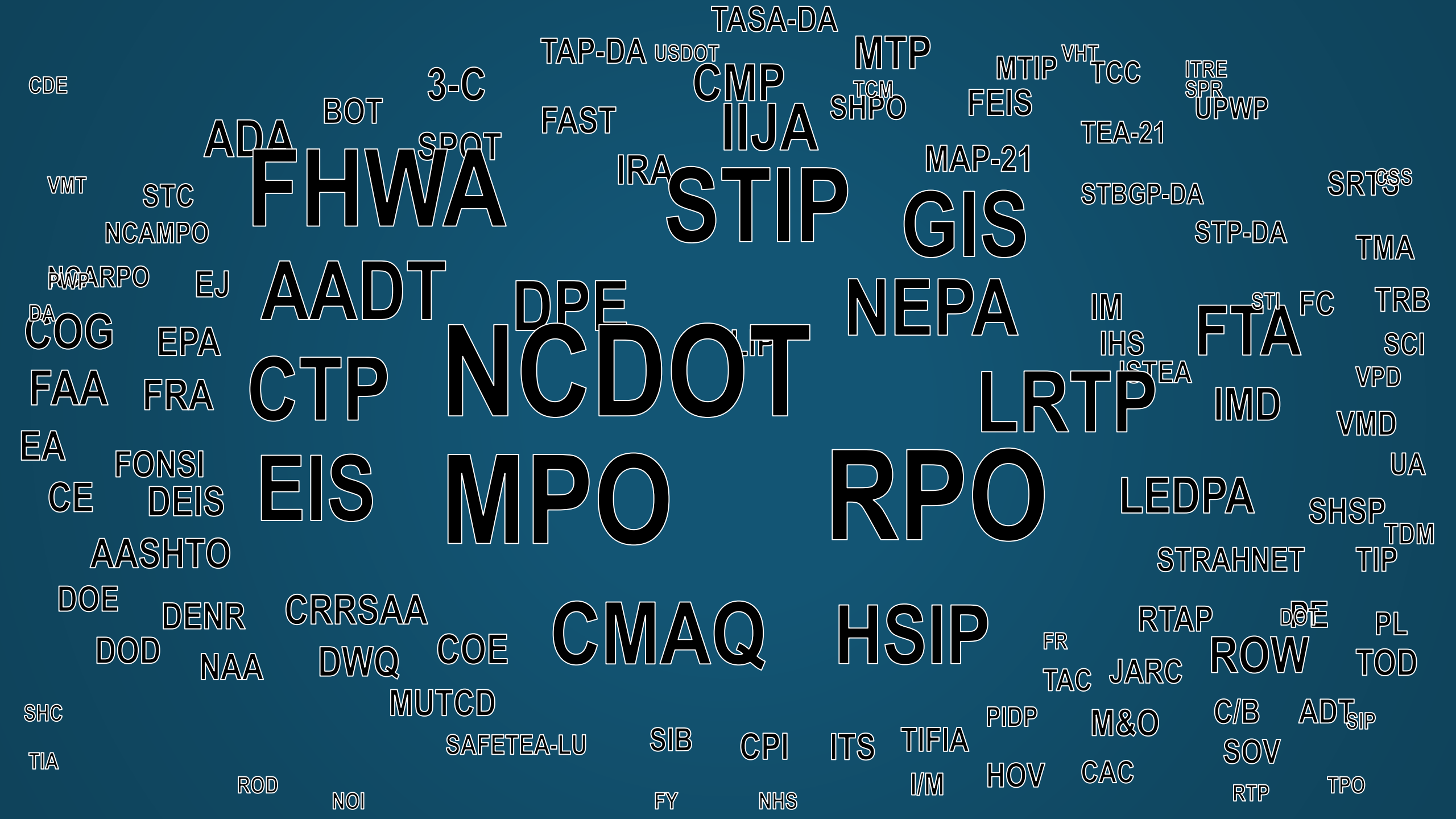
Chair, Cape Fear RPO

(2014-present)

Member, Wilmington MPO (Dec. 2012 – present); two-time vice chair

Level Set

- Transportation in North Carolina is governed by the Strategic Transportation Investments Act (STI) law
- Transportation planning is an incredibly complex process with lots of moving parts and players involved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What is Strategic Prioritization?

- Data-driven process used to evaluate and rank transportation projects for North Carolina's 10-year State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
- Enacted in 2013 through House Bill 817, known as the Strategic Transportation Investments Act (STI)
- **Premise:** take politics out of transportation decisions, move to data-driven process

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Prioritization Basics

Prioritization	**Assigning data and scores to project**
STIP	**State Transportation Improvement Program 10-year document of project funding and schedules**
Programming	**Assigning funding and schedules to projects**

Source: Cape Fear RPO

How Projects Compete in Prioritization *Across Three Tiers*

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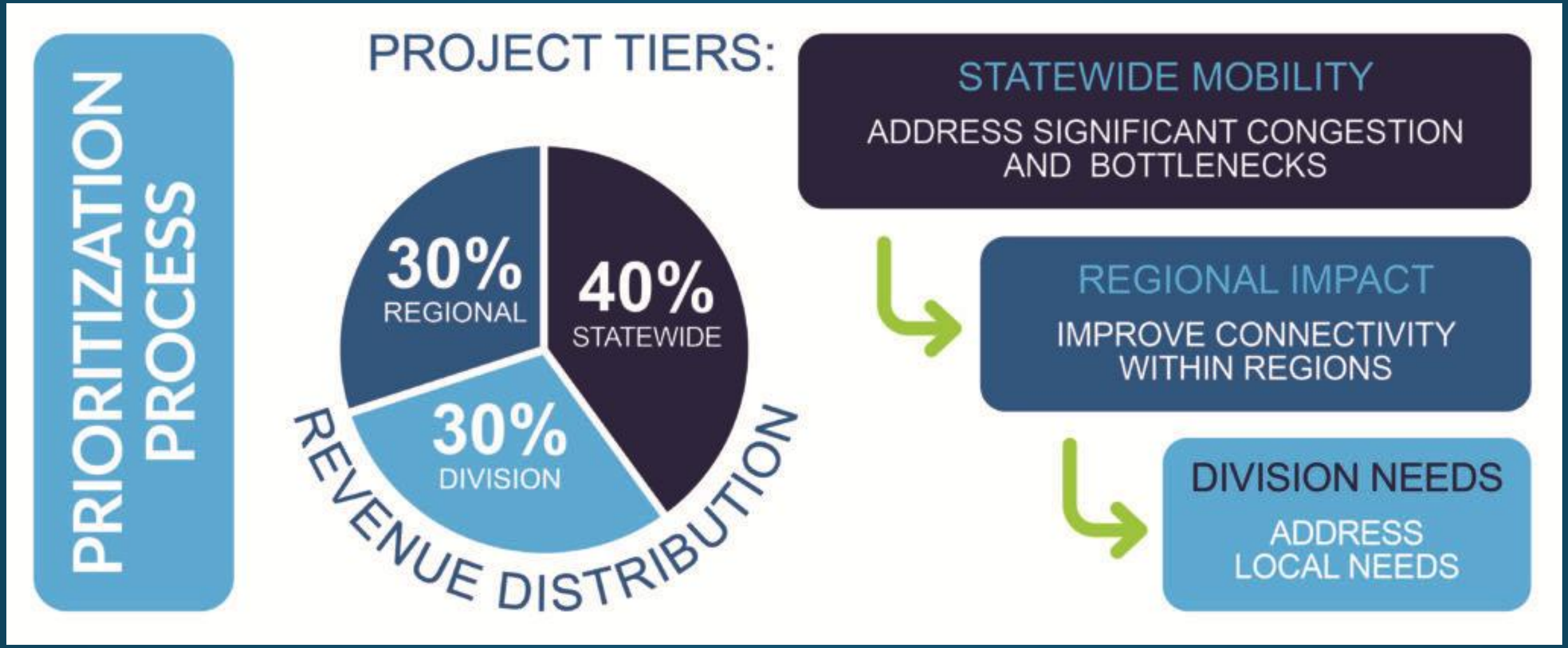

Source: Wilmington Urban Area MPO

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NCDOT Prioritization Process

- Statewide tier: 100% data-driven, 40% of total funds
- Regional tier: 70% data, 30% local input, 30% of total funds
- Division tier: 50% data, 50% local input, 30% of total funds

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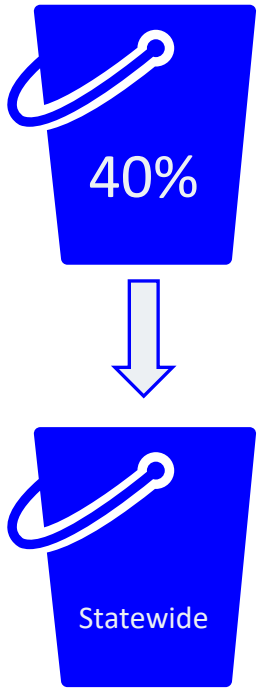
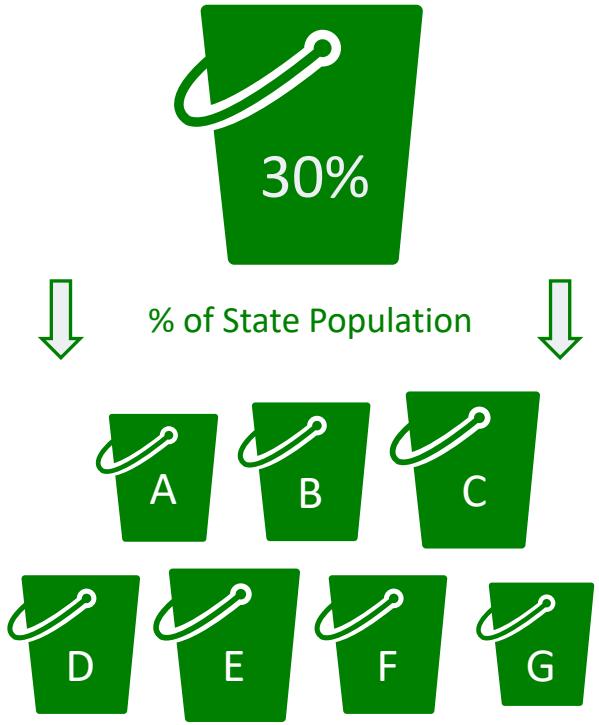
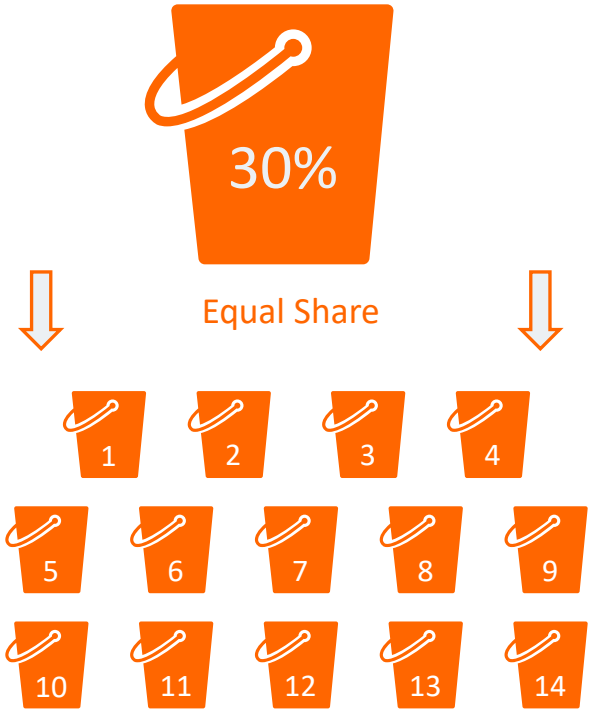
Statewide Mobility



Regional Impact



Division Needs



Source: Cape Fear RPO / NCDOT SPOT Office

How Projects Compete in Prioritization *Across Six Modes of Transportation*

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- Prioritization applies to projects across each of NCDOT's six modes of transportation:
  - **Aviation** 🔵 🟢 🟠
  - **Bicycle / Pedestrian** 🟠
  - **Ferry** 🟢 🟠
  - **Highway** 🔵 🟢 🟠
  - **Rail** 🔵 🟢 🟠
  - **Transit** 🟢 🟠

Eligibility

- Statewide
- Regional
- Division

Source: Cape Fear RPO

How Projects Compete in Prioritization

Across 7 NCDOT regions and 14 divisions

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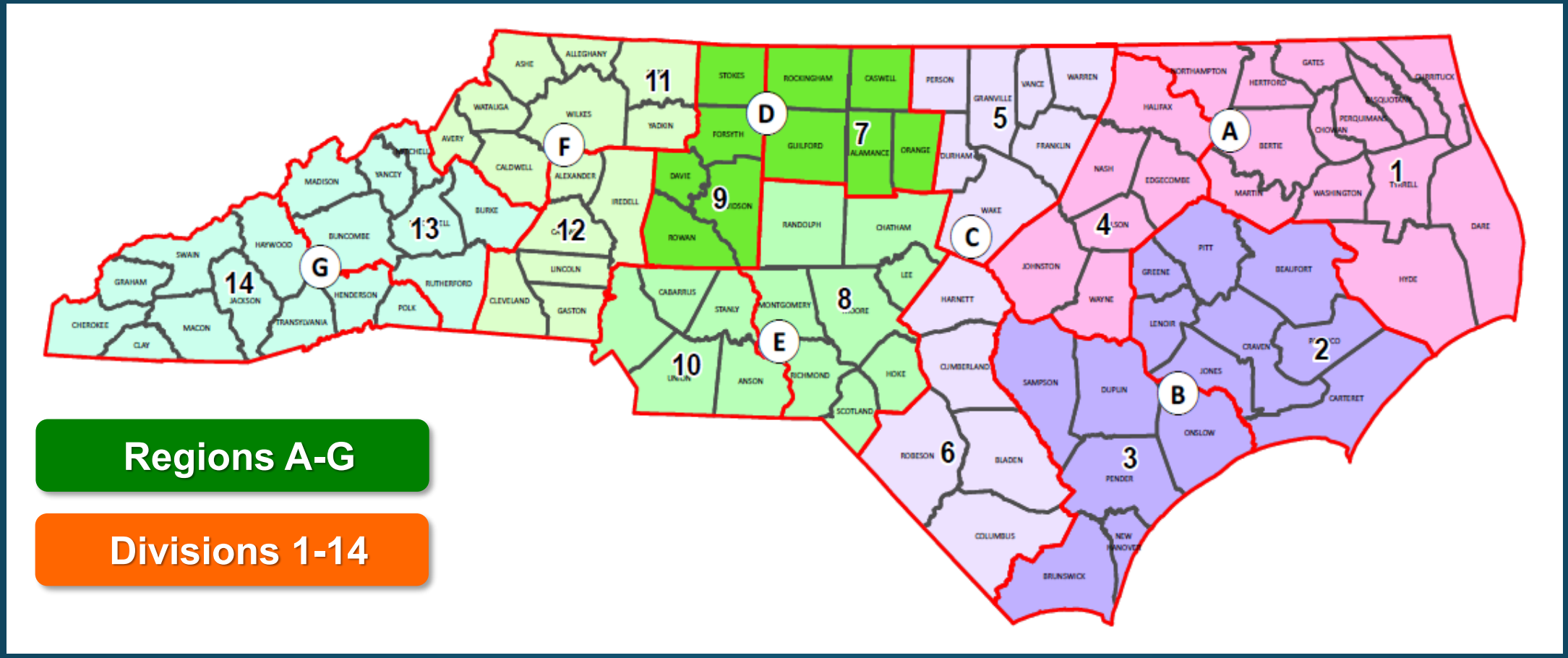

Source: NCDOT SPOT Office

How Projects Compete in Prioritization

Based on specified criteria

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NCDOT Prioritization Highway Scoring Criteria

1. Benefit cost
2. Congestion (existing, not future/planned/predicted)
3. Safety
4. Economic competitiveness (statewide tier)
5. Freight
6. Multimodal
7. Pavement condition
8. Lane width
9. Shoulder width
10. Accessibility and connectivity to employment centers, tourist destinations, or military installations (regional, division tiers)

What role do local elected officials play?

Three Regional Transportation Planning Organizations

WMPO

Frank Williams (Vice Chair)

Mike Forte (alternate)

CAPE FEAR RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Frank Williams (Chair)

Mike Forte

Randy Thompson (alternate)

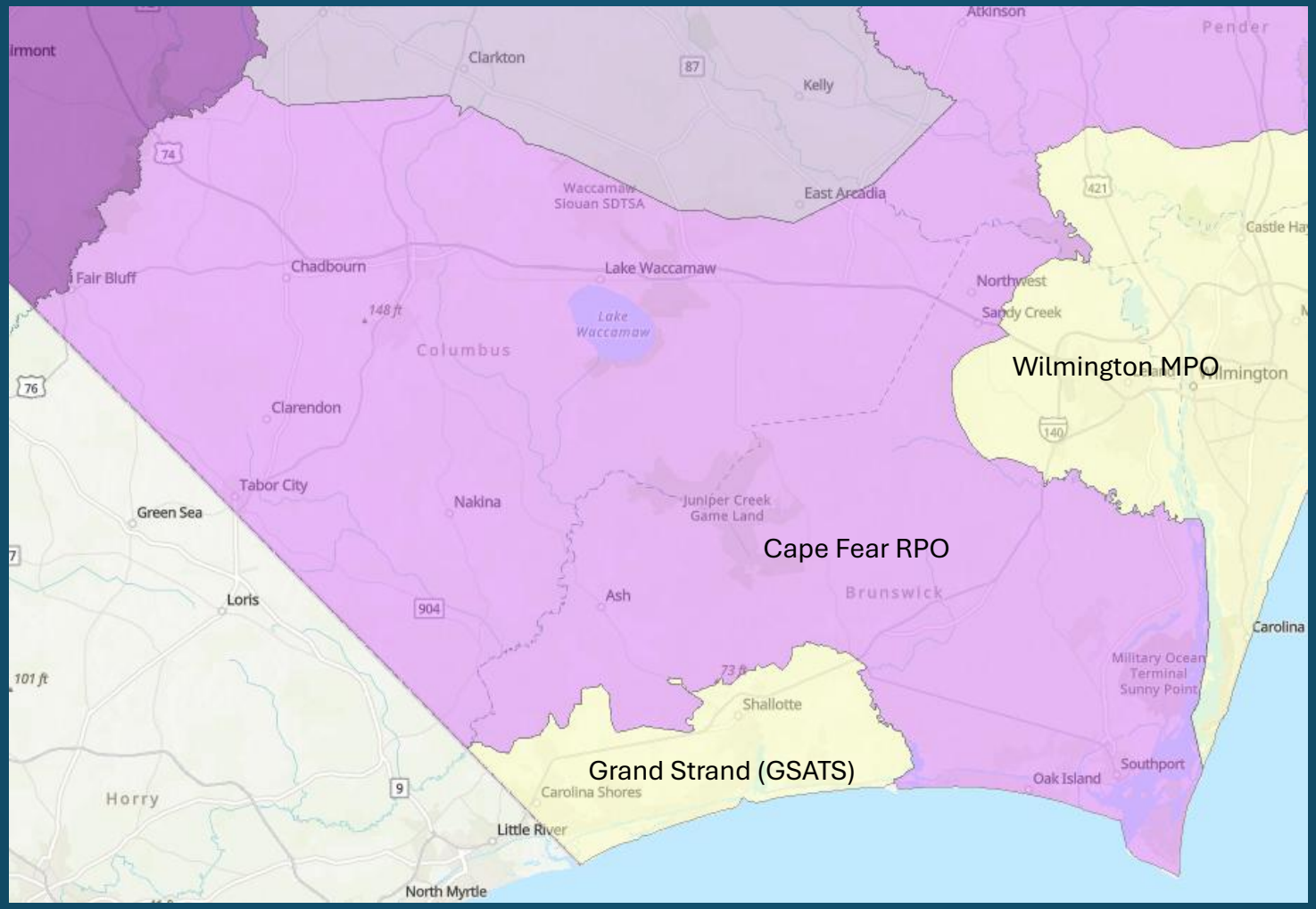
GSATS

The Grand Strand Area Transportation Study

Randy Thompson (Chair)

Pat Sykes

Regional Transportation Planning Organizations



Regional Transportation Planning Organizations

Prioritization: Local Officials' Role

- Serve on regional planning organization boards
- Suggest projects during each round of prioritization
- Agree on scoring criteria to evaluate project submissions
- Work with stakeholders to identify top Brunswick County priorities
- Work with RPO/WMPO/GSATS staff, DOT to determine which projects score well enough to *possibly* be funded
  - Assign points at regional, division tiers
  - NCDOT has final say based on STI law

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Pulling it All Together

- Transportation planning is a complex process
- Project needs outweigh available state funding
- Construction costs have increased
- Some NCDOT divisions have had negative funding in recent rounds of Prioritization available because of the increased costs
- Projects can take years (or decades) to complete
- Local officials need to engage
- Scoring formulas likely need tweaking by the legislature