

South Carolina Department of Transportation

Engineering Directive

Directive Number: ED-83 **Effective:** July 2, 2026

Subject: Metropolitan Interstate Project Ranking Process

Purpose: To establish a policy for ranking Metropolitan Interstate Projects

Primary Department: Planning

In 2007, the South Carolina General Assembly enacted Act 114, requiring SCDOT to establish a project prioritization process for projects to be undertaken that are included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. In 2016, the General Assembly enacted Act 275, eliminating some of Act 114's requirements but retaining the requirement for project prioritization. This requirement is codified in South Carolina Code of Laws Section 57-1-370 and further detailed in South Carolina Code of Regulation 63-10, as amended.

This engineering directive establishes the methodology for prioritizing metropolitan interstate corridors for evaluation and identifying targeted improvements to reduce congestion, enhance system performance, and guide future investment priorities.

In 2025, the newly adopted Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan, *Momentum 2050*, established strategic goals and objectives focused on advancing the long-term priorities of the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT). Several of the goals emphasize the need to address urban congestion including a targeted investment in an urban interstate congestion program aimed at improving reliability on major urban corridors.

The plan also recognizes that effectively addressing congestion will require evaluating a range of solutions beyond the traditional roadway widening projects. Potential strategies may include interchange enhancements, operational improvements on roads that access interstate, and the addition of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes and congestion priced choice lanes. To support this effort, SCDOT will conduct corridor planning studies on highly ranked segments of the interstate system to identify the scope of work necessary to improve conditions.

For analysis purposes, the interstate system located in metropolitan regions has been divided into corridor segments based on consistent roadway characteristics and traffic volumes. These corridors are further grouped into four geographic regions to reflect the distinct transportation needs and challenges within each area of the state: Upstate, Midlands, Lowcountry, and Pee Dee.

The following criteria and associated weightings will be used to calculate corridor prioritization scores on a scale of 0 to 100 points. Corridors receiving higher scores will be assigned a higher priority for future evaluation. Within each region, urban interstate segments will be evaluated using the following relevant criteria:

- Annual Average Daily Truck Traffic (AADT) (20%, 0 - 20 points) – Measures the length weighted annual average daily number of vehicles traveling on an interstate segment.
- Safety (30%, 0 - 30 points) – Evaluated using two equally weighted measures:
 - total crashes per 1,000,000 vehicle miles traveled (VMT) (15%),
 - fatal and serious injury crashes per 1,000,000 VMT (15%).

- Reliability (10%, 0 - 10 points) – Measured using the length weighted Level of Travel Time Reliability (LOTTR), which reflects the consistency and predictability of travel times. LOTTR values closer to 1.0 indicate more reliable the travel conditions.
- Congestion (30%, 0 to 30 points) – Evaluated using three equally weighted measures:
 - Weekday daily delay per 10,000 ADT (10%)
 - AM recurrent delay (10%)
 - PM recurrent delay (10%)
- Heavy Truck Volume (10%, 0 to 10 points) – Measures the length weighted annual average daily number of heavy trucks on an interstate segment.

These weighted criteria will be incorporated into a ranking formula that produces an overall prioritization score for each corridor segment. Based on these scores, metropolitan interstate corridors will be prioritized within each region, with the highest scoring segments receiving the highest priority for advancement for planning studies.

Planning studies will assess candidate improvement projects identified along the prioritized corridors using established evaluation criteria. Projects that do not demonstrate sufficient benefit or feasibility will not advance for further consideration.

The following Act 114 criteria were evaluated but determined not to be appropriate for the initial corridor prioritization process, because they either do not directly support the purpose and need of the metropolitan interstate program or are more effectively evaluated during subsequent planning or project development phases:

- Potential for Economic Development – Not relevant as the potential for economic development will be considered as part of the planning studies.
- Pavement Quality Index – Not relevant as pavement conditions may change between plan development and project implementation.
- Financial Viability – Not relevant as financial feasibility will be assessed after recommended improvements are identified in the planning studies. Candidate projects deemed to be financially infeasible based on a cost benefit analysis will be removed from further consideration and will not advance to subsequent stages of project development.
- Environmental Impact – Not relevant as environmental impact assessments will occur as part of the future project development process.
- Alternative Transportation Solutions – Not relevant as alternative transportation strategies will be evaluated during the planning studies.
- Consistency with Local Land Use Plans – Not relevant as this program category focuses on improvements within existing interstate corridors.

All data used by the Office of Planning to determine the prioritization of candidates for inclusion will be kept on file as required by Departmental Directive 51 and SCDOT's record retention schedules.

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History: Issued on July 2, 2026