

**Division of Water Infrastructure
North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality**

**Draft Priority Rating Systems for Stormwater Construction Projects and Stormwater Planning
Grants from the Local Assistance for Stormwater Infrastructure Investments (LASII) Program**

Draft for Public Comment

May 2023

Background

In the Fall of 2021, the NC General Assembly (NCGA) passed Session Law (SL) 2021-180 to create the Local Assistance for Stormwater Infrastructure Investments (LASII) fund and appropriated funds for stormwater construction and planning grants. The State Water Infrastructure Authority (SWIA) approved the first stormwater Priority Rating Systems (PRSs) for stormwater construction and planning studies in July 2022. The first LASII applications were submitted in Sept. 2022, and SWIA approved the first round of applications for LASII funding at its Feb. 21, 2023 meeting.

The Division of Water Infrastructure (Division) in the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) administers the Local Assistance for Stormwater Infrastructure Investments funding program. The State Water Infrastructure Authority (Authority) establishes the priorities for funding for the State.

Based on the first round of applications received, the Division staff worked to review and score the applications, and review comments from applicants. The Division proposed changes to the LASII PRSs to provide applicants with clearer wording for some line items and the possible addition of new line items. The Division also suggested simplifying wording within the PRS line items and keeping the requirements within the Guidance Document.

All of the Division of Water Infrastructure’s funding programs follow a similar Priority Rating System (PRS) consisting of four categories:

1. Category 1 – Project Purpose
2. Category 2 – Project Benefits
3. Category 3 – System Management
4. Category 4 – Affordability / Financial Situation

Proposed Changes to Stormwater Construction Project PRS

On April 19, 2023, the Authority approved recommended changes to the Priority Rating System for public review. The proposed changes to the PRS for Construction Projects from last year’s PRS are in line items 1.A, 1.C, 1.D, 2.A.1, 2.B.1, 2.C, 2.D, 2.E, 3.A through 3.E, and 4.B.6. The proposed changes to the PRS for Planning Projects from last year’s PRS are in line items 2.D, 2.E and 3.B.6.

The proposed 2023 PRS for Stormwater Construction and the proposed PRS for Stormwater Planning projects are below. The Division is seeking public comments on both proposed Priority Rating Systems.

DRAFT Priority Rating System Score Sheet for Stormwater Construction Projects Funded with Local Assistance for Stormwater Infrastructure Investment (LASII) Grants			
Instructions for Applicant: For each line item, place an “X” to claim the points for that line item. Be sure that the required narrative includes justification for every line item claimed. At the end of each category, provide the total points claimed in the subtotal row for that category. Then add the subtotals from each category and enter the Total Points for All Categories in the last line. <i>Note that some categories have a maximum allowed points that may be less than the total of individual line items.</i>			
Line Item #	Category 1 – Project Purpose Points will be awarded for <u>only one</u> Project Purpose: 1.A or 1.B or 1.C	Place “X” in this box if claimed	Points
1.A	More than 50 percent of the construction cost of the project will be used to create new stormwater control measures (SCMs), rehabilitate, or replace existing SCMs to control stormwater quality		
1.A.1	Proposed SCMs are nature-based solutions, OR		35
1.A.2	Proposed SCMs are not nature-based solutions		25
1.B	Restoration of streams, wetlands, buffers, or estuaries to control stormwater quality		25
1.B.1	Project includes restoration of a first order stream and includes stormwater infiltration SCMs		2 (additional points)
1.B.2	Project includes establishment or restoration of riparian buffers to at least 30 feet on both sides of the stream		2 (additional points)
1.C	More than 50 percent of the construction cost of the project will be used to create, rehabilitate, or replace existing stormwater infrastructure to control stormwater quantity ¹		25
1.D	Rainwater harvesting and utilization		25
Maximum points available for Category 1 – Project Purpose			35
Subtotal claimed by Applicant for Category 1 – Project Purpose			

¹ To qualify for Line Item 1.C points, applicant must demonstrate one of the following: (1) the project will reduce flow downstream; or (2) the project will not increase flow downstream; or (3) there will be no downstream impacts as a result of the project.

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Line Item #	Category 2 – Project Benefits	Place “X” in this box if claimed	Points
2.A	Water Quality Improvement		
2.A.1	Project <u>directly benefits</u> subwatersheds that are impaired, OR		15
2.A.2	Project <u>directly benefits</u> specific classified waters, OR		10
2.A.3	Achieves at least 35% reduction in both Total Nitrogen and Total Phosphorus in Nutrient Sensitive Waters, OR		10
2.A.4	Achieves at least 35% reduction in both Total Nitrogen and Total Phosphorus in Non-Nutrient Sensitive Waters, OR		5
2.A.5	Directly benefits a NC Natural Heritage Program natural area		3
2.B	Flood Reduction		
2.B.1	Increases public safety by improving the applicant’s ability to access and operate critical infrastructure during flood events including NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Evacuation Routes, OR		15
2.B.2	Reduces structural flooding in habitable structures or improves ability to access habitable structures during a flood event, OR		8
2.B.3	Reduces street flooding		5
2.C	By working together, <u>two or more units of local government</u> improve stormwater quality and/or address stormwater quantity issues through collaborative efforts		10
2.D	Includes an innovative stormwater project to address stormwater quality or stormwater quantity		5
2.E	Includes a public education component such as signage describing the function of the stormwater quality or quantity infrastructure		1
Maximum points available for Category 2 – Project Benefits			30
Subtotal claimed by Applicant for Category 2 – Project Benefits			
Line Item #	Category 3 – System Management	Place “X” in this box if claimed	Points

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3.A	Local Planning		
3.A.1	Applicant has adopted or will adopt per Project Resolution a stormwater-related Plan by completion of this project, and the proposed project is or will be identified in the Plan, OR		5
3.A.2	Applicant will develop a stormwater-related Plan by completion of this project and the proposed project will be identified in the Plan, OR		2
3.A.3	Applicant has adopted or will adopt per Project Resolution a Stormwater Management Program by completion of this project, OR		5
3.A.4	Applicant will develop a Stormwater Management Program by completion of this proposed project		2
3.B	Applicant has implemented an Operation and Maintenance Plan for its stormwater infrastructure system		3
3.C	Applicant has a current Stormwater Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that spans at least 5 years and proposed project is identified in the CIP		2
3.D	Applicant has an adopted Stormwater Utility with a Stormwater Enterprise Fund or provides the Resolution to Develop and Implement a Stormwater Utility with a Stormwater Enterprise Fund with its application		5
3.E	The type of project proposed has been identified through a local or regional planning process that included a vulnerability assessment for future conditions and long-term resiliency strategies		3
Maximum points available for Category 3 – System Management			10
Subtotal claimed by Applicant for Category 3 – System Management			
Line Item #	Category 4 – Affordability	Place "X" in this box if claimed	Points
4.A	Population		
4.A.1	Population is less than 10,000, OR		3

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4.A.2	Population is greater than or equal to 10,000 but less than 20,000		2
4.B	Local Government Unit (LGU) Indicators / Disadvantaged Areas		
4.B.1	1 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark, OR		4
4.B.2	2 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark, OR		6
4.B.3	3 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark, OR		8
4.B.4	4 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark, OR		10
4.B.5	5 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark, OR		12
4.B.6	50 percent or more of the total project cost will benefit disadvantaged areas		10
Maximum points available for Category 4 – Affordability			15
Subtotal claimed by Applicant for Category 4 – Affordability			
Total Points Claimed by Applicant for All Categories for Stormwater Construction Project			
Maximum Points Available for All Categories for Stormwater Construction Project			90

DRAFT Priority Rating System Score Sheet for Stormwater Planning Study
 Funded with the Local Assistance for Stormwater Infrastructure Investment (LASII) Grants

Instructions for Applicant: For each line item, place an **"X"** to claim the points for that line item. Be sure that the required narrative includes justification for every line item claimed. At the end of each category, provide the total points claimed in the subtotal row for that category. Then add the subtotals from each category and enter the Total Points for All Categories in the last line.

Line Item #	Category 1 – Project Benefits	Place "X" in this box if claimed	Points
1.A	Link between stormwater challenges and how the study will help address the challenges		Range from 0 – 5
1.B	How the study will be used to develop and prioritize future projects that address the challenges		Range from 0 – 3
1.C	Study will investigate new procedures to implement, add to, or make improvements to at least one (1) of the six (6) Stormwater Minimum Control Measures		2
1.D	Study is a collaborative effort with other local government units which is necessary in order to accomplish the goals of the study		3
1.E	Study will evaluate potential projects that will benefit a subwatershed that is impaired, or specific classified waters, or Nutrient Sensitive Waters to achieve Total Nitrogen and Total Phosphorus reduction, or a NC Natural Heritage Program natural area		2
1.F	Study will evaluate nature-based stormwater solutions to address the identified stormwater quality or stormwater quantity issue		2
1.G	Study will investigate the applicability of an innovative stormwater project to address stormwater quality or stormwater quantity		2
1.H	Study will evaluate potential projects that will address future flooding, sea level rise, or other environmental changes with the goal to decrease vulnerability to future conditions		1
Subtotal claimed by Applicant for Category 1 – Project Benefits			
Line Item #	Category 2 – System Management	Place "X" in this box if claimed	Points
2.A	At least one person working for or with the applicant is designated as responsible for stormwater management and provides at least 0.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTEs) on stormwater management activities		1
2.B	Status of implementing results of previous planning study or studies		1

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2.C	Level of applicant’s staff involvement in the development and implementation of <u>this</u> proposed planning study		1
2.D	Stormwater Management Plan		
2.D.1	Applicant has adopted or will adopt per Project Resolution a stormwater management plan for the study area by completion of this project, OR		4
2.D.2	Applicant will develop a stormwater management plan for the study area by completion of this project		1
2.E	Applicant has an adopted Stormwater Utility with a Stormwater Enterprise Fund or provides the Resolution to Develop and Implement a Stormwater Utility with a Stormwater Enterprise Fund with its application		5
Subtotal claimed by Applicant for Category 2 – System Management			
Line Item #	Category 3 – Affordability	Place “X” in this box if claimed	Points
3.A	Population		
3.A.1	Population is less than 10,000, OR		2
3.A.2	Population is greater than or equal to 10,000 but less than 20,000		1
3.B	Local Government Unit (LGU) Indicators / Disadvantaged Areas		
3.B.1	1 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark, OR		2
3.B.2	2 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark, OR		4
3.B.3	3 out of 5 LGU indicators are worse than the state benchmark, OR		6
3.B.4	4 out of 5 LGU indicators are worse than the state benchmark, OR		8
3.B.5	5 out of 5 LGU indicators are worse than the state benchmark, OR		10
3.B.6	Study benefits disadvantaged areas		8

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Subtotal claimed by Applicant for Category 3 – Affordability	
Total Points Claimed by Applicant for All Categories for Stormwater Planning Study	
Maximum Points Available for All Categories for Stormwater Planning Study	44