Western Piedmont Council of Governments

Creative Regional Solutions Since 1968

1880 Second Avenue NW | Hickory, NC 28601
PO Box 9026 | Hickory, NC 28603
828.322.9191 | Fax: 828.322.5991 | www.wpcog.org

To: **Honorable Randy T. Church, Chairman**
Members of the Board of Commissioners

From: **Alison Adams, WPCOG Director of Community and Regional Planning**

Re: **Building Outdoor Communities Grant Application**

Date: **December 12, 2023**

This memo is to address the $25,000 Building Outdoor Communities (BOC) grant application submitted by WPCOG staff on behalf of Caldwell County on December 6th, 2023. The BOC program is designed to help communities in western North Carolina "leverage their natural assets and collaborate to advance their outdoor community and economic development goals." The grant application is for a feasibility study that will explore the potential of creating a trail along the existing Caldwell Railroad line, extending from Caldwell County and ultimately connecting to the City of Hickory's Riverwalk trail.

The study area will also include the abandoned rail spur that runs along the riverfront in downtown Rhodhiss and a possible trail extending from the end of the City of Hickory's Riverwalk trail at Alex Lee Boulevard on U.S. 321 to the Shoppes at Rivercrest. The trail would then continue to downtown Granite Falls via U.S. 321A, creating a loop leading to Rhodhiss via the Caldwell Railroad. The feasibility study will enhance outdoor economic development in Caldwell County by taking the initial steps to create new pedestrian and bicycle connections between 5 municipalities in Caldwell County (Town of Rhodhiss, Town of Granite Falls, Town of Sawmills, Town of Hudson, City of Lenoir), the City of Hickory's 10-mile existing and planned trail system, and the Carolina Thread Trail's Blueway in Hickory.

BOC grant guidelines require a 25% match from Caldwell County ($6,250). The City of Hickory has agreed to contribute $1,250 toward the study's cost.

Should you have questions please feel free to contact me. We are happy to serve Caldwell County.

Respectfully,

Alison H. Adams
WPCOG Director of Community and Regional Planning

Cc. Donald Duncan, County Manager

Executive Committee: Jill Patton, Chair | Joseph L. Gibbons, Vice Chair | Larry Chapman, Secretary | George B. Holleman, Treasurer | Bob Floyd, Jr., Past Chair | **At-Large Members:** Randy Burns | Cole Setzer | Marla Thompson | Larry Yoder | **Executive Director,** Anthony W. Starr

Serving: Alexander County | Taylorsville | Burke County | Connelly Springs | Drexel | Glen Alpine | Hildebran | Morganton | Rutherford College | Valdese | Caldwell County | Cajah's Mountain | Cedar Rock | Gamewell | Granite Falls | Hudson | Lenoir | Rhodhiss | Sawmills | Catawba County | Brookford | Catawba | Claremont | Conover | Hickory | Long View | Maiden | Newton