

GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)

1880 2nd Avenue NW, PO Box 9026

Hickory, NC 28603

MINUTES

GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (GHMPO)

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

Wednesday, January 21st, 2026, 2:30 PM In-person meeting and via Zoom

Present			**Absent**		
First Name	**Last Name**	**Representing**	**First Name**	**Last Name**	**Representing**
Martin	Townsend	Town of Granite Falls	Larry	Yoder	Alexander County
Barbara	Beatty	Catawba County	Ike	Perkins	City of Lenoir
Mark	Canrobert	City of Conover	Beth	Rudisill	Town of Maiden
Melinda	Zimmerman	Town of Valdese	Jody	York	Town of Hildebran
Wendy	Cato	City of Morganton	Donald	Robinson	Town of Catawba
Jill	Patton	City of Hickory	Holly	Crafton-Lay	Town of Maiden
Les	Morrow	City of Claremont	Roy	Johnson	City Newton
Hank	Guess	City of Hickory	Barry	Mitchell	Town of Hudson
Genita	Hill	Town of Long View	Jack	Simms	Town of Taylorsville
Jamie	Hagerty	Town of Granite Falls	Richard	Andrews	Town of Cajah's Mountain
Donna	Price	Town of Rhodhiss	Mike	Stroud	Burke County
Gary	Sigmon	City of Claremont	Mary	Furtado	Catawba County
Jonathan	Beal	City of Lenoir	VACANT		Brookford
			VACANT		Gamewell
			VACANT		Glen Alpine
			VACANT		Caldwell County

			VACANT		Cedar Rock
			VACANT		Connelly Springs
			VACANT		Sawmills
			VACANT		Rutherford College
			VACANT		Drexel
WPCOG, FHWA & GUEST			**NC DOT STAFF**		
Averi Ritchie – WPCOG			Ruben Crummy – NC DOT TPD		
Casey Fullbright - WPCOG			Sean Sizemore – Div 11		
Alison Alexander – WPCOG			Michael Poe- Div 11		
Anthony Starr - WPCOG			Travis Chrisawn – Div 11		
Patti Nelson- WPRTA			Anil Panicker – Div 12		
Shelby Zeilender – WPCOG			Travis Jordan – Div 12		
			Dough Phillips – Div 13		
			Tim Anderson – Div 13		
			Stephan Sparks – Div 13		
			Dean Leadbetter – Div 11 & 12		
			Sarah Tolman – NCDOT Div 13 Training Program		
			Hasan Obias – NCDOT TPD		
			Meghan Phillips – NCDOT BOT		
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Call To Order/Ethics Awareness/ and Introductions: Chairman Guess called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM and welcomed all present. Introductions were conducted, followed by the Introduction of online viewers.

Approval of Remote Participation: Online attendees were Wendy Cato, Patti Nelson, Renee Carswell and Stephen Sparks. Chairman Guess canvassed the

committee for any objections to online participants. Upon a motion made by Chairman Guess and seconded by Mrs. Patton, online participation was approved.

Action Items:

I. **Approval of Consent Agenda:** Chairman Guess called for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Upon a motion made by Mrs. Patton and a second by Mr. Morrow, the Committee unanimously approved the consent agenda.

II. **Transportation Improvement Program Revisions for Approval:** Ms. Ritchie presented the State Transportation Improvement Program revisions, highlighting several additions and modifications to statewide and Greater Hickory MPO projects. She also reviewed select project cost adjustments, schedule accelerations, and delays. Upon a motion made by Mrs. Patton and seconded by Mrs. Beatty, the Committee unanimously approved the Transportation Improvement Program Revisions.

III. **Fiscal Year 2027 Local Assessments:** Ms. Ritchie presented the FY 2027 MPO transportation assessments, noting that Western Piedmont Council of Governments serves as the lead planning agency for the Greater Hickory MPO and is responsible for establishing local government dues. She explained that the assessments represent the required local match for federal transportation planning funds and are based on 2024 population estimates within the MPO planning boundary. Ms. Ritchie reviewed changes in federal funding, including an increase in PL funds and the Safe & Accessible Transportation Options set-aside, which does not require a local match, as well as updates to transit planning funding that require state and local matches. Upon a motion made by Chairman Guess and seconded by Mrs. Patton, the committee unanimously approved the FY 2027 Local Assessment.

IV. **Draft FY 2027 Unified Planning Work Program Summary:** Ms. Ritchie presented the Draft FY 2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), explaining that the document outlines the MPO's transportation planning tasks, associated budgets, and funding sources for the upcoming fiscal year in accordance with federal planning requirements. She summarized key federal initiatives guiding the work program,

including performance-based planning, multimodal and accessibility-focused planning, public engagement, resilience, and improved data-driven decision making. Ms. Ritchie highlighted major work tasks for the year, such as initiating the 2055 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, supporting STIP prioritization, advancing safety, bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and congestion management efforts, and continuing coordination with NCDOT, local governments, and transit providers. The Transportation Advisory Committee reached consensus to release the Draft FY 2027 UPWP for public comment.

V. **Approve 2026 MPO Meeting Calendar Modification:** Ms. Ritchie presented the approved 2026 MPO meeting calendar, noting that a change to the November meeting date is required due to a federal holiday conflict. Upon a motion made by Mrs. Patton and seconded by Mr. Townsend, the committee unanimously approved the modification to the 2026 MPO meeting calendar.

VI. **5303 STIP Amendment:** Ms. Ritchie presented the 5303 STIP Amendment, explaining that the update reflects Federal Transit Administration funding used to support metropolitan transit planning activities and requires corresponding state and local matches. She noted that the TIP must be amended to accurately show the 5303 funding amounts by fiscal year. The committee reached consensus to release the 5303 STIP Amendment for public comment.

NCDOT Update –

- **BOT –** Mrs. Phillips provided updates on board activities including the monthly meeting and an economic development presentation.
- **Division 11:** Mr. Poe stated that Divison 11 is preparing for potential winter storms. Mr. Poe provided updates including the awarding of the contract for Mission Road and Pinewood Road utility relocation which should be completed this spring.
- **Division 12:** Mr. Jordan provided updates in the packet, with no new projects occurring at this time.
- **Division 13:** Mr. Phillips reported that the Lake Rhodhiss Bridge project is currently progressing and that grading and pipe work has begun on the Burke Industrial Drive project.
- **NCDOT-TPD:** None
- **NCDOT-IMD:** Mrs. Abija made her official introduction and notified the committee of her intent to send out quarterly newsletters.

Reminders: Ms. Ritchie reminded members that all TAC members need to fill out Ethics forms by April 15th.

Public Comment/Announcements: None

Adjournment: Chairman Guess adjourned the meeting at 3:10 p.m. The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 25th, 2026.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Hank Guess, TAC Chairman	Averi Ritchie, TAC Secretary