

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 (TCC)

Wednesday, January 21st, 2026 @ 1:00 PM In-person meeting and via Zoom

Present			**Absent**		
First Name	**Last Name**	**Representing**	**First Name**	**Last Name**	**Representing**
Randy	Williams	City of Newton	Michael	Berley	City of Morganton
John	Marshall	City of Hickory	Patrick	Reach	Alexander County
Blake	Wright	Town of Maiden	Brian	Burgess	Alexander/Taylorsville
Erik	Schlichting	City of Conover	Patrick	Creech	Alexander County
Laurie	LoCicero	Catawba County	Randy	Feirabend	Town of Cajah's Mtn
Jon	Hogan	City of Lenoir	Daniel	Cobb	Town of Granite Falls
Bryce	Carter	City of Claremont	Chris	Timberlake	Catawba County
Wendy	Smith	Town of Morganton	Rick	Justice	Town of Rhodhiss
Bradley	Kirkley	Burke County	Nathan	Hester	Town of Taylorsville
Steve	Miller	City of Hickory	Shelly	Stevens	Caldwell County
Dustin	Milsap	Town of Sawmills	Chris	Timberlake	Catawba County
Caroline	Kone	City of Hickory	Wilson	Elliott	City of Hickory
Bill	Carroll	Town of Drexel	Jon	Greer	Town of Hudson
Hannah	Williams	City of Lenior	Danny	Hipps	Town of Catawba
Karen	Dickerson	City of Hickory	Wayne	Rash	Caldwell County
			Amy	Bucknam	Alexander County

			Logan	Shook	Town of Hildebran
			Greg	Wilson	Town of Granite Falls
			Bonnie	Caudie	Town of Gamewell
			Alan	Glines	Burke County

WPCOG, FHWA & GUEST	**NC DOT STAFF**
Averi Ritchie – WPCOG	Dean Ledbetter – Div 11 & 12
Casey Fullbright – WPCOG	Ruben Crummy – NC DOT TPD
Michael Rapp – Valdese Planner	Sean Sizemore – Div 11
	Travis Chrisawn – Div 11
	Brandon Whitaker – Div 11
	Anil Panicker – Div 12
	Travis Jordan – Div 12
	Dough Philips Div 13
	Stephan Sparks – Div 13
	Nikki Abija - IMD
	David Wasserman- SPOT
	Teressa Robinson - SPOT
	Hasan Obias – NCDOT TPD
	Sarah Tolman – NCDOT Div 13 Training Program

Call to Order/ Introductions: Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM and welcomed all present. Introductions were conducted, followed by the Introduction of online viewers.

Action Items:

I. Approval of Consent Agenda: Chair Williams called for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Upon a motion made by Mrs. Smith and a second by Mr. Schlichting, the board 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 Mr. Schlicting and seconded by Mrs. LoCicero, 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 Mr. Marshall and seconded by Mrs. LoCicero, 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. Smith and seconded by Mrs. Williams, 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 –

- **Division 11:** Mr. Sizemore stated that no new updates were available and provided all current projects in the agenda packet.
- **Division 12:** Mr. Panicker 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: Chair Williams adjourned the meeting at 1:22 p.m. The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 25th, 2026.

Respectfully Submitted,

Randy Williams, MPO/TCC Chair	Averi Ritchie, TAC Secretary