

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, May 27, 2026 @ 2:30 PM In-person meeting and via online participation

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

Molly	McKay	City of Morganton	VACANT		Connelly Springs
			VACANT		Sawmills
			VACANT		Rutherford College
			VACANT		Drexel

WPCOG, FHWA & GUEST	**NC DOT STAFF**
Averi Ritchie – WPCOG	Travis Chrisawn – Div 11
Casey Fullbright – WPCOG	Sean Sizemore – Div 11
Daniel Odom – WPCOG	Mark Stafford – Div 12
Katelyn Smith – WPCOG	Travis Jordan – Div 12
Anthony Starr – WPCOG	Stephen Sparks – Div 13
Steve Cannon – Guest	Reuben Crummy – NC DOT TPD
Renee Carswell – City Clerk Morganton	Jason Myers – NCDOT Rail Division
	Meagan Phillips – NCDOT BOT

Call to Order/Ethics Awareness/ and Introductions: Chairman Guess called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM and welcomed all present. Introductions were conducted, followed by the Introduction of online viewers.

Approval of Remote Participation: Online attendees were Renee Carswell, Stephen Sparks, Steven Cannon, Meagan Phillips, Jack Simms, Jason Myers and Rueben Crummy. 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, which included the Minutes of the April 22, 2026 meeting and the Transportation Improvement Program Revisions for Release. Upon a motion made by Mrs. Patton and a second by Mrs. Zimmerman, the Committee approved the consent agenda.

II. Transportation Improvement Program Revisions for Approval: Ms. Ritchie presented the Transportation Improvement Program Revisions for Approval. Upon a motion made by Mrs. Patton and seconded by Mr. Beal, the committee approved the revisions.

III. Locally Administered Project Program: Spring 2026 Project Applications: Mr. Odom presented the Locally Administered Project Program (LAPP) Spring 2026 Call for New Projects. He noted the MPO receives roughly $3.5 million annually in federal transportation grant funding. The Spring Call received three applications: two from the City of Hickory (5th Street NE and 10th Ave Drive NE Intersection Improvements; 13th Ave Drive SE Connector) and one from the City of Lenoir (Harper Avenue Streetscape). Total requested project funding is $17.237 million, with a target investment of $6.5 million. The presentation was delivered to the committee to release the project applications for public comment.

IV. WNC Passenger Rail Update: Mr. Myers provided an update on the status of WNC passenger rail. He reported that passenger rail ridership is currently 59% higher than pre-COVID levels in 2019. The proposed route would run from Charlotte to Asheville, keeping the maintenance facility in Charlotte to allow for faster implementation without the need to construct a new facility. The service is projected to provide 1.5 round trips per day utilizing 3 trains. He noted that match funding could possibly be supplied through STI, and the option of renting trains rather than purchasing them is being considered to reduce capital costs. A Service Development Plan is anticipated to be complete in two years or sooner.

V. 2055 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Introduction: Ms. Ritchie introduced the 2055 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) to the committee via presentation. She explained that the MTP is a federally required, fiscally constrained, long-range planning document with a 20+ year horizon that guides multimodal transportation investments across the region. The next update is underway, with final plan adoption scheduled for July 2028.

NCDOT Update –

BOT: Ms. Phillips reported on the May board meeting, noted that the BOT is discussing plans to host their fall board meeting in the area (hosted by Brad Lail), and mentioned the June board meeting will be next week in Raleigh.

Division 11: Mr. Chrisawn stated that there were no major updates.

Division 12: Mr. Stafford introduced the new planning engineer, noted efforts to resolve the culvert on 39th, and mentioned "No Mow May".

Division 13: Mr. Sparks reported that there is no new project development, but noted construction updates on three projects that Division 12 had picked up. This includes pavement and patching at 9th Ave Dr NW in Burke and Rutherford, a bridge replacement over the NS railroad in Morganton, and resurfacing work in Burke County.

NCDOT-TPD: Mr. Crummy provided an update regarding the TPD Newsletter and noted there is no new traffic forecast.

NCDOT-IMD: None.

Reminders: Ms. Ritchie reminded the committee about the recent federal audit findings, formally introduced Katelyn Smith as the new LAPP planner, and mentioned Richard Andrews.

Public Comment/Announcements: None

Adjournment: Upon a motion made by Chairman Guess and seconded by Mrs. Patton, the meeting was adjourned at 3:34 PM. The next meeting will be Wednesday, June 24, 2026.

Respectfully Submitted,

_____ _____

Hank Guess, TAC Chairman Averi Ritchie, TAC Secretary