

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, May 27, 2026 @ 1:00 PM In-person meeting and via online participation

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

			Wayne	Rash	Caldwell County
			Jon	Hogan	City of Lenoir
			Bill	Carroll	Town of Drexel
			Amy	Bucknam	Alexander County
			Bonnie	Caudie	Town of Gamewell
			Daniel	Cobb	Town of Granite Falls

WPCOG, FHWA & GUEST	**NC DOT STAFF**
Averi Ritchie – WPCOG	Sean Sizemore – Div 11
Casey Fullbright – WPCOG	Travis Chrisawn – Div 11
Daniel Odom – WPCOG	Travis Jordan – Div 12
Katelyn Smith – WPCOG	Stephen Sparks – Div 13
Rusty Bost – Labella Associates	Reuben Crummy – NC DOT TPD
	Jason Myers – NCDOT Rail Division
	Nikki Elsheimer – IMD
	Steven Cannon - NCDOT

Call to Order/ Introductions: Chair LoCicero called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM and welcomed all present. Introductions were conducted, followed by the Introduction of online viewers.

Action Items:

I. Approval of Consent Agenda: Chair LoCicero 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 Mr. Rapp and a second by Mrs. Williams, 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 Mr. Wright and seconded by Mrs. Williams, 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 –

Division 11: Mr. Sizemore stated that there were no new updates.

Division 12: Mr. Jordan reported that there were no new updates.

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.

NCDOT-IMD: Ms. Elsheimer reported on a multimodal planning grant up for approval for a City of Hickory project. She also noted that the Alexander Track Plan was approved. Additionally, she shared that new staff has joined and regional planning is now fully staffed.

Reminders: Ms. Ritchie reminded the committee about the recent audit recommendations and formally introduced Katelyn, the new LAPP planner.

Public Comment/Announcements: None

Adjournment: Upon a motion made by Mr. Wright and seconded by Mrs. Williams, Chair LoCicero adjourned the meeting at 1:55 PM. The next meeting will be Wednesday, June 24, 2026.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Greater Hickory MPO/TCC Chair Averi Ritchie, TAC Secretary