

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, September 24th, 2025 @ 2:30 PM In-person meeting
and via Zoom

Present			**Absent**		
First Name	**Last Name**	**Representing**	**First Name**	**Last Name**	**Representing**
Hank	Guess	City of Hickory	Larry	Yoder	Alexander County
Martin	Townsend	Town of Granite Falls	Jack	Simms	Town of Taylorsville
Barbara	Beatty	Catawba County	Ike	Perkins	City of Lenoir
Jill	Patton	City of Hickory	Beth	Rudisill	Town of Maiden
Mark	Canrobert	City of Conover	Jody	York	Town of Hildebran
Roy	Johnson	City Newton	Donald	Robinson	Town of Catawba
Richard	Andrews	Town of Cajah's Mountain	Les	Morrow	City of Claremont
Genita	Hill	Town of Long View	Holly	Crafton-Lay	Town of Maiden
Wendy	Cato	City of Morganton	Donna	Price	Town of Rhodhiss
Mike	Stroud	Burke County	Mary	Furtado	Catawba County
			Glen	Harvey	Town of Valdese
			Barry	Mitchell	Town of Hudson
			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	Dean Ledbetter – Div 11 & 12
Casey Fullbright - WPCOG	Ruben Crummy – NC DOT TPD
Melani Harrell – WPCOG	Sean Sizemore – Div 11
	Michael Poe- Div 11
	Anil Panicker – Div 12
	Travis Jordan – Div 12
	Dough Phillips – Div 13
	Tim Anderson – Div 13
	Stephan Sparks – Div 13
	Brad Lail - BOT
	Meghan Phillips - BOT
	Jason Butler – NCDOT

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 Meghan Phillips, Wendy Cato, Tim Anderson, Jason Butler, Stephen Sparks and Beth Rudisill. Chairman Guess canvassed the committee for any objections to online participants. Upon a motion made by Chairman Guess and seconded by Mrs. Beatty, online participation was approved.

Action Items:

I. **Approval of Consent Agenda:** Chair Williams called for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Upon a motion made by Mrs. Beatty and a second by Mrs. Patton, the board unanimously approved the consent agenda.

II. **Transportation Improvement Program Revisions for Approval:** Ms. Ritchie presented the latest Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) revisions, which included several statewide and regional project updates. Notable changes included a delay in the implementation of the closed-loop signal improvement project to FY 2026, cost increases for federal lands infrastructure improvements, and new sidewalk construction projects in Hickory, Conover, and Burke County. The revisions also added funding for electric vehicle infrastructure along NC's alternative fuel corridors and safety enhancements such as rumble strip installations in Caldwell and Burke Counties. Upon a motion made by Mrs. Patton and seconded by Mr. Townsend, the board unanimously approved the Transportation Improvement Program Revisions.

III. **Prioritization 8 Identified Projects:** Ms. Ritchie presented the Prioritization 8.0 (P8.0) project list for board approval, highlighting its role in shaping the 2026–2035 State Transportation Improvement Program through a data-driven and locally informed process. The Greater Hickory MPO received 18 project submittals for this cycle, based on regional population and roadway mileage, and assigned local input points to projects in alignment with long-range plans such as the MTP and CTP. Projects were evaluated within three funding tiers, Statewide Mobility, Regional Impact, and Division Needs, each with varying levels of data and local input. The board was asked to approve the submitted list to advance selected projects through the P8.0 scoring and programming process. Upon a motion made by Mrs. Beatty and seconded by Mrs. Patton, the board unanimously approved the Prioritization 8 Identified Projects.

IV. **Express Design Recommendations:** Ms. Ritchie introduced the Express Design submittals process, which provides conceptual designs to improve accuracy in project cost estimates and enhance collaboration ahead of Prioritization 9. The Greater Hickory MPO has been allotted 10 express design submittals, with 4 required by November 2025 and the remaining 6 to be informed by Prioritization 8 data. Planned submittals include corridors in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba counties, each selected based on crash data, local input, and coordination with existing studies. These express designs will support more informed scoring in future prioritization cycles and help identify key infrastructure improvements across the region. Upon a motion made by Mr. Lail and seconded by Mrs. Patton, the board unanimously approved the Express Design Recommendations for Prioritization 9.

V. **Draft Western Piedmont Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan:** Mr. Fullbright presented the draft release of the 2025 WPCOG Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, a

fully digital and interactive resource designed to improve safe, connected, and accessible active transportation across the region. The plan features regional, public input, and priority project dashboards that reflect both community-driven priorities and existing planning efforts. While the digital draft is now available for review, work is still ongoing to refine the content and ensure alignment with local needs. The finalized plan is expected to be released in November 2025. Chairman Guess canvassed the committee, and upon seeing no objections, the Draft Western Piedmont Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was approved for public release by consensus.

NCDOT Update –

- **Division 11:** Mr. Poe stated that no new project updates were available and provided all current projects in the agenda packet. Mr. Poe informed the board that Division 11 was 92% complete regarding Hurricane Helene Recovery.
- **Division 12:** Mr. Panicker provided updates in the packet, with no new projects occurring at this time.
- **Division 13:** Mr. Anderson discussed project updates including the Castle Bridge project pre-construction meeting and project schedule release in November. Mr. Anderson informed the board that Division 13 is 68% complete regarding Hurricane Helene Recovery.
- **NCDOT-TPD:** Mr. Crummy provided updates including the appointment of a new Secretary of Transportation as well as a new State Traffic Engineer.

- **NCDOT-IMD:** No updates

Reminders: Ms. Ritchie reminded members that the October MPO meeting is cancelled, there will be a supplemental LAPP call in November as well as new guidance about documentation submittals prior to MPO meetings.

Public Comment/Announcements: None

Adjournment: Chairman Guess adjourned the meeting at 4:10 p.m. The next meeting will be Wednesday, November 12th, 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,

Hank Guess, TAC Chairman	Averi Ritchie, TAC Secretary