

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, September 24th, 2025 @ 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
Wendy	Smith	Town of Morganton	Patrick	Reach	Alexander County
Rick	Justice	Town of Rhodhiss	Brian	Burgess	Alexander/Taylorsville
Bradley	Kirkley	Burke County	Patrick	Creech	Alexander County
Bill	Carroll	Town of Drexel	Randy	Feirabend	Town of Cajah's Mtn
Hannah	Williams	City of Lenior	Daniel	Cobb	Town of Granite Falls
Karen	Dickerson	City of Hickory	Chris	Timberlake	Catawba County
Laurie	LoCicero	Catawba County	Dustin	Milsap	Town of Sawmills
Logan	Shook	Town of Hildebran	Blake	Wright	Town of Maiden
Jon	Greer	Town of Hudson	Nathan	Hester	Town of Taylorsville
Jon	Hogan	City of Lenoir	Shelly	Stevens	Caldwell County
Erik	Schlichting	City of Conover	Chris	Timberlake	Catawba County
Bonnie	Caudie	Town of Gamewell	John	Marshall	City of Hickory
			Steve	Miller	City of Hickory
			Alan	Glines	Burke County
			Wilson	Elliott	City of Hickory

			Caroline	Kone	City of Hickory
			Danny	Hipps	Town of Catawba
			Wayne	Rash	Caldwell County
			Amy	Bucknam	Alexander County
			Bryce	Carter	City of Claremont
			Greg	Wilson	Town of Granite Falls

WPCOG, FHWA & GUEST	**NC DOT STAFF**
Averi Ritchie – WPCOG	Dean Ledbetter – Div 11 & 12
Casey Fullbright – WPCOG	Ruben Crummy – NC DOT TPD
	Sean Sizemore – Div 11
	Anil Panicker – Div 12
	Travis Jordan – Div 12
	Dough Philips Div 13
	Stephan Sparks – Div 13
	Chad Young – NC DOT
	Jason Butler – NC DOT

Call to Order/ Introductions: Chair Williams 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 Williams called for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Upon a motion made by Mr. Schlichting and a second by Mr. Justice, 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. Smith and seconded by Mr. Schlichting, 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 Mr. Justice and seconded by Mrs. Smith, 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 Mrs. LoCicero and seconded by Mr. Schlichting, 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. Mr. Williams 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. 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 discussed project updates including the Castle Bridge project pre-construction meeting and project schedule release in November.
- **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: Chair Williams adjourned the meeting at 2:03 p.m. The next meeting will be Wednesday, November 12th, 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,

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