



**Western Piedmont
Council of Governments**
Creative Regional Solutions Since 1968

Bi-Monthly Policy Board Meeting

Tuesday, January 24, 2023

Caldwell County—Fryside Taproom and Eatery
6 pm dinner/6:45 pm meeting

Agenda Item	Presenter	Action Requested
Call to Order/Welcome	Chair Jill Patton Vice Chair Mike Labrose	
Introductions		
Recognition of New Board Delegates and Outgoing Board Delegate	Chair Patton	No
Minutes of Previous Meetings	Chair Patton	Yes
Workforce Development Board Appointment	Charity Patterson Hamber	Yes
NCARCOG 2023 Policy Agenda	Anthony Starr	No
Community and Economic Development 2022 Grant Awards Summary	Ben Willis	Yes
FY2023-24 WPCOG Assessments for Local Governments	Anthony Starr	Yes
Local and Regional Disaster Recovery, Mitigation, and Resiliency Technical Assistance	Alison Adams	No
4th Amendment of the FY2022-23 Budget	Andrea Roper	Yes
Other Business		
Executive Director's and Staff Reports		
Next Meeting - Tuesday, March 28, 2023		
—Hosted by City of Hickory		
Adjournment		

Notes: Dinner will begin at 6:00 pm at the Fryside Taproom and Eatery (440 South Main Street, Granite Falls, NC 28630) compliments of Caldwell County. Persons needing special assistance are asked to notify WPCOG at 828.485.4221 before the scheduled meeting date.

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: January 24, 2023

SUBJECT: Recognition of New Board Members and Outgoing Board Delegate

PRESENTERS: Jill Patton, Board Chair

ATTACHMENTS: None

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Welcome new board members listed below:

- Cole Setzer, Catawba County Delegate
- Tonia Stephenson, Appointed Delegate

Thank you to outgoing board member listed below:

- Danny Hipps, Town of Maiden Delegate

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: For informational purposes only. No action required.

Suggested Motion: *None.*

Minutes
Western Piedmont Council of Governments
Bimonthly Policy Board Meeting
Tuesday, November 22, 2022
Town of Long View

Members Present:

Jill Patton, Chair
Joseph L. Gibbons, Vice-Chair
George Holleman, Treasurer
Larry Chapman, Secretary
Larry Yoder, At-Large
Wayne Abele, At-Large
Kitty Barnes, At-Large
Marla Thompson, At-Large
Kelvin Gregory
Johnnie Carswell, Alternate
Ronnie Setzer
Ramona Duncan
Joie Fulbright
Jim Green, Alternate
Dennis Anthony
Barbara Pennell
Dr. Caryl Burns
Tracy Townsend, Alternate
Ben Honeycutt
Phyllis Pennington, Alternate
Danny Hipps
Chris Jernigan
Ronnie Thompson, Alternate
Jerry Hodge
Beverly Danner, Alternate
Allen Spencer
Kendra Edwards, Alternate
Wayne Annas
Bobby Mosteller
Erisha Lipford
Helen Chestnut
Malla Vue
Randy Burns
Tommy Luckadoo

Members Absent:

Bob Floyd, Past Chair
Robbie Wilkie, Alternate
Mike Labrose

Local Government/Agency:

Hickory
Lenoir
Taylorsville
Hudson
Alexander County
Burke County
Catawba County
Long View
Brookford
Burke County
Cajah's Mountain
Connelly Springs
Conover
Conover
Drexel
Gamewell
Granite Falls
Granite Falls
Hildebran
Long View
Maiden
Morganton
Morganton
Newton
Newton
Rhodhiss
Rhodhiss
Rutherford College
Sawmills
Appointed
Appointed
Appointed
Appointed
Appointed

Village of Cedar Rock
Caldwell County
Caldwell County

Members Absent (continued):

Donald Robinson	Catawba
Dale Sherrill	Claremont
Sheila Perkins	Glen Alpine
David Williams, Alternate	Hickory
Mike Smith, Alternate	Hildebran
Holly Crafton-Lay, Alternate	Maiden
Charlie Watts	Valdese
Amparo R. Alfaro	Appointed
Jeanna Price	Appointed

Guests/Others Present:

Tamara Brooks	Connelly Springs
Tom Hart	Conover
Sherri Bradshaw	Drexel
Scott Hildebran	Lenoir
James Brinkley	Long View
TJ Bates	Long View
Chuck Mullis	Long View
James Cozart	Long View
Keith Warren	Sawmills
Chase Winebarger	Sawmills

WPCOG Staff Present:

Anthony Starr, Executive Director
Sherry Long, Assistant Executive Director
Ashley Bolick, Director of Administrative Services and Human Resources
Andrea Roper, Director of Finance
Ben Willis, Director of Community and Economic Development
Alison Adams, Director of Community and Regional Planning
Jason Toney, Communications Manager
Elizabeth Hilliard, Executive Administrative Assistant
Tasmin Mack, Human Resources Specialist

Call to Order/Welcome

A regular meeting of the WPCOG Policy Board was called to order at 6:45 pm by Chair Patton. Chair Patton thanked the Town of Long View for hosting. Town of Long View Mayor, Marla Thompson, welcomed the Policy Board to Long View.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were considered. Mr. Joie Fulbright made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 27, 2022 meeting and Mr. Jerry Hodge offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business/Reports

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

NADO Awards Recognition

Mr. Anthony Starr, WPCOG Executive Director, stated the National Association of Development Organizations' (NADO) is a Washington, DC-based association that promotes programs and policies that strengthen local governments, communities, and economies through regional cooperation, program delivery, and comprehensive strategies. The association's Aliceann Wohbruck Impact Awards program recognizes regional development organizations and partnering organizations for improving the economic and community competitiveness of our nation's regions and local communities.

Award-winning projects were recognized during NADO's 2022 Annual Training Conference, held in Pittsburgh, PA, on October 15-18. WPCOG was honored during the 2022 NADO Conference for the following two awards:

NC Foothills Experience Web Application

The NC Foothills Experience Web App (www.expncfoothills.com) is a first-of-its-kind application that is designed to demonstrate to prospective residents and businesses – as well as current residents – that our region provides a high quality of life, offering an ideal work-life balance.

The web app focuses on four key categories that contribute significantly to our region's quality of life: Outdoor Adventures – state and local trails and greenways, parks, ball fields, and biking opportunities; Fun Places – cultural amenities including museums, libraries, art galleries, and historic destinations; Farm Fresh – local food in the form of u-pick farms, roadside stands, butchers, and farmers markets; and Cool Spaces – wineries, distilleries, bike shops, outfitters, and local breweries.

Each location and event included within these four categories are represented by icons on maps, which users can click on to see immersive drone videos, photos, and written descriptions. Users can then click on another category to build their own personalized experiences. For example, after selecting a historic destination to visit, a user can click on the other categories to create a multi-destination experience, including a bite to eat at a local brew pub, a bike ride on a greenway, and a visit downtown. Because the app is built on ESRI's geographic information systems platform, location is central to its overall functionality, allowing users to easily get directions to multiple locations on their mobile devices or computers. Users can also click through to each location's homepage to learn even more.

Industrial Growth Analysis (IGA)

The Industry Growth Analysis (IGA) (found at www.westernpiedmontworks.org) report serves as a regional snapshot of future economic development opportunities by defining growing and shrinking job sectors, low and high-paying jobs within those sectors, and educational opportunities in the region to acquire the educational attainment to fill those jobs. The analysis is of particular importance as the region recovers from the negative impacts caused by the COVID- 19 pandemic.

The IGA is accomplished by creating a series of industry employment and wage tables and charts. All industry sectors are plotted into one of four zones based on average weekly wages and national growth projections over the next ten years. The report identifies the region's "most-favored" industries, which pay above the average regional wage and are expected to grow nationally over the next ten years. The "most-favored" industries should become the focus of economic development efforts in the Western Piedmont Region. Conversely, industries that pay below the average regional wage and/or are expected to decline over the next decade are not considered economic development targets.

In addition, the IGA also reviews regional educational offerings to determine if training is available to prepare Western Piedmont residents for positions in the area's identified "most-favored" industries. Included in the examination are degree programs from the Western Piedmont's three community colleges (Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, Catawba Valley Community College, and Western Piedmont Community College). The report also includes bachelor's and master's programs from Lenoir-Rhyne University and Appalachian State University.

HOME Consortium American Rescue Plan Funding

Ms. Sherry Long, Assistant Executive Director, stated on March 11, 2021 President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan (ARP) into law, which provides over \$1.9 trillion in relief to address the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, public health, state and local governments, individuals, and businesses.

To address the need for homelessness assistance and supportive services, Congress appropriated \$5 billion in ARP funds to be administered through HOME to perform activities that must primarily benefit qualifying individuals and families who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or in other vulnerable populations.

The Unifour HOME Consortium received \$4,182,773 which can be spent on brick and mortar. Before any funds can be obligated, the City of Lenoir must solicit public input and submit a comprehensive plan to HUD on how the funds will be used by the end of 2023. The WPCOG administers the program on behalf of Lenoir and the region.

At the request of local government officials, WPCOG staff is reviewing possible uses of the funding including replicating the Sarasota Florida Homeless Assistance Model. This program utilizes a holistic approach to serving the homeless population by establishing a centralized record system of individuals experiencing homelessness, using existing non-profits to provide support, as well as adopting ordinances to address unauthorized soliciting aid and loitering.

The development of a regional case management program, identification of gaps in services and/or areas in need of improvement are also being explored. WPCOG staff has begun interviewing local service providers to identify how the ARP funds might be used to address the needs of our local homeless population without duplicating existing services.

Staff requested the Policy Board to provide direction to staff together with suggesting local service providers that should be interviewed. No action is required at this time.

3rd Amendment of the FY2022-23 Budget

Ms. Andrea Roper, Director of Finance, stated the attached 3rd Amendment of the FY2022-23 budget reflects a total budget of \$24,837,971 and an operating budget of \$8,760,791 which represents an increase of the total budget from the September 27, 2022, budget adoption of \$37,815.

The 3rd Amendment of the 2022-2023 Budget includes:

- General Government increased due to the addition of website maintenance and human resource service contracts.
- An increase in Environmental Protection due to an increase in stormwater contracts.
- Community and Regional Planning increased due to new GIS and planning project contracts.
- Aging increased due to an increase in the MIPPA grant and UNCA grant.
- Chargeable salaries decreased and compensated absences increased due to personnel changes across several departments.
- Contractual decreased mainly due to contractual funds being allocated to salaries in the environmental protection department.
- An increase in supplies due to normal programmatic needs across several departments.
- Advertising/subscriptions increased due to subscriptions in the IT department and small increases for programmatic advertising needs in several departments.
- An increase in contingency due to the addition of several new contracts.
- Transfer to Capital Reserve Fund increased due to the increase in indirect funds generated by personnel changes.
- Capital Reserve Fund increased due to the increase in transfers from the general fund.

Staff requested the Policy Board to review and approve the Third Amendment of the 2022-2023 Budget.

Ms. Kitty Barnes made a motion that the Policy Board approve the Third Amendment of the 2022-2023 Budget as proposed and Mr. Larry Yoder offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Nominating Committee Report

Ms. Kitty Barnes, Nominating Committee Chair, stated each year the Board Chair appoints a nominating committee for the purpose of recommending persons for the Officers, Executive Committee and Appointed Delegates of the Policy Board. Chair Patton appointed Wayne Abele (Burke County), Larry Chapman (Hudson), Kitty Barnes (Catawba County) and George Holleman (Taylorsville) to serve as members of the 2022 Nominating Committee.

Ms. Barnes, Nominating Committee Chair, will present the recommendations from the Nominating Committee listed below. Changes from 2022 are highlighted.

Position	Recommendation	Term Ends
Chair	Jill Patton (Hickory)	Dec. 2023
Vice Chair	Joe Gibbons (Lenoir)	Dec. 2023
Secretary	Larry Chapman (Hudson)	Dec. 2023

Treasurer	George Holleman (Taylorsville)	Dec. 2023
Immediate Past Chair	Bob Floyd (Cedar Rock)	Dec. 2023
Executive Committee At-Large	Randy Burns (Burke County)	Dec. 2023
Executive Committee At-Large	Cole Setzer (Catawba County)	Dec. 2023
Executive Committee At-Large	Marla Thompson (Long View)	Dec. 2023
Executive Committee At-Large	Larry Yoder (Alexander County)	Dec. 2023
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Malla Vue	Dec. 2023
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Jeanna Price	Dec. 2023
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Tonia Stephenson	Dec. 2023
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Amparo Alfaro	Dec. 2024
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Erisha Lipford	Dec. 2024
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Tommy Luckadoo	Dec. 2024
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Helen Chestnut	Dec. 2024
Forum Representative	Marla Thompson (Long View)	Dec. 2023
Alternate Forum Representative	Larry Yoder (Alexander County)	Dec. 2023

The Policy Board was requested to elect the officers, Executive Committee members, and appointed delegates for 2023.

Mr. Danny Hipps made a motion that the Policy Board approve the nominations as presented by the Nominating Committee and Mr. Chris Jernigan offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Outgoing Board Member Recognition

Chair Patton recognized the following outgoing Policy Board members for their years of service:

- Mr. Keith Warren, Town of Sawmills
- Ms. Kitty Barnes, Catawba County
- Mr. Wayne Abele, Burke County

Other Business

Executive Director's and Staff Reports

Mr. Anthony Starr, WPCOG Executive Director, reviewed the Executive Director's Report providing details and current operations of the WPCOG and issues that may be of interest to board members.

Administration

- The WPCOG continues the search process for the Long View town manager position and the Brookford police chief. Staff are also assisting Hildebran for the search for a new town attorney. Work is also beginning to assist Hickory with the selection of a new city attorney and Greenway Public Transportation with the selection of a new executive director.
- The WPCOG recently completed a staff leadership training event. It was a day-long event that was very productive and aimed to improve everyone's ability to lead and manage people.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

- The AAA solicited for contractors interested in providing the following chore services: house cleaning, deep cleaning, landscaping, and pest control. Staff received 3 bids.

Community & Economic Development (CED)

- WPCOG CED staff has written or assisted with 8 (eight) Rural Transformation Grants, 3 (three) CDBGs, 3 (three) Building Reuse, and 3 (three) NCDEQ Volkswagen Settlement grants requesting over \$12 million for the region.
- On November 9th, three local governments in the region were notified they received funding from the NC Department of Commerce Rural Economic Development Division CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization program totaling \$6,694,044. Newton received \$950,000 to renovate Center High School Community Center, Alexander County received \$645,044 to assist the Sterling Road neighborhood with housing and street improvements, and Granite Falls received \$4,999,000 to replace decaying water and sewer lines.

Community & Regional Planning

- The Town of Cajah's Mountain Planning Board met to review the final zoning ordinance.
- The Town of Hudson Council approved the final draft of the Comprehensive Plan.
- The Town of Long View Council approved the final draft of the Land Use Plan.
- Staff completed and presented renderings for the Town of Hildebran Comprehensive Plan.

Finance

- Finance and HCTDA staff continue to work with auditors on the FY22 audit. The audit is expected to be complete by the end of the month and will be up for consideration at the Policy Board meeting in January 2023.

Regional Housing Authority (RHA)

- The Annual Landlord meeting was held on Thursday, November 17, 2022 at 9 am for all current and interested landlords. There were 40-50 landlords who attended.

Workforce Development

- Staff have been quite busy with various items in the four county region.

There are currently several vacancies in the Finance, Regional Housing Authority, and Administrative Departments. Ms. Ashley Bolick was recognized as the new Director of Economic Development for Caldwell County. The Policy Board was reminded of the reception in honor of Ms. Ashley Bolick on Wednesday, November 30th, at 4:00 pm.

Ms. Alison Adams stated the Community and Regional Planning Department has a GIS Technician position that will be filled by a gentleman from the Raleigh-Cary area. The planning department is working on digital inclusion with the state as well as NC State's Department of Emerging Issues. Funding has been received and the planning department will be writing individual plans for all four counties. They will be reaching out to obtain more information. A kickoff meeting has already be held

and good feedback was received. Policy Board members may receive an email requesting additional information for the digital inclusion plans.

Next Meeting

The next Policy Board meeting is scheduled for January 24, 2023 with the location to be announced.

Adjournment

Chair Patton adjourned the meeting at 7:15 pm.

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: January 24, 2023

SUBJECT: Workforce Development Board Appointment

PRESENTER: Charity Patterson Hamber, Director of Workforce Development

ATTACHMENTS: Robin Ross letter of recommendation

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Request Policy Board to appoint Robin Ross, Vice President for Talent Development and K-64, Catawba Valley Community College, in order to meet the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) board membership requirement for *Adult Education and Literacy eligible under WIOA Title II*.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

Staff request the Policy Board to appoint Robin Ross, to the Workforce Development Board membership for a two-year term.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

I move to appoint Robin Ross to the Workforce Development Board for a staggered two-year term, February 2023 – July 2025.



**Catawba
Valley**

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

November 17, 2022

Dear Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board,

It is my distinct honor as President of Catawba Valley Community College to recommend Ms. Robin Ross, Vice President for Talent Development and K-64, to serve as a representative of Catawba Valley Community College on the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board. Ms. Ross is an outstanding leader at our college and is also responsible for the overall delivery of all workforce development programs for our community.

Robin's connection and understanding of our diverse workforce ecosystem would be an asset for this region. She is committed to service and an excellent communicator. Ms. Ross has worked in a variety of positions here at CVCC and would be an outstanding representative of our college as we continue to collaborate and partner across our region to make this a better place to live, work, and play.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Garrett D. Hinshaw, President
Serving Catawba and Alexander Counties

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: January 24, 2023

SUBJECT: NCARCOG 2023 Policy Agenda

PRESENTER: Anthony W. Starr, Executive Director

ATTACHMENTS: 1. NCARCOG Policy Agenda

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Each year, the NC Association of Regional Councils of Governments (NCARCOG) adopts a policy agenda to use as a guide for its efforts to seek state and legislative changes. The goals intend to assist councils of governments (COGs) and their local governments on a variety of topics. Anthony Starr serves as the chair of the legislative committee for the NCARCOG.

The 2023 NCARCOG Policy Agenda includes goals for the following:

- A requested appropriation for the General Assembly to COGs to fund 32 new finance positions across the state to assist local governments with financial administration.
- A request to replace the outdated reimbursement system (called ARMS) that handles the financial transactions for area agencies on aging and local senior adult service providers.
- A requested appropriation for the General Assembly to increase funding and the number of long-term care ombudsmen in the state.
- A request to modify the Prosperity Zones in NC to conform to COG regional boundaries.
- A request to utilize COGs to provide hazard mitigation planning and disaster resiliency for local governments within their regions.
- Support for additional improvements for broadband service to underserved communities.
- Additional funding for aging, community development, infrastructure, and workforce programs.
- Using COGs as the default mechanism for the regional delivery of services instead of creating new organizations or divisions within the state government.
- Designating COGs as eligible entities for receiving grants on behalf of local governments when regional collaboration on certain projects makes sense.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: Staff requests Policy Board review the info, share it with other elected officials, and provide feedback. No action is required by the board.

Suggested Motion: *None.*



2023 Policy Agenda

NCARCOG Overview

The North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Governments (NCARCOG) represents 16 regional councils of governments (COGs), and it advocates for regional solutions to address multi-jurisdictional issues or opportunities, coordinated state and federal program service delivery, and building strategic partnerships to improve the prosperity of rural and urban North Carolina.

Policy Priorities

1. Build partnerships and capacity for COGs to provide financial administration for local governments.

Many local governments struggle with poor financial administration in North Carolina. This leads to inaccurate financial statements, higher risk of errors and fraud, and incomplete or inaccurate information for local elected bodies to use for key decision-making for the public welfare. Local governments must meet audit, budget, and internal control requirements established by the state and national standards, and many have done so successfully over the decades. An entire generation of local government officials is leaving the workforce due to retirement, and many areas of the state find it difficult to find the qualified professionals needed to remain compliant with state and national accounting standards. COGs are an extension of local government, with professional finance staff, that are uniquely qualified to assist local governments in need of temporary and ongoing financial services. COGs have the ability and authority to partner with the Local Government Commission (LGC), North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM), and North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) to meet the audit, compliance, and financial administration needs of local governments. However, additional capacity is needed to meet the financial administration needs of local governments.

Action Requested:

The NCARCOG requests the North Carolina General Assembly to appropriate \$3.52 million in recurring funding for COGs to create a financial administration program to employ 32 additional finance professionals in the 16 regions to assist small local governments with returning to a compliant status. These positions will serve as “boots on the ground.” This program will serve 60 to 120 local governments with priority for units with limited means and those units on the LGC’s Unit Assistance List.

2. Provide funding to replace the outdated and poorly functioning ARMS system for the provision of aging services within the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services.

The state developed a reimbursement system in the 1990s, called ARMS, to facilitate payment for services directed to older adults in North Carolina. The system has far exceeded its useful life and represents significant risks for failure. The following challenges and risks exist with ARMS: increased risk of security breaches due to age; increased downtime of the system for users creating inefficiencies; functional limitations to meet current operational needs; incompatibility with newer software systems; labor-intensive procedures; and other obsolete features.

A new software system creates better efficiencies, reduces risks and interruptions of services, enhances compatibility with other software platforms, improves performance measurement, and increases accountability for the use of funds.

Action Requested:

The NCARCOG requests the North Carolina Division of Health and Human Services and General Assembly to appropriate funding to replace the ARMS system. The NCARCOG (through its Area Agencies on Aging) requests to serve in a key partnership role with the development and selection of a replacement system.

NCARCOG Contacts

Robert Hiett, NCARCOG Board Chair | rhiett@ucpcog.org

Greg Browning, Forum Chair | gregorybrowning@charter.net

Anthony Starr, Legislative Chair | anthony.starr@wpcog.org



2023 Policy Agenda

3. Increase funding for the Long-Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman Program in North Carolina.

LTC Ombudsmen are employed by Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) within each COG to serve North Carolinians living in licensed long-term care facilities in our state. This includes residents in nursing homes, adult care homes, and family care homes. As a group, LTC Ombudsmen serve and protect some of the most vulnerable and needy citizens in the state in a non-regulatory role. There are about 91,000 patient beds in the state. LTC Ombudsman work to resolve complaints made by, or for, residents of LTC facilities, advocate for patients' rights and quality of care, educate consumers and LTC providers about patient's right and good care practices, facilitate community involvement through volunteers, and suggest changes to laws and regulations regarding long-term care.

The National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine recommends one full time equivalent (FTE) paid ombudsman per every 2,000 long-term care (LTC) beds. The current program funding is insufficient to support 45.5 full-time equivalent positions. COGs and AAAs employ only 36.5 ombudsmen and that staff level requires diverting funding from other services to achieve that level of staffing. Examples of diverted program funds include: home delivered meals, medical transportation, in-home aide, and other services. The current level of funding creates risks that LTC patient's rights and care are not fully addressed. An additional \$2.5 million is needed annually to fully fund the ombudsman program and meet LTC patients' needs.

Action Requested:

The NCARCOG requests the North Carolina General Assembly to appropriate an additional \$2.5 million in annual recurring funds to fully fund the ombudsman program.

4. Modify the Prosperity Zones to conform to COG regions.

Eight Prosperity Zones were created in 2014 when the state eliminated the previously designated economic development regions. The designation of the Prosperity Zones intended to improve collaboration among state agencies and to improve customer service. However, the Prosperity Zones do not have a dedicated administrative structure, have been largely ineffective, and duplicate efforts of COGs. Many COGs already serve as the Economic Development Administration's designated economic development districts and Appalachian Regional Commission's local development districts. The assigned geographies of the Prosperity Zones do not follow natural economic, transportation, political, or cultural patterns and are often too large to foster cooperation within those regions.

COG regions better reflect natural patterns within the state and already contain human infrastructure among a range of programs including planning, transportation, workforce development, community and economic development, etc. Using COG regions as the basis for Prosperity Zones would decrease duplication and confusion for local governments and facilitate better coordination of services.

Action Requested:

The NCARCOG requests the North Carolina General Assembly to modify the eight Prosperity Zones to conform to the 16 COG regions. When necessary, state agencies can assign multiple COG regions to state staff personnel.

NCARCOG Contacts

Robert Hiett, NCARCOG Board Chair | rhiett@ucpcog.org

Greg Browning, Forum Chair | gregorybrowning@charter.net

Anthony Starr, Legislative Chair | anthony.starr@wpcog.org



2023 Policy Agenda

5. Establish COGs as the entity to develop regional pre-disaster hazard mitigation plans, and to perform regional resilience planning and coordination.

Smaller units of local governments within each COG region may have a limited capacity to apply for emergency management grants, and successfully manage all the training and compliance requirements for the duration of the grant. North Carolina COGs have successfully managed regional disaster and recovery efforts and have extensive experience with emergency management grants. The COGs could serve as designated grant recipients, grant administrators, provide regional communication and coordination activities, and provide the necessary technical assistance to meet grant compliance standards. COG involvement would enhance recovery and resiliency efforts and allow more local governments to participate in funding opportunities.

COGs have coordinated, planned, and delivered planning and programming services on a multi-jurisdictional basis for the past fifty years. Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation (PDM) plans, implemented with assistance from the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program require local government leaders from multiple cities and counties to develop a coordinated plan to identify goals, action steps, and projects to limit the impact of natural and man-made disasters. COGs already engage in resiliency planning efforts within their regions, and each COG engages with local government leaders on a multi-jurisdictional basis. PDM plans are required to be performed every five years, and regularly assessed to determine progress towards implementing the plan. COGs can provide planning professionals to work with local government leaders to develop PDM plans, and to work with local governments to implement the high priority projects to limit the impacts from future disasters.

Action Requested:

NCARCOG requests legislative and policy authorization for the North Carolina Department of Emergency Management to use COGs to provide hazard mitigation planning services, training, grant administration, grant application assistance, or any other service requested by a qualifying local government in order for it to utilize BRIC and other Federal Emergency Management Agency funds. The NCARCOG requests recurring funding to build capacity to assist local communities with hazard mitigation and resiliency planning and project implementation. The NCARCOG intends to submit a funding request in 2024.

6. Support the expansion of high-speed broadband throughout North Carolina.

The availability of high-speed broadband, defined by the FCC a 25 megabits per second download speed and 3 megabits per second upload speed, is critical to the economic resilience of local governments throughout North Carolina. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to increase availability of high-speed broadband to ensure continuation of local government services, local economies, education, workforce training, and nearly every other aspect of private or public operations that rely on internet connectivity to function.

Action Requested:

NCARCOG supports legislative and policy that increases the availability of high-speed broadband throughout North Carolina and urges the members of the North Carolina General Assembly to continue to provide funding to study, build, and upgrade broadband infrastructure to ensure the private and public entities across the state are able to function and compete in the global economy while maintaining safe and effective public services vital to the health and welfare of North Carolina citizens. The NCARCOG request the General Assembly and other state leaders to use COGs as a mechanism for local and regional broadband planning and implementation efforts.

NCARCOG Contacts

Robert Hiett, NCARCOG Board Chair | rhiett@ucpcog.org

Greg Browning, Forum Chair | gregorybrowning@charter.net

Anthony Starr, Legislative Chair | anthony.starr@wpcog.org



2023 Policy Agenda

7. Advocate for additional funding for aging, community development, infrastructure, and workforce programs.

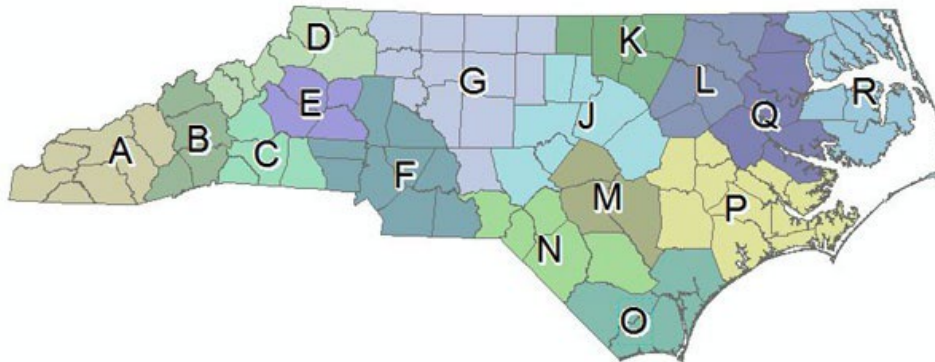
COG regions across the state are working with local government leaders to plan and coordinate services and programs for a rapidly increasing older adult population, expand or upgrade water and sewer capacity to accommodate growth and development within each region, developing partnerships to improve access to workforce housing, and coordinating workforce and/or economic development opportunities with area employers to provide the skilled workers needed for economic growth.

Action Requested:

- Provide additional funding for the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) to support growing older adult populations.
- Continue increased funding for water and sewer infrastructure projects to facilitate community and economic development.
- Improve workforce development services by seeking approval from the US Department of Labor to delegate funding and operations for Wagner-Peyser related services to local workforce development boards.

8. Build strategic partnerships to improve regional delivery of services.

Rural and urban local governments established COGs to come together to solve local and regional issues. COGs play a role in convening leaders within each region and coordinating with multiple types of organizations to deliver programs, projects, or services. COGs are best positioned for the delivery of federal, state, and local programs or services on a regional basis due to the ability to scale a service or program to meet the needs of each region, or to work cooperatively across multiple regions when needed or required.



Action Requested:

Advocate for an increase in the use of COGs to administer and/or implement governmental services and programs that are intended to be delivered on a multi-county basis. Advocate that COGs serve as the default mechanism to delivery regionally based services. Oppose the creation of new regional offices or regional service areas that split COG regions. Request state agencies and the General Assembly consider modifying other state-designated regions to align with COG regions or to avoid splitting COG regions.

NCARCOG Contacts

Robert Hiett, NCARCOG Board Chair | rhiett@ucpcog.org

Greg Browning, Forum Chair | gregorybrowning@charter.net

Anthony Starr, Legislative Chair | anthony.starr@wpcog.org



2023 Policy Agenda

9. **Modify rules, regulations, or legislation to include COGs as eligible entities for state and federal grants.**

The federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular 2 CFR 200. 64 (l) identifies a Council of Governments (COG) as an eligible local government for the purpose of applying for and receiving federal grant awards. NCGS 160A-475(1) and 153A-395 allow COGs to apply for, accept, receive, and dispense grants made available to it by the State of North Carolina, the United States of America or any of its agencies, any local government, and any private or civic agency. Some program rules and grant applications, at the state and federal levels, do not list COGs as eligible program administrators, applicants, or sub-recipients. These limitations prevent COGs from applying for regional based grants, and/or delivering regionally significant programs in each COG service area.

Action Requested:

NCARCOG requests the members of the North Carolina General Assembly add Councils of Governments to the list of eligible entities for state and federal grant programs. In addition, NCARCOG requests the members of the North Carolina delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives, and the U.S. Senate also add Councils of Governments to the list of eligible entities for federally funded grants and programs.

NCARCOG Contacts

Robert Hiett, NCARCOG Board Chair | rhiett@ucpcog.org

Greg Browning, Forum Chair | gregorybrowning@charter.net

Anthony Starr, Legislative Chair | anthony.starr@wpcog.org

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: January 24, 2023

SUBJECT: Community and Economic Development 2022 Grant Awards Summary

PRESENTER: Ben Willis

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Full Department Grant List
2. Average Annual Wages 2022

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

In 2022, CED staff developed applications that resulted in grant funding for 31 projects totaling \$17,571,930. The funding ranged from \$10,000 each to provide charging stations in three communities to \$4,990,000 in Rural Economic Development Division funds for a sewer project.

New private sector investments for economic development projects in 2023 totaled \$235,225,000 in addition to the creation of 400 new, full-time jobs and affecting 442 housing units. Staff was able to secure six (6) N.C. Commerce Building Reuse grants, six (6) Rural Transformation grants, three (3) Rural Economic Development Division grants, and continued to administer more than 80 community and economic development grant projects.

A brief overview will be given of the grants/projects that were awarded for our region in 2022 and information will be shared on how the WPCOG can assist in 2023.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: None. This item is for informational purposes only.

Suggested Motion: *None.*

WPCOG Grant Awards Summary - 2022

Government (County, City, Regional)	Name of Grant	(Month/day/year) Funded	Source of Funding (ARC, EDA, etc)	Grant Amount	LG Match	Private Sector Investment	Project Total	Jobs Created	Housing Units Affected	Department
City of Lenoir	e Campus LHS Upgrade and Improvement Proj	12/14/2022	NCDOC (Rural Transformation)	\$ 580,000.00						
City of Conover	Downtown Tread Trail Connector Project	12/15/2022	NCDOC (Rural Transformation)	\$ 640,000.00						
City of Morganton	Project Fill (Gerresheimer)	12/8/2022	NCDOC	\$ 500,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 62,000,000	\$ 62,525,000.00	78		
City of Claremont	Project Eos (Prysmian)	12/8/2022	NCDOC	\$ 375,000	\$ 18,750	\$ 136,000,000.00	\$ 136,393,750.00	50		
City of Newton	Project Tuscany (Pasta Piccinini)	12/8/2022	NCDOC	\$ 175,000	\$ 8,750	\$ 7,000,000	\$ 7,183,750.00	27		
City of Newton	Central High School Community Center	11/9/2022	REDD	\$ 950,000	\$ 625,000		\$ 1,575,000.00			C & ED
Alexander County	Sterling Road Project	11/9/2022	REDD	\$ 645,044			\$ 645,044.00			C & ED
Granite Falls	Sewer Project	11/9/2022	REDD	\$ 4,990,000			\$ 4,990,000.00			C & ED
City of Morganton	Project Vette (Molded Fiber Glass)	10/20/2022	NCDOC	\$ 200,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 7,200,000	\$ 7,210,000.00	30		
WPCOG	Planning Explorer Tool	9/8/2022	EDA	\$ 40,000.00			\$ 40,000.00			
City of Morganton	Bethel Park Renovation PARTF	8/1/2022	PARTF	\$ 500,000.00			\$ 500,000.00			C & ED
City of Lenoir	EV Level 2 Charging System	7/11/2022	NC DEQ Volkswagon Settlement	\$ 10,000.00			\$ 10,000.00			
City of Taylorsville	EV Level 2 Charging System	7/11/2022	NC DEQ Volkswagon Settlement	\$ 10,000.00			\$ 10,000.00			
WPCOG	EV Level 2 Charging System	7/11/2022	NC DEQ Volkswagon Settlement	\$ 10,000.00			\$ 10,000.00			
City of Lenoir	HOME	7/1/2022	HUD	\$ 1,530,918.00			\$ 1,530,918.00			
City of Lenoir	CDBG	7/1/2022	HUD	\$ 153,768.00			\$ 153,768.00			
Burke County	Industrial Park Access Road Project	6/29/2022	ARC	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 1,900,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00	100		
City of Newton	Project Primo West (PregisPolyMask)	6/16/2022	NCDOC	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 11,200,000.00	\$ 11,473,500.00	10		C&ED
Town of Valdese	Old Rock School	6/15/2022	NCDOC (Rural Transformation)	\$ 850,000.00			\$ 850,000.00			
City of Newton	Downtown Revitalization	6/15/2022	NCDOC (Rural Transformation)	\$ 900,000.00			\$ 900,000.00			
Alexander County	Downtown Multi-Use Teacher Building	6/15/2022	NCDOC (Rural Transformation)	\$ 650,000.00			\$ 650,000.00			
City of Hickory	Land Acquisition	6/15/2022	NCDOC (Rural Transformation)	\$ 900,000.00			\$ 900,000.00			
Catawba County	URP	5/20/2022	NCHFA	\$ 125,000.00			\$ 125,000.00			
Alexander-Burke-Caldwell	URP	5/20/2022	NCHFA	\$ 253,500.00			\$ 253,500.00			
City of Morganton	Project Highlander (Vanguard)	4/21/2022	NCDOC	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 5,925,000.00	\$ 6,135,000.00	80		C & ED
Caldwell County	Tri-County Speedway	4/19/2022	NCDOC	\$ 500,000.00			\$ 500,000.00			C & ED
WPCOG-Alexander Cty	ESFRLP	4/8/2022	NCHFA	\$ 162,000.00			\$ 162,000.00		<u>4</u>	C & ED
WPCOG-Catawba Cty	ESFRLP	4/8/2022	NCHFA	\$ 162,000.00			\$ 162,000.00		4	C & ED
Town of Drexel	Butler Hill Build-Ready Sites	3/1/2022	NCRR	\$ 500,000.00			\$ 500,000.00	0	0	C & ED
Burke County	Project Bravo (Meritor)	2/17/2022	NCDOC	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 4,000,000.00	\$ 4,210,000.00	25		C & ED
Town of Hildebran	New Town Park Development	1/14/2022	PARTF	\$ 289,700.00	\$ 289,700.00		\$ 289,700.00			C & ED
				\$ 17,571,930	\$ 1,500,700	\$ 235,225,000.00	\$ 254,297,630.00	400		

Average Annual Wages - 2022

<u>Name of Grant</u>	<u>(Month/day/year) Funded</u>	<u>Source of Funding (ARC, EDA, etc)</u>	<u>Grant Amount</u>	<u>LG Match</u>	<u>Private Sector Investment</u>	<u>Project Total</u>	<u>Jobs Created</u>	<u>Average Annual Wage</u>	<u>Department</u>
Project Fill/Gerresheimer	12/8/2022	NCDOC	\$ 500,000	\$ 25,000	\$62,000,000	\$62,525,000	78	\$ 49,800.00	C & ED
Project Eos/Prsymian	12/8/2022	NCDOC	\$ 375,000	\$ 18,750	\$136,000,000	\$136,393,750	50	\$ 58,200.00	C & ED
Project Tuscany/City of Newton	12/8/2022	NCDOC	\$ 175,000	\$ 8,750	\$7,000,000	\$7,183,750	27	\$ 48,100.00	C & ED
Project Vette/Molded Fiber Glass	10/20/2022	NCDOC	\$ 200,000	\$ 10,000	\$7,200,000	\$7,210,000	30	\$ 40,900.00	C & ED
Project Primo West/Pregis PolyMask	6/16/2022	NCDOC	\$ 70,000	\$ 3,500	\$11,400,000	\$11,473,500	10	\$ 48,080.00	C & ED
Project Highlander/Vanguard	4/21/2022	NCDOC	\$ 200,000	\$ 10,000	\$5,925,000	\$6,135,000	80	\$ 44,720.00	C & ED
Project Bravo/Meritor	2/17/2022	NCDOC	\$ 200,000	\$ 10,000	\$4,000,000	\$4,210,000	25	\$ 66,000.00	C & ED
									C & ED
									C & ED
			\$ 1,720,000	\$ 86,000	\$ 233,525,000.00	\$ 235,331,000.00	300	\$ 50,828.57	

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: January 24, 2023

SUBJECT: FY2023-24 WPCOG Assessments for Local Governments

PRESENTER: Anthony W. Starr, Executive Director

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Proposed Assessments Table
2. Narrative (Descriptions of Assessments)

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Each year, the WPCOG assesses dues to its local governments per its charter and bylaws. The proposed assessments for FY23 reflect a 1.2% increase in population based on the state population estimate for July 2021. The current population estimate reflects 4,438 additional persons for the region than 2020. The proposed assessments represent a total increase of required assessments of nearly 5.8% (\$30.169.89 increase).

The general assessments rate reflect an increase from 83.4 to 87.6 cents per capita to adjust for a portion of annual inflation. Inflation increased 6.45% from December 2021 to December 2022. The proposed per capita rate represents a 5% increase. Last year, the inflation rate exceeded 7% and the assessments rate increased 3%.

The WPCOG uses the general assessments to provide the required matching funds for the Area Agency on Aging, Economic Development Administration, and Appalachian Regional Commission.

The assessments also include the required match for the MPO per federal and state requirements. The federal funding for the MPO is increasing 5% for FY23-24. Assessments for water resources also increased 5%. See the attached narrative for further details.

The attached table shows all the assessments including the optional dues for Sister Cities.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: Staff requests Policy Board review and approve the FY2023-24 assessments.

Suggested Motion: *I move that the Board approve the assessments as presented.*



Western Piedmont Council of Governments

Creative Regional Solutions Since 1968

APPROVED FISCAL YEAR 2023 - 2024 ASSESSMENTS									
Local Government	2021 State Planning Population *	Assesments X .876 Per Capita	2021 MPO Population **	MPO PL	MPO FTA	2023-2024 Water Resources ***	TOTAL WPCOG ASSESSMENTS	Sister Cities	TOTAL WITH NON-WPCOG OPTIONS
Alexander County	34,002	\$29,785.75	34,002	\$15,009.75	\$694.24	\$5,845.01	\$51,334.75	\$500.00	\$51,834.75
Taylorsville	2,323	\$2,034.95	2,323	\$1,025.46	\$47.43	\$399.33	\$3,507.17	\$500.00	\$4,007.17
Burke County	56,201	\$49,232.08	56,201	\$24,809.22	\$1,147.49	\$9,661.06	\$84,849.85		\$84,849.85
Connelly Springs	1,538	\$1,347.29	1,538	\$678.93	\$31.40	\$264.39	\$2,322.00		\$2,322.00
Drexel	1,756	\$1,538.26	1,756	\$775.16	\$35.85	\$301.86	\$2,651.13		\$2,651.13
Glen Alpine	1,540	\$1,349.04	1,540	\$679.81	\$31.44	\$264.73	\$2,325.02		\$2,325.02
Hildebran	1,686	\$1,476.94	1,686	\$744.26	\$34.42	\$289.83	\$2,545.44		\$2,545.44
Morganton	17,525	\$15,351.90	17,525	\$7,736.19	\$357.82	\$3,012.58	\$26,458.49	\$500.00	\$26,958.49
Rutherford College	1,231	\$1,078.36	1,231	\$543.41	\$25.13	\$211.61	\$1,858.51		\$1,858.51
Valdese	4,867	\$4,263.49	4,867	\$2,148.48	\$99.37	\$836.65	\$7,347.99		\$7,347.99
Caldwell County	41,386	\$36,254.14	41,386	\$18,269.33	\$845.00	\$7,114.33	\$62,482.80		\$62,482.80
Cajah's Mountain	2,721	\$2,383.60	2,721	\$1,201.15	\$55.56	\$467.75	\$4,108.05		\$4,108.05
Cedar Rock	301	\$263.68	301	\$132.87	\$6.15	\$51.74	\$454.44		\$454.44
Gamewell	3,702	\$3,242.95	3,702	\$1,634.20	\$75.59	\$636.38	\$5,589.12		\$5,589.12
Granite Falls	5,000	\$4,380.00	5,000	\$2,207.19	\$102.09	\$859.51	\$7,548.79		\$7,548.79
Hudson	3,801	\$3,329.68	3,801	\$1,677.90	\$77.61	\$653.40	\$5,738.59		\$5,738.59
Lenoir	18,500	\$16,206.00	18,500	\$8,166.59	\$377.73	\$3,180.19	\$27,930.51		\$27,930.51
Rhodhiss	1,001	\$876.88	1,001	\$441.88	\$20.44	\$172.07	\$1,511.27		\$1,511.27
Sawmills	5,019	\$4,396.64	5,019	\$2,215.57	\$102.48	\$862.78	\$7,577.47	\$500.00	\$8,077.47
Catawba County	85,242	\$74,671.99	85,242	\$37,629.01	\$1,740.44	\$14,653.26	\$128,694.71	\$500.00	\$129,194.71
Brookford	446	\$390.70	446	\$196.88	\$9.11	\$76.67	\$673.35		\$673.35
Catawba	707	\$619.33	707	\$312.10	\$14.44	\$121.53	\$1,067.41		\$1,067.41
Claremont	1,705	\$1,493.58	1,705	\$752.65	\$34.81	\$293.09	\$2,574.13		\$2,574.13
Conover	8,428	\$7,382.93	8,428	\$3,720.43	\$172.08	\$1,448.79	\$12,724.23		\$12,724.23
Hickory	44,073	\$38,607.95	44,073	\$19,455.47	\$899.87	\$7,576.23	\$66,539.52	\$500.00	\$67,039.52
Long View	5,100	\$4,467.60	5,100	\$2,251.33	\$104.13	\$876.70	\$7,699.76		\$7,699.76
Maiden	3,717	\$3,256.09	3,717	\$1,640.82	\$75.89	\$638.96	\$5,611.76		\$5,611.76
Newton	13,175	\$11,541.30	13,175	\$5,815.94	\$269.00	\$2,264.81	\$19,891.05		\$19,891.05
TOTALS	366,693	\$321,223.07	366,693	\$161,871.98	\$7,487.01	\$63,035.23	\$553,617.29	\$3,000.00	\$556,617.29

* Dues Per Capita are based on population figures from the NC Office of State Planning for 2021.

** Dues for the MPO are based on population figures from the NC Office of State Planning for 2021.

*** Water Resources Dues are shared between our regional local governments based on population figures from the NC Office of State Planning for 2021.

\$556,617.29



FY 2023-24 WPCOG Local Government Assessments Narrative

As directed by the WPCOG Policy Board, member assessments and special program assessments are calculated using July 2021 population estimates from the NC Office of State Planning. Municipal populations are subtracted from the county's total population, and counties pay the remainder or non-municipal portion based on 87.6 cents per capita. Assessments for municipalities are also calculated at 87.6 cents per capita based on their total population.

MPO assessments are based on the July 2021 population estimates from the NC Office of State Planning which determines the urbanized and non-urbanized areas.

MPO-PL column is the matching requirement for local governments within the Greater Hickory MPO Planning Boundary (PL), based on 2021 city, town, or unincorporated county population estimates. These matching funds are a minimum of 20 percent of the total PL funds in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for the MPO for FY 2023-24. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act has added a new PL set aside for Increasing Safe & Accessible Transportation Options. The Act requires each MPO to use at least 2.5% of its PL funds on specified planning activities to increase safe and accessible options for multiple travel modes for people of all ages and abilities. The MPO planning function is a federally mandated activity to maintain highway funds eligibility. MPO PL assessments in FY2023-24 will increase 5% compared to FY2022-23. This increase is necessary to fulfill the planning initiatives introduced by new federal planning requirements:

- 2023-2024 will be a work-intensive year for collecting data for Prioritization 7.0, assigning local input points, and submitting new transportation projects to NCDOT for the region. Staff will meet with NCDOT and all municipalities to ensure the best projects are selected and effectively entered into NCDOT's prioritization system.
- Our recent Federal Certification Review recommended expanding resiliency considerations and environmental justice analysis. To expand on GHMPO's 2050 MTP, staff will collect data for new mapping tools to support Title VI, environmental justice, resiliency, bike/pedestrian/transit projects, and highway initiatives.
- The region's bicycle and pedestrian needs have not been assessed in ten years. Staff will update the GIS inventory of existing data from local, state, and federal partners related to bicycle and pedestrian transportation facilities. Data will be assessed and used to make project recommendations for the regional bike and pedestrian plan.
- The Movability Advisory Committee will continue to meet quarterly. This group conducts and assists with walk audits and reports that help investigate mobility barriers. This group, along with walk audits, help promote equity and justice in transportation planning.

WPCOG Dues Assessments Narrative FY 2023-24

- The TCC and TAC will continue to meet monthly with virtual attendance options.
- GHMPO's Locally Administered Project Program (LAPP) will hold a call for projects. New funding sources (Carbon Reduction Program) will be incorporated into the call and the scoring process.
- GHMPO staff continue to conduct annual vehicle occupancy rate (VOR) counts throughout the region. All collected data is analyzed and shared with NCDOT partners.
- New public involvement strategies are ongoing with an outreach coordinator. Informational items and activities will be available at attended public events. Public meetings will be held in accessible locations to impacted populations. Virtual options are available for meetings.
- GHMPO will continue to coordinate meetings with MPO staff, municipal staff, and NCDOT to assess transportation needs and promote shared initiatives.
- GHMPO will continue to coordinate STIP and MTIP changes as necessary.

The **MPO-FTA** column represents matching funds for public transit planning for the entire area of the Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir MSA. These funds are 10 percent of the total costs for transit elements within the UPWP, which includes planning for the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority.

The **Water Resources** program focuses on protecting the integrity of our region's water resources to meet the needs of current and future generations. The Western Piedmont Water Resources Committee serves an advisory role for the region's local governments and the Western Piedmont Council of Government's Policy Board. Assessments support staff involvement in activities that include but are not limited to: oversight for water resource programs, grants and projects; septic tank repair program administration; watershed planning; regulatory compliance; technical support related to legislation and water policy; water education and outreach such as providing support to the annual WNC Water Quality Conference; and development and maintenance of partnerships at the local, state and federal level to support these efforts. The water resources assessments reflect a 5% increase to account for inflation in program costs.

Water Resources Program efforts in FY2023-24 will include:

- Reforming the Lower Creek Committee in Caldwell County and meet 3-4 times a year to further the goals of that plan.
- Reforming the Hunting Creek Committee in Burke County and meet 3-4 times a year to further the goals of that plan.
- Forming a Clarke Creek Committee in Catawba County to better our chances of receiving funds for a 9-element plan.
- Forming a Muddy Fork Committee in Alexander County to better our chances of receiving funds for a 9-element plan.
- Continue meetings with the Water Resources Committee
- Continue to hold the Annual Water Quality Conference.
- Being available to answer questions from our local governments about water related issues, grants and regulations.

WPCOG Dues Assessments Narrative FY 2023-24

- Additional grant writing/administration for other water quality and natural resources projects.

Note: Participation in the following program is on a voluntary basis.

Sister Cities. All cities and counties are eligible to participate in this program. Annual dues of \$500 are used to host visitors and other activities related to exchanges with a sister region in Altenburg, Germany. Each member government appoints two representatives to the Western Piedmont Sister Cities Association. The WPSCA sponsors events with German food and entertainment to celebrate the region's German heritage. The most recent project involved an exchange of government officials and educators who came to the region to promote student and faculty exchanges between several schools in this area and schools in Altenburg. There is discussion about a visit to Altenburg related to green technology and an upcoming musical exchange. Other exchanges have involved the Hickory Museum of Art, Catawba Science Center, educators, physicians, government staff, business leaders, musicians, youth soccer teams, etc. Please let us know if your local government would like to join us as a new member.

The attached table of funding requests represents all the amounts that will be requested by WPCOG, unless local governments agree to add other programs. A separate communication will be transmitted regarding amounts for any contracts your local government has with the WPCOG for technical assistance or grant administration.

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: January 24, 2023

SUBJECT: Local and Regional Disaster Recovery, Mitigation, and Resiliency
Technical Assistance

PRESENTER: Alison Adams, Community and Regional Planning Director

ATTACHMENTS: None

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

The General Assembly appropriated \$6 million to the North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Government (NCARCOG) from the state's Disaster Relief and Mitigation Fund. The appropriation provides funding to aid local and regional governments with emergency management, disaster recovery, and mitigation efforts. Each council of governments is a sub-grant recipient receiving a total allocation of \$331,250. The funding was awarded on July 1, 2022, and is required to be spent by June 30, 2024. The scope of the funding supports two areas – Disaster Recovery Financial Administration Training Deployment and Regional Recovery Capacity Grants. To date, we have worked and will continue to work with the Office of State Budget Management, NCARCOG, NC Division of Public Safety - Division of Emergency Management (Greg Atchley - Western Region Manager, and the multi-hazard planners representing our four counties), and the County Emergency Management Coordinators (Daniel Fox, Vic Misenheimer, Mike Willis, and Karyn Yaussy) and their support staff, as well as the County Soil and Water personnel.

Disaster Recovery Financial Administration Training Deployment – \$37,500

The NCARCOG is referring to this effort as a train-the-trainer model. NCARCOG will hire a contractor to provide training to each COG-designated representative. The COG representative will facilitate emergency management recovery mitigation grant training to local government personnel. Curt Willis is the Western Piedmont Council of Governments' designated representative. Curt has a variety of experiences that will lend themselves to aid this initiative.

Regional Recovery, Mitigation, and Resiliency Capacity Grants - \$293,750

The second initiative is being divided into three areas.

Reimbursement Support and Grant Writing

- Establish an emergency management planning position to facilitate the acquisition of finance/funding for regional and/or local government projects through training and technical assistance pre-disaster.
- Aid in the coordination of funding efforts for local governments during and post-disaster through administrative support.

- Continue mitigation support for local governments through federal, state, and private grant acquisitions.

Stream Mitigation Clean-up Prioritization

- Assist in recovery planning, specifically related to flooding, that utilizes drone technology to create baseline information, identifying high-risk areas that need priority mitigation to prevent further damage. The baseline is a detailed aerial analysis of problem areas that will prioritize mitigation efforts based on variables related to impact on infrastructure, underserved areas, and feasibility of mitigation due to locational factors. The creation of this baseline creates justification for mitigation clean-up grant opportunities.

Resiliency Mapping Tool – CHADME (Community Health and Disaster Mitigation Explorer)

- Establish a Quality of Life tool for mitigation, preparedness, and resiliency planning. The quality of life tool is a metrics-based software solution addressing mitigation practices through a hierarchy of variables – socioeconomic, high-risk health patients, limited or no means of transportation, proximity to natural features, little or no housing options, etc. The creation of the tool will allow emergency management response teams and managers to remain prepared and create resiliency due to readily available information. Obtaining grant funding is possible with the quality of life tool by providing proof of specific locational needs to address local or regional resiliency. Upon completion, local governments will have a detailed analysis and a working metrics-based database to make prompt critical decisions.

The next steps are as follows:

- Begin training with NCARCOG training contractor once selected.
- Continue constructing the mapping tool based on emergency management feedback
- Obtain an inventory from emergency management coordinators to administer drone flights to document debris, prioritize clean up and obtain grant funding.
- Continue to work with all emergency management personnel to create a local layer that is county specific based on needs and known issues that are not identified on FEMA maps.
- Aid emergency personnel in the construction of preparedness plans using the mapping tool and drone footage.

We will continue to collaborate and engage partners throughout the region to obtain information, and feedback, and to help develop a valuable tool that assists our four counties' emergency management efforts and serve as a best practice for preparedness.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

Staff requests the Policy Board to provide feedback and guidance. No formal action by the Board is needed at this time.

Suggested Motion: *None*

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: January 24, 2023

SUBJECT: 4th Amendment of the FY2022-23 Budget

PRESENTER: Andrea Roper, Finance Director

ATTACHMENTS: Budget Summary Sheets

SUMMARY OF REQUEST: The attached 4th Amendment of the FY2022-23 budget reflects a total budget of \$24,813,456 and an operating budget of \$8,750,373 which represents a decrease of the total budget from the November 22, 2022, budget adoption of \$24,515.

The 4th Amendment of the 2022-2023 Budget includes:

- A decrease in Transportation due to increased project work in the Planning department.
- Community and Regional Planning increased due to new GIS and planning project contracts.
- Fund Balance Appropriated increased \$18,000 due to the new EQV Strategic contract.
- Chargeable salaries decreased and compensated absences increased due to personnel changes and to better reflect planned staff absences.
- Contractual increased \$19,284 mainly due to the new contract with EQV Strategic to solidify legislative goals.
- Capital Outlay - Equipment increased to cover the anticipated purchase of LIDAR technology for disaster recovery project work.
- An increase in contingency due to the addition of several new contracts.
- A decrease in Compensated Absence Liability due to the decrease in fringe funds generated by chargeable salaries and the increase in fringe expenses.
- Transfer to Capital Reserve Fund decreased due to the decrease in indirect funds generated by chargeable salaries.
- Capital Reserve Fund decreased due to the decrease in transfers from the general fund.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: Staff requests the Policy Board to review and approve the Fourth Amendment of the 2022-2023 Budget.

Suggested Motion: *I move that the Policy Board approve the Fourth Amendment of the 2022-2023 Budget as proposed.*

**WESTERN PIEDMONT
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**
2022-2023 BUDGET
4th Amendment of the Budget
January 24, 2023

WPCOG REVENUE BUDGET FY 2022-2023 1/24/2023	01/24/23 PROPOSED BUDGET	11/22/22 CURRENT BUDGET *	VARIANCE
WPCOG ASSESSMENTS	302,121	302,121	0
INTEREST	400	400	0
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	335	335	0
ANNUAL MEETING CONTRIBUTION	9,000	9,000	0
GENERAL GOVERNMENT			
FIN. ADMIN, COMM.SRV	84,773	84,773	0
TRANSPORTATION			
MPO (FHWA & FTA) & PASS. SAMPLING	919,138	987,138	(68,000)
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION			
WATER RESOURCES, EPA 205(J) PROJECTS, AND ARC WATERSHED	557,540	557,540	0
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT			
CDBG, HOUSING COUNSELING, & MPP	1,590,342	1,590,342	0
COMMUNITY & REGIONAL PLANNING			
PLANNING, DATA SERVICES, GIS	974,953	935,371	39,582
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
ECON DEV GRANTS & BUILDING REUSE	760,498	760,498	0
REGIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING			
SECTION 8 HOUSING VOUCHERS	1,357,035	1,357,035	0
AREA AGENCY ON AGING SERVICES			
AGING ADMINISTRATION & SERVICES	1,286,802	1,286,802	0
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT			
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT	843,881	843,881	0
FUND BALANCE APPROPRIATED			
FUND BALANCE APPROPRIATED	63,555	45,555	18,000
	0	0	0
SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS (PASS THROUGH)			
AGING	3,937,531	3,937,531	0
SECTION 8 HOUSING	7,573,437	7,573,437	0
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	2,751,351	2,751,351	0
BURKE RIVER TRAIL PROJECT	441,889	441,889	0
TOTAL	23,454,581	23,464,999	(10,418)

CAPITAL RESERVE FUND			
TRANSFER FROM GENERAL FUND	210,228	224,325	(14,097)
ALLOCATED FUND BALANCE	148,647	148,647	0
TOTAL	358,875	372,972	(14,097)

CAPITAL PROJECT FUND - BUILDING EXPANSION			
STATE CAPITAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE FUND ALLOCATION	1,000,000	1,000,000	0
TOTAL	1,000,000	1,000,000	0

WPCOG EXPENSE BUDGET FY 2022-2023 1/24/2023	01/24/23 PROPOSED BUDGET	11/22/22 CURRENT BUDGET *	VARIANCE
GENERAL GOVERNMENT			
FIN. ADMIN, COMM.SRV	158,485	140,485	18,000
TRANSPORTATION			
MPO (FHWA & FTA) & PASS. SAMPLING	919,138	987,138	(68,000)
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION			
WATER RESOURCES, EPA 205(J) PROJECTS, AND ARC WATERSHED	557,540	557,540	0
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT			
CDBG, BLDG REUSE, COUNSELING, MPP	1,590,342	1,590,342	0
COMMUNITY & REGIONAL PLANNING			
PLANNING, DATA SERVICES, GIS	1,006,588	967,006	39,582
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
ECON DEV GRANTS	952,380	952,380	0
REGIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING			
SECTION 8 HOUSING VOUCHERS	1,357,035	1,357,035	0
AGING AGENCY SERVICES			
AGING	1,364,984	1,364,984	0
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT			
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT	843,881	843,881	0
	0	0	0
SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS (PASS THROUGH)			
AGING	3,937,531	3,937,531	0
SECTION 8 HOUSING	7,573,437	7,573,437	0
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	2,751,351	2,751,351	0
BURKE RIVER TRAIL PROJECT	441,889	441,889	0
TOTAL	23,454,581	23,464,999	(10,418)

CAPITAL RESERVE FUND			
TRANSFER TO CAPITAL PROJECTS	358,875	372,972	(14,097)
			0
TOTAL	358,875	372,972	(14,097)

CAPITAL PROJECT FUND - BUILDING EXPANSION			
CAPITAL OUTLAY	502,560	502,560	0
CONTRACTUAL	497,440	497,440	0
TOTAL	1,000,000	1,000,000	0

* The amounts used for the Current Budget are from the adoption of the 2022-2023 Budget presented on November 22, 2022.
The Proposed Operating Budget is: **\$8,750,373**

WPCOG EXPENSE BUDGET FY 2022-2023 1/24/2023	01/24/23	11/22/22	VARIANCE
	PROPOSED BUDGET	CURRENT BUDGET *	
CHARGEABLE SALARIES	3,890,209	3,944,704	(54,495)
COMPENSATED ABSENCES	267,371	247,842	19,529
INCENTIVE	7,048	4,500	2,548
LONGEVITY	130,222	130,222	0
RETIREMENT	865,889	872,470	(6,581)
GROUP INSURANCE	618,292	618,800	(508)
WORKERS' COMPENSATION	17,000	17,000	0
UNEMPLOYMENT COSTS	36,720	36,720	0
CONTRACTUAL	1,171,562	1,152,278	19,284
TRAVEL-SUBSISTENCE/REGIST.	97,672	95,004	2,668
TRAVEL-TRANSPORTATION	112,555	111,055	1,500
FUEL	15,670	15,670	0
TELEPHONE	41,381	41,381	0
POSTAGE	25,219	27,219	(2,000)
PRINTING	23,092	23,092	0
UTILITIES	38,761	38,761	0
RENT - EQUIPMENT	10,308	10,308	0
RENT/LEASE - BUILDING	123,075	123,075	0
MORTGAGE/OCCUPANCY COST	133,000	133,000	0
SUPPLIES	187,687	182,849	4,838
AUDIT	31,703	31,703	0
DUES	30,912	30,912	0
ADVERTISING/SUBSCRIPTIONS	70,786	70,786	0
MAINTENANCE-EQUIPMENT	33,394	33,355	39
MAINTENANCE-VEHICLES	2,421	2,361	60
MAINTENANCE-BLDG/GROUNDS	68,433	68,433	0
CONTENTS/LIABILITY INSURANCE	26,011	25,461	550
ANNUAL MEETING	18,000	18,550	(550)
LEGAL FEES	9,048	9,976	(928)
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSE	5,810	5,810	0
CAPITAL OUTLAY-EQUIPMENT	61,929	48,001	13,928
CONTINGENCY	338,384	321,135	17,249
COMPENSATED ABSENCE LIAB	17,392	30,844	(13,452)
OWNER IMPROVEMENTS	0	0	0
INTERNET SERVICE	10,140	10,140	0
WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT	49	49	0
SECTION 8 PORTABLE ADMIN	3,000	3,000	0
OPEB TRUST ALLOCATION	0	0	0
ALLOCATED FUND BALANCE	0	0	0
TRANSFER TO CAPITAL RESERVE FUND	210,228	224,325	(14,097)
SR - AGING FEES & SERVICES	3,937,531	3,937,531	0
SR - SECTION 8 FEES & SERVICES	7,573,437	7,573,437	0
SR - WIA FEES & SERVICES	2,751,351	2,751,351	0
BURKE RIVER TRAIL PROJECT	441,889	441,889	0
TOTAL	23,454,581	23,464,999	(10,418)



Executive Director's Report

January 24, 2023

This report is intended to provide details about current operations of the WPCOG and issues that may be of interest to board members. The updates are grouped according to each department.

Administration

- The WPCOG completed the search process for the **Long View** town manager position and the **Brookford** police chief. Staff are also assisting **Hildebran** for the search for a new town attorney and **Hickory** for a new city attorney. Work also continues for **Greenway Public Transportation** with the selection of a new executive director. Finally, work is beginning with search for a new county manager for **Alexander County**.
- The assistant executive director continues to provide technical assistance to all local governments regarding administration of funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Please contact her with any requests for assistance or information.
- The WPCOG has hired David Pugh as the new Director of Administrative Services and HR. He begins work on January 17, 2023. He brings 13 years' experience as a town manager to the position.
- The WPCOG is currently accepting applications for a housing rehabilitation inspector.
- Staff continue to work on the potential improvements for the Caldwell Railroad.
- Staff anticipate releasing the RFQ for architectural services for the expansion of the WPCOG office. We are using the services of a lobbyist to assist in securing additional funding for the project beyond the \$1 million appropriated last year by the General Assembly.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

- The AAA is actively working with 40 caregivers as part of D-CARE study with Atrium Baptist Wake Forest Health.
- AAA has contracts with providers to assist older adults for yard work and house cleaning utilizing ARPA funds. Some clients have already received assistance.
- AAA and Catawba Public Health have signed contract to hire a Community Health Worker targeting older adults in Long View area – funding with ARPA funds. The position has been filled.
- The AAA has a vacancy for representative in Alexander County to serve at Alternate for NC Senior Tar Heel Legislature.

Community & Economic Development (CED)

- CED staff assisted in writing and developing two winning NC Commerce Rural Transformation Grants for the Fall round of funding. **Lenoir** was awarded \$580,000 for The Campus Lenoir High School Upgrade and Improvement Project and **Conover** for \$640,000 for their Downtown Tread Trail Project.
- A total of eight ARC Spring applications have been approved by Governor Cooper and are awaiting award notification from Washington DC.
- Additionally, the CED Department assisted **Morganton** with a Building Reuse application for Project Fill. This project was awarded \$500,000 and will create 78 jobs and has a private sector investment of \$62,000,000.

- In the given year, the CED Department obtained \$17,571,930 in grant funding, which helped secure \$235,224,000 in private sector investment and created 400 jobs in the region.
- Community and Economic Development staff are currently administering 82 grants for local governments
- Urgent Repair Program Update for December – staff currently has three under construction in **Burke County** and nine under construction in **Caldwell County**.
- Urgent Repair & DEQ-ARPA Funding for **Alexander/Catawba Counties** – 5 (five) under contract and 5 (five) out to bid. 1 (one) DEQ Rehabilitation completed in **Burke** and 2 (two) were in **Caldwell County**
- Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation (ESFR Caldwell): 8 (eight) homes under construction, 1 (one) out to bid
- ESFR **Burke County**: One out for bid, 6 (six) ready for rehab, 4 (four) houses under construction
- CDBG **Rhodhiss**: 8 (eight) homes ready for rehab inspections, 1 (one) home under construction and one out for bid
- ESFR **Alexander, Catawba**, and Iredell Counties – 3 (three) homes under contract
- CDBG Scattered Site Houses (SSH) - **Conover** now has 5 (five) houses under contract and 1 (one) out to bid, **Catawba County** (SSH) - 1 out to bid and **Newton** (SSH) - 1 out to bid
- NCHAF ARPA Mortgage Relief Funding for December: 6 (six) homeowners received \$123,855 to bring their mortgages current and prevent foreclosure.
- Foreclosure Prevention: 21 (twenty-one) total households assisted - 1 (**Alexander**) - 1 (Lincoln) - 3 (**Burke**) – 2 (Iredell) – 7 (**Caldwell**) – 7 (**Catawba**)
- First-Time Homebuyer loans administered for December: 4 (four) – 1 (Caldwell) – 3 (Catawba)

Community & Regional Planning

- The **Long View** Council approved the Land Use Plan prepared by the WPCOG.
- Staff began reviewing the **Hildebran** zoning ordinance for needed text amendments.
- Work begun on the **Rhodhiss** zoning and subdivision ordinances.
- Digital Inclusion Planning for the four-county region has begun with multiple meetings.
- The Regional Housing Tool Kit draft is complete and being reviewed internally.
- WPCOG is assisting **Claremont** with interim daily planning services for 3 days per week.
- Transportation staff presented the following chapters at the TCC/TAC meetings as part of the effort to update the region's metropolitan transportation plan: Safety and Security, System Resiliency, Highway, and Congestion Management.

Finance

- The WPCOG audit is not yet complete. We are waiting on the OPEB information from the consultant. It is expected we will be able to submit the audit to the LGC by the end of January.
- The FY22 audit for WPCOG is underway. To date, the OPEB (other post-employment benefits) report has not been received from the actuary, Cavanaugh Macdonald Consulting. We expect the report to be done in time to meet the LGC audit date requirement.

Regional Housing Authority (RHA)

- The RHA continues to see an increase in tenants returning to work and housing assistance payments for the RHA are continuing to decrease. Per unit costs for the RHA continue to decrease as well.
- The RHA has a total of 246 available Mainstream Vouchers and 187 of those are leased. Applications continue to be accepted for the Mainstream Voucher Program and we have approximately 59 openings to fill.

- In 2023, the RHA will be receiving the additional five veteran vouchers, which will bring our total veteran voucher number to 20. The RHA has now leased 10 veterans with housing assistance. Five other veterans have a pending voucher at this time and continues to search for housing.
- The RHA has received 30 guaranteed Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) to house individuals and families who are 1) homeless, 2) at risk of homelessness, 3) fleeing, or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking or 4) recently homeless. The RHA was given the opportunity to ask for more and we requested a total of 200 EHV vouchers. To date, no more have been awarded. The RHA is working closely with the Continuum of Care and the shelter homes in our four county area to maximize the use of these vouchers. The effective date for these vouchers was July 2021. The RHA has all 30 of the EHV's leased. Currently, the RHA is ranked 2nd in the state of NC and 35th nationally for its successful leasing rates. Thirty-three other applications or vouchers pending that are going through the eligibility process. Applications continue to be received.
- The RHA is currently leased at 1,048 out of 1,074 (97.6%) for the regular housing choice vouchers. Ongoing leasing efforts continue for all vouchers.
- The RHA has approximately 2,400 families on its regular housing choice voucher waiting list. Applications continue to be accepted online for the Mainstream Program. Our Emergency Housing Program Vouchers and our VASH Program Vouchers will continue to accept referrals from specific agencies.
- In December 2022, the RHA was notified that we will be awarded \$123,000 in Extraordinary Administrative Funding to provide additional support to Mainstream Voucher families in securing and maintaining stable housing. The RHA received the 9th highest award out of 150 total national awards.

Workforce Development

- Staff are working with **Hickory** to update flyers and recruitment efforts to attract more clients to the Ridgeview Works Center.
- Workforce staff continue to work with MyFutureNC to achieve greater educational attainment levels for our region. Staff met with MyFutureNC about ongoing and future efforts.