



Western Piedmont Council of Governments

Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

Wednesday, June 24, 2026, 2:30 PM

WPCOG Offices—1880 2nd Ave NW

wpcog.org/metropolitan-planning-org

Agenda Item	Presenter	Attachment	Action
Call to Order /Ethics Awareness/ Introductions	Hank Guess		
Consent Agenda Items:			
A. Minutes of May 27, 2026 Meeting	Hank Guess	Attachment I	Approve Consent Agenda Items
B. Transportation Improvement Program Revisions for Release			
Transportation Improvement Program Revisions for Approval	Averi Ritchie	Attachment II	Adopt via Resolution
Locally Administered Project Program: Spring 2026 Project Applications	Daniel Odom	Attachment III	Adopt via Resolution
Results of the GHMPO Federal Recertification Review	Averi Ritchie	Attachment IV	Discussion
2055 Metropolitan Transportation Plan - Goals, Policies, and Vision Draft	Averi Ritchie	Attachment V	Presentation
Express Design Project Submittals & Statewide Tier Results	Averi Ritchie & Casey Fullbright	Attachment VI	Presentation
NCDOT Board Updates	Brad Lail, Meagan Phillips		
Division 11	Michael Poe		
Division 12	Mark Stafford		
Division 13	Tim Anderson		
Transportation Planning Division	Reuben Crummy		
Integrated Mobility Division	Nikki Elsheimer		
Reminders	Averi Ritchie		
Public Comment / Announcements	Hank Guess		
Adjournment	Hank Guess		
Next Meeting: July 22, 2026			



**GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING
ORGANIZATION (MPO)**
1880 2nd Avenue NW, PO Box 9026
Hickory, NC 28603



MINUTES

**GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (GHMPO)
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)**

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

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

Molly	McKay	City of Morganton	VACANT		Connelly Springs
			VACANT		Sawmills
			VACANT		Rutherford College
			VACANT		Drexel
<u>WPCOG, FHWA & GUEST</u>			<u>NC DOT STAFF</u>		
Averi Ritchie – WPCOG			Travis Chrisawn – Div 11		
Casey Fullbright – WPCOG			Sean Sizemore – Div 11		
Daniel Odom – WPCOG			Mark Stafford – Div 12		
Katelyn Smith – WPCOG			Travis Jordan – Div 12		
Anthony Starr – WPCOG			Stephen Sparks – Div 13		
Steve Cannon – Guest			Reuben Crummy – NC DOT TPD		
Renee Carswell – City Clerk Morganton			Jason Myers – NCDOT Rail Division		
			Meagan Phillips – NCDOT BOT		

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

Approval of Remote Participation: Online attendees were Renee Carswell, Stephen Sparks, Steven Cannon, Meagan Phillips, Jack Simms, Jason Myers and Rueben Crummy. Upon a motion made by Chairman Guess and seconded by Mrs. Patton, online participation was approved.

Action Items:

I. Approval of Consent Agenda: Chairman Guess called for a motion to approve the consent agenda, which included the Minutes of the April 22, 2026 meeting and the Transportation Improvement Program Revisions for Release. Upon a motion made by Mrs. Patton and a second by Mrs. Zimmerman, the Committee approved the consent agenda.

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

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

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

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

NCDOT Update –

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

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

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

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

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

NCDOT-IMD: None.

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

Public Comment/Announcements: None

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Hank Guess, TAC Chairman

Averi Ritchie, TAC Secretary

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TCC/TAC**

MEETING DATE: June 24, 2026

SUBJECT: Transportation Improvement Program Revisions for Release

PRESENTER: Averi Ritchie, Transportation Planning Director

ATTACHMENTS: Transportation Improvement Program Revisions for Release

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) revisions include modifications and amendments to regional and statewide transportation projects. STIP revisions are released for public comment and approved following a 30 day public comment period by TAC. All approved revisions are submitted for Board of Transportation approval. Modifications and revisions often include funding and fiscal year changes. Revisions are released monthly by NCDOT.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: Release for public comment.

Suggested Motion: *Approval to release for public comment*

REVISIONS TO THE 2026-2035 STIP
HIGHWAY PROGRAM

STATEWIDE PROJECT

STIP DELETIONS

TC-0003	- STATEWIDE PROJECT	NCDOT; VARIOUS LOCATIONS, FUNDING FOR 5311(B) CAPITAL	FY 2023 -	\$137,000	(S)
STATEWIDE		CAPITAL FUNDING FOR RURAL PROJECTS.	FY 2023 -	\$137,000	(L)
PROJ.CATEGORY		<u>REMOVE PROJECT AT THE REQUEST OF THE</u>	FY 2023 -	<u>\$1,097,000</u>	(5311)
PUBLIC TRANS		<u>INTEGRATED MOBILITY DIVISION.</u>		\$1,371,000	
TC-0005	- STATEWIDE PROJECT	STATEWIDE; VARIOUS LOCATIONS, FUNDING FOR CONSTRUCTION	FY 2022 -	\$750,000	(L)
STATEWIDE		5339(B) DISCRETIONARY GRANT FOR FACILITY CONSTRUCTION.	FY 2022 -	<u>\$3,000,000</u>	(5339)
PROJ.CATEGORY		<u>REMOVE PROJECT AT THE REQUEST OF THE</u>		\$3,750,000	
PUBLIC TRANS		<u>INTEGRATED MOBILITY DIVISION.</u>			
TC-0006	- STATEWIDE PROJECT	STATEWIDE; VARIOUS LOCATIONS, FUNDING FOR CONSTRUCTION	FY 2021 -	\$84,000	(L)
STATEWIDE		5339(B) DISCRETIONARY GRANT FOR FACILITY CONSTRUCTION.	FY 2021 -	\$335,000	(5339)
PROJ.CATEGORY		<u>REMOVE PROJECT AT THE REQUEST OF THE</u>	FY 2022 -	\$300,000	(L)
PUBLIC TRANS		<u>INTEGRATED MOBILITY DIVISION.</u>	FY 2022 -	\$1,100,000	(5339)
				\$1,819,000	
TC-0007	- STATEWIDE PROJECT	STATEWIDE; VARIOUS LOCATIONS, FUNDING FOR CAPITAL	FY 2021 -	\$297,000	(L)
STATEWIDE		5339(B) DISCRETIONARY GRANT FOR FACILITY CONSTRUCTION.	FY 2021 -	\$1,189,000	(5339)
PROJ.CATEGORY		<u>REMOVE PROJECT AT THE REQUEST OF THE</u>	FY 2023 -	\$490,000	(L)
PUBLIC TRANS		<u>INTEGRATED MOBILITY DIVISION.</u>	FY 2023 -	\$2,000,000	(5339)
				\$3,976,000	

* INDICATES FEDERAL AMENDMENT

REVISIONS TO THE 2026-2035 STIP
HIGHWAY PROGRAM

STATEWIDE PROJECT

STIP DELETIONS

TC-0008	- STATEWIDE PROJECT	STATEWIDE; VARIOUS LOCATIONS, FUNDING FOR 5339(B) DISCRETIONARY GRANT FOR FACILITY CONSTRUCTION.	CONSTRUCTION	FY 2025 -	\$100,000	(L)
STATEWIDE				FY 2025 -	\$400,000	(5339)
PROJ.CATEGORY			CAPITAL	FY 2023 -	\$1,500,000	(L)
PUBLIC TRANS		<u>REMOVE PROJECT AT THE REQUEST OF THE INTEGRATED MOBILITY DIVISION.</u>		FY 2023 -	\$5,600,000	(5339)
				FY 2024 -	\$875,000	(L)
				FY 2024 -	\$350,000	(5339)
					\$8,825,000	
TC-0010	- STATEWIDE PROJECT	STATEWIDE; VARIOUS LOCATIONS, FUNDING FOR 5339(B) DISCRETIONARY GRANT FOR FACILITY CONSTRUCTION.	CONSTRUCTION	FY 2023 -	\$1,000,000	(L)
STATEWIDE				FY 2023 -	\$4,000,000	(5339)
PROJ.CATEGORY				FY 2024 -	\$900,000	(L)
PUBLIC TRANS		<u>REMOVE PROJECT AT THE REQUEST OF THE INTEGRATED MOBILITY DIVISION.</u>		FY 2024 -	\$3,600,000	(5339)
				FY 2025 -	\$1,400,000	(L)
				FY 2025 -	\$4,200,000	(5339)
					\$15,100,000	
TC-0011	- STATEWIDE PROJECT	NCDOT; VARIOUS LOCATIONS, FUNDING FOR 5339(B) DISCRETIONARY GRANT FOR FACILITY CONSTRUCTION.	CONSTRUCTION	FY 2023 -	\$719,000	(5339)
STATEWIDE			CAPITAL	FY 2021 -	\$598,000	(L)
PROJ.CATEGORY				FY 2021 -	\$2,391,000	(5339)
PUBLIC TRANS		<u>REMOVE PROJECT AT THE REQUEST OF THE INTEGRATED MOBILITY DIVISION.</u>		FY 2022 -	\$1,700,000	(L)
				FY 2022 -	\$4,000,000	(5339)
					\$9,408,000	
TC-0012	- STATEWIDE PROJECT	STATEWIDE; VARIOUS LOCATIONS, FUNDING FOR 5339(B) DISCRETIONARY GRANT TO PURCHASE ELECTRIC BUSES AND CHARGING STATIONS.	CAPITAL	FY 2024 -	\$625,000	(L)
STATEWIDE				FY 2024 -	\$2,500,000	(5339)
PROJ.CATEGORY					\$3,125,000	
PUBLIC TRANS		<u>REMOVE PROJECT AT THE REQUEST OF THE INTEGRATED MOBILITY DIVISION.</u>				

* INDICATES FEDERAL AMENDMENT

Thursday, June 4, 2026

REVISIONS TO THE 2026-2035 STIP
HIGHWAY PROGRAM

STATEWIDE PROJECT

STIP DELETIONS

TC-0013 STATEWIDE PROJ.CATEGORY PUBLIC TRANS	- STATEWIDE PROJECT	STATEWIDE; VARIOUS LOCATIONS, FUNDING FOR 5310 CAPITAL DISCRETIONARY GRANT AWARDED BY FTA. <u>REMOVE PROJECT AT THE REQUEST OF THE INTEGRATED MOBILITY DIVISION.</u>	FY 2021 - \$70,000 (S) FY 2021 - \$280,000 (5310) \$350,000
TM-0033 STATEWIDE PROJ.CATEGORY PUBLIC TRANS	- STATEWIDE PROJECT	NCDOT; VARIOUS LOCATIONS, 5311(F) INTERCITY ADMINISTRATIVE BUS - STATE ADMIN. <u>REMOVE PROJECT AT THE REQUEST OF THE INTEGRATED MOBILITY DIVISION.</u>	FY 2022 - \$494,000 (5311) \$494,000
TU-0003 STATEWIDE PROJ.CATEGORY PUBLIC TRANS	- STATEWIDE PROJECT	NCDOT; VARIOUS LOCATIONS, H.O.P.E GRANT PLANNING OPPORTUNITY FROM THE FTA. DISCRETIONARY GRANT AWARDED BY FTA. PLANNING AND DESIGN IN PREPARATION FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLE DEPLOYMENT. <u>REMOVE PROJECT AT THE REQUEST OF THE INTEGRATED MOBILITY DIVISION.</u>	FY 2021 - \$12,000 (S) FY 2021 - \$110,000 (5312) FY 2023 - \$20,000 (S) FY 2023 - \$80,000 (5303) \$222,000

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REVISIONS TO THE 2026-2035 STIP
HIGHWAY PROGRAM

GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

STIP ADDITIONS

<p>* HS-2613C BURKE PROJ.CATEGORY DIVISION</p>	<p>- GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION</p>	<p>SR 1501 (HUFFMAN BRIDGE ROAD/ANTIOCH ROAD); SR 1512 (AMHERST ROAD) TO SR 1584 (MORGANTON LENOIR AIRPORT AVENUE). INSTALL RUMBLE STRIPS/STRIPES.</p> <p><u>ADD PROJECT BREAK AT THE REQUEST OF THE TRANSPORTATION MOBILITY AND SAFETY DIVISION</u></p>	<p>CONSTRUCTION</p>	<p>FY 2027 - \$126,000 (HSIP) FY 2027 - \$14,000 (T(M)) \$140,000</p>
<p>* HS-2613F BURKE PROJ.CATEGORY DIVISION</p>	<p>- GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION</p>	<p>SR 1653 (AIRPORT RHODHISS ROAD); SR 1611 (RHODHISS ROAD) TO SR 1625 (9TH AVE DRIVE NW); SR 1653 (HICKORY AIRPORT ROAD) FROM SR 1625 TO CATAWBA COUNTY. INSTALL RUMBLE STRIPS/STRIPES.</p> <p><u>ADD PROJECT BREAK AT THE REQUEST OF THE TRANSPORTATION MOBILITY AND SAFETY DIVISION</u></p>	<p>CONSTRUCTION</p>	<p>FY 2027 - \$108,000 (HSIP) FY 2027 - \$12,000 (T(M)) \$120,000</p>
<p>* HS-2613G BURKE PROJ.CATEGORY REGIONAL</p>	<p>- GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION</p>	<p>NC 18 (S. STERLING STREET); SR 1704 (BETHEL STREET)/BROUGHTON HOSPITAL ENTRANCE, AND AT BROUGHTON ROAD/POTEAT STREET INTERSECTIONS IN MORGANTON. INSTALL PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS, CURB RAMPS, AND CROSSWALKS.</p> <p><u>ADD PROJECT BREAK AT THE REQUEST OF THE TRANSPORTATION MOBILITY AND SAFETY DIVISION</u></p>	<p>CONSTRUCTION</p>	<p>FY 2027 - \$418,000 (HSIP) FY 2027 - \$47,000 (T(M)) \$465,000</p>

STIP MODIFICATIONS

<p>BR-0151 BURKE PROJ.CATEGORY DIVISION</p>	<p>- GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION</p>	<p>SR 1002 (HENRY RIVER ROAD); SR1002 (HENRY RIVER ROAD) OVER I-40. REPLACE BRIDGE.</p> <p><u>TO ALLOW ADDITIONAL TIME FOR PLANNING AND DESIGN, DELAY CONSTRUCTION FROM FY 27 TO FY 28.</u></p>	<p>RIGHT-OF-WAY CONSTRUCTION</p>	<p>FY 2027 - \$500,000 (HFB) FY 2028 - \$416,000 (BGDA) FY 2028 - \$104,000 (L(M)) FY 2028 - \$312,000 (L) FY 2028 - \$11,568,000 (HFB) \$12,900,000</p>
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* INDICATES FEDERAL AMENDMENT

REVISIONS TO THE 2026-2035 STIP
HIGHWAY PROGRAM

GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

STIP MODIFICATIONS

HB-0057 CALDWELL PROJ.CATEGORY DIVISION	- GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION	SR 1356 (OLD JOHNS RIVER ROAD); BRIDGE 130185 OVER JOHNS RIVER. REPLACE BRIDGE. <u>TO ALLOW ADDITIONAL TIME FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION, DELAY CONSTRUCTION FROM FY 26 TO FY 27. DP REPRESENTS RAISE GRANT FUNDS.</u>	CONSTRUCTION	FY 2027 -	\$162,000	(DP)
				FY 2027 -	\$10,000	(BGOFF)
				FY 2027 -	\$6,000	(HFB)
				FY 2028 -	\$822,000	(BGOFF)
				FY 2028 -	\$537,000	(HFB)
				FY 2029 -	\$159,000	(BGOFF)
				FY 2029 -	\$104,000	(HFB)
		\$1,800,000				
HB-0058 CALDWELL PROJ.CATEGORY DIVISION	- GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION	SR 1356 (OLD JOHNS RIVER ROAD); BRIDGE 130186 OVER JOHNS RIVER. REPLACE BRIDGE. <u>TO ALLOW ADDITIONAL TIME FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION, DELAY CONSTRUCTION FROM FY 26 TO FY 27. DP REPRESENTS RAISE GRANT FUNDS.</u>	CONSTRUCTION	FY 2027 -	\$162,000	(DP)
				FY 2027 -	\$8,000	(BGOFF)
				FY 2027 -	\$6,000	(HFB)
				FY 2028 -	\$720,000	(BGOFF)
				FY 2028 -	\$589,000	(HFB)
				FY 2029 -	\$63,000	(BGOFF)
				FY 2029 -	\$52,000	(HFB)
		\$1,600,000				
HB-0059 CALDWELL PROJ.CATEGORY DIVISION	- GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION	SR 1356 (OLD JOHNS RIVER ROAD); BRIDGE 130275 OVER JOHNS RIVER. REPLACE BRIDGE. <u>TO ALLOW ADDITIONAL TIME FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION, DELAY CONSTRUCTION FROM FY 26 TO FY 27. DP REPRESENTS RAISE GRANT FUNDS.</u>	CONSTRUCTION	FY 2027 -	\$162,000	(DP)
				FY 2027 -	\$9,000	(BGOFF)
				FY 2027 -	\$6,000	(HFB)
				FY 2028 -	\$811,000	(BGOFF)
				FY 2028 -	\$590,000	(HFB)
				FY 2029 -	\$71,000	(BGOFF)
				FY 2029 -	\$52,000	(HFB)
		\$1,701,000				
HB-0060 CALDWELL PROJ.CATEGORY DIVISION	- GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION	SR 1356 (OLD JOHNS RIVER ROAD); BRIDGE 130317 OVER JOHNS RIVER. REPLACE BRIDGE. <u>TO ALLOW ADDITIONAL TIME FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION, DELAY CONSTRUCTION FROM FY 26 TO FY 27. DP REPRESENTS RAISE GRANT FUNDS.</u>	CONSTRUCTION	FY 2027 -	\$210,000	(DP)
				FY 2027 -	\$9,000	(BGOFF)
				FY 2027 -	\$8,000	(HFB)
				FY 2028 -	\$863,000	(BGOFF)
				FY 2028 -	\$765,000	(HFB)
				FY 2029 -	\$76,000	(BGOFF)
				FY 2029 -	\$68,000	(HFB)
		\$1,999,000				

* INDICATES FEDERAL AMENDMENT

REVISIONS TO THE 2026-2035 STIP
HIGHWAY PROGRAM

GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

STIP MODIFICATIONS

I-5990 BURKE PROJ.CATEGORY DIVISION	- GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION	I-40; SR 1761 (OLD NC 10) EXIT 118 INTERCHANGE. CONSTRUCT INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENTS. <u>TO ALLOW ADDITIONAL TIME FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION, DELAY CONSTRUCTION FROM FY 27 TO FY 29.</u>	RIGHT-OF-WAY	FY 2027 -	\$3,186,000	(NHP)
				FY 2027 -	\$797,000	(T(M))
				FY 2028 -	\$910,000	(NHP)
				FY 2028 -	\$227,000	(T(M))
				FY 2029 -	\$512,000	(NHP)
				FY 2029 -	\$128,000	(T(M))
				FY 2030 -	\$512,000	(NHP)
				FY 2030 -	\$128,000	(T(M))
			UTILITIES	FY 2027 -	\$360,000	(NHP)
				FY 2027 -	\$90,000	(T(M))
				FY 2028 -	\$360,000	(NHP)
				FY 2028 -	\$90,000	(T(M))
			CONSTRUCTION	FY 2029 -	\$5,386,000	(NHP)
				FY 2029 -	\$1,346,000	(T(M))
				FY 2030 -	\$6,494,000	(NHP)
	FY 2030 -	\$1,624,000	(T(M))			
	FY 2031 -	\$3,960,000	(NHP)			
	FY 2031 -	\$990,000	(T(M))			
			\$27,100,000			

* INDICATES FEDERAL AMENDMENT

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TCC/TAC**

MEETING DATE: June 24, 2026

SUBJECT: Transportation Improvement Program Revisions for Approval

PRESENTER: Averi Ritchie, Transportation Planning Director

ATTACHMENTS: Transportation Improvement Program Revisions for Approval

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) revisions include modifications and amendments to regional and statewide transportation projects. STIP revisions are released for public comment and approved following a 30 day public comment period by TAC. All approved revisions are submitted for Board of Transportation approval. Modifications and revisions often include funding and fiscal year changes. Revisions are released monthly by NCDOT.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: Recommend for approval.

Suggested Motion: *Motion to approve*

REVISIONS TO THE 2026-2035 STIP
HIGHWAY PROGRAM

GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

STIP MODIFICATIONS

TP-5106	- GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN	WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS,	PLANNING	FY 2026 -	\$8,000	(L(M))
ALEXANDER	PLANNING ORGANIZATION	SYSTEMWIDE FUNDING FOR PLANNING ASSISTANCE.		FY 2026 -	\$8,000	(S(M))
BURKE		<u>ADD FUNDING AT THE REQUEST OF THE MPO.</u>		FY 2026 -	\$57,000	(5303)
CALDWELL				FY 2027 -	\$9,000	(L(M))
CATAWBA				FY 2027 -	\$9,000	(S(M))
PROJ.CATEGORY				FY 2027 -	\$68,000	(5303)
PUBLIC TRANS				FY 2028 -	\$8,000	(L(M))
				FY 2028 -	\$8,000	(S(M))
				FY 2028 -	\$57,000	(5303)
					\$232,000	

* INDICATES FEDERAL AMENDMENT



**GREATER HICKORY
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)**
1880 2nd Avenue NW, PO Box 9026
Hickory, NC 28603



**RESOLUTION ADOPTING MODIFICATIONS TO THE
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) FY 2026-2035**

A motion was made by _____ and seconded by _____ for the adoption of the following resolution, and upon being put to a vote was duly adopted.

WHEREAS, the following modifications have been proposed for FY 2026-2035
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):
See page 1 of this Attachment

WHEREAS, the MPO certifies that these TIP modifications are consistent with the intent of the adopted 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP);

NOW THEREFORE be it resolved, by the Greater Hickory MPO Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) that the TIP FY 2026-2035 be modified as listed above on this, the 24th day of June, 2026.

Hank Guess
Greater Hickory MPO TAC Chair

Averi Ritchie
Greater Hickory MPO TAC Secretary

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TCC/TAC**

MEETING DATE: June 24, 2026

SUBJECT: Locally Administered Project Program – Spring 2026 Call for New Projects

PRESENTER: Daniel Odom, Planning Manger

ATTACHMENTS: LAPP 2026 – Spring Call for New Projects

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

The Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) and Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) receive roughly \$3.5 million annually in federal transportation grant funding for multimodal projects (pedestrian, transit, small intersection). These funds are managed through the Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP). The Spring Call for Projects was opened in March and closed May 8th. Tentative funding scenarios were presented at the May 27th meeting.

The following applications were received and are described in detail within the attachment:

- City of Hickory
 - 5th Street NE and 10th Avenue Drive NE Intersection Improvements
 - 13th Avenue Drive SE Connector
- City of Lenoir
 - Harper Avenue Streetscape

Following coordination with NCDOT, the GHMPO's proposed funding scenario recommends a total funding award of \$3.874MM in federal funding across the three projects.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: Approve LAP Funding Authorization Resolution & Associated STIP Amendment.

Suggested Motion:

1. **Motion to award the proposed Locally Administered Project funding.**
2. **Motion to approve an amendment to the State Transportation Improvement Program to reflect LAP funds awarded.**



Western Piedmont
Council of Governments

Creative Regional Solutions Since 1968

Locally Administered Project Program: Spring 2026 Project Applications

GHMPO TCC and TAC

June 24, 2026

New Project Applications

- **City of Hickory**

- 5th Street NE and 10th Ave Drive NE Intersection Improvements
- 13th Ave Drive SE Connector

- **City of Lenoir**

- Harper Avenue Streetscape Project

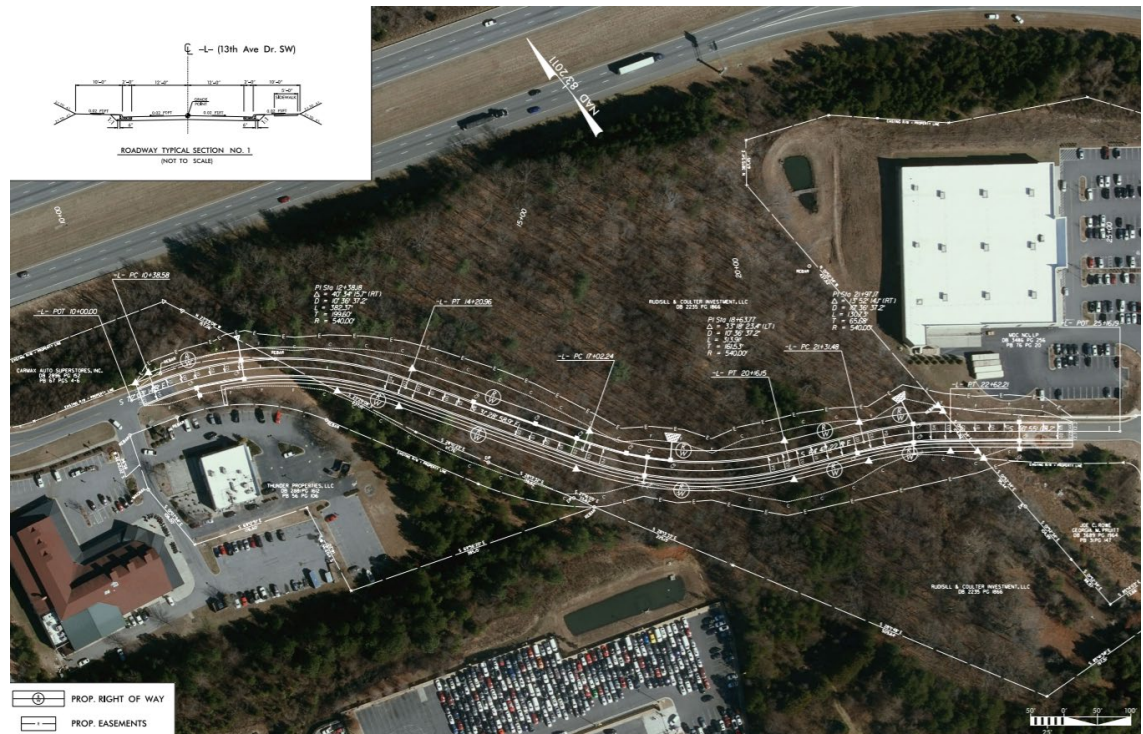
5th Street NE and 10th Avenue Drive NE Intersection Improvements

- **Description:** This project will improve pedestrian safety and accessibility at the intersection of 5th Street NE and 10th Avenue Drive NE through the installation of pedestrian signal infrastructure, enhanced crosswalk visibility, and new sidewalk construction.
- **Total Federal Funding:** \$1.84 Million
- **Total Cost:** \$2.3 Million
- **Project Score:** 79



13th Ave Drive SE Connector

- **Description:** This project will construct a new roadway segment connecting two existing sections of 13th Avenue Drive SE, creating a continuous corridor between Lenoir Rhyne Boulevard (Exit 125) and McDonald Parkway (Exit 126). The connector is approximately 0.28 miles (1,450 feet).
- **Total Federal Funding:** \$4 Million
- **Total Cost:** \$5 Million
- **Project Score:** 73.6



Harper Avenue Sidewalk

- **Description:** The project proposes sidewalk on both sides of the Harper Avenue Corridor from Ridge Street to Morganton Blvd for approximately .6 miles, as well as a revamped stormwater drainage system to minimize local flooding. The sidewalk will be 6 feet wide with a variable 5 to 6 foot wide brick paver separation from the street. The brick area will contain metal benches, pedestrian lighting, street trees, trash bins, and bike racks.
- **Total Federal Funding:** \$7.95 Million
- **Total Cost:** \$9.937 Million
- **Project Score:** 78.9

Harper Avenue Sidewalk & Greenway Connections



Total Funding Requested

Project Title	Score	Total Federal Funding	Total Local Match	Total Project Funding
5th Street NE and 10th Ave Drive Intersection Improvements	79	\$1.84MM	\$460,000	\$2.3MM
Harper Ave Streetscape	78.9	\$8.56MM	\$2.02M	\$10.1MM
13th Ave Drive SE Connector	73.6	\$4MM	\$1MM	\$5MM
TOTAL		\$14.4MM		\$17.4MM

Target Investment for Spring
2026 Call: \$6.5M

Proposed Funding Scenario

Project Title	Score	Total Federal Funding	Total Local Match	Total Project Funding
5th Street NE and 10th Ave Drive Intersection Improvements	79	\$1.84M	\$460,000	\$2.3MM
Harper Ave Streetscape (Preconstruction Only)	78.9	\$1.634MM	\$408,500	\$2.042MM
13th Ave Drive SE Connector (Preconstruction Only)	73.6	\$400K	\$100K	\$500K
TOTAL		\$3.874M	\$968,500	\$4.843M

Funds remaining through FY
2031: \$9.08M



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Council of Governments

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Questions?





**GREATER HICKORY
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)**
1880 2nd Avenue NW, PO Box 9026
Hickory, NC 28603



**RESOLUTION DIRECTING STBG-DA AND TAP-DA FUNDS TO LOCAL
PRIORITY PROJECTS**

A motion was made by _____ and seconded by TAC Member _____
To adopt the following resolution, and upon being put to a vote was duly adopted.

WHEREAS, the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a Transportation Management Area and has the authority to direct available Federal Highway program Surface Transportation Block Grant – Direct Attributable (STBG-DA), Transportation Alternatives Program – Direct Attributable (TAP-DA), Carbon Reduction Program (CRP), and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) obligation authority to MPO area local projects; AND

WHEREAS, the above funding sources are included in the Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP); AND

WHEREAS, allocation of the above funding sources enable work on three area priority projects, to proceed totaling \$3.874 million in federal dollars (to be distributed among the funding sources by the Department of Transportation) as shown in the Locally Administered Projects Program Presentation at the June 24, 2026, TAC Meeting; AND

WHEREAS, the proposed project recommendations and recommended actions have been developed in coordination with the North Carolina Department of Transportation; AND

NOW THEREFORE be it resolved, by the Greater Hickory MPO Transportation Advisory Committee, to approve the direction of \$3.874 million in LAPP funds on this, the 24th day of June, 2026.

Hank Guess
Greater Hickory MPO TAC Chair

Averi Ritchie
Greater Hickory MPO TAC Secretary



**GREATER HICKORY
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)**
1880 2nd Avenue NW, PO Box 9026
Hickory, NC 28603



**RESOLUTION ADOPTING MODIFICATIONS TO THE
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) FY 2026-2035**

A motion was made by _____ and seconded by _____ to adopt the following resolution, and upon being put to a vote was duly adopted

WHEREAS, the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is a Transportation Management Area and has the authority to direct available Federal Highway program Surface Transportation Block Grant – Direct Attributable (STBG-DA), Transportation Alternatives Program – Direct Attributable (TAP-DA), Carbon Reduction Program (CRP), and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) obligation authority to MPO area local projects; AND

WHEREAS, the above funding sources are included in the Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP); AND

WHEREAS, allocation of the above funding sources enable work on three area priority projects to proceed totaling \$3.874 million in federal dollars (to be distributed among the funding sources by the Department of Transportation) as shown in the Locally Administered Projects Program Presentation at the June 24, 2026, TAC Meeting; AND

WHEREAS, the following projects have been proposed for inclusion in the FY 2026-2035 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); AND

WHEREAS, the MPO certifies that these TIP modifications are consistent with the intent of the adopted 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP); AND

NOW THEREFORE be it resolved, by the Greater Hickory MPO Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) that the TIP FYs 2026-2035 be modified as listed above on this, the 24th day of June, 2026.

Hank Guess
Greater Hickory MPO TAC Chair

Averi Ritchie
Greater Hickory MPO TAC Secretary

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TCC/TAC**

MEETING DATE: June 24, 2026

SUBJECT: Results of the GHMPO Federal Recertification Review

PRESENTER: Averi Ritchie, Transportation Planning Director

ATTACHMENTS: Results of the GHMPO Federal Recertification Review

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) completed the 2026 Certification Review of the Greater Hickory MPO and fully certified the MPO's transportation planning process for the next four years. The review found that GHMPO is in compliance with all federal planning requirements and continues to demonstrate a strong, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process.

All prior recommendations from the 2022 certification review were successfully addressed, demonstrating continued improvement and responsiveness to federal guidance. Additionally, the 2026 review included fewer recommendations than the previous cycle, reflecting the MPO's progress and maturity in its planning processes.

The review included no corrective actions, indicating full compliance across all evaluated areas. The MPO also received several commendations, particularly for its use of interactive planning tools and dashboards, integration of freight and land use data into the MTP, and outreach to regional freight stakeholders.

A small number of recommendations for improvement were identified, focused on process refinements such as documentation, public involvement procedures, and TIP consistency language.

Overall, the review highlights that GHMPO is performing at a high level with strong regional coordination, effective planning practices, and continued opportunities for incremental improvement.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: None. Informational item only.



Federal Highway Administration
North Carolina Division
310 New Bern Avenue, Suite 410
Raleigh, NC 27601
(919) 856-4346

Federal Transit Administration
Region 4 Office
230 Peachtree NW, Suite 1400
Atlanta, GA 30303
404-865-5600

May 29, 2026

Mayor Hank Guess, Chair
Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization
City of Hickory

Subject: Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) Federal Planning
Certification Review

Dear Mayor Guess:

This letter notifies you that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly certify the planning process for the GHMPO Transportation Management Area (TMA). The Certification is valid for four years from the date of the Report. This certification is based on the findings from the Federal Certification Review conducted on Monday, April 27, 2026.

The overall conclusion of the Certification Review is that the planning process for the GHMPO complies with the Federal metropolitan transportation planning laws and regulations under 23 USC 134 and 49 USC 5303. The planning process at the GHMPO is a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive process and reflects a significant professional commitment to deliver quality in transportation planning.

We would like to thank Averi Ritchie and the rest of the MPO staff for their time and assistance in planning and conducting the review. Enclosed is a report that documents the results of this review and offers five recommendations for continuing quality improvements and enhancements to the planning process, as well as three commendations for use of best practices. This report has been transmitted concurrently to the MPO, NCDOT, and Greenway Public Transportation.

If you have any questions regarding the Certification Review process, the Certification action, and/or the enclosed report, please direct them to either George Hoops, FHWA NC Division, at george.hoops@dot.gov or Jason Morgan, FTA Region 4, at jason.morgan@dot.gov.

Sincerely,



Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration

Sincerely,



for Yolonda K. Jordan
Division Administrator

Enclosure: Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization Certification Review Report

cc: Jason Morgan, FTA Region 4

Averi Ritchie, WPCOG – GHMPO Staff

Casey Fullbright, WPCOG – GHMPO Staff

Daniel Odom, WPCOG – GHMPO Staff

Kelly Christensen, WPCOG

Taylor Dellinger, WPCOG

Andrew Webb, WPCOG

Michael Bowman, Greenway Public Transportation

James Upchurch, NCDOT - Transportation Planning Division

Reuben Crummy, NCDOT – Transportation Planning Division

Transportation Management Area Planning Certification Review

Federal Highway
Administration

Federal Transit
Administration

Greater Hickory MPO Transportation Management Area



May 29, 2026





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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 27, 2026, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted the certification review of the transportation planning process for the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) urbanized area. FHWA and FTA are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process for each urbanized area over 200,000 in population at least every four years to determine if the process meets the Federal planning requirements.

1.1 Previous Findings and Disposition

The last certification review for the Greater Hickory urbanized area was conducted on March 7, 2022. The 2022 Certification Review findings are summarized as follows.

Finding	Recommendations	Disposition
The GHMPO needs to conduct an evaluation of the PIP effectiveness prior to updating the PIP document.	It is recommended that the GHMPO conduct an evaluation of PIP effectiveness prior to updating the PIP document.	On November 15, 2023, the GHMPO adopted an updated Public Involvement Policy (PIP). During this update, the MPO evaluated the adequacy of public notice procedures and revised notice timeframes as appropriate; additionally, the MPO refined the methodology and distribution channels for press releases.
The GHMPO needs to capture more thoroughly environmental and resiliency data in the 2050 MTP.	It is recommended that the MPO more thoroughly capture environmental and resiliency data in the 2050 MTP.	At the time of the 2050 MTP adoption, the MPO used a Community Health and Disaster Mitigation Explorer (CHADME) explorer tool. This metrics-based tool allowed the MPO to examine potential mitigation practices through a hierarchy of variables, including socioeconomics, high-risk health populations, location of populations with limited or no access to transportation, proximity to natural features, and other social determinants of health. In addition, the 2050 MTP considered flooding on roadways, flood plains, etc. associated with system resiliency. The 2050 MTP also has separate Natural Environment and System Resilience chapters.
The GHMPO needs to work with the NCDOT Division Office to determine where Emergency Relief (ER) funding has been spent in their MPO area.	It is recommended that the GHMPO reach out to the NCDOT Division Office to determine where Emergency Relief (ER) funding has been spent in their area.	GHMPO has worked with all 3 NCDOT divisions post Helene to identify emergency relief funding spent within our region.
The GHMPO needs to better document its voting structure when they update their MOU.	It is recommended that the GHMPO better document its voting structure when they update their MOU.	The voting structure has been clearly identified in the MOA.
The GHMPO needs to document its performance-based planning process and accomplishments with the 2050 MTP.	It is recommended that the MPO document its performance-based planning process and accomplishments with the 2050 MTP.	All performance measures were covered within Chapter 10 of the 2050 MTP.



Finding	Recommendations	Disposition
The GHMPO needs to consider using a smaller geography unit such as traffic analysis zones rather than census tracts for identifying EJ populations. Census tracts can be quite large and may miss significant EJ populations.	It is recommended that the MPO consider using a smaller geography unit such as traffic analysis zones rather than census tracts for identifying EJ populations. Census tracts can be quite large and may miss significant EJ populations.	Executive Order 14173, issued by President Trump on January 21, 2025, rescinds several previous executive orders related to environmental justice, including EO 12898 and EO 14096.
The GHMPO needs to create one map for EJ analyses that depicts the entire MPO rather than multiple maps segmented by county.	It is recommended that the MPO create one map for EJ analyses that depicts the entire MPO rather than multiple maps segmented by county.	
The GHMPO needs to ensure that cumulative effects of projects are considered by including past projects as part of the EJ analysis.	It is recommended that the MPO ensure that cumulative effects of projects are considered by including past projects as part of the EJ analysis.	
The GHMPO needs to conduct both <i>qualitative</i> and <i>quantitative</i> analyses on a system-wide level to identify potential transportation impacts to EJ populations.	It is recommended that the MPO conduct both <i>qualitative</i> and <i>quantitative</i> analyses on a system-wide level to identify potential transportation impacts to EJ populations.	

1.2 Summary of Current Findings

The current review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization area meets Federal planning requirements.

As a result of this review, FHWA and FTA are certifying the transportation planning process conducted by North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization and Western Piedmont Transit Authority/Greenway Public Transportation subject to addressing corrective actions. There are also recommendations in this report that warrant close attention and follow-up, as well as areas that the MPO is performing very well in that are to be commended.

Review Area	Finding (Corrective Actions/Recommendations/ Commendations)
MPO Organizational Structure and Policy Board 23 U.S.C. 134(d)	Recommendation: The GHMPO website should explicitly list the current TAC membership and clearly identify the member(s) responsible for representing transit-related interests in addition to voting structure.



Review Area	Finding (Corrective Actions/Recommendations/ Commendations)
Metropolitan Planning Agreements 23 CFR 450.314(a)	Recommendation: The MOU currently serves as a cooperative framework among NCDOT, the MPO, regional public transportation providers, and participating local governments; consequently, it should be formally executed only by those parties with direct responsibility for the agreement's implementation.
Participation by Interested Parties 23 USC 134(i)(5) 23 USC 134(j)(1)(B) 49 USC 5303(i)(5) 49 USC 5303(j)(1)(B)	Commendation: The MPO is commended for their use of interactive digital tools and dashboards that facilitate regional coordination and transparency and inform the public of community impacts related to regional transportation projects. Recommendation: The PIP should describe explicit procedures for employing visualization techniques in the MTP and TIP (23CFR450.316(a)(1)(iii)). Recommendation: The PIP should describe explicit procedures for demonstrating consideration and responding to public input received during the development of the MTP and TIP (23CFR450.316(a)(1)(vi)).
Metropolitan Transportation Plan 23 U.S.C. 134(c),(h)&(i) 23 CFR 450.324	Commendation: The MPO is commended for their integration of freight-oriented development and land-use data directly into the 2050 MTP. Commendation: The MPO is commended for their survey of 100 regional freight operators to help in identifying critical bottlenecks and address federal freight planning factors to ensure the regional strategy remains grounded in real-world logistics and economic needs.
Transportation Improvement Program 23 U.S.C. 134(c)(h)& (j) 23 CFR 450.326	Recommendations: The TIP adoption resolution should include a clause associated with TIP/MTP consistency.



2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 134(k) and 49 U.S.C. 5303(k), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) must jointly certify the metropolitan transportation planning process in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) at least every four years. A TMA is an urbanized area, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, with a population of over 200,000. The reviews consist of a site visit, a review of planning products (in advance of and during the site visit), and preparation of a Certification Review Report that summarizes the review and offers findings. The reviews focus on compliance with Federal regulations, challenges, successes, and experiences of the cooperative relationship between the MPO(s), the State DOT(s), and public transportation operator(s) in the conduct of the metropolitan transportation planning process. Joint FTA/FHWA Certification Review guidelines provide agency field reviewers with latitude and flexibility to tailor the review to reflect regional issues and needs. Consequently, the scope and depth of the Certification Review reports will vary significantly.

The Certification Review process is only one of several methods used to assess the quality of a regional metropolitan transportation planning process, compliance with applicable statutes and regulations, and the level and type of technical assistance needed to enhance the effectiveness of the planning process. Other activities provide opportunities for this type of review and comment, including Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) approval, the MTP, metropolitan and statewide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) findings, air-quality (AQ) conformity determinations (in nonattainment and maintenance areas), as well as a range of other formal and less formal contact provide both FHWA/FTA an opportunity to comment on the planning process. The results of these other processes are considered in the Certification Review process.

While the Certification Review report itself may not fully document those many intermediate and ongoing checkpoints, the “findings” of Certification Review are, in fact, based upon the cumulative findings of the entire review effort.

The review process is individually tailored to focus on topics of significance in each metropolitan planning area. Federal reviewers prepare Certification Reports to document the results of the review process. The reports and final actions are the joint responsibility of the appropriate FHWA and FTA field offices, and their content will vary to reflect the planning process reviewed, whether they relate explicitly to formal “findings” of the review.

To encourage public understanding and input, FHWA/FTA will continue to improve the clarity of the Certification Review reports.



2.2 Purpose and Objective

Since the enactment of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, the FHWA and FTA, are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process in all urbanized areas over 200,000 population to determine if the process meets the Federal planning requirements in 23 U.S.C. 134, 40 U.S.C. 5303, and 23 CFR 450. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), extended the minimum allowable frequency of certification reviews to at least every four years.

The GHMPO is the designated MPO for the Hickory urbanized area, and the Western Piedmont Council of Governments is the Lead Planning Agency. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is the responsible State agency and Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority (WPRTA)/Greenway Public Transportation is the responsible public transportation operator. The MPO includes 28 voting member jurisdictions from Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties.

Certification of the planning process is a prerequisite to the approval of Federal funding for transportation projects in such areas. The certification review is also an opportunity to help on new programs and to enhance the ability of the metropolitan transportation planning process to provide decision makers with the knowledge they need to make well-informed capital and operating investment decisions.

3.0 SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Review Process

The last certification review was conducted in March 2022. A summary of the status of findings from the last review is provided in Section 1.1. This report details the latest certification review, which consisted of a formal site visit and a public involvement opportunity, conducted in April of 2026.

Participants in the review included representatives of FHWA, FTA, NCDOT, WPRTA, and GHMPO staff. A full list of participants is included in Appendix A.

A desk audit of current documents and correspondence was completed prior to the site visit. In addition to the formal review, routine oversight mechanisms provide a major source of information upon which to base the certification findings.

The certification review covers the transportation planning process conducted cooperatively by the MPO, State, and public transportation operators.



The following topics are required elements of the metropolitan planning process authorized in 23 USC 134 and 49 USC 5303 and therefore must be addressed or confirmed as part of the TMA certification. The statutory and regulatory requirements of these topics are listed below:

1. MPO Organizational Structure and Policy Board
2. Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries
3. Metropolitan Planning Agreements
4. Planning Process and Process Coordination
5. Participation by Interested Parties
6. Congestion Management Process
7. Unified Planning Work Program
8. Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
9. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
10. List of Obligated Projects
11. Transit Planning

Background information, status, key findings, and recommendations are summarized in the body of the report for these subject areas.

3.2 Documents Reviewed

The following MPO documents were evaluated as part of this planning process review:

1. Certification Review Report (2022)
2. Charter (updated on 3/23/2010)
3. Congestion Management Process
4. Congestion Management Report (July 2024)
5. FFY25 – List of Obligated Projects (Funds posted in SAP: 10/01/2024 thru 9/30/2025)
6. Local Coordination Public Transportation Plan (2021)
7. 2050 MTP (2023)
8. Memorandum of Understanding (Amended 2015)
9. Public Participation Policy (10/28/2020) – Available on the MPO website
10. Public Involvement Policy (11/15/2023)
11. TAC Bylaws (Adopted 5/2007)
12. TAC Bylaws, 2003
13. Title VI Plan Update (Adopted 6/26/2019)
14. 2026-2035 Transportation Improvement Program
15. SFY 2026 and 2027 Unified Planning Work Program and Self Certification (Dated: 2/26/2025)
16. GHMPO (Dated February 2003, Amended March 2009, and again in 9/2013)
17. Resolution Supporting Targets for Performance Measures Established By NCDOT (Signed: 5/24/23)



4.0 PROGRAM REVIEW

4.1 MPO Organization Structure and Policy Board

4.1.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(d) and 23 CFR 450.314(a) state the MPO, the State, and the public transportation operator shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. These responsibilities shall be clearly identified in written agreements among the MPO, the State, and the public transportation operator serving the MPA.

4.1.2 Current Status

The Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) is housed within the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG), which serves as the MPO's Lead Planning Agency (LPA). This partnership fosters balanced regional coordination across 28 member jurisdictions spanning Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties—an area that also defines the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Designated as a Transportation Management Area (TMA) following the 2010 Census, the MPO's planning boundary includes State Parks and Federal U.S. Forest Service lands, though no Indian Tribal lands have been identified within the region.

The MPO is governed by two primary bodies, both of which are actively engaged in the regional planning process:

- **Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC):** Serving as the Policy Board, the TAC makes final decisions on public investments in transportation infrastructure and services. The TAC is composed of local elected officials, officials of public agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation in the metropolitan area, and appropriate state officials.
- **Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC):** Composed of city managers, planning directors, and technical staff, the TCC provides the essential technical review and guidance that informs the TAC's decisions.

The regional governance is established through a voting structure that allocates one vote per jurisdiction, with the exception of the City of Hickory, which is granted two votes, and one vote to the regional public transportation authority. This arrangement is maintained by member jurisdictions as an equitable and proportional representation of the metropolitan population. The MPO indicates that the current practice of scheduling Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) meetings on the same day as, and immediately preceding, Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings is effective. This concurrent schedule facilitates direct interaction between the TCC and TAC, and the MPO has identified no operational issues resulting from this coordination.



The MPO reports sustained and excellent engagement within both the TAC and TCC. While the TCC has experienced limited membership turnover, the TAC has seen more frequent changes in representation. To address this, the MPO has implemented a comprehensive new member orientation program designed to provide necessary background and facilitate the effective participation of incoming officials in the regional planning process.

4.1.3 Findings

The GHMPO is found to be fully compliant with applicable laws, regulations, and practices of organizational structure and policy board.

Recommendation: The GHMPO website should explicitly list the current TAC membership and clearly identify the member(s) responsible for representing transit-related interests in addition to voting structure.

4.2 Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries

4.2.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(e) and 23 CFR 450.312(a) state the boundaries of a Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) shall be determined by agreement between the MPO and the Governor. At a minimum, the MPA boundaries shall encompass the entire existing urbanized area (as defined by the Bureau of the Census) plus the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20-year forecast period for the MTP.

4.2.2 Current Status

Despite concerns during the previous certification review regarding population shifts within the urbanized area, the Greater Hickory MPO (GHMPO) has maintained its Transportation Management Area (TMA) status. Following the release of 2020 Census data, the GHMPO and NCDOT coordinated specific adjustments to the 2020 Census Urban Area Boundaries. These adjusted urban boundaries remain entirely within the existing Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), which encompasses all of Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties; no further changes to the 20-year MPA boundary were required.

Following a formal review conducted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) North Carolina Division to ensure compliance with 23 CFR 450.312, official approvals for the adjusted urban area boundaries were issued on January 16, 2025, with supplemental adjustments following on March 17, 2025. Notably, the GHMPO did not utilize this opportunity to smooth the 2020 Census Urban Area (UA). This omission may lead to federal-aid funding complications for projects within the Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB) but outside the UA that are currently functionally classified as minor collectors; specifically, such projects would be designated as either urban minor collectors, which maintain federal-aid eligibility, or rural minor collectors, which do not. Considering this, the MPO may coordinate with NCDOT to pursue further adjustments to their UA.



4.2.3 Findings

The GHMPO is found to be fully compliant with applicable laws, regulations, and practices of transit planning.

4.3 Metropolitan Planning Agreement

4.3.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(d) and 23 CFR 450.314(a) state the MPO, the State, and the public transportation operator shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. These responsibilities shall be clearly identified in written agreements among the MPO, the State, and the public transportation operator serving the MPA.

4.3.2 Current Status

The Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) serves as the Lead Planning Agency (LPA) for the MPO, operating under a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). Originally adopted in February 2003, this foundational agreement was amended by all member jurisdictions in March 2009 and September 2013 to ensure it remains current with regional needs. The MPO is currently considering the update to the MOU.

The MOU clearly outlines the Board's membership and the specific responsibilities necessary to execute the metropolitan transportation planning process. These duties include cooperating with the State and publicly owned operators of public transportation services to conduct the Federal and State transportation planning process. Furthermore, the Board is responsible for developing the planning work programs, the Metropolitan and Comprehensive Transportation Plans, and the Transportation Improvement Program.

Complementing the MOU, the MPO's bylaws provide further clarity by detailing the core purpose, strategic goals, and individual roles and responsibilities of the Policy Board.

4.3.3 Findings

The GHMPO is found to be fully compliant with applicable laws, regulations, and practices of their Metropolitan Planning Agreement.

Recommendation: The MOU currently serves as a cooperative framework among NCDOT, the MPO, regional public transportation providers, and participating local governments; consequently, it should be formally executed only by those parties with direct responsibility for the agreement's implementation.



4.4 Transportation Planning Process and Process Coordination

4.4.1 Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.306 and 450.318 define the scope of the metropolitan transportation planning process and the relationship of corridor and other subarea planning studies to the metropolitan planning process and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. In addition, 23 CFR 450.316 (c), (d), and (e) address the need for participation by Federal lands management agencies and Tribal governments in the development of key products in the planning process. Key provisions of 23 CFR 450.306 are related to required planning factors, coordination, and consistency with related planning processes, asset management, and possible differences in requirements for TMAs.

23 U.S.C. 134(g) & (i)(5)-(6) and 23 CFR 450.316(b-e) set forth requirements for consultation in developing the MTP and TIP. Consultation is also addressed specifically in connection with the MTP in 23 CFR 450.324(g)(1-2) and in 23 CFR 450.324(f)(10) related to environmental mitigation.

In developing the MTP and TIP, the MPO shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies including Agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities (State, local, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight), Other providers of transportation services, Indian Tribal Government(s), and Federal land management agencies.

4.4.2 Current Status

The GHMPO MTP outlines the utilization of various regional maps, inventories, and planning documents provided by agency contacts, though the specific application of these resources is not fully detailed. To ensure a collaborative process, the MPO provides relevant resource agencies with comprehensive development schedules for both the MTP and TIP.

Beyond basic scheduling, the MPO maintains ongoing communication regarding public review periods and upcoming meetings. This proactive outreach is designed to solicit agency feedback at critical decision points, ensuring that technical input is integrated when it can most significantly influence the final planning outcomes.

Performance-based requirements specific to transit are covered in the transit planning section.

4.4.3 Findings

The GHMPO is found to be fully compliant with applicable laws, regulations, and practices of transportation planning process and process coordination.



4.5 Participation by Interested Parties

4.5.1 Regulatory Basis

Sections 134(i)(5), 134(j)(1)(B) of Title 23 and Section 5303(i)(5) and 5303(j)(1)(B) of Title 49, require a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to provide adequate opportunity for the public to participate in and comment on the products and planning processes of the MPO. The requirements for public involvement are detailed in 23 CFR 450.316(a) and (b), which require the MPO to develop and use a documented participation plan that includes explicit procedures and strategies to include the public and other interested parties in the transportation planning process.

Specific requirements include giving adequate and timely notice of opportunities to participate in or comment on transportation issues and processes, employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, making public information readily available in electronically accessible formats and means such as the world wide web, holding public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input, and a periodically reviewing of the effectiveness of the participation plan.

4.5.2 Current Status

The GHMPO adopted an updated Public Involvement Policy (PIP) on November 15, 2023, which is currently hosted on the MPO website alongside the previous iteration. This 2023 policy incorporates a mandatory 45-calendar-day public comment period for revised participation plans and provides comprehensive details regarding public notice requirements and mandatory comment timeframes specific to the MPO's planning deliverables and activities.

To enhance regional coordination and transparency, the GHMPO maintains several interactive digital tools on their website, including:

- An interactive State Transportation Investment Program (STIP) mapping tool that displays current programmed projects within the GHMPO region.
- The Transportation Integrity Explorer, an interactive dashboard developed to complement the Transportation Integrity chapter of the 2050 MTP, which facilitates the examination of transportation projects and their associated community impacts.
- The 2025 WPCOG Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, a digital resource featuring interactive dashboards that allow the public to evaluate regionally adopted projects, stakeholder and community input, and proposed priority projects.
- The Community Health and Disaster Management Explorer (CHADME), an interactive, metrics-based tool designed for mitigation, preparedness, and resiliency planning purposes for the Western Piedmont region. Variables include socioeconomics, high-risk health populations, location of populations with limited or no access to transportation, proximity to natural features, and other social determinants of health.



- The Western Piedmont Transportation Safety Plan identifies a High Injury Network (HIN), a High Injury Intersection (HII) network, a Bike-Ped HIN, and a High-Risk Network (HRN) by pinpointing areas where the most injuries occur and evaluating the region's biggest transportation risks. This is shown using an interactive mapping dashboard. This process emphasizes the role of crash history while taking a proactive approach to transportation safety. The TSP also recommends safety enhancements and countermeasures for implementation.

4.5.3 Findings

The GHMPO is found to be fully compliant with applicable laws, regulations, and practices of participation by interested parties.

Commendation: The MPO is commended for their use of interactive digital tools and dashboards that facilitate regional coordination and transparency and inform the public of community impacts related to regional transportation projects.

Recommendation: The PIP should describe explicit procedures for employing visualization techniques in the MTP and TIP (23CFR450.316(a)(1)(iii)).

Recommendation: The PIP should describe explicit procedures for demonstrating consideration and responding to public input received during the development of the MTP and TIP (23CFR450.316(a)(1)(vi)).

Observations: It was noted and the MPO had confirmed that the 2025 WPCOG Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan digital tool does have municipal boundaries in the current layers, but the layers do not currently include the FTA urbanized area boundaries. In light of this, the MPO may consider adding the FTA boundaries into the tool.

4.6 Congestion Management Process

4.6.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(k)(3) and 23 CFR 450.322 set forth requirements for the congestion management process (CMP) in TMAs. The CMP is a systematic approach for managing congestion through a process that provides for a safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal transportation system.



4.6.2 Current Status

The GHMPO updated its Congestion Management Process (CMP) in 2023 alongside the development of the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). This update resulted in a more effective, federally prescribed, eight-step process for identifying, classifying, and mitigating regional congestion. The 2023 CMP incorporates all required federal elements: Objectives, Performance Measures, Data Collection, Problem Identification, Evaluation, Implement, and the final step, a biennial evaluation of implemented strategies.

The MPO completed its most recent biennial evaluation in 2024. The resulting Congestion Management Report (CMR) serves as the initial baseline report for the biennial evaluation cycle, fulfilling the requirements of the 2023 CMP.

Because the 2024 CMR is the first report issued since the release of the most recent CMP, its main goal is to "set the standard against which future Congestion Management Reports will be assessed." It successfully establishes the data and scoring baseline, with the official measurement of strategy effectiveness "actual measurements of improvement" set to begin with the next biennial report.

4.6.3 Findings

The GHMPO is found to be fully compliant with applicable laws, regulations, and practices of their congestion management process.

Observations: It was noted and the MPO had confirmed that the next biennial Congestion Management Report evaluation is due this year and that they are on track with the report update.

4.7 Unified Planning Work Program

4.7.1 Regulatory Basis

23 CFR 450.308 sets the requirement that planning activities be performed under Titles 23 and 49 U.S.C. be documented in a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The MPO, in cooperation with the State and public transportation operator, shall develop a UPWP that includes a discussion of the planning priorities facing the MPA and the work proposed for the next one- or two-year period by major activity and task in sufficient detail to indicate the agency that will perform the work, the schedule for completing the work, the resulting products, the proposed funding, and sources of funds.

4.7.2 Current Status

The UPWP is developed cooperatively between the MPO, the regional transit operator (WPRTA) and NCDOT. The UPWP activities are developed, selected, and prioritized with the input of the MPO member jurisdictions. Staff identifies, selects, and prioritizes the work tasks in the UPWP that need to be and can be accomplished during the 1-year fiscal period (e.g., July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026).



The UPWP development process typically begins in late fall or early winter each year. The NCDOT, transit operators, and member jurisdictions are consulted to identify projects, studies, and work tasks that need to be included in the UPWP for the upcoming fiscal year. Their involvement in the development of emphasis areas supports and adheres to Federal requirements, explicitly addressing the ten federal planning factors established by federal law—and meets the MPO’s MTP and other planning objectives. The NCDOT Transportation Planning Division (TPD) and Integrated Mobility Division (IMD) calculate and inform the MPO of Section 104(f) Planning (PL) funds and Section 5303 planning funds available for programming. Additionally, Section 5307 transit planning funds are apportioned to urbanized areas and managed by the designated recipient – (WPRTA within the GHMPO area). The budget is then utilized to identify what types and how much work can be accomplished in the fiscal year. The draft UPWP is typically released in January and adopted in the February to April timeframe (for example, the FY 2026 UPWP was officially adopted on February 26, 2025) and approved by FHWA/FTA in June. Quarterly and final reporting and invoicing narratives are submitted to NCDOT by task code for reimbursement and potential amendments. The end of the year annual report is a good means by which the MPO can more accurately manage its work tasks and project funding for the next fiscal year.

The MPO typically receives sufficient planning funds to adequately implement its program. All 5303 and 5307 funds are used to support transit planning activities. The MPO uses some PL funds to develop corridors and access management studies. To ensure a comprehensive planning approach, the MPO also supplements its program with State Planning and Research (SPR) funds, Surface Transportation Block Grant Program - Direct Attributable (STBGP-DA) funds, and specific Safe and Accessible Transportation Options funds.

The UPWP is consistent with the MTP and its long-term strategies, goals, and priorities, mapping out data collection and specific milestones required for the upcoming 2055 MTP update.

Even though Federal law only requires the MPO to certify the planning process every four years, the MPO annually certifies its planning process during UPWP development. MPO staff provide the TCC and Board the necessary documentation—including a detailed federal compliance checklist—to certify that they are meeting the Federal planning requirements. The frequency with which the self-certification occurs enables the two Boards to become familiar with why it is required and what they are certifying, culminating in an annual, formally adopted Resolution of Certification.

4.7.3 Findings

The GHMPO is found to be fully compliant with applicable laws, regulations, and practices of the development of their UPWP.

Observation: Currently, there is no formal documented process for amending the UPWP or for what changes even require an amendment. As of present day, if an amendment is needed, GHMPO first confirms with NCDOT TPD before bringing the changes to the TAC and TCC, after which, the changes are presented at the TAC/TCC meetings and are opened for an established



public comment period. If there are no issues with potential changes after the comment period is over, GHMPO will adopt the amendment. Further, amendments are not necessary for all project scope or financial changes, rather, the threshold for changes is only if extra money is needed or the overall dollar amount changes. Considering this, the MPO, in collaboration with the regional transit operator (WPRTA) and NCDOT, may consider formally documenting the amendment process for the UPWP detailing when an amendment is needed and how an amendment is processed.

4.8 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

4.8.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(c), (h) & (i) and 23 CFR 450.324 set forth requirements for the development and content of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Among the requirements are that the MTP address at least a 20-year planning horizon and that it includes both long- and short-range strategies that lead to the development of an integrated and multi-modal system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand.

The MTP is required to provide a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process. The plan needs to consider all applicable issues related to the transportation systems development, land use, employment, economic development, natural environment, and housing and community development.

23 CFR 450.324(c) requires the MPO to review and update the MTP at least every 5 years in attainment areas to reflect current and forecasted transportation, population, land use, employment, congestion, and economic conditions and trends.

Under 23 CFR 450.324(f), the MTP is required, at a minimum, to consider the following:

- Projected transportation demand
- Existing and proposed transportation facilities
- Operational and management strategies
- Congestion management process
- Capital investment and strategies to preserve transportation infrastructure and provide for multimodal capacity
- Design concept and design scope descriptions of proposed transportation facilities
- Potential environmental mitigation activities
- Pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities
- Transportation and transit enhancements
- A financial plan

4.8.2 Current Status

The Greater Hickory MPO (GHMPO) maintains a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) with a 20-year planning horizon, updated every five years. The most recent 2050 MTP, adopted on July



25, 2023. It provides a long-range vision that divides project implementation into distinct horizon years, such as 2030, 2040, and 2050. It actively identifies both existing and proposed transportation networks to foster an integrated, multimodal transportation system that addresses highways, public transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. To ensure fiscal responsibility, the MPO projected 30-year revenues against modal project costs, dividing them into three funding bands: 2024-2030, 2031-2040, and 2041-2050. These estimates account for a 3% annual inflation rate for the latter two periods and incorporate a diverse mix of standard and innovative funding sources.

In accordance with federal performance-based planning mandates, the MTP features a dedicated Performance Measures framework to assess the condition and performance of the regional transportation network. The plan outlines specific performance targets and metrics for areas such as highway safety, state of good repair for public transit (see section 4.11.2), and bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. Furthermore, the MTP integrates a federally prescribed Congestion Management Process (CMP) to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize mobility. This data-driven CMP utilizes specific performance measures—including travel time indices, planning time indices, and bottleneck rankings—to continuously evaluate intersections and monitor regional system performance over time. GHMPO posts the most up-to-date performance measures and targets on its MTP website.

To manage the region's high volume of freight traffic, the GHMPO integrates freight-oriented development and land-use data directly into the 2050 MTP. The MPO maintains a comprehensive database of local providers—categorized by product, commodity, and county—to drive targeted outreach. A primary example of this was a 2022 survey of 100 regional freight operators, which helped the MPO identify critical bottlenecks and address federal freight planning factors. This industry feedback ensures the regional strategy remains grounded in real-world logistics and economic needs.

During the MTP development, the GHMPO actively engages resource agencies through digital outreach, virtual meetings, and public notices. While the MPO provides clear schedules and opportunities for input, agency responses are often general; the MPO continues to encourage more specific feedback regarding environmentally sensitive features to better inform the planning process. To address these concerns, the MTP includes a detailed framework for environmental mitigation, identifying potential impact types and restoration activities designed to maintain the region's ecological functions.

4.8.3 Findings

The GHMPO is found to be fully compliant with applicable laws, regulations, and practices of the development of their metropolitan transportation plan.

Commendation: The MPO is commended for their integration of freight-oriented development and land-use data directly into the 2050 MTP.



Commendation: The MPO is commended for their survey of 100 regional freight operators to help in identifying critical bottlenecks and address federal freight planning factors to ensure the regional strategy remains grounded in real-world logistics and economic needs.

4.9 Transportation Improvement Program

4.9.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(c),(h) & (j) set forth requirements for the MPO to cooperatively develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Under 23 CFR 450.326, the TIP must meet the following requirements:

- Must cover at least a four-year horizon and be updated at least every four years.
- Surface transportation projects funded under Title 23 U.S.C. or Title 49 U.S.C., except as noted in the regulations, are required to be included in the TIP.
- List project description, cost, funding source, and identification of the agency responsible for carrying out each project.
- Projects need to be consistent with the adopted MTP.
- Must be fiscally constrained.
- The MPO must provide all interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed TIP.

4.9.2 Current Status

The MPO TIP is typically developed every two years on a schedule that is compatible with STIP development. It is a consensus-based process including the MPO, NCDOT, and transit operator. The MPO provides their prioritized list of projects to the NCDOT Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation (SPOT) for inclusion as part of the prioritization process.

The MPO's project selection process begins with a call for projects from member jurisdictions and public input. An initial list of projects is evaluated for need, readiness, and funding feasibility. They are then ranked using the MPO's prioritization process. The MPO ranks and prioritizes TIP projects using an established local methodology. Projects are then submitted to NCDOT and ranked based on the SPOT ranking process for possible inclusion in the STIP/TIP. Projects funded with STP-DA and TA-DA funds are based on a schedule determined by the MPO. Typically, these funds are used to plan and construct greenway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, intersection, small roadway, and transit projects. The MPO's Public Involvement Policy is used to seek public participation in the development of, and amendment to the TIP. The MPO approved the FY 2026-2035 TIP on August 27, 2025. The TIP includes capital and non-capital surface transportation projects in sufficient detail, estimated total cost per phase, and a discussion of the effect the TIP has toward achieving the performance targets identified. The TIP also includes a financial constrained analysis.



The process used to amend the TIP normally begins with NCDOT submitting their proposed amendments within the MPO area to the MPO for review and approval prior to NCDOT taking official action. If the MPO wishes to amend the TIP, it contacts NCDOT to discuss the proposal. In all instances, the MPO provides background information on amendments to the TCC and Board for approval. The definition the GHMPO uses for identification of TIP amendments is included in their Public Involvement Process.

4.9.3 Findings

The GHMPO metropolitan transportation plan is found to comply with the applicable laws, regulations, and practices of the development of their transportation improvement program.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the TIP adoption resolution includes a clause associated with TIP/MTP consistency.

Observation: Currently, the GHMPO ensures compliance with fiscal constraint requirements for the TIP by leveraging NCDOT's demonstration of fiscal constraint within the STIP. This practice is predicated on the understanding that the TIP, as a subset of the STIP, inherently maintains financial alignment with verified revenue projections.

The FHWA and FTA will work with NCDOT on updating this statement for future STIP/TIP update cycles with the goal of moving away from the "assumption" that the TIP is a subset of the STIP and instead describe the process used to ensure both statewide and localized fiscal constraint is being met.

A potential refinement for future reporting could state: *"While the TIP is functionally a subset of the STIP, GHMPO meets federal fiscal constraint requirements through active participation in NCDOT's **Strategic Transportation Investments (STI)** process. Utilizing the **Strategic Prioritization (SPOT)** scoring system, projects are programmed exclusively within specific, capped funding tiers—Statewide, Regional, and Division. This methodology ensures that GHMPO's programmed projects constitute a financially constrained schedule of improvements supported by verified state and federal revenue projections, rather than an unconstrained list of regional desires."*

4.10 List of Obligated Projects

4.10.1 Regulatory Basis

23 U.S.C. 134(j)(7) and 23 CFR 450.334 requires that the State, the MPO, and public transportation operators cooperatively develop a listing of projects for which Federal funds under 23 U.S.C. or 49 U.S. C. Chapter 53 was obligated in the previous year. The listing must include all federally funded projects authorized or revised to increase obligations in the preceding program year and, at a minimum, the following for each project:

- The amount of funds requested in the TIP



- Federal funding obligated during the preceding year
- Federal funding remaining and available for subsequent years
- Sufficient description to identify the project
- Identification of the agencies responsible for carrying out the project

4.10.2 Current Status

The NCDOT provides the MPO with the required annual list of projects for which Federal funds have been obligated, and the MPO posts that information on its website. The GHMPOs website includes multiple years of annual listing of projects for which federal funds have been obligated by Federal Fiscal Year. The files include for both highways as “GHMPO FFY 202_ Authorizations” spreadsheets and transit as “GHMPO FFY 202_ Transit Authorizations” spreadsheets which includes columns for WBS element, WBS TIP Sub Num, Mode, Route/City, Description, County, Division, Phase of Work, Funding Type, MPO/RPO, Amount.

4.10.3 Findings

The GHMPO is found to be fully compliant with applicable laws, regulations, and practices of the development of their list of obligated projects. However, we have the following recommendations:

Observation: FHWA and FTA intend to coordinate with NCDOT to refine the reporting format and data provided to MPOs for the annual *List of Obligated Projects*. This effort aims to ensure that the annual listing fully adheres to the requirements of 23 CFR 450.314(a).

4.11 Transit Planning

4.11.1 Regulatory Basis

49 U.S.C. 5303 and 23 U.S.C. 134 require the transportation planning process in metropolitan areas to consider all modes of travel in the development of their plans and programs. Federal regulations cited in 23 CFR 450.314 state that the MPO in cooperation with the State and operators of publicly owned transit services shall be responsible for carrying out the transportation planning process.

23 U.S.C. 134(h)(2)(A) states the metropolitan transportation planning process shall provide for the establishment and use of a performance-based approach to transportation decision making to support the national goals described in section 150(b) of this title and in section 5301(c) of 49 U.S.C.

4.11.2 Current Status

The Greater Hickory MPO has one transit operator in its large urbanized area. It is the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority (WPRTA)/Greenway Public Transportation. The WPRTA is governed by a seven-member Board composed of a representative from each jurisdiction. The



Board members are appointed by their respective governing bodies. WPRTA is the Designated Recipient of FTA 5307 Urbanized Area and 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & People with Disabilities program. WPRTA provides Fixed Route transportation service in the cities of Conover, Hickory, and Newton, and Flex Route service in the Town of Taylorsville and Burke County (Morganton, Drexel, Valdese, Rutherford College), and Dial-A-Ride service in the counties of Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba. There is a satellite facility in Alexander, Burke, and Caldwell counties for the paratransit operations, and a Transit Center for the fixed route service in Hickory. Buses are parked at Penske in Conover, and the main facility for the paratransit and fixed route services is in Conover.

Beginning in 2014, per the MPO membership requirements established by Section 1201(a) of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), WPRTA is represented in the regional governance by a voting representative on the MPO Policy Board, which is the TAC. The Executive Director of WPRTA is the appointed MPO board member for transit. The voting structure is further detailed in Section 4.1 MPO Organization Structure and Policy Board. The MPO incorporates the planning factors in all proposed projects, including WPRTA transit projects. Transit performance targets and goals are included in the MPO MTP. The transit operator and the MPO maintain a positive relationship. Transit appears to be involved in all planning phases, including TIP, STIP, UPWP, and MTP.

The 2050 MTP lists safety actuals for calendar year 2021 and safety targets established by NCDOT for 2022, which have been adopted by GHMPO. GHMPO adopts the safety measures annually. Under FTA's Transit Safety rule, public transportation agencies are classified into two tiers, Large and Small. Small providers are given the option to A) write their own safety plan or B) allow the NCDOT to carry out these requirements on their behalf. WPRTA, the sole public transportation provider in the GHMPO area, adopted their own Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) Compliant Safety Plan and Targets.

The State of Good Repair / Transit Asset Management (TAM) targets included in the 2050 MTP were adopted in 2018 in coordination with WPRTA. The 2023 measures were adopted when GHMPO was updating the MTP in 2023, so these were not used. However, the GHMPO has since adopted the 2026 measures established by NCDOT. Under FTA's TAM rule regulation, there are two categories of public transportation providers – Tier I and Tier II. The GHMPO's public transit system, WRPTA, is a tier II agency. Tier II agencies are defined as those operating a fleet of fewer than 100 vehicles and not operating fixed rail. Tier II agencies are permitted to participate in the NCDOT's group TAM plan, which includes one set of performance targets. The GHMPO is not required to maintain a TAM plan but is responsible for coordinating with transit providers to establish performance targets.

WPRTA is preparing for a network redesign and reorientation of existing transit routes. The intention of the redesign is to improve the efficiency of the routes and reduce the wait times. WPRTA will utilize automatic passenger counter (APC) and data from the COG to determine route adjustments. The agency plans to utilize microtransit service to feed riders from the outer areas of the system into the fixed routes.



WPRTA is also currently working to incorporate technology into their transit system, including a mobile fare system and an application for microtransit.

4.11.3 Findings

The GHMPO is found to be fully compliant with applicable laws, regulations, and practices of transit planning.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The FHWA and FTA review found that the metropolitan transportation planning process conducted in the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization meets Federal planning requirements as follows.

5.1 Commendations

The following are noteworthy practices that the Greater Hickory MPO is doing well in the transportation planning process:

1. The MPO is commended for their use of interactive digital tools and dashboards that facilitate regional coordination and transparency and inform the public of community impacts related to regional transportation projects.
2. The MPO is commended for their integration of freight-oriented development and land-use data directly into the 2050 MTP.
3. The MPO is commended for their survey of 100 regional freight operators to help in identifying critical bottlenecks and address federal freight planning factors to ensure the regional strategy remains grounded in real-world logistics and economic needs.

5.2 Corrective Actions

The following are corrective actions that the Greater Hickory MPO must take to comply with Federal Regulations:

None Observed.

5.3 Recommendations

The following are recommendations that would improve the transportation planning process:

1. The GHMPO website should explicitly list the current TAC membership and clearly identify the member(s) responsible for representing transit-related interests in addition to voting structure.
2. The MOU currently serves as a cooperative framework among NCDOT, the MPO, regional public transportation providers, and participating local governments; consequently, it should be formally executed only by those parties with direct responsibility for the agreement's implementation.



3. The PIP should describe explicit procedures for employing visualization techniques in the MTP and TIP (23CFR450.316(a)(1)(iii)).
4. The PIP should describe explicit procedures for demonstrating consideration and responding to public input received during the development of the MTP and TIP (23CFR450.316(a)(1)(vi)).
5. The TIP adoption resolution should include a clause associated with TIP/MTP consistency.

5.3 Training/Technical Assistance

The following training and technical assistance are recommended to assist the MPO with improvements to the transportation planning process:

None Identified.



APPENDIX A – PARTICIPANTS

The following individuals were involved in the Greater Hickory MPO urbanized area on-site review:

- Averi Ritchie, WPCOG – GHMPO Staff
- Casey Fullbright, WPCOG – GHMPO Staff
- Daniel Odom, WPCOG – GHMPO Staff
- Kelly Christensen, WPCOG
- Taylor Dellinger, WPCOG
- Andrew Webb, WPCOG
- Michael Bowman, WPRTA/Greenway Public Transportation
- James Upchurch, NCDOT - Transportation Planning Division
- Reuben Crummy, NCDOT – Transportation Planning Division
- George Hoops, PE, FHWA NC Division
- Jason Morgan, FTA Region 4
- Emily Maciejak, U.S. DOT Volpe Center
- Kaitlin Justice, U.S. DOT Volpe Center



APPENDIX B – AGENDA

Greater Hickory MPO On-Site/Virtual Hybrid Certification Review Agenda

9:00 – 9:15	Introductions and Purpose
9:15 – 9:30	Status of Previous Certification Review Findings
9:30 – 9:50	MPO Organizational Structure and Policy Board
9:50 – 10:00	Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries
10:00 – 10:30	Metropolitan Planning Agreements
10:30 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 11:00	Planning Process and Process Coordination
11:00 – 11:30	Participation by Interested Parties
11:30 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 12:45	Congestion Management Process
12:45 – 1:15	Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
1:15 – 1:30	Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
1:30 – 1:45	List of Obligated Projects
1:45 – 2:00	Break
2:00 – 2:30	Transit Planning
2:30 – 2:45	MPO Highlights/Concerns/Questions
2:45 – 3:15	Federal Review Team Meeting/Team Report Out
3:15 – 3:30	Provide a Report Out to MPO



APPENDIX C – PUBLIC COMMENTS

The survey results from the Greater Hickory MPO Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) are summarized below:

Committee Representation

- **TCC (Technical Committee):** 61.54% (8 respondents).
- **TAC (Policy Board):** 38.46% (5 respondents).

MPO Support and Communication

- **Information Quality:** 76.92% of respondents find materials provided by staff to be "Very Helpful and Timely," while the remaining respondents find them "Generally Helpful" (15.38%) or "Adequate" (7.69%).
- **Meeting Format:** 92.31% agree that current schedules and formats provide sufficient opportunity for review and discussion. Only 7.69% believe they "Could be Improved".
- **Agency Coordination:** Coordination with partner agencies (NCDOT, Greenway Transit, local governments) is viewed as "Very Strong" (69.23%) or "Strong" (23.08%).

Planning and Investment

- **Project Prioritization (MTP/TIP):** Responses were split, with 38.46% describing the process as "Clear and Collaborative" and another 38.46% finding it "Generally Clear". However, 15.38% found it "somewhat unclear".
- **Investment Alignment:** 61.54% feel transportation investments reflect regional and local needs "To a Great Extent," while 30.77% feel they do so "To a Moderate Extent".
- **Public Involvement:** This was the most varied area, with 46.15% rating efforts as "Effective," 23.08% as "Adequate," 15.38% as "Very Effective," and 15.38% stating they "Could be Expanded".

Key Opportunities for Improvement

Respondents identified several areas to enhance regional planning and coordination:

Public Accessibility: Increase social media presence and develop a less technical, more public-friendly website landing page.

Simplified Communication: Use simple fact sheets and fewer acronyms to better engage the community.

Process Efficiency: Optimize meeting schedules and streamline project requirements with partner agencies to ensure projects remain affordable and feasible for all jurisdictions.



The key takeaways from the results of a public survey conducted by the Greater Hickory MPO regarding regional transportation are summarized below:

Public familiarity and participation in regional transportation efforts:

- **Plan Familiarity:** A significant majority of respondents (65.22%) reported they were not familiar with any of the listed transportation plans.
- **Most Recognized Plan:** Among the specific options, the Western Piedmont Bike/Ped plan had the highest familiarity at 30.43%.
- **Other Plans:** Familiarity with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) was low, each at 8.7%. The Planning Work Program (PWP) was recognized by only 4.35% of respondents, while no respondents were familiar with the Congestion Management Process (CMP) or Public Involvement Plan (PIP).

Public participation in regional transportation efforts:

- **No Participation:** The vast majority of respondents (78.26%) have not participated in any MPO-related planning activities.
- **Direct Engagement:** Only 4.35% (one respondent) indicated they had participated in these planning efforts.
- **Uncertainty:** Approximately 17.39% of respondents were unsure if they had participated in any activities.

Public Opportunity to participate in transportation planning effort:

- **Mixed Opinions on Opportunities:** The largest group of respondents (34.78%) felt that there are "Somewhat" enough opportunities to participate.
- **Significant Uncertainty:** A large portion of respondents (30.43%) indicated they were "Not Sure" if opportunities were available.
- **Low "Yes" and "No" Responses:** An equal number of respondents (17.39% each) explicitly felt there either were ("Yes") or were not ("No") sufficient opportunities to participate in the planning efforts.

Respondents assessment of the Transportation plans availability:

- **Information Sources:**
 - **Social Media:** This is the most common source of information, cited by 52.17% of respondents.
 - **Not Sure:** A large portion of respondents (34.78%) were unsure how they received information.
 - **Word of Mouth:** Used by 17.39% of respondents.
 - **Public Meetings:** Cited by 8.7%.
 - **Email/Newsletters:** Only 4.35% used this method.
 - **MPO Website/Other:** No respondents (0%) selected these as sources.



- **Availability Rating:**
 - A majority of respondents (52.17%) rated the availability of information as "Limited".
 - 17.39% were "Not Sure" about the availability.
 - 13.04% felt information was "Accessible" and another 13.04% were "Neutral".
 - Only 4.35% rated information as "Very Accessible".

Respondents respondent with what would make it easier for the public to stay informed about transportation projects:

- **More frequent updates:** This was the most requested method, cited by 60.87% of respondents.
- **More visuals/maps:** Over half of respondents (56.52%) suggested that more visual information would be helpful.
- **Short summaries:** Approximately 52.17% of respondents indicated a preference for brief summaries of information.
- **Community meetings:** This method was also favored by 52.17% of those surveyed.
- **Interactive tools:** Roughly 34.78% of respondents felt that interactive tools would aid in staying informed.
- **Other:** A small portion of respondents (13.04%) suggested other unspecified methods.

Respondents identified transportation challenges experienced:

- **Primary Challenge:** The most significant issue reported is a lack of sidewalks and bike facilities, cited by 69.57% of respondents.
- **Safety and Traffic:** Over half of respondents (52.17%) identified safety concerns as a challenge, while 43.48% cited traffic congestion.
- **Infrastructure and Connectivity:** Three different areas were each identified as challenges by 39.13% of respondents: Limited transit options, Connectivity between different areas, and General road conditions.
- **Other Barriers:** ADA barriers were noted by 13.04% of those surveyed.
- **Minimal Concerns:** Very few respondents (4.35%) reported experiencing no major challenges.

Respondents feedback on if the transportation system supports their daily needs:

- **Needs Improvement:** The majority of respondents (52.17%) feel the system needs improvement.
- **Well:** Approximately 30.43% of respondents believe the system currently supports their needs well.
- **Neutral:** A smaller group (13.04%) expressed a neutral opinion.
- **Very Well:** Only 4.35% (one respondent) feel the system supports their needs very well.
- **Not Sure:** No respondents indicated they were unsure.



What respondents identified as transportation improvements they would most like to see in their communities:

- **Sidewalks & Bikes:** This was the most requested improvement, selected by 73.91% of respondents.
- **Roadway Improvements:** Over half of the respondents (52.17%) cited general roadway improvements as a priority.
- **Safety and Regional Connectivity:** Both Safety Improvements and Regional Connectivity were identified as priorities by 47.83% of respondents.
- **Transit and Economic Access:**
 - Transit Access & Connectivity: 21.74%.
 - Economic Development Access: 17.39%.
- **ADA Improvements:** 13.04% of respondents would like to see improvements related to ADA accessibility.

Respondents feedback on what transportation improvements would have the greatest positive impact in your community?

Respondents highlighted the importance of active transportation, emphasizing the need for expanded sidewalks, bike trails, and greenways, as well as improved ADA accessibility. Addressing specific roadway improvements—such as upgrading interchanges along I-40, enhancing heavily congested intersections, and optimizing traffic signal timing—was noted as key for better vehicular flow. Additionally, there is a strong interest in improving regional public transit connectivity and establishing passenger rail options, accompanied by a need for better public communication regarding the transportation services already available.

Respondents feedback on other issues they would like to share regarding transportation?

Community members emphasized the necessity of expanding and actively promoting accessible public transportation options to ensure all residents can reliably reach jobs and essential services. Participants also expressed a strong desire for regional passenger rail connectivity to major hubs and airports. Furthermore, improving the overall safety of local roads—such as widening lanes and adding supportive shoulders —alongside enhancing access to recreational areas, were identified as important priorities for the region's transportation future.



APPENDIX D - LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act
AMPO: Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations
CAA: Clean Air Act
CFR: Code of Federal Regulations
CMP: Congestion Management Process
CO: Carbon Monoxide
DOT: Department of Transportation
FAST: Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act
FHWA: Federal Highway Administration
FTA: Federal Transit Administration
FY: Fiscal Year
HSIP: Highway Safety Improvement Program
ITS: Intelligent Transportation Systems
LEP: Limited-English-Proficiency
M&O: Management and Operations
MAP-21: Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century
MPA: Metropolitan Planning Area
MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTP: Metropolitan Transportation Plan
NAAQS: National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide
O₃: Ozone
PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}: Particulate Matter
SHSP: Strategic Highway Safety Plan
STIP: State Transportation Improvement Program
TDM: Travel Demand Management
TIP: Transportation Improvement Program
TMA: Transportation Management Area
U.S.C.: United States Code
UPWP: Unified Planning Work Program
USDOT: United States Department of Transportation





Report prepared by:

NC FHWA Division Office

**310 New Bern Avenue, Suite
410**

Raleigh, NC 27601

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TCC/TAC**

MEETING DATE: June 24, 2026

**SUBJECT: Goals, Vision, and Policies Chapter of Metropolitan Transportation Plan
PRESENTER: Averi Ritchie, Transportation Planning Director**

ATTACHMENTS: Goals, Vision, and Policies Overview

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

The proposed "Goals, Vision, and Policies" chapter of the 2055 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) establishes the foundational direction for the Greater Hickory MPO's long-range transportation investments. The updated vision focuses on developing a safe, secure, connected, reliable, and resilient transportation system that expands access to opportunities, supports economic prosperity, and enhances the region's quality of life. Crucially, this chapter directly aligns our regional objectives with the ten federal planning factors mandated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), ensuring full compliance and consistency with statewide planning practices.

To better serve the region, the update strategically reorganizes the priorities established in the 2050 MTP into eight broader, outcome-based goal areas. This restructured framework reduces overlap and establishes a stronger connection between objectives and performance measures. The eight proposed 2055 goals focus on: Safety & Security, Mobility & Connectivity, Accessibility & Transportation Choice, Economic Vitality & Freight Mobility (which now formally integrates aviation), Infrastructure Condition & Reliability, Resilience, Environment & Quality of Life, and Regional Coordination & Public Engagement.

Finally, the chapter outlines the active planning tools and programs GHMPO staff are utilizing to translate these goals into actionable projects. These include the upcoming Economic Expansion and Accessibility interactive mapping tool, transit ridership trend analysis for WPRTA, updates to the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, the Western Piedmont Transportation Safety Plan (WPTSP), and the continued administration of the Locally Administered Project Program (LAPP). Approval of this chapter will set the official policy framework for the remainder of the 2055 MTP development process.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: None. Informational item only.



Western Piedmont
Council of Governments

Creative Regional Solutions Since 1968

2055 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Update: Goals, Vision, and Policies
Greater Hickory MPO | June 2026

OUR VISION

- "A safe, connected, reliable, and resilient transportation system that expands access to opportunities, supports economic prosperity, and enhances quality of life."

FEDERAL PLANNING FACTORS

- Economic Vitality
- Safety
- Security
- Accessibility
- Environment
- Connectivity
- Efficiency
- Preservation
- Resiliency
- Tourism

GOAL TRANSITION: 2050 TO 2055

2050 MTP Goal Area	Key Themes	Proposed 2055 Goal
Multimodal Transportation	Connectivity, access, modal integration	Mobility & Connectivity
Streets & Highways	Mobility, reliability, congestion relief	Mobility & Connectivity
Congestion Management	Reliability, system efficiency	Mobility & Connectivity
Bicycle & Pedestrian	Active transportation, accessibility, safety	Accessibility & Transportation Choice
Public Transportation	Transit access, mobility options	Accessibility & Transportation Choice
Freight Transportation	Freight movement, economic activity	Economic Vitality & Freight Mobility
Aviation	Economic development, regional competitiveness	Economic Vitality & Freight Mobility
Land Use Coordination	Community development, coordination	Environment & Quality of Life
Human & Natural Environment	Environmental stewardship	Environment & Quality of Life
Safety & Security	Fatalities, crashes, security	Safety
Transportation Funding	Asset management, project implementation	Infrastructure Condition & Reliability
Planning Process	Coordination, public engagement	Regional Coordination & Public Engagement
System Resilience	Hazard mitigation, recovery, reliability	Resilience

SAFETY & CONNECTIVITY

- **Goal 1: Safety & Security**

- Reduce fatalities and serious injuries for all users. Includes improved emergency response and cross-modal safety outcomes.

- **Goal 2: Mobility & Connectivity**

- Efficient transportation network across modes. Merges highways and multimodal into a single focus on regional movement.

ACCESSIBILITY & ECONOMY

- **Goal 3: Accessibility & Choice**

- Expand safe and affordable access to opportunities for all ages. Consolidates Bike/Ped and Transit goals.

- **Goal 4: Economic Vitality**

- Support prosperity through reliable movement of goods and people. Integrates Freight and Aviation focus areas.

CONDITION & RESILIENCE

- **Goal 5: Infrastructure**

- Emphasize preservation and maintenance of existing assets. Maximizes the value of current regional investments.

- **Goal 6: Resilience**

- Adapt to and recover from disruptions. Includes hazard mitigation and mitigating stormwater impacts.

ENVIRONMENT & COORDINATION

- **Goal 7: Environment & QOL**
 - Protect natural and human environments while promoting planned growth and energy conservation.
- **Goal 8: Regional Coordination**
 - Promote coordinated decision-making and meaningful public involvement throughout the planning process.

ECONOMIC ACCESSIBILITY TOOL

- Interactive mapping tool (FY 26-27 adoption) evaluates networks using traffic signal data, AADT, and zoning.
 - Identifies regional bottlenecks
 - Supports signal delay review
 - Promotes strategic growth

TITLE VI EXPLORER TOOL

- Interactive mapping tool which is used to make project impact assessments about highly concentrated Title VI communities.
 - Identifies highly concentrated Title VI communities
 - Supports project impact assessments
 - Promotes inclusive regional planning

TRANSIT & BIKE/PED TOOLS

- **Transit Ridership Analysis**
 - Initiating trend analysis for WPRTA to assist in system-wide reroutes. Includes mapping updates for automated passenger counter software.
- **Regional Bike/Ped Plan**
 - Ongoing oversight and implementation of the adopted Western Piedmont Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, including scoring and mapping.

SAFETY & FUNDING

- **WP Safety Plan (WPTSP)**
 - Identifies high-risk areas using crash data across all modes. Informs CTP "Purpose and Need" sheets for FY 26-27.
- **ADA Transition Planning Services**
 - We partner with communities to create clear, forward-thinking plans that remove barriers and improve access to civic life for individuals with disabilities.
- **\$ LAPP Program**
 - Annual call for projects and supplemental funding. GHMPO currently administers one project on behalf of local staff.



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Questions?



**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
GREATER HICKORY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TCC/TAC**

MEETING DATE: June 24, 2026

SUBJECT: Express Design Project Submittals & Statewide Tier Results

PRESENTER: Averi Ritchie & Casey Fullbright

ATTACHMENTS: Express Design Project Submittals & Statewide Tier Results

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

The NCDOT Express Design program is a critical planning tool utilized to develop conceptual engineering layouts and refined cost estimates for proposed transportation projects prior to formal scoring. By identifying potential right-of-way impacts, environmental constraints, and realistic budget requirements early in the development phase, Express Designs help mitigate unforeseen issues and significantly increase a project's competitiveness for funding. For the current planning cycle, GHMPO staff is actively finalizing three local project submittals for this program, which must be submitted to NCDOT by the end of June.

In addition to the upcoming Express Design submittals, the NCDOT Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation (SPOT) has officially released the scoring results for the Statewide Mobility Tier. The Statewide Tier focuses on major highway and freight corridors that move large volumes of traffic across the state. We are pleased to report that the results are in, and the approved major projects have been fully programmed into the Prioritization 8.0 (P8.0) framework.

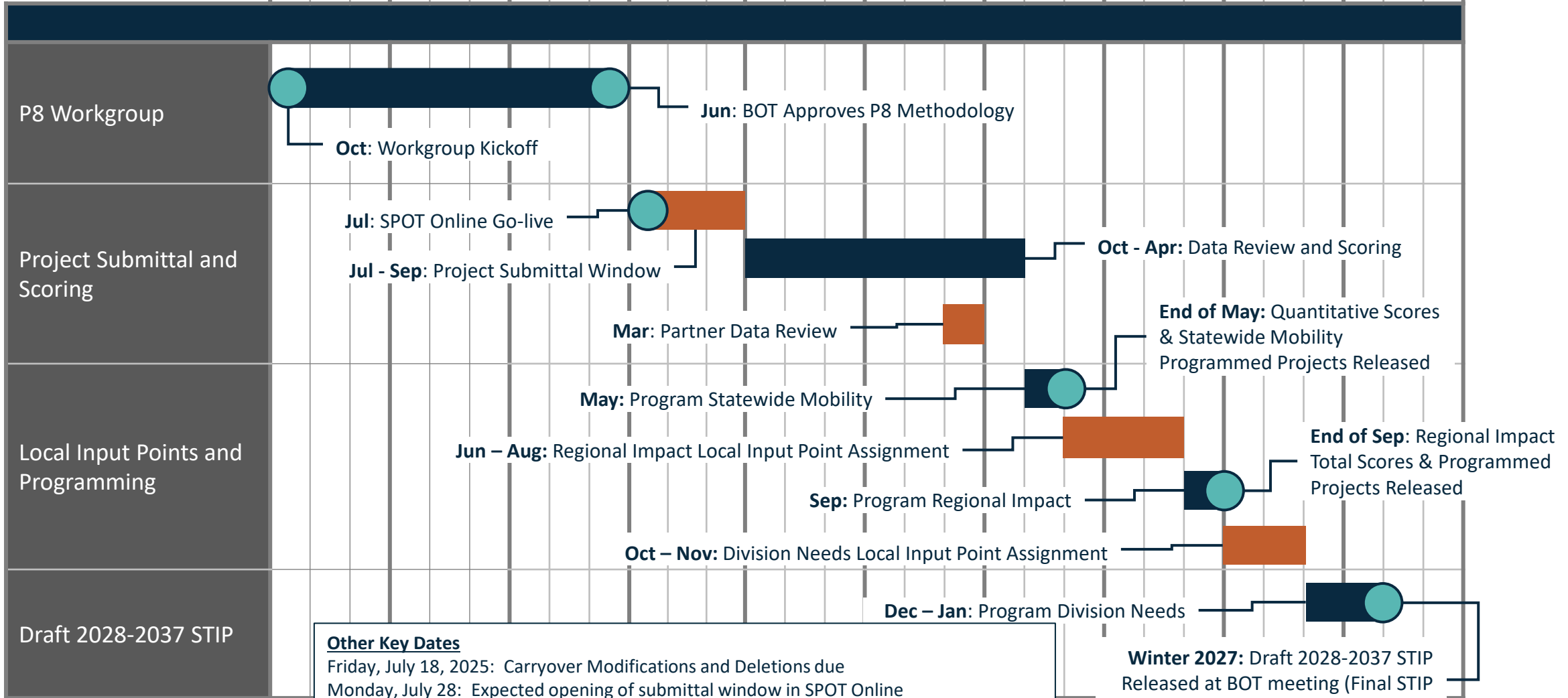
The programming of these Statewide Tier projects establishes a clear baseline as the region transitions into the subsequent Regional Impact and Division Needs scoring tiers of P8.0. During the meeting, staff will provide a brief presentation reviewing the specifics of the three June Express Design submittals, alongside a summary of our region's programmed Statewide Tier projects for the committees' review and discussion.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: None. Informational item only.

REVISED P8 Schedule

● Fixed Dates
■ Partner Input

2024	2025					2026					2027		
O N D	J F M A M	J J A S O	N D	J F M A M	J J A S O	N D	J F M	A M J	J A S	O N D	J F M		



Other Key Dates

- Friday, July 18, 2025: Carryover Modifications and Deletions due
- Monday, July 28: Expected opening of submittal window in SPOT Online
- Tuesday, September 30, 2025: Submittal window closes
- Tuesday, September 30, 2025: Area-specific Weights due to SPOT Office
- Friday, May 1, 2026: Deadline for SPOT Office approval of LIP Assignment Methodologies

Potential Express Design Submittals for Prioritization 9

SPOT ID	Mode	TIP	Project Category	Route	From / Cross Street	To	Description	Specific Improvement Type	Cost to NCDOT	Statewide Mobility Quantitative Score (Out of 100)	Regional Impact Quantitative Score (Out of 70)	Division Needs Quantitative Score (Out of 50)
H250621	Highway		Statewide Mobility	US 321 (Hickory Boulevard)	US 321 ALT (Riverbend Drive)	Glenn Ridge Drive	Construct reduced conflict intersection corridor	25 - Improve Multiple Intersections along Corridor	\$ 15,000,000	73.09	51.42	37.00
H170910	Highway	I-5991B	Statewide Mobility	I-40	SR 1476 (Fairgrove Church Road) - Exit 128	NC 16 (Thornburg Drive) - Exit 132	Widen roadway to 6 lanes.	1 - Widen Existing Roadway	\$ 98,400,000	68.32	40.03	24.47
H172232	Highway		Statewide Mobility	I-40	SR 1761 - Exit 116	US 321 - Exit 123	Widen Existing Roadway	1 - Widen Existing Roadway	\$ 300,300,000	63.16	37.49	22.77
H250089	Highway		Regional Impact	NC 16	US 64 Eastbound ramps	US 64 Westbound ramps	Construct roundabouts	25 - Improve Multiple Intersections along Corridor	\$ 11,600,000	N/A	48.04	36.39
H090090	Highway	U-6151	Regional Impact	NC 16	Catawba River	US 64	Catawba River to US 64 in Taylorsville. Upgrade and modernize two-lane roadway.	16 - Modernize Roadway	\$ 147,600,000	N/A	47.30	36.11
H090084-A	Highway	R-2307A	Regional Impact	NC 150	Relocated NC 16	SR 1902 (Harvel Road)	Relocated NC 16 (STIP project R-2206) to east of SR 1840 (Greenwood Road). Widen to 4-lanes with a BYP of the Terrell Historic District.	1 - Widen Existing Roadway	\$ 419,500,000	N/A	44.43	25.89
H090474-C	Highway	U-4700C	Statewide Mobility	US 321	SR 1108 (Mission Road)	SR 1933 (Southwest Boulevard)	Add additional lanes	1 - Widen Existing Roadway	\$ 159,200,000	60.81	41.31	29.96
H090474-B	Highway	U-4700B	Statewide Mobility	US 321	US 321 ALT (South Main Street)	SR 1108 (Mission Road)	Add additional lanes	1 - Widen Existing Roadway	\$ 285,100,000	58.59	38.66	26.93

**Draft 2028-2037 STIP Estimated Funding Availability
for Selecting Projects from Prioritization 8.0
As of May 28, 2026**

STI Funding Category	Funding Availability
Region A (Divisions 1 & 4)	\$100M
Region B (Divisions 2 & 3)	\$150M
Region C (Divisions 5 & 6)	\$551M
Region D (Divisions 7 & 9)	\$236M
Region E (Divisions 8 & 10)	\$246M
Region F (Divisions 11 & 12)	\$432M
Region G (Divisions 13 & 14)	\$122M
Division 1	\$228M
Division 2	\$159M
Division 3	\$31M
Division 4	\$29M
Division 5	\$125M
Division 6	\$186M
Division 7	\$106M
Division 8	-\$21M
Division 9	\$80M
Division 10	\$97M
Division 11	\$15M
Division 12	\$47M
Division 13	\$190M
Division 14	\$257M

Values are as of May 28, 2026, and will change due to, but not limited to:

- Variance adjustments (also known as the lookback law)
- Additional funding for ongoing activities
- Bid adjustments
- Cost changes for future projects
- Schedule changes
- Changes in anticipated revenues (including federal transportation re-authorization)

Greater Hickory MPO
Transportation Update
June 2026

Division 11 Projects Under Development – Caldwell Co.								
<u>TIP</u>	<u>ROUTE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>ROW YEAR</u>	<u>CONST YEAR</u>	<u>TOTAL PROJECT COST</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Final Assigned Manager</u>	<u>Funding: S/F</u>
BL-0002	US 321A (MAIN STREET)	US 321A (MAIN STREET), CONSTRUCT PEDESTRIAN CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS FROM SR 1952 (CEDAR VALLEY ROAD) TO SR 1156 (LEGION ROAD).	2026	2026	\$464,000	Planning	Division	F
BL-0065	NS	Lenoir Greenway, Harper Avenue to Morganton Boulevard. Extend multi-use path.	2028	2029	\$2,449,000	Planning	LAP	F
BP11-R008	SR 1545 (COTTRELL HILL ROAD)	Replace Bridge 130011 on SR 1545 over Zachs Fork Creek in Caldwell County	2025	2028	\$1,575,000	Utilities	Division	S
BP11-R025	SR 1927 (OLD MORGANTON ROAD)	Replace Bridge 130332 on SR 1927 over Abington Creek in Caldwell County	2026	2029	\$1,475,000	R/W	Division	S
BP11-R040	SR 1719 (CEDAR VALLEY CHURCH ROAD)	Replace Bridge 130048 on SR 1719 over Upper Little River in Caldwell County	2025	2028	\$1,175,000	Utilities by others complete	Division	S
BP11-R042	SR 1328 (BROWN MOUNTAIN BEACH ROAD)	Replace Bridge 130322 on SR 1328 over Este Mill Creek in Caldwell County	2028	2029	\$950,000	Planning	Division	S
BP11-R048	SR 1571	Replace Bridge 130342 on SR 1571 over Kings Creek in Caldwell County	2026	2027	\$1,735,000	Planning	Division	S
HB-0056	SR 1514	SR 1514, REPLACE BRIDGE 130 OVER YADKIN RIVER.	2025	2026	\$2,150,000	September 2026 LET	Division	F
HB-0057	SR 1356	SR 1356, REPLACE BRIDGE 185 OVER JOHNS RIVER.	2025	2027	\$2,100,000	October 2026 LET	Division	F
HB-0058	SR 1356	SR 1356, REPLACE BRIDGE 186 OVER JOHNS RIVER.	2025	2027	\$1,820,000	October 2026 LET	Division	F
HB-0059	SR 1356	SR 1356, REPLACE BRIDGE 275 OVER JOHNS RIVER.	2025	2027	\$1,860,000	October 2026 LET	Division	F
HB-0060	SR 1356	SR 1356, REPLACE BRIDGE 317 OVER JOHNS RIVER.	2025	2027	\$2,330,000	October 2026 LET	Division	F

Greater Hickory MPO
 Transportation Update
 June 2026

Division 11 Projects Under Construction								
<u>Contract Number</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>TIP#</u>	<u>Route</u>	<u>Location Description</u>	<u>Contract Amount</u>	<u>Contractor</u>	<u>Construction Progress %</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
C204844	CALDWELL	U-6036	SR 1109 (PINEWOOD ROAD)	FROM US 321 TO SR-1252 (BERT HUFFMAN ROAD)	\$11,480,140.98	JAMES R VANNOY & SONS CONSTRUCTION COMPANY INC	52 %	7/27
C204840	CALDWELL	U-4700CC	US 321 and SR 1108 (Mission Road)	INTERSECTION AT US-321 AND SR-1108 (MISSION RD).	\$13,348,559.10	HEI CIVIL CAROLINAS LLC	11 %	4/28
DK00436	CALDWELL	DF18311. 2014030.PR	SR 1358 (Edgemont Church Place)	REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 161 OVER WILSON CREEK	\$1,641,926.67	JAMES R VANNOY & SONS CONSTRUCTION COMPANY INC	17 %	4/27

Division 13, GHMPO Construction Progress Update, June 2026

Contract Number	County	TIP#	Description Of Work	Route	Location Description	Letting Date	Completion Date	Revised Completion Date	Completion Percent
C204716	Burke	B-5869	Bridge Replacement	US-64	BRIDGE #99 OVER NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILROAD ON US-64/US-70 IN MORGANTON.	5/16/2023	2/8/2027	3/29/2027	81.43%
C204956	Burke, Caldwell	R-3430B	Bridge Replacement	SR-1001	BRIDGE #110010 OVER CATAWBA RIVER ON SR-1001 (CONNELLY SPRINGS RD).	8/19/2025	3/30/2029		7.14%
C205096	Burke, McDowell		Milling, Resurfacing, and Shoulder Reconstructuion	SR-MULTI	20 SECTIONS OF SECONDARY ROADS.	5/20/2025	11/1/2026	11/2/2026	61.76%
DM00387	Burke	HA-0001	Grading, Drainage, Paving, Curb and Gutter	-	NEW ACCESS ROAD INTO BURKE INDUSTRIAL PARK	5/28/2025	6/30/2026	7/30/2026	88.54%
DM00429	Burke	BP13-R033	Bridge Replacement	SR-1116	SR-1116 (JEETER CARSWELL RD) OVER DOUBLE BRANCH	11/19/2025	4/30/2027		91.88%
DM00442	Burke, Rutherford		Patching and Pavement Preservation	SR-MULTI	VARIOUS SECONDARY ROUTES	3/6/2024	11/21/2025	12/12/2025	33.27%
DM00449	Burke	R-5967	Patching and Pavement Preservation	SR-1625	SR-1625 (9TH AVE DR NW)	1/3/2024	10/30/2026	11/25/2026	73.31%
DM00455	Burke, Madison, McDowell, Rutherford		Long-life Pavement Markings	NC-108, NC-114, NC-126, NC-181, NC-208, NC-209, NC-226ALT, NC-9, SR-VAR, US-221	VARIOUS PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ROUTES	8/7/2024	9/26/2025		47.54%
DM00466	Burke, McDowell, Rutherford		Milling, Resurfacing, and Shoulder Reconstructuion	SR-MULTI	VARIOUS SECONDARY ROUTES	4/15/2026	9/3/2027		0.00%

Division 13, GHMPO Project Development Update, June 2026

Project ID	Project Manager Name	Description	R/W Acq. Begins	Let Date	Funding Program Description	PE Status
RX-2013C	NANCY HORNE	HIGHWAY-RAILWAY GRADE CROSSING SIGNALS AND GATES ON HOGAN STREET AT NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILWAY CROSSING 729506G IN MORGANTON,BURKE COUNTY,NC		6/2/2026	RAIL - RAIL - HIGHWAY GRADE CROSSING IMPROVEMENT	ACTIVE
HS-2413H	GABRIEL L. JOHNSON	VARIOUS PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ROUTES. INSTALL HORIZONTAL ALIGNMENT WARNING SIGNS.		6/3/2026	HIGHWAY - SAFETY	ACTIVE
HS-2413E	GABRIEL L. JOHNSON	US 70, VARIOUS LOCATIONS. INSTALL RUMBLE STRIPES AND 6" LONG LIFE PAVEMENT MARKINGS.		6/19/2026	HIGHWAY - SAFETY	ACTIVE
HS-2413Q	GABRIEL L. JOHNSON	SR 1786 (MILLER BRIDGE ROAD). NC 18 AND SR 1761 (OLD NC HIGHWAY 10). INSTALL RUMBLE STRIPES WITH 6 INCH LONG LIFE PAVEMENT MARKINGS.		10/30/2026	HIGHWAY - SAFETY	ACTIVE
HS-2413V	GABRIEL L. JOHNSON	NC 181, SR 1414 (ST MARYS CHURCH ROAD) AND NC 183. INSTALL RUMBLE STRIPES WITH LONG LIFE PAVEMENT MARKINGS.		10/30/2026	HIGHWAY - SAFETY	ACTIVE
BL-0141	GABRIEL L. JOHNSON	NC 126, BENFIELD'S LANDING BURKE ROAD TO EASTSIDE BURKE AVENUE IN NEBO. CONSTRUCT SIDEWALK.	5/29/2026	6/2/2027	BIKE & PED - LOCALLY SELECTED	ACTIVE
EB-5978	GABRIEL L. JOHNSON	COLLEGE STREET MULTIMODAL CONNECTOR TRAIL FROM NORTH GREEN STREET TO US 70 IN MORGANTON	9/18/2026	9/30/2027	BIKE & PED - STI (PRIORITIZATION)	ACTIVE
BL-0166	GABRIEL L. JOHNSON	MASSEL AVENUE, RODORET STREET TO CAROLINA STREET SE. CONSTRUCT SIDEWALK.	10/1/2027	10/1/2028	BIKE & PED - LOCALLY SELECTED	INACTIVE
I-5891B	GABRIEL L. JOHNSON	I-40 FROM MILE MARKER 105 TO MILE MARKER 112 PAVEMENT REHABILITATION AND BRIDGE REHABILITATION		3/20/2029	HIGHWAY - INTERSTATE MAINTENANCE	ACTIVE
BR-0151	HANNAH K. SMITH	SR 1002 (HENERY RIVER ROAD),SR 1002 (HENRY RIVER ROAD) OVERI-40. REPLACE BRIDGE.	10/25/2027	6/19/2029	HIGHWAY FUND BRIDGE / BRIDGE PROGRAM	ACTIVE
I-5990	HANNAH K. SMITH	I-40 AT EXIT 118 - SR 1761 (OLD NC 10). (COMB W/BR-0151). CONSTRUCT INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENTS.	9/15/2027	6/19/2029	HIGHWAY - STI (PRIORITIZATION)	ACTIVE
U-5836	BRENDAN MERITHEW	NC 181 FROM SR 1414 (ST. MARY'S CHURCH ROAD) TO MORGANTON ETJ WIDEN EXISTING ROADWAY	10/12/2026	6/18/2030	HIGHWAY - STI (PRIORITIZATION)	ACTIVE
BR-0130	GRAYSON P. FLOYD	Replace Bridges 110114 and 110120 on I40 over Silver Creek.	10/19/2026	1/21/2031	HIGHWAY FUND BRIDGE / BRIDGE PROGRAM	ACTIVE
R-3430A	WESLEY BROOKS CARTNER	SR 1001 (MALCOLM BOULEVARD) FROM US 70 TO CATAWBA RIVER. MODERNIZE ROADWAY TO INCLUDE BICYCLE AND		1/1/2040	HIGHWAY - STI (PRIORITIZATION)	INACTIVE