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WPCOG - Newsletter

January 2019

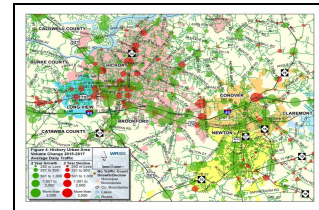
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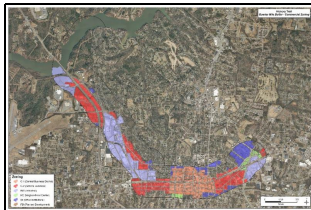
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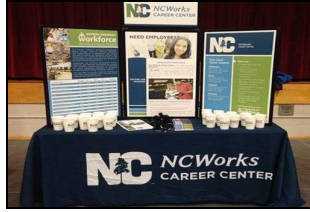
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Workforce Development Board

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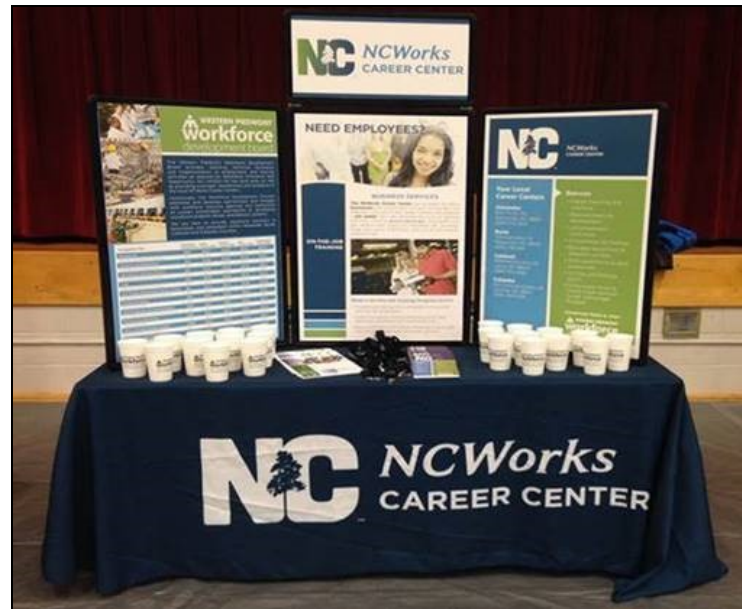
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Workforce Development Board NCWorks is Working

As the economy continues to improve and grow, career seekers are finding that they have many options for a career path that is right for them. Since July 2018, over 7,500 career seekers have come to our NCWorks Career Centers for job getting assistance in areas like resume development, interview prep, job searches, recruiting and virtual recruitment set up.

We also provide [NEXTGen Youth and Young Adult](#) (16yrs-24yrs Old) specific career guidance and coaching at our NCWorks Career Centers, which can include paid internships, job shadowing and scholarships for those eligible.



Businesses have also seen positive results in holding their recruitment events at our local NCWork Career Centers, with results of over 80 hiring events advertised and supported at the centers since July.

Our NCWorks Career Centers offers a specific employer recruitment flyer, advertising on our www.westernpiedmontworks.org website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram social media outlets and career coaching support during the recruitment event, all at no cost.

The Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board provides oversight, planning and coordination of the NCWorks Career Centers.

[Article by Wendy Johnson](#)

Area Agency on Aging Community Advisory Committee

What is a Community Advisory Committee?

The Community Advisory Committee was established in legislation ratified by the North Carolina

General Assembly. It was the intent of the General Assembly that each community in the state should take a more active role in promoting the interest and well-being of persons residing in nursing homes and adult care homes. The N.C. Division of Aging and Adult Services, through a network of regional long term care ombudsmen, provide the committee members with training and assistance in the performance of their duties.



What do the Committees do?

The committees work to give the residents a voice-to help advocate, listen, and understand their concerns. The committees work to maintain the rights of all long term care residents. The committee meets quarterly to visit and report on facilities in their county. The committee members are also the link between the community and the facility, seeking to increase community involvement and, at the same time, keep the public informed about aspects of long term care and operation of the nursing and/or adult care homes.

Why are these Committees so important?

These committees can truly make a difference in our resident's lives. All it takes is one conversation, one laugh, or one smile to make someone's day just that much better. We would love for our community to come together for our residents and help us give them a voice.

Who do we serve?

We need committee members in Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, and Alexander counties. These residents need dedicated individuals such as yourself. You must live in the community in which you decide to serve. For example, if you live in Catawba County you must serve in Catawba County.

If you are interested in volunteering to make a true difference in your community please contact:

Regional Ombudsman
Christina Franklin
Phone: 828-485-4213
Email: christina.franklin@wpcog.org

Article by Amber Chapman

Community & Economic Development

NC Building Reuse Grant Projects

James River Companies received approval for a \$60,000 North Carolina Rural Economic Development Division Building Reuse Grant to renovate a vacant facility along U.S. 321 Business in Newton.

James River, an official dealer of John Deere equipment, has purchased the former Slimline building at 2616 Northwest Blvd. Aside from building acquisition costs, the company plans to invest more than \$300,000 to renovate the building. In addition, James River plans to create 12 new, full-time jobs with an average pay of \$44,000 per year.

Meanwhile, PTI - a subsidiary of HSM Solutions - has been awarded a \$187,000 Building Reuse Grant to make renovations to a 160,000 square-foot site located at 1501 13th St SW in Hickory. The project will allow PTI - which manufactures custom, extruded foam profiles for a variety of industries - to consolidate its operations from three buildings into one.

Part of an overall investment of more than \$1 million, PTI plans to hire 15 new, full-time employees with an average annual pay of nearly \$45,000.

Combined, the two building reuse grant projects will bring more than \$1.3 million in investment and 27 new, full-time jobs to the region.

Article by Paul Teague

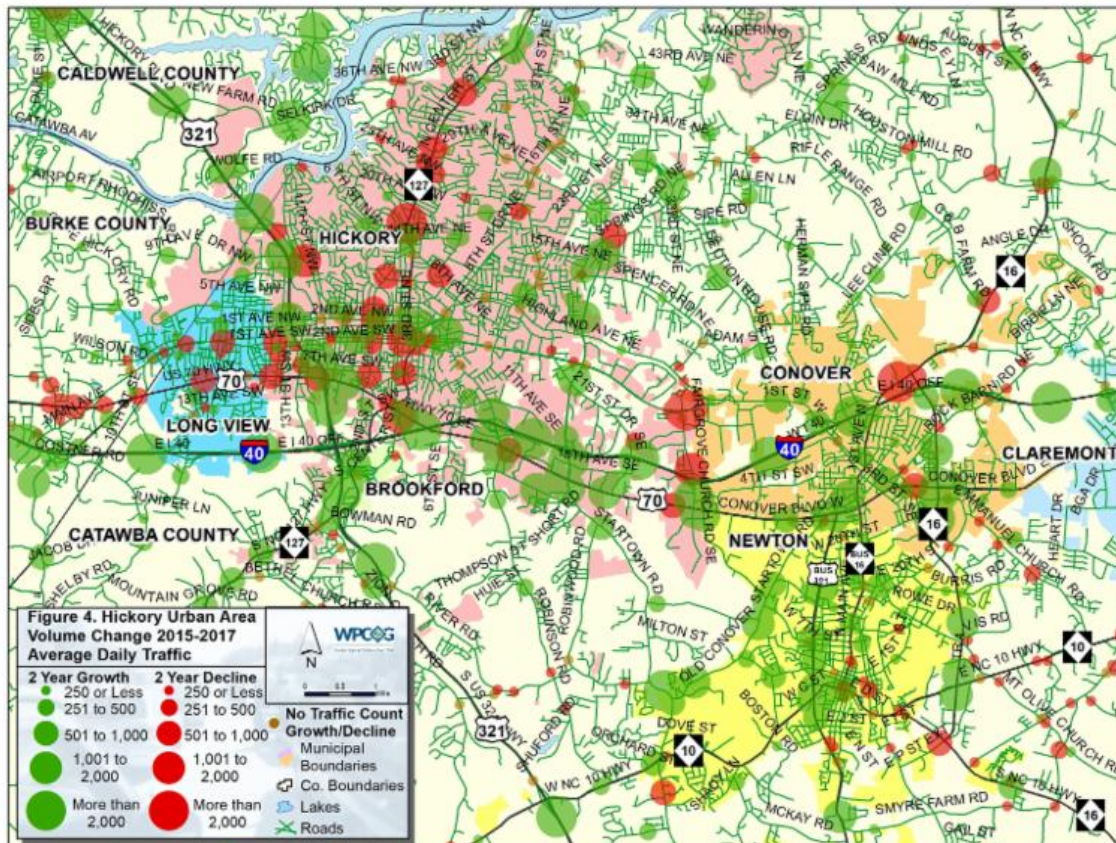
Community & Regional Planning

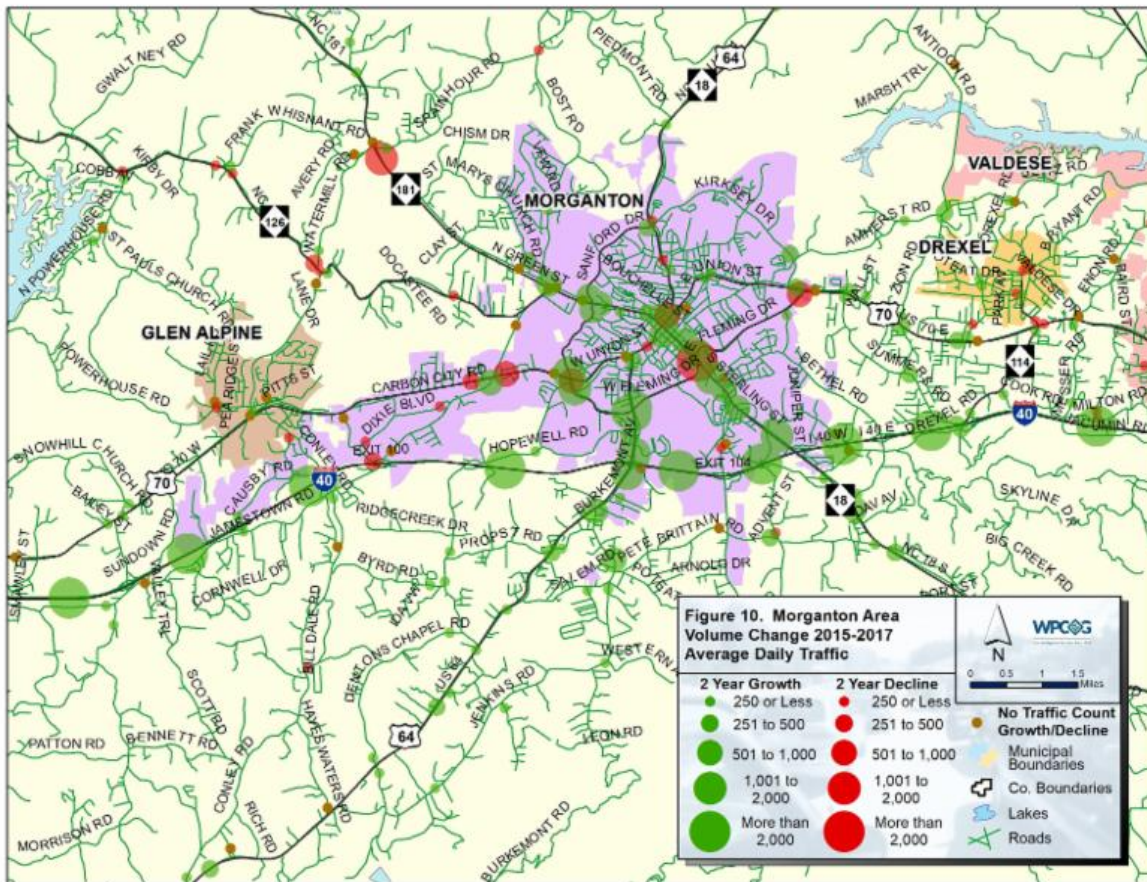
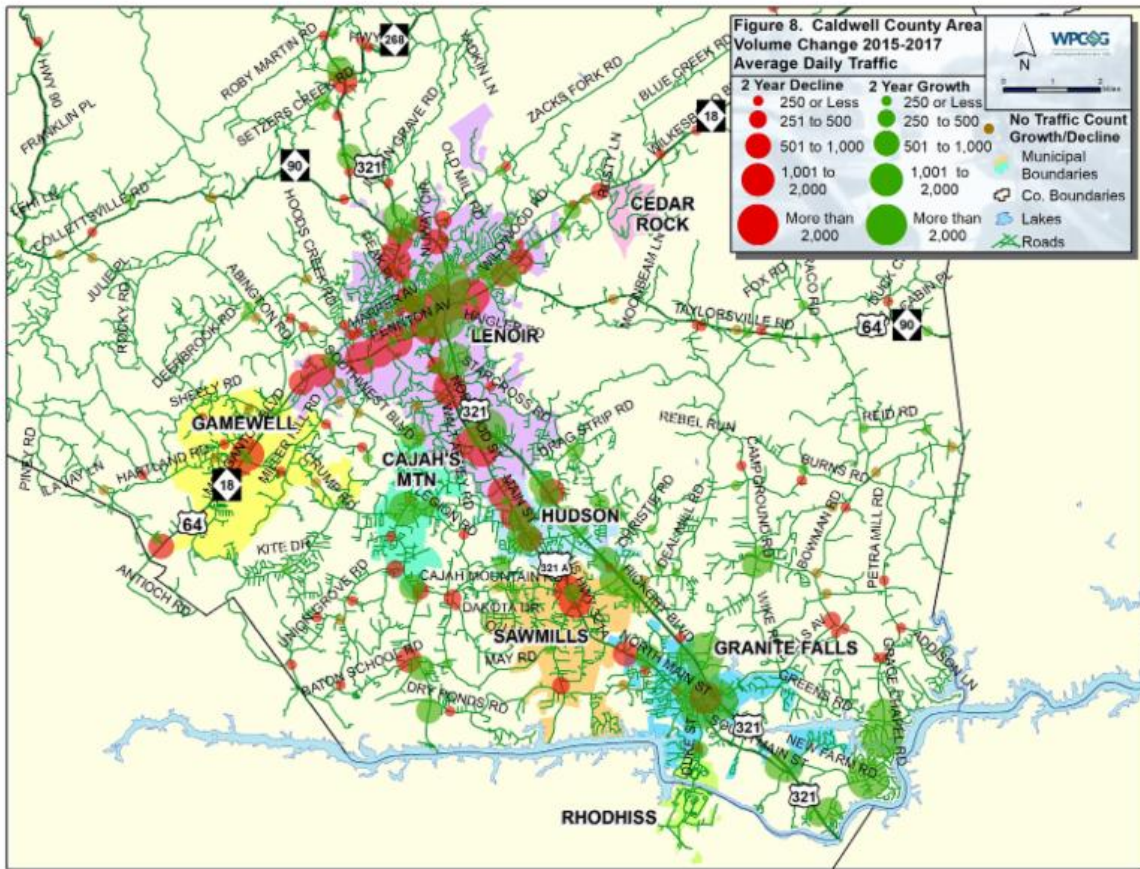
Winter 2018 EIN - Hickory Metro Region Traffic Count Trends

The current issue addresses Hickory Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) unemployment rates, Hickory Metro average annual wages and Hickory MSA traffic counts.

Here are a few key highlights of the EIN:

- The Hickory MSA's unemployment rate declined from 3.4% in April 2018 to 3.1% in October 2018.
- Between April and October, the number of employed persons grew by 1,925 to 170,753 while the civilian labor force decreased from 174,691 to 176,224 (1,753).
- Average Hickory MSA wages increased from \$34,835 in 2013 to \$39,646 in 2017.
- Data from the North Carolina Department of Transportation reveals that the highest 2017 traffic count in the Hickory Metro region of 72,000 vehicles per day occurred along I-40 between US Highway 321 (Exit 123) and McDonald Parkway (Exit 126).
- The largest traffic volume increase in the Hickory-Newton-Conover area between 2007 and 2017 (10,000 vehicles per day) was along I-40 between the Longview and US 321 exits.
- The highest Alexander County traffic count in 2017 (15,000) was located at NC 127 just south of Rink Dam Road.
- Between 2007 and 2017, Average Daily Traffic (ADT) increases of 1,000 vehicles per day occurred along NC 127 north of Rink Dam Rd and NC 16 between Taylorsville and the Catawba County line.
- Twelve traffic count locations in Caldwell County had ADTs of 30,000 or more in 2017. Nearly all of these counts occurred on US 321 between Lenoir and the Catawba River Bridge.
- Traffic counts along US 321 were much higher in 2017 than in 2015 along US 321 between Lenoir and the Catawba County line.
- Burke County/Morganton area traffic counts higher than 35,000 vehicles per day in 2017 were all found along I-40.
- The largest traffic count increase (9,000 vehicles per day) in Burke County over the past two years took place at on I-40 between the Dysartsville Road (Exit 94) and Kathy Road (Exit 96).

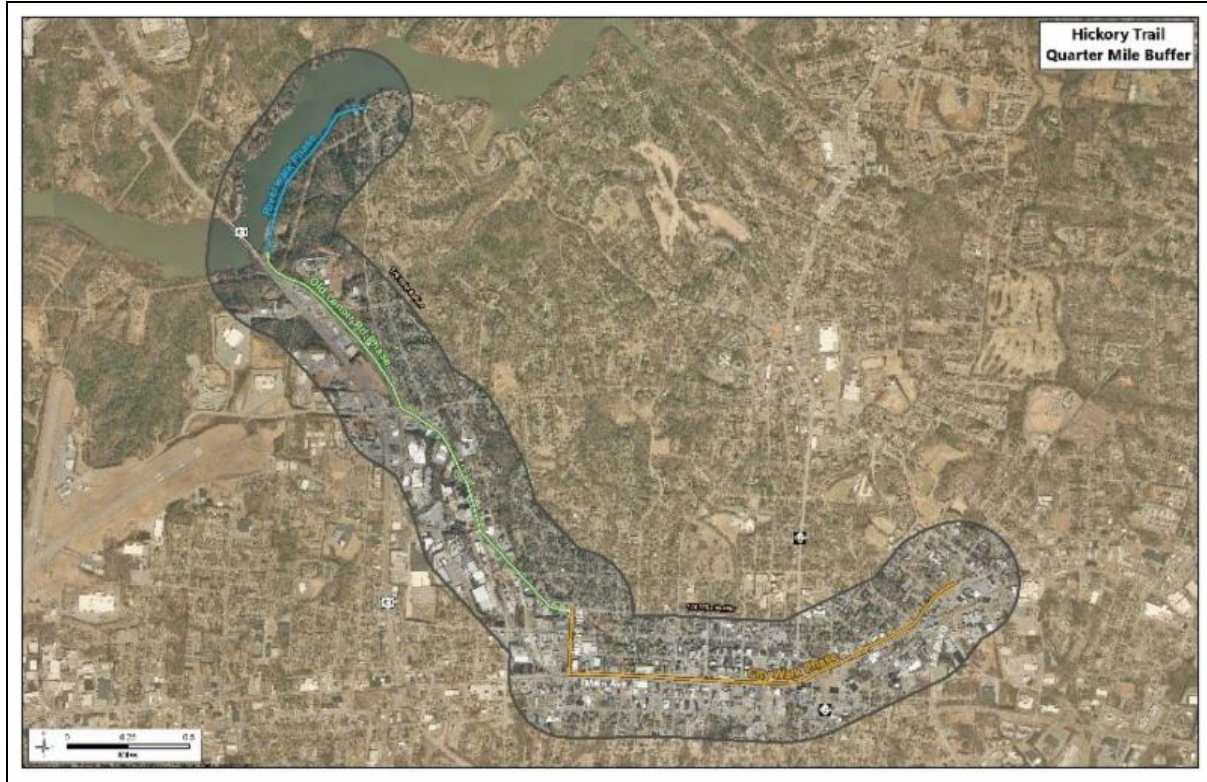




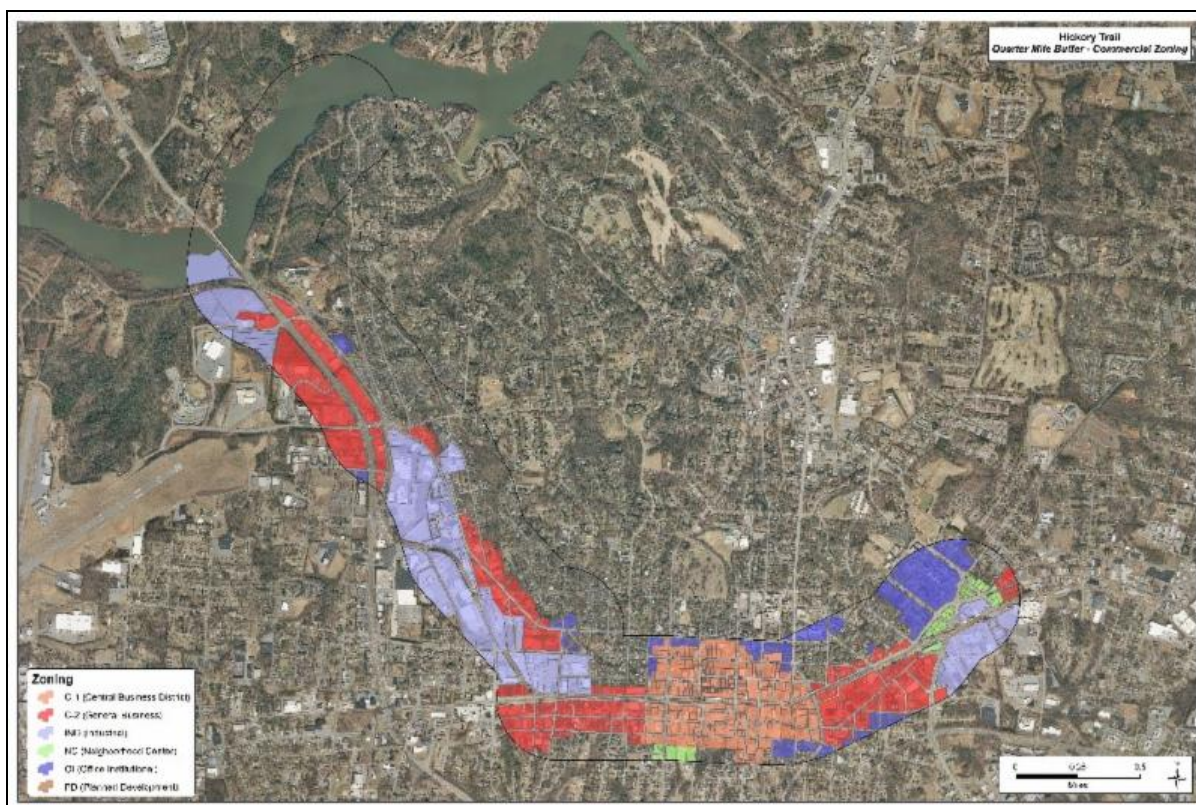
IT/GIS Services

Projected Commercial Development Along the (One-Quarter Mile) Hickory Trail

The Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) Information Technology/GIS, Community and Regional Planning and Communication departments and City of Hickory joined efforts to create a document showing potential commercial development after the completion of the Hickory Trail, with goals of 8,000 new jobs and private investment of \$500 million by 2035. Approved as part of a \$40 million bond referendum, the trail is a 5.2 mile multipurpose path project that will connect Lake Hickory to Lenoir-Rhyne University.



The analysis looked at several different factors such as zoning, land use, non-residential buildings per zoning, vacant non-residential buildings, total non-residential buildings, property values, and vacant property to determine potential growth of commercial development within the quarter-mile buffer. These factors also gave an estimate of potential commercial development around the Hickory Trail.



WPCOG staff used ArcGIS Desktop with Hickory's zoning layer, land use layer, property boundaries and values to create the maps and statistics for the methodology used to determine the non-residential goals after the completion of the Hickory Trail. Also, WPCOG staff work with Hickory Staff in designing the Hickory Trail document.

For additional information, visit <http://www.hickorync.gov/content/hickory-trail-report-outlines-economic-goals-city-projects>

Article by Daniel Ezell and Taylor Dellinger

Regional Housing Authority Mainstream Vouchers

Appropriations Acts in 2017 and 2018 made approximately \$400 million available for new mainstream voucher assistance. This is the first available funding for new Mainstream Vouchers since 2005. HUD awarded over \$98 million in funding to 286 PHAs on September 4, 2018. The Regional Housing Authority applied for the newly allocated Mainstream Vouchers to assist families with non-elderly persons with disabilities. HUD awarded 35 Mainstream Vouchers to the RHA to be used beginning in November 2018. In less than two months, the RHA assisted 35 additional families with housing, based on this allocation. Aside from serving a special population, Mainstream Vouchers are administered using the same rules as other housing choice vouchers.

If you need housing assistance, please contact:

Kala Guido

828-485-4282

kala.guido@wpcog.org

You may also apply online at

<https://wpcog.housingmanager.com>

Article by Kala Guido

Transportation Key Goals of Title VI Draft Update

We want to hear from you! Western Piedmont Council of Government's transportation team is working on updating Title VI documentation. The plan aims to improve targeted outreach to Limited English Proficiency, Title VI, and Environmental Justice populations. The main goals of the update include:

Establishing a Title VI Coordinator

Title VI Coordinator: Brian Horton

Achieve Environmental Justice (EJ) Goals

EJ is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. The updated plan determines where EJ communities are located (maps included in appendix E).

Data Collection Analysis and Reporting

Please refer to [Appendix D](#) for demographic tables on Race & Ethnicity, Age & Sex, Disability, Poverty, and Household Income.

[Title VI Maps](#) show where LEP, Disability Status, Vehicle Availability, and 65 Year and Older are located.

Limited English Proficiency

The following table displays Limited English Proficiency (LEP) data for the Greater Hickory MPO planning area:

LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME	Estimate	Margin of Error	Percent of Population
Total (population 5 years and over):	343,511	+/-180	100%
Speak only English	314,031	+/-1,112	91.4%
Spanish or Spanish Creole:	19,390	+/-869	5.6%
Speak English "very well"	10,127	+/-856	52.2%
Speak English less than "very well"	9,263	+/-686	47.7%
Hmong:	4,954	+/-589	1.4%
Speak English "very well"	2,920	+/-393	58.9%
Speak English less than "very well"	2,034	+/-381	41.0%
Vietnamese:	624	+/-285	0.2%
Speak English "very well"	138	+/-95	22.1%
Speak English less than "very well"	486	+/-253	77.8%
Laotian	578	+/-358	0.2%
Speak English "very well"	414	+/-322	71.6%
Speak English less than "very well"	164	+/-106	28.3%

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

The Four Factor Analysis is an individualized assessment that balances the following four LEP factors. The assessment of the four factors can be found on [pages 7-13](#) of the Draft Title VI Plan and were completed for Spanish and Hmong speaking populations.

(1) The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program, activity, or service of the recipient or grantee;

This factor looks at the 2 most spoken languages in the four county region excluding English. Data shows that the two most spoken languages are Spanish and Hmong. Factor one addresses where these LEP communities are located by Census Tract.

(2) The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program;

This factor evaluates the amount that MPO programs and activities come in contact with LEP individuals. This factor establishes outreach mechanisms currently being conducted through the MPO.

(3) The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the recipient to people's lives; and

This factor specifies which strategies the MPO use and could begin using to improve communication with LEP communities.

(4) The resources available to the recipient and costs.

Factor four includes financial resources as well as community-based organizations that represent and disseminate information to LEP persons.

Additional resources necessary for LEP populations:

- Language Assistance Measures
- Written Translation and Oral Interpretation
- Staff Support for Language Assistance
- Project-Specific LEP Outreach
- Monitoring and Updating the Language Assistance Plan

Other Key Objectives in Draft Update:

- Dissemination of Title VI Information
- Public Involvement
- [External Discrimination Complaint Procedures](#)
- Review of Organizational Directives
- Title VI Training
- Compliance and Enforcement Procedures

Please send all Title VI Update questions, concerns, and comments to Averi Ritchie at averi.ritchie@wpcog.org.

Article by Averi Ritchie



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