

Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Western Piedmont Council of Governments. Don't forget to add jason.toney@wpcog.org to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.



WPCOG - Newsletter

December 2018

Table of Contents

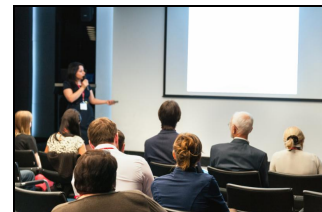
Featured Article - [Financial Manager Earns Local Government Finance Certification](#)



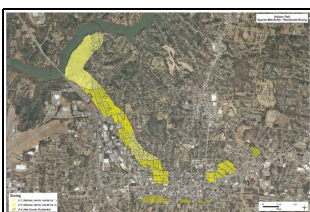
Area Agency on Aging
PROJECT C.A.R.E.
(Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty)...
[Learn more](#)



Community & Economic Development
HUD Counseling Program 50 Years Strong...
[Learn more](#)



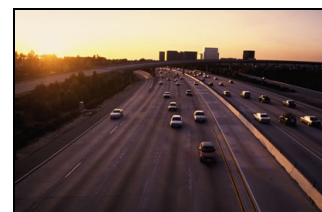
Community & Regional Planning
- Comprehensive Plans...
[Learn more](#)
- 2013-2017 5-Year ACS Data Now Available...[Learn More](#)



IT/GIS Services
Hickory Trail Residential Growth Projections...
[Learn more](#)



Regional Housing Authority
Applications and Waiting List updates...
[Learn more](#)



Transportation Planning
NCDOT Releases 2017 Traffic Counts...
[Learn more](#)



Workforce Development Board

Energy Lineworker Career Pathway...

[Learn more](#)



WPCOG Financial Manager Earns Local Government Finance Certification

Since 1985, the North Carolina Government Finance Officers Association and the North Carolina Association of County Finance Officers have offered a program of voluntary certification for local government finance officers. Certificate holders can:

- Provide greater service to the public and the management of local government,
- Recognize the achievement of an established level of competency and proficiency amount finance officers,
- Promote continuing professional development of finance officers, and
- Enhance their professional image.

Sandy Jones, WPCOG Financial Manager, has recently acquired the certification for local government finance officers. This certification is difficult to obtain, requiring the successful completion of five core courses and an examination consisting of four parts. Each part of the exam covers one of the below core classes, except for Introduction to Local Government Finance.

- Introduction to Local Government Finance
- Governmental Accounting and Financial Reporting
- Budgeting in Local Government and Capital Financing in Local Government
- Cash Management and Investment of Public Funds
- Effective Supervisory Management Program

In addition to the above, two groups of people are eligible for the certification. First, those who are the finance officer of a local government or public authority, as defined in G.S. 159-7, or of a local school administrative unit. Second, others who hold supervisory or professional positions with a local government, public authority, or school administrative unit and have administrative responsibility for one or more financial functions, such as internal audit, investment, budgeting, or accounting.

Sandy is the first employee in the history of WPCOG to obtain this certification, and we are very proud of her accomplishments.

Article by [Andrea Roper](#)

Transportation NCDOT Releases 2017 Traffic Counts

WPCOG's Transportation Department is excited to announce the release of the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) 2017 traffic counts. NCDOT's Traffic Survey Group collects traffic data statewide to analyze and support planning, design, construction, maintenance, operation and research activities required to manage North Carolina's transportation system. Taylor Dellinger, WPCOG's Senior Data Analyst, presented Average Daily Traffic (ADT) Count Maps for Alexander, Burke Caldwell, and Catawba Counties at November's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting. ADT counts are conducted at locations throughout each county over a 24-hour period. Mr.

Dellinger presented two-year and ten-year traffic trends at select locations in each county and provided brief reports for each county. Notable 2017 ADT counts in the four counties included:

- Catawba County at I-40 near Lenoir Rhyne Boulevard (72,000 ADT), US 321 near US 70 and North of NC 127 (46,000 ADT), NC 127 near 17th Ave. NE in Viewmont (34,000 ADT), and Lenoir Rhyne Boulevard just north of I-40 (34,000 ADT);
- Burke County at I-40 between Highway Old NC 10 (Exit 118) and Hildebran (Exit 119) (54,000 ADT), US 64 just north of I-40 (26,000 ADT), NC 18 (S. Sterling St.) just south of US 70 (W. Fleming Dr.) (24,000 ADT) and US 64-70 (W. Fleming Dr.) just east of US 64 (Burkemont Ave.) (24,000);
- Caldwell County at US 321 just north of Grace Chapel Road (37,000 ADT), US 321 just north of Smith Crossroads (36,000 ADT), US 321 near Falls Avenue (35,000 ADT) and US 64 NC 18/90 (Harper Ave.) just west of Smith Crossroads (23,000 ADT);
- Alexander County at NC 127 just south of Rink Dam Rd. (15,000 ADT), NC 16 near US 64-Taylorsville (14,000 ADT) and NC 16 just south of Macedonia Church Rd. and Millersville Rd. (13,000 ADT).

You can access Mr. Dellinger's maps [here](#). The maps show changes in ADT counts from 2007 to 2017 and from 2015 to 2017, noting major traffic increases and decreases throughout the region. You can access the NCDOT 2017 traffic counts [here](#).

Article by [Averi Ritchie](#)

Workforce Development Board Energy Lineworker Career Pathway



The Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board is in the process of certifying our 3rd Career Pathway for our region: Energy-Lineworker Pathway. Three collaborative meetings have taken place in this joint effort between, energy employers, educators (including our K-12 school systems and our community colleges), workforce professionals and partner agencies. This process will result in a certified career pathway for six workforce development regions representing twenty counties, as there are 6 Workforce Boards involved in this Pathway (Gaston, Region C, Mountain Area, Charlotte Works and Centralina workforce board regions).

This certification process will:

- Address energy and utility employer needs including not only Lineworker needs, but all career paths in the Energy field.
- Create a career ladder based on levels of education obtained and salaries in our Western Piedmont region.
- Educate the community on career opportunities in the Energy field.
- Gather and distribute information on regional training programs, career awareness activities and employment opportunities.

The goal is to have the pathway certified by May 2019.

Article by [Wendy Johnson](#)

Area Agency on Aging



Project C.A.R.E. (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty) is a state-funded dementia-specific support program for family caregivers. The program uses a family consultant to provide comprehensive support to caregivers of those caring for someone at home with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia. Project C.A.R.E. family consultants assist caregivers with education, resources, and access to vouchers to alleviate some of the stress caregiving can create. The goal of the program is to assist the Caregiver in providing care for the person with Dementia at home for as long as it is safe and possible. The Family Consultant receives referrals to the program and schedules in-home visits to meet with the caregiver and the person with dementia. The level of assistance provided varies and is dependent upon what the caregiver needs and prefers. Project CARE has assisted more than 200 people caring for someone with Alzheimer's or Dementia in the last year.

Many of the caregivers served with Project CARE support and assistance are isolated within their community. For example, one such caregiver lives in the city of Newton. We will call him Joe. Joe is a 57-year-old son is caring for his 84-year-old mother with advanced dementia. Prior to caring for his mother, Joe had worked in a manufacturing plant in the area. He promised his mother and his father (who passed away 2 years ago), that he would never place either of them in a facility. When his mother's Dementia began to progress, the physician informed him that she could not be left at home alone. There are no other family or friends who can or will help out. His great aunt who is 87 visits once a month. He tried all resources. His mother was too advanced for Adult Day Care. She makes \$50 per month too much to receive Medicaid. At that time, she was not appropriate for Hospice. He decided to take medical leave with the vacation time he had saved to take care of her "until she was better". Since that time, he has provided care to her 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on his own. Her condition has declined and Hospice has become involved, but can only provide respite care at their facility. He says doing that would break his vow to his parents. As we all know, Family Medical Leave lasts 12 weeks. His leave time from work expired last March. Joe says he does not have a job to go back to "when something happens to his mother". He cannot bring himself to discuss her passing even though he knows that is the path they are taking. This 57-year-old son is now providing total care for his mother. She is bed bound in a hospital bed in the living room. He bathes her, changes her, feeds her and attempts to engage her in something fun. He says he thinks she knows him because she smiles and touches his face when he is near, but he is not sure. Occasionally, he will sing to her, and she will try to sing or hum along to a hymn. Meanwhile, Joe is alone with his mother all the time. The only visitors or breaks he gets are when Hospice comes to bathe her or check on her.

Joe became aware of services available through Project Care and contacted us for help. The Family Consultant met with him, provided education, support and discussed some things he can do to engage her. She likes to fiddle with things in her hands, especially her blanket. There are now fiddle aprons and lap quilts for people with Dementia for that reason. Playing music more may help with

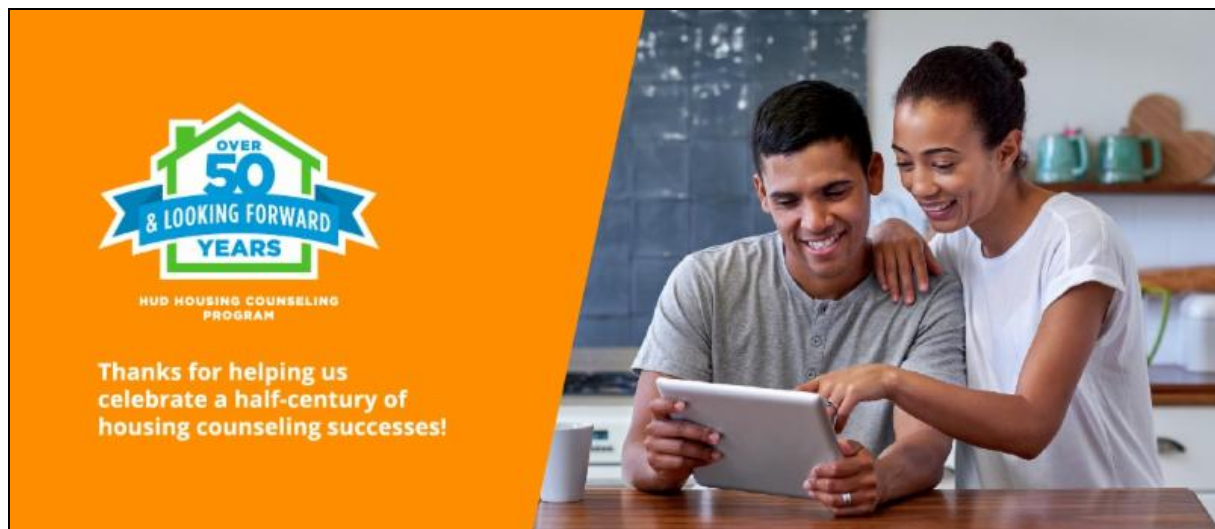
the fidgeting. We discussed the symptoms of Dementia she is having- hallucinations, fidgeting, mumbling nonsensical words, forgetting to swallow medications, and more. He now knows all of that is common and normal for someone with dementia. Project CARE provided suggestions to help manage the symptoms she is having. Project CARE also began frequent calls to check on Joe. Joe was so appreciative of the friendly visit and information. Project CARE also provided a \$500 respite care voucher for Joe. This voucher can be used to pay for someone to care for his mom so that Joe can have a break from his caregiving responsibilities. Joe used the funds to pay for someone to stay with his mother for a weekend. He decided to go on a fishing trip with his buddies. Joe said it was a whole world that he found while on the trip. He says he had lost himself while caring for his mother and that he found a "piece of peace" while he was on the lake. This little bit of a break, \$500 and the Project CARE family consultant to talk with has allowed Joe to continue caring for his mom as he had promised.

If you know of someone who is a caregiver of a loved one with dementia or Alzheimer's - please have them contact [Karen Phoenix](#) with the Project CARE program at (828) 485-4267.

Article by Karen Phoenix

Community & Economic Development

HUD Counseling Program 50 Years Strong



Since 1968, the HUD Housing Counseling Program has been committed to the needs of home-buying consumers and its legions of stakeholders. The Housing Counseling Program provides a comprehensive array of invaluable information, education and resources, including but not limited to the following:

- Resources and information to consumers and stakeholders at every stage of the housing process
- Do-it-yourself workshops and classes to help maintain and improve your biggest investment
- Guidance to help homebuyers avoid default and foreclosure
- Training, tools, and promotional materials designed to assist HUD-approved housing counseling agencies in providing their vital services

Housing Counseling

This program provides counseling to consumers on seeking, financing, maintaining, renting, or owning a home. The program also addresses homelessness through counseling and assists homeowners in need of foreclosure assistance.

HUD provides support to a nationwide network of Housing Counseling Agencies (HCA) and counselors. HCAs are trained and approved by HUD to provide tools to current and prospective homeowners, renters so that they can make responsible choices to address their housing needs in light of their financial situations.

Recently WPCOG was awarded \$45,635 for the fiscal year 2018-2019 Housing Counseling Grant.

Community & Regional Planning Comprehensive Plans

The Western Piedmont Council of Governments is currently working on two Comprehensive Plans for the region, including the [Caldwell County Comprehensive Plan](#) and the [Bethlehem Community Plan](#) for Alexander County. Both Project began in 2018 and will continue through 2019.



The Bethlehem Community Plan has been in process since September, and the committee has discussed demographics, housing, and transportation. On Tuesday, December 18th, the first community meeting was held at Mt. Pisgah Lutheran Church and about 60 interested citizens attended. WPCOG staff was able to gather a great deal of information from those attendees.

Caldwell County had their kickoff meeting with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee on November 15th. WPCOG Staff presented demographic information and began the process of getting input from the committee through group discussion, and a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis.

Both plans will be a yearlong process and will cover many topics, including Transportation, Economic Development, Natural and Cultural Resources and Current and Future Land Use. Input from the steering committees and the public is one of the most critical aspects of writing a plan for these

communities.

If your municipality is interested in conducting a Comprehensive Plan for your community, contact Johnny Wear at 828-485-4283 | john.wear@wpcog.org.

Article by Johnny Wear

2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey Data Now Available



On December 6, 2018, the US Census Bureau released data from the 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey (ACS) for all areas. More than 40 topics are available from the 2013-2017 ACS including educational attainment, housing, employment, commuting, language spoken at home, nativity, ancestry and selected monthly homeowner costs. The 2013-2017 ACS data can be found in American Factfinder on the US Census Bureau web site. 2013-2017

American Community Survey data summaries for the region are also available for [download](#) in the data services section of Western Piedmont Council of Governments web site. For more information about the 2013-2017 American Community Survey, contact Senior Data Analyst Taylor Dellinger at 828.485.4233 or

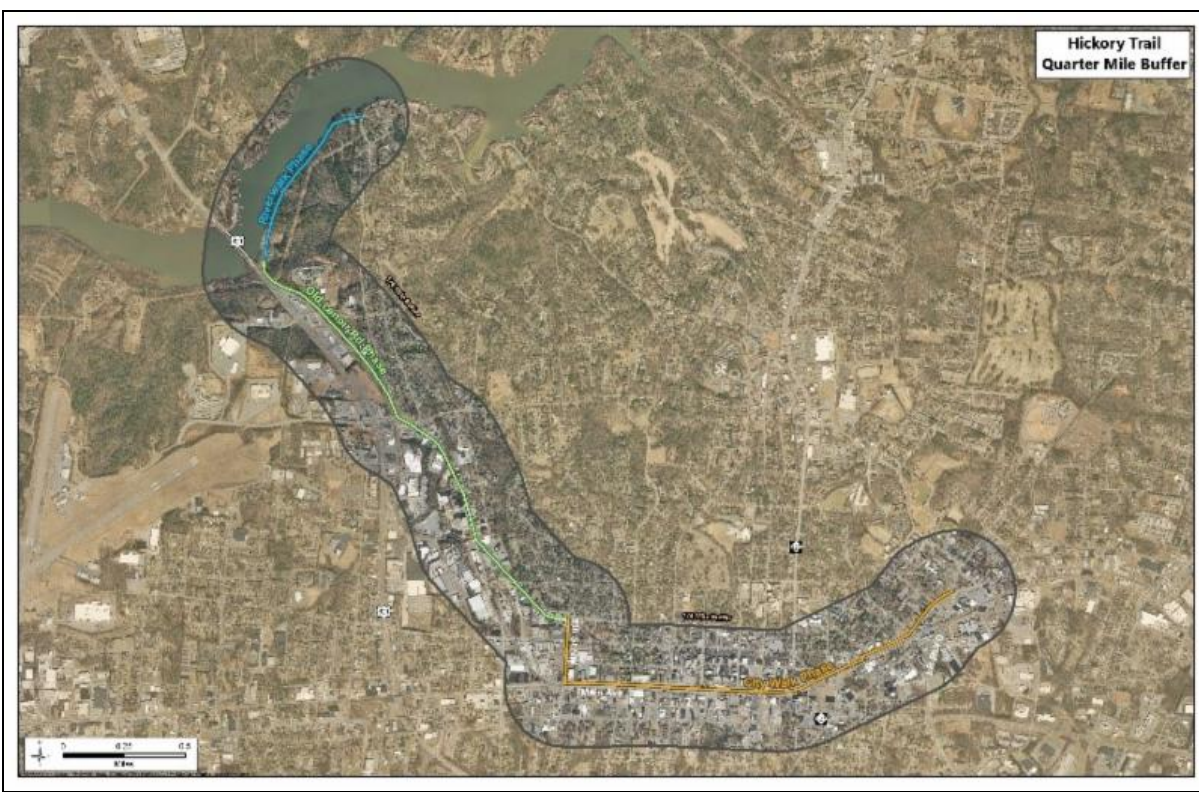
taylor.dellinger@wpcog.org.

Article by Taylor Dellinger

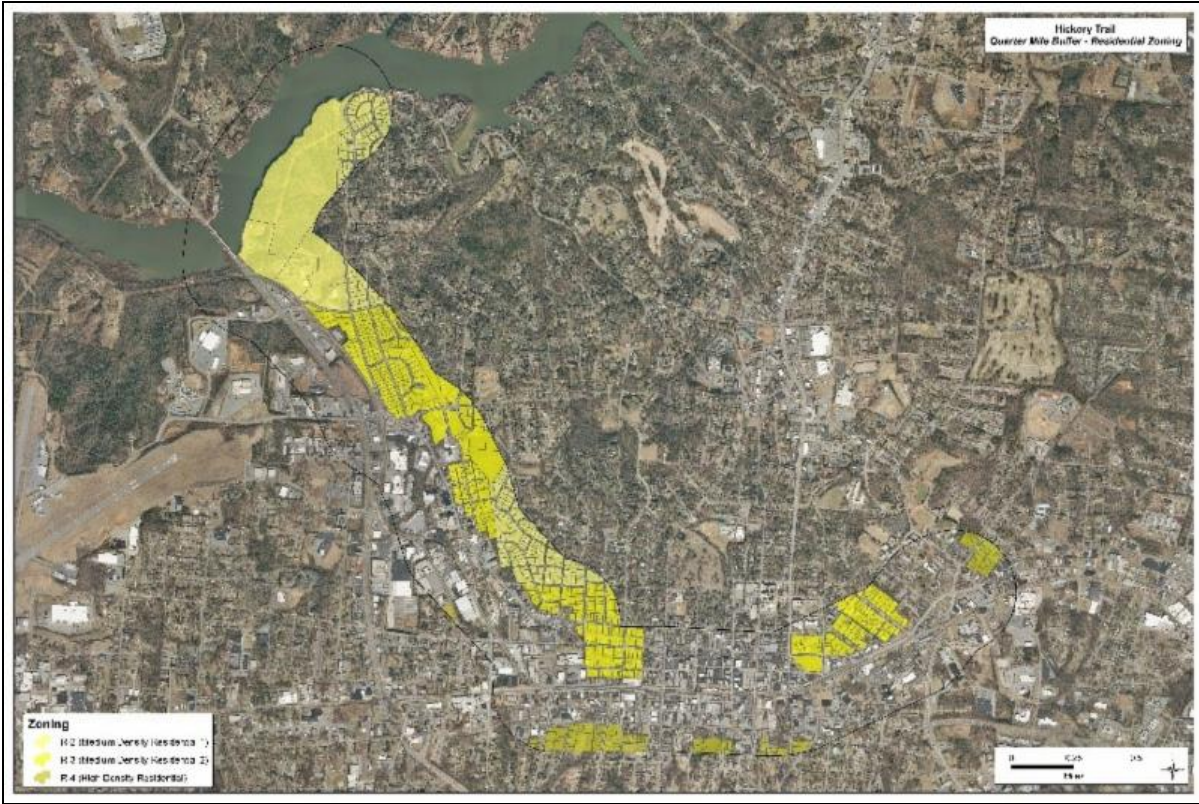
IT/GIS Services

Hickory Trail Residential Growth Projections

The City of Hickory and the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) Information Technology/GIS, Planning and Communication Departments joined efforts to create a document showing potential residential growth after the completion of the Hickory Trail. Projections revealed 1,750 new housing units and a population increase of 3,500 within a quarter-mile buffer of the Hickory Trail by 2035. The trail is a 5.2 mile multipurpose path project that was approved through a \$40 million bond referendum that will connect Lake Hickory to Lenoir-Rhyne University. January's newsletter article will focus on the estimated commercial growth within the quarter-mile buffer.



The residential growth analysis examined several different factors such as zoning, land use, housing units per zoning, total housing units, property values, and vacant property to determine the potential for new housing development within the quarter-mile buffer. These factors also gave an estimate of potential population increase 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 to determine the 2035 residential goals following the completion of the Hickory Trail. Also, WPCOG staff work with Hickory Staff in designing the Hickory Trail report.

Click the link for additional information about the [Hickory Trail](#).

Article by Daniel Ezell and Taylor Dellinger

Regional Housing Authority

Applications and Waiting List updates

The Regional Housing Authority (RHA) has been accepting pre-applications since February 20, 2017. During this time, the RHA processed nearly 3,000 pre-applications for the waiting list. Starting January 1, 2018, the RHA began notifying applicants of their placement on the waiting list at the time of their application and then twice yearly, in August and February.

Due to the volume of applications, as of January 1, 2019, the RHA will be accepting pre-applications online. Any family needing assistance will be able to apply through the WPCOG website. This update will also make existing applicant's waiting list numbers available through the WPCOG website.

As the RHA begins accepting online applications, paper applications will be phased out. After April 1, 2019, paper applications will no longer be accepted.

The RHA plans to perform a purge of the waiting list in February 2019. Each applicant will be sent a letter asking if they are still interested in receiving housing assistance. Applicants MUST respond to the letter and indicate their continued interest in assistance to avoid being dropped from the waiting list.

If you are an applicant, please remember that it is crucial for you to keep your address updated with us. You will be contacted by mail only when you reach the top of the waiting list.

Applicants can update their address by:

Fax: ATTN: Kala Guido 828.322.5991 or

Email: kala.guido@wpcog.org or

By mail: to The Regional Housing Authority ATTN: Kala Guido PO Box 9026 Hickory, NC 28603

In Person: 1880 Second Ave NW, Hickory, NC 28601

If you are in need of housing assistance or have questions regarding the Housing Choice Voucher Program, you may contact Kala Guido, using the above methods or at 828.485.4282

Article by Kala Guido



Stay Connected



1880 2nd Ave NW · Hickory, NC 28601 · 828.322.9191

www.wpcog.org