

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


September 2019

Table of Contents

WPCOG Calendar

Taking Charge Lunch & Learn
Friday, October 4, 2019 11:00am
Location: Western Piedmont Council of Governments-Area Agency on Aging
1880 2nd Avenue NW, Hickory, NC 28601
To register & reserve lunch call 828-485-4256 or email mary.mitchell@wpcog.org

Experts answering questions about Powers of Attorney, Medicaid, Long-Term Care Options.
What is it? How do I get it?
How will I know if I need it?
Lunch provided at no charge. Deadline to register - Tuesday, October 1



Area Agency on Aging
Upcoming Events.
[Learn more.](#)



Community & Economic Development
PARTF Grants Awarded to Valdese and Hudson.
[Learn more.](#)



Community & Regional Planning - GIS/Data Services
Responding to the 2020 Census.
[Learn more.](#)



Community & Regional Planning - Environmental Planning
WPCOG Stormwater Program FAQ. [Learn more.](#)



Regional Housing Authority
6th Annual Landlord Workshop. [Learn more.](#)



Transportation Planning
Hudson Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. [Learn more.](#)



Workforce Development Board

Workforce Board Welcomes

NCSSM-Morganton

[Learn more.](#)



Regional Housing Authority 6th Annual Landlord Workshop

The Regional Housing Authority will be hosting our 6th annual Landlord Workshop on Thursday November 7, 2019. Current and interested Section 8 Landlords are invited to attend. For more information regarding the workshop or for general information about the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program, please contact Kala Guido at 828-485-4282. Landlords should expect to receive their invitation to the workshop this year in early October.

FAQs

What is the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8)?

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program is a rental assistance program funded by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered locally by The Regional Housing Authority (RHA). HUD's HCV Program provides rental assistance to low income families, the elderly and persons with disabilities so that they can live in decent, safe and sanitary housing. Program participants may use their Voucher to find their own housing by searching single-family homes, manufactured homes, townhomes or apartments.

What are My Benefits as a Landlord?

Landlords who participate in the program are helping low income families in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba Counties obtain the most basic of needs-housing. By complying with program regulations, landlords can gain these business benefits: guaranteed receipt of the RHA's portion of contract rent, lower vacancy rates and reduced tenant turnover.

How do I rent my home or apartment with the Housing Authority?

The RHA has collaborated with www.gosection8.com, and www.nchousingsearch.org. Both provide an enhanced program to list rental properties online for free.

What are My Responsibilities?

Under the HUD HCV Program, landlords must make repairs to the property, if required. Landlords must comply with all federal, state and local fair housing laws and permit inspections of the unit as requested by the RHA. Landlords must comply with the terms of the lease, HUD's Tenancy Addendum, the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Contract, and NC Landlord laws.

What kind of Housing Qualifies?

Any safe, decent and sanitary housing qualifies. Units can include single family homes, manufactured homes, townhomes and apartments. Qualifications for the program are an adequate living area with heating, water and sewer systems. The home must be free from any conditions that might endanger the health and safety of the participant. To ensure the home meets the qualifications, the RHA must conduct and the unit must pass a housing quality standard inspection.

What kind of inspection is done?

Your unit will be inspected to make sure that it meets the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) of the HCV program. The inspector will examine the exterior of the building, the plumbing, heating systems, the exits, hallways, and each room in the unit to make sure the unit is reasonably clean, safe and in good condition. The unit must be ready to inspect at the time of the inspection and all utilities must be turned on and working. The inspector will need access to the unit itself, the basement and all common areas.

Does the Housing Authority screen Housing Choice Voucher Participants?

The Housing Authority does not screen tenants for you. You must do this yourself, just as you would screen

non-HCV tenants. The Housing Authority can tell you the number of people on the voucher, current and previous addresses, and current and previous landlords. However, the Housing Authority's main focus is checking that the applicant meets the HCV program requirements.

Article by Kala Guido

Transportation

Hudson Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Thanks to a competitive grant applied for by WPCOG and awarded by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), a new Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is being developed for the Town of Hudson. Recently, this Plan's engagement process culminated in a community open house on September 10 at Hudson Elementary. There, multiple residents and families provided their feedback on draft recommendations, while also having some fun. The event shared how past community participation has been reflected in the draft recommendations, including safer crossings, extended trails, connected neighborhoods, and more comfortable facilities for cycling and walking. Adding fun to the event, there was a bicycle safety course for children in the school parking lot, along with free snow cones, bike helmets, and even one new bike for one lucky boy and girl each, whose names were drawn that evening.



Wrapping up by year's end, the next steps for the Plan include review of the final draft by the Steering Committee, and ultimately, adoption by the Town Commission. Some of the Plan recommendations are expected to be implemented within the next couple years, leveraging other projects, such as the funded intersection improvements of US-321 at both Pine Mountain Road and at Mount Herman Road. Other recommendations will become a guiding vision to seek out future funding opportunities and partnerships for implementation. To learn more about the Plan, please visit:

www.townofhudsonnc.com/planning-department

Article by Brian Horton

Workforce Development Board

Workforce Board Welcomes NCSSM-Morganton



The Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board had the pleasure of hearing from Kevin Baxter, Director of the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics Western Campus at the August 22, 2019 board meeting. Kevin shared his enthusiasm and scope of the vision for the NCSSM - Morganton campus. We know that the campus will positively impact the full Western Region of North Carolina and beyond. The Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board looks forward to a strong partnership with NCSSM in the West. You can follow the progress of NCSSM-Morganton by subscribing their Youtube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fk2DluldRhs&t=5s>

Article by Wendy Johnson

Area Agency on Aging

Upcoming Events

Taking Charge Lunch & Learn

Friday, October 4, 2019 11:00am

Location: Western Piedmont Council of Governments-Area Agency
on Aging

1880 2nd Avenue NW, Hickory, NC 28601

**To register & reserve lunch call 828-485-4256 or
email mary.mitchell@wpcog.org**



Experts answering questions about
Powers of Attorney, Medicaid, Long-Term Care Options.

What is It? How do I get it?

How will I know if I need it?

**Lunch provided at no charge. Deadline to register-
Tuesday, October 1**

Healthier Lifestyle/Healthier You

Taking Care of You Full Circle

Thursday, October 10, 2019 11:00am

**Location: Ridgeview Recreation, 115 7th Ave
SW, Hickory, NC 28602**



Presenting the annual healthy lifestyle
workshop for Older Adults and Caregivers.
Featured speakers promoting healthy ideas for
a healthier lifestyle for older adults and
caregivers. Questions,

call Family Caregiver Support Program (828) 485-4256.

To register and reserve lunch call Ridgeview Recreation
(828) 324-8007

Lunch provided at no charge. Deadline to register-Monday, October 7

Your Health-Your Greatest Wealth

Monday, October 21, 2019 11:00am

Location: Martin Luther King, Jr. Recreation, Lenoir

Presenters will share valuable wellness information and lifestyle ideas with nutrition, exercise and emotional well-being. Ideas you can put into action today!

Questions, call Family Caregiver Support Program (828) 485-4256.
To register and reserve lunch call Caldwell Senior Center (828) 758-2883
Lunch provided at no charge.



5th Annual ACAP Caregiver

Conference

Caregiving Finding Your Way



Friday, November 1, 2019 9:00am

Location: First United Methodist Church, 311 3rd Ave. NE, Hickory

***Strategies to become an effective caregiver
and advocate for older adults.***

Breakfast & Lunch provided at no charge.

***Nursing contact hours available. Register at www.wpcog.org
or call 828-485-4256. Registration deadline : Thursday, October 24.***

Registration and meals provided at no charge.



Opening season at Hudson's Optimist Park, 1964. The Hudson Optimist Club broke ground on the ball park in 1962 and operated the facility for 50+ years. The Town of Hudson took ownership of the park in 2016 and has just been awarded a grant from PARTF to complete upgrades and renovation.

The NC Parks and Recreation Authority met this month to award 2019-20 Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grants. The PARTF program provides competitive grant funding for park land acquisition, development of amenities, and renovation of existing facilities. This year's grant cycle was particularly competitive. The Authority received 56 applications (\$16M total requests) and was able to fund 14 projects (\$4.7M awarded) state-wide. Congratulations to the two successful applicants from the Western Piedmont-Town of Valdese and Town of Hudson!

Valdese was awarded \$285,000 to develop Phase I of the new 300+ acre Valdese Lakeside Park, including restrooms, parking, picnic area, dog park, wildlife viewing platform, kayak launch, and walking trail. The local match for this project has been provided by private donations through Friends of the Valdese Rec-an impressive feat!

The Town of Hudson first applied for PARTF funds to assist with Optimist Park renovations in the 2018-19 cycle but did not receive funding. Hudson is dedicated to enhancing this beloved community resource and applied again in 2019-20, this time successfully! The Town was awarded a PARTF grant for \$222,580, which will assist in replacement of aging concessions/restroom buildings, bleacher and walkway renovation, renovation of existing ball fields, and installation of a new playground equipment, picnic shelter, and gaming center with bocce and cornhole.

The next call for projects will be in early May 2020. If your local government would like assistance in preparing an application or would like to receive more information about the program, please contact WPCOG Community Development Administrator, Erin Schotte, at 828-485-4240 or erin.schotte@wpcog.org.

Article by Erin Schotte

Community & Regional Planning - GIS/Data Center

Responding to the 2020 Census



MAKE NC COUNT CENSUS 2020

2020 Census day is less than 7 months away (April 1, 2020). More than \$1,623 per person in federal aid and \$205 in state aid are distributed annually in North Carolina based directly or indirectly on the census count.

In our region, about \$675 million in federal and state aid are distributed annually based directly or indirectly on the census count. As preparations for the 2020 Census continue, below is a list of frequently asked questions, provided by NC Census 2020 website, concerning how citizens should respond to the 2020 Census.

Question: Who is counted in the Census?

Answer: Everyone. The Census counts everyone living in the United States, regardless of citizenship status or age.

Question: When will I complete the Census?

Answer: Census notices will be mailed in mid-March 2020, and you can respond online as soon as you get your Census notice. Census Bureau enumerators will begin visiting households that have not responded yet in mid-April 2020.

Question: How can I respond?

Answer: The 2020 Census is the first U.S. Census to allow response by smartphone or online. You can choose to respond by phone or by traditional paper questionnaire. Census forms will be available in 12 languages, and Census support and assistance will be available in 59 languages, American Sign Language, braille, and large print.

Question: What information will be requested?

The Census asks for your name, age, race, sex, Hispanic Origin, household relationship, as well as housing questions. The 2020 questionnaire will essentially be the same as the [2010 form](#). When completing the Census, you should count everyone who is living in your household on April 1, 2020 - including infants.

Question: What information will not be requested?

The Census Bureau will never ask for Social Security numbers, bank or credit card account numbers, money or donations or anything on behalf of a political party

If you are visited by someone from the United States Census Bureau, here are some recognition tips to assure the validity of the field representative;

Census Bureau enumerators must present an ID Badge that includes their photograph, the Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date. In addition to carrying a laptop and/ or bag with a Census Bureau logo, the field representative will provide the following:

- Supervisor's contact information and/or the regional office phone number for verification, if asked and/or a letter from the Director of the Census Bureau on U.S. Census Bureau letterhead.

If in doubt, call the U.S. Census Bureau Atlanta Regional Office at 1-800-424-6974.

Question: What if I already filled out a Census questionnaire this year?

Answer: You probably received the American Community Survey (ACS) or the American Housing Survey (AHS) from the U.S. Census that is sent out each year to approximately 25% of the population. Those surveys are more comprehensive than the Census questionnaire. The actual 2020 Census questionnaire does not arrive until around March 2020.

Question: If I filled out the American Community Survey or the American Housing Survey, do I still have to fill out the 2020 Census questionnaire?

Answer: Yes. You are required to complete any questionnaire received from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Question: Where are college students, prisoners, military personnel, and other people living in ground quarters supposed to be counted?

Answer: The Census counts everyone, once, only once, and in the right place. College dorms, prisons, military barracks, and long-term nursing homes are examples of Census group quarters. The Census will work with administrative staff at these places to count everyone. Students or military personnel living in

apartments will receive their own Census mailings. Everyone should answer their Census form based on where they usually reside as of April 1, 2020.

Question: If I disagree with some aspect of this year's Census, is boycotting the form the best way to show that?

Answer: No. Refusing to fill out the entire form will cause an enumerator to be sent to your home for follow-up. While refusing to answer only one question on the Census may not trigger this response, under Title 13 of the U.S. Code, you can be fined up to \$100 for refusing to fill out a Census form and \$500 for knowingly answering questions falsely. Further, incomplete forms will cause your community to have less accurate data and potentially fewer resources long-term.

If you have additional questions concerning the 2020 Census, please contact U.S. Census Bureau Atlanta Regional Office at 1-800-424-6974, or Taylor Dellinger (phone 828-485-4233 email: taylor.dellinger@wpcog.org).

Article by Taylor Dellinger

Community & Regional Planning - Environmental Planning

WPCOG Stormwater Program - FAQ

The Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) Stormwater Partnership began in 2010, and conducted education programs on behalf of a few local governments in the region to fulfill the Outreach/Education required in their MS4 Stormwater Permits. WPCOG has now expanded that program, as of July 1st, 2019, to meet all of the requirements of those permits; including management of stormwater control structures and permitting to minimize runoff issues, illicit discharge monitoring using our Code Enforcement Division, and Good Housekeeping as it pertains to the properties owned by those local governments. Currently the partnership has full program coverage of 7 municipalities in the region: Hudson, Valdese, Cahah's Mountain, Sawmills, Granite Falls, Gamewell, and Lenoir. The WPCOG continues to implement the Stormwater Education and Outreach Programs for the following municipalities: Hickory, Conover, Maiden, Morganton, and Rutherford College. The following is a list of typically asked questions concerning the WPCOG's Stormwater Program:

What is the Western Piedmont Council of Governments Stormwater Program?

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality enforces any municipality of a certain size to manage any stormwater runoff within their boundaries. This requirement is based off of a 1972 permit (NPDES MS4) developed under the Clean Water Act and enforced by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency. The management of stormwater is needed to protect our drinking water supply, ensure environmental health, and protect the waters that work as a major draw for North Carolina's tourism. The correct management of stormwater helps prevent flooding, prevents pollutants from entering our states water bodies, and prevents erosion from damaging one of the best features of our state.

Why was the Stormwater Program Developed?

Historically, the United States would dump pollutants and sewage directly into the waters of the US. The idea behind this was "Dilution is the solution", essentially that by putting any pollutants in the water it would dilute their concentration down to make them less hazardous. Eventually this spurred on the creation of the EPA and the Clean Water Act (CWA). The CWA allowed for regulation of water pollutants and management of stormwater that runs off of impervious surfaces.

An impervious surface is any surface that does not allow water to pass through it - think asphalt, concrete, buildings, or even gravel in most cases. This inability for water to penetrate through these surfaces means that the stormwater runoff just "runs across it", picking up pollutants and speed along the way. Pretty much any impervious surface has some type of pollutant on it: chemicals from your roof, brake dust and oil from roads, chemical pesticides from parking lots, etc. When the stormwater runoff picks up these pollutants, it will typically go right into the storm drain.

What is a Storm Drain?

Stormwater runoff that goes into storm drains actually gets released back into our streams and rivers rather than being treated due to a logistical problem with trying to treat every ounce of stormwater that hits our developments. It would be prohibitively expensive, and impossible to treat stormwater runoff in addition to our waste water. 1 acre of asphalt that receives 1 inch of rainwater can generate over 27,000 gallons of runoff - take that and multiply it by every acre of impervious surface in your town to get a scale of why it's not possible to treat stormwater. So the solution is to have a separate sewer system that focuses on just draining out stormwater. A storm sewer drain is a type of grated drain that collects runoff, whereas a sanitary sewer typically has a solid manhole.

What is Storm Sewer Dumping?

At some point you have probably seen a storm sewer drain with the telltale signs of someone dumping pollutants into it. It's not uncommon for people to use storm drains as garbage receptacles or a "convenient" place to dump oil or paint - usually thinking that the water gets treated. However this pollution (called an "illicit discharge") ends up in a river or lake - typically where nearby municipalities pull their drinking water from. This pollution builds up over time harming the health of the water, killing plants and animals that inhabit it, and increasing the cost to treat the water to make it safe for human consumption or use. There are many types of pollutants that can impair streams: chemicals, oils, grass clippings, pesticides, runoff from washing your car, etc.

The WPCOG stormwater management program works towards preventing these issues for everyone who utilizes the water, and to improve the overall environmental quality of the area. This is achieved through education, policies that help regulate stormwater, and structures that control stormwater for new developments. If you have any questions about the WPCOG's stormwater program, or wish to report an illicit discharge/stormwater issue you can contact Jack Cline at: 828.485.4222, or by email at jack.cline@wpcog.org, and Johnny Wear at 828.485.4283, or by email at john.wear@wpcog.org.

Article by Jack Cline, Johnny Wear and Taylor Dellinger



WPCOG Calendar

October

4 - Taking Charge - Aging Event (11am)

23 - MPO Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) (TBA)

23 - MPO Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) (TBA)

24 - Workforce Development Board @ WPCOG (8:30am)

28 - Combined Aging Service Providers/Regional Aging Advisory Committee/Senior Tar Heel Legislature (12PM)

November

7 - 6th Annual Landlord Meeting (3pm)

15 - Regional Housing Forum Series @ WPCOG (8:30am-12PM)

20 - MPO Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) (TBA)

20 - MPO Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) (TBA)

26 - WPCOG Policy Board Meeting (6pm) @ Maiden

December

12 - Workforce Development Board @ WPCOG (8:30am)

18 - MPO Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) (TBA)

18 - MPO Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) (TBA)

Stay Connected



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

www.wpcog.org