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## WPCOG - Newsletter

February 2021

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## Area Agency on Aging Benefits of Caregiver Respite



Caregiving can be a rewarding and challenging job simultaneously, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Responsibilities as a caregiver can range from a few hours a week to 24/7 and often include transportation to medical appointments, buying groceries, providing personal care, paying bills, preparing meals, or taking care of medications. These are just a few examples of the many jobs caregivers take on caring for a loved one. Most everyone will be a caregiver and/or need a caregiver at some point in his or her life.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also brought many family members into caregiving roles for the first time. At the same time, the pandemic has also required existing caregivers to adapt how they carry out their caregiving responsibilities. Caregivers have been learning to adapt and use new techniques to help their loved one by using telehealth options to connect with health care providers, mail order to fill prescriptions and deliver medical supplies, ordering grocery/pharmacy delivery online, and connecting with online or telephone support groups to name a few.

Caregivers gladly take on these responsibilities and feel rewarded by helping a loved one. Working through caregiver challenges might feel doable in the short term, but too much time without a break can lead to caregiver burnout, depression, or possible health problems. It may seem like taking a break or finding respite is not as important or even selfish of the caregiver. However, the reality is that caring for our overall health is more important than ever, given the stressful times we are all experiencing. Every caregiver needs help along the way - someone who will be with their loved one for a short time so that caregivers can take care of themselves.

Respite can reduce the possibility of caregiver burnout, stress, and exhaustion and help improve caregiving quality and the relationship with the care recipient. Respite also provides moments to focus on oneself during times when caregivers can be overwhelmed by others' needs. Overall, respite can strengthen family stability and reduce stress while protecting the health and well-being of both the caregiver and their loved one.

The Family Caregiver Support Program offers options for caregivers to receive respite services. These options include In-Home Aide services provided temporarily by a home health agency either occasionally as needed or regularly.

Caregivers often have friends or neighbors who have volunteered help with caregiving and would like to pay a person to stay with their family member while taking a much-needed break. The Family Caregiver Support Program provides caregiver vouchers for caregivers to be reimbursed for payment on a short-term basis for this valuable respite service provided by a friend, neighbor, or even an extended family member.

If you know a caregiver and have noticed the toll it is taking on their health and well-being, share this important information with them. Better yet, offer to help in some way to help relieve their caregiving responsibilities.

It is important to remember that taking care of yourself is one of the most important things you can do as a caregiver.

For additional information about caregiver respite services and community resources, contact WPCOG Area Agency on Aging Family Caregiver Support Program.

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Visit our website at [www.wpcogaaa.org](http://www.wpcogaaa.org)

Article by Mary Mitchell

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## Community & Economic Development

### Lenoir Using Grant Funding to Clean Up Industrial Site

The City of Lenoir has begun cleaning up a former industrial site along Virginia Street near the city's downtown.

WPCOG staff assisted Lenoir in obtaining a \$300,000 Appalachian Regional Commission grant to fund the cleanup efforts. The city has also contributed \$250,000 to the cleanup.

The site is a former furniture plant that was demolished for scrap in 2009 by a private company. But after the company abandoned the site following a bankruptcy declaration, the city was left to deal with the rubble and the environmental fallout.

Because of environmental concerns, no other companies stepped forward to purchase the property and redevelop the site. As a result, the city foreclosed on the parcel in 2014 and sought grant funding in order to complete the cleanup process.



According to Lenoir City Manager Scott Hildebran, the goal is to finish the site cleanup and obtain a Brownfields certification in order to get the 15-acre site on the market for redevelopment.

Lenoir Public Works Director Radford Thomas has been overseeing the cleanup process. He previously helped establish a Brownfields Advisory Committee comprised of local officials and business leaders that has sought Environmental Protection Agency grant funding.

As for the redevelopment, Lenoir Planning Director Jenny Wheelock said the objective is create a mix of industrial and residential development. Known as Fairfield South, the area already has seen the creation of a community garden and the current redevelopment of the former Blue Bell textile site.

**Article by Paul Teague**

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## Community & Regional Planning

### WPCOG Helps Local Governments Conform to New Development Standard

In 2019 the NC General Assembly adopted planning and development regulations that reorganized the previous county and city enabling statutes (previously chapter 153A and 160A) into a new Chapter 160D. Every City and County development regulation in the State was required to conform to the new statutory framework by January 1, 2021. Due to Covid-19, the date of statutory framework compliance was amended to June 30, 2021.

The intent of consolidating previously scattered development rules is to have a uniform set of statutes applicable to cities and counties, place the statutes into a more logical order, and have the statutes organized into a more user-friendly progression.

The Western Piedmont Council of Governments has been assisting local governments in our region to prepare them for being compliant with NC General Statutes 160D. The WPCOG has completed or will complete ordinance updates to bring 15 of our local governments into compliance with 160D by the June 30, 2021

deadline. WPCOG planners have been presenting the changes and working with local government staff, planning boards, and governing boards to make sure that the changes are made and that there is an understanding of the requirements and their responsibilities stemming from the new statutes.

Article by John Wear

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## Regional Housing Authority RHA Awarded New Vouchers

The WPCOG RHA applied for and was awarded an additional 75 Mainstream Vouchers in 2020, making the agency the only housing authority in North Carolina to receive these additional vouchers. Mainstream Vouchers target households with members who are non-elderly, meaning ages 18 to 62, and disabled. Leasing for these new vouchers will begin March 2021. Previously, the RHA was awarded 171 Mainstream Vouchers and as of Feb.2021, one hundred percent of these vouchers have been issued and filled.

In addition, the RHA, in partnership with the Charles George VA Medical Center, applied for HUD-Veteran Assisted Supportive Housing (VASH) Vouchers to provide housing payment assistance to homeless veterans in our community. This program is unique because it combines housing assistance in conjunction with case management and clinical services provided by the VA to support the veterans who receive them. In January, HUD awarded the RHA 10 HUD-VASH Vouchers based on our community need. If you know of a Veteran in need of housing assistance, please contact Elizabeth Moncrief for additional information. Email: [elizabeth.moncrief@wpcog.org](mailto:elizabeth.moncrief@wpcog.org) | Phone: 828-485-4244.

Due to the increase in vouchers, the RHA has earned an additional full-time Housing Specialist Position. Kelley Hayward was hired for the new position in January 2021. Before working at the RHA, Kelley was the Program Director at the Women's Resource Center, a community agency that seeks to advocate for the empowerment of women through personal empowerment and economic self-sufficiency. She brings experience and expertise in program development, client services, and grant writing.

Article by Elizabeth Moncrief

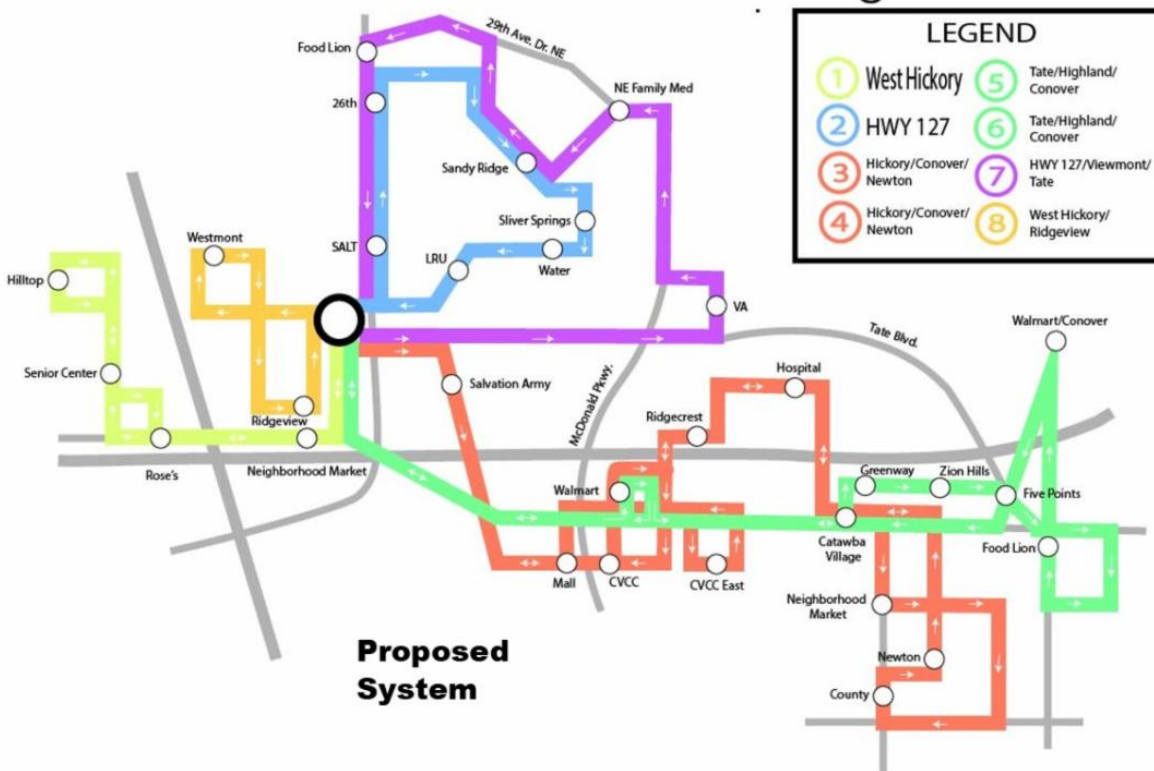
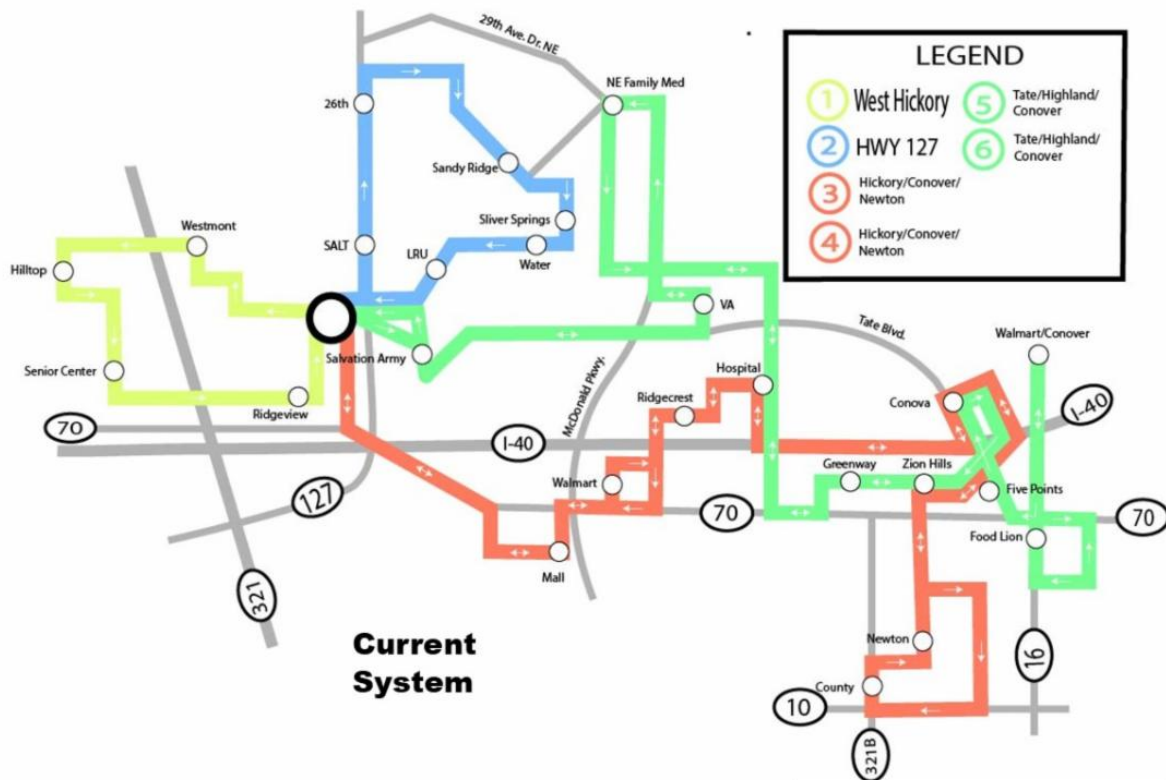
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## Transportation Draft Scenario Released for Catawba Re-Route

Last year, Greenway Public Transportation launched "Catawba Re-Route," a community-led process to recommend the first potential bus system overhaul in over ten years. Over 100 surveys were collected with many comments requesting expanded service to new destinations, shorter rides, and more frequent trips. Western Piedmont Council of Governments staff have assisted Greenway in developing scenarios to address these community and rider requests.

Recently, a proposed cost-neutral scenario was released for public comment. Since several routes would be designed to travel faster, the time savings could be reinvested to travel new places with the same number of buses and service hours as the current system. Before and after maps provide a graphic representation of how the proposed new system compares with the current bus system. Proposed areas of new coverage include Hwy 70 SW, Conover Blvd W, Northwest Blvd, Springs Rd, and 29th Ave Dr NE.

Currently, a new round of surveys is underway to help gather feedback on the proposed changes. To take a survey, more about the proposed changes, or stay involved, visit the study web page at: <https://www.mygreenway.org/catawba-re-route-2021>.



Article by Brian Horton

**Workforce Development Board**  
 Virtual Job Fairs Provide New Recruiting Options!



# EMPLOYER PROFILE

The Western Piedmont Region is continuing to offer Virtual Job Fairs to our employers & job seekers. To date, we have hosted 11 Virtual Job Fairs & Employer Profile videos and have more lined up in the future. Virtual Job Fairs offer the employers and job seekers a safe environment to come together. In addition, the Virtual Job Fairs are recorded and posted out on Social Media to gain further interest after the Job Fair is completed. You can view all NCWorks Virtual Job Fairs on our YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsZ5inndfEREtMmELO5yPQA> If you are interested in a Virtual Job Fair, contact Leslie Farris, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board at [leslie.farris@wpcog.org](mailto:leslie.farris@wpcog.org) or 828-485-4214.

Article by Leslie Farris

## WPCOG CALENDAR

All scheduled meetings are currently being conducted electronically.  
For a listing of upcoming meetings and information on how to participate or attend, please visit [www.wpcog.org/electronic-public-meetings](http://www.wpcog.org/electronic-public-meetings).

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