Hickory Horizons
Continuing the Vision
(1995)

Contents

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Part 1: Vision Summary

Preface

The Hickory Horizons: Continuing the Vision is the continuation of the visioning process initiated by the City of Hickory. It began in January of 1993 and continued through completion in late spring of 1994. The first visioning process began in October 1984 was completed in July 1987, and updated in 1989. The first visioning process focused on five key issues: Economy, Transportation, Housing, Land Use, and Finance. During the seven years since its completion, important changes have taken place in Hickory, the Unifour, the Charlotte Metro Region, and the Carolina Piedmont.

The primary effects of the emerging global economy are registered in the metropolitan areas. Job growth in the Carolinas Piedmont has shifted from rural to urban metropolitan areas which have become the key points of linkage in the global economic network. Job growth has fueled urban growth, and the Carolinas, once rural states, began a transformation during the early eighties toward becoming urban states. This dramatic shift from a dispersed rural oriented pattern, to a concentrated urban metropolitan pattern has led to the need for cities and counties in the growing metropolitan areas to work cooperatively toward developing a common vision for their shared future. While the major Piedmont metros have received the most attention, the Hickory Metro, as the fourth largest metro in the state of North Carolina, is undergoing the same type of transformation.

In order to react to both internal and external changes, a new, expanded, and more comprehensive format for the visioning process was needed. The second Hickory Horizons visioning process, *Continuing the Vision*, was based on developing a broader, more comprehensive format which included Environment, History, Culture, Education, Infrastructure, Health, Social Services, Public Safety, Zoning, and Annexation to the previous list of key issues. In recognition of Hickory's new role as the central city of the emerging Hickory Metro area, a broad spectrum of leadership from each key urban system area of both Hickory and the metro was involved in the visioning process.

The visioning process was completed in three phases. Phase One involved the creation of a Steering Committee to conduct an "urban audit". The audit, based on collecting data, analyzing, and systematically documenting the issues, conditions, activities and plans of various bodies, provided the Steering Committee with a foundation for initiating Phase Two of the visioning process. Phase Two of the Hickory Horizons visioning process provided an opportunity for City and metro leadership and citizens to become involved in a structured and defined program for developing the visions, goals, and alternative choices for strategies for the City of Hickory in the context of the Hickory Metro area. Six task forces were formed to address the target issues, including 1. Environment, 2. History, Culture & Arts, Education, 3. Transportation & Infrastructure, 4. Economic Development, 5. Health, Social Services, Public Safety, and 6. Land Use, Zoning, Housing, Annexation. In Phase Three, the Steering Committee prepared the final *Hickory Horizons: Continuing the Vision* plan and report from the materials and recommendations developed during phases one and two.

The City of Hickory commissioned Michael Gallis & Associates as consultants to assist in the *Hickory Horizons: Continuing the Vision* process and in preparation of the documents.

Introduction

The 1990's will be a key period in the evolution of the Hickory Metro area and the City of Hickory. The City of Hickory is emerging as the central city of the state's fourth largest Metro area. Urbanization in the four-country area has been traditionally viewed as a scattered pattern of twenty-three separate and independent cities. Rapid urban growth since 1970 has closed the distance between the major cities, leading to the formation of a metropolitan area. The metro area is now fast becoming an important urban center attracting national and global economic development. The strength of the area now lies in its collective educational, economic, cultural, health, and other attributes and resources.

Through the meetings and discussions of the visioning process, it became clear that each metro city and county has traditionally pursued its own future by planning independently. The result of this approach has led to fragmentation due to the lack of coordination between the multiple planning and implementation frameworks based on different political or geographic boundaries.

In the past ten years, Hickory has begun to recognize that cooperation is needed for the development of transportation, water, sewer, recreational facilities, etc., to serve the area. In recent years, the Catawba River study is an example of coordinated regional action. Other systems, such as education, health care, land use, historic preservation, culture and the arts, have not been cooperatively planned across the metro and region, but have instead been planned on a jurisdictional basis.

Through the visioning process, it is apparent that there now exists a need and opportunity to create a metro/regional context for planning and coordination of many efforts. Communities are complex organisms that must balance the demands of economic growth, and historic and environmental preservation, with educational and cultural development. The creation of a metro/regional frame of reference will enable the cities and counties to increase coordination, avoid duplication, and seek opportunities to share costs which will maximize their resources in a more cost efficient approach for metro area developments.

The continued evolution and integration of the metro area will increase the need to create comprehensive metropolitan visions and goals worked out jointly by the cities and counties of the Hickory Metro as the foundation of a metro/regional framework.

The City of Hickory, jointly with representatives from the four counties and various cities, has begun regional discussions and initiatives to benefit the entire metro area. Recommendations made in this report are intended as an important step in the process of building a metro context for the City's vision.

City of Hickory

Hickory

Hickory Regional Airport

Long View

Hildebran

Brookford

Conover
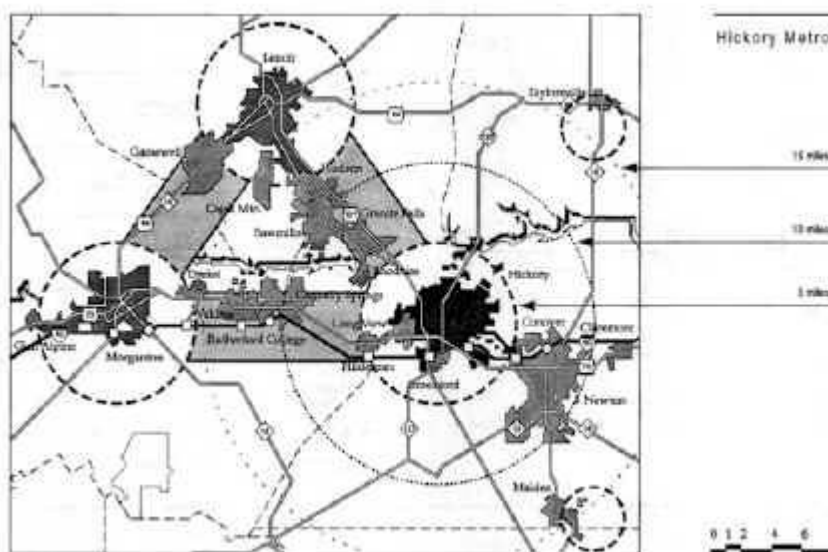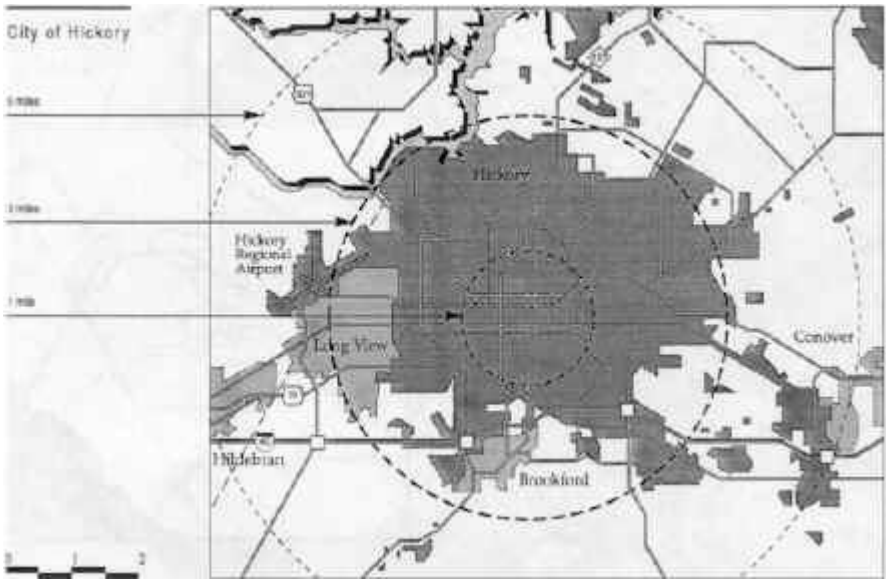
Context

GLOBAL

The visioning process for the City established three scales of context.

The world is becoming a single economic network. Significant political, educational, and cultural changes are being brought about by globalization as people and nations are being drawn into the global network. The Hickory Metro area is in the process of establishing connections with the emerging global network.

CAROLINAS

The first scale *address the position and relationships of the City and Metro within the two Carolinas. The Hickory Metro, as a small metro, must understand its relationships with the larger Piedmont metros: Greenville-Spartanburg, Charlotte, Triad, Triangle and Columbia and Coastal seaports.*

The Carolinas, a two-state region, is emerging in a global age as a single interactive economic region. The decade of the eighties saw the traditional dispersed growth pattern shift to an urban focuses pattern, which led to the creations of large metropolitan areas. The Hickory Metro, emerging as one of the important urban social and economic centers, has a central position within the two-state region. Its location offers easy access to the other major Piedmont metropolitan areas and to a variety of other amenities and facilities in the Carolinas.
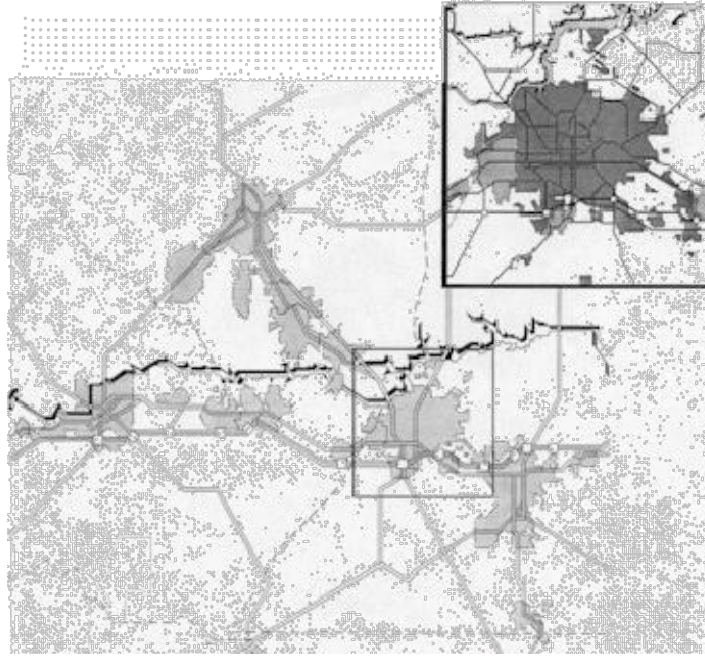
HICKORY METRO

The second scale *focused upon the position and relationship of the City within the Metro structure. The process of metropolitan formation will accelerate in the future due to increased population and economic growth. It is critical, at this stage, to recognize the need for the Unifour political units to coordinate and cooperate for the enhanced development of the entire metro area.*

The Hickory Metro, comprised of over 20 cities anchored by Hickory, Lenoir, and Morganton, has become a single large continuous metropolitan area. The four-county Unifour was transformed during the eighties by rapid urban growth which caused the formerly small independent cities to meld into a continuous urban area. This rapid urban growth also led to the incorporation of six new cities between 1970 and 1990. Today, the Hickory Metro competes with the larger metros for jobs and economic opportunities.

CITY OF HICKORY

The third scale concerned both the developments within the City limit boundary and Hickory's role as the central city of the emerging Hickory Metro area.

The City of Hickory, the largest of the 23 metro cities with over 28,000 people, is the central city and hub of the Metro Area. Hickory has emerged as the health, retail, educational, and cultural center of the Metro Area. In its role as the central city within the Metro Area, Hickory's ability to maximize its social and economic opportunities is important to both the City, Metro and the entire region. Simultaneously, the ability of the four-county region to maximize its social and economic potential, is vital to Hickory.

Key Visions & Goals

The City of Hickory, along with 22 other cities, is entering a new "Metro" era of development. Hickory, emerging as the central city of the metro area, must play a new role in facilitating cooperation between multiple government entities for the future. "Continuing the Vision" envisions the City of Hickory exercising leadership by locally addressing the issues, visions and goals in each area listed below. By taking steps within its own jurisdiction, the City of Hickory can benefit the entire metropolitan area.

Environment

The Hickory Metro has the opportunity to distinguish itself and improve the quality of life for its citizens, by capitalizing on its unique environmental setting along the Catawba River with its lakes and the Blue Ridge Mountains. In the competition for quality economic growth the cities, counties, citizens and businesses of the Metro should develop programs and policies that enhance the environment as a means of creating amenities and environmental qualities which attract high quality business.

The cities and counties by working jointly to develop mechanisms to plan and implement programs for open space, air and water quality, patterns and standards for development, transportation corridor enhancement and waste disposal can improve the appearance of the metro and region.

Protecting and enhancing the environmental identity of the Hickory Metro will be a key attribute in developing the attractiveness of the region. Both a regional environmental and a parks and open space commission should be established for the long-term viability of the region.

Task Force 1

History, Culture & Arts, Education

The development of quality educational institutions and programs, knowledge and preservation of regional history and access to cultural and arts facilities are necessary for the continued social and economic development of Hickory and the Hickory metro area.

The Metro Area needs to focus attention on its collective regional history through continued research. Outreach efforts should aim at making a broad audience aware of the region's rich and diverse heritage. Strong cooperation and coordination among local, regional, and state constituencies and facilities are needed to expand arts and cultural programs, enhance opportunities and improve upon arts facilities, to meet the changing needs of the metro and region.

The Metro must continue to emphasize the importance of education, from pre-kindergarten to graduate programs, to improve the well being of both individuals and the Metro Continued aggressive planning, coordination, and implementation are needed to set and achieve higher levels of educational expectation and achievement. Successful efforts to expand and improve these components of the quality of life will distinguish the Hickory Metro from its competitors. Improving quality of life will make the area more attractive to quality growth and more livable for its citizens.

Task Force 2

Transportation & Infrastructure

The Metro Area generally, and Hickory in particular, have been blessed with a geography that is a delightful setting for a high quality of life. Unfortunately, the topographic quality of this area makes transportation planning and implementation difficult. Traditionally, transportation planning and implementation were carried out by a variety of individual and loosely connected units. Metropolitan growth has made cooperation between local governments imperative for transportation and infrastructure planning and implementation.

The Hickory Metro's history of seeking innovative solutions to problems has established a strong base for expanding regional approaches to transportation and infrastructure development in order to support economic and social growth without traffic congestion, urban blight and pollution. Efforts to plan jointly and coordinate individual jurisdiction plans and priorities in the metro context will provide the most effective means of ensuring the provision of needed improvements. A regional forum for transportation and infrastructure planning needs to be established for the long-term development of the Metro.

Task Force 3

Economic Development

The future economy of the Hickory Metro depends on recognizing the increased importance of metropolitan regions in the global economy. The Hickory Metro can build on its strong and dynamic history of entrepreneuralism. The City and Metro can take advantage of their proximity to the larger and better known Carolinas metros by expanding cooperative metro marketing efforts, developing transportation and infrastructure, improving access for tourism, enhancing the Metro's unique environmental qualities, and strengthening traditional industries.

An awareness and understanding that all local communities are becoming parts of a larger interconnected metro economy should be created among all jurisdictions. In this metro economy, the strengths of each community are strengths for all and the weaknesses of each community are liabilities for all. Plans to strengthen the financial base for public improvements that benefit the economy should be developed in a cooperative manner involving all jurisdictions and development agencies. The Metro economy can be improved by regional public/private partnerships, communication, and coordination among development organizations.

Task Force 4

Health, Social Services, Public Safety

Communities in the Hickory Metro are growing closer together and are increasingly facing similar community service issues and problems. Long term strategies for the services necessary for health and social stability must evolve through strong cooperation and coordination among health, social service and public safety organizations and agencies.

Increased cooperation among the agencies within the Metro can maximize the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of these services. Hickory and its sister jurisdictions must lead a continuous and comprehensive effort to improve the methods and delivery of health, public safety and social services throughout the Metro. As improvements are made, each community will benefit exponentially.

Strong regional health care, effective social service, public safety and security for all segments of a diverse population must be seen as an essential foundation for a healthy and stable metropolitan community.

Task Force 5

Land Use, Zoning, Housing, Annexation

Metropolitan formation is bridging the communities of the Hickory Metro area. Urbanization has produced contiguous development, linking the communities along the Metro's major transportation arteries. These

communities both share the benefits and impacts of growth and need to work in concert on developing strategies which maximize the use of land, while enhancing attractiveness and discouraging blight.

It is essential that each of the region's communities recognizes that key resources are shared. The identity and quality of life of the region will impact each community and is the result of the combined impact of individual jurisdictional decisions on land use, zoning, housing, and annexation.

Urban growth requires the creation of a regional information and data base to be used in resolving the issues of growth, environmental quality, affordable housing, and provision of urban services. Coordination among the various Metro communities on issues of growth, land use visions, strategies, and plans will benefit the Metro's economy, environment, and quality of life. Mechanisms must be developed to encourage a coordinated and systematic approach to planning for land use, housing, zoning, and annexation.

Task Force 6

Implementation Strategy

I. Tools

A. Policies:
Policies refer to locally adopted statements of community goals and objectives. Through policy, local elected leaders spell out the future pattern of growth and direction that the community will follow. The best known example of a policy is the strategic plan. The plan does not have spending powers or regulatory requirements, but charts the course for future decisions.

B. Regulations:
Regulations are local ordinances designed to protect public health, safety, morals, and general welfare. The term police power is often used to describe these regulations. Several planning controls used for guiding urban development and carrying out plans are based on this authority to regulate. The most important of these are: zoning, subdivision regulations, and building, housing, health, and fire codes. There are also miscellaneous ordinances controlling such things as signs, landscaping, historic preservation, mobile homes, and floodplains which are part of the police power.

C. Plans and Studies:
Plans and studies are the means of acquiring information (studies) or establishing specific future projects or programs. Studies, such as a market analysis for residential development, are the means to deepen the knowledge and create the base of understanding upon which to make public and private decisions. Plans are the means to establish specific projects and programs such as a parks or transportation plan or a social action plan, aimed at addressing social and health problems.

D. Investments:
Investments refer to public capital investment. Public investment in facilities such as schools, municipal buildings, infrastructure and parks determines the use of publicly owned land. Public capital investment also exerts a powerful influence on the development of privately owned land. The construction of water lines, sewer lines, schools, public buildings and parks changes the pattern of what is economically feasible and thus changes private decisions.

II. Implementors

A. Public Sector:

1. State Agencies: State government has a variety of agencies which provide various types of financial support, studies and regulations for transportation, arts, economic development, and other plan component areas.
*Tools: *a. Policies, b. Regulations, c. Plans and Studies, d. Investments*

2. W.P.C.O.G.: The Western Piedmont Council of Governments is an organization of local governments involved in various regional planning functions including transportation, environment, economic development and housing.
*Tools: *a. Policies, c. Plans and Studies*

3. County: Counties are typically involved in education, social services, land use, public health, public safety, and environmental issues.
*Tools: *a. Policies, b. Regulations, c. Plans and Studies, d. Investments*

4. City: Cities are involved in transportation, infrastructure, utilities, public safety, and land use and zoning controls.
*Tools: *a. Policies, b. Regulations, c. Plans and Studies, d. Investments*

5. Educational Institutions (K-12 & Colleges): The institutions of a community have a powerful effect on all aspects of the social and economic life of a community.
*Tools: *a. Policies, c. Plans and Studies, d. Investments*

6. Special Single-purpose Public Agencies: Agencies such as the Tourism Development Authority, the Economic Development Corporation, Convention and Visitors Bureau, etc.
*Tools: *a. Policies, c. Plans and Studies, d. Investments*

B. Quasi-Public

1. Special Interest, Volunteer & Non-Profit Organizations: Citizen groups covering a variety of areas from garden clubs to drug abuse.
*Tools: *a. Policies, b. Regulations, c. Plans and Studies, d. Investments.*

C. Private Sector

1. Business: Businesses impact the physical appearance, financial strength, and job opportunities of the community.
Tools: a. Policies, c. Plans and Studies, d. Investments

2. Chamber: The Chamber of Commerce is primarily an economic development and marketing organization concerned with increasing economic opportunity.
*Tools: *a. Policies, c. Plans and Studies, d. Investments*

3. Foundations: Private foundations, from large national to small local, can become financial partners in the future of the community.
*Tools: *a. Policies, c. Plans and Studies, d. Investments*

4. Religious institutions: Religious organizations can greatly influence the attitudes and direction of the community.
*Tools: *a. Policies, c. Plans and Studies, d. Investments*

5. Independent educational institutions (K-12, comprehensive college, etc.)
Tools: a. Policies, c. Plans and Studies, d.

Part 2: Urban Systems

Task Force 1

Environment

Definition

Includes the visual and physical environmental conditions and their influence on the long-term development of the community. Considered in this category are issues of the long-term interface between the environment and urban growth as well as the development of streetscapes, recreation opportunities/facilities, and parks.

Mission Statement

Seek to determine an environmental strategy that maximizes the unique environmental setting and resources available to Hickory and the Metro Area by: 1. developing a strategy for regional air quality, watershed, and water resources, and 2. developing a strategy for open space, streetscapes, parks, greenways, and other environmental improvements that recognize Hickory's role as a regional provider of recreational services.
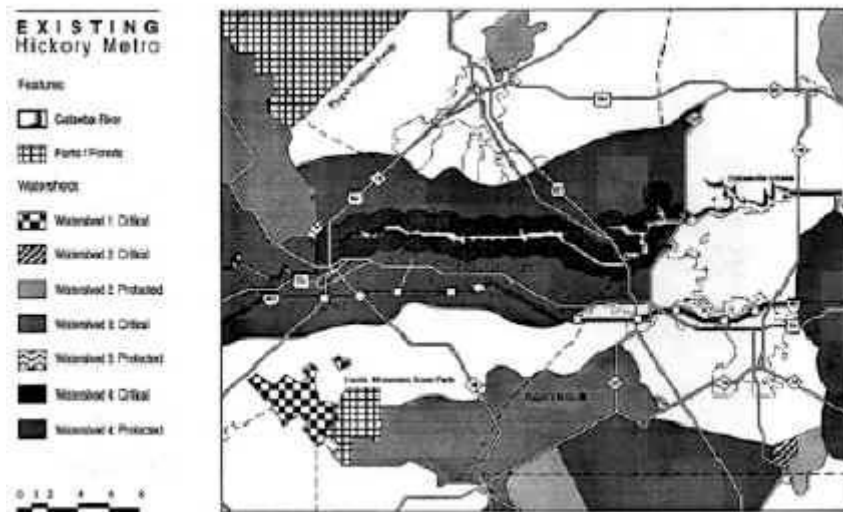
Context

Environmentally, the Carolinas are famous for the contrasting natural environmental features of beaches and swamps along the coast and the national forests and rivers in the mountains. The City of Hickory, the central city of the Hickory Metro Area, is located in one of the most desirable environmental settings in the Carolinas. This unique setting for a metro areas distinguishes the Hickory Metro from the major Piedmont metro areas. Against the background of the Blue Ridge Mountains and developing along the Catawba River and Lake Hickory, the City's and Metro's future growth can benefit from this remarkable setting.

Traditionally, the City grew up along major transportation links and not along the river. These traditional transportation corridors, which include U.S. 321 and U.S. 70, as well as numerous other major arterials, were never considered as environmental roads with extensive landscape and do not reflect the environmental character of the area. Air quality is an important issues which local communities along the major transportation corridors have little control over.

The City has developed numerous parks and recreation areas which serve the Metro, and has the largest and most comprehensive parks and recreation program in the four-county area. In addition to parks, the City has lovely

historical areas; yet many of the commercial and major corridors do not reflect a concern for environmental quality and beautification. In the competition for economic activity with the larger metropolitan areas which will advertise their size and resources, Hickory can develop a special niche based on its environmental setting which includes the beauty of both its natural and man-made landscape.

Visions & Goals

Metro

1. Create, use, and maintain a positive environmental identity, quality of life, perception, and awareness for the region which maximizes its unique natural setting and resources to distinguish it from other metros.
2. Develop mechanisms to balance use of the region's environmental resources for economic development, water supply, ecological preservation, recreation, and scenic enjoyment.
3. Create a unified approach to metro and regional environmental issues, opportunities, and problems through cooperative programs which coordinate local government activities and strategies.
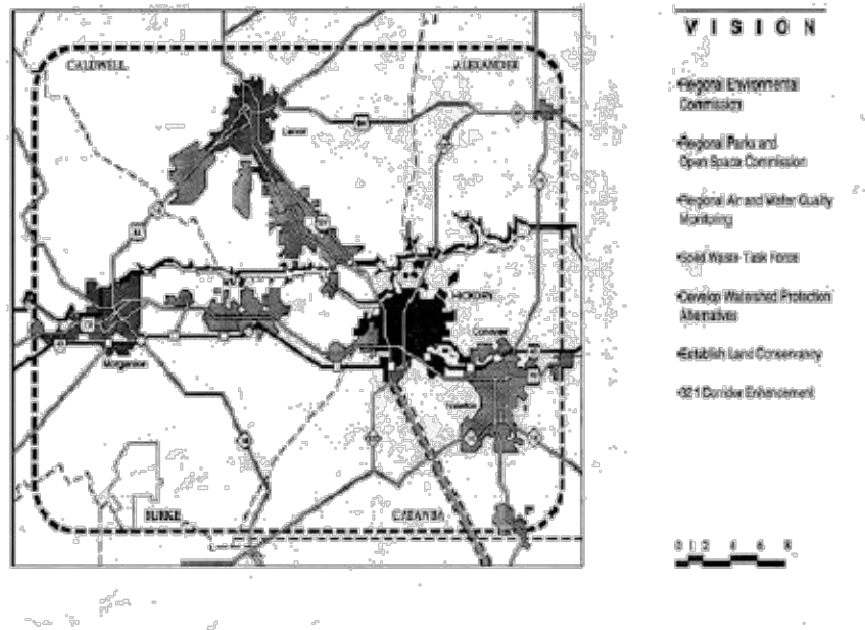
City

1. Create and maintain a positive environmental identity and quality of life throughout the City through streetscaping and development of parks and open space.
2. Maximize opportunities to enhance the environmental quality of Hickory's location along the Catawba River by promoting high quality, sensitive development.
3. Guide long-term development to reflect the quality of the environment through City programs, regulations, and investments by both the public and private sectors which aim at improving the landscape and appearance.
4. Cooperate in local and regional level partnerships to enhance and preserve the environment.

VISION

- Streetscaping
- River Front Opportunities
- Plan Environmentally Sensitive Business Parks
- Link Parks
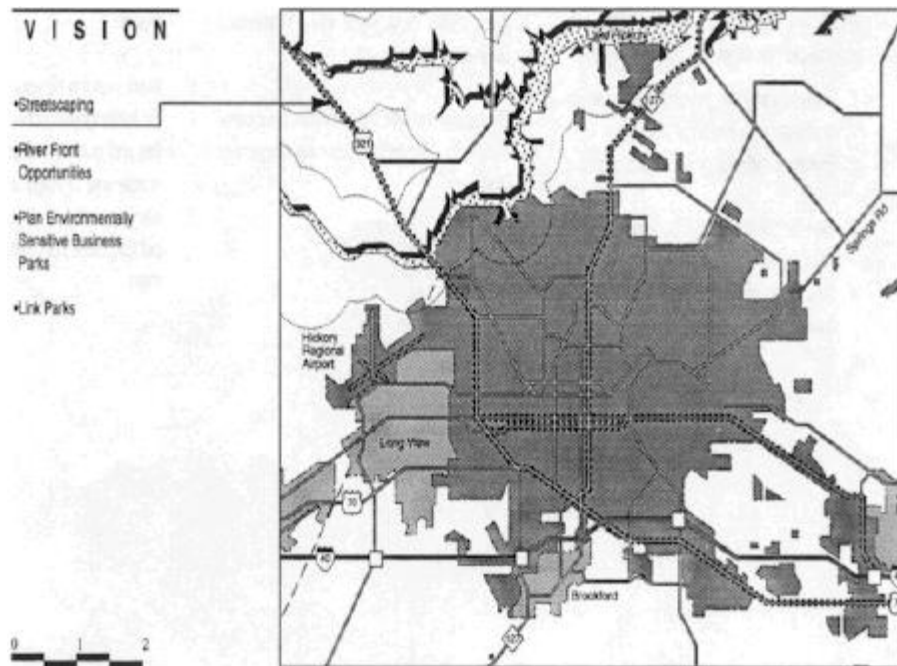
Recommendations

I. Urbanization

A. Establish a Regional Environmental Commission with meaningful representation from the area to oversee such studies and subcommittees as may be necessary to implement the coordination of plans and services that impact the quality of environmental resources of the area.

B. Support more effective enforcement of existing air and water quality regulations.

C. Support air monitoring studies and testing for the metro area through WPCOG.

D. Support enhancement of the Solid Waste Task Force operating under WPCOG. Encourage development of a regional plan for disposal of solid waste.

E. Initiate development of a coordinated Regional Land Use Plan that maintains a balance of environmental protection and economic development, including consideration of methods for dealing with existing environmentally unattractive properties.

F. Seek state authorization to develop a regional watershed protection plan that better protects water quality and allows flexibility in developing innovative methods for both economic growth and environmental protection.

G. Initiate the foundation of a private/non-profit group, such as the NC Conservancy, to assist the region in the acquisition and preservation of land for parks and open space.

H. Strengthen public education about environmental issues and programs.

I. Strengthen public education on environmental issues throughout the region through efforts of the Regional Environmental Commission and area community colleges, Catawba Science Center, schools, and local government.

J. Support efforts to develop regional plans for water and sewer services.

K. Encourage environmentally sensitive business and commercial parks.

II. Open Space Recreation

A. Establish a Regional Parks and Open Space Commission through WPCOG, composed of representatives from local governments within the Hickory Metro, to develop a regional plan for parks and open spaces.
   1. Insure that local government planning correlates with a regional plan.
   2. Ensure a balance of active and passive parks.
   3. Plan for continuous landscaping of major corridors with focus on visual issues.
   4. Link open spaces in other geographic localities.
B. Find innovative ways to reconcile economic development and environmental protection by developing environmentally sensitive business parks (e.g. Rock Hill's Waterford Business Park).
C. Encourage the MPO to establish a subcommittee to develop corridor enhancement plans.
D. Ensure that recommendations of this committee correlate with the Foresight 321 corridor plan with emphasis on corridor enhancements.
E. Work with the Hickory MPO to create a plan for thoroughfare enhancement which identifies and outlines key corridors, desired landscape and signage improvements, necessary zoning overlays, and potential public/private partnerships needed to implement.
F. Seek available grants for regional approaches to development of open spaces and recreational facilities.
G. Develop a plan that will link parks and open spaces throughout the region and throughout the City of Hickory for pedestrians and cyclists.
H. Consider "town hall" meetings in all areas for citizens' input relating to appearance, environmental issues.

Implementation

I. Urbanization

Implementors	Action Steps
Hickory City Council, Catawba County Board of Commissioners, Other Municipal and County Governments	Establish Regional Environmental Commission Appoint key representatives to work with WPCOG to expand the Environmental Vision to all the counties in the Unifour and establish broad based support
CVCC Environmental Council, Chambers of Commerce, Other Environmental Organizations, WPCOG	Address all items identified under "Urbanization"

Schedule: Year 1	Schedule: Years 2-3	Schedule: Years 4-5
Establish Regional Environmental Commission Support educational efforts of ongoing environmental programs both city-wide and regionally Support efforts of Solid Waste Task Force, City, and WPCOG Hold town meetings to enlist support for programs throughout the region. Initiate discussion with WPCOG for meeting of all planners in Metro to discuss possibility of developing a regional land use plan.	Develop air monitoring program for region through environmental commission & WPCOG. Develop regional plans for water and sewer service Encourage development of environmentally sensitive business parks. Develop Regional Land Use Plan.	Monitor and refine strategies as metro and state develop new requirements.

II. Open Space, Recreation	
Implementors	Action Steps
Hickory City Council	Invite other governmental units to a conference to address the needs in regional parks and open space. Department directors and Commissions to present long range plans for parks and recreation. Request representative of MPO to suggest to WPCOG that a permanent subcommittee to examine and recommend corridor enhancement throughout the region be established
City and County Governments, WPCOG	Governmental units approach WPCOG to initiate regional parks and recreation planning.

|	Establish Regional Parks and Open Space Commission.	
Hickory City Council, Planning Commission, Hickory Recreation Commission, Civic Clubs	Develop a plan to link city parks and open spaces with pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Plan enhancements to city thoroughfares	
Schedule: Year 1	**Schedule: Years 2-3**	**Schedule: Years 4-5**
Initiate plan for regional parks and open space commission through conference. Present recommendation to MPO regarding subcommittee on corridor enhancement subject to approval of Hickory City Council	Encourage creation of trust to purchase land for parks and open space. Develop plans for connecting parks and open space through trails and water access. Develop brochures promoting regional parks and trails. Encourage town hall meetings regarding parks and open space.	Monitor and refine strategies.

History, Culture & Arts, Education

Definition

History, Culture, Arts and Education are key elements of quality of life in a community. History refers to important "historic sites, districts, people and themes" from each stage of a city's or county's growth and strategies to preserve and enhance them. Culture, Arts, and Education refers to facilities and programs relating to education and the visual and performing arts, including facilities, programs, and events which have educational and cultural meaning.

Mission Statement

Seek to determine clear goals, policies, strategies, and needed resources to support: 1. the historic resources and traditions of Hickory in the Metro Area. 2. the development of cultural and arts facilities and programs needed in the area. 2. the educational qualities of the community necessary for the continued social and economic development of the community.
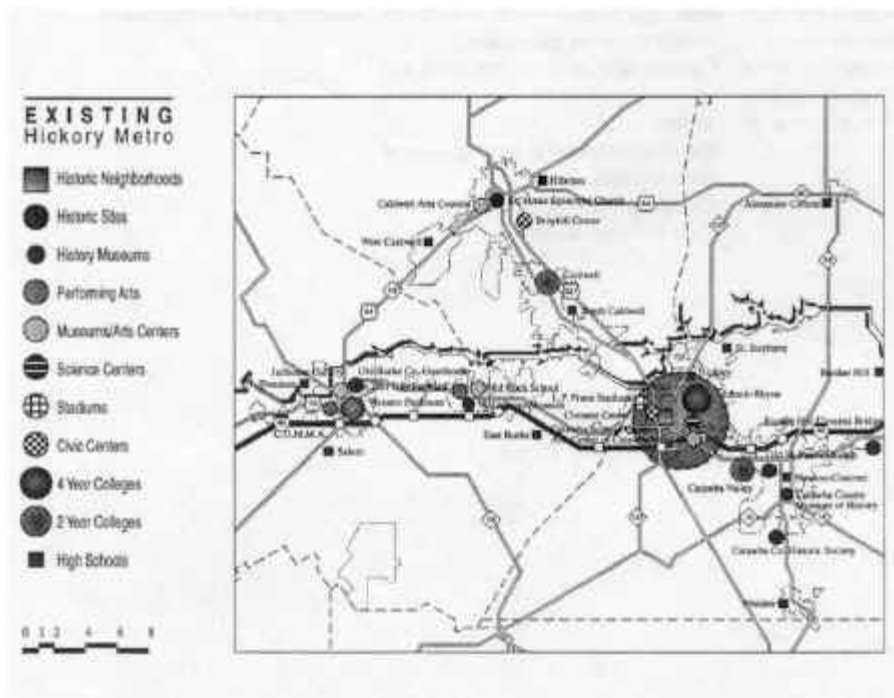

Context

Quality of life is a major factor in determining the relocation criteria for various kinds of economic activity. Quality of life is a group of interrelated factors, which together increase the desirability of living in a community. Important in determining a high quality of life are things such as well cared for historic neighborhoods and buildings, availability of visual and performing arts facilities and programs; and a wide range of educational opportunities and institutions.

By maintaining and developing the historic neighborhoods and buildings a sense of tradition is created which gives richness and identity to the community. While Hickory is an old city, first settled in the late 18th century and incorporated in 1870, it is not recognized as an important Carolinas historic site as is Charleston, Asheville, or Old Salem. Hickory does have historic neighborhoods and buildings of local and regional importance. Within the

Hickory Metro area, Hickory is an important historic city and its resources offer the region important amenities. Sites of regional and national historic interest and significance are found in most of the Metro communities.

In recent years, each of the major Piedmont metros, such as Charlotte, Raleigh, Winston-Salem, long recognized as leaders in cultural-arts facilities and programs, and Greenville S.C., have been making significant investments in cultural and arts facilities and programs. Hickory has developed a significant resource in the Arts Center of the Catawba Valley, and other cultural and arts facilities are being developed throughout the Hickory Metro. With programs such as the Western Piedmont Symphony Orchestra, Hickory Community Theater, City of Morganton Municipal Auditorium, James Broyhill Center, Catawba Valley Arts Center and P.E. Monroe Auditorium, the Metro is capable of competing favorably with any metro its size. To compete effectively with the major metros, the Hickory Metro will need to look to the creation of yet larger scaled facilities which can gain a broader identity throughout the Carolinas.

Education is increasingly important in the social and economic development of communities. The Hickory Metro is home to one four-year college, Lenoir-Rhyne, and three two-year community colleges. Of these four schools, two, Lenoir-Rhyne and Catawba Valley Community College, are located in the City of Hickory.
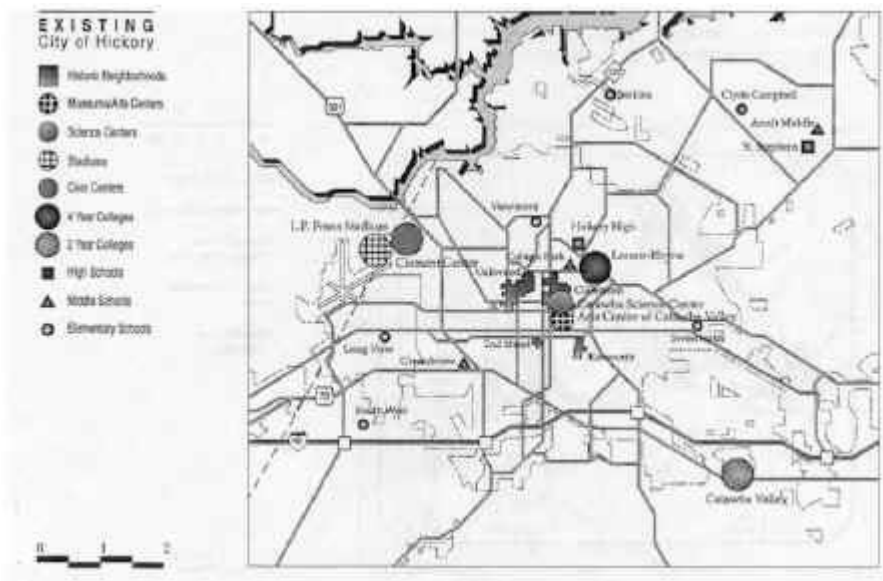

Visions & Goals

Metro

1. Continue to support the Hickory Metro as a state-wide leader in education, culture, arts, and history facilities and programs.
2. Enhance and improve the unified metro effort to plan a comprehensive approach for the development of the historic, cultural, and educational resources of the region.
3. Recognize and promote the cultural contribution of each community, while maximizing the use of existing facilities.
4. Promote regional cooperation for the development of large scale multi-purpose facilities, such as a regional civic center, to compete effectively with other larger metro/regions.
5. Recognize the importance of the pre-school and K-12 education system and create region-wide standards for excellence by working toward the NC2000 goals.
6. Maximize the opportunities in higher education development through recognition of specialization and cooperative relationships between the various educational units.
7. Explore the development of more college level programs emphasizing science, math, and technology at undergraduate and graduate levels to support the development of high technology business and industry.
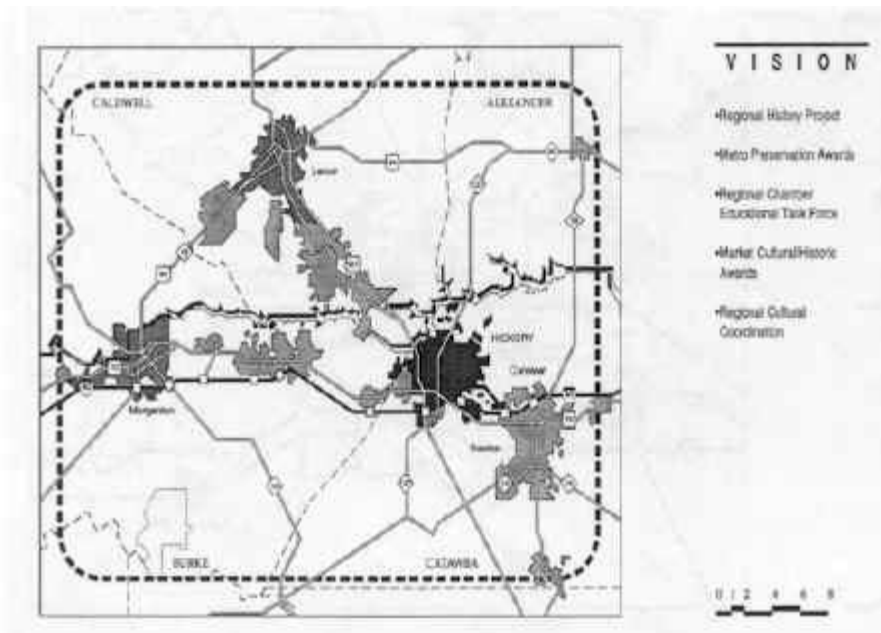
City

1. Hickory should strive to further enhance and develop its historic, cultural, arts, and educational resources.
2. Hickory should continue to develop a rich and varied mix of historical, educational, and cultural resources that can continue to serve the growing metro and broader region.
3. Broaden the cultural offerings of Hickory through recognition of multiculturalism in the City's facilities and programming.
4. Encourage broadening community participation in the historic, cultural, arts, and educational programs.
5. Recognize the historic diversity of the region and develop strategies to maximize Hickory's strength and unique historical meaning within this context.
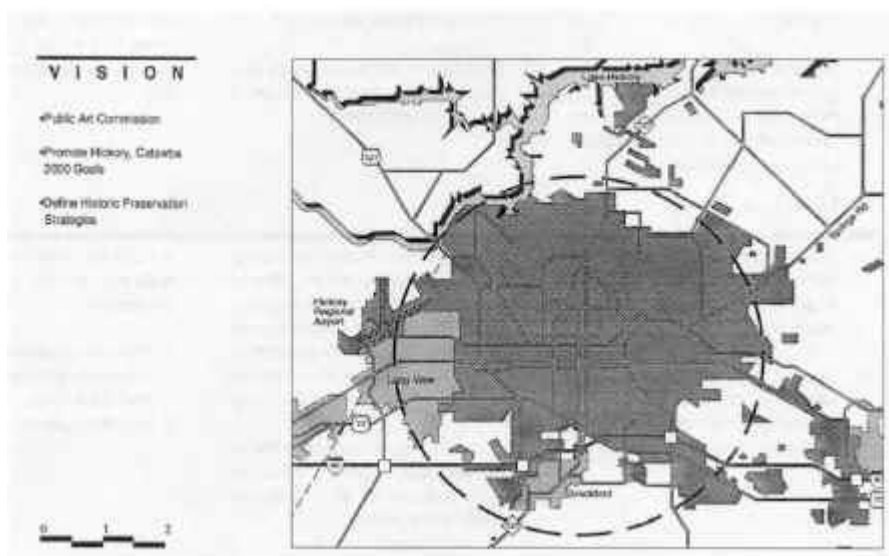
Recommendations

I. History

A. Establish a task force to disseminate information from all metro areas.
B. Establish a metro awards program in the area of local history / historic preservation which has high visibility and press.
C. Form a task force to study the problems of transitional neighborhoods and the resource differentials affecting lower income Unifour historic districts and individual National Register properties.
D. Form a task force to investigate potential strategies to resolve conflict between development and historic preservation.
E. Establish a task force with representation from each college and university to study the creation of a program by Lenoir-Rhyne College and all colleges to focus on the history of the metro area either at the graduate or undergraduate level or both.
    1. *Appropriate time schedule for regional participation.*
    2. *Teacher training for preschool and K-12 educators in local / regional history.*
    3. *Curriculum focusing on the cultural / geographical amenities of the Catawba River Valley.*
F. Create a regional administrator position and establish a central office to coordinate multi-agency historical information and to seek grants for agencies within the area.
G. Support a study for metro / regional history.
    1. *Compile an inventory of historic sites in the entire metro area.*
    2. *Support a cultural / anthropological / geographical study of the metro area.*
    3. *Develop a comprehensive written history of the metro area.*
H. Develop a brochure / guide that identifies historic sites in the metro.
I. Implement a local history component into the preschool and K-12 school system which recognizes the contributions of all communities within the metro region.

II. Culture & Arts

A. Establish a regional consortium or expanded metro task force to include directors of facilities which encourage broader metro participation.
B. Establish a City of Hickory public art commission.
C. Create a public art inventory and support a strategy for a comprehensive metro wide public art program designating suitable sites in cooperation with local communities.
D. Establish a study to assess local programming needs.
E. Complete a regional inventory of all facilities and programs and prepare an evaluation of these in relationship to a regional needs assessment.
F. Develop a metro wide signage program which highlights the location or arts and cultural facilities.
G. Work with state and local tourism agencies to identify and market facilities and programs within the metro area.
H. Create a consortium or expanded task force of local educators and artists from around the region to further cultural arts programs in education.
I. Request the State Arts Council and the four County Arts Councils to establish a regional coalition to discuss long term strategies for the metro region.

III. Education

A. Assess the need for development of comprehensive university programs to serve the growing educational needs of the metro region.
B. Develop a four-county educational task force and consortium, through the regional Chambers, to participate in cooperative educational strategies.
C. Support better utilization of existing educational facilities and programs by coordinating and scheduling programs and events in a metro context to better meet the time constraints of a multicultural population and reduce unnecessary duplication of programs.
D. Continue to support and work toward the strategies outlined in the Goals2000 program for all K-12 school systems and colleges.
E. Support the development of specialized educational programs with emphasis on:
    1. *Technology with respect to the information highway*
    2. *Work force literacy*
    3. *Pre-school preparation*
F. Support and enhance the diversity of the various community colleges within the region through the coordination of programs to best meet the needs of a growing community.
G. Encourage regional meetings between the Metro Chambers' educational subcommittees in coordination with the educational consortium organization.

Implementation

I. History

Implementors	Action Steps	
Hickory City Council WPCOG City/County/State Historic Preservation Offices, Western North Carolina Historic Association, other municipal and county governments, Lenoir-Rhyne College History Dept.	Conduct conference to initiate development of History Task Force(s) to study issues of local history, historic preservation, history education, identification (brochure), and marketing of historic sites, and historic Metro Awards program Create a regional administrator position and central office to conduct multi-agency historical information and to seek grants for agencies within area. Develop a K-12 local history curriculum.	
Schedule: Year 1	**Schedule: Years 2-3**	**Schedule: Years 4-5**
Establish a task force to disseminate information from all metro areas.	Establish a Metro awards program in the area of local history / historic preservation which would have high visibility and press. Form a task force to investigate strategies to resolve conflict between development and historic preservation, and the resource differentials between the Metro's historic districts and national historic register properties.	Create a regional administrator position and establish a central office for the coordination of multi-agency historical information and to seek grants for agencies within the area. Implement a local history

	Develop a brochure / guide that identifies historic sites in the area. Establish a task force with representation from each college and university to study the creation of a program to focus on the history of the Metro area either at the graduate or undergraduate level or both. Support a study for Metro / Regional history.	component into the preschool and K-12 school system which recognizes the contributions of all communities within the Metro region.

II. Culture & Arts

Implementor	Action Steps	
Catawba County Council for the Arts Hickory City Council Counties and other municipalities, arts councils, culture and arts facilities directors, school superintendents, reps of higher education, NCDOT, TDA, Dept. of Commerce	Request the State Arts Council and four-county Arts Councils to establish a regional coalition to discuss long-term strategies for the Metro and region. Complete a regional inventory of all facilities and programs and prepare an evaluation of these in relationship to regional needs. Establish a regional consortium to include facilities directors across the metropolitan area. Establish a public arts commission for Hickory. Establish a metro-wide signage program for cultural facilities.	

Schedule: Year 1	Schedule: Years 2 - 3	Schedule: Years 4 - 5
Request the States Arts Council and the four County Arts Councils to establish a regional coalition to discuss long-term strategies for the Metro region. Complete a regional inventory of all facilities and programs and prepare an evaluation of these in relationship to a regional needs assessment. Establish a regional consortium or expanded Metro task force, to include directors of facilities, which encourages broader Metro participation. Establish a study to assess local programming needs.	Create a consortium or expanded task force of local educators and artists from around the region to further cultural arts programs in education. Develop a Metro-wide signage program which highlights the location of arts and cultural facilities. Establish a City of Hickory public art commission. Create a public art inventory and support a strategy for a comprehensive Metro wide public art program designating suitable sites in cooperation with local communities.	Work with state and local tourism agencies to identify and market facilities and programs within the Metro area.

III. Education

Implementors	Action Steps	
Regional Chambers, CEE School Boards, County Commissions, Community Colleges, Parent Groups	Develop a four-county educational task force and consortium to participate in cooperative educational strategies. Establish regional meetings between the regional chamber's educational subcommittees in coordination with the educational consortium organization. Work toward the strategies outlined in the Goals 2000 program, the development and coordination of programs in the various community colleges, and better coordination and scheduling of events and programs in a metro context.	

| Schedule: Year 1	Schedule: Years 2-3	Schedule: Years 4-5
Continue to support and work toward the strategies outlined in the Goals 2000 program for all K-12 school systems and colleges. Support the development of specialized educational programs in technology, work force literacy, and pre-school prep.		Support the development of a comprehensive university to serve the growing educational needs of the Metro region.

Transportation & Infrastructure

Definition

Transportation and infrastructure are the framework upon which urban growth takes place. Transportation refers to the pattern and dynamics of movement of all modes of transportation including roads, rail, and air. Infrastructure refers to the sewer, water, solid and other waste facilities and systems. This includes sanitary sewer systems, storm water drainage, electricity, water plants and distribution systems, etc.

Mission Statement

Seek to determine how urban growth has changed the larger scale metro and corresponding local development pattern and what future resources will be required to support continued urban social and economic growth by assessing: 1. the optimal future surface and air regional, metro and local transportation patterns, 2. the continued expansion of infrastructure needed for urbanization, and 3. the need for cooperative, multi-jurisdictional infrastructure.
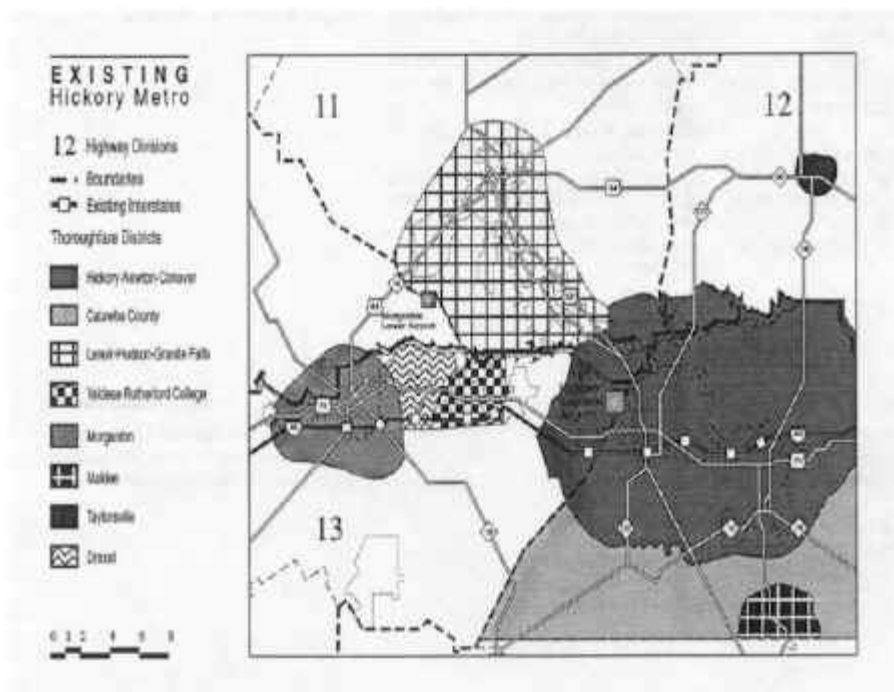
Context

As the group of twenty independent cities merges into a single large Hickory Metro area, new demands on transportation and infrastructure will arise. Traditionally, the transportation planning was carried out by the Hickory-Newton-Conover MPO and eight thoroughfare planning districts. Infrastructure was developed by both public and private providers. Neither transportation nor infrastructure was planned on a metro / regional basis. Additionally, the Metro area is divided into three State Highway divisions which further fragments the coordination of transportation improvements. Hickory, as the pivotal central city, will be the key to the metro infrastructure and transportation future.

Transportation is equally important at the regional, metro, and local scales. At the regional scale, the long-term relationship between the Hickory Metro and the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport will become increasingly

important. This connection will mot logically take place through the city of Hickory which has the only other commercial airport (Hickory Regional Airport) in the fifteen-county Charlotte Metro Region. At the metropolitan scale, no integrated and systematic planning has taken place to provide long-term accessibility to the twenty cities of the metro area. Without early long-term planning the roads which connect the metro area could easily become a tangled mass of traffic. Locally, the Hickory arterial system is confusing and its pattern is illegible, with the result that the downtown, within two miles of I-40, is relatively inaccessible.
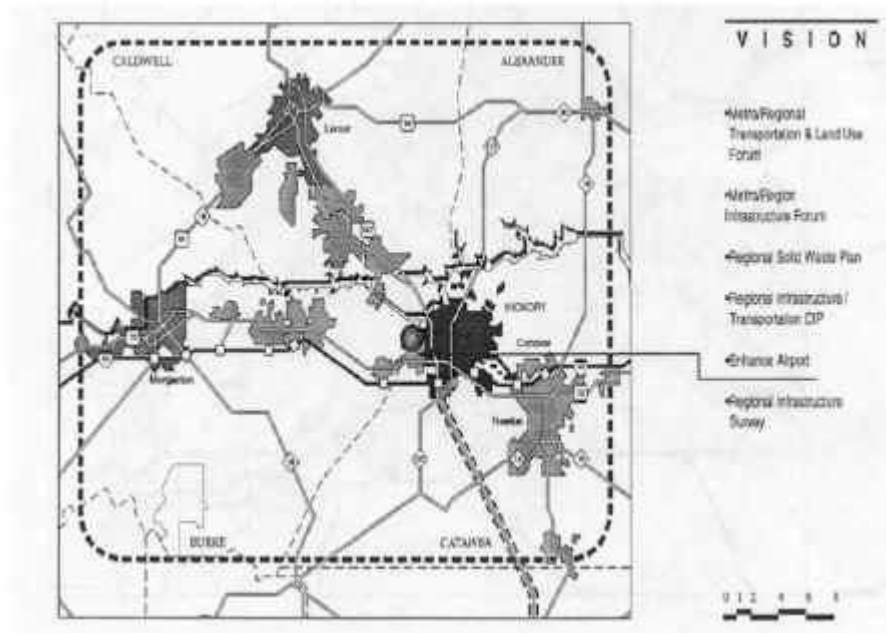
While significant investments in sewer and water facilities have been recently completed by the City of Hickory, long-term identification of service districts and multi-jurisdictional strategies for utility expansion have not been completed. These issues will become more important as the metro cities continue to merge. Opportunities for significant cooperation to achieve capital and operating savings will be passed by unless relationships can be established and strengthened early in the process.
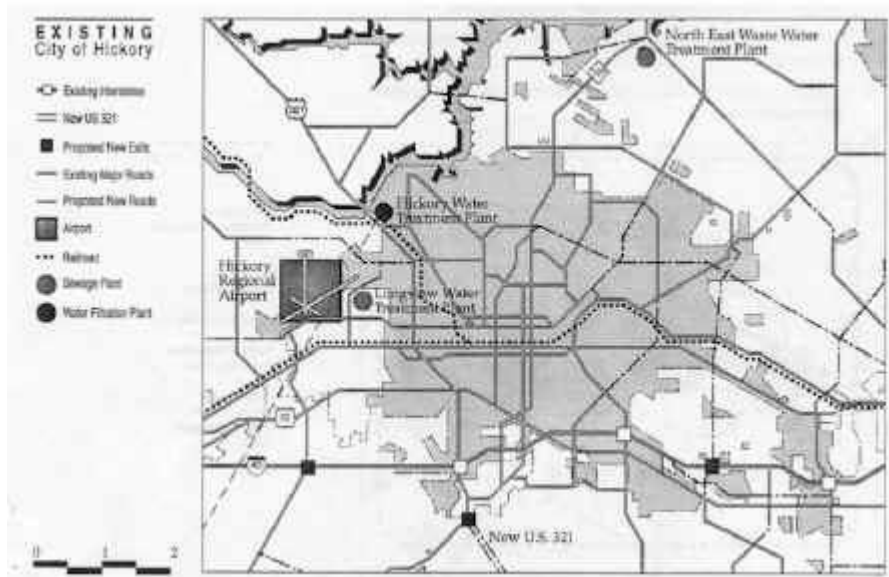
Visions & Goals

Metro

1. Recognize that Metro growth will put greater demands on existing area roads and that will increase the importance of improving accessibility between and within the various Metro communities and key destination points.
2. Develop a unified regional approach to comprehensive transportation planning including freeways, arterials, airports, transit, pedestrian traffic, and rail inclusive of existing highway and thoroughfare planning districts.
3. Promote and continue to improve transportation linkages including road, rail, and air between the Hickory Metro and other surrounding Metro areas.
4. Coordinate land use, development, and infrastructure with transportation planning in the entire four county region.
5. Identify, document, and coordinate regional service area plans to maximize efficiency and reduce costs of infrastructure.
6. Create opportunities for pedestrian traffic via bike paths, jogging trails, sidewalks, and other pedestrian ways.
7. Preserve current rail transportation between Hickory and Lenoir.
8. Explore potential transit visions to include alternative transportation strategies for the region.
9. Continue to develop the airport as an essential part of the metro and regional transportation network.

VISION

- Metro/Regional Transportation & Land Use Forum
- Metro/Region Infrastructure Forum
- Regional Solid Waste Plan
- Regional Infrastructure / Transportation CIP
- Enhance Airport
- Regional Infrastructure Survey

City

1. Enhance Hickory's role as a regional infrastructure provider.
2. Seek ways to create better transportation connections between neighborhoods, businesses, institutions, health facilities, and other destinations within the City and the region.
3. Recognize the need to increase the connectivity between the traditional urban core and the major regional transportation corridors.
4. Seek to promote efficient land use and development strategies that reduce capital and operating costs of transportation and infrastructure.
5. Expand and enhance the pedestrian movement system via bike trails, jogging paths, sidewalks, and other pedestrian ways.

VISION

- Inter-Regional Passenger Rail
- Improve Arterial Connection
- Study Street Naming
- High Quality Water System
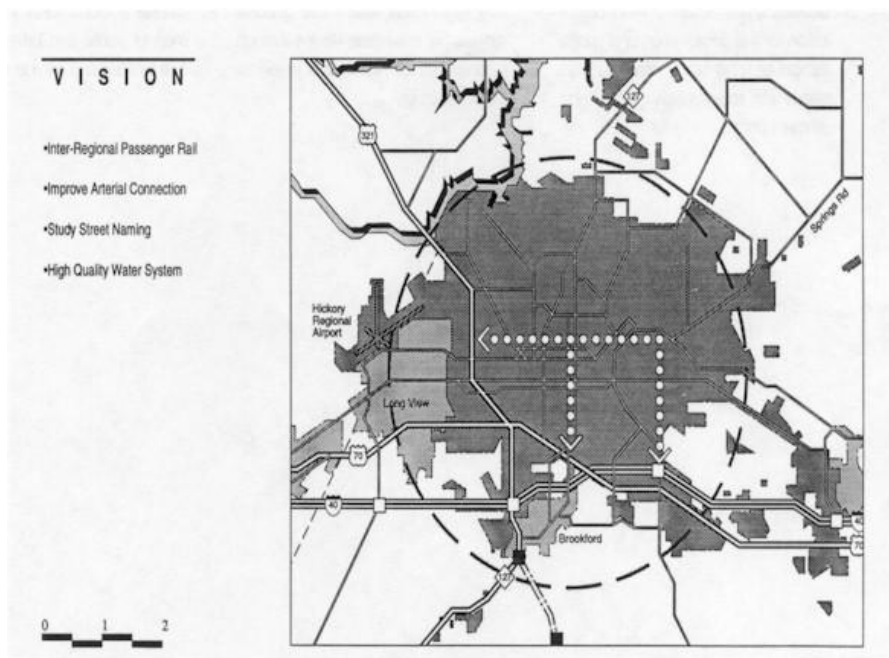
Recommendations

I. Transportation

A. Encourage the development and adoption of coordinated thoroughfare and transit plans by all jurisdictions in the metro area.
B. Create a forum for mutual cooperation and support among the three principal highway division representatives whose territories include parts of the metro region.
C. Create a forum for coordinating land use with transportation and infrastructure in the four counties.
D. Encourage the creation of subdivision regulations and right-of-way protection across the four counties.
E. Support efforts to plan future land uses, street configurations, and development standards that are compatible with the intended function of all major thoroughfares in the metro area.
F. Create a body to develop an integrated intermodal metro transportation plan that includes roads (interstates and major arterials), rail, air, pedestrian, and transit.
G. Request that NCDOT study the feasibility of inter-regional passenger rail (Amtrak) connections for the metro.
H. Encourage a forum of Transit Development Plan Committees from each metro county to explore coordination of regional human service agency transportation.
I. Study the feasibility of linking 4th St. S.W. to the 2nd St. S.W. extension from the US 321 project.
J. Study Hickory's street naming system, focusing on major thoroughfares, with a goal of developing consistent names to better direct travelers using major streets in the urban area.
K. Study the development of signage and streetscaping programs to provide visual cues to direct travelers to major destinations in the urban area.

II. Infrastructure

A. Encourage discussion and strategy development towards a comprehensive interconnected region wide water supply that maximizes service through economies of scale.
B. Develop a four county regional organization for the coordination and prioritization of long term infrastructure needs with an emphasis on local government units.
C. Provide a high quality water system that will meet the long term needs of a developing community.
D. Encourage discussion and strategy development towards a comprehensive, region-wide solid waste disposal system that maximizes service through economics of scale and involves municipal input.
E. Create a forum to develop metro water and sewer service districts based on the ability to provide services and flexible enough to respond to changes in these capabilities.
F. Create a four county inventory and map of public and private infrastructure facilities and service areas.
G. Create a regional capital improvements plan considering water, sewer, solid waste, transportation needs, and evaluate public cost of capital projects.

Implementation

I. Transportation

Implementors	Action Steps
WPCOG	Establish a forum for cooperation and support among the three principle highway division representatives. Establish a forum for coordinating land use with transportation and infrastructure in the Metro. Develop an integrated intermodal Metro transportation plan to include roads,

Implementors	Action Steps
	rail, air, pedestrian and transit.
Hickory City Council	Request that NCDOT study feasibility of inter-regional passenger rail connections for the Metro. Initiate Hickory city projects for street naming systems, signage and streetscaping, and road improvement projects.
Departments of Social Services, other municipal and county governments, state and local DOT, City and County Planning Depts.	Coordinate metro regional human service agency transportation; create subdivision regulations and right-of-way protection across the four counties.

Schedule: Year 1	Schedule: Years 2-3	Schedule: Years 4-5
Create a forum for cooperation and support among the three highway division reps. Create a forum for coordinating land use with transportation and infrastructure in the four counties. Request that NCDOT study feasibility of interregional passenger rail connections for the Metro. Study Hickory's street naming system. Study the development of signage and streetscaping programs in the City of Hickory.	Coordinate thoroughfare and transit plans across the Metro area. Encourage the creation of subdivision regulations and right-of-way protection across the four counties. Coordinate land use, street configurations, and development standards with intended function of major metro thoroughfares. Create a body to develop an integrated transportation plan. Establish a forum of transit development plan committees from each county to coordinate regional human service agency transportation. Study the feasibility of linking 4th Street SW to 2nd Street SW extension to US321 project.	Monitor and refine strategies.

II. Infrastructure

Implementors	Action Steps
Hickory City Council WPCOG	Initiate discussion and strategy development toward a comprehensive interconnected region-wide water supply.
Other municipal and county governments, public utility depts., state depts. of natural resources	Establish a forum to develop metro service districts for water and sewer services. Create a four-county inventory and map of public and private infrastructure facilities and service areas. Create a regional capital improvements program. Establish a four-county regional organization to coordinate and prioritize long-term infrastructure needs.

Schedule: Year 1	Schedule: Years 2-3	Schedule: Years 4-5
Establish a forum to develop metro service districts for delivery of water and sewer services. Create a four-county inventory and map of public and private infrastructure facilities and service areas.	Initiate discussion and strategy development toward a comprehensive and inter-connected region-wide water supply to maximize service. Establish four-county regional organization to coordinate and prioritize long-term infrastructure needs. Initiate discussion and strategy development toward a comprehensive region-wide solid waste	Update regional infrastructure inventory and map.

| | disposal system that maximizes service.

Create a regional capital improvements plan including water, sewer, solid waste, transportation needs, and public cost.

Update regional infrastructure inventory and map. | |

Economic Development

Definition

Economic Development refers to the evolving structure and pattern of economic activity within the city as a component of the metro. Seeks to define the retail, manufacturing, tourism, service, and other components, their relative strengths, and potential for development. Also includes the issues of recruitment, marketing, and strategies to strengthen the city's economy.

Mission Statement

Seek to determine the most effective means of measuring, evaluating, and strengthening the local and regional economy by: 1. developing a clear understanding of the structure and health of the current economy, and 3. developing strategies to strengthen the various economic sections (manufacturing, real estate, tourism, retail, etc.), and 3. developing strategies to strengthen the financial base of the public sector necessary to support future public improvements.
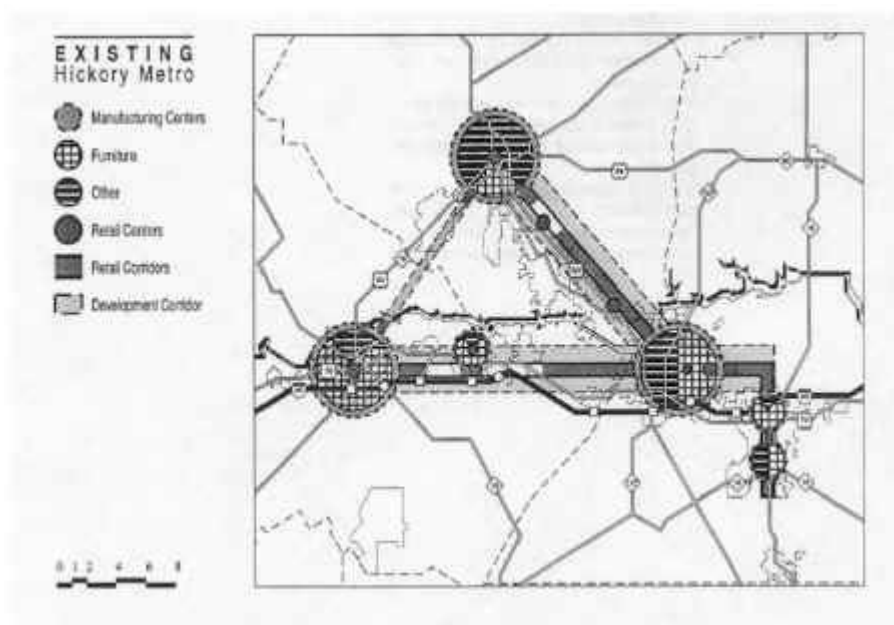

Context

The Carolina Piedmont is rapidly developing as one of the rising economic zones in the new global economy. Each of the major Piedmont metros is developing specific strengths in economic development: Charlotte, the major financial and distribution center; Greenville, the recent choice of BMW; Triad, a major manufacturing center; and the Triangle, the major research and development center of the Carolinas. Centrally located in the Carolina Piedmont, the Hickory Metro has easy access to three of the four major Piedmont metros and can benefit economically from this proximity. The perception of the region is still one of a scatteration of small independent cities. Marketing will be key to developing new perceptions of the Hickory Metro, an area of over 290,000 people today and the fourth largest MSA in the state of North Carolina.

The Hickory Metro, traditionally a furniture and textile economy, is diversifying into several manufacturing areas. Hickory, emerging as a metro center, has an increasing share of the retail market, while the proximity of the furniture and textile industry has generated a specialty outlet retail component drawing thousands of visitors each

year. Located in proximity to major tourist attractions in the mountains of North Carolina, Hickory has an opportunity to strengthen the tourism component of its economy. Recognition of the economic potential of the region will be key to attracting long term economic activity to strengthen the Metro economy. There is a need to develop support for small and medium sized businesses to maintain the economic health of the region. The lessons learned from the closing of the Business Technology Center (B.T.C.) need to be incorporated into any future programming.

While Catawba County has one of the highest tax bases in the thirteen-county Carolinas Partnership, outside of Mecklenburg, new means to strengthen the tax base and revenue stream must be determined.
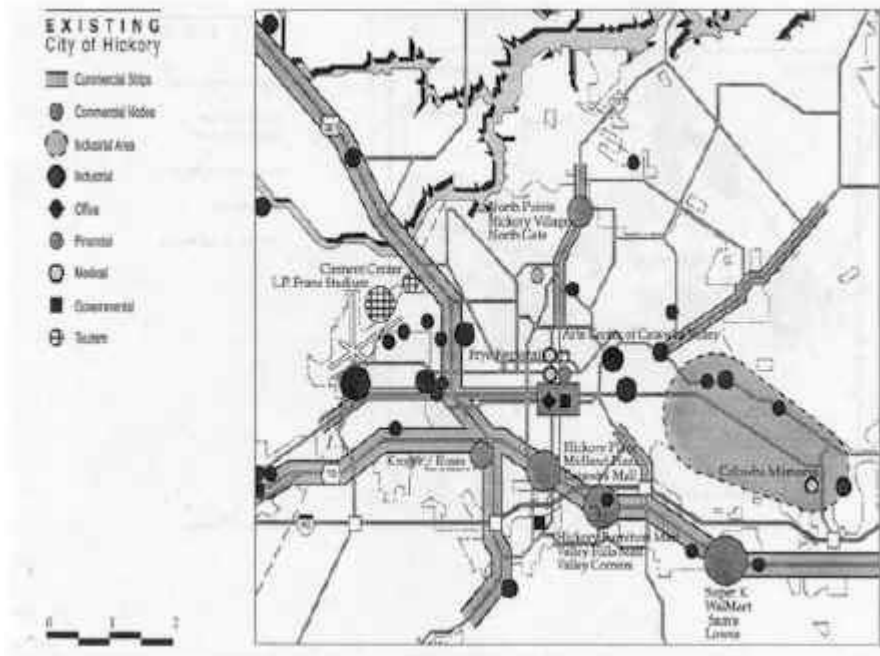
Visions & Goals

Metro

1. Recognize the importance that all the communities are becoming part of a larger metro/regional economy to the benefit of all.
2. Build diversity and quality economic development to provide jobs, tax base, and preserve the economic viability of the City and region.
3. Recognize the need to support existing metro/regional businesses as well as promote new economic development throughout the region.
4. Recognize that economic development throughout the region benefits all and is a multi-faceted issue involving manufacturing, retail, tourism, commercial, office, etc.
5. Maintain and enhance a business climate conducive to entrepreneurship, new business locations, and local business needs.
6. Recognize the importance of education, transportation, infrastructure, culture, and arts resources which support economic development.
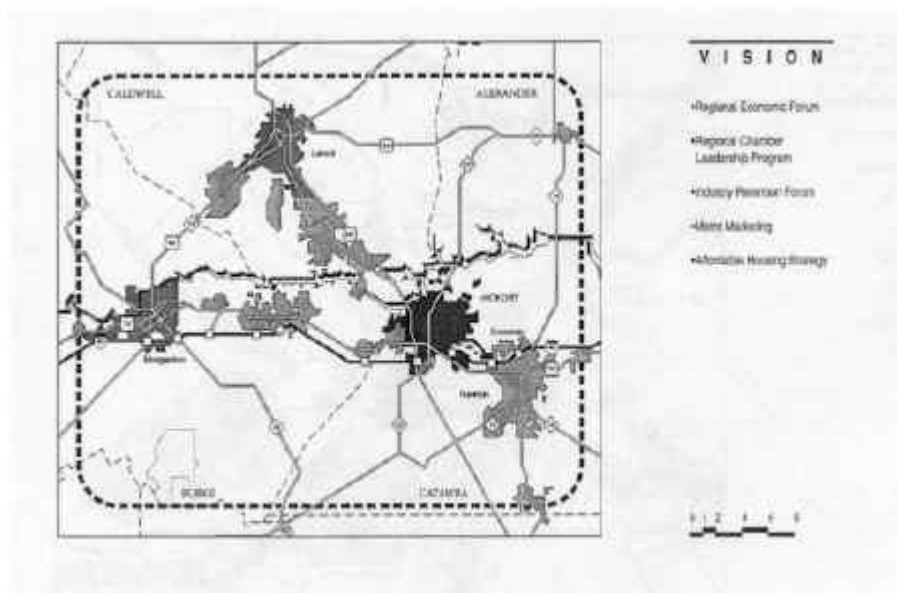
City

1. Encourage Hickory's growing role as a retail, service, health distribution, and information center and as the economic anchor for development throughout the region.
2. Develop productive public/private relationships leading to the development of appropriate land use controls and a comprehensive planning process to address the problems of declining and decaying commercial, retail and industrial areas.
3. Develop adaptive reuse and revitalization strategies to address problems within existing communities.
4. Work with local industry to create long-term development plans to preserve the City's economic base.
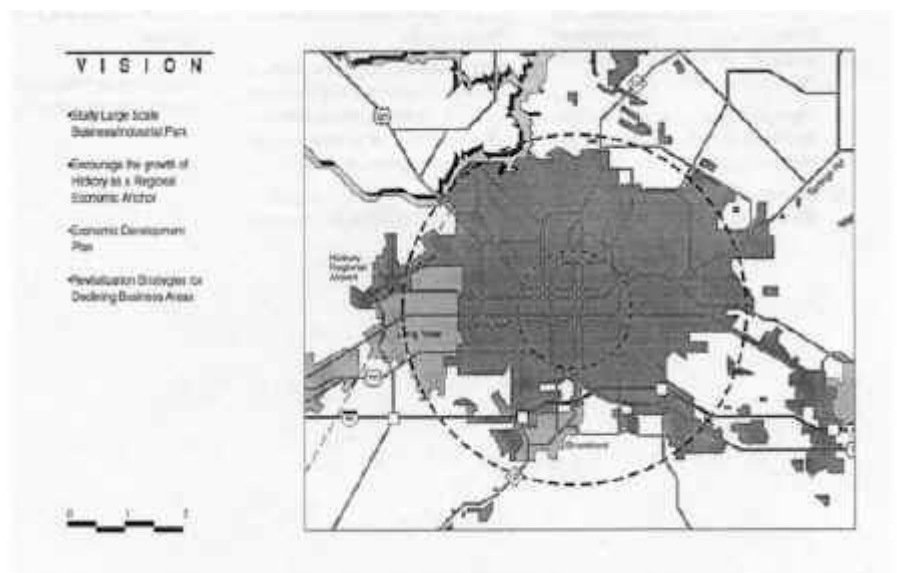
Recommendations

I. Private Sector

A. Encourage the Chambers to create a regional coalition of Chamber task forces to strengthen metro marketing.
B. Create a regional forum for various economic development entities such as the EDC, Chambers, TDA, SBC, SBTDC, and the WPCOG to form cooperative visions and strategies.
C. Help government understand the needs of existing industry and create a forum to development strategies for their support.
D. Support the development of more technical curriculum offerings at the local community colleges and the development of a four-year comprehensive college/university.
E. Support the development of a comprehensive metro / regional transportation and infrastructure plan which facilitate the production and distribution of goods and services.
F. Support the development of a plan for affordable housing to ensure the long-term availability of an expanding labor force.
G. Work with the public sector to maintain a healthy balance between growth, increases in service demands, and the budget.
H. Address a poor environmental protection image by establishing a regional forum to:
   1. Coordinate environmental programs.
   2. Coordinate regional land use regulations among local governments.
I. Develop a metro / regional leadership program through a cooperative chamber effort.

II. Public Sector

A. Create a forum for the small business centers and the Small Business Technology Development Centers to better coordinate services with the needs and opportunities of the business community.
B. Create cooperative development strategies for effective land use, transportation, and infrastructure planning.
C. Develop outline of long-term financial and revenue needs plan.
D. Find the educational resources that complement the high technology fiber optic information superhighway.
E. Build on existing cooperative efforts to strengthen economic identity of the Hickory Metro area. Continue to develop Metro marketing materials for use by the entire region to facilitate new business recruitment.
F. Create a Metro / regional funding pool to develop Metro marketing and advertising tools.
G. Develop methods to make Metro marketing materials available and affordable for all agencies.
H. Begin a study on location and feasibility of a large scale regional business/industrial park.

Implementation

I. Private Sector

Implementors	Action Steps
Catawba County Chamber of Commerce	Initiate a metro / regional leadership program.
	Create a regional coalition of Chamber task forces to strengthen metro marketing.
	Create a regional forum for economic development entities to form cooperative development strategies.
	Establish a forum to develop strategies to meet the needs of existing industry.
Chambers of Commerce	

Schedule: Year 1	Schedule: Years 2-3	Schedule: Years 4-5
Develop a metro/regional leadership program. Support the development of comprehensive metro and regional transportation and infrastructure plan to effectively move goods and services. Develop a forum for public/private discussions to balance growth, increased service demands, and public budgets. Establish a regional coalition to strengthen metro market.	Establish a regional forum for various economic development entities to cooperate. Establish a forum to develop strategies for meeting the needs of existing industry. Support the development of technical curriculum at local community colleges and four-year institutions. Use a regional forum to address poor environmental protection image.	Develop an affordable housing strategy.

II. Public Sector

Implementors	Action Steps
City of Hickory	Establish a forum for SBC's and SBTDC's to coordinate business community needs. Strengthen the development of metro marketing materials for business recruitment. Establish a metro/regional funding pool for metro marketing and advertising. Initiate study of location and feasibility for a large scale regional business/industrial park. Development outline of long-term financial and revenue needs.
WPCOG, other county and municipal governments, EDC's, IDC's, colleges, SBC's, SBTDC, TDA,CVB, Boards of Education, City and County Planning Boards, NCDOT, business/industry associations and other state agencies.	

| Schedule: Year 1	Schedule: Years 2-3	Schedule: Years 4-5
Create a forum for SBC's and SBTDC's to better coordinate services to the business community. Continue to develop metro marketing materials for use by the entire region for business recruitment. Establish a metro/regional funding pool for metro marketing and advertising. Develop methods to make marketing materials available and affordable for all agencies.	Create a forum for cooperative land use, transportation, and infrastructure strategies. Create a forum to study the educational resource needs to complement the information highway.	Establish a forum to study and develop a plan to finance long-term regional development strategies and for development of a large scale regional business/industrial park.

Health, Social Services, Public Safety

Definition

Health, Social Services, and Public Safety refers to the support mechanisms which sustain the life and vitality of the community. Health includes all aspects of health care facilities and programs. Social Services includes all facilities and programs which provide human service assistance to the community. Public Safety includes the Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Services facilities and community programs which are aimed at controlling and preventing crime and fire.

Mission Statement

Seek to determine long-term goals and strategies for the community services necessary for health, safety, and social stability by: 1. understanding the public and private health needs of the community and Metro, and 2. developing the community services (locations closer to users) necessary for social well being in the future, and 3. developing the resources and strategies necessary to ensure a safe and secure community.
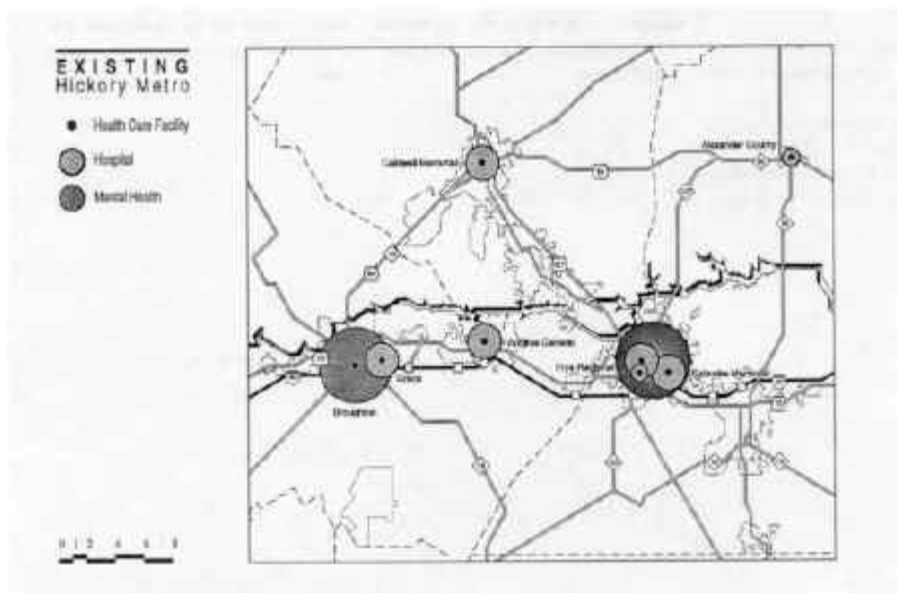
Context

A healthy and stable community is very important to the vitality of the community. A healthy community is based on adequate provision of medical services, social programs to help the disadvantaged, and the stability which the police and fire departments provide.

While the major medical center of the Carolinas is in the Raleigh-Durham Metro area, other significant medical schools are located in Winston-Salem, Columbia, and Charleston. The Hickory Metro is well-served by a number of quality hospitals located primarily in the City of Hickory, which is emerging as the medical center of the Metro area. The interface between the medical facilities, transportation, and landscape programs by which to improve the connectivity and setting of these facilities should be considered.

The provision of social services involves an ever-widening range of programs reflective of the condition of modern urban life. Homeless shelters, soup kitchens, teenage drug abuse centers, etc. are all parts of the social services found in urban areas. The delivery of community-based social services housed in satellite centers needs to be

explored for county services provided in the urban areas. Anticipating future needs and arranging for facilities and programs in a more efficient manner can help to reduce long term social service expenses and improve services.

The stability of the community cannot be achieved by the police and fire department alone. Community involvement can help to make people more aware of crime problems and how they can participate in making their neighborhoods safer. As the city grows new capital facilities will be required to fulfill the needs of providing police and fire protection.
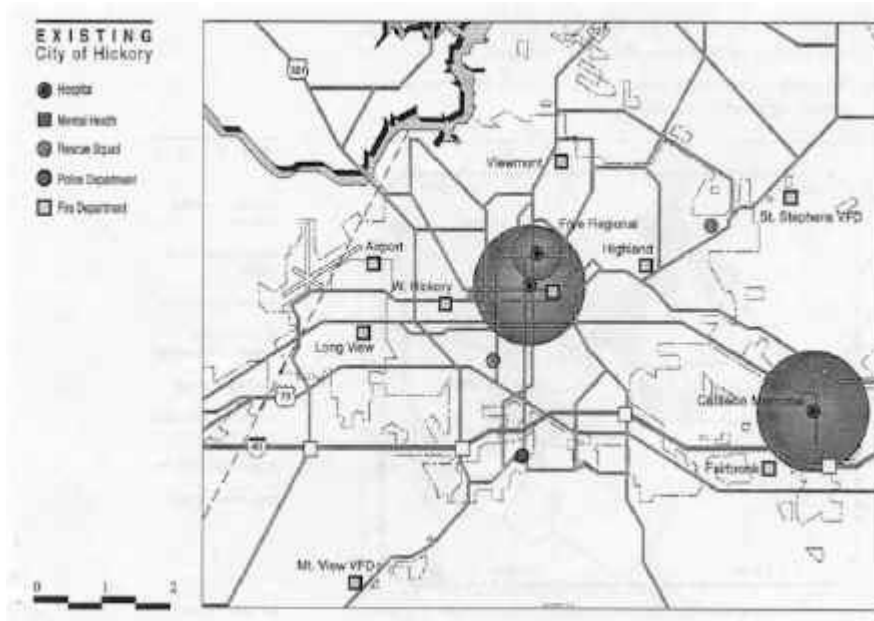
Visions & Goals

Metro

1. Enhance the quality of life of the region by strengthening health, social services, and public safety.
2. Reduce crime, social, and health problems to enhance the potential for long-term regional development.
3. Create an environment where increased coordination and innovation are encouraged in the various metro/regional agencies and providers to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of health, social services, and public safety delivery.
4. Encourage local government to support their local agencies' and providers' participation in regional dialogue, cooperation, and responsibility.
5. Support the development of metro and regional environmental policies and regulations which enhance healthy living.
6. Recognize that the regionalization of medical services will require an increase in the scope and quality of health care to comprehensively serve the needs of this region.
7. Develop long- and short-term strategies for a comprehensive fire service delivery system to serve the Hickory metro area.
8. Maintain and enhance the current Emergency Medical Service and develop long-term strategies for future growth and service expansion.
9. Encourage and support the development of community health care alliances between organizations and institutions.
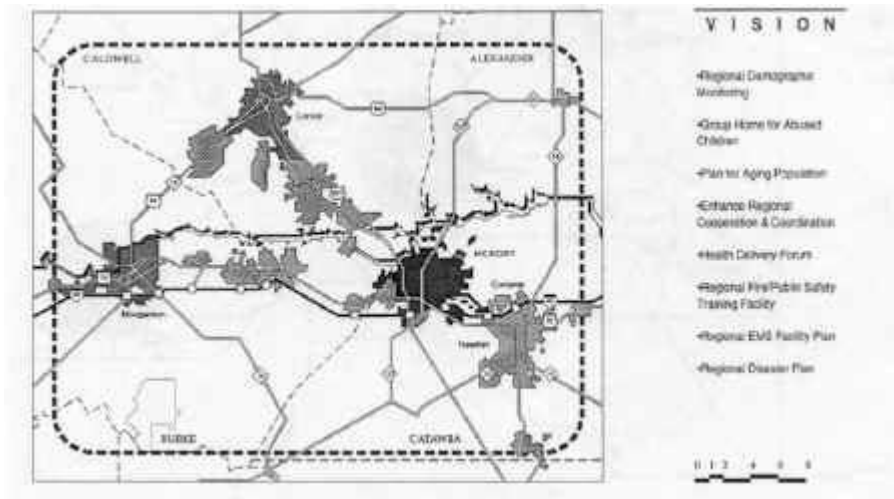
City

1. Ensure that Hickory maintains a comprehensive high quality of life through strong health, social services, and public safety facilities and programs.
2. Ensure that every neighborhood is a safe community with equal accessibility to necessary health and social service facilities.
3. Promote awareness and prevention, as well as responsibility and self-sufficiency, for each member of the community.
4. Encourage citizen participation in community policing, improving the criminal justice system, and coordinating future planning with law enforcement professionals.
5. Maintain and enhance the fire service delivery system which prevents fires, saves lives, reduces property loss, addresses training needs, and coordinates emergency incident management and disaster planning.
6. Ensure that the present Emergency Medical Service is maintained in the City and its immediate vicinity, and that facility planning efforts coincide with future growth and development.
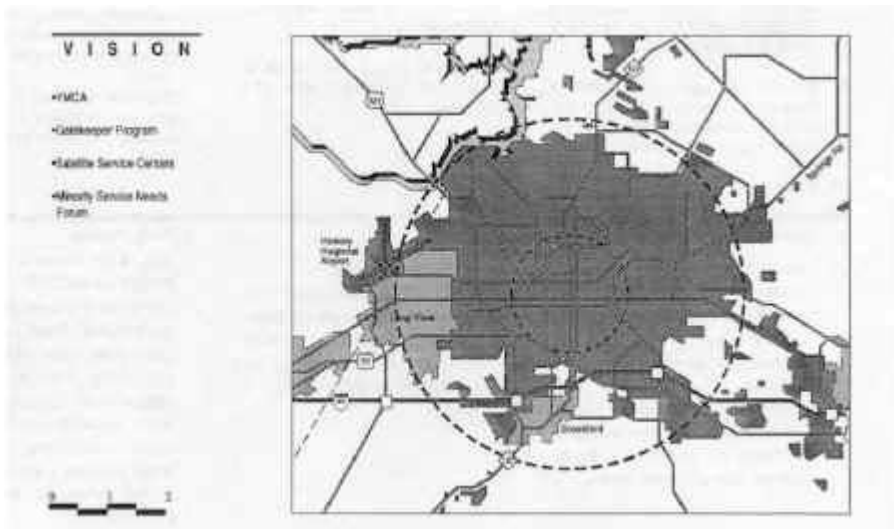
Recommendations

I. Health

A. Evaluate accessibility to health care through a study by the Public Health Department using their daily contact with the population.
B. Encourage local governments to appoint a task force to evaluate present health services and needs for other services.
C. Survey Hickory Metro Area health providers to define opportunities to consolidate or eliminate medical services to provide more effective, high quality care.
D. Develop a forum to design and implement a healthy community agenda.
E. Encourage formation of Health Care Alliances.

II. Social Services

A. Develop a system to assess, measure and monitor the changing social needs of the community and identify a process to meet these needs as well as to secure funding for them.
B. Develop and maintain a system to monitor metro / regional demographic changes to better plan for long-term needs on a regional basis.
C. Establish inter-agency committees to reduce cross-over and overlap in the delivery of services, and develop regional forums for agencies to develop methods of coordinating and improving programs across the metro.
D. Encourage economic alternatives to welfare.
E. Seek anti-crime and crime prevention measures through education and economic incentives.
F. Address the need for group homes for abused and neglected children on a region-wide basis.
G. Develop and pursue strategies that support the traditional family structure:
   1. Develop recreation programs for family participation.
   2. Make programs for parenting education, drug and alcohol prevention, conflict resolution, and pregnancy avoidance available through the Metro.
   3. Establish family resource centers providing access to public agencies in public housing.
   4. Encourage businesses to provide day care and establish a Child Care Resource and Referral program for the Metro.
H. Develop and pursue strategies that address the aging population's needs.
   1. Expand housing, recreation and volunteer opportunities for the elderly in the Metro.
   2. Institute a "gatekeeper" program in Hickory among public and private service personnel to notify appropriate agencies when an older adult may need assistance.
   3. Support application of the Catawba County Elderplan strategies throughout the Metro.
I. Development and pursue strategies to serve a more diverse local population.
   1. Develop collaborative efforts among agencies and organizations to improve services to minority populations through needs assessments, satellite service centers, program development and coordination, and identification and pursuit of funding.
   2. Train public employees in cultural competence and develop plans to make the City's workforce, especially at management and supervisory levels, reflective of the City's demographic make-up.
J. Develop and pursue strategies related to mobility, education, and homelessness, which affect the well-being of the area's citizens:
   1. Develop strategies to support the educational goals of the Hickory and Catawba County 2000 reports.
   2. Continue to operate the Piedmont Wagon System with particular attention to the elderly and transit disadvantaged, and study future expansions to serve other parts of the Metro.
   3. Study the homelessness in Hickory and investigate alternative for providing transitional housing for the temporarily homeless.

III. Public Safety

A. Police
    1.   Assess trends which will predict future police needs.
    2.   A regional criminal justice coordinating activity should be developed that involves public as well as professional staff input.
    3.   Assure regional coordination of police efforts which allows development of technology and information sharing by both the public and private sectors.

B. Fire
    1.   Fire Prevention Planning
Organize metro area fire departments to cooperatively educate the public on fire safe practices and fire prevention methods; and to enforce the North Carolina State Fire Code.
    2.   Facility Planning
    a.   Support the creation of a task force through the WPCOG, consisting of area business representatives, community college officials, municipal and county public safety officers, instructors, and planners, to research a regional fire and public safety training facility, to identify current and future requirements for training facilities, facility priorities, uses and funding sources for planned development and construction.
    b.   Develop plans for fire department physical facilities and water supply systems.
    3.   Management of Emergency incidents
Improve preparedness for emergency incidents and fires; continue to improve methods to confine, control, and extinguish fires and perform life saving techniques.

C. Emergency Medical Services
    1.   Develop plans for regional EMS facilities, both short- and long-range.
    2.   Monitor population and age change to better predict future needs of Emergency Medical Service
    3.   Create region-wide policies and procedures for Emergency Medical Services for all EMS units and all regional hospitals.

D. Disaster Planning
Develop a regional partnership for coordinating disaster management plans between the region's Police, Fire, and EMS services.

Implementation

I. Health

Implementors	Action Steps
City Councils, County Commissions	Establish a Metro health task force.
WPCOG, Chambers of Commerce	Provide data on demographic trends, survey of needs
City of Hickory	Develop strategies for serving an increasingly diverse citizenry.

Schedule - Year 1	Schedule - Years 2-3	Schedule - Years 4-5
B. Task Force	A. Accessibility Study C. Survey Health Services E. Healthy Community Forum	D. Health Community Agenda

II. Social Services

Implementors	Action Steps
City Councils, County Commissions	Establish a Metro social service agency task force/forum.

Schedule - Year 1	Schedule - Years 2-3	Schedule - Years 4-5
A. Demographic survey, needs, identification	C. Integrate communities	F. Regional home for abused / neglected children
B. Monitor demographic changes	D. Economic alternatives to welfare	H. Aging Strategy

G. Family Support Strategy	E. Educational / Economic deterrents to crime	I. Diversity Strategy
J. Homeless Strategy		

III. Public Safety

Implementors	Action Steps
City Councils, City Commissions	Establish public safety, fire and EMS working groups.
Public Health Departments, Public and Private Agencies	Collaborate on Task forces, forums, commissions
Public Safety Agencies, Fire Departments, Emergency Medical Services, Hospitals	Identify and pursue federal, state and private funding sources. Share successful strategies.

| Schedule - Year I	Schedule - Years 2-3	Schedule - Years 4-5
A. (2) Focus Group (Police) B. (1)(2a) Task Forces (Fire) C. (1) EMS Facility Plan	A. (1)(3) Trend Projection methodology; technology/information sharing process (Police) B. (2b)(3) Facility/water system planning; emergency preparedness (Fire). C. (2)(3) Population trend monitoring; develop regional EMS policies, procedures. D. Coordinate disaster plans.	Continue all efforts.

Land Use, Zoning, Housing, Annexation

Definition

Land Use, Zoning, Housing, Annexation refer to the urban components which direct and effect growth. Land Use is the pattern of development decisions which define the built environment. Zoning regulations guide the development of land within the city and its sphere of influence. Housing includes the entire range from affordable to upper end. Annexation is the expansion of existing city boundaries to incorporate newly urbanized areas.

Mission Statement

Seek to determine the long-term issues of growth which will require strategies to: 1. optimize the future pattern of land use at regional and local levels, 2. develop zoning policies and procedures necessary to achieve the future land development patterns, and 3. understand the unmet needs in the long-term development of the housing market, and 4. effectively determine the optimal configuration of city limits for the future expansion pattern of Hickory and the other Metro cities.
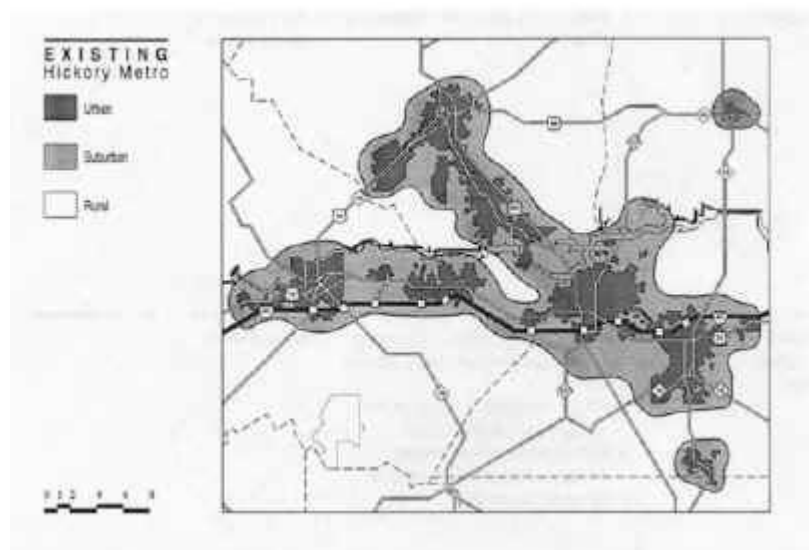
Context

Rapid urban growth, combined with the changing commuting patterns and economic structure, is driving the formation of the Hickory Metro area. These shifts in transportation and economic patterns are changing the land use and zoning pattern, yet cities and counties have continued to independently develop their land use and zoning policies and plans. Traditionally, the growth of the City and Metro has followed the major commercial and transportation corridors. Each successive stage has left a residue of partially used and vacant buildings reflecting both a change in the retail structure and an oversupply of various commercial land categories. Lack of coordination on issues of land use and zoning between jurisdictions is causing serious development and transportation problems. A systematic approach to the development of the City and Metro, which can sustain social and economic growth, is needed.

Hickory's housing profile exceeds both the Metro and the State. High quality residential growth has begun to reflect the important potential of the appealing setting offered by the river and lake. While Hickory has developed quality new housing along Lake Hickory, affordable housing is increasingly distanced from the City, separating jobs and workers. A full range of housing in a pattern which allows people access to economic opportunity and social amenities, is needed.

Hickory has maintained a stable annexation policy but has, in many cases, used up its designated sphere of influence and lacks influence over the form of development in unincorporated areas in the counties adjacent to the City limits. If the new incorporated areas are to be consistent with the existing City and its goals to maintain an ordered environment, the City needs input into the development pattern in these adjacent areas.
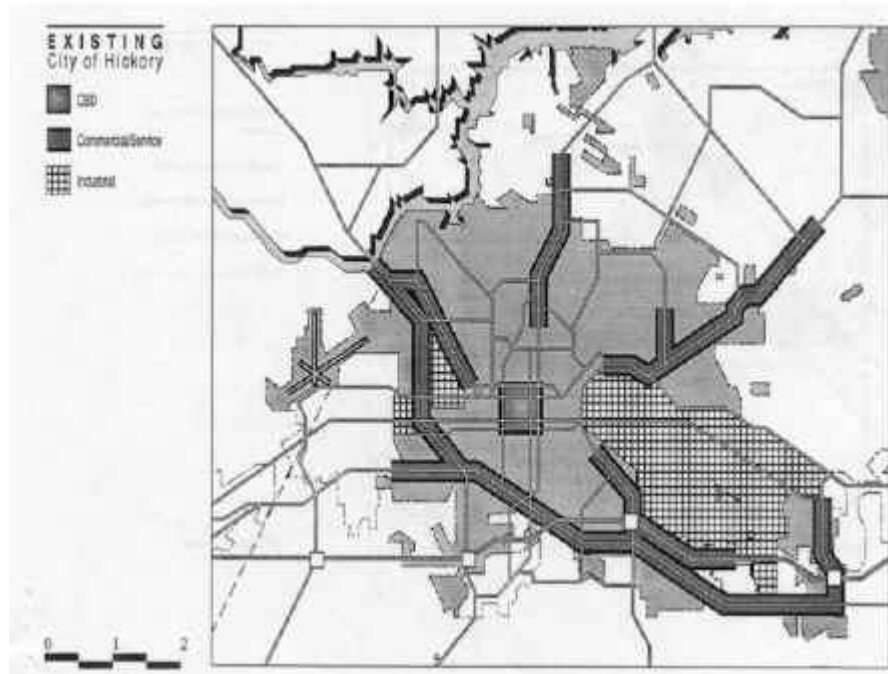
Visions & Goals

Metro

1. Encourage a well balanced high quality regional development pattern which assures the long-term desirability of the region.
2. Develop coordinated land use, zoning and annexation strategies and programs for the metro area.
3. Increase understanding among the local units as to their relationship to the whole metro area.
4. Develop strategies to increase cooperation and reduce the gap between cities and counties over land use, zoning, and annexation issues.
5. Encourage development of quality housing throughout the region to ensure access to good housing for all economic segments of the community, especially supporting development in affordable markets with proximity to employment.
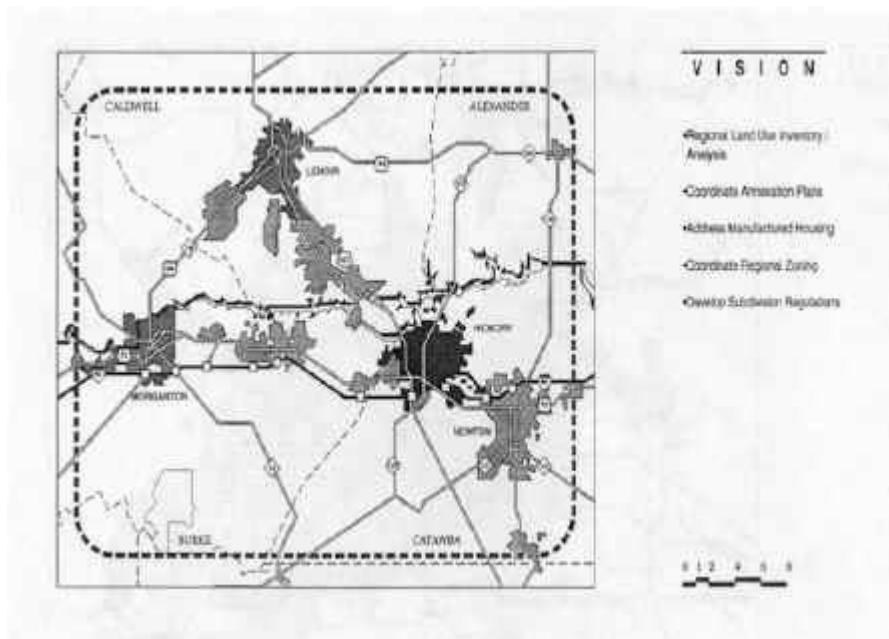
City

1. Long-term standards should be designed to ensure a long-term improvement in the quality of development in the community.
2. Identify and address the issues of decline and deterioration of commercial and industrial areas.
3. Coordinate the plans for land use, zoning, annexation and housing with the plans for transportation, infrastructure, education, health, social services, environment, history, culture, and the arts.
4. Encourage the development of a balanced range of housing to provide quality housing to all segments of the community.
5. Create a plan for the development of the US 321 and US70 corridors and coordinate these plans with the plans being developed by adjacent local governments.
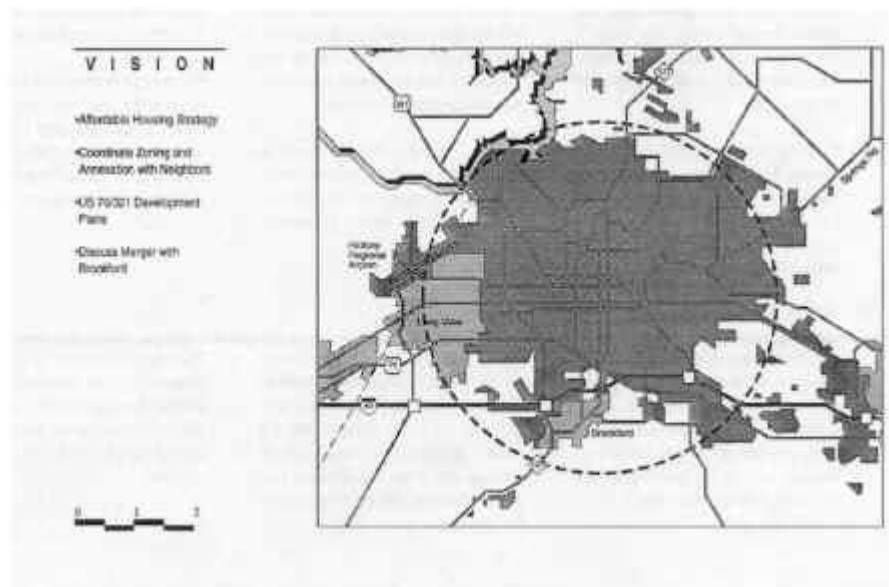
Recommendations

I. Land Use & Zoning

A. Develop a comprehensive land use inventory and database for the metro area to provide an updated description of current uses, to project land use demands and to evaluate the changes that future growth and development will cause in the region.
B. Investigate long term metro / regional land use alternatives and the effects they will have on capital and operating expenses for the cities and counties.
C. Support the development of a regional land use and zoning base map to evaluate the effect of existing plans on each other and collectively on regional growth.
D. Encourage metro communities to develop policies and strategies for coordinated comprehensive land development in the metro.
E. Support public initiatives for private property owners and developers to combine resources to cooperatively create high amenity developments.
F. Develop and coordinate zoning across the region.
G. Investigate the effects of commercial zoning on land values, economic development and investments in the metro region.
H. Support the creation of a regional coalition to coordinate zoning across the metro.
I. Establish a series of logical steps to implement regional land use and zoning coordination.

II. Housing

A. Encourage the region's cities and counties to pursue all private, state and federal programs which can assist in the purchase, construction, rehabilitation or preservation of affordable homes for ownership.
B. Encourage the region's cities and counties to develop regulations and tax policies for manufactured housing to improve compatibility with site-built housing; allow their taxation as real estate and preserve their value.
C. Study the formation of a consortium of banking institutions to counsel lower income borrowers with credit problems, share the risk in a loan pool for high risk loans and finance private affordable housing initiatives in the region.
D. Develop and distribute a resource book, identifying all sources of affordable housing assistance and information available in the region, and periodically update.
E. Develop educational programs for the community colleges and high schools to teach people about homeownership.
F. Encourage businesses to invest in housing for their work force through land development; and by assisting qualified employees through savings, borrowing, incentives, and home ownerships investment programs.
G. Develop programs to rehabilitate and maintain existing public housing, provide incentives and programs to increase resident involvement in property maintenance, and develop programs to encourage and train residents for home ownership.
H. Study using established housing developers or establishing a self-supporting regional non-profit housing corporation with professional staff to develop affordable single-family housing capitalized by the public and private sectors.
I. Review city and county regulations, practices, and standards to determine if changes can be made to improve affordability of housing without sacrificing quality or requiring public subsidies.
J. Establish a consortium, including the counties, cities, low income housing developers, and others, to develop a regional strategy for affordable housing.

III. Annexation

A. Encourage the region's cities to coordinate their annexation planning and to develop annexation agreements, where appropriate to ensure the effective and timely provision of the municipal utilities, services, facilities and planning needed for sound urban development.
B. Municipal annexations in the Hickory Metro should be planned so that annexed areas receive municipal services on the same basis as existing municipal areas and should include assessments of fiscal feasibility to protect the financial integrity of the annexing city.
C. The city of Hickory and the Town of Brookford should consider merging to facilitate the extension of municipal services necessary for the sound development of the US 321 and NC 127 South corridors.
D. The City of Hickory's long range annexation planning should involve all adjacent areas including those in Alexander, Burke, and Caldwell Counties, and should include the development of coordinated land use, infrastructure and municipal service plans among the neighboring counties and cities to maintain an orderly environment and stable capital improvement study.

Implementation

I. Land Use & Zoning

Implementors	Action Steps
City of Hickory, County and Municipal Governments	Establish meetings of zoning and planning professionals.
WPCOG	Develop regional statistical database, regional land use map and inventory, and regional zoning map.

Schedule: Year 1	Schedule: Years 2-3	Schedule: Years 4-5
Begin quarterly meetings of zoning and planning professionals. Continue annual meeting of political leaders	Develop a regional statistical database. Develop a regional land use map and inventory. Develop a regional zoning map.	

II. Housing

Implementors	Action Steps
Hickory Community Development Dept., County and Municipal Governments, Non-profit Housing Agencies	Establish consortium of banks to support development of affordable housing for the region. Establish quarterly meetings of public housing administrators, Habitat officials, buildings, banks. Review impact of regulations on housing cost.
WPCOG	Develop manufactured housing policy. Develop inventory of housing programs, financial aids and incentives, financing options, educational programs for housing, existing non-profit organizations and builders.

Schedule: Year 1	Schedule: Years 2-3	Schedule: Years 4-5
Develop a consortium of banks regarding low cost housing. Establish quarterly meetings or forums of public housing administrators, Habitat officials, builders, and banks.	Develop a development and tax policy for manufactured housing. Develop an inventory of housing programs, financial aids and incentives, financing options, educational programs for housing, existing non-profit organizations, and builders. Review regional zoning and subdivision	Develop recommendations for changing regulations to improve housing affordability without sacrificing quality or requiring subsidies.

regulations and assess impacts on housing costs.	

III. Annexation

Implementors	Action Steps
City of Hickory, Municipal Governments	Review all annexation agreements with adjacent jurisdictions Maintain and implement policy to annex adjacent areas as feasible.
WPCOG	Encourage the region's cities to coordinate their annexation planning and develop annexation agreements.

Schedule: Year 1	Schedule: Years 2-3	Schedule: Years 4-5
Review all annexation agreements with adjacent jurisdictions. Maintain and implement policy to annex adjacent areas as feasible. Encourage the region's cities to coordinate their annexation planning and develop appropriate annexation agreements.		

Part 3: Appendices

Key Dates

Stage 1　　**Founding**

1769　The County Wagon Road, the main road from Salisbury to Old Fort, was constructed through the present day Hickory Area.

1779　Land, comprising the core of present day Hickory, was platted by William McMullin.

1784　John Bradburn constructed a log tavern by a large hickory tree near the junction of the County Wagon Road and the road to Lincolnton.

1798　McMullin's tract was purchased by Jesse Robinson at a public auction.

1859　The Western North Carolina Railroad reached the area and lots were sold near the depot.

Stage 2　　**Growth**

1860　A post office was established under the name "Hickory Tavern".

1865　Confederate commissary buildings were burned in a Union cavalry raid during the Civil War.

1865-70　Henry W. Robinson and W. W. Lenoir had large tracts of land, now comprising the core of the city, platted into grid street patterns.

1870　A charter was granted to the Town of Hickory Tavern.

1876　The name name was changed to "Hickory".

1880's　Start of manufacturing boom with establishment of the Piedmont Wagon Company, Hickory Novelty Company, and The Hickory Manufacturing Company.

1881　The Chester and Lenoir Railroad reached Hickory.

1889　Hickory was rechartered as the City of HIckory.

1889　First street lights in Hickory.

1891　Opening of Lenoir College (later Lenoir-Rhyne).

Stage 3　　**Developmental**

1904　Construction of public water and sewer facilities

1908　Implementation of a street numbering plan.

1911　Opening of Richard Baker Hospital (now Frye Regional Medical Center).

1913　Adoption of the city manager form of government (the first city in the state and the third in the nation to do so).

Stage 4　　**Between Wars**

1928　Lake Hickory was created by construction of the Oxford Dam.

1931　Highland / West Hickory / Hickory merger

1937　Construction of the Hickory Municipal Airport

Stage 5　　**Post-War**

1946　Construction of the present US 70 corridor

1960　Catawba Valley Technical Institute (now Catawba Valley Community College) opened.

1963　Establishment of the Hickory Regional Planning Area.

1967　Opening of the Catawba Mall on US 70.

1967　Opening of Catawba Memorial Hospital

1968　Hickory named an "All America City".

Stage 6　　**Renewal**

1971　Construction of Tate Boulevard

1974-77　Downtown urban renewal

1975 Construction of I-40 completed

1978 Construction of Henry Fork Wastewater Plant

1980 Opening of Siecor Corporation Headquarters

1986 Opening of the Arts Center of Catawba Valley in the Old Claremont High School Facility

1987 Hickory named "All America City" for the second time.

1989 Construction begins on the new U.S. 321 Corridor.

Stage 7   **Metro**

1992 Opening of 32 million gallons per day water plant

Reference: From Tavern to Town

Key Statistics

Annexation History: Hickory	
1870	Granting of a charter to the City of Hickory Tavern. Initial city limits were a circle one mile radius from the railroad station.
1931	Towns of West Hickory and Highland merged with the City of Hickory, making Hickory the fastest growing city in North Carolina.
1957-58	Northwest Hickory and Viewmont areas. Adds 3 square miles extending City Limits to Lake Hickory Country Club, Viewmont, and Jaycee Park areas.
1964	Airport area. Adds 1 square mile.
1969	Lakeland Park and Shuford Development. Adds 1 square mile and extends City Limits to Lake Hickory.
1980	Valley Hills Mall area. Adds 2 square miles and extends City Limits across I-40 incorporating the region's fastest growing commercial area.
1982	Northeast Hickory (Sandy Ridge Road) area. Series of annexations extends City Limits into St. Stephens community.
1986	Northeast, Northwest, Highway 70, and Fairgrove Church Road areas. City Limits expand to adjoin Conover.
1987	Catawba Springs. Adds 1 square mile 2-1/2 miles from main City Limits. Water and sewer policy requiring petition for annexation results in over 40 satellite annexations during 1980's.
1992	Tate Boulevard. Developed industrial areas added to City.

Annexation Statistics

Period	Number	Area	Population
1950's	39	3.3 sq. mi.	4,573
1960's	29	1.1 sq. mi.	1,240
1970's	38	2.2 sq. mi.	2,165
1980's	93	7.6 sq. mi.	6,225
1990's	24	2.4 sq. mi.	253
Total (1993)	223	16.6 sq. mi.	14,456

Number of Physicians (per 100,000 pop.)

	Metro	State
1980	101	125
1985	112	146
1990	126	161
1992	134	170

*Individual city data is not available.

NOTE: The Metro area has had a steady increase in the average rate of physicians per 100,000 population, keeping pace with the state growth rate.

SOURCES: *N.C. Health Professions Data Book,* Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Number of Serious Crimes Reported (per 100,000 pop.)

	1980	1985	1990	1992
Hickory	12,351	10,391	11,758	11,141
Lenoir	9,985	8,466	9,700	7,591
Morganton	6,118	6,187	6,173	7,128
Metro	4,341	3,564	4,337	4,170
State	4,661	4,204	5,520	5,944
Other Cities				
Asheville	8,498	7,397	9,920	9,399

Winston-Salem	9,799	7,179	11,161	10,910
Greensboro	8,046	5,638	7,773	8,778
Charlotte	8,433	9,649	12,853	12,203
Raleigh	7,486	5,844	6,499	7,580

NOTE: The crime rate is the number of serious crimes reported per 100,000 population. "Serious Crimes" are murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson. The City and Metro crime rate in 1992 were below their respective rates in 1980, while the state's crime rate in 1992 was a 78% increase over its 1980 rate.
SOURCES: *Crime in North Carolina*, Uniform Crime Report, State Bureau of Investigation, Division of Criminal Information.

Percentage of Adults with 12-yrs & 16-yrs of Education

	City	**Metro**	**State**
1970	12-yrs. 48%	12-yrs. 34%	12-yrs. 38%
	16-yrs. 15%	16-yrs. 6%	16-yrs. 8%
1980	12-yrs. 59%	12-yrs. 49%	12-yrs. 55%
	16-yrs. 21%	16-yrs. 9%	16-yrs. 13%
1990	12-yrs. 72%	12-yrs. 62%	12-yrs. 70%
	16-yrs. 23%	16-yrs. 11%	16-yrs. 17%

NOTE: The City of Hickory's percentages of adults with 12- and 16-years of education have kept ahead of the state while the Metro's percentages have remained behind.
Sources: *1970 Census,* General Social and Economic Characteristics, tables 46, 103, 120.
1980 Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, tables 66, 71, 73, 119, 171, 175
1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Tape Files 1 and 3.
1990 Census CPH-L-81, table 1 "Social Characteristics".

Population

	City	**Metro**	**State**
1870	330 (1)*	36,105	1,071,361
1880	1,400 (3)*	46,381	1,399,750
1890	2,023 (4)*	55,356	1,617,949
1900	2,535 (4)*	66,486	1,893,810
1910	3,716 (4)*	78,785	2,206,287
1920	5,076 (6)*	86,465	2,559,123
1930	7,363 (6)*	114,339	3,170,276
1940	13,487 (10)*	139,315	3,571,623
1950	14,755 (9)*	165,218	4,061,929
1960	19,328 (10)*	191,069	4,556,155
1970	20,569 (9)*	227,402	5,084,411
1980	20,757 (8)*	270,457	5,880,095
1990	28,301 (10)*	292,457	6,628,637

*City as % of Metro.
NOTE: The City of Hickory and the Metro area have had a steady increase of population. The City's population has remained near 10% of the Metro's population since 1940.
SOURCES: 1970 Census, Characteristics of Population, tables 19, 35.
1980 Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, tables 73, 171; Summary Tape File 1.
1990 Census of Population and Housing - Summary Tape Files 1 and 3

Median Age of Population

	City	**Metro**	**State**
1970	28.2	27.4	26.5
1980	31.9	30.5	29.6
1990	34.4	34.6	33.1

NOTE: The median age of the population has been steadily increasing in the City and Metro. Both exceed the State's average.
Sources: 1970 Census, Characteristics of Population, tables 19, 35.
1980 Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, tables 73, 171; Summary Tape File 1.
1990 Census of Population and Housing - Summary Tape File 3.

Persons Per Household

	City	Metro	State
1970	2.99	3.24	2.90
1980	2.41	2.80	2.78
1990	2.28	2.55	2.54

NOTE: The average number of persons per household has steadily decreased in the City and Metro.
SOURCES: 1970 Census, Housing Characteristics for States, Cities and Counties, tables 1, 18, 29.
1980 Census, Housing Characteristics for States, Cities and Counties, table 45.
1980 Census, Summary Tape Files 1 and 1A.
1990 Census of Population and Housing - Summary Tape Files 1 and 3.

Median House Values

	City	Metro	State
1970	$16,500	$12,300	$12,800
1980	$39,900	$34,000	$36,000
1990	$66,900	$56,700	$65,800

NOTE: Median house values have steadily increased in the City and Metro. The City's median value has remained above the State's average.
SOURCES: 1970 Census, Housing Characteristics for States, Cities and Counties, tables 1, 18, 29.
1980 Census, Housing Characteristics for States, Cities and Counties, table 45.
1980 Census, Summary Tape File 1 and 1A.
1990 Census of Population and Housing - Summary Tape File 1.

Mean Contracted Rent

	City	Metro	State
1970	$62	$53	$59
1980	$139	$124	$135
1990	$301	$260	$284

NOTE: Mean contract rent has steadily increased in the City and Metro. The City's mean rent has remained above the state's average.
SOURCES: 1970 Census, Housing Characteristics for States, Cities and Counties, tables 1, 18, 29.
1980 Census, Housing Characteristics for States, Cities and Counties, tables 1, 45.
1980 Census, Summary Tape File 1A.
1990 Census of Population and Housing - Summary Tape File 1.

Per Capita Income

	City	Metro	State
1970	$3,380	$3,357	$2,492
1980	$9,779	$7,499	$6,133
1990	$15,433	$12,461	$12,885

NOTE: The per capita income of the City of Hickory has remained higher than the State average while the Metro average has fallen behind the State as a whole.

Glossary

Environment

Streetscape - the view along a street from the perspective of a driver or pedestrian, especially of the natural and man-made elements in or near the street right of way, including street trees, lawns, landscape buffers, signs, street lights, above-ground utilities, drainage structures, sidewalks, bus stop shelters and street furniture.

Tree ordinance - a local ordinance which may regulate the removal, replacement, treatment, or addition of trees to public or private property.

Watershed - The land area draining to a body of water used as a source of drinking water as defined by North Carolina law. Land development within drinking water supply watershed must be regulated according to state guidelines to reduce the risk of water supply degradation or contamination.

Greenway - a linear park which may accommodate pathways principally for foot traffic and/or bicycles. Typically, greenways are planned along creeks, streams or rivers and managed as natural environments, or as sidewalks or bikeways along landscaped streets.

U.S. Wetlands - areas of saturated or flooded soils where there is a prevalence of plants that grow in or are adapted to water, or which require a very wet environment. Wetlands provide important habitats, floor and storm protections, and water quality benefits, and their development is regulated by the federal government.

Corridor / Thoroughfare Enhancement - addition of pedestrian, bicycle, and landscaping amenities to vehicular transportation routes.

History, Culture & Arts, Education

Historic district - areas which local governments have determined to be of specific significance in terms of their history, pre-history, architecture or culture and which are protected by special zoning regulations to prevent changes or development which would be incongruous with the special character of the district.

Historic site - a location which has been identified as having a special significance to the history, pre-history, architecture or culture of a community.

National Register of Historic Places - the official list of the nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation. Listing in the National Register is an honor and provides some protection from state or federal actions but has no effect on what a private property owner may do.

Arts Council - a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation appointed by the county commissioners in each county to promote the arts and administer state distributed arts funding under the Grassroots Arts Program.

Transportation & Infrastructure

MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) - an umbrella organization of local government established to carry out continuous, comprehensive and cooperative transportation planning.

Thoroughfare Plan - an official plan for the development of the major street system for an area which is adopted jointly by the local government and the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

Hazardous waste - waste which, because of its quantity, concentration or characteristics, poses a present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, dispersed of or otherwise managed.

Solid waste - hazardous or non-hazardous garbage, refuse or sludge and other material that has served its intended use and is to be discarded.

Highway Division - one of fourteen geographic divisions established for the administration of the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Each multi-county division has a representative appointed by the governor to the North Carolina Board of Transportation.

Highway District - administrative units within each highway division.

Piedmont Wagon - the public bus system serving Hickory, Newton, and Conover.

Infrastructure - the basic installation and facilities needed for urban development, i.e. water, sewer, storm drainage, communication systems, sewer distribution, etc.

Economic Development

E.D.C. (Economic Development Commission) - a commission appointed by the county commission to recruit, assist and retain businesses.

S.B.C. (Small Business Center) - programs of assistance for small business established through the community college system.

S.B.T.D.C. (Small Business Technology Development Center) - a program of assistance and consultation for small businesses established through the university system.

T.D.A. (Tourism Development Authority) - a board appointed by local government in Catawba County and funded with a hotel/motel occupancy tax to promote tourism.

Carolinas Partnership - a unified fifteen (15) county marketing and economic development organization established to unify and promote the Charlotte Metro / Region.

Health, Social Services, Public Safety

E.M.S. - Emergency Medical Services

Interagency Council - a council of human services agency officials within each county.

Community Health Care Alliances - A non-profit, voluntary, regional health insurance purchasing cooperative for small businesses. North Carolina will provide seed money to establish four to twelve cooperatives across the state among regions to be defined by their participants. The first Community Health Care Alliance established will be among eighteen counties west of the Hickory Metro.

Land Use, Zoning, Housing, Annexation

Land Use - the way land is used, i.e. residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, open space, forestry, recreation, etc.

ETJ (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction) - an area adjacent to and outside of a city in which the city has authority to exercise planning, zoning, building and subdivision regulation. ETJ may be established under state law with the permission of the county commission required in most cases or by enactment of special legislation.

Political / Governmental

WPCOG (Western Piedmont Council of Governments) - the lead regional planning agency established by the local governments of the Hickory Metro.

Unifour - the four counties of the Hickory Metro, i.e. Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba.

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