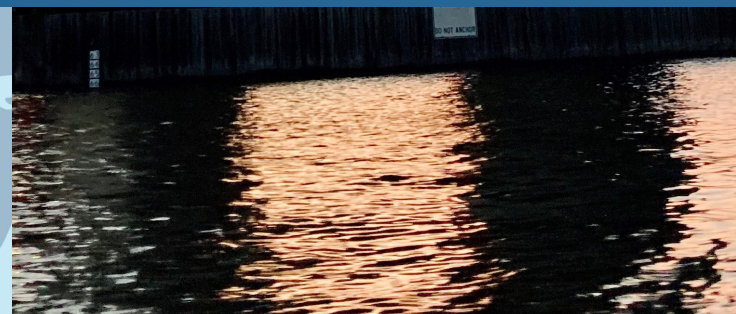




WILMINGTON URBAN AREA

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

FY 2020-21
ANNUAL REPORT



MISSION STATEMENT

Create and execute continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive regional long-range planning efforts that proactively drive transportation decisions to improve safety, connectivity, economic development and quality of life in the Wilmington region.



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WMPO BOARD MEMBERS

The Board is the federally recognized entity responsible for carrying out the urban transportation planning process for the Wilmington Urban Area.

PENDER COUNTY
Commissioner



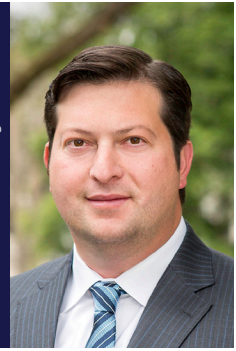
David Piepmeyer, Chair

TOWN OF
WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH
Mayor Pro Tem



Hank Miller, Vice Chair

NC BOARD OF
TRANSPORTATION
Board Member At-Large



Landon Zimmer

TOWN OF BELVILLE
Mayor



Mike Allen

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Neil Anderson

NEW HANOVER COUNTY
Commissioner



Jonathan Barfield, Jr.

TOWN OF LELAND
Mayor



Brenda Bozeman

TOWN OF KURE BEACH
Commissioner



John Ellen

CPFTA/
NEW HANOVER COUNTY
Commissioner



Deb Hays

TOWN OF CAROLINA BEACH
Mayor



LeAnn Pierce

CITY OF WILMINGTON
Council Member



Charlie Rivenbark

BRUNSWICK COUNTY
Commissioner



Frank Williams

TOWN OF NAVASSA
Mayor



Eulis Willis

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am glad to have FY 21 in the rearview mirror. The COVID-19 pandemic brought forward a number of challenges for the Organization and the world. Although we experienced these challenges, the Organization pushed forward to also accomplish some great things. We have also been able to learn from our experiences and will evaluate potential changes that will catapult the Organization forward in years to come. As the Executive Director of the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and on behalf of our Board, I am pleased to present this 2021 Annual Report.

Challenges

The North Carolina Department of Transportation's cash management issues coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in difficulty planning and implementing important infrastructure improvements in our state and region. In addition, the Department of Transportation has been completing an evaluation of project cost estimates for committed and non-committed projects in the State/MPO Transportation Improvement Programs. The results of this analysis will likely require some hard decisions in the upcoming year.

Achievements

Although throughout the year we have experienced many challenges, it has also provided for many notable achievements. Some of these accomplishments include the successful completion of the FHWA/FTA Certification Review, adoption of Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045, adoption of the Wilmington Rail Trail Master Plan, adoption of the 2020 Congestion Management Process, and adoption of Cape Fear Change in Motion 2020.

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead, the next year will include challenges as we try to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and NCDOT's anticipated increases in project cost estimates. I also anticipate a number of achievements that will include the adoption of the Pender County Streets Plan, completion of the Kure Beach Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan, completion of the Navassa Collector Street Plan, substantial completion of construction of the MPO offices, implementation of several other MPO Direct Attributable funded projects and many more.

Although the past year has been very challenging, the upcoming year will be a breath of fresh air. The MPO staff looks forward to working with the MPO Board, our member jurisdictions, our citizens, and other key stakeholders to ensure 2022 is another successful year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Kozlosky', with a stylized flourish at the end.

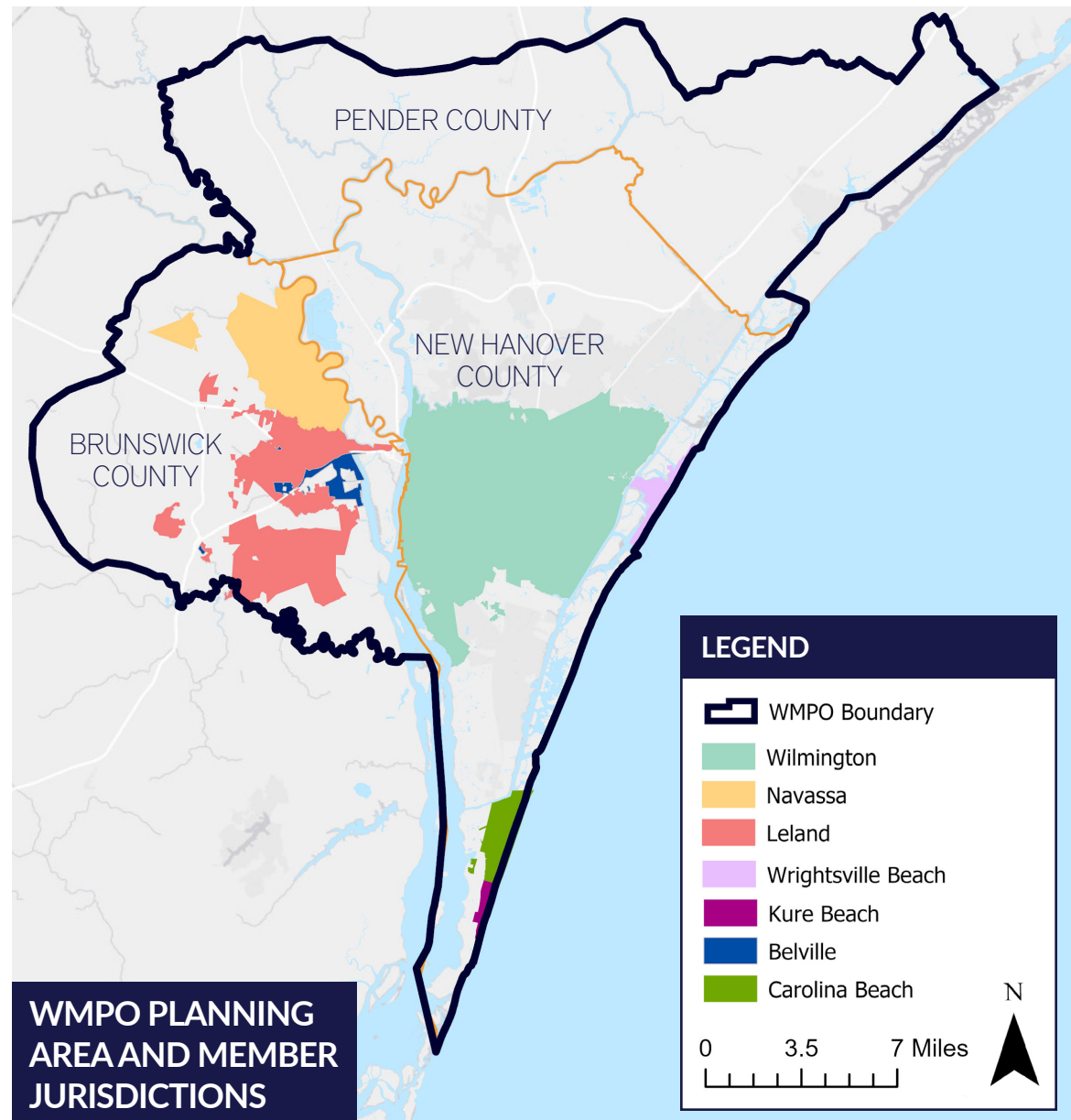
Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director

ABOUT THE WMPO

The Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WMPO) was created in 1978 when the region's population exceeded 50,000. Federally-mandated in all urban areas of 50,000 or more, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are responsible for conducting regional transportation planning which serves as the basis for the expenditure of federal transportation funds. The WMPO is the MPO recognized by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the Wilmington Urban Area and includes representatives from the following jurisdictions and organizations:

- City of Wilmington
- Town of Carolina Beach
- Town of Kure Beach
- Town of Wrightsville Beach
- New Hanover County
- Town of Belville
- Town of Leland
- Town of Navassa
- Brunswick County
- Pender County
- Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
- North Carolina Board of Transportation

The WMPO planning boundary, shown in the map to the right, contains approximately 494 square miles and encompasses all of New Hanover County and portions of Brunswick and Pender counties. The current population of the area is estimated at over 280,000.



FHWA/FTA 2020 WMPO CERTIFICATION REVIEW

Federal regulations require the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to jointly review, evaluate, and certify the transportation planning process conducted by each Transportation Management Area (TMA) every four years. The WMPO's certification review was held virtually on April 30, 2020. FHWA and FTA reviewed the WMPO's organizational structure, the ongoing development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and other ongoing planning processes. Staff was asked to discuss and answer questions regarding public transportation, environmental mitigation, public engagement, and environmental justice. Public comments received during the 30-

day public comment period held in advance of the review were also discussed.

FHWA released the draft Certification Review Report on July 7, 2020 and presented the final Certification Review Report to the WMPO Board on November 18, 2020. Per the report, "The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) find that the metropolitan transportation planning process substantially meets Federal requirements and jointly certify the planning process."

The findings of the review identified no corrective actions, one recommendation, and three commendations. It was recommended that

the MPO analyze past projects to ensure that cumulative impacts of benefits and burdens are considered.

FHWA and FTA endorsed the WMPO's planning process, certifying for four years.

COMMENDATIONS:

The MPO is commended for using subject matter experts and a CAC to assist with its MTP update.

The MPO is commended for its use of new and innovative public outreach techniques which have resulted in increased public input.

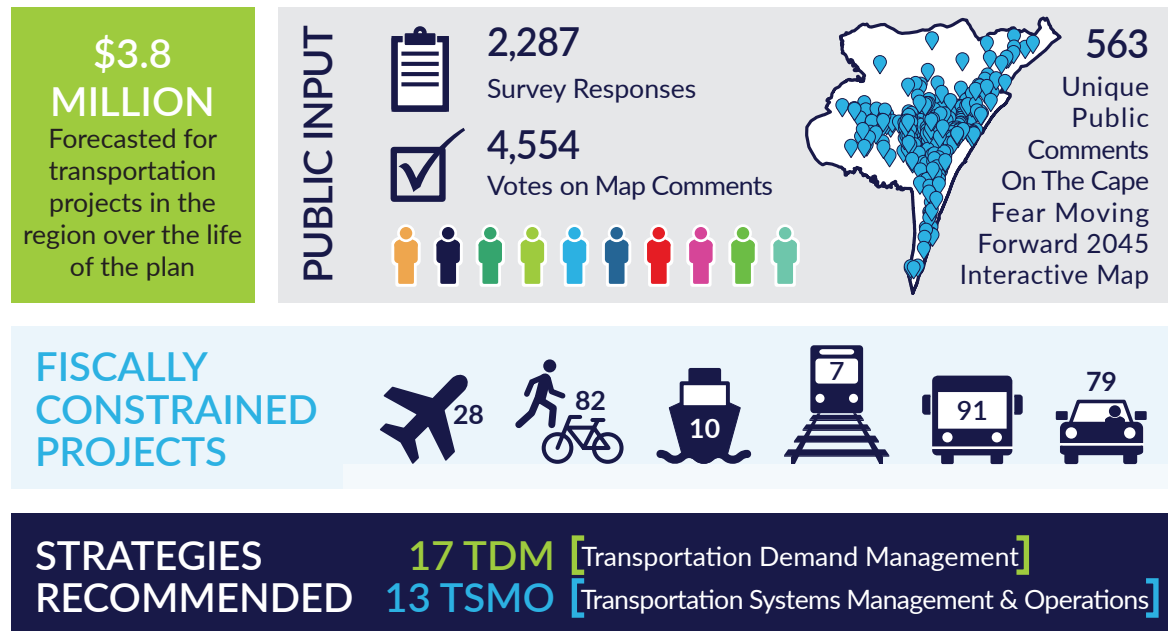
The MPO is commended for involving an extensive number of freight providers in freight planning, and for establishing a committee to inform the freight portion of the MTP update.



ADOPTION OF CAPE FEAR MOVING FORWARD 2045



Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 was adopted by the WMPO Board on November 18, 2020. Development of the plan began in 2018 with stakeholder and public involvement. This feedback was used to guide the vision, goals, and objectives of the plan as well as help create an initial project list for each mode. Projects were prioritized through the help of subject matter experts and fiscally constrained using project cost estimates and revenue projections. The draft plan was released for public review and comment in February 2020. Due to COVID-19, the initial public comment period for the draft plan was extended



into July 2020, and three virtual open houses were held in order to provide the public additional opportunities to ask questions and discuss with staff. The final draft of the plan was approved by the WMPO Board on July 30, 2020. WMPO staff presented the final plan to the governing boards of its members in August and September 2020.

As federally required, the MTP identifies projects, policies, and strategies contributing to a multi-modal transportation system over a 25-year planning horizon. The plan is fiscally constrained, meaning the projects identified within the plan can reasonably be anticipated to be funded during the life of the plan. The MTP also considers alternative funding

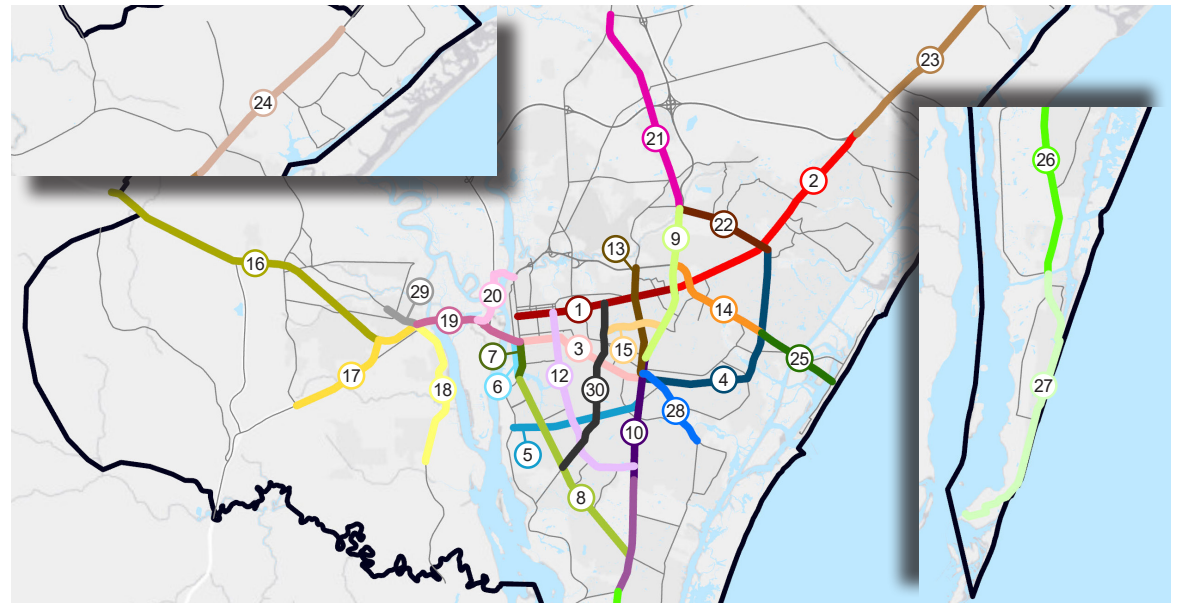
sources such as vehicle registration fees, bonds, and tolls to fund projects, recognizing that the region's transportation infrastructure needs far exceed expected revenues of traditional funding sources.

Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 will be used by federal, state, and local governments to guide transportation projects in our region over the next 25 years. The WMPO will use the plan to guide recommendations, as well as to select projects for submittal for NCDOT Prioritization and consideration for funding and programming in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)/MPO Transportation Improvement Program (MPO TIP).

ADOPTION OF THE 2020 CMP BIENNIAL DATA REPORT



The 2020 Congestion Management Process: Biennial Data Report was adopted January 27, 2021. The Congestion Management Process (CMP) is a methodical approach for monitoring and managing congestion in a region. The document identifies strategies and projects that aid in the efficient movement of people and goods throughout the region. Federal law requires all Transportation Management Areas (TMAs), which have populations greater than 200,000, to develop a CMP as an integrated part of the metropolitan transportation planning process. A successful CMP benefits the efficiency of a



The WMPO's 30-Corridor CMP Network

regional transportation system and supports community objectives such as transit use, livability, and land use. The WMPO was designated as a TMA in 2012 and developed and adopted its initial CMP in 2013. The process includes the preparation of a biennial data report every two years in order to continually monitor and address current needs.

The 2020 CMP was developed by the WMPO in cooperation with partners including NCDOT, Kittelson, and member jurisdictions. New performance measures and metrics were developed to align with the goals of the 2045 MTP. New data sources were used to collect

travel time and speed data. The National Performance Management Research Data Set (NPMRDS) is a database of travel times collected by fleet vehicles, connected cars, and mobile apps in the region. This data and associated metrics were used in place of traditional travel time data collection techniques and measures to identify the sources of congestion in the region. Strategies were developed with the help of transportation planning partners to identify future solutions for congestion in the region.

As intended, the results of the 2020 Biennial Report will be used by the WMPO in other regional transportation planning efforts.

OTHER LONG-RANGE PLANNING EFFORTS



WILMINGTON RAIL TRAIL MASTER PLAN

Funded by the WMPO's Direct Attributable program and a donation from the Arts Council of Wilmington and New Hanover County, the Wilmington Rail Trail Master Plan envisions an urban trail that incorporates wayfinding, pedestrian amenities, and public art to reactivate the vacant NCDOT-owned rail corridor between 3rd Street and McRae Street in downtown Wilmington. Development of the Master Plan was guided by a Steering Committee comprised of WMPO, City of Wilmington, and NCDOT staff and members of the Friends of the Wilmington Rail Trail and the Arts Council, as well as citizen advocates for the project. Public outreach and stakeholder engagement was an integral part of the plan development process. In addition to small group stakeholder interviews, a public survey was open for 30 days during September and October 2020. A press release in the form of a YouTube video was launched in September to raise awareness and gain support for the project. The video, produced by the City of Wilmington, received over 650 views. In total, over 1,900 people responded to the survey.

The Master Plan outlines the history of the surrounding Northside neighborhood; the vision and goals of the Wilmington Rail Trail; existing conditions in the area; recommendations, including a conceptual layout for the six-block, approximately 1/2-mile trail; and next steps. The WMPO Board adopted the Wilmington Rail Trail Master Plan on November 18, 2020. Next steps include preliminary engineering and design and continued exploration of potential funding opportunities.



PENDER COUNTY STREETS PLAN 2021

In January, the WMPO and Pender County kicked off the development of the Pender County Streets Plan 2021. The plan, which is an update to the 2016 Pender County Collector Street Plan, is intended to be a comprehensive technical document that integrates the recommendations of Pender 2.0: Comprehensive Land Use Plan with support of the development community as well as citizens. The effort was funded as a special study in the WMPO's adopted FY 2021 Unified

Planning Work Program (UPWP). Two phases of public outreach and stakeholder engagement were held in March/April and May/June of 2021. Plan development was guided by a Stakeholder Steering Committee comprised of Pender County Planning and Community Development staff, members of the development community, NCDOT, citizens, and others. The consultant, WSP, delivered the final document and recommendations in June and WMPO staff prepared the finished product. The recommendations of the 2021 Plan Update will also be available online in the format of an interactive StoryMap set to launch in Fall 2021. Consideration for adoption by the WMPO Board is anticipated in fall 2020.

STREETLIGHT DATA

The WMPO's FY 21 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) included a yearlong subscription to StreetLight InSight® that began in January 2021. StreetLight is a big data Software as a Service (SaaS) platform that utilizes location records from cell phones and navigation devices to develop a better understanding of vehicular travel patterns across the United States. The platform allows users the ability to download and visualize Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes, origin-destination volumes of customizable geographies, and top routes within a geographical area. Additionally, outputs of analysis contain attributes for traveler demographics, speed, duration, and length of trip. Use cases for StreetLight data include congestion studies, travel demand modeling, event and tourism

OTHER LONG-RANGE PLANNING EFFORTS

studies, corridor studies, travel time analysis, turning movements, and circuitry. The WMPO is currently utilizing the StreetLight platform to aid with long-term and short-term planning activities. In addition to its own analysis, the WMPO has had requests from the City of Wilmington, the Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE), and Wave Transit to determine the origin-destination and cut-through traffic volumes of specific geographic areas. WMPO staff continues to work with the StreetLight training team to learn more advanced analysis techniques with the goal of utilizing the data to make better informed decisions for long-range planning throughout the Cape Fear region.

P6.0 PROJECT IDENTIFIED NEEDS, DATA REVIEW + LOCAL INPUT METHODOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

The Strategic Transportation Investment Law mandates a data-driven project selection process to inform the programming of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and MPO Transportation Improvement Program (MPO TIP). The process, called Prioritization, provides for MPOs, RPOs and NCDOT Divisions to submit projects to be evaluated for funding and programming. Prioritization 6.0 (P6.0) is ongoing, and during FY 21, the WMPO completed modal project selection and submittal, as well as provided supplemental identified needs information and

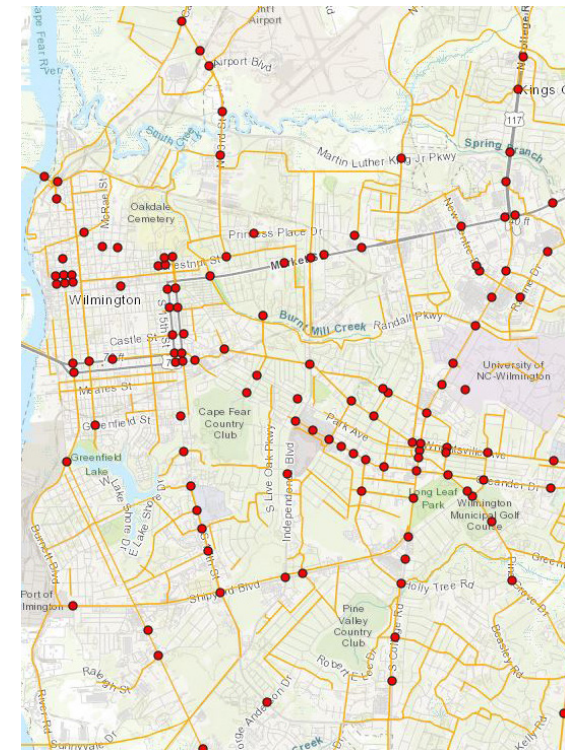
complete streets components for all submitted projects. The quantitative scores of submitted projects are anticipated for release in August 2021.

In addition to project submittals, the WMPO also developed a Local Input Point Methodology to guide the assignment of local input points during the Regional Impact and Division Needs project scoring. Unlike projects scored based exclusively on quantitative data in the Statewide Mobility tier, scoring in the Regional Impact and Division Needs tiers include points for local input. In the Regional Impact, input accounts for 30% (split between Division and MPO/RPO), and in the Division Needs, input accounts for 50% (split between Division and MPO/RPO). The WMPO is allotted 1600 points for assignment in both the Regional and Division categories of Prioritization.

UPDATES TO THE BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN “UNIVERSE OF PROJECTS” DATABASE

The Bicycle and Pedestrian “Universe of Projects” Database was first created by the WMPO’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee in 2013 as an inventory of regional walking and biking infrastructure needs. Since its creation, additional projects have been added to the database as a result of WMPO public outreach efforts. The development of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Elements of the 2040 and 2045 MTPs utilized this project database to select regional priority projects that were included in these plans. In

an effort to keep the database of needs current and relevant for future local and regional bicycle and pedestrian planning efforts, WMPO staff worked with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee in the summer and fall of 2020 to inventory the nearly 1,000 projects. Completed and duplicate projects were removed and projects with identification in locally adopted plans were identified and scoped to match for consistency. Projects that were not identified in locally adopted plans were preliminarily scoped based on existing project conditions and engineering judgement.



Updated Bicycle & Pedestrian Database

FY 2020-2021 WMPO HIGHLIGHTS

SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

As required by 23 CFR 450.324(f)(3) – (4)(i) (ii), NCDOT establishes and reports targets for five safety performance measures each year and includes these targets in the Highway Safety Improvement Program annual report. NCDOT has established targets for the following five performance measures based on five-year rolling averages:

1. Number of fatalities
2. Rate of fatalities per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
3. Number of serious injuries
4. Rate of serious injuries per 100 million VMT
5. Number of non-motorized (bicycle and pedestrian) fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries

Each MPO in the state is required to adopt the state established targets or establish its own, either of which must occur within 180 days of the State reporting its safety targets. In February 2021, the WMPO Board supported the endorsement of the targets for safety

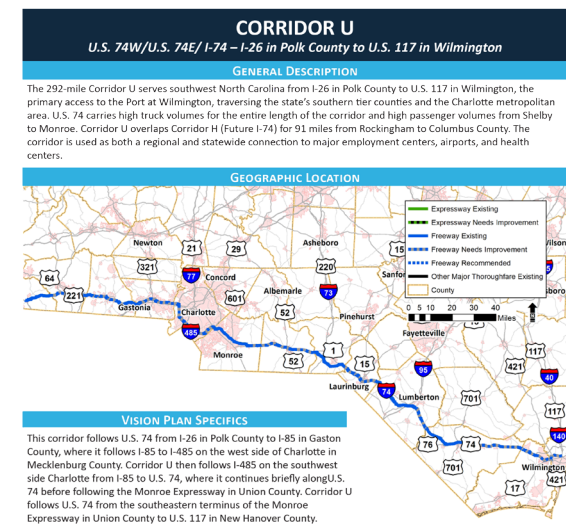
performance measures established by NCDOT.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PLAN PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Federal Transit Administration's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) requires transit agencies to develop and certify safety plans to be effective July 19, 2019. The PTASP also requires public transportation providers that receive federal funding to set initial safety targets by July 20, 2021 (date adjusted due to the COVID-19 pandemic). The Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority (Wave Transit) developed its initial and current targets, which include the following for both Fixed Route Bus and Demand Response services:

1. Fatalities
2. Injuries
3. Injuries per 100 thousand Vehicle Revenue Miles (VRM)
4. Safety events
5. Safety events per 100 thousand VRM
6. System reliability (VRM/failures)

MPOs are required to establish performance targets within 180 days of a state or transit agency setting targets and, in June 2021, the WMPO Board agreed to plan and program projects that contribute to the accomplishment of Wave Transit's initial regional targets.



SUPPORT FOR NCDOT US74 CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN

NCDOT adopted the Strategic Transportation Corridors (STC) Network in 2015 to establish a multimodal, high-priority system of highways, rail lines, ports, and airports to support smart planning, help set long-term investment decisions, and ensure that North Carolina's economic prosperity goals are achieved. The STC framework

FY 2020-2021 WMPO HIGHLIGHTS

called for the development of individual strategic corridor master plans in each of the 25 designated corridors with a buffer of 20 miles on either side of each facility. US 74, from I-26 in Polk County to US 117 in Wilmington, is identified as Corridor U in the STC Network. NCDOT developed a master plan based on stakeholder input, which included the WMPO, and sound technical assessment that presents a vision for the expansion and maintenance of a freeway corridor. The Board endorsed the master plan vision on September 30, 2020.



BIKE MONTH PROCLAMATION

The WMPO Board made a proclamation naming May 2021 as Bike Month, in promotion of safe and convenient bicycling for both transportation and recreation. This proclamation also included the week of May 17-23, 2021 as National Bike to Work Week and Friday, May 21, 2021 as National Bike to Work Day. The WMPO is committed to promoting the safe use of bicycles on streets and trails through long-range planning efforts and

public outreach events and activities.



RESOLUTION SUPPORTING REALIGNMENT OF ON-ROAD SECTIONS OF EAST COAST GREENWAY IN WILMINGTON

Members of the WMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee worked with the East Coast Greenway Alliance to examine and recommend changes to portions of the on-road route in the City of Wilmington. These changes include modifying the existing route on South 17th Street and Independence Boulevard to better utilize the Gary Shell Cross City Trail and reduce the amount of time spent on high speed corridors with limited bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee recommended the changes to the WMPO Board for consideration, and the Board supported these changes on May 26, 2021. The revisions will allow for a safer and more pleasant ride for cyclists along the route.



East Coast Greenway after Rerouting

WMPO STRATEGIC PLAN STARTED

The WMPO Board began development of the 2021 – 2025 Strategic Business Plan in spring 2021. A survey assessing the overall effectiveness of the organization and opportunity areas for improvement was made available to the WMPO's Technical Coordinating Committee, Board Members, and community partners in May. Two additional strategic work sessions with the Board are planned in early FY 2022, after which a final report and recommendations will be considered for adoption.

STIP/MPO TIP REPROGRAMMING

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) identifies funding for and outlines the scheduling of transportation projects in the state over a ten-year period. The WMPO adopts the STIP as its MPO Transportation Improvement Program (MPO TIP). While the STIP/MPO TIP is fiscally constrained, estimated budget, project costs, and schedules are subject to change.

NCDOT was experiencing cash flow issues prior to the COVID-19 pandemic due to rising construction costs; storm cleanup and damage repair from Matthew (2016), Florence (2018), and Dorian (2019); and legal settlements related to the MAP Act. Beginning in March 2020, COVID-19 restrictions caused traffic volumes to decrease, along with revenue from the state's motor fuel tax and highway use tax, which together make up over half of NCDOT's revenue. To allow the continuation of NCDOT operations and maintenance, House Bill 77 was passed, shifting revenue from the Highway Trust Fund to the Highway Fund. House Bill 77 also allows \$700 million in Build NC Bonds to be sold in FY 2021 while increasing the amount of Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicle (GARVEE) Bonds available. The combination of these factors led to an estimated decrease in the STIP budget of \$2 billion over the next ten years.

The budget decrease, along with project cost increases estimated at over \$3 billion, caused the current STIP, which covers 2020-2029, to no longer be fiscally constrained. In order to regain fiscal constraint and meet federal requirements, NCDOT had to reprogram the STIP/MPO TIP. The reprogramming of the STIP/MPO TIP also allowed NCDOT to provide realistic project delivery

schedules and update projects funded by Build NC and GARVEE Bonds to account for House Bill 77.

The reprogramming of the STIP caused most projects in the WMPO region to be delayed.

As NCDOT implemented drastic cost reduction strategies and reprogrammed the STIP/MPO TIP delaying much needed transportation infrastructure projects in the state and the Wilmington region, the WMPO Board endorsed encouraging NCDOT,

the North Carolina General Assembly, and the Governor of North Carolina to explore new funding mechanisms that could raise funds to accelerate these projects. Passed in September 2020, the resolution expressed the Board's desire to assist NCDOT in getting the previously committed projects back on their respective funding cycles.

The WMPO Board identified their top priority projects in a letter to the North Carolina General Assembly dated July 10, 2020, with the hope that some of the top local priority projects would resume first once NCDOT was back above the cash floor. The Board's top five priorities for projects funded in the adopted 2020-2029 STIP/MPO TIP are as follows:

WMPO BOARD'S TOP 5 FUNDED PRIORITY PROJECTS:

1. **Hampstead Bypass (R-3300)** | *Reprogramming delayed Section A construction from 2023 to 2026 (3 years) and Section B construction from 2021 to 2023 (2 years)*
 2. **Military Cutoff Road/Eastwood Road Interchange (U-5710)** | *Reprogramming delayed construction from 2022 to 2027 (5 years)*
 3. **Independence Boulevard Extension (U-4434)** | *Reprogramming delayed construction from 2025 to 2028 (3 years)*
 4. **MLK Jr Pkwy/Kerr Avenue Interchange (U-3338C)** | *Reprogramming delayed construction from 2023 to 2029 (6 years)*
 5. **MLK Jr Pkwy/Market Street/Eastwood Road Interchange (U-4902C)** | *Reprogramming delayed construction from 2024 to 2029 (5 years)*
-

WMPO BOARD'S TOP UNFUNDED PRIORITY PROJECT:

Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Replacement

ADOPTION OF CAPE FEAR CHANGE IN MOTION 2020



Cape Fear Change in Motion 2020 is the update to the Short-Range Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan. It will be used to guide Go Coast initiatives over the next five years to decrease Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and traffic congestion, and diversify mode use in the WMPO region.

Development for the update to the plan began in FY 2020. This process started with a review of the TDM element of the MTP, Cape Fear Change in Motion 2045, which outlines TDM strategies for short-range, medium-range, and long-range

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide WMPO Area residents with the resources and offer motivation to choose healthy, sustainable, and effective multimodal transportation to reduce stress on the road network and increase alternative means of mobility.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- [Reduce Time Spent in Traffic]
- [Improved Quality of Life through a Walkable and Bikeable Community]
- [Decrease the Need for Major Spending on Capital Projects]
- [Improved Health and Safety]
- [Equitable Mobility Solutions]

timelines for reducing VMT in the region in the next 25 or more years. The TDM Advisory Committee, or Go Coast Committee, advised to develop a short-range TDM plan to concentrate on attainable yet impactful strategies that can be achieved over the next one to five years.

In Fiscal Year 2021, public input from a 28-question survey was used to incorporate public preference of alternative transportation modes and prioritize strategies for implementation. The drafted plan included two major components of strategy scorecards and work plans for each short-range strategy identified. The scorecards were developed to rate each strategy based on its

STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED:

PRIMARY

- Fostering a Bicycle & Pedestrian Friendly Culture
- Consulting for Telecommuting Opportunities
- Alternative Work Schedules



SECONDARY

- Personalized Commuter Plans
- Bike Share
- Improved TDM-focused Collaboration
- Carpool & Vanpool



feasibility and impact. Each strategy was scored by the committee, and final scores informed a prioritized list. Lastly, work plans were developed to assign tasks and measurable outcomes for each strategy and its progress over the next five years.

The draft plan was released for public comment in December 2020. Results of the public comment period were reviewed by the Go Coast Committee, and agreed upon changes were made to the draft plan. The final draft was approved by the Go Coast Committee in February 2021 and adopted by the WMPO Board in April 2021.

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



2020 COMMUTER CHALLENGE

The Fifth Annual Go Coast Commuter Challenge took place from October 16 to 30, 2020. The Commuter Challenge is the Wilmington Urban Area's region-wide contest to encourage residents to use alternative modes of transportation for everyday commutes. By using alternative transportation and reducing VMT, participants can have a positive impact on both traffic congestion and the environment.

Participants reduced 5,661 miles of VMT.

Participants saved approximately \$900 worth of fuel.

Participants burned approximately 5,900 calories from walking and biking.

Ninety participants tracked their alternative mode use over the course of the two-week event to compete for gift cards from sponsors Lidl, Ogden Tap Room, Trader Joe's, Two Wheeler Dealer, and Whole Foods.



BIKE MONTH 2021/ BIKE THERE MAP

Organized by the League of American Bicyclists and celebrated in communities throughout the United States, National Bike Month is a chance to showcase the many benefits of bicycling and encourage more individuals to bike both as a means of transportation and for recreation. Go Coast Bike Month is our chance to showcase the desire for more bike facilities in the Wilmington Urban Area to make our communities safer, more connected, and happier. For the first time, the WMPO Board proclaimed May as Bike Month.

Participants signed up to participate through the Go Coast website and tracked their rides each week of the month. Prizes to participants were provided by Bike Cycles and Two Wheeler Dealer.

The following are the results from Go Coast Bike Month 2021:

121 Participants

500 Commuting Trips taken in place of a Single Occupancy Vehicle

+

300 Trips taken for Leisure or Exercise

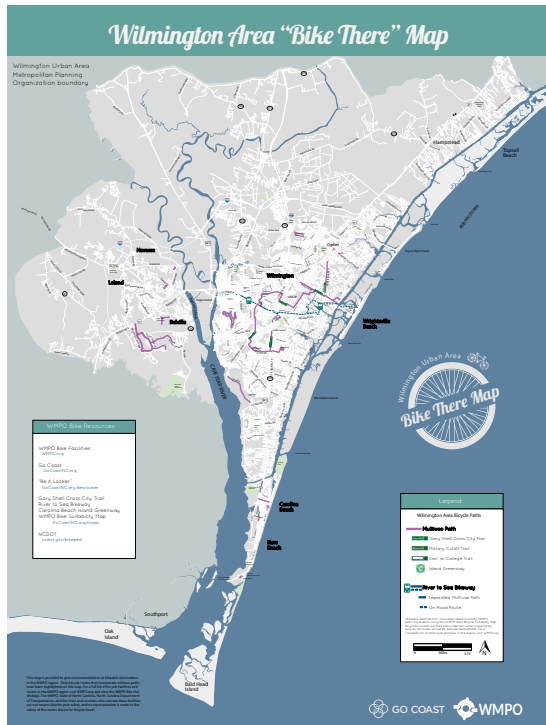
800 Total Bicycle Trips and 4,922 Miles Ridden

The most popular routes included the Gary Shell Cross City Trail, River to Sea Bikeway, Covil Farms Drive, Wrightsville Avenue, Park Avenue, Princess Place Drive, 5th Avenue, 15th Street, Masonboro Loop Road, Greenville Loop Road, and Ann Street.

The highest participation from bicyclists commuting to work were from the WMPO, nCino, New Hanover County, New Hanover Regional Medical Center, UNCW, and Apiture.

As part of 2021 Bike Month, Go Coast released its first edition of the Wilmington Area "Bike There" Map. This map provides an impressive list of bikeable destinations that includes parks, shopping centers, local businesses, museums, and more. The map is available online at <https://www.gocoastnc.org/> and in print.

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



PLANNING FOR THE RIVER TO SEA AND NEW BRUNSWICK HERITAGE RIVERSIDE RIDE FOR FALL 2021

The 2020 Annual River to Sea Bike ride was cancelled due to COVID-19. The 31st Annual event was then postponed in 2021 from its traditional date of the first Saturday in May to October 16. The WMPO staff has begun planning for the 2021

River to Sea Bike Ride which will have a cap of 450 participants. More information about the annual River to Sea Bike Ride can be found at <https://www.gocoastnc.org/>.

Member jurisdictions in Brunswick County requested the WMPO's assistance in organizing an inaugural Brunswick Heritage Riverside Ride. This group bike ride will travel from Phoenix Park in Navassa to Brunswick Riverwalk Park in Belville and back and is planned for fall 2021. Preliminary planning for this event is underway.

BE A LOOKER 2021 CAMPAIGN

The 2021 Be A Looker campaign began in May and will continue until October 2021. The campaign is being deployed through a combination of marketing efforts and a series of community events throughout the Wilmington Urban Area. Go Coast is partnering with the Wilmington Fire Department to hold in-person events to provide print material, safety instruction, and free helmets in various locations throughout Wilmington. Go Coast will also promote "Be A Looker" at community markets and other community events like the 2021 River to Sea Ride and the inaugural Brunswick Heritage Riverside Ride. "Be A Looker" has also been shared through mass email to 13,000 residents and will appear in regional newsletters and print media. A key feature of the campaign is the "Be A Looker" Pledge. The "Be A Looker" Pledge is a commitment to educate oneself on rules of the

road, prioritize safety, and recognize biking and walking as legitimate modes of transportation. Visit <https://www.gocoastnc.org/bealooker/>.



Promotion of Be a Looker on Wave Transit Buses

BIKE SUITABILITY MAP UPDATE

The WMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee approved a methodology to score roadways in the WMPO region for their cycling compatibility. Over 300 roadways were scored using the criteria of roadway speed, vehicle lane volumes, and the presence of a bicycle lane. Each roadway was categorized into one of four groups based on its score to provide a recommendation to cyclists on the ease or difficulty of cycling on that particular roadway. Staff will continue to work with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee to finalize the map by late 2021.

IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



UPDATES TO THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, and the subsequent cancellation of public meetings and open houses, the WMPO's Public Participation Plan (PPP) was amended to allow the WMPO to hold meetings electronically. Following a 45-day public comment period from June 24, 2020 to August 8, 2020, the WMPO Board passed a resolution amending the PPP to allow for electronic/remote meetings.

TELECOMMUTING

COVID-19 impacted many places of employment and immensely increased the number of individuals telecommuting. According to a region-wide survey of over 250 respondents, 25% of individuals worked from home at least one day a week before the pandemic with just 44% of individuals aware

that their employer had an official telecommuting policy. By July 2020, the number of WMPO residents working from home grew to 69%. Overall traffic counts decreased by 35% in the region. Additionally, 61% of respondents reported that they were either more productive or just as productive working from home versus working in their regular place of work.

Consulting for telecommuting policies is a strategy identified in Cape Fear Change in Motion 2020. Go Coast will pursue this strategy by working with area employers to determine opportunities for writing a work from home policy and increasing the number of employers working from home at least one day a week.

WILMINGTON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ENPLANEMENTS/ DEPLANEMENTS

Wilmington International Airport (ILM) experienced an extreme decline in passenger enplanements and deplanements during the COVID-19 pandemic. Signs of recovery were evident during the second half of FY 21 as rollout of a vaccine prompted the return of some commercial air travel in the region. In April 2020, ILM processed just 1,839 enplanements and 1,963 deplanements—only 4% of the previous year's total enplanements and deplanements. By April 2021, enplanements had risen to 28,833 and deplanements to 31,281, nearing pre-pandemic ILM passenger levels.

Despite significant decline in commercial passengers traveling in and out of ILM, there was no decrease in cargo enplanements and deplanements. In fact, a steady increase of cargo enplanements and deplanements has occurred during the second half of FY 21.

In anticipation of returning to pre-COVID passenger enplanements and deplanements, and with consideration for future growth, ILM began phase 3 of their terminal expansion in the winter of 2020. Completion of the terminal expansion is expected by winter 2022.



ILM Terminal Expansion, Phase 3

IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



REGIONAL TRANSIT RIDERSHIP

The impact of COVID-19 on public transportation nationally has been severe. Not only have ridership figures dropped thus reducing fare revenues, but there have been increased costs related to training, personal protective equipment, and labor. The American Public Transportation Association states that transit ridership dropped by 79% nationally in 2020 as compared to 2019, and as of December 2020, remained at 65% of pre-pandemic levels. The Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority's (Wave Transit) ridership numbers reflect these observed trends with annual ridership figures decreasing from 862,712 in FY19 to 472,931 in FY21. Wave has taken active measures to maintain a safe environment through protocols, sanitation regiments, and personal protective equipment,

and looks to continue to provide quality transit service to the citizens of the Wilmington region.

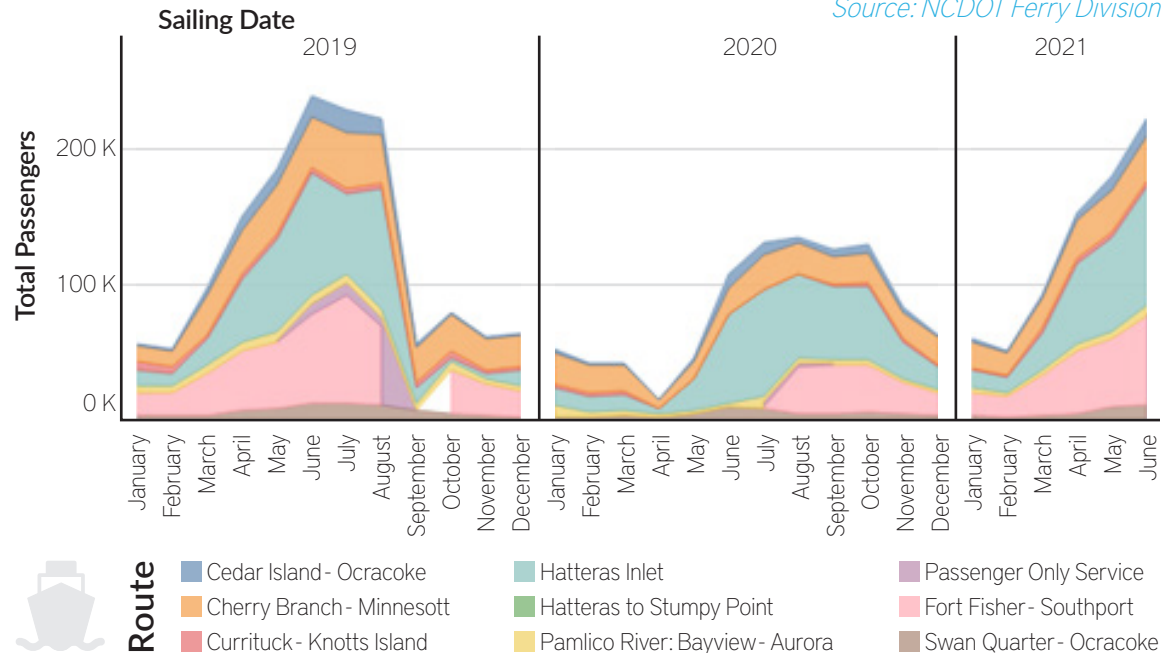
NCDOT FORT FISHER - SOUTHPORT FERRY RIDERSHIP

Used by both commuters and visitors, the Fort Fisher-Southport Ferry is one of the busiest routes for the NCDOT Ferry System. Between COVID-19

impacts and the Fort Fisher terminal ramp replacement project that forced suspension of the service, the Fort Fisher-Southport Ferry route saw ridership drop from 438,000 passengers in 2019 to just 150,000 passengers in 2020. The ramp replacement project at Fort Fisher concluded in July 2020 and the route reopened to the public. By November 2020, ridership numbers matched pre-COVID ridership numbers from 2019. Ridership continues to match pre-COVID numbers during the second half of FY 21 with current ridership on pace with figures from 2019.

ANNUAL COMPARISONS

Source: NCDOT Ferry Division



TECHNICAL SERVICES

STBG-DA AND TASA-DA PROJECTS COMPLETED OR IN DEVELOPMENT

There are currently 23 projects receiving Direct Attributable funding, either through the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program or the Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) Program. These projects are at various stages of planning, design, or construction, as indicated to the right. Additionally, one Direct Attributable project was completed during FY 2020-2021.

BOLD = Completed during FY 2020-2021



Middle Sound Greenway Extension (U-5527C)

FY 2021:

- NC Port Authority (NCPA) Port of Wilmington North Gate Design & NEPA Work (Project ID TBD) *Planning*
- Middle Sound Loop & Walmart Connector (HL-0035) *Planning*
- CFPTA (Wave Transit) Automatic Passenger Counters (TL-0017)* *Planning*

FY 2020:

- US421/Lake Park Blvd & Hamlet Avenue Intersection Improvements (U-6233) *Design*
- St Joseph Street Bike Lanes (U-6039) *Planning*
- Wilmington Multimodal Transportation Center Phase 1B (U-6234) *Bidding*
- Wilmington/New Hanover County Traffic Signal Preemption Phase II (U-6235)** *Design*

FY 2019:

- Middle Sound Greenway Ogden Park Connector (EB-6027) *Design*
- 21st Street at Market Street HAWK Signal (EB-6028) *Design*
- Clarendon Avenue MUP (EB-6029) *Planning*

FY 2017:

- Belville Elementary MUP (EB-6026) *Design*
- Rice Hope MUP (EB-6025) *Design*

FY 2016:

- Navassa Park MUP (U-5534U) *Design*

* Equipment – not shown on map

** Multiple locations – not shown on map

FY 2015:

- South College Road at Holly Tree Road Crosswalks (U-5534Q) *Design*

FY 2014:

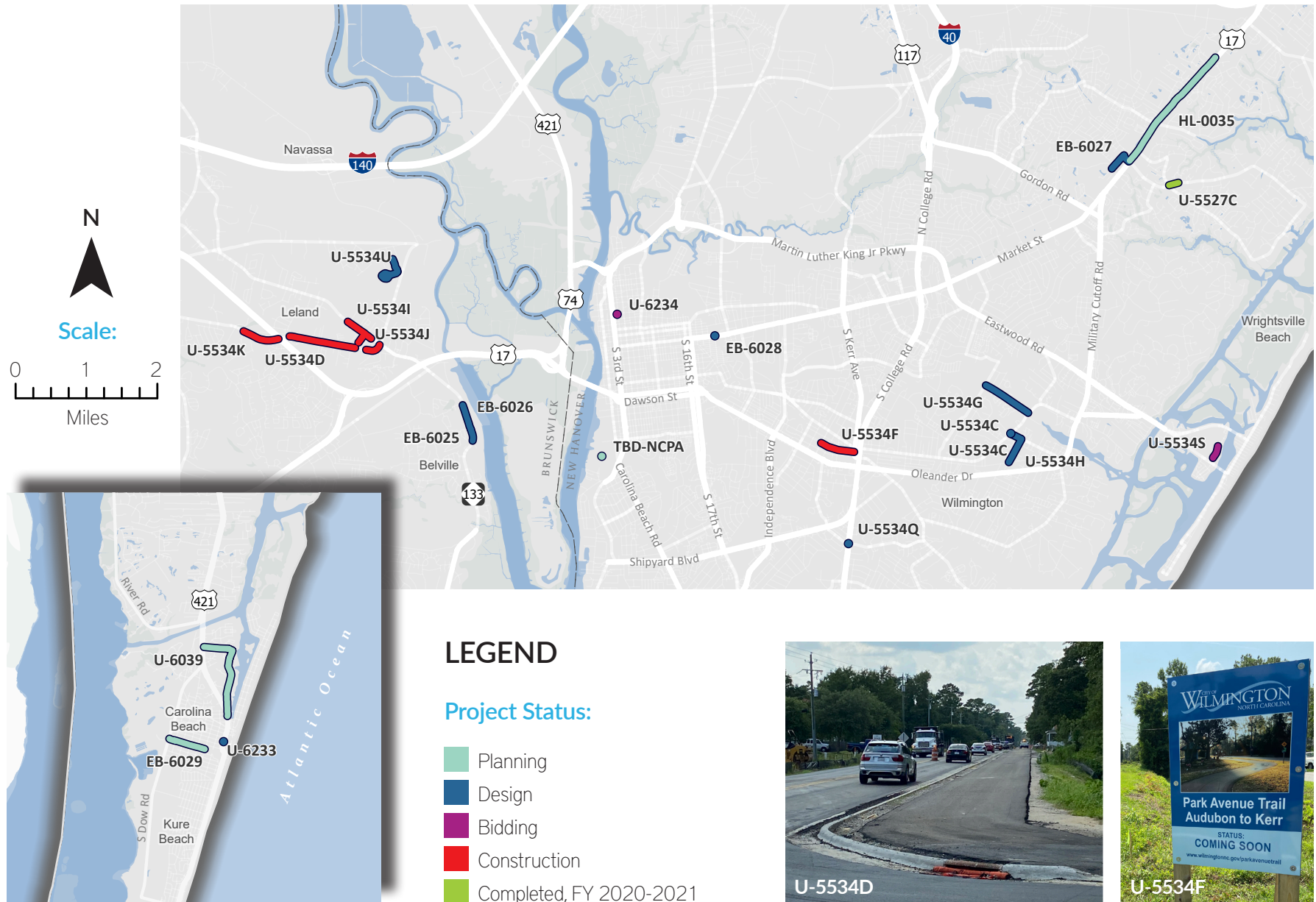
- Hooker Road MUP (U-5534G) *Design*
- Hinton Avenue MUP (U-5534H) *Design*
- Old Fayetteville Loop Road Pedestrian Loop (U-5534J) *Construction*
- Village Road MUP Extension (U-5534I) *Construction*
- Leland Middle School Sidewalk (U-5534K) *Construction*
- **Middle Sound Greenway Extension (U-5527C)**
- Coral Drive Sidewalks (U-5534S) *Bidding*

FY 2013:

- Wrightsville Avenue/Greenville Avenue to Hinton Avenue Intersection and Multimodal Improvements (U-5534C) *Design*
- Park Avenue MUP Phase II (U-5534F) *Construction*
- Old Fayetteville Road MUP (U-5534D) *Construction*



TECHNICAL SERVICES



TECHNICAL SERVICES

In addition to management of the Direct Attributable Program, the WMPO provides the following technical services:

- Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) Review
- Development Review
- Traffic Counting
- Project Management Assistance

The following TIA review, development review, and traffic counting activities were completed during FY 2020-2021.

40

TIA REVIEWS

Forty TIAs were reviewed during FY 2020-2021, 27 of which were new submittals. The remaining 13 were ongoing reviews that began in the previous fiscal year.

1,260

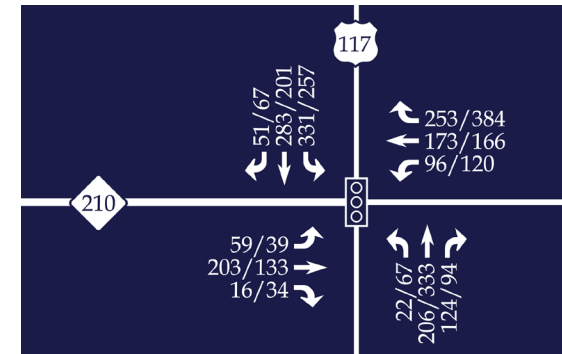
SITE PLAN REVIEWS*

*Includes formal reviews (916), informal reviews (331), and concept plan reviews (13)

450

TRAFFIC COUNTS

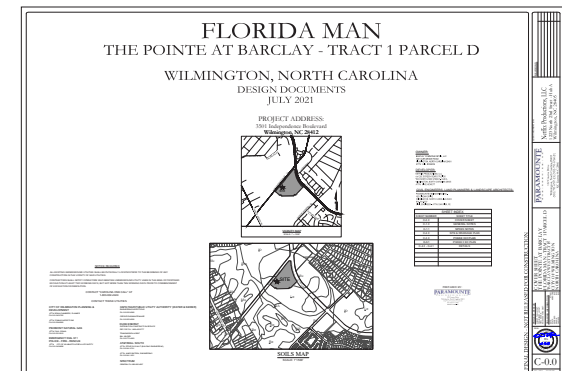
Four hundred and fifty traffic counts were completed by WMPO staff during FY 2020-2021. Of these, 309 were WMPO annual counts while 141 were special counts.



Queuing and Blocking Report Lanes Ferry Landing

Intersection: 11: NC 210 & Site Drive 3

Movement	EB	SB
Directions Served	L LR	
Maximum Queue (ft)	31	22
Average Queue (ft)	1	9
95th Queue (ft)	10	27
Link Distance (ft)		443
Upstream Blk Time (%)		
Queuing Penalty (veh)		
Storage Bay Dist (ft)	100	
Storage Blk Time (%)		
Queuing Penalty (veh)		



CONCLUSION



We look forward to another successful year of continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning in FY2021-2022.





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