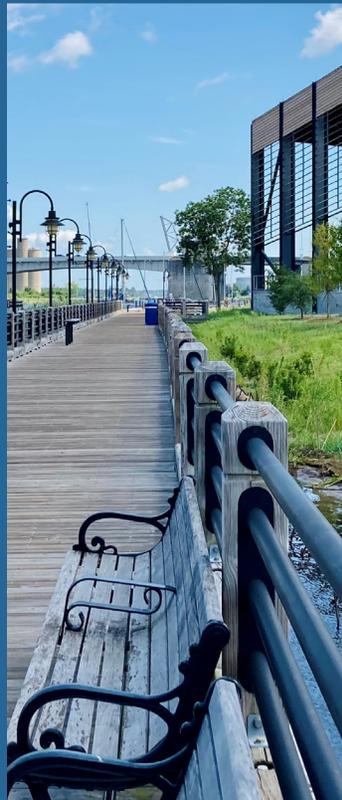


FY 2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT



WILMINGTON URBAN AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION



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



CITY OF WILMINGTON
Council Member

Neil Anderson



TOWN OF CAROLINA BEACH
Mayor

Lynn Barbee



NEW HANOVER COUNTY
Commissioner

Jonathan Barfield, Jr.



TOWN OF LELAND
Mayor

Brenda Bozeman



TOWN OF KURE BEACH
Commissioner

John Ellen



CFPTA/
NEW HANOVER COUNTY
Commissioner

Deb Hays



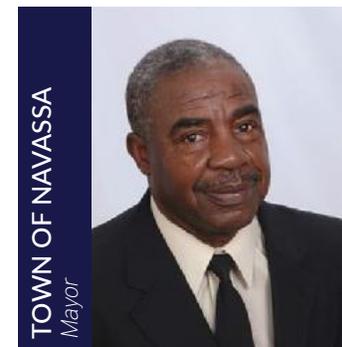
CITY OF WILMINGTON
Council Member

Luke Waddell



BRUNSWICK COUNTY
Commissioner

Frank Williams



TOWN OF NAVASSA
Mayor

Eulis Willis

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

July 22, 2022

Community Stakeholders:

Fiscal Year 2022 has been a year filled with ups and downs. The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to plague our daily lives however, we are seeing signs of a return to normalcy. The pandemic has changed the way we live, work, and play but has also identified avenues for us to become more efficient. Through the past year, we have experienced some challenges and many successes. As the Executive Director of the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and on behalf of our Board, I am pleased to present this FY 2022 Annual Report.

Challenges

The North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) evaluation of project cost estimates for committed and non-committed projects in the State/MPO Transportation Improvement Programs identified a \$ 12 billion shortfall. The infrastructure bill passed by Congress and signed by the President has provided some relief. However, the results of NCDOT's analysis required the NC Board of Transportation to cancel Prioritization 6.0 and the MPO Board to discuss project delays.

Achievements

Although we have experienced challenges, this year has been filled with many notable achievements. Some of these accomplishments include the adoption of the Kure Beach Bicycle and Pedestrian and Pender County Collector Street Plans, allocation of Coronavirus Response & Relief and Direct Attributable funds to our member jurisdictions to implement important projects in their communities, the hosting of a tremendously successful 2022 NCAMPO Conference, recipient of a 2022 MOBI award, and NCDOT has begun construction of the Hampstead Bypass.

What is on the horizon?

Looking ahead, the next year will include continued work with NCDOT on the development of the 2024-2033 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program. In addition, there will be follow up on potential project delivery options for the replacement of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. Finally, the anticipated completion of the Military Cutoff Road extension will provide a new north-south route in the community.

These are exciting times! The MPO staff looks forward to working with the MPO Board, our member jurisdictions, our citizens, and other key stakeholders to ensure FY 2023 is another successful year.

Sincerely,



Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director

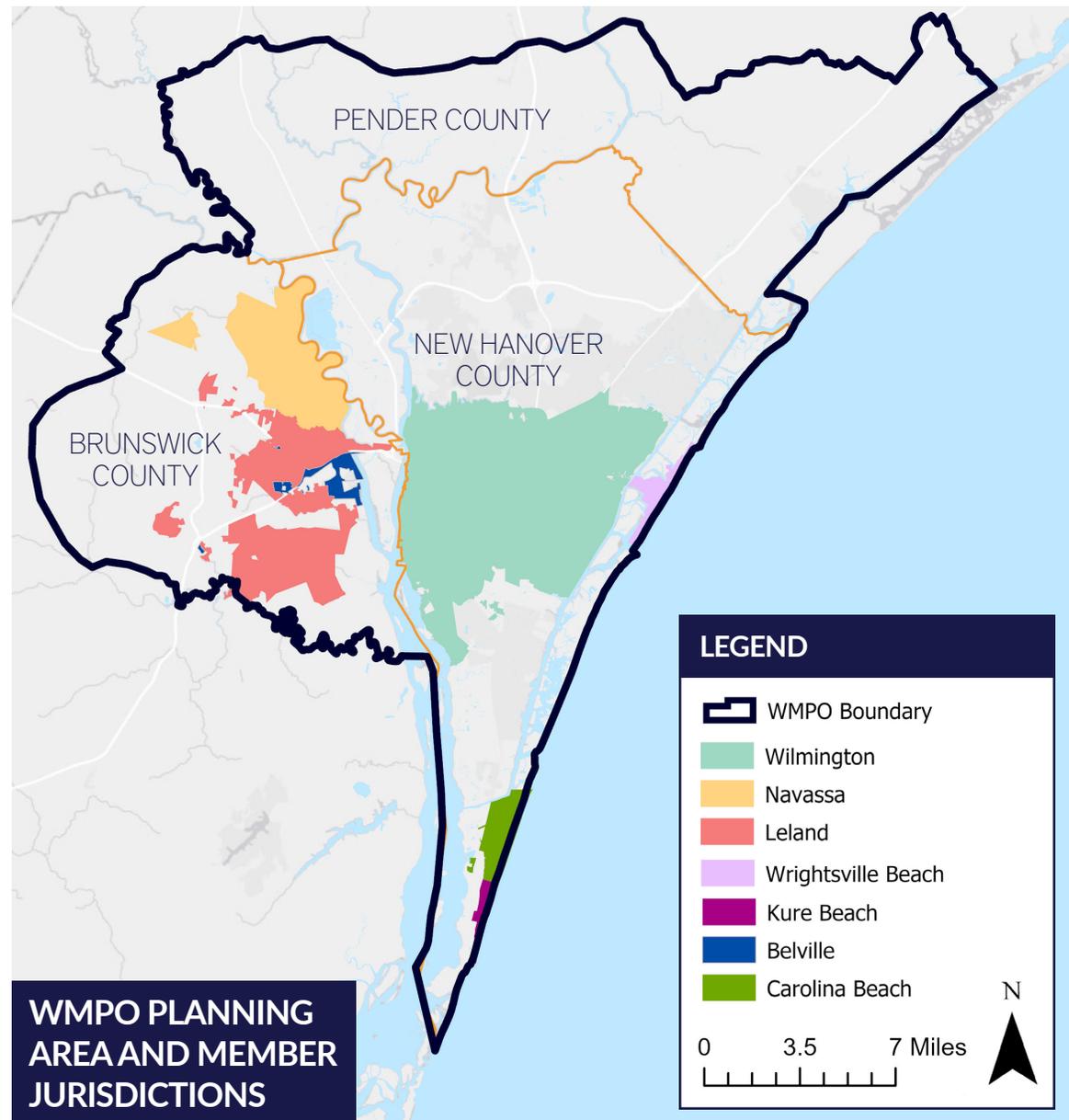
ABOUT THE WMPO

The Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WMPO) was created in 1978 based on the region's population exceeding 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. When the region's population exceeded 200,000 in 2012, the WMPO was designated as a Transportation Management Area (TMA).

The WMPO 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.



ADOPTION OF 2022-2026 STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

On January 26, 2022, the WMPO Board adopted the 2022-2026 WMPO Strategic Business Plan. The key components of the strategic plan include the organization's mission and vision, strategic focus areas, topic-focused project areas, processes to move forward with funding, and implementation steps.

The strategic focus areas of the plan are safety, multimodal transportation options, regional focus, economic development, community engagement, advocacy for an organized, cohesive voice, and organizational/operational effectiveness.

WMPO staff developed a FY 2022 work plan of specific action steps and performance measures to monitor progress in the implementation of the plan. Examples of these action steps include the following:

- Adopt performance measures and create a dashboard to track the measures
[Focus Area: Safety](#)
- Encourage and provide funding for walking, biking, public transportation and the ferry system through the MPO's Direct Attributable (DA) Program by updating the DA Program project scoring, providing annual project manager training, and providing guidance to members managing current projects
[Focus Area: Multimodal Transportation Options](#)
- Complete a compensation study and an MPO compensation survey report
[Focus Area: Organizational/Operational Effectiveness](#)

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS:



COMPLETION OF 2022 COMPENSATION STUDY

An identified action step to achieve organizational/operational effectiveness was the completion of a WMPO staff compensation study. The WMPO Board unanimously accepted the results of the 2022 WMPO Compensation Study on April 27, 2022. Salaries from jobs with 70% or more similar job descriptions were collected through four different surveys and merged to form a market average. According to the study, 8 out of 10 WMPO positions are recommended for a higher paygrade. The City of Wilmington completed a compensation study that moved the City's pay bands consistent with these recommendations.

TOP PROJECT PRIORITIES

The 2022-2026 Strategic Business Plan also identifies six major projects that the WMPO Board considers to be its top priorities. The Board views these projects as crucial to the transportation network in the Wilmington Urban Area. These projects include:

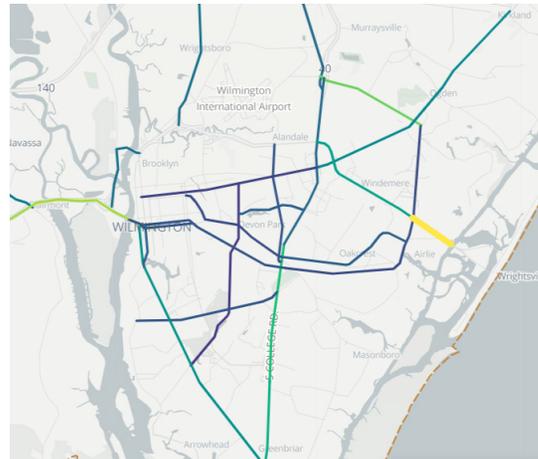
- Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Replacement
- Hampstead Bypass A Section
- Military Cutoff/Eastwood Interchange
- Independence Boulevard Extension
- MLK/Kerr Interchange
- MLK/Market/Eastwood Interchange

LONG-RANGE PLANNING EFFORTS



ADOPTION OF PENDER COUNTY COLLECTOR STREET PLAN

The Pender County Streets Plan 2021 was adopted November 10, 2021. The plan, which is an update to the 2016 Pender County Collector Street Plan, was funded in the WMPO's adopted FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The update now serves as a comprehensive technical document that integrates the recommendations of Pender County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan with support of the development community as well as citizens. The plan aims to improve connectivity, inform land development, maintain acceptable levels-of-service on existing roadways, ensure conservation of natural areas, and provide a safe and high-quality multimodal transportation network for residents, businesses, and visitors. Development of the plan was guided by a steering committee comprised of Pender County staff, members of the development community, NCDOT, and citizens among others and included two phases of public outreach and stakeholder engagement.



CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS

In 2012, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) designated the Wilmington Urban Area as a Transportation Management Area (TMA) when the population of the region exceeded 200,000. As a TMA, the WMPO is required to prepare and adopt a Congestion Management Process (CMP) to evaluate and manage congestion in a regionally-agreed upon manner. The WMPO developed its original CMP in 2014 and publishes a Biennial Data Report on a biennial basis to evaluate how the regional network is performing according to established performance measures.

During FY 2021-2022, the WMPO worked with Kittelson and Associates to review the regional corridor network and available data. Kittelson conducted travel time and vehicle hot

spot analyses for 30 corridors utilizing available vehicle probe data from the National Performance Management Research Data Set (NPMRDS). In addition to providing travel time performance measures for each corridor and a vehicle hot spot map, Kittelson developed a web-based CMP Dashboard for citizens to visualize these results.

Next steps include the evaluation and scoring of the 30 corridors based on (1) travel time reliability and (2) multi-modal suitability. The WMPO will work with its member jurisdictions to recommend congestion mitigation strategies based on the corridor scores. The final draft of the 2022 Biennial Data Report is anticipated to be adopted in late 2022.



LONG-RANGE PLANNING EFFORTS

ADOPTION OF KURE BEACH BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN PLAN

The Town of Kure Beach, Alta, and the WMPO kicked off development of a bicycle and pedestrian plan for the Town of Kure Beach in September 2021. The plan will aid the Town in the development and prioritization of its bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure needs. A kickoff meeting to discuss the Town's existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and develop a strategy for public engagement was held in mid-October. A 3-day charrette activity was held November 30th through December 2nd. The charrette included two public meetings and stakeholder interviews. Approximately 150 members of the public attended the two public meetings, with an additional 436 responses providing input through the online interactive map tool. Alta completed an initial draft of the final plan which was released to the Steering Committee for initial review in late February 2022. A 30-day public comment period was held during the month of March and included a formal presentation by Alta to Kure Beach Town Council. Kure Beach Town Council adopted the plan on May 23, 2022. The WMPO Board adopted the plan on June 29, 2022.

NAVASSA STREETS PLAN

In October 2021, the Town of Navassa and the WMPO kicked off the development of the Navassa

Collector Street Plan to replace the 2004 Town of Navassa Collector Street Plan. The plan will serve as a tool for the Town to guide both public and private investments in shaping the transportation network as the Town continues to grow. The proposed collector street network addresses existing and future needs, aiming to improve interconnectivity; redistribute traffic from existing congested roads; provide new routes to move traffic more efficiently; and create redundancies in the network for improved resiliency. The plan includes typical cross-sections for collector street design and policy recommendations to prepare the Town to serve future developments while preserving its existing neighborhoods. The proposed collector street network will complement the Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan currently in development. Plan development is being guided by a steering committee and incorporates public input received via a public survey and both in-person and virtual public meetings. The plan was funded in the WMPO's adopted FY 22 UPWP. Adoption by the WMPO Board is anticipated in fall 2022.



US 74 RISK AND RESILIENCY STUDY

As part of NCDOT's increased resiliency efforts, the department is conducting vulnerability assessments on Strategic Transportation Corridors (STCs), including US 74 from I-485 in Matthews to the North Carolina Port of Wilmington. The purpose of the study is to develop goals and objectives for resiliency of the corridor and to identify vulnerabilities to extreme weather events such as hurricanes while developing and testing mitigation measures and response scenarios. The study uses Atkins' City Simulator model to better understand existing vulnerabilities and how these vulnerabilities may change as a result of growth and development along the US 74 corridor.



Flooding along US 74 following Hurricane Matthew

LONG-RANGE PLANNING EFFORTS



INTEGRATED PROJECT DELIVERY

The NCDOT Integrated Project Delivery Team is tasked with documenting and evaluating existing business practices; researching and assessing best practices; identifying strategic opportunities for improvement; creating an integrated process for project manager execution; developing an implementation plan; and supporting implementation activities. WMPO staff serve on steering committees and have been included in workshops to develop project delivery elements.



WALK WILMINGTON UPDATE

The City of Wilmington, in recognizing the desire of its citizens for a more walkable, livable community, applied for and received a NCDOT Planning Grant in 2021 to update *Walk Wilmington: A Comprehensive*

Pedestrian Plan (2009). WMPO staff is assisting the city in managing the development of the Plan update, which is being guided by a steering committee comprised of local stakeholders, citizens, and city staff. Public engagement efforts, including a survey and input map, began in June and will continue through August 2022. The final plan is anticipated in late 2022/early 2023 and will be presented to Wilmington City Council and the WMPO Board for consideration for adoption.



US 17 CORRIDOR STUDY (PEDESTRIAN CROSSING)

In spring 2022, the WMPO engaged HDR to conduct a pedestrian safety study for the intersection of US 17 and Ploof Road/Olde Waterford Way in Leland. The study intersection is identified in Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 MTP and the Town of Leland's Pedestrian Plan as a priority for future bicycle and pedestrian crossing improvements. The intent of the study is to document the existing conditions for pedestrian safety and connectivity at the intersection and provide recommendations. The study was completed in June 2022.

STIP/MPO TIP REPROGRAMMING

In April 2022, the North Carolina Department of Transportation released the initial draft 2024–2033 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Due to the estimated \$8 billion shortfall between anticipated transportation revenues and programmed projects in the currently adopted 2020 – 2029 STIP, the initial draft 2024-2033 STIP proposes the removal of previously committed projects from funding.

The Prioritization Workgroup developed a framework for selecting projects for funding that appear in the initial draft 2024-2033 STIP. This is outlined as projects scheduled for construction in FY 24 through FY 26, projects having federal grant funding, or projects engaged in ongoing right-of-way acquisition were programmed first. Projects were then selected based on their committed round of Prioritization until anticipated funding in the statewide, regional, and division tiers was exhausted.

To ensure that local priorities are being addressed, MPOs and RPOs can propose project swaps. This option allows for a project that has become unfunded in the initial draft 2024-2033 STIP to be swapped in, in exchange for a project that remained funded. In order for projects to be swapped, there must be agreement between NCDOT and the subject MPO/RPO(s) and the cost of the swapped projects must be within 10% of one another.

The WMPO Board will consider potential swaps during summer/fall 2022.

FY 2021-2022 WMPO HIGHLIGHTS



HAMPSTEAD BYPASS GROUNDBREAKING

The North Carolina Department of Transportation held a groundbreaking ceremony for the B Section of the Hampstead Bypass, from NC 210 to US 17 north of Hampstead, on March 11, 2022. Several state and local officials, including NCDOT Secretary of Transportation Eric Boyette, Chief Operating Officer of NCDOT Beau Memory, and Chairman of the Pender County Board of Commissioners and WMPO Board David Piepmeyer provided remarks during the ceremony emceed by NC Board of Transportation Member Landon Zimmer. The Hampstead Bypass is a priority project of the WMPO Board, identified as such in both the 2017-2021 and 2022-2026 WMPO Strategic Plans. Construction of the B Section is anticipated for completion in FY 26. Construction of the A Section, from NC 210 in Hampstead to NC 140 in New Hanover County, is scheduled to begin in 2027.

SAFETY PERFORMANCE MEASURE TARGETS

On January 26, 2022, the WMPO Board endorsed the Safety Performance Measure Targets for Calendar Year 2022 established by NCDOT. The performance measure targets are:

Performance Measure	CY 2022 Adopted Targets
Number of Fatalities	1,254.9
Rate of Fatalities per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	1.057
Number of Serious Injuries	3,537.6
Rate of Serious Injuries per 100 million VMT	2.962
Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries	486.0

SUPPORT FOR I-685

On June 29, 2022, the WMPO Board approved a resolution requesting NCDOT evaluate and consider the extension of future Interstate 685 from Dunn to Wilmington. The US 421 corridor between I-85 in Greensboro and I-95 in Dunn was included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) as a “high priority corridor,” allowing for NCDOT to request the future I-685 interstate

designation. The extension of I-685 to Wilmington would connect large population centers, enhance economic development opportunities, provide an important connection to the Port of Wilmington, improve access between military installations, and provide for an improved evacuation route.



SUPPORT OF CITY OF WILMINGTON, PENDER COUNTY, AND TOWN OF NAVASSA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDS GRANT APPLICATIONS

On March 30, 2022, the WMPO Board supported the City of Wilmington, Pender County, and the Town of Navassa’s applications for the North

FY 2021-2022 WMPO HIGHLIGHTS

Carolina Emergency Management's Transportation Infrastructure Resiliency Fund Grants. The grants will be used for projects that update and prepare transportation infrastructure for storms, mudslides, and flooding events taking projections of future risk into consideration; risk assessments for critical transportation routes, building on existing and future reports such as the I-95 and I-40 Flood Resilience Feasibility Study; and for creating community-informed flood risk and vulnerability assessments that identify resilience gaps and project opportunities for transportation routes. All three localities received their requested awards.



ADOPTION OF THE REMOTE PARTICIPATION POLICY

On September 29, 2021, the WMPO Board adopted a remote participation policy that encourages board members to attend Board meetings in-person yet allows leeway to attend meetings virtually under certain circumstances. The Board asserted that in-person attendance

would lead to higher quality participation among members. The circumstances for remote participation include personal illness or disability, out-of-town travel, unexpected lack of childcare, family member illness or emergency, weather conditions, military service, employment or business obligations, or an unexpected scheduling conflict for up to two meetings per year. While virtual participation is not intended to be used solely for convenience, it provides board members the opportunity to participate when they otherwise could not.



ENDORSEMENT OF MODEL BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE ORDINANCE

The WMPO Board endorsed the WMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee's (BPAC's) Model Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Ordinance on November 17, 2021. The BPAC and WMPO staff developed the model ordinance through researching land development codes and

best practices from North Carolina and across the country. The draft ordinance was also reviewed by the Wilmington City Attorney's Office for compliance with state statutes. While the model ordinance is not a requirement for jurisdictions, it serves as a comprehensive starting point for members interested in adding to or strengthening bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure requirements.

WMPO BOARD LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The WMPO Board adopted the 2022 Legislative Agenda on April 27, 2022. The WMPO expresses support of identifying new infrastructure revenue sources in order to meet the growing transportation needs of the state. Regarding transportation priorities, the Board has identified the following priority projects:

- Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Replacement
- Hampstead Bypass
- Military Cutoff Road/Eastwood Road Interchange
- Independence Boulevard Extension
- MLK Jr. Parkway/Kerr Avenue Interchange
- MLK Jr. Parkway/Market Street/Eastwood Road Interchange
- South Front Street Widening
- Carolina Beach Road Widening

The Legislative Agenda also includes WMPO support of electric scooter legislation; opposition to the transfer of state road maintenance to local governments; a proposed limitation on municipal requirements for

FY 2021-2022 WMPO HIGHLIGHTS

street improvements related to schools; and support for NCDOT's policy recommendations related to moped use on public roadways.



Military Cutoff Road Extension



URGING CONSIDERATION OF ALL POSSIBLE FUNDING OPTIONS FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE CAPE FEAR MEMORIAL BRIDGE

In February 2022, the WMPO Board passed a resolution urging NCDOT to consider all possible funding options, including tolls and previous

proposals, for the replacement of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. NCDOT completed a feasibility study that evaluated four options for the replacement of the bridge in 2020 but the project is unfunded in the 2020-2029 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Due to project cost increases and NCDOT's programming challenges, it is unlikely the replacement of the bridge will be programmed for funding in the next 10-year STIP cycle necessitating the exploration and consideration of potential funding options beyond traditional mechanisms. Replacement of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, which was constructed in 1969 and currently carries over 60,000 vehicles per day, is the WMPO Board's top unfunded priority.



2022 MOBI AWARD

The Old Fayetteville Road Multi-use Path in Leland won a NCDOT Mobi Award in May 2022. The one-mile multi-use path, which provides bicycle and pedestrian access to educational, recreational, and civic destinations along Old Fayetteville Road, won in the Small Urban Category. NCDOT's Mobi Awards recognize multi-modal projects that play a significant

role in creating vibrant communities across North Carolina. Projects are scored based on economic development, job creation, improved public health, and other unique or significant contributions.



Old Fayetteville Road MUP in Leland

ENDORSEMENT OF MODEL TELECOMMUTING AND ALTERNATIVE WORK SCHEDULE POLICY

On June 29, 2022, the WMPO Board approved Go Coast's Alternative Work Schedule and Telework Schedule Model Policy. The model policy, which was developed by the Go Coast Committee over the course of several months, was in response to a need from area employers for navigating a return to the workplace following the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, 25% of WMPO area residents reported being able to work from home at least one day a week. By July 2020, that percentage increased to 69%. The intent of the model policy is to provide a guide for employers seeking to amend or implement a policy.

2022 NCAMPO CONFERENCE

The WMPO hosted the 2022 North Carolina Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (NCAMPO) Conference on April 20-22, 2022. The conference, which had not been held since 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, took place at the Wilmington Convention Center. Approximately 475 transportation planning and engineering professionals from MPOs, RPOs, NCDOT, consultant firms, transit agencies, and other organizations from across the state and country attended the conference. The theme of the conference was "Transportation Reimagined," highlighting the need for innovative solutions and adaptive transportation infrastructure and programs for a safe, healthy, and resilient post-pandemic North Carolina. In addition to general plenary sessions and agency updates, the conference offered twenty technical breakout sessions on topics ranging from transportation innovation to virtual engagement as well as a variety of mobile tours to showcase transportation infrastructure in the Wilmington region.



TRANSPORTATION REIMAGINED

SAFE • HEALTHY • RESILIENT

2022 NCAMPO CONFERENCE
Wilmington, NC • April 20-22, 2022



Welcome



General Session



MOBILE TOURS OFFERED:

HISTORIC WILMINGTON BIKE RIDE

CAROLINA BEACH BIKE RIDE

NC PORT OF WILMINGTON TOUR

BRUNSWICK RIVERWALK TOUR

WILMINGTON RIVERFRONT BOAT TOUR



Wilmington Rail Trail Walking Session

¼ CENT SALES TAX EFFORT

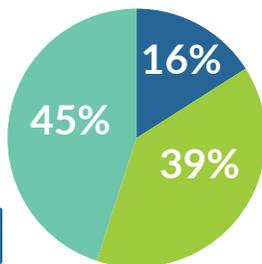
MOVE FORWARD >>> GO FURTHER

Quarter-Cent Transportation Sales Tax to
Expand Trails & Modernize Transit



On May 2, 2022, the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners approved the quarter cent sales tax referendum to be placed on the November 2022 ballot. If passed, residents and visitors of New Hanover County would pay an additional 25 cents for every \$100 spent, raising approximately \$144 million for transit and trail projects over the next ten years. These funds will be used to enhance public transportation, construct bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and further the rail realignment project. The funds can also be leveraged to apply for state and federal grants, leading to needed multimodal improvements in the county. Examples of improvements include more frequent transit service, the construction of more trails, and safety improvements. New Hanover County created a website entitled “Trails Transit NHC” as a way to educate citizens about the referendum.

MODAL
BREAKDOWN
OF
FUNDS
GENERATED



BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN

In the first five years, sales tax funds would be used to improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure throughout the county. These improvements, which are based on current needs and would continue to be evaluated and refined, include over 10 miles of new multi-use trails, five additional sidewalks, and pedestrian improvements at nine intersections.

- North College Road Trail
- North College Road Extension Trail
- South College Road Trail
- Masonboro Loop Road Trail
- Downtown Trail



passes. These changes would increase accessibility and improve rider experience while allowing Wave Transit to serve more people.



RAIL REALIGNMENT

In the first five years, sales tax funds could go to work on South Front Street, relocating part of the railroad tracks to the west side of the road and implementing pedestrian improvements. These enhancements to NCDOT’s South Front Street Widening project would improve mobility and safety for the community.



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

In the first five years, sales tax funds would be used to increase bus frequency; increase the hours of operation for both fixed-route buses and microtransit; install new benches and shelters as well as signs to display real-time bus arrivals; implement new technology; and allow free youth

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



This year's Annual WMPO/Go Coast Commuter Challenge took place from October 16th to 31st and had about 50 participants, replacing 6,750 vehicle miles traveled and 575 trips, saving \$508 in fuel costs, and burning 6,000 kcals. Top contenders were provided prizes from local sponsors that included Trader Joes, Lidl, and Grinders Café.



BIKE MONTH 2022

In April 2022, the WMPO Board and the Wilmington City Council proclaimed May as Bike Month. WMPO staff encouraged cycling through social media posts as well as by hosting the River to Sea Bike Ride. Additionally, cyclists of the Wilmington region could register as participants on the Go Coast website and track their mileage on Go Coast's Strava page.



2021/2022 RIVER TO SEA EVENTS

The 31st Annual River to Sea Bike Ride took place in October 2021 and the 32nd Annual River to Sea Bike Ride took place on May 7, 2022. A combined total of approximately 650 cyclists participated in these two events. Riders were escorted by local law enforcement from the City of Wilmington, New Hanover County, and Wrightsville Beach. The Town of Wrightsville Beach hosted participants at Wrightsville Beach Park and provided water prior to the ride returning to downtown Wilmington.

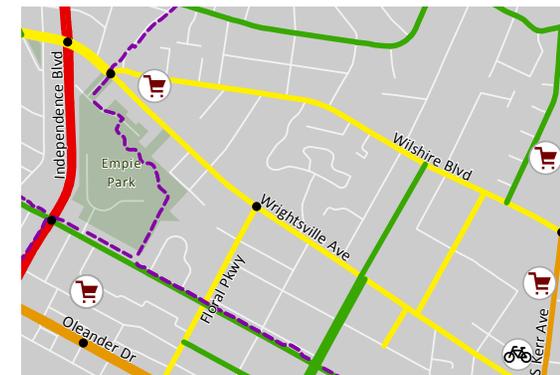
INAUGURAL BRUNSWICK HERITAGE RIVERSIDE RIDE

The 1st Annual Brunswick Heritage Riverside Ride took place on October 23, 2021. Riders traveled along the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor for a total of 16 miles. Starting at Phoenix Park in Navassa, they traveled through Leland to

Brunswick Riverwalk Park in Belville and returned along the same route. Approximately 65 riders participated in the event. Planning is currently underway for the 2022 ride.

BIKE SUITABILITY MAP COMPLETION

In 2022, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee adopted the bike suitability map. The suitability map ranks the region's roadways from easiest to most difficult for on-road cycling and provides locations of multi-use paths, parks, schools, and other amenities. The map will be printed and distributed. Additionally, an interactive map will be available on the WMPO website.



- Roadway Score:**
- Easy
 - Moderate
 - Experienced
 - Advanced
 - Not Recommended
 - Not Allowed

- Facilities:**
- - - Multiuse Path
 - Park
 - School
 - 🛒 Grocery Store
 - 🚲 Bike Shop

WMPO BUILDING FUNDING AND CONTRACT AWARD



525 N. 4th Street, circa 1960



525 N. 4th Street, 2022



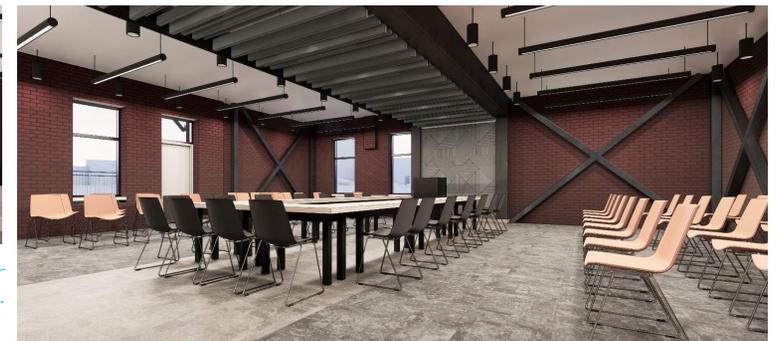
3D Visualization of Renovated 525 N. 4th Street

RENOVATION OF 525 N 4TH STREET BUILDING (FORMERLY THOMAS GROCERY BUILDING)

The WMPO is in the process of renovating the two story structure located at 525 N 4th Street in downtown Wilmington for use as the main offices and public meeting space for the organization. The building was originally built in 1894 for the Thomas Grocery company and is currently owned by the City of Wilmington. During FY22, the building design was completed and the construction project

was successfully bid, with a start of onsite work in the summer of 2022. Construction is anticipated to last approximately ten months.

The building will be part of the larger Wilmington Multi-modal Transportation Center, encompassing the recently constructed Padgett Station, the proposed downtown rail trail and a future passenger rail station. All of these facilities will be located in the Brooklyn Arts District, bounded by North 3rd and 4th Streets and Campbell and Hanover Streets. The WMPO's 12-person staff will occupy the first and second floor offices, and the main floor will provide meeting space for the entire WMPO Board.



(Clockwise from top left) Interior Design Concepts for Reception; Huddle Space; and Board Room

TECHNICAL SERVICES

The WMPO provides the following technical services:

- Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) Review
- Development Review
- Traffic Counts
- Project Management Assistance
- Management of the Direct Attributable Program*

*Includes projects funded by the Surface Transportation Block Grant - Direct Attributable (STBG-DA) Program, the Transportation Alternatives Set Aside - Direct Attributable (TASA-DA) Program, and Coronavirus Response and Recovery Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) funds.

The following TIA, development review, traffic counting, and project management activities were completed during FY 2021-2022:

67 TIA REVIEWS

The WMPO member jurisdictions require TIAs whenever a proposed development is expected to generate at least 100 additional trips during a peak travel period, typically weekday mornings or afternoons. These required analyses are reviewed by professional engineers from NCDOT, the WMPO, City of Wilmington, and other member jurisdictions for completeness and accuracy. Upon approval, the TIAs serve as reference documents for plan reviews and driveway access permits to the state maintained roadway system.

A total of 67 TIAs were reviewed during FY 2021-

2022, of which 56 were new submittals. The remaining 11 were ongoing reviews that began the previous fiscal year.

998 DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS

The WMPO member jurisdictions may request technical review of site plans prior to issuance of building permits. Technical Services staff provide comments on technical elements related to transportation plans, engineering design standards and Code requirements.

Of the 998 plan reviews that were performed during FY 2021-2022, 701 were formal reviews, 295 were informal plan reviews, and two were conceptual plan reviews.

503 TRAFFIC COUNTS

The WMPO collects traffic counts at selected locations on an annual basis. In addition, member jurisdictions may request special traffic counts for specific projects and roadways, including speed and volume, travel time counts, and pedestrian or bicycle volume counts.

Five hundred and three (503) traffic counts were completed by WMPO staff during FY 2021-22.

Of these, 372 were scheduled annual counts and 131 were special requested counts.

DIRECT ATTRIBUTABLE PROGRAM

The Direct Attributable (DA) program provides funding in three categories: STBG-DA, TASA-DA, and Carbon Reduction (CR). STBG-DA funds may be used for projects to preserve and improve the conditions and performance on any Federal-aid highway; bridge and tunnel projects on any public road; pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure; and transit capital projects. TASA-DA funds may be used for a variety of projects, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, environmental mitigation, safe routes to school projects, and vulnerable road user safety assessments. CR funds may be used for projects designed to reduce transportation emissions. Stakeholders looking to acquire DA resources to implement relevant transportation projects must apply to be considered for funding allocation.



Ribbon Cutting for Park Avenue MUP Phase II

DA PROJECT WEB MAP

The WMPO created an ArcGIS Web Application that allows stakeholders to observe the locations and project statuses of DA-funded projects currently being planned and implemented within the WMPO planning area. The web application is currently housed on the City of Wilmington ArcGIS Online account and has public, open access to anyone who is interested in learning about DA projects occurring within WMPO jurisdiction. The web application will be updated as projects are added and project statuses progress. The web application can be further utilized to inform stakeholders seeking to apply for DA funding what types of projects have been previously approved for funds and whether a project of interest has already been brought forth to the WMPO prior to application submission.

FY 2021-2022 ALLOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DA FUNDS

Based on cost increases, the WMPO Board supported awarding the following projects additional monies, in combination with the local 20% matching funds requirement:

- Wrightsville Avenue/Greenville Avenue to Hinton Avenue (U-5534C)
- Hooker Road Multi-Use Path (U-5534G)
- Hinton Ave Multi-Use Path (U-5534H)
- Multimodal Phase 1B (U-6234)

ALLOCATION OF CRRSAA FUNDS

The Coronavirus Response and Recovery Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA) appropriated an additional \$10,000,000,000 for Highway Infrastructure Programs (HIP). Of this amount, \$9,840,057,332 was set aside and apportioned for activities eligible under section 133(b) of Title 23, United States Code (USC) and such other purposes as specified in the CRRSAA. The WMPO was the recipient of a CRRSAA funding allocation in the amount of \$1,481,100.

In March of 2021, the WMPO Board supported making the funds 100% payable and directed staff to develop criteria by which these additional funds may be awarded. In response, the methodology for evaluating proposed projects was changed to:

1. Remove the local match requirement;
2. Account for documented hardships resulting from Covid-19 pandemic related events or consequences;
3. Distinguish existing projects from newly proposed projects;
4. Streamline the requirements for analysis; and
5. Provide for a tiebreaker in case of need.

A special call for applications was issued in June 2021. In October, the following projects were awarded funds:

Town of Navassa | Navassa Park Multi-Use Path

The Town of Navassa received \$168,198 to complete the Navassa Park MUP along Brooklyn

Street between Water Street and Navassa Road.

Wave Transit | Passenger Amenity Upgrades

The Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority (Wave Transit) received \$273,343 for passenger amenity upgrades, including shelters and benches.

City of Wilmington | Downtown Trail Phase 1

The City of Wilmington received \$680,000 for the cost to design Phase 1 of the Downtown Trail.

Town of Kure Beach | Fort Fisher and K Avenue Intersection Improvements

The Town of Kure Beach received \$359,559 for pedestrian access and safety improvements at the intersection of Fort Fisher Blvd and K Avenue, including sidewalks.

DA SCORING CRITERIA UPDATES AND CALL FOR PROJECTS

In April of 2022, the WMPO Board directed staff to revise the criteria by which projects are evaluated. The Board's direction was for the following changes:

1. Increase the relative weight for safety oriented projects;
2. Revise and clarify criteria for non-automotive projects;
3. Modify the criteria categories to sum to 100 points total; and
4. Include a tiebreaker matrix, in case of need.

A call for applications was issued in the summer of 2022 using the revised criteria.

TECHNICAL SERVICES

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

There are currently 22 projects receiving Direct Attributable funding, either through the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program, Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) Program, or Coronavirus Response and Recovery Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) funds. These projects are at various stages of planning, design, or construction, as indicated to the right. Additionally, four Direct Attributable projects were completed in FY 2021-2022.

BOLD = Completed during FY 2021-2022



Coral Drive Sidewalks (U-5534S)

FY 2022:

- Fort Fisher Blvd & K Avenue Pedestrian Safety Improvements (BL-0059) *Planning*
- CFPTA (Wave Transit) Passenger Amenity Upgrades (TC-0021)** *Planning*
- Downtown Trail Phase I (BL-0045) *Planning*

FY 2021:

- NC Port Authority (NCPA) Port of Wilmington North Gate Design & NEPA Work (HL-0040) *Design*
- Middle Sound Loop and Walmart Connector (BL-0040) *Planning*
- **CFPTA (Wave Transit) Automatic Passenger Counters (TL-0017)***

FY 2020:

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

FY 2019:

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

* Equipment – not shown on map

** Multiple locations – not shown on map

FY 2017:

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

FY 2016:

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

FY 2015:

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

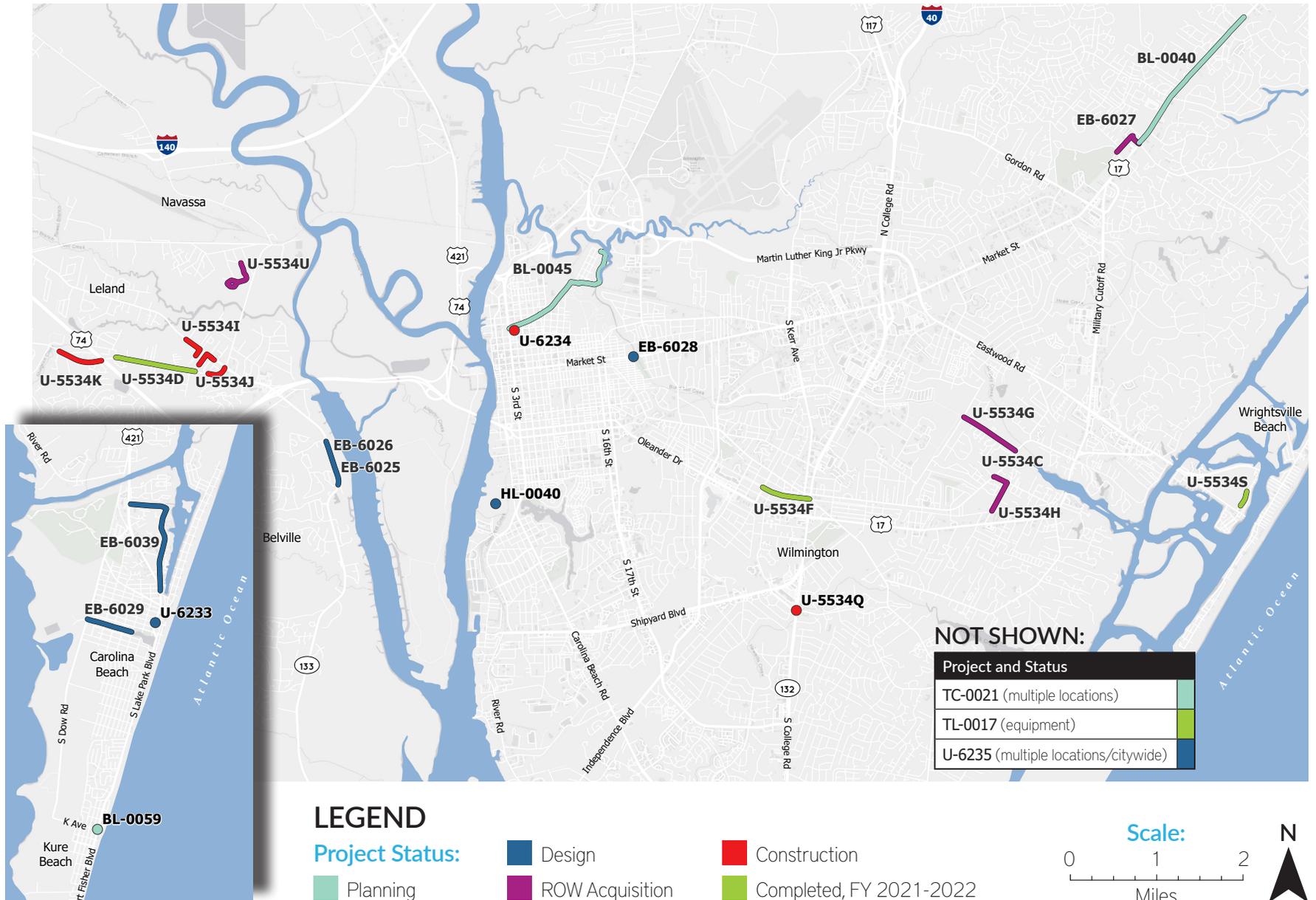
FY 2014:

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

FY 2013:

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

TECHNICAL SERVICES



LEGEND

Project Status:

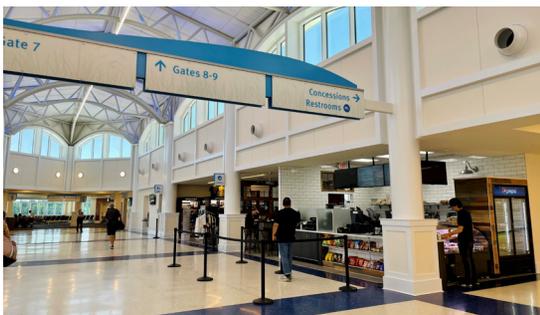


WMPO PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS



NEW TERMINAL OPENS AT ILM

Wilmington International Airport (ILM) completed the final phase of its three-phase terminal expansion project in February 2022. The project, which began in 2018, has expanded ILM facilities by 75%. Phase 1 included a new outbound bag room as well as screening equipment. Phase 2 renovated the airlines' ticket offices, expanding the ticket lobby and ticket counters to accommodate passenger growth and an additional airline and charter operators. Phase 3 included the gate area, TSA checkpoint, and baggage claim. Four new gates were added as well as expanded concessions and a large gathering space with views of the airfield. The WMPO Board received a tour of the new facilities at its April meeting, which was held at ILM.



New Gates and Expanded Concessions

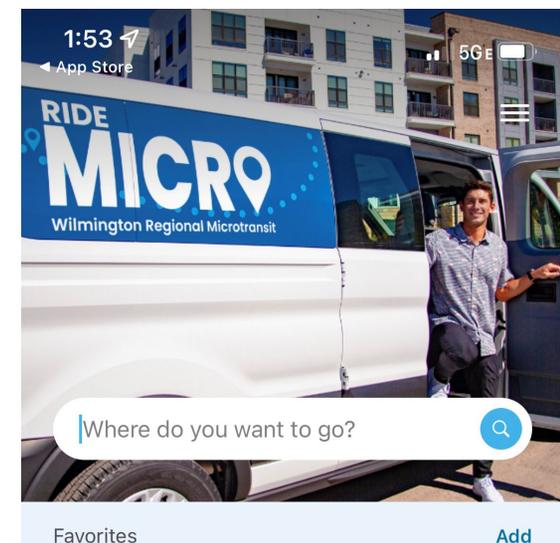


WAVE TRANSIT SYSTEM NETWORK REDESIGN

The Cape Fear Public Transit Authority (Wave Transit) Board of Directors approved the final plan for its System Network Redesign on May 26, 2022. The Network Redesign will increase service hours, expand the existing network through on-demand microtransit service, and provide more frequent service on fixed routes with high ridership. It will preserve the current network in the urban core while implementing improvements on the periphery. The changes will go into effect on July 3, 2022.

INTRODUCTION OF MICROTRANSIT

Wave Transit launched a regional, on-demand microtransit pilot program, "RideMICRO," on October 11, 2021. The network includes 3,400 virtual stops across four zones that have been implemented: Northern Brunswick/Downtown Wilmington (Zone 1); Pender/Northeastern New Hanover County (Zone 2); South New Hanover County/Pleasure Island (Zone 3); and North New Hanover County (Zone 4). The program is currently averaging 260 trips per month, with 80% of these occurring in Zone 1 and Zone 2. The pilot program was funded 100% by NCDOT for the first year and an application for a second year is in review.



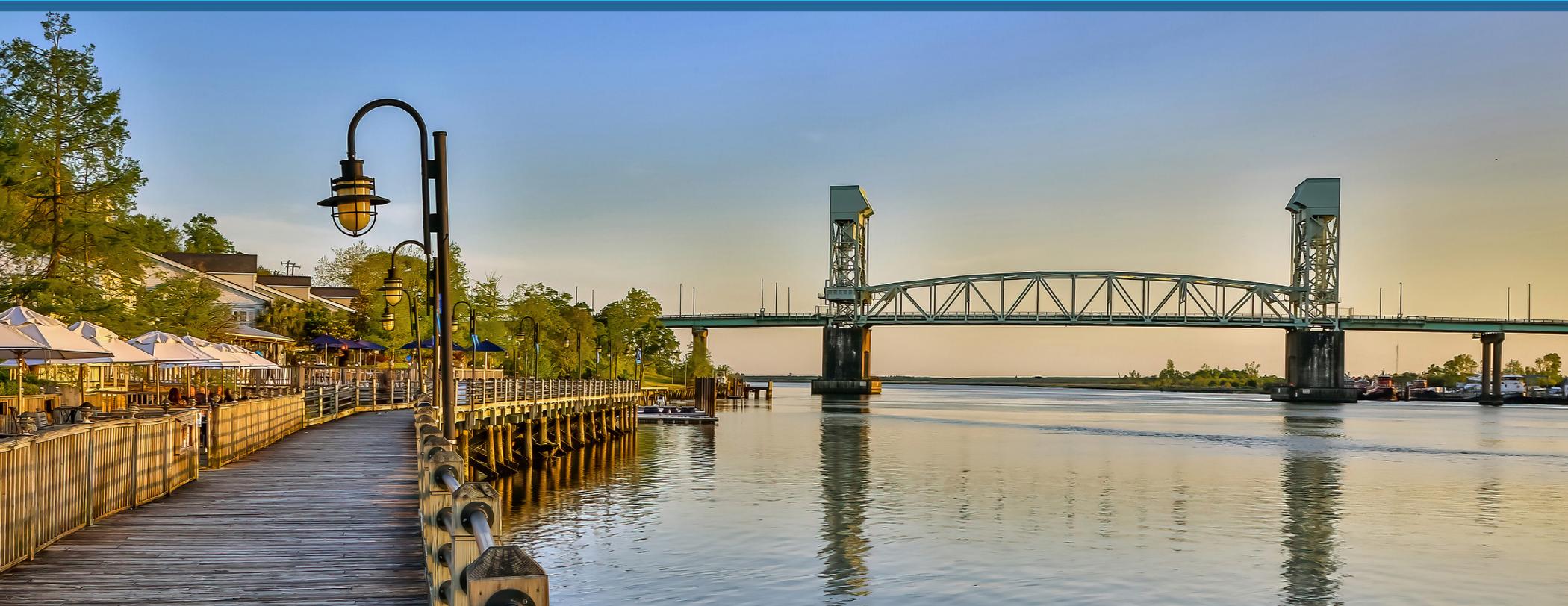
Rides can be scheduled using the RideMICRO App

CONCLUSION



We look forward to another successful year of continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning in FY2022-2023.





WMPO

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