



2026 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



WILMINGTON URBAN AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

OUR MISSION

To 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.

OUR VISION

Seek to provide safe, reliable, and seamless options for transportation for all in the Wilmington Metropolitan Area. The WMPO will speak with a unified voice and work with residents to anticipate the transportation needs of a growing and changing community.



TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

The Wilmington Urban Area MPO supports prioritization and funding for local transportation and infrastructure projects and the need to explore new transportation and infrastructure revenue sources to address the growing needs of the state and the nation. This includes, but is not limited to: road, bridge, and highway projects; public transportation; ferry, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure; beach nourishment; inlet and waterway maintenance; coastal storm damage reduction; port infrastructure; and airports.

The Wilmington Urban Area MPO encourages the North Carolina Department of Transportation, North Carolina General Assembly, and Governor of North Carolina to explore and implement new funding mechanisms that could raise the funds necessary to accelerate much needed transportation projects.



TRANSPORTATION PROJECT PRIORITY: CAPE FEAR MEMORIAL BRIDGE

The Wilmington Urban Area MPO Board has identified the replacement of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge as their highest unfunded priority. The WMPO is committed to working with our partners at NCDOT to explore all possible funding options for the replacement of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge.



TRANSPORTATION FUNDING FOR DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS

The Wilmington Urban Area MPO encourages increased funding for maintaining drainage ditches for which NCDOT is responsible in counties subject to the N.C. Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA).



OPPOSITION TO TRANSFER OF STATE ROAD MAINTENANCE

The Wilmington Urban Area MPO respectfully and urgently requests the North Carolina General Assembly reject proposals which would transfer responsibility for large portions of the state's road system to local governments and weaken or dismantle municipal Powell Bill Street maintenance funding.



LIMITATION ON CITY REQUIREMENTS FOR STREET IMPROVEMENTS RELATED TO SCHOOLS

SL 2017-57 included language related to street improvements for schools. The Wilmington Urban Area MPO continues to be concerned that on non-state-maintained facilities where improvements related to schools are needed, the funding burden has fallen on the municipalities or the level of service on the roadways will be compromised. The Wilmington Urban Area MPO encourages the General Assembly to review this language and seek solutions to address this funding concern.



WILMINGTON URBAN AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS DESIGNATED AS “PUBLIC AUTHORITIES”

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are required by U.S. federal law (**23 U.S.C. § 134** and **49 U.S.C. § 5303**) to conduct comprehensive, cooperative transportation planning in urbanized areas over 50,000 people. The enabling authority for the creation and functioning of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is also found in **NCGS Chapter 136, Article 16, Planning**. While Article 16 establishes the framework for MPO’s in North Carolina, under the umbrella of federal and state funding, cooperation, and oversight of transportation assets, the precise legal status of an MPO entity is not directly stated in the NC General Statutes.

NCGS 120-72(9) lists 23 categories of “public authorities,” including as examples: water, sewer, and drainage authorities, regional economic development commissions, regional planning commissions, local school administrative units, regional transportation authorities, ABC boards, and councils of government.

The North Carolina Association of MPOs (NCAMPO) unanimously voted on February 25, 2025, to request the North Carolina General Assembly recognize MPOs as public authorities. The Wilmington Urban Area MPO supports NCAMPO’s request and encourages the North Carolina General Assembly to amend **NCGS 120-72(9)** to include Metropolitan Planning Organizations as “public authorities.”

*NCAMPO requests clarifying the current status of MPOs by amending § 136-200.1 as follows: Metropolitan planning organizations recognized. Metropolitan planning organizations established pursuant to the provisions of 23 U.S.C. § 134 are hereby recognized under the law of the State as **public authorities as defined by GS § 143C-1-1(d) (22)**.*



ELECTRIC ASSISTED BICYCLE LEGISLATION

The Wilmington Urban Area MPO supports the use of electric assisted bicycles to provide an alternative mode of transportation when utilized in a safe and responsible manner. The MPO encourages the North Carolina General Assembly to implement legislation defining e-bicycle subclasses. Locations of permissible use of electric assisted bicycles should be subject to local government control through their adopted codes and ordinances.



MOPED LEGISLATION

The Wilmington Urban Area MPO supports the North Carolina Department of Transportation’s policy recommendation of restricting mopeds on public roadways with posted speed limits of 45mph or greater. The MPO also encourages the North Carolina General Assembly to implement laws that regulate the use of mopeds in a manner that promotes the safety and welfare of the citizens and visitors of North Carolina and pursue education and clarity on existing regulations for mopeds, golf carts, and low-speed vehicles.



ELECTRIC SCOOTER LEGISLATION

The Wilmington Urban Area MPO supports the use of electric scooters to provide an alternative mode of transportation so long as the scooters and/or bicycles are used in a safe and responsible manner, do not create visual clutter, and do not block parking or ADA accessibility. The allowance and/or use of electric scooters should be subject to local government control through their adopted codes and ordinances.