



# 3

## *Developing the Plan*

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## Development Strategy Overview

The development of Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) was deeply rooted in public participation, aiming to create a transportation network that reflects the needs and priorities of the region's residents. By utilizing a variety of outreach methods, the WMPO ensures that public feedback is integral to decision-making, while actively involving a broad range of stakeholders in shaping the region's transportation future. Central to this process are the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Committee (MTPC), which played a critical role in refining the plan's vision, goals, and guided outreach efforts. Other considerations that acted as a basis for the development of goals and objectives include emerging technology and future innovation, congestion management, and transportation demand management. This comprehensive approach ensured that *Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050* is not only a technical road map but also a plan that prioritizes community involvement and effectively addresses the transportation challenges of the future.



### Guiding Committees

#### Citizen Advisory Committee

The WMPO established a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), as described within the Public Participation Plan (PPP), to oversee and guide the development of Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050. The 13-member volunteer committee was composed of citizen representatives, appointed by each WMPO Board member, representing various community and civic organizations, professional and neighborhood associations, and the private sector. The CAC was instrumental in providing citizen perspectives and insights on the plan, while also advising the WMPO on ways to more effectively engage the public and assisting in outreach efforts.

#### Metropolitan Transportation Plan Committee

The WMPO convened a second committee, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Committee (MTPC), as an additional resource during the planning process. The 18-member committee involved a variety of subject matter experts in transportation, urban planning, public health, emergency management, and others. The MTPC was created to advise and direct plan progression, including criteria and metric development, project evaluation, and policy recommendation review. The committee was instrumental in creating and adopting the plan's vision and goals, as well as reviewing the work of other advisory committees.

# Planning Considerations

## Public Involvement

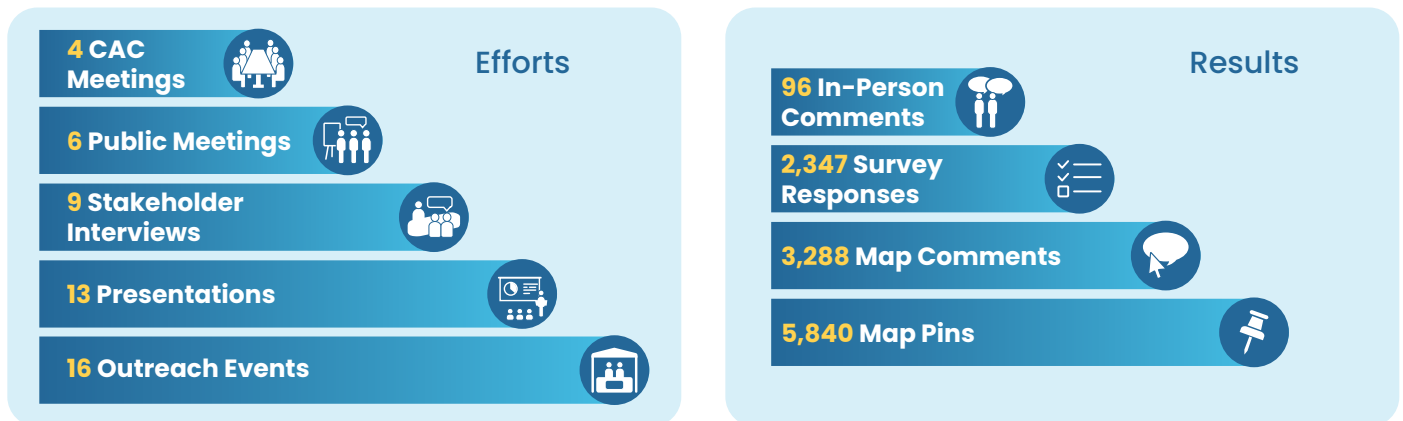
Public participation is a critical component of the development of the plan. The WMPO's Public Participation Plan (PPP) outlines the public involvement process of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), which includes a variety of tools and methods of distributing information to the public and gathering feedback. The PPP underscores the importance of public participation in all stages of the transportation planning process. The methods contained within the plan are designed to ensure the priorities of the public are incorporated into transportation decisions.

Outreach for *Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050* was conducted in two phases. Phase I began on August 1, 2023, concluding on November 30, 2023, and included a survey with an interactive map, public meetings, pop-up events, presentations, stakeholder interviews, and the convening of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) to guide outreach strategies. Phase II of public outreach began on May 28, 2025, and concluded on June 27, 2025. Phase II included a one-month public comment period for the draft *Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050* MTP. Phase I is detailed below, while Phase II is overviewed in Chapter 5.

### Public Outreach Phase I

Over the four-month period of Phase I, the WMPO conducted nine stakeholder interviews, held six public meetings, provided 13 presentations, and attended 16 pop-up events. Along with public outreach events, the WMPO engaged in a social media campaign, distributed posters and handouts, created three informational videos, published three press releases, and facilitated three paid and one donated advertisement opportunities. WMPO staff were on hand at all public outreach events to assist citizens in taking the survey, which was available online and in person at outreach events and available in both English and Spanish. Additionally, the survey had an interactive mapping section where citizens were able to provide input by transportation mode with an associated geographic location.

### Phase I Public Engagement Summary



See Appendix C for more information on public involvement during the development of this plan.



The online survey, which included an interactive map element, opened on July 26, 2023, and closed on December 6, 2023. The additional four days prior to the official start of Phase I on August 1, 2023, and six days after the official end of Phase I on November 30, 2023, provided a grace period for early and late survey takers. The survey received a total of 2,347 responses, while the map received 5,840 pins and 3,288 comments. An additional 96 comments were collected in-person during public meetings. The responses collected through the survey were analyzed by WMPO staff and each comment submitted was categorized into one of the four categories based on the type of comment received: concern, maintenance, policy, or project. The classified responses were provided to the staff of member jurisdictions, modal planning partners, and the MTPC to assist in the development of projects, goals, and objectives.



## OPEN HOUSE SESSIONS

Come learn about the WMPO's 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, **Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050**, at one of our open houses! WMPO staff will host six open house sessions, which are listed below:

**Northeast Library** | August 3rd | 4 pm to 6 pm  
1241 Military Cutoff Rd, Wilmington, NC 28405

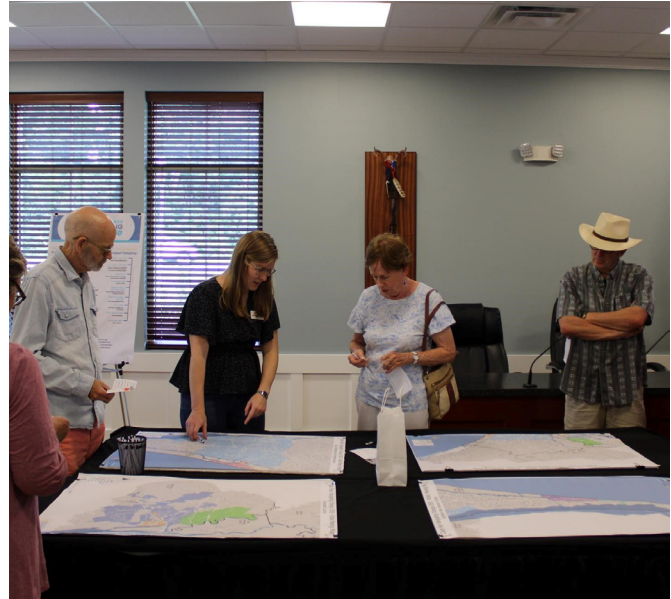
**Carolina Beach Town Hall** | August 15th | 9 am to 11 am  
1121 N Lake Park Blvd, Carolina Beach, NC 28428

**Belville Town Hall** | August 17th | 4 pm to 6 pm  
63 River Rd SE, Belville, NC 28451

**Hampstead Annex** | August 22nd | 4 pm to 6 pm  
15060 Hwy 17, Hampstead, NC 28443

**Senior Center** | August 24th | 9 am to 11 am  
2222 College Rd, Wilmington, NC 28403

**Virtual Session** | August 31st | 12 pm to 1 pm  
Please visit plan website to access Zoom option.



## Take the survey!



Tell us about your **community's transportation needs** and top priorities!



Visit the WMPO website to learn more about Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050:

**wmpo.org/2050mtp**

Clockwise from top left: List of open house sessions; Public meeting at Belville; Survey advertisement; person leaving a comment

The survey asked respondents about their current travel choices and behaviors, top transportation priorities and concerns, and preferences for future travel.





### Phase 1 Survey Results: Top Investment Priorities

**1<sup>st</sup>** Maintaining existing roads



**2<sup>nd</sup>** Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure



**3<sup>rd</sup>** Public transportation system



### Phase 1 Survey Results: Current Travel Choices



**76%**  
Drive alone for over 50% of trips



**11%**  
Bike for over 50% of trips



**2%**  
Carpool for over 50% of trips



**40%**  
Walk for over 50% of trips



**3%**  
Use public transportation for over 50% of trips

### Phase 1 Survey Results: Future Transportation Mode Preferences



3.5 out of 5 would prefer to bike more often in the future.



1 out of 5 would prefer to carpool more often in the future.



4 out of 5 would prefer to walk more often in the future.



2.5 out of 5 would prefer to use public transportation more often in the future.



Less than 1 out of 5 would prefer to drive alone more often in the future.

### Phase 1 Survey Results: Budget Allocation

Given a budget of \$100, how much would you spend?



**\$19**  
Bicycle/pedestrian facilities



**\$22**  
Maintaining roads



**\$10**  
More roads



**\$4**  
Water transportation



**\$10**  
Rail



**\$12**  
Roadway safety



**\$5**  
Aviation



**\$14**  
Public transportation

## Population and Economic Trends

### Population Growth

The greater Wilmington region is experiencing robust population growth, establishing itself as one of the fastest growing areas in North Carolina. This growth is reflected statewide, where Brunswick and Pender Counties ranked among the fastest growing counties in North Carolina between 2022 and 2023, according to the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management. It should be noted that this data represents the entirety of all three counties, though only portions of Brunswick and Pender Counties fall within the WMPO's planning area.

Looking ahead, the region is projected to continue its upward trajectory, with sustained growth expected through 2050. This anticipated increase underscores the importance of a data-driven planning process to effectively respond to the evolving needs of the population. To support this effort, the Wilmington Regional Travel Demand Model (WRTDM) was developed as a key analytical tool to evaluate the impacts of proposed projects on the roadway network, while also capturing future travel patterns and multimodal transportation demands. The model's insights are critical in guiding infrastructure investments and shaping policy decisions that promote a resilient and efficient regional transportation system that meets the demands of the growing population. The following pages highlight the socioeconomic data for the Base Year (2021) and Future Year (2050) of the TDM, which was developed through close coordination with NCDOT Transportation Planning Division and WMPO member jurisdictions to ensure the accuracy of population and employment forecasts through 2050.

#### 2020–2025 POPULATION GROWTH



##### New Hanover County

↑ 8% 243,333 residents



##### Brunswick County

↑ 22% 167,112 residents



##### Pender County

↑ 16% 70,077 residents

Table 3.1 - Summary of WRTDM Socioeconomic Data

| Category             | 2021    | 2050    |
|----------------------|---------|---------|
| Population           | 310,009 | 606,399 |
| Number of Households | 134,233 | 265,618 |
| Employment           | 122,856 | 259,727 |

#### PROJECTED SOCIOECONOMIC TREND MAPS:

**FIGURE 3-1:**  
Projected Population Density (2050)

**FIGURE 3-2:**  
Projected Employment Density (2050)

**FIGURE 3-3:**  
Distribution of Projected Population Growth  
(2021 – 2050)

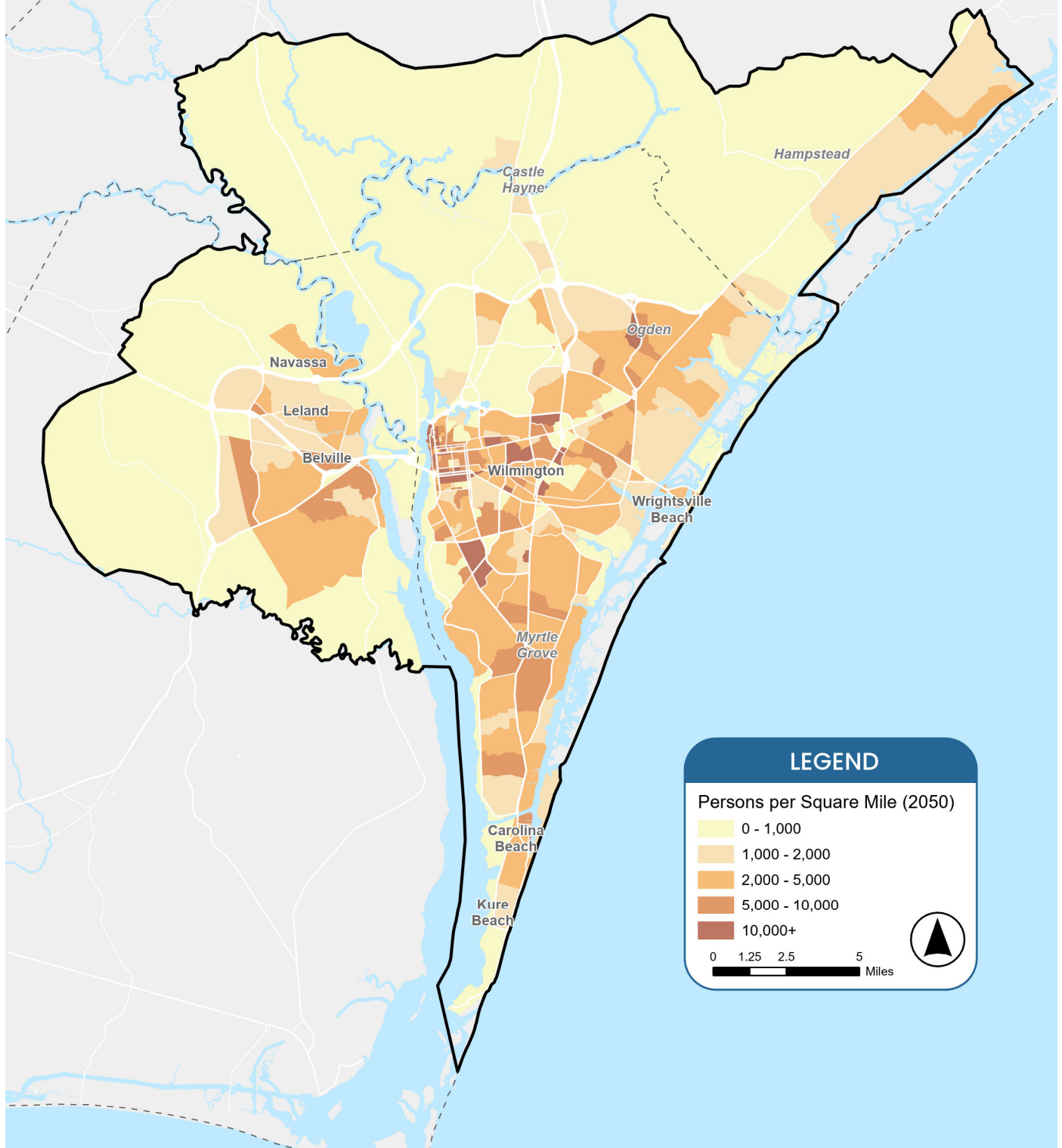
**FIGURE 3-3:**  
Distribution of Projected Employment Growth  
(2021 – 2050)



See Appendix J for more information on the development of the Wilmington Regional Travel Demand Model.

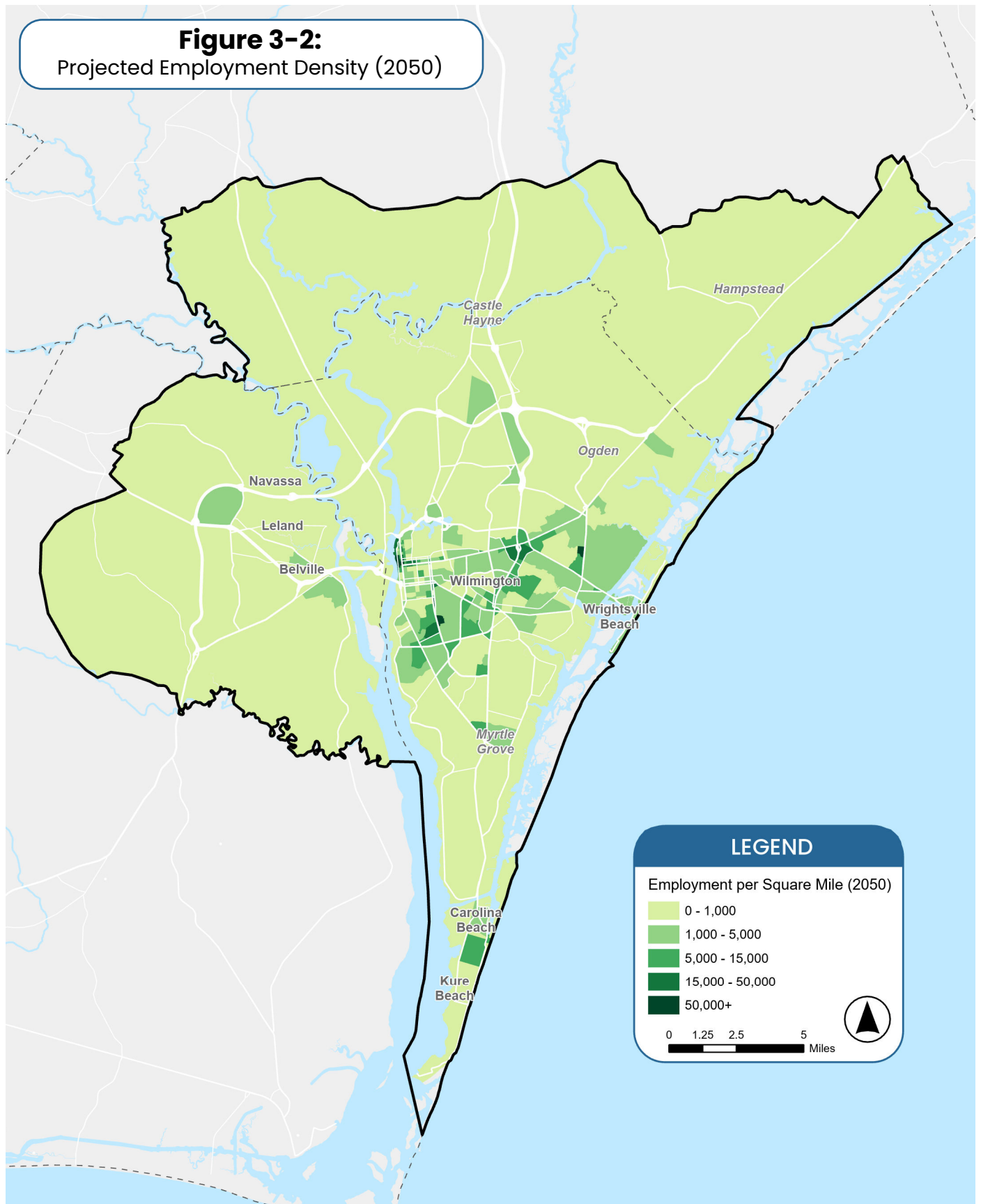


**Figure 3-1:**  
 Projected Population Density (2050)





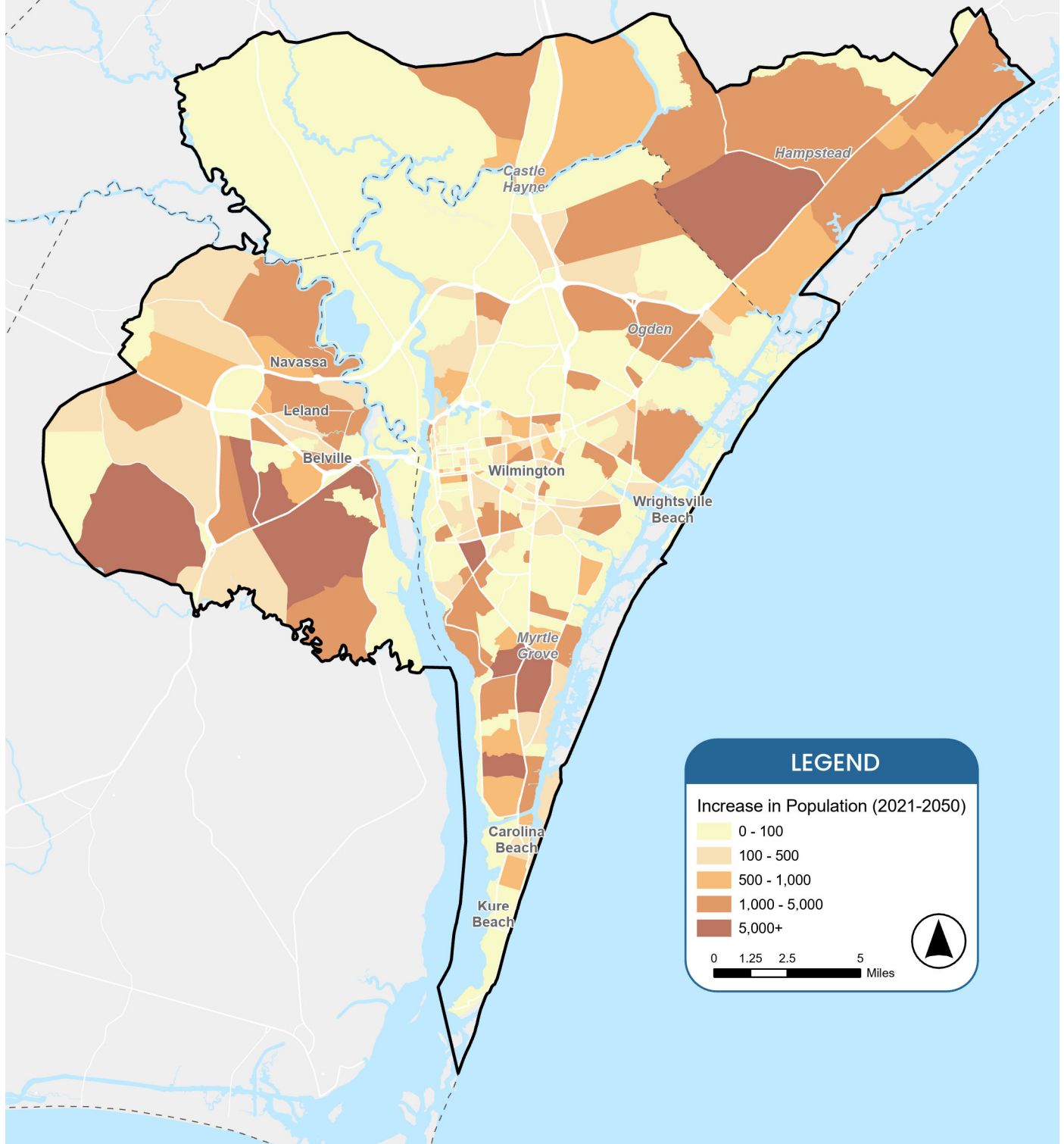
**Figure 3-2:**  
Projected Employment Density (2050)





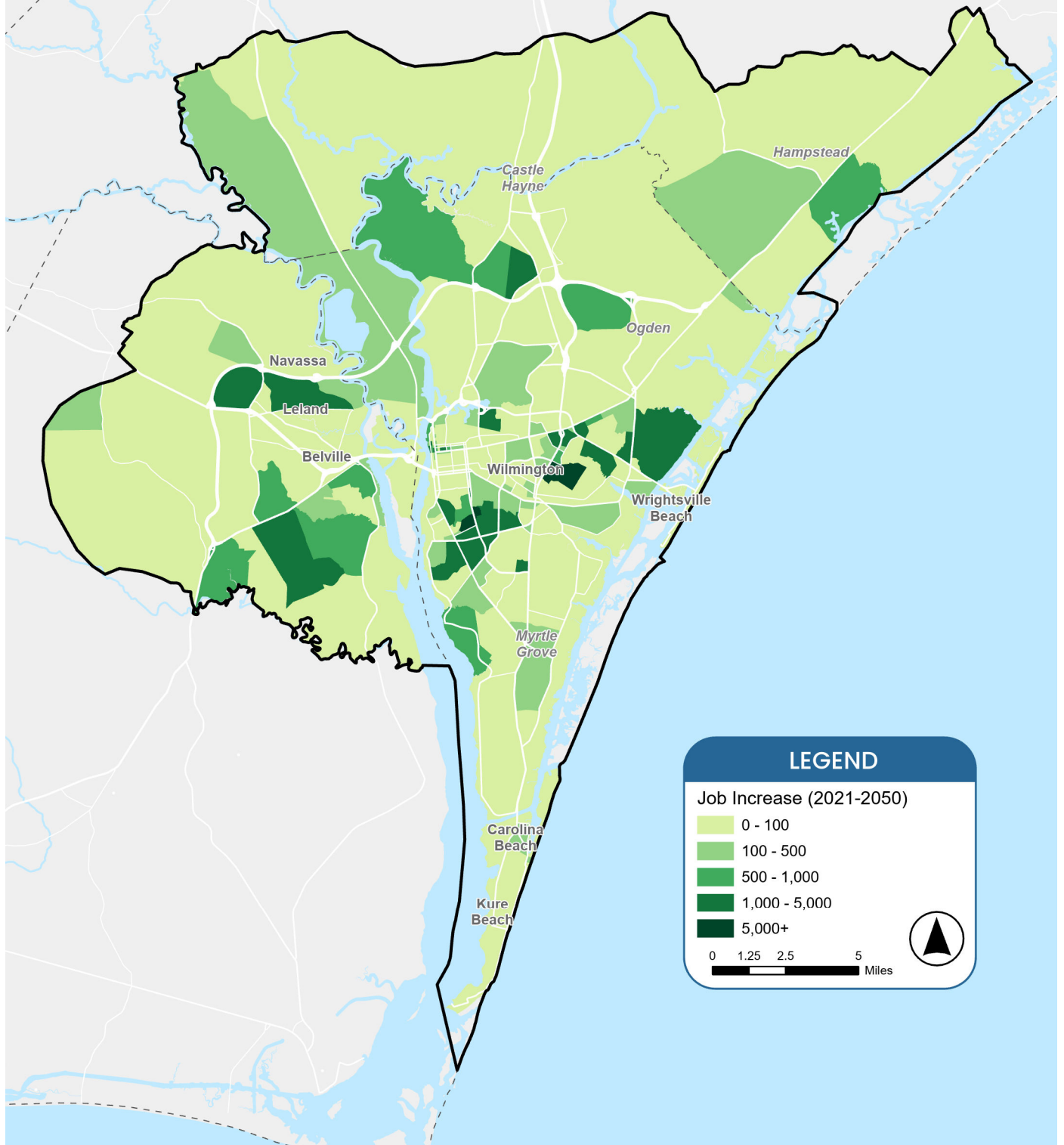
**Figure 3-3:**

Distribution of Projected Population Growth  
(2021-2050)



**Figure 3-4:**

Distribution of Projected Employment Growth  
(2021-2050)





## Freight Growth

Wilmington stands at the forefront of a dynamic freight growth opportunity driven by its strategic coastal location, robust multimodal infrastructure, and proactive investments in North Carolina's statewide logistics system. Per NCDOT's Statewide Multimodal Freight Plan, it is projected that total freight volumes in the state will grow by 40% in tonnage and 72% in value by 2045. These trends position Wilmington as a critical hub for the state's expanding freight movement. Enhancements such as the expansion of the Queen City Express rail service and the development of the Carolina Connector intermodal terminal in Rocky Mount are key catalysts that have enabled the Wilmington region to broaden its reach into inland markets. These developments help encourage a sustainable modal shift from road to rail which significantly boosts freight network efficiency, lowers transportation costs, and reduces congestion on regional highways.

Looking ahead, targeted infrastructure investments will unlock even greater potential for Wilmington's freight system. Although the short corridor between the Port of Wilmington and I-40 is less than nine miles, peak period truck congestion highlights the importance of strategic improvements to access routes and highway capacity to ensure reliable and timely freight movement. By 2045, freight-related industries across North Carolina are projected to support nearly 1.5 million jobs and contribute more than \$75 billion annually to the state's economy. Wilmington's expanding multimodal network is expected to play a key role in this growth, attracting new industries and creating thousands of local jobs, particularly in logistics, warehousing, and transportation. Through innovative freight solutions and strong collaboration between public and private partners, Wilmington is positioned to become a leading logistics hub. This growth will enhance supply chain resilience, stimulate investment, and generate significant economic benefits for the region. Additionally, the presence of at-grade rail crossings throughout the region presents operational challenges that once addressed will enhance freight fluidity, particularly around the port's southern entrance where rail switching activity is frequent. Proposed enhancements to the Wallace to Castle Hayne rail corridor promise to elevate freight rail capacity across southeastern North Carolina, supporting efficient transportation of bulk commodities including agricultural products, industrial materials, and manufactured goods, while also enabling the potential reestablishment of passenger rail service to Raleigh.

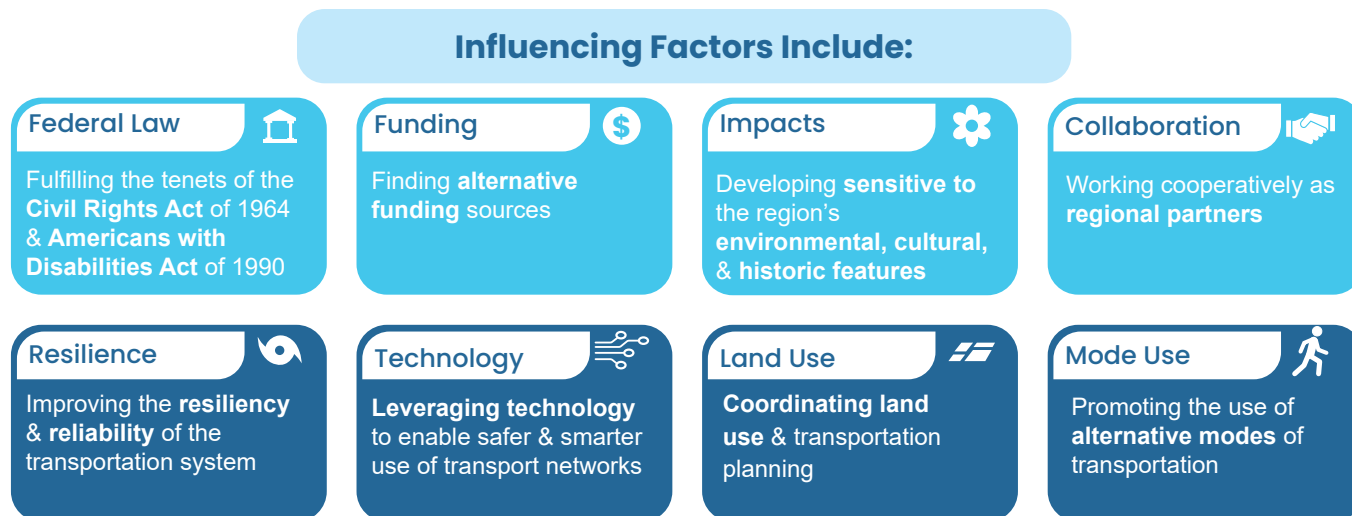


Clockwise from top left: Queen City Express; Freight trucks in Wilmington; The Yard industrial park on US 421; Rail crossing at Sutton Steam Plant Rd.



## Future Innovation

The *Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050* Metropolitan Transportation Plan recognizes the many factors that will influence transportation in the region.



The incorporation of innovative technologies when addressing transportation needs in the region will become increasingly popular and is already beginning to take place. From preemptive traffic signal timings to cameras on major corridors, the City of Wilmington has already begun to embrace the role of technology in creating a more efficient transportation system. The WMPO hopes to identify technologies that can be implemented in the region including Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), future public transportation technology, drones, and autonomous vehicles. The following are future technologies likely to become prevalent during the life of the plan:

### Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

- Modern data collection using GPS, Bluetooth, etc.
- Improved data analysis allowing for more efficient signal timing
- Signage communicating real time delays, weather, and event conditions to travelers
- Emergency vehicle preemptive signalization
- Connected Vehicle (CV) technology to identify potential hazards and prevent traffic accidents
- Improved enforcement

### Future Public Transportation Technology

- Smartphones will allow for greater access to public transportation information
- Modern fare collection will allow for multiple methods of collecting fares
- Microtransit, including on-demand microtransit, provides an efficient way to address coverage needs for a transit system
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) elements prioritize public transportation with their own travel lane, rapid boarding, and high frequency

- Micromobility options are increasing, and manufacturers are working with technology providers to make these vehicles safer to use
- Fixed Route CAD/AVL systems use computers and GPS to aid dispatchers in tracking transit vehicles to monitor driver performance, increase communication, and decrease operational problems

## Drones

- Drones are increasingly being used for data collection in dangerous or hard-to-reach locations
- Drones are beginning to be seen as a viable method of transportation and delivery for goods and services
- A Chinese autonomous passenger drone received safety and airworthiness approval in 2023, allowing the commercialization and operation of passenger drones to move forward

## Autonomous Vehicles

- Levels of automation are already being introduced as features in new cars such as lane detection and speed control, with tech continuing to advance and develop higher levels of automation
- Autonomous vehicles will increase the safety and efficiency of the transportation network
- Parking requirements and sprawl will have to be addressed
- Biggest challenges are currently technology limitations and legislation



Clockwise from top left: CASSI autonomous transit shuttle; WMPO drone; On-demand service, RideMICRO; Dynamic message sign (DMS) in use.

## RESILIENCE STRATEGIES:

### PLANNING STAGE

- Add a goal statement related to resiliency
- Identify resilient transportation project criteria to be used in prioritization process
- Continue to identify and assess extreme weather susceptibility

### PROJECT LEVEL

- Consider new design approaches and standards that minimize potential disruption due to extreme weather
- Apply design criteria or consider realignments or relocation away from high-risk areas
- Redesign drainage systems to handle larger flows
- Create programs and develop capital projects to address needed drainage improvements

### ONGOING

- Identify pre-planned detour routes
- Coordinate with NCDOT and emergency responders
- Enhance resiliency of sign structures and signal wires to prevent disruption
- Dredge the Intracoastal Waterway
- Alleviate potential flooding at Town Creek/US17
- Alleviate potential flooding on NC133 in Brunswick County



Photo of wetlands taken from MLK Jr Blvd in Wilmington.

## Resiliency

Resiliency is the ability to anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to changing conditions and withstand, respond to, and recover rapidly from disruptions. The FHWA has developed resources for state Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) on integrating resiliency into transportation planning. Utilizing these resources, the WMPO has derived the following steps the region should take, outlined to the left.

The Wilmington region has been significantly impacted by severe weather events in the past, such as Hurricane Debby and Potential Tropical Cyclone 8 (PTC8) in 2024 and Hurricane Florence in 2018. Because of the continued likelihood of being affected by severe weather in the future, the WMPO Board has voiced support for NCDOT's efforts to secure state and federal funding for improvements to roadway infrastructure to address flooding and accessibility issues experienced in such events.



NC 133 in Brunswick County after PTC8. Photo by Wilmington Star News

## Environmental Considerations

*Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050* seeks to guide transportation investments in a way that supports fair and balanced regional development. Through a Degree of Impact (DOI) analysis, a high-level planning stage environmental assessment, this plan aims to ensure access to safe, efficient, and reliable transportation options while reducing or mitigating any potential negative impacts on both people and places. Through proactive stakeholder engagement and thoughtful analysis of community needs, this plan strives to ensure that transportation investments support a high-functioning and efficient multimodal transportation network that is reflective of the priorities of the region.



See Chapter 5 for more information on the degree of impact analysis and results.



## Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO)

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) defined Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) as “an integrated set of strategies to optimize the performance of existing infrastructure through the implementation of multimodal and intermodal, cross-jurisdictional systems, services, and projects designed to preserve capacity and improve security, safety, and reliability of the transportation system.”

The goal of TSMO is to get the best performance out of our current transportation facilities. TSMO examines performance from a systems perspective, where the transportation network is viewed as a unified whole, composed of the different transportation modes and facilities, as well as jurisdictions and agencies that must work together for improved system performance. Enhancing the existing transportation infrastructure through TSMO strategies improves the overall security, safety, and reliability of the transportation system.

TSMO provides a set of strategies that can enhance overall system performance when combined. *Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050* recommends the implementation of the following strategies regionally:

- Access management
- Bus pullouts
- Emergency vehicle preemption
- Improved signage and lighting
- Pavement markings
- Social media and smart apps
- Traveler information systems and dynamic message signs
- Parking management
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM)
- Advanced communications
- Connected and automated vehicles
- Congestion pricing
- Multimodal services
- Transit signal prioritization

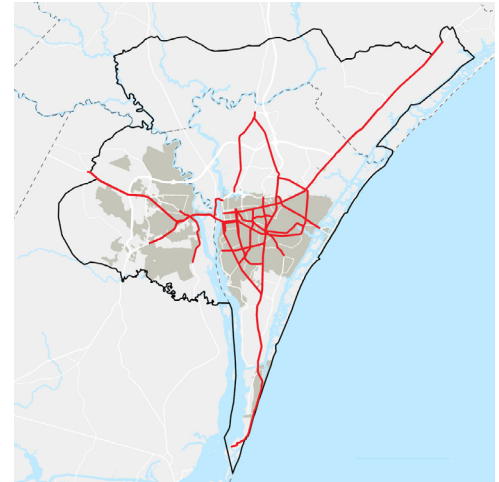


Clockwise from top left: Park & Ride Lot on College Rd. for UNCW campus; Parking meters in Wilmington; DMS on College Rd., Pavement markings and signage.

## Congestion Management Process (CMP)

Due to the region's population surpassing 200,000, the WMPO was designated as a Transportation Management Area (TMA) in 2012. Because of this designation, WMPO is required to develop and maintain a Congestion Management Process (CMP). Congestion management is the application of strategies to improve transportation system performance and reliability by reducing the adverse impacts of congestion on the movement of people and goods. Requirements of the CMP include:

- Development of congestion management objectives
- Establishment of measures of multimodal transportation system performance
- Collection of data and system performance monitoring to define the extent and duration of congestion and determine the causes of congestion
- Identification of congestion management strategies
- Implementation of strategies, including identification of an implementation schedule and possible funding sources for each strategy
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of implemented strategies



2022 WMPO CMP Network.

The WMPO developed its first CMP in 2014, identifying the region's critical roadway corridors and establishing multimodal performance measures to monitor congestion along each corridor.

Additionally, the process identifies mitigation strategies to reduce congestion along each identified corridor. Effectively managing congestion and advancing regional goals requires the strategic application of targeted approaches, as outlined in the WMPO's Congestion Management Process (CMP). During the initial development of the 2022 CMP, the Steering Committee identified four primary strategies to address congestion throughout the region, shown to the right.

Each strategy is supported by a set of techniques that were evaluated based on their implementation complexity and what corridor functional type(s) the strategies are applicable to. Together, these strategies form a practical toolkit for advancing congestion mitigation in a way that aligns with the WMPO's long-term transportation vision.

### CMP Performance Measures

#### 1. Travel Time Performance Measures

- Average travel time (AM/PM)
- Average delay (AM/PM)
- Hotspot identification



#### 2. Safety Performance Measures

- Rear end collisions
- Bicycle crashes
- Pedestrian crashes



#### 3. Volume Performance Measures

- Average vehicle count
- Truck percentage
- Bicycle counts (AM/PM)
- Pedestrian counts (AM/PM)



#### 4. Transit Performance Measures

- Transit boarding



Strategy implementation is integrated into the broader planning process, with the CMP informing projects and policies within the CTP, MTP, STIP, and local plans. CMP strategies support project development by identifying corridor needs and aligning appropriate solutions such as operational improvements, multimodal enhancements, or added capacity. These techniques inform corridor studies, are cited in local plans, and are evaluated for inclusion in the fiscally constrained MTP. As projects move from the CTP/MTP to funded projects in the STIP, CMP data and performance metrics help justify and prioritize investments. This ensures that congestion strategies remain responsive to current conditions and consistent with the region's long-term objectives.



See Appendix J for more information on the WMPO Congestion Management Process.

The WMPO monitored more than 30 critical roadway corridors and developed reports on a biennial basis until the 2022 CMP Report. Following the adoption of the 2022 CMP Report, the WMPO adjusted to developing the CMP on a 5-year basis to alternate with MTP development schedules. The strategies recommended in the CMP Report were considered throughout the development of this plan as potential projects and policies.

## WMPO Congestion Management Process – Strategies Toolbox to Address Congestion

### Reduce Demand

Reduce congestion by lessening the demand for motorized vehicular capacity on congested corridors

For example...



HOV Lanes



Carpooling



Telework Policies

### Improve Operations

Reduce congestion by improving operational aspects of congested corridors

For example...



Work Zone Management



Variable Speed Limits



Red Light Cameras

### Shift Mode

Reduce congestion by shifting mode use of congested corridors from single-occupancy vehicles to more efficient modes

For example...



Bike Share



Bus Rapid Transit



Park & Ride Lots

### Increase Capacity

Reduce congestion by increasing capacity to accommodate additional traffic along congested corridors

For example...



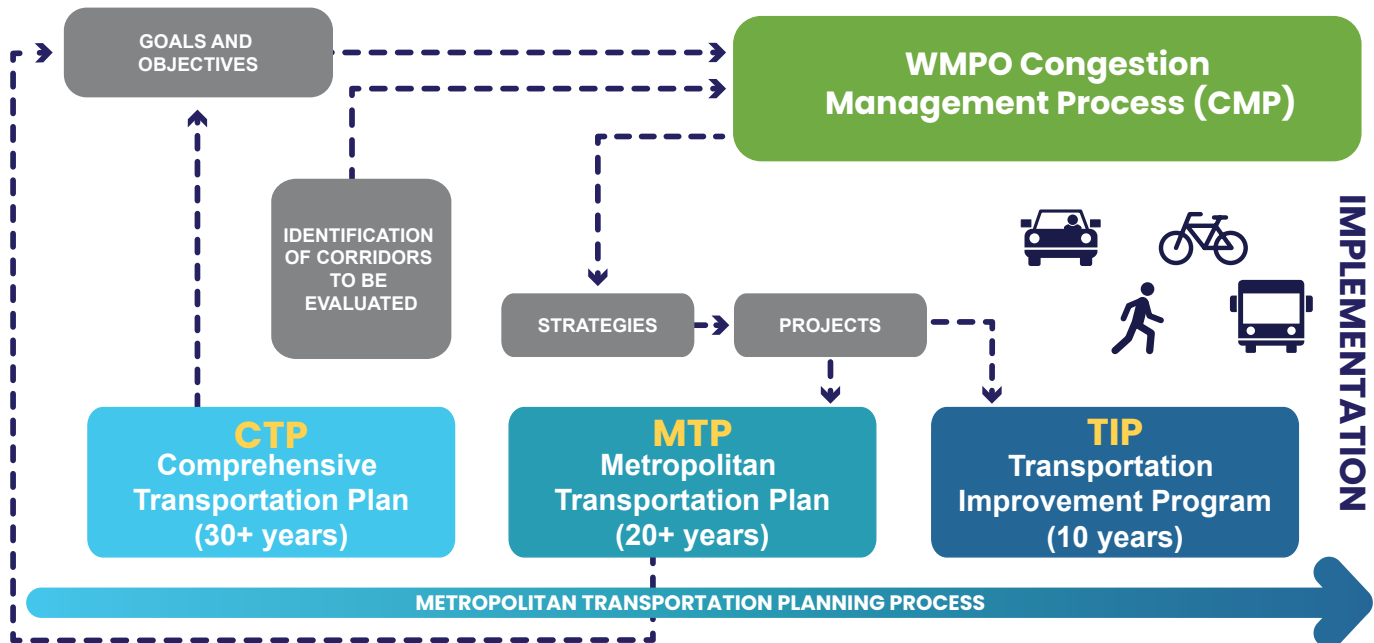
Turn Lanes



Interchanges



Bus Lanes



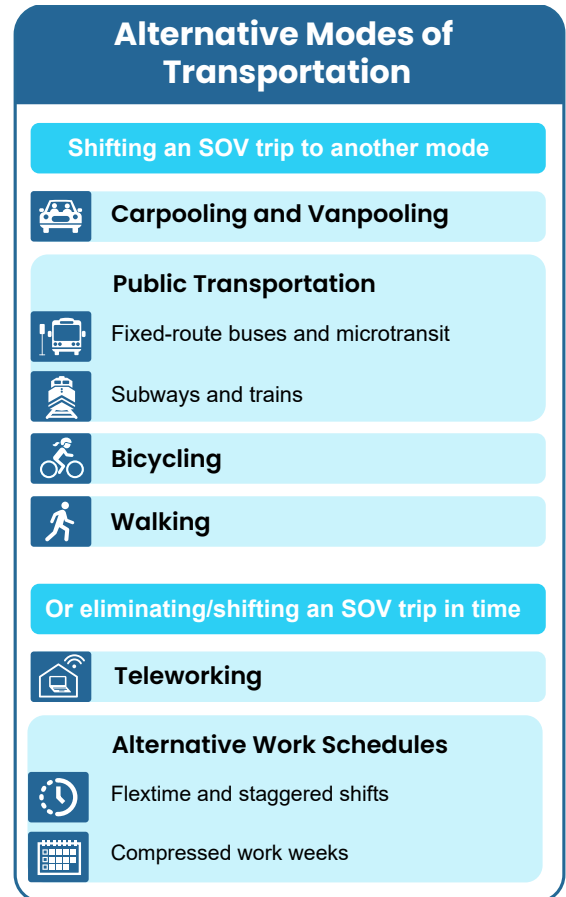


## Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) refers to strategies used to reduce traffic congestion and manage travel demand by redistributing this demand in space (to other modes of alternative transportation) or time (to off-peak commuting hours). It emphasizes the movement of people and goods over the movement of motor vehicles, since it's not always possible to build our way out of traffic congestion. TDM utilizes shorter term, relatively lower-cost strategies than building new roads, travel lanes, or parking for motor vehicles, many of which are single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs).

TDM strategies are focused on impacting commuters who already have access to a personal vehicle and are designed to facilitate transportation behavior change towards the usage of alternative modes, although TDM can be applied broadly to benefit a wide range of a transportation network's users. By utilizing TDM strategies to reduce the number of SOVs on the road, a community can maximize its transportation system's efficiency and improve everyone's commute time, as well as reduce wear-and-tear on existing roadway infrastructure. TDM aims to accomplish a variety of goals in addition to reducing traffic congestion, including improving environmental quality and supporting a range of safe, affordable, and reliable transportation options for all travelers.

The term "alternative transportation" refers to modes of transportation other than driving alone. Examples are shown in the graphic to the right.



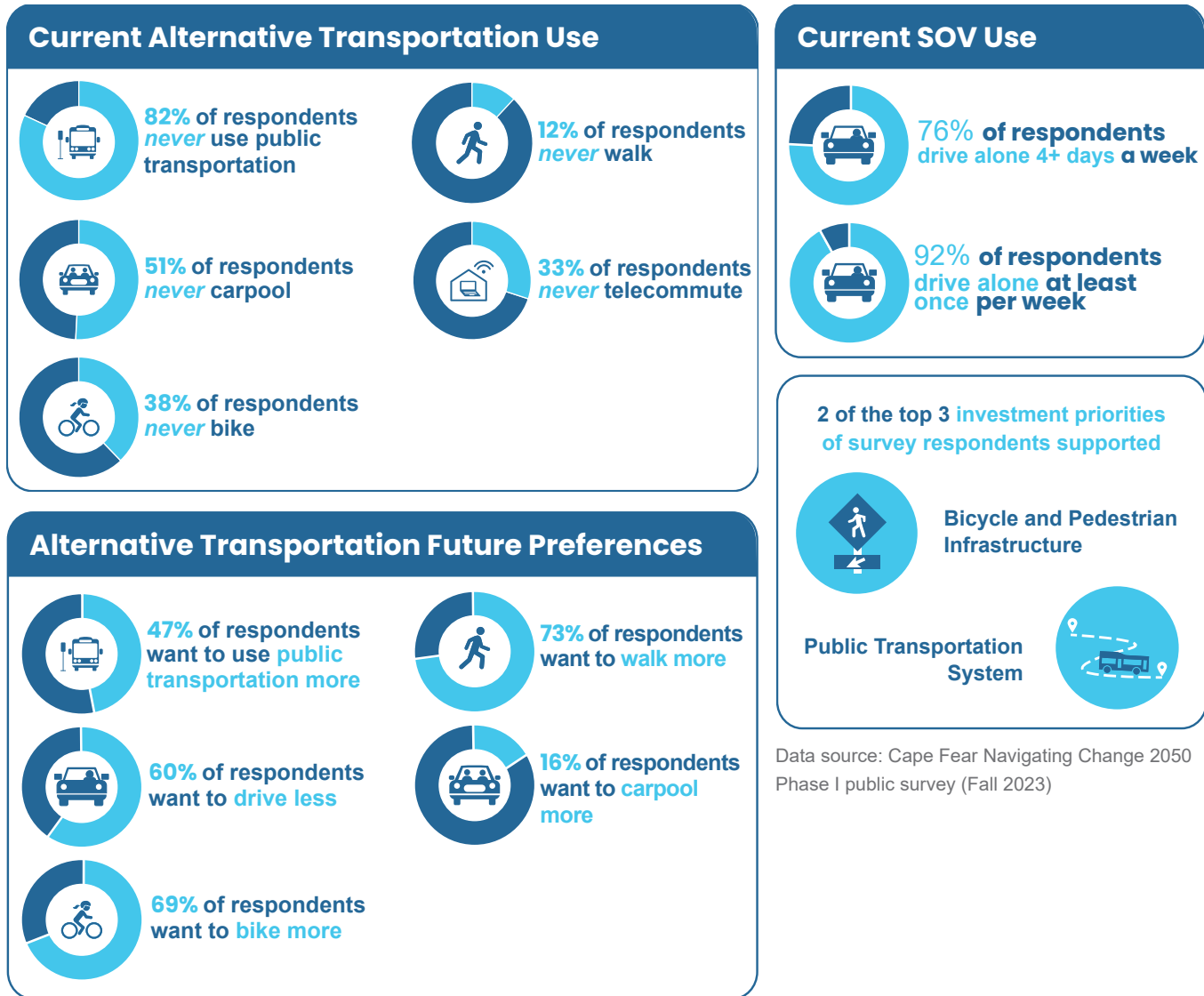
### TDM Strategies

A variety of TDM strategies can be applied to encourage and support the usage of alternative transportation at the employer, municipal, and state levels. TDM strategies applied across the world can range from:

- Subsidizing costs to commuters for transit, carpooling, or vanpooling, whether by an employer or through other means
- Financial incentives ranging from tax incentives with transportation fringe benefits (pretax purchasing of transit passes or subsidies) to cash/prizes from gamification
- Financial disincentives to driving alone including parking pricing or congestion pricing during peak hours
- Education and commuter support including instructions on how to use alternative transportation, wayfinding infrastructure, carpool ride-matching, and trip planning assistance
- Infrastructure to support alternative transportation usage, including high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, park and ride lots, or amenities for bicyclists like bike racks and commuter showers
- Policies promoting flex-time and alternative work locations to reduce congestion at peak hours
- Marketing and outreach to increase familiarity with alternative transportation options

## TDM in the Wilmington Region

Survey data collected during Phase I of public engagement for *Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050* provided insights into transportation preferences and choices in the Wilmington region.



The WMPO works to advance transportation demand management in the Wilmington region through its Go Coast TDM program. TDM has been applied in Wilmington since 2003 with the historic Cape Fear Breeze Program. A recommendation from *Cape Fear Commutes 2035*, the MTP adopted in 2010, was for a full-time TDM coordinator at the WMPO. The TDM program was rebranded to Go Coast in 2015 with the hire of a full-time TDM coordinator. Since then, the Go Coast program has worked with WMPO member jurisdictions, local employers, and other community partners to advance TDM in the Wilmington region.

Go Coast activities are guided by the Go Coast advisory committee as well as a short-range plan which is updated every five years. The most recent TDM short-range plan, *Cape Fear Change in Motion 2020*, has planned for TDM activities 2021-2025. For 2026-2030 activities, WMPO staff began the process for a short-range plan update in mid-2024 to coincide with the update process for *Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050*.

## Go Coast Activities in 2025



### Go Coast Committee

Assist in designing and implementing TDM programs



### Be A Looker

Campaign to increase safety for bicyclists and pedestrians sharing the road



### Commuter Friendly Employer

Recognizes employers supporting alternative transportation usage



### Personalized Commuter Plans

Directions on how to use alternative transportation



### Carpool Support

Through park-and-ride lots and ride-matching with Share the Ride NC



### Model Policies

To support teleworking or alternative work schedules



### Events & Campaigns

Including National Bike Month, annual bike rides, outreach events, Bike to Work Day, and more



Left: WMPO staff tabling with Go Coast info, swag, and helmets at an event. Right: Riders on Park Ave. during the 35th Annual River to Sea Bike Ride on Saturday, May 3, 2025.



## Vision, Goals, and Objectives

The MTPC developed the following vision statement and goals to guide the plan's development. These were based on consideration of the federal planning factors, MTPC input, information gathered from Phase I of public involvement, emerging technologies and innovation, and elements of TSMO and TDM. The *Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050* vision statement and goals can be found below.

### Vision

Our region will thrive and prosper through a fair and resilient transportation network that supports regional economic vitality while improving quality of life for residents and enhancing quality of place for neighborhoods.

### Goals

#### Safe



- Eliminate transportation-related injuries and fatalities through the implementation of injury prevention initiatives and strategies.
- Increase safety through context-sensitive design.
- Ensure the security of technology, infrastructure, and logistics.

#### Fair



- Prioritize fair and balanced investment in transportation projects that reflect local values and responsible planning.
- Increase quality of life and avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects for all populations.
- Increase accessible mobility options and reduce or remove barriers to mobility
- Ensure meaningful public involvement opportunities and the constructive incorporation of public feedback in the transportation planning and decision-making process.

#### Connected



- Expand efficiency and capacity of the transportation network through increased and connected multimodal transportation options.
- Support multimodal transportation facilities and policies that contribute to quality of place and are integrated with land use planning.
- Develop resources and technology that support intermodal travel

#### Resilient



- Support transportation infrastructure that withstands and recovers from natural or man-made hazards.
- Provide redundant transportation options that support the movement of people, goods, and emergency responders.
- Ensure long-term viability through a realistic, maintainable, and responsible approach to project development.
- Increase the reliability of transportation options and travel times.

#### Proactive



- Anticipate changing needs and technologies in project design and implementation.
- Integrate transportation and future land use planning.
- Provide timely communication and education around important transportation activities, initiatives, and campaigns.
- Explore new or innovative partnerships, funding, and technology.

## Federal Planning Factors

Chapter 1 introduced 10 planning factors outlined in federal transportation legislation. These planning factors, which have evolved over time, are a foundational part of the transportation planning process and were considered throughout the development of this plan's vision and goals.

|                                 |                                  | Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050 Goals                                            |                                                                                   |                                                                                   |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                 |                                  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Federal Planning Factors</b> | Support economic vitality        |                                                                                   | ○                                                                                 | ●                                                                                 | ●                                                                                   | ●                                                                                   |
|                                 | Increase safety                  | ●                                                                                 | ●                                                                                 |                                                                                   |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |
|                                 | Increase security                | ●                                                                                 |                                                                                   | ●                                                                                 | ○                                                                                   |                                                                                     |
|                                 | Increase accessibility           | ●                                                                                 | ●                                                                                 |                                                                                   |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |
|                                 | Protect & enhance environment    |                                                                                   | ●                                                                                 |                                                                                   | ●                                                                                   | ○                                                                                   |
|                                 | Enhance connectivity             |                                                                                   | ○                                                                                 | ●                                                                                 |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |
|                                 | Promote efficient management     |                                                                                   |                                                                                   | ●                                                                                 |                                                                                     | ●                                                                                   |
|                                 | Emphasize preservation           |                                                                                   |                                                                                   |                                                                                   | ●                                                                                   | ○                                                                                   |
|                                 | Improve resiliency & reliability | ○                                                                                 |                                                                                   |                                                                                   | ●                                                                                   | ●                                                                                   |
|                                 | Enhance travel & tourism         | ○                                                                                 |                                                                                   | ●                                                                                 |                                                                                     | ●                                                                                   |

## Modal Objectives

The objectives were developed with the help of the MTPC and rooted in the adopted goals. The objectives are intended to illustrate how success is defined for each goal under the six transportation modes considered in this plan, as well as for TDM. Project scoring was designed around the goals and objectives and will be described in the following chapter. Modal policies were also developed as part of this plan, which the objectives provided a basis for. These policies are outlined in Chapter 6.



- Ensure the safe and secure arrival and departure of passenger and freight aircraft.
- Provide a safe and secure environment along the full passenger journey.



- Ensure aviation growth is grounded in fair consideration of surrounding communities and the environment.



- Coordinate with roadway and rail network projects that support the development of ILM to include accommodations for truck/rail freight transportation to/from site.
- Provide efficient intermodal connections to/from airport for passengers and freight.



- Increase resiliency of airport facilities from disasters or other disruptions, man-made or natural.



- Support opportunities for rail service to ILM.
- Identify opportunities for new and innovative transportation connections for passengers and freight.



## AVIATION OBJECTIVES

- Build facilities and traffic engineering solutions that prioritize vulnerable road users.
- Increase visual cues and traffic calming strategies that prioritize vulnerable road user safety.
- Maintain, enhance, and increase infrastructure to improve safety between non-motorists, cyclists, and/or motorized vehicles



- Prioritize new bicycle and pedestrian facilities that connect to employment centers, community resources, and/or services.
  - Improve ADA accessibility.
  - Ensure meaningful participation from a broad range of community members in the planning process.



- Increase multimodal density to facilitate intermodal connection opportunities.
- Create first- and last-mile connections.
- Build connections that fill gaps in the existing network that will allow for an uninterrupted bicycle and/or pedestrian path of travel.
- Collaborate with jurisdictions on comprehensive plans, other plans, or ordinances to include bicycle and pedestrian elements.



- Increase bicycle and pedestrian facilities that provide alternatives to auto transport.
- Consider the long-term costs of constructing bicycle and pedestrian facilities and future funding for anticipated maintenance.
- Encourage facilities with low environmental impact.



- Identify and reserve right-of-way and/or easements for future bicycle and pedestrian projects.
- Promote and support educational programs that teach bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- Utilize and develop partnerships to support bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and initiatives.
- Increase promotion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, amenities, and resources.



## BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN OBJECTIVES





- Reduce conflicts with non-ferry automobile traffic at ferry terminals.
- Provide a safe and secure ferry system.



- Improve ADA accessibility on ferry vessels and from ferry terminal to adjacent destinations.



- Prioritize projects that allow for bike share and public transportation at ferry/water transportation terminals.
- Increase infrastructure to promote biking and walking to and from the ferry/water transportation terminal.



- Prioritize projects and routes that are resilient against natural hazards or reduce overall maintenance costs.
- Improve and maintain the efficiency of evacuation operations.



- Prioritize projects that develop new ferry routes to serve both commuter and tourism markets.
- Increase the use of new and innovative technologies that support community well-being.



## FERRY & WATER TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES



## RAIL OBJECTIVES

- Eliminate and/or mitigate rail conflicts with other modes.
- Enhance infrastructure to improve safety for all modes (cyclists, pedestrians, etc).
- Provide a safe and secure rail system and operations.

- Encourage job creation by providing sufficient transportation capacity for all rail users.
- Ensure meaningful public participation from a broad range of community members during the design of facilities/routes.
- Increase accommodations for passengers to include other non-motorized modes of transportation.

- Improve or maintain safe and reliable connections to ports, rail terminals, military bases, and major logistics and manufacturing sites.

- Build and sustain resiliency to extreme events and hazards by designing and constructing less vulnerable infrastructure to minimize loss and by employing rapid restoration techniques.

- Identify rail-served sites for future rail-served industrial development.
- Promote future opportunities for passenger facilities.





- Prioritize the installation of crosswalks at or near bus stop locations.
- Prioritize safe design and aesthetics of new and existing transit facilities.



- Identify and pursue opportunities to provide public transportation options that benefit transit-dependent populations.
- Improve ADA accessibility.
- Ensure meaningful participation from a broad range of community members in the planning process.



- Increase network of bus shelters, benches, and other amenities at bus stop locations.
- Prioritize new public transportation facilities that connect to employment centers, community resources, and/or services.



- Identify strategies to broaden the ridership base and encourage transit usage.



- Support community development and placemaking efforts along public transportation routes and near public transportation facilities.
- Provide direct, time competitive transit services that complement other transportation modes.



## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES



## ROADWAY OBJECTIVES

- Reduce the rate and severity of crashes.
- Increase visual cues and traffic calming strategies that prioritize vulnerable road user safety.
- Maintain, enhance, and increase infrastructure to improve safety between non-motorists, cyclists, and/or motorized vehicles.



- Protect and strengthen the region's unique identity, natural surroundings, and overall quality of life while promoting fairness in how benefits and impacts are shared.
  - Ensure meaningful participation from a broad range of community members in the planning process.



- Support existing and new multimodal facilities and connections along corridors for the movement of goods and people.
- Increase interconnectivity of roadway facilities and the redundancy of routes.



- Build resiliency to extreme events and hazards by designing and constructing less vulnerable infrastructure to minimize loss and employing rapid restoration techniques.



- Ensure facility design supports efficient emergency response.
- Develop efficient and redundant routes to support the movement of goods.

- Consider and support projects that facilitate future adaptations and new technology to accommodate changing demands.

- Support community development and place making efforts when designing roadway facilities.
- Consider and support projects that align with anticipated land use patterns and adopted plans.
- Provide timely notification and education around current and future roadway projects.



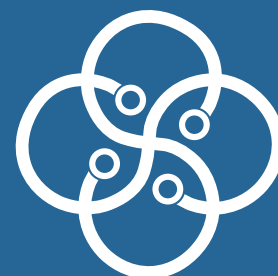
## TDM Objectives

TDM objectives were developed through review by the Go Coast committee and WMPO staff of public input data received from multiple channels. Staff analyzed comments and responses from the survey from Phase I of public input for *Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050*. Survey data from two WMPO-organized bike rides (the 34th Annual River to Sea Bike Ride scheduled for September 7, 2024, and the 4th Annual Brunswick Heritage Riverside Ride held September 28, 2024) and a survey following the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge preservation project in May 2024 were also analyzed.

In October and November 2024, WMPO staff conducted a set of employer commuting workshops to better understand the commuting needs and challenges of Cape Fear-area employers. Participants included representatives from the City of Wilmington, the Town of Carolina Beach, the Town of Leland, Wilmington Downtown Incorporated, the NC Works Career Center, Flaming Amy's, the Cape Fear Workforce Development Board, Community Care of the Lower Cape Fear, and Approve Payments. The first workshop, held in-person on October 18, 2024, explained TDM and Go Coast and requested participant feedback in facilitated discussions, as well as an impact and feasibility activity assessing various TDM strategies. The second workshop, held virtually on November 14, 2024, brought back for discussion the key messages heard from the previous workshop which would be used to draft TDM objectives and potential implementation plan items.

After reviewing data and comments from the channels detailed above, TDM objectives pertaining to the five *Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050* goals were developed by the Go Coast Committee.

-  • Bolster education and outreach for safe bicycling and walking for all road users.
-  • Develop tools for education and awareness surrounding safety for motorized forms of alternative transportation, i.e. carpooling, vanpooling, and public transportation.
-  • Conduct employer outreach in all areas to a broad range of employer sizes and industries.
-  • Pursue opportunities to increase carpooling and facilitate carpool matching.
-  • Coordinate with Wave Transit on outreach to increase familiarity with public transportation.
-  • Investigate opportunities for park-and-ride lots within the WMPO boundary.
-  • Foster a regional culture where alternative transportation usage is legitimized and embraced.
-  • Increase marketing and outreach to improve awareness and understanding of alternative transportation options to audiences including area employers, neighborhoods, schools, and others.
-  • Identify opportunities to facilitate commuter incentives at the employer level.



TDM  
OBJECTIVES

 See Appendix L for the final FY 2026 - FY 2030 Transportation Demand Management Implementation Plan.

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<https://www.govtech.com/fs/Infrastructure-Must-be-Ready-to-Accommodate-Modern-Vehicles.html>
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