



525 N. 4th Street, Wilmington, NC 28401
P.O. Box 1810, Wilmington, NC 28402
O: (910) 341-3258 | F: (910) 341-7870
www.wmpo.org

WMPO Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

525 N 4th Street

Wilmington, NC 28401

Members Present, In person

Chuck Bost, Town of Belville
Lynn Barbee, Town of Carolina Beach
Brenda Bozeman, Town of Leland
Allen Oliver, Town of Kure Beach
Brad George, Pender County
Ken Dull, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Bill Rivenbark, New Hanover County
Stephanie Walker, Cape Fear Transportation Authority
Cassidy Santaguida, City of Wilmington
Frank Williams, Brunswick County
Rose Terry, Town of Navassa
Landon Zimmer, NC Board of Transportation

Members Present, Remote

Kevin Spears, City of Wilmington

Others Present, In Person

Mike Kozlosky, WMPO
Abby Lorenzo, WMPO
Greer Templer, WMPO
Krysdan Burden, WMPO
Beth King, WMPO
Ronda Hogan, WMPO
Caitlin Cerza, WMPO
Amanda Halbert, WMPO
Tessa Jones, WMPO
Luke Hutson, WMPO
Carolyn Caggia, WMPO

John Rouse, HDR
James Dehaven, Wilmington Resident
Lecia Dehaven, Wilmington Resident
Richard J. Nasca, Wilmington Resident
Veronica Newsome, NCDOT
Bill Kincannon, HDR
David Roy, NCDOT
Natalie English, Greater Wilmington Chamber
Michelle Howes, NCDOT
Megan Mullins, Greater Wilmington Chamber
Tony Elkins, Wilmington Resident
Gary Gischel, Wilmington Resident
Betty Gischel, Wilmington Resident
Mackenzie Bruns, WECT
Doug Pruden, Wilmington Resident
Kelly Kenoyer, WHQR
Mark Hairr, WAVE
Chris Cottle, New Hanover County Sherriff's Office
Janet Pruden, Wilmington Resident
Chris Coudriet, NHC
Seth Davil, CFRA
Forrest Powell, Prestige Safety Group
Will Peterson, WECT

Others Present, Remote

Adam Freeman,
Adrienne Cox, NCDOT
AMPO Staff

Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Brayton Willis
Brenna Flanagan, Port City Daily
Brian Chaya, Balfour Beauty
Celia Miars
Chad Kimes, GFT
David Wasserman
Eric Seidel, CFPUA
George Willoughby
Jeff Dayton, HDR
Katie Economou, AMPO
Katie Hite, NCDOT
Keith Nixon
Kelly Godbey
Kyle Burden, City of Wilmington

Michael Turner
Mike Forte, Brunswick County
Nikolai Mather
Ryan Coady, AMPO
Tyler McQueen
Varoon Desai, Balfour Beatty Investments
WECT News
Sharon Mahoney, NCDOT

1. Call to Order

Chairman Barbee called the meeting to order at 3:04pm.

2. Roll Call

Mike Kozlosky, WMPO Director, called the roll.

Present: Chuck Bost, Lynn Barbee, Brenda Bozeman, Allen Oliver, Brad George, Ken Dull, Bill Rivenbark, Stephanie Walker, Kevin Spears, Cassidy Santaguida, Rose Terry, Frank Williams, and Landon Zimmer

3. Conflict of Interest Statement

Chairman Barbee read the conflict-of-interest statement as required by North Carolina General Statute and requested any conflicts of interest be disclosed by the Board. There were no conflicts of interest.

4. Approval of Board Member Excused Absences

There were no excused absences.

5. Approval of the Agenda

Brenda Bozman made a motion to approve the agenda; Frank Williams seconded the motion. The agenda passed unanimously.

6. Public Comment Period

James Dehaven, Wilmington resident. Mr. Dehaven spoke in opposition to the NCDOT project number U-5710. He believes at the end of the project all they will have

accomplished is moving the traffic congestion from one traffic light to another and damaging the aesthetics of the residential neighborhoods and surrounding area. Mr. Dehaven would like everyone to consider the damage of a four-year construction period to the area shops, restaurants, and rental properties. He believes it will be a slow and painful experience for drivers and will likely cause irreparable economic damage. Mr. Dehaven also pointed out that NCDOT will be compounding the situation because they are also scheduled to upgrade three bridges at the same time. In conclusion, Mr. Dehaven asked if no one is concerned about the business failures due to the construction, he asks to consider the impact of the loss of sales tax and occupancy tax revenue.

Jerod Patterson, CEO of Business Alliance for Sound Economy. Mr. Patterson spoke about the unsolicited bridge proposal that is before the Board, stating that he is not advocating for or against the proposal but simply asking the Board to advance a serious and ongoing examination of options to make the bridge replacement a reality. Mr. Patterson would like to see the Board keep all options open and on the table.

Richard J Nasca, Wilmington resident of 26 years, addressed the Board regarding the NCDOT U-5710 project. He requested the Board to have a public hearing to reconsider the U-5710 project. Mr. Nasca stated that more than 1,100 people have signed a petition opposing the project, believing that that solution is worse than the original problem. Mr. Nasca also conveyed a list of questions he would like to have discussed at a public hearing.

Natalie English, President and CEO of the Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, thanked the Board for all they do with this Board and with their respective community positions. Ms. English addressed the Board today with concerns about the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, highlighting its history and the collaboration that was needed when the bridge was built. Ms. English stated that the same collaboration is needed now, she relayed that the Chamber of Commerce has identified the replacement of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge as the top transportation priority. Ms. English stated that the southeastern region of NC is one of the fastest growing regions in the United States and the bridge is a critical connector for employment, shopping, healthcare, and recreation in the region. Ms. English concluded by stating that everyone must remain vigilant and work together in identifying ways to fund the replacement of the bridge as well as all the transportation infrastructure needs in the region.

Gary Gischel, Wilmington resident, spoke to the Board in regard to the NCDOT project U-5710. Mr. Gischel is requesting a public hearing to review DOT changes and revise and or delay the U-5710 project. Mr. Gischel relayed that, in his opinion, three minutes of public comment before a Board meeting does not adequately allow for the

communication of facts. Mr. Gischel referenced the WMPO website and gave his opinion of how the U-5710 project directly contradicts the Federal Plan Requirement standards the WMPO follows.

7. Presentations

- a. Town of Leland Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) - Ben Andrea, Town of Leland
Mike Kozlosky introduced Ben Andrea, Planning and Inspections Director for the Town of Leland who gave a presentation on the Town of Leland's Integrated Mobility Plan. Mr. Kozlosky also reminded the Board that this is an item that is on their Consent Agenda for consideration. Mr. Andrea began his presentation with an overview of the project and their scheduled timeframe, from the kickoff in June of 2024 to the completion in July of 2025. Mr. Andrea reviewed the goals and objectives of the plan, as well as the project identification and prioritization process they used. Mr. Andrea explained the public engagement piece to the project, stating that they held open houses as well as having online engagement with the public. He went over the summary of the responses they received for both phases of the public outreach. Mr. Andrea highlighted the IMP deliverables, explaining that the bulk of the technical and results of the public engagement are in the appendices. He presented the analysis project maps from the IMP showing the proposed projects by priority. Mr. Andrea concluded his presentation by speaking about project funding and implementation and thanking the sponsors of the project.

There were no questions, Brenda Bozman stated how proud she is of the Town of Leland staff and the work they put into this plan.

- b. Bridge And Safety Infrastructure for Community Success (BASICS) Act - Katie Economou, Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO)
Mike Kozlosky introduced Katie Economou from AMPO who gave a presentation on Bridge And Safety Infrastructure for Community Success Act. Ms. Economou began her presentation explaining what the BASICS Act is, what it does, and why it matters concerning transportation reauthorization. Ms. Economou explained that Congress is currently working on the next surface transportation reauthorization, the current one will expire September 30, 2026, and Congress is expected to release new legislative text this spring. Ms. Economou stated that the BASICS Act is AMPO's and the LOT Coalition's marker bill for the next surface transportation reauthorization. She highlighted Chairman Graves thoughts on reauthorization, his idea of going back to basics, and focusing on the most fundamental infrastructure needs. Ms. Economou reviewed why the BASICS Act is necessary, highlighting the fact that distribution of funds, compared to the responsibilities of local communities, is out of balance. Ms. Economou reviewed what the BASICS Act is meant to accomplish, stating that the

BASICS Act is not about creating a whole new system, but rather strengthening the current framework. She stated that the BASICS Act works to modernize planning funds, increase surface transportation block grant overall funds, increase highway safety improvement programs overall funds, continue the bridge formula program, reaffirms MPO project selection, strengthens consultation with areas below 50,000 in population, federal financial management system access, ensure suballocated funds are protected from transfer, and providing funds for regional transportation planning organizations. Ms. Economou explained that the BASICS Act increases guaranteed funding for local governments and states but does not decrease overall state funding. She explained that the BASICS Act is a forward-thinking bill and is based on some funding assumptions for FY27, such as, a baseline highway transportation fund of \$80 billion, inflation adjustments of \$2 billion, a consolidation of competitive programs of \$2.5 billion, and the Safe Streets for All and Bridge Program into core formula programs of \$6.5 billion. Ms. Economou reviewed the policy changes to the STBG, the Bridge Formula Program, and HSIP. She explained the changes in transferability and project selection, as well as metropolitan planning and the creation of Rural Transportation Planning Organizations provisions. Ms. Economou concluded her presentation by highlighting what regions can do to support the BASICS Act.

Frank Williams voiced his support for the bill and for the Board to support it on the consent agenda.

8. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Board Regular Meeting Minutes- February 25, 2026
- b. Resolution approving 2026-2035 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Programs Amendment #26-1
- c. Resolution approving 2026-2035 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Programs Administrative Modification #26-3
- d. Resolution adopting the Town of Leland's Integrated Mobility Plan
- e. Resolution supporting the Bridge And Safety Infrastructure for Community Success (BASICS) Act (HR 7437)

Frank Williams made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Allen Oliver seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

9. Regular Agenda

- a. Opening of the 45 Day Public Comment Period for the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Public Participation Plan
Tessa Jones, WMPO Public Information Officer, reviewed with the Board what the Public Participation Plan (PPP) is and what the purpose of the plan is. Ms. Jones explained the federal requirements that regulate the PPP and what the document

requires the WMPO to do. She explained how WMPO puts the PPP into action and gave an overview of the 2026 Public Participation Plan, presenting the updated format and user-friendly graphics.

Chuck Bost made a motion to open the 45-Day Public Comment Period for the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Public Participation Plan. Stephanie Walker seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

- b. Resolution approving Amendment #3 to the FY 26 Unified Planning Work Program
Mike Kozlosky explained that the amendment in the Board packet is a housekeeping amendment, used to move funds within the UPWP. Mr. Kozlosky explained that the Board has until the end of March to move those funds. This resolution moves \$18,900 from nine task codes to the management fund, there is no increase in budget.

Allen Oliver made a motion to approve amendment #3 to the FY26 UPWP. Chuck Bost seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

- c. Resolution adopting the FY 27 Unified Planning Work Program
Mike Kozlosky explained that in January the WMPO brought the FY27 UPWP before the TCC and WMPO Board to open the 30-day public comment period, the only comment received was from the NCDOT requesting more definition in the traffic counter, GIS, and management and operations. The WMPO updated the FY27 UPWP. The final FY27 UPWP is before the Board for adoption.

Brenda Bozman made a motion to adopt the FY27 Unified Planning Work Program. Chuck Bost seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

- d. Resolution certifying the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Planning Process for FY 2026-2027
Mike Kozlosky explained that the self-certification process certifies that the WMPO is compliant with 23 CFR 450.336 in the Code of Federal Regulations. He stated that like the other two documents on the agenda, this certification is required to be approved by March 31st

Brad George made a motion to certify the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Planning Process for FY2026-2027. Chuck Bost seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

- e. Resolution requesting Administrative Modifications to the adopted 2026-2035 State/MPO Transportation Improvement Programs to modify U-5525 Surface Transportation Block Grant- Direct Attributable (STBG-DA) Planning Allocations for the amended FY 26 and adopted FY 27 Unified Planning Work Programs

Mike Kozlosky explained that this resolution allows the WMPO to update the 2026-2035 STIP to reflect the FY26 and FY27 Surface Transportation Block Grant – Direct

Attributable (STBG-DA) planning allocations adopted in the FY26 and FY27 UPWP's.

Frank Williams made a motion to approve the request for Administrative Modifications to the adopted 2026-2035 STIP. Allen Oliver seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

10. Discussion

a. 2026-2035 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #26-4

Mike Kozlosky explained that this administrative modification is for informational purposes only and will be brought back for action at another meeting.

b. Cape Fear Memorial Bridge- Conceptual Unsolicited Proposal

Mike Kozlosky gave the history of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, stating that in May of 2025 the WMPO Board supported the consideration and pursuit of all possible funding options for the replacement of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. He stated the Board supported inclusion of the replacement of the bridge as a toll facility in the 2026-2035 STIP and the Board supported amending our Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 plan to include the bridge replacement as a toll facility. The Board also reserved the right to withdraw any approval as a toll facility at any time until NCDOT advertised a contract to construct a replacement bridge. The Board also approved the STIP in July, including the project as a toll facility and in October 2025 the Board adopted Cape Fear Navigating Change in 2050, where the bridge is identified as a toll facility. In November 2025, the Board received a presentation from the Turnpike Authority on a comparative analysis that evaluated the traditional toll delivery and the Public Private Partnership (P3) toll delivery. The report was finalized in February and delivered to the Board. In February 2026, NCDOT received a conceptual unsolicited proposal from a private entity to replace the bridge. Based on NCDOT's P3 guidelines, it requires written consent from the MPO for the DOT to complete an assessment of the unsolicited proposal. Mr. Kozlosky pointed out that this is not a formal bid, after review of the unsolicited proposal, if the Board desires to deliver the replacement of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge as a public private partnership, a competitive process would need to be followed in accordance with North Carolina General Statutes as well as the NCDOT's P3 guidelines.

Mike Kozlosky introduced Michelle Howes from NCDOT and David Roy from the NC Turnpike Authority to give a presentation on the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. Michelle Howes, PE, NCDOT Division 3, began the presentation by reviewing the project background. She stated that the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge was opened to traffic in 1969 and by 2020 a feasibility study was completed that identified four

bridge replacement options. Ms. Howes highlighted the bridge replacement activity that has occurred from 2020 to present day. She explained that due to the cost of the project, a Value for Money analysis is required under federal law and at the request of the WMPO, an analysis was prepared in 2023 to evaluate delivery options. Ms. Howes explained that since that initial analysis, NCDOT received a federal grant and the cost estimate for the project has increased significantly, so the NCDOT has prepared an updated comparative analysis to incorporate the project updates. The updated analysis was presented to the Board in November of 2025. At this point, Ms. Howes introduced David Roy to present the unsolicited proposal review.

David Roy Director of Innovative Finance, from the North Carolina Turnpike Authority, presented the unsolicited proposal review, stating again, that if the procurement of a P3 results from an unsolicited proposal it will be publicly and competitively procured in accordance with North Carolina General Statutes. Mr. Roy reviewed NCDOT's Public-Private Partnership Policies and Guidelines and specifics for this project. He noted that February 24, 2026, Delivering Bridges, LLC. submitted a conceptual unsolicited proposal for a P3 delivery of the replacement of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. On March 11, 2026, NCDOT notified the WMPO of the receipt of the conceptual unsolicited proposal. Mr. Roy stated that if the WMPO consents to performing an initial screening of the proposal, a working group and oversight committee would be formed to review and provide a recommendation on the proposal and determine whether to accept the proposal. Mr. Roy presented the process and potential next steps if the WMPO decides to move forward with a review of the conceptual unsolicited proposal. Mr. Roy also did a quick recap of the comparative analysis that was presented to the Board last November. He gave an overview of the two delivery approaches, Traditional Toll delivery and Private Public Partnership (P3) Toll delivery, highlighting the similarities and differences between the two. Mr. Roy reviewed the Bonus Allocation funding that is available if implementing a toll project, he highlighted the amount of funding possible as well as how that funding can be used. Mr. Roy reviewed the project using Qualitative Analysis and the NDDOT's Quantitative Analysis, overviewing the project cost for both the Traditional Toll and P3 Toll. Mr. Roy summarized the findings of the Quantitative Analysis for both the Traditional Toll and P3 Toll and reviewed key considerations that the WMPO should be aware of. Mr. Roy opened the floor for questions.

Bill Rivenbark stated that he believes the bridge was obsolete when it was built and he asked for some clarification about how the NCDOT has built three other bridges up and down the coast but now wants to charge one billion dollars for the replacement of this bridge.

Brenda Bozman stated that she believes it is the wrong thing to do, tolling the bridge.

Frank Williams asked Mike Kozlosky if he felt authorized with the resolution that is in place to investigate this conceptual unsolicited proposal. Mr. Kozlosky stated that based on the current resolution the Board adopted in May of 2025, he believes that an assessment of the public private partnership would be consistent with that direction. He also noted that the Board adopted the 2026-2035 STIP/MPO TIP and Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050 plan which also includes the bridge as a toll facility. Mr. Kozlosky believes that what is being asked of the Board is an assessment of the unsolicited proposal and the MPO could glean some information from the proposal that could be beneficial.

Rose Terry asked how long is it normal for the Board to explore options, is there a timeframe where the process is drawn to a close and the Board decides. Mike Kozlosky answered that it is his understanding that if no other action is taken, that is deliver the bridge as a P3 or to reject the toll option, NCDOT and Turnpike Authority would deliver this project through as traditional toll. David Roy agreed and stated that the bridge project is currently funded and committed in the STIP as a toll facility. Stephanie Walker asked for more clarification on the timeline, Mr. Roy explained that in order to maintain access to the grant funds there needs to be clarification on the legislative language by the end of this calendar year.

Cassidy Santaguida wanted to clarify that considering this unsolicited proposal is not saying that we would want to move forward with a toll or P3, it is allowing us to access and learn more. Ms. Santaguida also questioned the bonus allocation that was mentioned, asking if the one-hundred-million-dollar bonus allocation was for all alternative funding or just tolls. Mr. Roy clarified that the bonus allocation is for all alternative funding.

Landon Zimmer reminded everyone that projects are getting more expensive every year but the revenue from the gas tax is not, so the Board needs to continue to keep all their options open. He recommends the Board continue to keep their options open and access this proposal.

Brenda Bozman questioned whether the Board could solicit the State to receive contributions from the ports. Ms. Bozman would like an explanation why the ports cannot help fund the project, since the bridge will benefit them as well. Mr. Roy stated that he thinks that would be a question for the ports.

Stephanie Walker noted that the timeline is tight and if we are looking for alternative funding options, what are other options that work within the timeline so the funds available now are not lost.

Frank Williams stated he believes the options need to stay open and get the assessment.

Kevin Spears stated that he thinks the cost of the bridge is important because it will matter to the constituents who need to use the bridge on a regular basis. Mr. Spears does not want to make a hasty decision, he acknowledges the current bridge is obsolete, but safe, it will not fall, he is aware that the cost to maintain the bridge is expensive, but he does not want to be forced into a hasty decision that could be expensive.

Chairman Barbee stated that he believes all of these proposals need to be explored and all options open.

11. Updates

a. Wilmington Urban Area MPO

Mike Kozlosky gave an update that the WMPO will be sending out an annual member survey, it will open on April 1st and close on April 30th, he requests that the Board complete the five-to-ten-minute survey. Mr. Kozlosky also updated the Board that the City of Wilmington is having a public meeting tonight for an EDA Grant for the bulkhead replacement on the river front. The City is also requesting letters of support for the grant application, and Mr. Kozlosky would like the Board's approval to draft a letter. The Board had no concerns about the WMPO drafting a letter and agreed to send one.

b. Cape Fear Public Transit Authority

Updates are in the packet.

c. NCDOT Division 3

Updates are in the packet.

d. NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division

Updates are in the packet.

e. NCDOT Transportation Planning Division

Updates are in the packet.

12. Announcements

- a. NC State Ethics Information Due- April 15, 2026
- b. Active Transportation Advisory Committee- April 21, 2026

13. Next Meeting – April 29, 2026

14. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Kozlosky

Director

Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

THE ABOVE MINUTES ARE NOT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS.
THE ENTIRE PROCEEDINGS ARE RECORDED DIGITALLY AS PART OF THIS
RECORD.