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WMPO Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 29, 2026

525 N 4th Street
Wilmington, NC 28401

Members Present, In person

Hunter Smith, Town of Belville
Lynn Barbee, Town of Carolina Beach
Brenda Bozeman, Town of Leland
Allen Oliver, Town of Kure Beach
Brad George, Pender County
Bill Rivenbark, New Hanover County
JC Lyle, City of Wilmington
Cassidy Santaguida, City of Wilmington
Frank Williams, Brunswick County
Rose Terry, Town of Navassa

Members Present, Remote

Stephanie Walker, Cape Fear Transportation
Authority

Others Present, In Person

Mike Kozlosky, WMPO
Abby Lorenzo, WMPO
Krysden Burden, WMPO
Caitlin Cerza, WMPO
Greer Templer, WMPO
Beth King, WMPO
Ronda Hogan, WMPO
Amanda Halbert, WMPO
Tessa Jones, WMPO
Luke Hutson, WMPO
Regina Hopkins, WMPO
Carolyn Caggia, WMPO
Doug Field, BFRCA
David Frankel, BFRCA
Chuck Brins, BFRCA
Jane Patterson, ROW
Peter Ruffin
Carol Bullock, HWF
Brayton Willis, Leland resident

Joan Keston, Wilmington resident
David Henrickson, Wilmington resident
Dennis McGarry, Wilmington resident
Nicholas Newell, Wilmington resident
Chris Coudriet, NHC
EJ Hanley, Wilmington resident
Mitchell Federman, Wilmington resident
Susan Federman, Wilmington resident
Jay Boyd, BBII
Mary Podolak, Leland resident
Jack Gillotte, Leland resident
David Roy, NCDOT
Dave Pupkiewicz, FDCI
Alan Gilbert, Carolina Beach resident
Susan Habina-Woolard, City of Wilmington
Thomas G. Wills, Leland resident
Michelle Howes, NCDOT
Lydia O'Quinn, NCDOT
Bill Kincannon, HDR
Veronica Scott, NCDOT
Adrienne Cox, NCDOT
Daniel Sheehan, Star News
David Ferrell, Maynard Nexsen
Thom Moton, City of Wilmington
Charlene Dail, GFT
George Willoughby, North Brunswick News
Hanna Davis, Wilmington Chamber of
Commerce
Megan Mullins, Wilmington Chamber of
Commerce
Mark Hairr, WAVE
Alain Norman, Castle Street Collective
Sofia Dinka, WHQR News
Grayson C
Coner Doherty, WWAY
Elizabeth O'Donnell

Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Matt Nichols,
Nikki Cooper,
Pat Batleman, Leland resident
Ron Batleman, Leland Resident

Others Present, Remote

Greg Laughter, WMPO
Stacey Mahoney, HNTB
Nick Amico, HDR
Veronica Carter, Town of Leland
Jason Doughty, Modjeski & Masters
Kyle Burden, City of Wilmington

Nazia Sarder, NDDOT

Walt Gray, Michael Baker International
Chris Werner, AECOM
Brenna Flanagan, Port City Daily
Melissa Dickerson, NC Ferry Division
Adam Freeman, WSP
Mark Jennings
Susan Draper
Seth Poole
Paul Lawler
Katie Hite, NCDOT

1. Call to Order

Chairman Barbee called the meeting to order at 3:00pm.

2. Roll Call

Mike Kozlosky, WMPO Executive Director, called the roll.

Present: Hunter Smith, Lynn Barbee, Brenda Bozeman, Allen Oliver, Brad George, Bill Rivenbark, Stephanie Walker, JC Lyle, Cassidy Santaguida, Frank Williams, and Rose Terry.

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

Mike Kozlosky stated that Landon Zimmer requested an excused absence. Frank Williams made a motion to excuse Landon Zimmer from the July 29th meeting, Brenda Bozeman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Approval of the Agenda

Brenda Bozeman made a motion to approve the agenda; Allen Oliver seconded the motion. The agenda passed unanimously.

6. Public Comment

Due to the extent of citizens that wanted to participate in public comment, the Board agreed unanimously to allow all the fourteen citizens who had signed up for public comment to speak for two minutes each.

Brayton Willis, Leland resident, spoke to the Board and submitted a white paper, which he had written about the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. Mr. Willis spoke in opposition to tolling the bridge, he questioned why primary beneficiaries of the bridge are not being asked to shoulder some of the cost. Mr. Willis stated before asking families, community

members and local business to pay tolls the major beneficiaries of the bridge should be asked to pay their fair share.

David Frankel, spoke to the Board about the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, questioning why channel truncation has not been considered. Mr. Frankel states that channel truncation would relieve the need for the height on the bridge. Mr. Frankel would like channel truncation to be a viable option.

Daniel Wright, discussed the problem with tolls, stating he sees it as regressive tax on people and families traveling the bridge for employment, doctor's appointments, beach days etc. Mr. Wright questioned the financing, noting that Raleigh just had their Capitol Boulevard project "de-tolled" and he is curious if the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge could be as well.

Carol Bullock, Executive Director of Historic Wilmington Foundation, spoke to the Board about the choice between historic preservation versus economic growth. Ms. Bullock stated the Historic Wilmington Foundation is in favor of replacing the bridge, they would just like to see a choice in the bridge built. The Historic Wilmington Foundation would like to see alternative A as a replacement for the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, believing it preserves the historic district and promotes economic growth.

Jane Patterson, President of Residents of Old Wilmington (ROW), spoke to the Board about the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, she is asking for removal of the toll and to support bridge alternatives. She believes the toll is more of a regressive tax on the community. Ms. Patterson gave multiple reasons she is against the proposed bridge, including the slope of the bridge, the noise pollution it will create, and the effect it will have on emergency routes.

Peter Ruffin, spoke to the Board about the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge noting that his home is directly affected by the bridge, Mr. Ruffin states that his home will either be taken by the bridge project or he will end up a troll under a bridge. Mr. Ruffin believes there are many flaws in the current design process, including that the project is being forced on the community, the traffic to the Holmes bridge will end up another problem and lastly the impact to residents' homes and local businesses will be immense.

Doug Field, Leland resident, spoke to the Board about Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, stating that he understands bridge fatigue, that bridge conversation has been going on since 2004 at least. Mr. Field requested the Board withdraw concession for tolling, which would buy time to discuss truncation.

Chuck Bins, addressed the Board and told them to keep an open mind about avoiding tolls. Mr. Bins noted the changes that have occurred since the 2025 grant was approved, including the estimated cost of the project, and the ACOE has issued a new environmental impact study identifying several issues including dredging and the implications of that action. Mr. Bins noted channel truncation should be an option.

David Hendrickson, Wilmington resident, spoke to the Board about the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, noting he is against tolling. Mr. Hendrickson reviewed the uses of the bridge and what soft consequences of tolling the bridge would be. Mr. Hendrickson asked the Board to please reassess the needs for tolls, he noted it is a state-owned bridge, and the state should pay for it, not tolling.

Joan Keston, Wilmington resident, spoke to the Board about spending over one billion dollars without a complete analysis of the effects of the project. Ms. Keston stated the Board does not include key partners in their study and believes the environment impact

study is incomplete. Ms. Keston asked if the Board has done a conflict-of-interest test analysis on the private company that is proposing construction or gone through the proper bidding proposals. She questioned if the Board is willing to charge taxpayers so a private company can make profits well in excess of cost.

Nick Newell, resident and owner of three businesses in New Hanover County and Brunswick County, spoke to the Board about the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. Mr. Newell believes tolling of the bridge is an unjust double tax on the residents of southeast North Carolina. Mr. Newell questioned what is so special about this river crossing that it needs a toll, citing numerous bridges in the state that are not tolled. Mr. Newell stated that the state finds the money for numerous bridges that serve smaller vehicle counts, why can't they find the money for this bridge. Mr. Newell stated the STIP Program is broken, the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge project rated #211 however once a toll was added it jumped to #9. Mr. Newell believes better solutions exist, he not only would like the Board to oppose the bridge tolling but also to go to NCDOT and tell them to fix their scoring criteria. Mr. Newell submitted a flyer.

Mitchell Federmann, Leland resident, noted he had a presentation to make but previous speakers today have given all the important information, and he would like to echo what they have said. Mr. Federmann would like to see the life of the current bridge be extended, giving time to take advantage of channel truncation and build an appropriate bridge. He would like to see the Board explore all options before committing to the plan before them.

Alan Gilbert, Carolina Beach resident, former WMPO Board member, addressed the Board about the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, requesting the Board to think of other options, no tolls, and look at alternative funding.

Jerod Patterson, President and CEO of Business Alliance for Sound Economy, spoke to the Board about U-5710. Mr. Patterson thanked the Board for advancing the intersection improvements at Eastwood Road and Military Cutoff. Mr. Patterson noted that construction will always bring temporary inconvenience, but that is the cost of bringing transportation improvements. Mr. Patterson also thanked the Board for prioritizing the replacement of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge and encouraged them to keep an open mind and consider all potential solutions.

7. Presentations

- a. Recognition of WMPO Board Member Brad George – Chairman Lynn Barbee
Chairman Lynn Barbee presented Brad George with a plaque of recognition for his time serving on the WMPO Board. Mr. George thanked the WMPO Board members past and present that he worked with, noting that he hopes to return and help as a committee member after a much-needed break.
- b. Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Unsolicited Proposal – Trevor Carroll, NCDOT
Mike Kozlosky introduced Trevor Carroll from NCDOT to present to the Board a review of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Unsolicited proposal. Mr. Carroll gave a brief review of the project background, reviewing the timeline of the bridge. He stated that the unsolicited proposal was submitted February 26, 2026, and on March 27, 2026, the WMPO requested NCDOT to perform an initial screening of the proposal. Mr. Carroll noted that a working group and oversight committee were

formed and presented who those committee members are, he stated that the Working Group commenced on April 29, 2026, and by July 2nd they recommended to the Oversight Committee to not move forward with the proposal. Mr. Carroll presented the proposal's scope is not materially different than what was already submitted and programmed in the 2026-2035 STIP and the terms presented were either not allowable or not beneficial to NCDOT. Mr. Carroll concluded his presentation by presenting what the next steps will be, while NCDOT will not be moving forward with the proposal, the Department is continuing to work on delivering the bridge as a Traditional Toll Project, contingent on the necessary legislative change.

Mr. Carroll opened the floor for questions, Frank Williams asked if the NCDOT would be available to speak to interested groups, Mr. Carroll replied that he cannot commit to an answer either way to the question, but he did highlight different ways the public can submit their comments and concerns. Mike Kozlosky stated that as soon as the draft environmental document and notice of the meetings are available, he will distribute them to the Board.

8. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Board Special Meeting Minutes – June 24, 2026
- b. Resolution approving 2026-2035 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Programs Amendment #26-4
- c. Opening of a 30-day Public Comment Period for 2026-2035 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Programs Amendment #26-5
- d. Resolution approving 2026-2035 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Programs Administrative Modification #26-7
- e. Resolution supporting the WAVE Connect Advisory Committee's Recommendations for the Award of the FY 2027 Section 5310 Community Grant Project Funds
- f. Resolution supporting the City of Wilmington's application to the North Carolina Recreational Trails Program grant

Brenda Bozeman made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Cassidy Santaguida seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

9. Regular Agenda

- a. Resolution approving Amendment #1 to the FY27 Unified Planning Work Program

Regina Hopkins, WMPO Accounting Manager, presented the Board the details of Amendment #1 to FY27 UPWP. Ms. Hopkins explained that back in March of 2026 the City of Wilmington decided not to charge the WMPO Indirect Costs, which left funds in our budget that the WMPO could utilize elsewhere. Ms. Hopkins explained that this amendment moves the funds out of the Indirect Costs fund line and into Management and Operations. Ms. Hopkins noted that it does not change the budget overall, it is just a housekeeping issue within the budget. Ms. Hopkins opened the floor for questions, there were no questions.

Allen Oliver made a motion to support approving Amendment #1 to the FY27 UPWP. Frank Williams seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

10. Discussion

a. 2026-2035 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #26-8

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

b. Senate Bill 257 (NC State Budget) MPO/I-77 Provision

David Ferrell, from Maynard Nexsen, presented an overview of the MPO/I-77 Provision that was included in the State Budget Bill. Mr. Ferrell presented background and context, stating that Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO) removed the I-77 South managed lanes project from the regional transportation planning process. NCDOT and legislative leaders estimate that \$60 million in state funds had already been spent by NCDOT on planning and preconstruction activities. The General Assembly responded with a budget provision establishing consequences. Mr. Ferrell reviewed the core principle and key elements of the provision, noting that the provision targets projects classified as statewide priorities in the State Transportation Improvement Program. Mr. Ferrell went on to review the specifics and mechanics of the provision, noting the triggers for reimbursement, the reimbursable costs and the allocation method for each local government. Mr. Ferrell presented the enforcement mechanisms that the NCDOT will adhere to as part of this provision. He also reviewed the specific application concerning CRTPO and the choice of next steps they face.

Mr. Ferrell presented the broader implications for all MPO's and the practical takeaways, including what it means for the WMPO. Mr. Ferrell opened the floor for questions, Bill Rivenbark questioned why Charlotte removed the project. Mr. Ferrell replied it is his understanding that there was a lot of community opposition to the project, which caused local leaders to make a vote to change. Cassidy Santaguida questioned, in the example given, who will be responsible to reimburse the state. Mr. Ferrell stated that the way the provision is drafted, the municipalities that vote to have the project removed will be the ones who pay. Ms. Santaguida asked for clarification if a municipality has multiple representatives involved in a vote, how would the percentages of reimbursement be divided. Mr. Ferrell responded that specifics like Ms. Santaguida's question are not currently addressed in the provision. Ms. Santaguida also questioned how far back in time will this provision encompass. Mr. Ferrell answered that the Charlotte project has a retroactive date of January 1, 2026 but he does not see where the provision itself has a retroactive date. Frank Williams questioned if a project has been ongoing for five years and was removed, would all the expenses incurred until that removal date be considered? Mr. Ferrell responded that is how it appears, with the way the provision is written. Mike Kozlosky clarified that this provision applies to projects funded at the Statewide Tier, and he has developed a spreadsheet that will be shared with the Board, that shows the projects funded at the Statewide Tier in our region. Chairman Barbee questioned if a project is

removed, how would the reimbursement payment be divided up between the voting members. Mr. Ferrell referred to how the Charlotte project is developing but did not have a specific answer.

c. Cape Fear Memorial Bridge – Section 106 – Project Programmatic Agreement

Mike Kozlosky, WMPO Executive Director, presented a draft Project Programmatic Agreement that has been received by the WMPO. Mr. Kozlosky noted the formalities of the agreement, as well as what they are used for. Mr. Kozlosky stated that FHWA, NC State Historic Preservation Office, NCDOT and the Advisory Council on Historic Resources are the signatory agencies of this project programmatic agreement and other entities have been invited to join as concurring or consulting party. Mr. Kozlosky reviewed the differences between a concurring or consulting party and recommended that the WMPO join as a concurring party, so they have a seat at the table. Mr. Kozlosky noted that FHWA has a deadline of August 7th for draft comments on the programmatic agreement. Mr. Kozlosky reviewed the next steps for the agreement, including determining if the WMPO wants to be a concurring or consulting party, submitting comments before the August 7th deadline and if the WMPO desires to sign, an agreement will be presented to the WMPO Board once the agreement is in its final form.

Frank Williams stated that he would suggest the WMPO be a concurring party and also clarified the list of other concurring or consulting partners and their roles. JC Lyle asked what the WMPO role would look like, would the seat at the table be a WMPO staff person or a Board member. Mr. Kozlosky noted that it would be a staff person, but if the Board prefers a sub-committee that could be arranged. Ms. Lyle also questioned why other members that were invited to participate declined. Mr. Kozlosky replied that the reasons they declined are unknown. The Board gave direction to move forward as a concurring party.

d. Prioritization 8.0 Regional Impact Tier Draft Local Input Point Assignment

Abby Lorenzo, WMPO Deputy Director, updated the Board on the Prioritization 8.0 Regional Impact Tier Draft Local Input Point Assignment, beginning with a quick review of what has already been completed and where we are currently. Ms. Lorenzo stated that the WMPO has 1,600 Regional Impact Tier Local Input Points available for assignment among eligible projects and noted that draft assignment was developed in accordance with the WMPO Board-approved Local Input Point Methodology. Ms. Lorenzo reviewed the point assignments via projects, noting a few staff recommendations and she presented a map of the locations of the projects. Ms. Lorenzo concluded her presentation with the next steps, reviewing the upcoming important dates and what will be accomplished.

Frank Williams made a motion to open the public comment period and amend the adopted P8.0 LIP Methodology to include a 14-day public comment period instead of a 30-day public comment period. Brenda Bozeman seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

e. WMPO Training Series

Mike Kozlosky shared that the WMPO Board has expressed a desire for some additional training. WMPO staff is suggesting that trainings be held beginning in September, on the same day as the Board meetings, for about an hour, before the meeting. Chairman Barbee noted that Mr. Kozlosky has the support of the Board to move forward.

11. Updates

a. **Wilmington Urban Area MPO**

Mike Kozlosky presented the Board with printed copies of the Annual Report and noted that the WMPO staff will be delivering copies of this report to the individual jurisdictions Council, Managers and Planning Departments. Mr. Kozlosky stated that he will be presenting to the City of Wilmington, because they are the Lead Planning Agency, however if there is a desire for Mr. Kozlosky to speak at other Councils or Commissioners' meetings, he is available. Mr. Kozlosky updated the Board on the new signage for the Surface Transportation Block Grant projects, presenting the sign for viewing. Mr. Kozlosky presented that he has been working on the update to the strategic plan and will get it out to the Board following this meeting. The last update Mr. Kozlosky presented was he would like to organize a tour of the construction at the Hampstead Bypass and would like to gauge the interest of the Board in taking a tour. Board members expressed an interest in this tour.

b. **Cape Fear Public Transit Authority**

Updates are in the packet but Mark Hairr wanted to thank Mike Kozlosky for helping organize a successful site visit by Congressman David Rouzer, and thank Board members who attended the visit.

c. **NCDOT Division 3**

Updates are in the packet, but Trevor Carroll noted that the Market Street project is close to being finalized. Mr. Carroll also shared a one-pager for the Board regarding the U-5710 project. He noted that these one-page updates will be more frequent with the high-profile projects.

d. **NCDOT Transportation Planning Division**

Updates are in the packet.

12. Announcements

- a. WMPO Active Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting – August 18, 2026
- b. Go Coast TDM Committee Meeting – August 20, 2026

13. Closed Session

Frank Williams made a motion to enter closed session, Rose Terry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, the Board entered closed session at 4:40 pm.

14. Next Meeting – August 26, 2026

15. Adjourn

WMPO Board Meeting Minutes

Frank Williams made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rose Terry seconded the motion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:26 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.