



WMPO's SS4A Safety Action Plan Round 1 Engagement Summary



What is a Safety Action Plan?

The WMPO launched the regional Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Safety Action Plan initiative in March 2025 to enhance roadway safety for all roadway users in the region. The SS4A program is a federal initiative launched by the U.S. Department of Transportation to support efforts to enhance transportation network safety and to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities, particularly for people walking, using a mobility device, biking, taking transit—not just those driving. The goal of the WMPO SS4A Safety Action Plan is to develop a holistic, well-defined multimodal strategy to prevent roadway fatalities and serious injuries in the WMPO region.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement Overview

Community engagement is a foundational component of the WMPO's SS4A Safety Action Plan. There will be three rounds of engagement throughout the planning process, with each focusing on different elements (Table 1):

Table 1. Engagement Rounds

Round #	Engagement Intent
Round 1	Introduce the WMPO SS4A Safety Action Plan goals, Safe Systems Approach, and existing conditions. Gather community input on safety concerns and priorities through surveys and mapping.
Round 2	Share draft recommendations for infrastructure, policies, and programs. Collect community feedback.
Round 3	Present final WMPO SS4A Safety Action Plan results and implementation strategies.

Round 1 of engagement gathered community feedback on safety concerns and priorities following the project team's analysis of existing crash conditions and review of regional plans and policies. Input from the community helps pinpoint locations where people feel unsafe from their personal experience, including places that may not yet appear in reported crash data. This local knowledge helps identify areas with frequent near misses, speeding issues, or missing sidewalks and crossings. Community engagement will also inform the selection of countermeasures, supporting proposed solutions that align with how people travel through their communities.

In addition to community engagement, the WMPO and project team established a WMPO SS4A Safety Action Plan Steering Committee to guide the plan's development and provide feedback at key milestones. The committee includes representatives from local municipalities and jurisdictions, bringing together staff with diverse expertise across departments including transportation planning and engineering, fire, police, and education.

WMPO SS4A Safety Action Plan Round 1 Engagement Strategy

Round 1 of engagement was open from August 1 through September 30, 2025. The WMPO launched a community outreach campaign through multiple communication channels to promote opportunities to participate in developing the Safety Action Plan:

- Social media
- Email newsletters and blasts
- Press releases
- Meeting presentations
- Radio interviews
- Flyers

To support consistent messaging, the project team developed an outreach toolkit containing social media graphics, sample captions, and templates for newsletters and email blasts (see Figure 1 for example graphics). The WMPO SS4A Safety Action Plan Steering Committee and other community partners were provided with the toolkit to share through their community connection outlets.



Figure 1. Round 1 Toolkit Examples

Community Engagement Results

Round 1 offered multiple ways to provide feedback, including an online comment map, an online survey, five pop-up events, and three open houses. In-person events also offered physical maps, paper surveys, and comment cards. Figure 2 summarizes the engagement results over the two-month period:

624
Survey Responses



678
Map Comments



160
Meaningful Conversations



Figure 2. Round 1 Engagement by the Numbers

We Heard You! Engagement Events Timeline

Location	Common Themes	Photos
<p>Open Air Market at the Grove - August 20, 10 AM to 12 PM</p>	<p>Safety enhancements are needed on US 17, particularly near busy side streets and driveways.</p>	
<p>Northside Food Co-Op Community Dinner - August 28, 6 PM to 8 PM</p>	<p>Concerns about downtown transportation safety for people walking, biking, and taking transit emerge. Key areas included Princess Place Drive, Market Street, and 3rd Street.</p>	
<p>Carolina Beach Farmers Market - August 30, 8 AM to 10 AM</p>	<p>Most reported feeling comfortable traveling in the area, while local cyclists emphasized the need for improved bicycle connectivity and safety.</p>	
<p>UNCW Market Day - September 10, 11 AM to 1 PM</p>	<p>Pedestrian safety concerns crossing College Road/major arterials, as well as crossing driveways/parking lots on campus.</p>	

Location	Common Themes	Photos
<p>New Hanover Co. Open House at WMPO Office – September 11, 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM</p>	<p>Excitement for the plan and for safer roads and crossings in Wilmington.</p>	
<p>Feast of the Pirates – September 13, 10 AM – 1 PM</p>	<p>Continued investment in roadway and intersection safety on NC 133 is needed, especially given continued growth and development pressures.</p>	
<p>Brunswick Co. Open House at Navassa Community Center September 17, 4 PM - 6 PM</p>	<p>Concerns about the lack of sidewalks and crossing infrastructure, especially given a recent fatal pedestrian crash near Main Street and Old Mill Road.</p>	
<p>Pender Co. Open House at Pender Co. Library (Hampstead Branch) – September 25, 4 PM - 6 PM</p>	<p>Feedback throughout Pender County focused on safety enhancements on US 17 as the region continues to grow.</p>	

Main Themes of Engagement Feedback

Round 1 of engagement focused on perceptions of transportation safety. This included specific roadways or intersections that feel unsafe or areas without infrastructure that make walking, biking, driving, using mobility devices, or taking transit challenging. The intent was to capture lived experience to supplement existing data sets, such as crash data, to reflect real-world conditions in the WMPO region.

This section summarizes the 624 survey responses. Many of the responses described crashes, injuries, and near-misses as a daily reality—especially for people walking, biking, or using mobility devices. Residents shared stories of pedestrians hit in crosswalks, bicyclists struck at intersections, and vulnerable roadway users injured on neighborhood streets. Respondents emphasized that risk extends beyond a few problem areas, prompting many to change when and where they travel due to speeding traffic, missing sidewalks, unsafe crossings, and poor driver yielding. Overall, the community doesn't see safety as just a matter of being careful; it depends on road design, visibility, predictable traffic, and shared responsibility. These adaptations reveal suppressed demand: people would walk and bike more if the system felt safer.

Plan Vision and Goals

The vast majority of respondents (over 90%) felt like the goal of zero fatal or serious injuries on our roadways by 2050 is an important goal. However, feedback differed on how to achieve that goal, with a majority wanting to see progress before 2050. Suggestions included measurable milestones rather than a one-time horizon in 25 years. Others expressed concerns about how regional growth and the lack of existing infrastructure will impact this goal. Overall, participants noted a strong desire for near-term / visible action, with many wanting to see accountability and urgency from local agencies.

Every Choice Counts. Every Life Matters.

Most respondents reported that they or someone they know has been directly affected by a crash, with several describing severe injuries or fatalities of their loved ones, neighbors, or community members using our roadways.

Safety Concerns

Respondents want to walk, bike, or use scooters more but avoid these modes due to unsafe infrastructure (see Figure 3). Roads favor drivers, offering little separation or protection for multimodal users. Missing sidewalks, unsafe crossings, disconnected routes, and fast traffic make active travel feel dangerous, especially biking and scooting. Many feel “forced into a car” even for short trips.

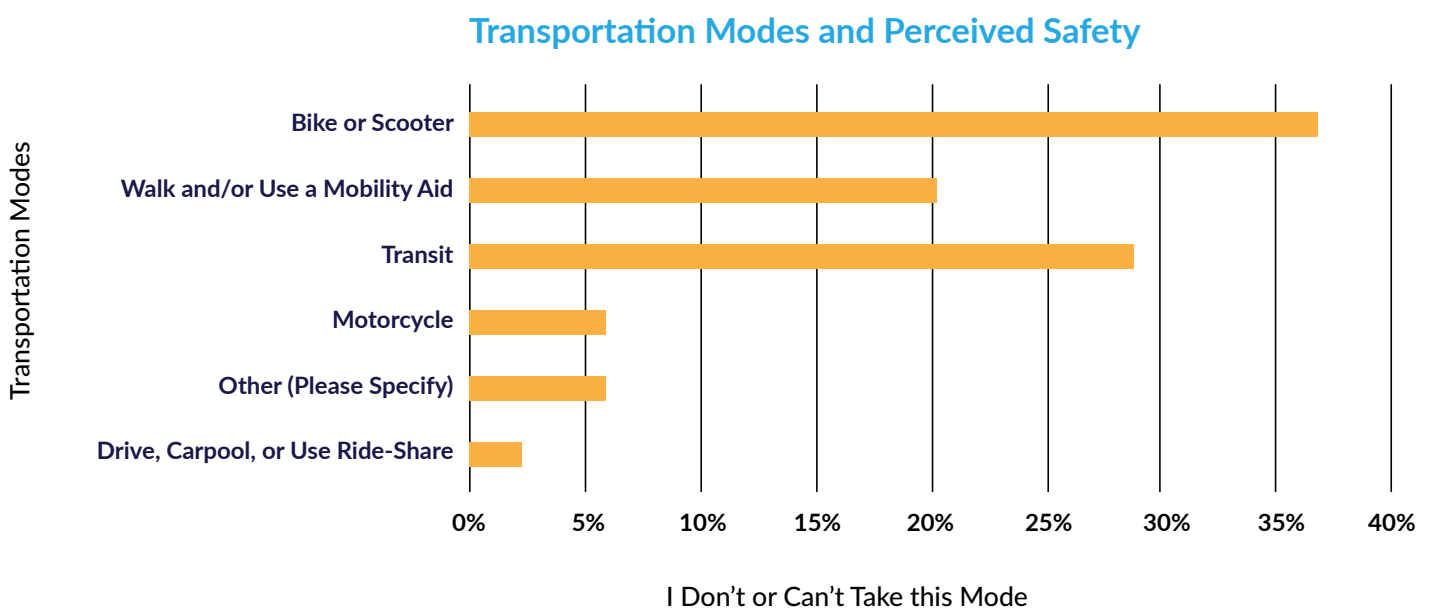


Figure 3. Ways Respondents Would Travel if They Felt Safer

Respondents were asked to identify the top threats to transportation safety (Figure 4). Distracted driving and speeding were the highest priorities. Infrastructure gaps—like missing sidewalks, crossings, and pedestrian safety features—also ranked high, highlighting the need for safer options for walking and biking.

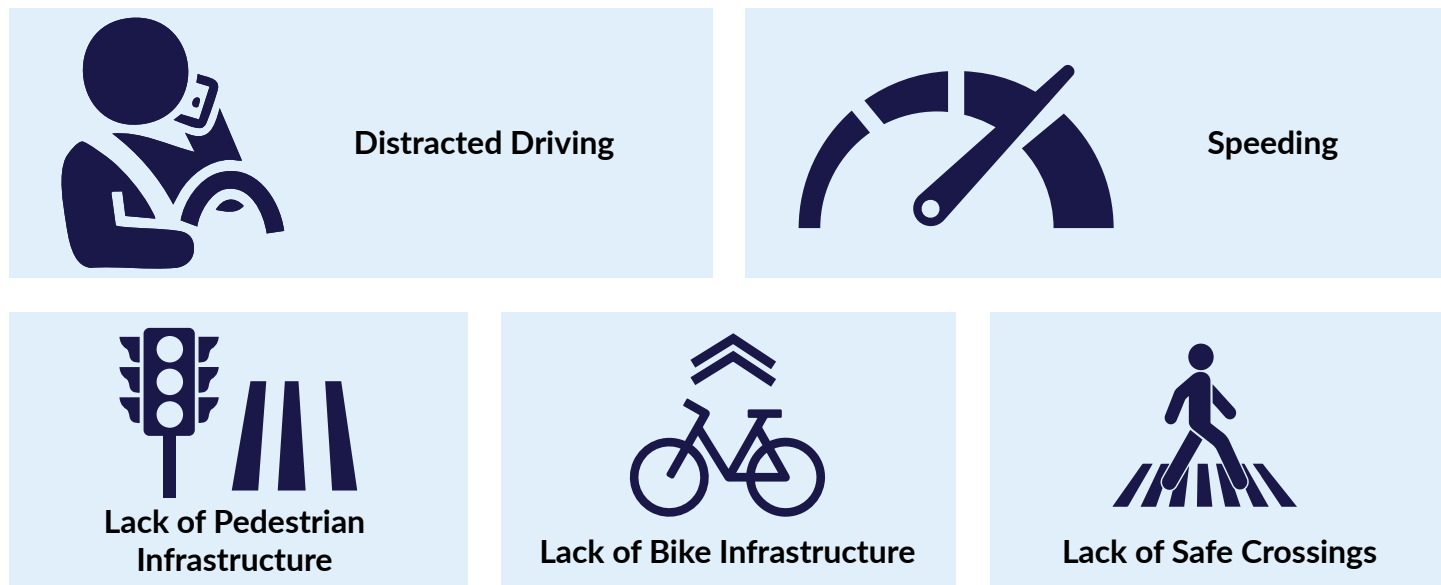


Figure 4. Top Threats to Transportation Safety

Respondents frequently identified specific roadways and intersections as safety concerns:

- 3rd Street
- Oleander Drive
- Market Street
- College Road
- Eastwood Road
- Military Cutoff Road
- Eastwood Road
- Carolina Beach Road
- River Road
- Shipyard Boulevard
- Greenville Loop Road
- Middle Sound Loop Road
- Porters Neck Road

Enhancing Safety in the Region

Respondents selected safer intersections and crossings, expanded multimodal infrastructure, enforcement, and slower speeds/traffic calming as top enhancements they would like to see (Figure 5):

Safety Enhancements

- Safer Intersections and Crossings**
- Multimodal Infrastructure**
- Enforcement**
- Slower Speeds/Traffic Calming**
- Better Lighting and Visibility**
- Clear Signs and Markings**
- Education and Awareness**
- Other**

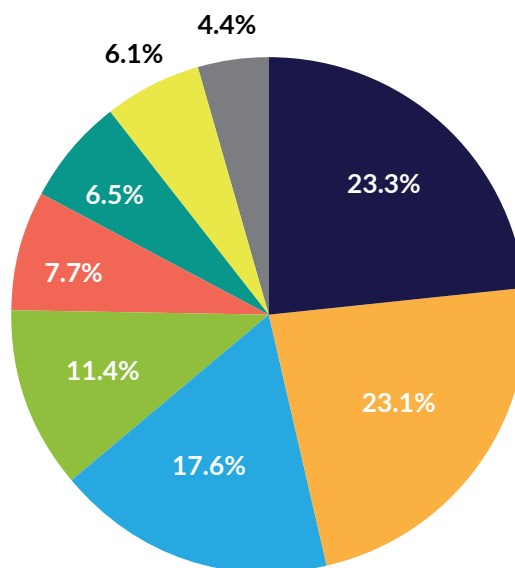
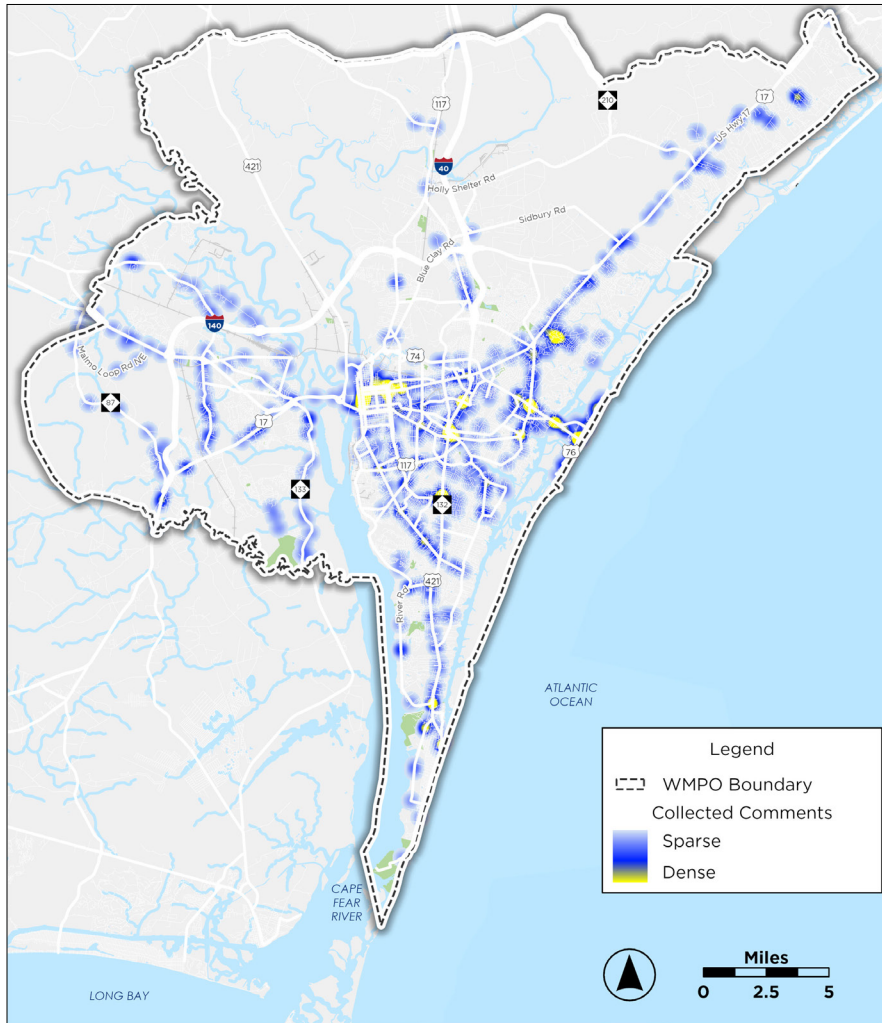


Figure 5. Top Safety Enhancements

Map Comments

This section summarizes the 678 map comments that were received from both the in-person map activity and online comment map. Several geographic areas across the region stood out from comments (Figure 6):



- 3rd Street
- Carolina Beach Road
- Cedar Hill Road
- College Road
- Dow Road
- Eastwood Road
- Lanvale Road
- Lumina Avenue
- Market Street
- Oleander Road
- Princess Place Drive
- River Road
- US 17
- US 74

Feedback ranged from safety concerns on corridors and at intersections to ideas to mitigate crashes and enhance safety for all users. Major themes included concerns about bicyclist safety, intersection and crossing safety concerns such as lack of driver yielding to pedestrians, driver behavior on the roadways, and the need for more walking and bicycling infrastructure.

Figure 6. Comments on Roadways and Intersections Throughout the Region

Conclusion and Next Steps

In summary, the WMPO's Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Safety Action Plan is a collaborative, data-driven effort to improve safety for all roadway users. Round 1 of engagement gathered valuable community input on unsafe roadways, missing infrastructure, and risky driving behaviors, which—combined with crash data—will guide targeted safety improvements. Moving forward, community feedback will continue shaping strategies, project locations, and infrastructure, policy, and program recommendations to help achieve the WMPO's vision of safe travel for everyone (Figure 7).



Figure 7. WMPO SS4A Safety Action Plan Timeline