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*Create and execute continuing, cooperative and comprehensive regional long-range planning efforts that pro-actively drive transportation decisions to improve safety, connectivity, economic development and quality of life in the Wilmington region.*

**TO:** Wilmington Urban Area MPO Board Members  
**FROM:** Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director  
**DATE:** March 20, 2026  
**SUBJECT:** March 25<sup>th</sup> WMPO Board Special Meeting

A Special meeting of the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Board will be held on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at 1:30 pm. The meeting will be held in the WMPO Board Room located at 525 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown Wilmington, NC.

The following is the agenda for the meeting:

1. Call to Order
2. WMPO 2026-2031 Strategic Plan
3. Adjourn

Attachments:

- Strategic Plan Detailed Agenda
- Adopted 2022-2026 WMPO Strategic Plan
- 2026-2035 State/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Map and Table
- WMPO's Prioritization 7.0 and Prioritization 8.0 Project Submittal Map and Table
- March 25<sup>th</sup> WMPO Board Special Meeting Notice

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## Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

City of Wilmington • Town of Carolina Beach • Town of Kure Beach • Town of Wrightsville Beach  
County of New Hanover • Town of Belville • Town of Leland • Town of Navassa • County of Brunswick  
County of Pender • Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority • North Carolina Department of Transportation

# WMPO STRATEGIC PLAN AGENDA

Location: Wilmington MPO Board Room

Date: March 25, 2026

Time: 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Leta Huntsinger  
Sarah Crump

## Agenda Items

<b>1:30 – 1:35</b>	Welcome & Purpose
<b>1:35 – 2:15</b>	SWOT Analysis
<b>2:15 – 2:30</b>	Existing Focus Areas
<b>2:30 – 2:35</b>	Emerging Focus Areas
<b>2:35 – 2:55</b>	Priority Projects
<b>2:55 – 3:00</b>	Wrap-up & Next Steps



**WILMINGTON URBAN AREA**  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning  
Organization**

**2022 - 2026 Strategic Plan**

**Presented by:**



## Executive Summary

The Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WMPO) provides a regional and cooperative transportation planning process that serves as the basis for the expenditure of all federal transportation funds in the greater Wilmington, NC area. The WMPO is committed to working with regional partners and community stakeholders to identify and implement transportation projects that serve the needs of residents in the metropolitan area.

The WMPO worked tirelessly to create a strategic plan that will guide us in achieving the vision we set for the future. This document describes the process and results of the strategic plan and outlines the focus areas and top priorities that we developed to meet our goals.

Guiding our work over the next five years, to meet the transportation needs and expectations of our communities, the WMPO identified seven key focus areas throughout this process:

- Improve Safety
- Multi-Modal Focus
- Regionally Focused
- Economic Development
- Community Engagement
- More Organized, Vocal and Cohesive Voice
- Organizational and Operational Effectiveness

The WMPO will use these focus areas to identify and solve transportation challenges in the Wilmington Metropolitan Area. We will refer to these as we plan, develop, and advocate for our residents. These focus areas will also be used as a framework to develop and plan transportation projects under the purview of the WMPO.

## **WMPO's Strategic Plan in Context**

Over the last decade the Wilmington area has maintained steady growth that requires updated and increased levels of transportation planning and projects. This growth also has brought new priorities and perspectives around our region's transportation infrastructure. Our changing communities will require new and updated infrastructure as well as innovative, safe, and equitable programs to increase the overall mobility in the Wilmington Metropolitan Area.

In 2021, the WMPO engaged its Board and regional stakeholders in robust discussions to understand the future needs of the metropolitan area, the most pressing transportation projects, and the challenges associated with these priorities.

For this strategic planning process, the WMPO utilized a facilitated approach to develop and analyze surveys and conducted Board meetings to identify challenges and opportunities facing the WMPO. This collaborative approach to identifying challenges allowed WMPO to determine priorities, focus areas, and potential solutions for present and emerging challenges. This process, and the resulting plan, gives the WMPO an advantage in anticipating and meeting the needs of residents and stakeholders.

## Organizational Overview

The WMPO is governed by the WMPO Board, which is tasked with providing policy and direction and approving all the WMPO projects. The Board is made up of thirteen voting members that represent twelve government bodies from the municipal, county, regional, and state levels. The Board also contains non-voting members who represent various government entities whose operations impact transportation planning in the Wilmington area. Non-voting members serve at the invitation of the WMPO Board.

The WMPO is required to conduct the transportation planning process in a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive manner. In order to accomplish these goals, the WMPO has the responsibility of coordinating TCC and Board activities, adopting a Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Comprehensive Transportation Plan, reviewing and approving the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program, completing a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), approving changes to the Federal-Aid Functional Classification System, and establishing goals and objectives for the transportation planning process.

The WMPO began this strategic planning process by conducting a survey that asked Board and TCC members about the WMPO's organizational effectiveness, projects, direction, and staff effectiveness. The survey results were presented to the Board for discussion with the goal of finding areas that need improvement and areas in which the MPO can build upon its success. The Board also participated in vision exercises to better understand what will be needed in the coming years. These processes gave the Board an opportunity to review and recertify its current mission and draft a new vision to lead the MPO into the future.

### **Mission:**

To create and execute continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive regional long-range planning efforts that proactively drive transportation decisions to improve safety, connectivity, economic development, and quality of life in the Wilmington region.

### **Vision:**

The vision statement below describes our aspirations for the WMPO. This statement indicates our current and future commitments, and where we would like to see the WMPO progress over the next five years.

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

## Strategic Focus Areas

The WMPO will continue to work on behalf of the residents in the Wilmington Metropolitan Area by focusing on areas of need to improve our transportation infrastructure. This mission calls for the WMPO to identify these areas of need and implement plans to address them. Through the strategic planning process, we will use the seven identified focus areas to guide our work in the future.

These focus areas will guide the WMPO in developing plans and projects that meet the long-term infrastructure priorities of the Wilmington Area. As we plan for growth and more robust transportation infrastructure, the WMPO will consistently refer to these seven areas to ensure that we are moving in a direction that accomplishes our mission and helps to achieve our vision.

### Strategic Focus Areas

The WMPO Board understands that as the Wilmington Metropolitan Area grows and changes in the next five years there will be significant opportunities and challenges in the area's transportation infrastructure needs. This understanding has led the Board to highlight following seven areas of focus for the WMPO:

- Improve Safety
- Multi-Modal Focus
- Regionally Focused
- Economic Development
- Community Engagement
- More Organized, Vocal and Cohesive Voice
- Organizational and Operational Effectiveness

### Improve Safety

The WMPO is committed to providing safe and reliable transportation throughout the Wilmington Metropolitan Area. The members of our communities utilize various modes of transportation in their daily lives, and we seek to ensure that every mode of transportation is as safe as the next.

- Adopt Safety Performance Measures and track these measures to determine if and how the area is performing
- Perform data collection/analysis, perform an annual review of the highest vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian crashes and assist with road safety audits when needed
- Support safety programs such as Vision Zero, "Be A Looker," Watch for Me NC, Bike Safe NC, etc.
- Program funding and pursue grants for projects that reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities
- Successful implementation of the Traffic Separation Study
- Support the Wilmington Rail Re-alignment Project
- Promote safety, education, and enforcement - give high priority to safety improvements in the vicinity of schools, public transportation, commercial corridors, and other high use bicycle and pedestrian destinations
- Support the NC Ferry System for emergency evacuations and distressed boaters

- Support the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority for improvements to bus stop amenities and improved access to stop locations
- Focus on Roadway projects that improve safety (access management, turn lanes, signal pre-emption, lighting, signage, etc.)

### **Multi-Modal Focus**

The WMPO will continue to invest in and expand accessibility to non-traditional modes of transportation. We will focus on ensuring that residents in our communities have a choice in how they travel throughout the area.

- Encourage and provide funding to enhance walking, biking, public transportation, and the ferry system in the Wilmington region
- Support critical infrastructure improvements that include multi-use paths, bike lanes, sidewalks, high-visibility crosswalks, push-button pedestrian signal heads, and other improvements for multi-modal transportation
- Encourage an increased focus on multi-modal transportation infrastructure
- Support “complete streets” and incorporate complete streets design into transportation projects in the Wilmington region
- Provide multi-modal connectivity between the various modes of transportation
- Support the development and implementation of plans that encourage multi-modal transportation
- Support the completion of the Wilmington Multi-modal Transportation Center
- Continue to utilize MPO’s surface transportation block grant and transportation alternatives; set aside direct attributable programs to fund our members’ local priorities and needs that support our larger regional network

### **Regionally Focused**

As a planning organization it is crucial that we focus on all communities in our metropolitan area. The WMPO will work to build a robust transportation infrastructure that contributes to economic growth and development throughout the region, becoming less centrally focused and supporting all our members’ needs.

- Provide regional accessibility from our transportation infrastructure
- Work collaboratively with our partners (MPO member jurisdictions, Cape Fear RPO, ILM, CFPTA, NCDOT, etc.)
- Educate WMPO members on services and programs provided by the MPO
- Continue to support projects and policies in the MPO’s long range plan
- Continue to support projects in the MPO Transportation Improvement Program and State Transportation Improvement Program

### **Economic Development Focused**

We understand that economic growth and vitality are crucial to meeting the needs of our residents, communities, and partners. The WMPO will work to enhance the Wilmington Area’s economic development opportunities by planning and implementing infrastructure projects that will enable global competitiveness. We will work to enable growth in all levels of the economy by enhancing transportation network effectiveness, efficiency, and safety.

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
- Promote economic growth in the region through enhanced transportation infrastructure
- Support economic vitality and innovation, transportation network efficiency and safety, and supply chain resilience and reliability
- Support economic development at Wilmington International Airport (business park, improve international and domestic trade and commerce facilities, general aviation improvements), biking (bike tourism, events, etc.), walking, ferry, freight/rail, and public transportation
- Support the NC Ports in their efforts to grow and expand

### **Community Engagement**

The WMPO exists to serve the transportation needs of the residents in our communities. We understand that this is not possible without input and feedback from people who are affected by our decisions. With this understanding we will work with community groups and members to plan and develop programs and projects that anticipate the concerns of our residents.

- Educate citizens and elected officials in order to increase general understanding of transportation issues
- Utilize the adopted Public Participation Plan and enhance efforts related to community engagement
- Enhance the use of social media to disseminate information regarding MPO projects and programs

### **More Organized, Vocal, and Cohesive Voice**

The WMPO seeks to become an organization that effectively communicates with a singular voice on a regular basis. We will use our voice to inform our partner organizations and communities of the projects and plans that we develop as an MPO.

- Continue to develop a Legislative Agenda that outlines the MPO’s legislative priorities
- Prioritize transportation projects in order to facilitate conversations amongst local, state, and federal delegation
- Utilize Board and staff relationships to advocate for transportation infrastructure in the Wilmington region

### **Organizational and Operational Effectiveness**

As an MPO it is crucial that we operate effectively and efficiently to achieve the goals that we set for ourselves. The WMPO will continue to improve our operations and find ways to increase operational effectiveness for the people of the Wilmington Metropolitan Area.

- Enhance the utilization of technology to improve operations
- Complete the Compensation Study to compare the MPO staff salaries to the public/private sector and in an effort to mitigate turnover
- Continue annual updates from the MPO’s partner and supportive organizations (NCDOT Division 3, NC Rail Division, NC Ferry Division, Wilmington International Airport, and Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority)
- Celebrate and communicate successes to the public- utilize available member jurisdictions communication resources

## Top Project Priorities

Through the strategic planning process, the WMPO identified six major projects that we consider to be our top priorities. We view the completion of these projects as crucial to the network of transportation infrastructure in the Wilmington Area. The completion of these projects will vastly improve mobility throughout the region and create opportunities to advance towards the goals that we have for our communities.

### Top Priorities (Physical Projects)

- Hampstead Bypass A Section
- Military Cutoff, Eastwood Acceleration
- Independence Boulevard Acceleration
- MLK - Kerr Acceleration
- MLK - Market - Eastwood Acceleration
- Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Replacement

## Transportation Funding Methods

As the Wilmington Area continues to grow, we understand that exploring alternative funding methods will be necessary to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our communities and the ambitious and critical goals that we set. The WMPO staff will work with our partners and funding agencies to identify and seek out potential funding methods, including state and federal grants; we will also provide the Board with further funding opportunities to consider.

- Evaluate all potential funding sources for important transportation projects
- Evaluate state and federal grants as potential funding sources
- Develop a list of potential options for MPO Board consideration
- Delineate between larger and smaller projects when developing these options

## Key Performance Indicators

The tactical actions and performance indicators for this strategic plan will be developed by the WMPO staff as they take the strategic priorities and create an annual implementation plan. Performance indicators will be used to track progress and support shared accountability across the organization regarding progress on the various priorities. The WMPO Staff will outline the indicators of success and provide them, along with the strategic plan, in a presentation to the Board for final approval. The staff will provide updates to the Board on the progress of the plan at regular intervals.

## Implementation Plan and Process

The implementation plan will be developed by the WMPO staff as they finalize the tactical actions and performance indicators. This plan will outline the steps and timelines necessary to meet the objectives of this plan and achieve the goals that derive from it. As the WMPO moves forward with this plan some aspects of implementation will change; thus, it is important that we remain flexible and agile.

## Appendix

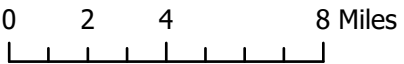
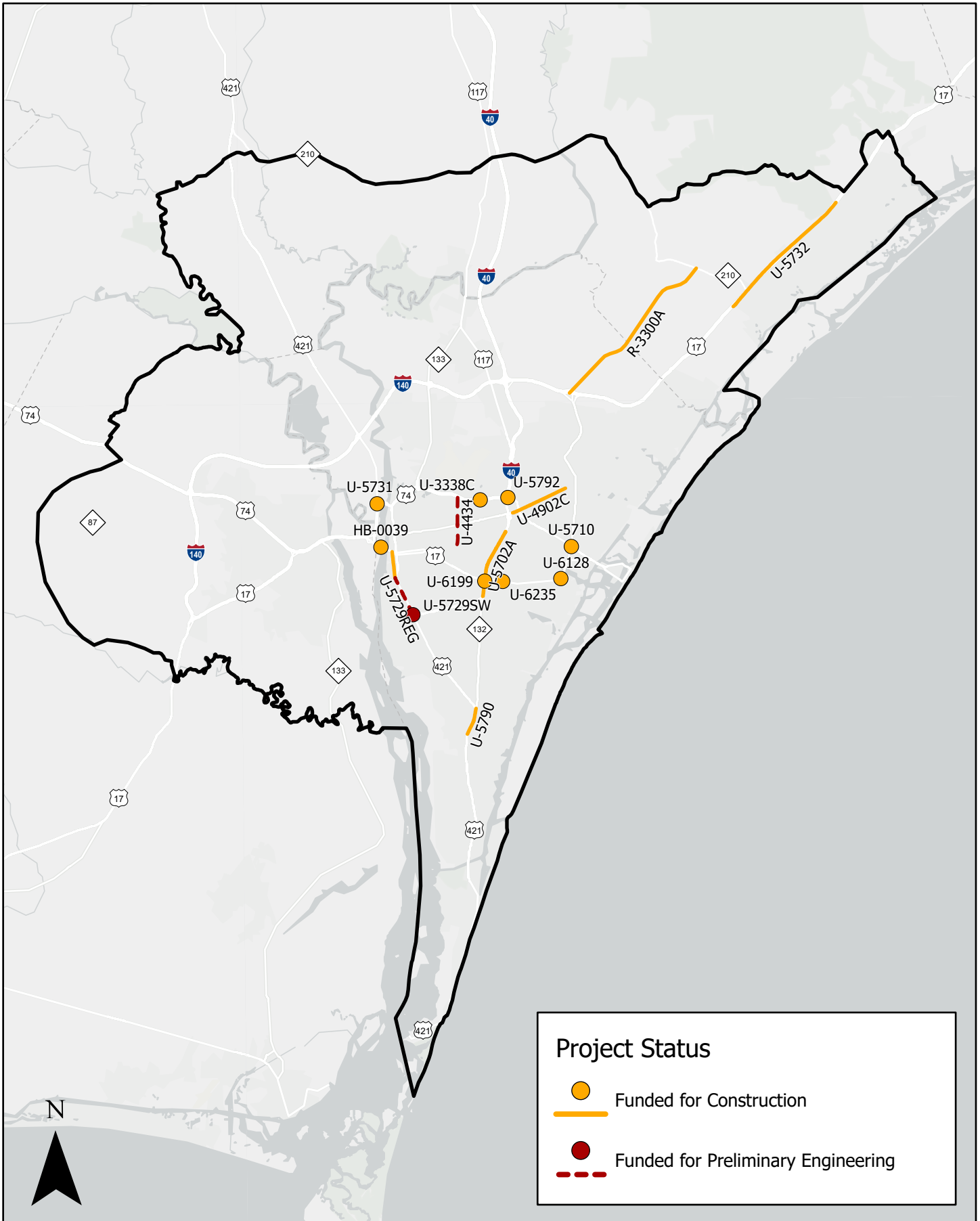
### Appendix 1: Implementation Template

The following template provides an example of how the WMPO may implement the strategic plan. This template contains space to outline the action steps, necessary participants, and proposed timeline for each Focus Area.

<b>Focus Area 1: Improve Safety</b>			
	<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
a			
b			
c			
<b>Focus Area 2: Multi-Modal Focus</b>			
	<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
a			
b			
c			

# 2026-2035 MPO/State Transportation Improvement Program

## Projects Funded for Construction or Preliminary Engineering



Data Source: WMPO, NCDOT

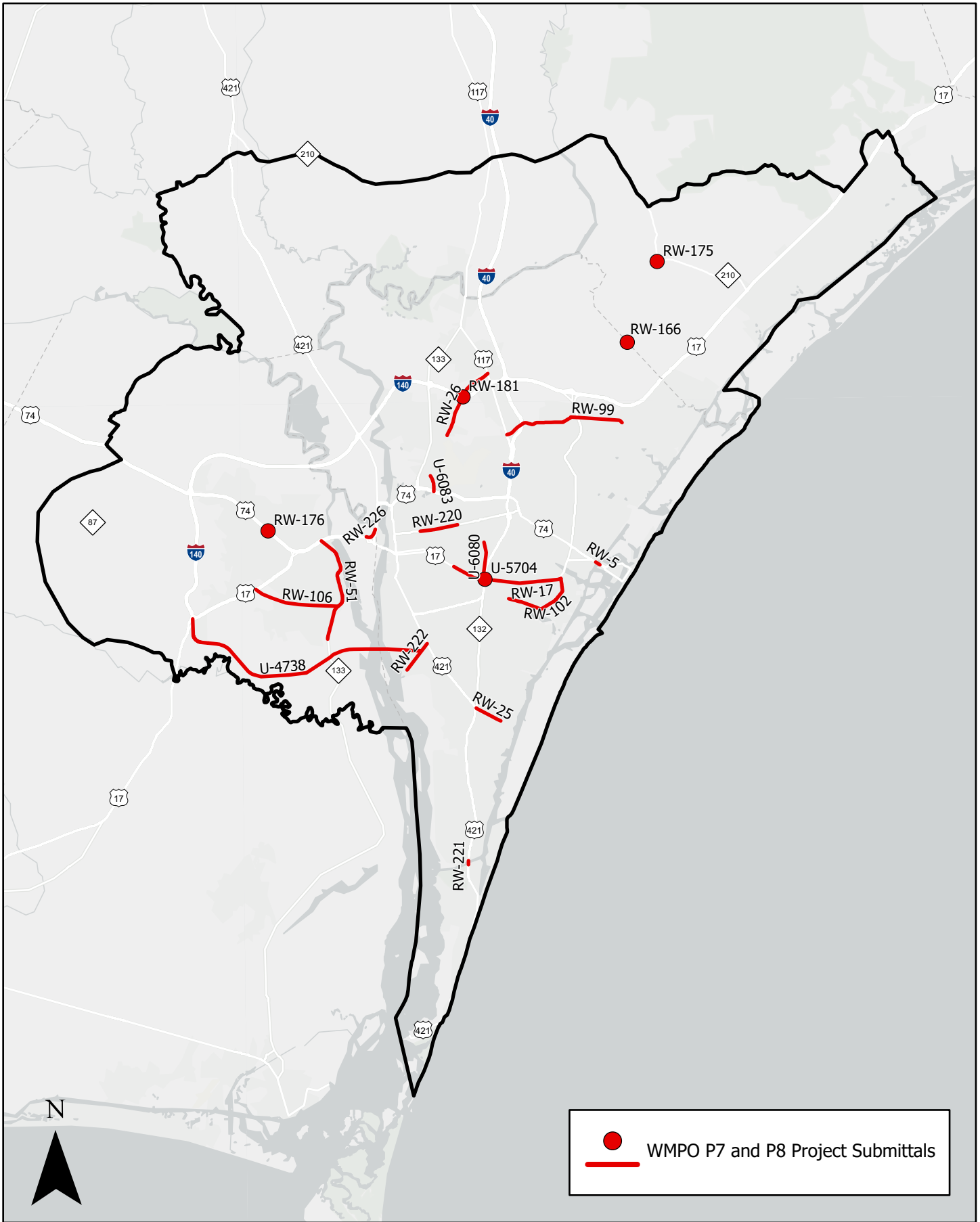


**2026-2035 MPO/State Transportation Improvement Program**  
**Projects Funded for Construction or Preliminary Engineering**

TIP Number	Project Name	To	From	Project Description	Project Cost	Right-of-Way Year	Construction Year
R-3300A	Hampstead Bypass (I of II)	US 17 Bypass south of Hampstead	NC 210	Construct freeway on new location	\$244,980,000	2018	2026
U-5790	US421/Carolina Beach Road Widening & Intersection Improvements	NC 132 (South College Road)	Sanders Road	Widen existing roadway and construct flyovers at US 421 and NC 132	\$54,500,000	2027	2029
U-5734	US 421/Front Street Widening	US 17 Business / US 76 / US 421 (Cape Fear Memorial Bridge)	US 421 (Burnett Boulevard)	Widen to multi-lanes	\$76,500,000	2026	2029
HB-0039	Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Replacement	US 17 / US 76 / US 421		Replace bridge 640013 (Cape Fear Memorial Bridge) over Cape Fear River	\$1,046,605,000	2026	2026
U-5731	US74/NC133/Isabel Holmes Bridge Flyovers	Intersection of US 74 and US 17/421	N/A	Upgrade at-grade intersection to an	\$55,390,000	2028	2030
U-3338C	Kerr Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway Interchange	Intersection of SR 1175 (Kerr Avenue) and US 74 (Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway)	N/A	Improve interchange	\$39,600,000		2030
U-6199	Wilmington Citywide Signal System	Various Routes in Wilmington	N/A	Improve signal system	\$16,610,000	2028	2030
U-5702A	US117/NC132/College Road Access Management Improvements (I of II)	SR 1272 (New Centre Drive)	US 117 (Shipyard Boulevard)	Access management and travel time improvements	\$81,200,000	2030	2033
U-6235	Wilmington Signal Preemption Phase II	Various Routes in Wilmington	N/A	Traffic signal pre-emption for emergency vehicles project	\$1,430,000		2026
U-5792	US 74/Martin Luther King Jr Parkway & US 117/NC 132/ College Road Intersection	US 17 Business (Market Street)	SR 2048 (Gordon Road)	Upgrade roadway	\$291,499,000	2026	2029
U-4902C	US17 BUS/Market Street Access Management Improvements (II of III)	North of US 117 / NC 132 (College Road)	Station Road	Construct access management improvements	\$169,120,000	2030	2033
U-6128	US17/76/Oleander Drive & Greenville Loop Road/Greenville Avenue Intersection	Intersection of US 76 (Oleander Drive), Greenville Avenue, and Greenville Loop Road	N/A	Add second left-turn lane to the westbound approach of US 17/76/Oleander Drive at Greenville Loop Road Intersection	\$11,100,000	2027	2030
U-5710	US74/Eastwood Road & Military Cutoff Road Interchange	Intersection of US 74 (Eastwood Road) and SR 1409 (Military Cutoff Road)	N/A	Upgrade at-grade intersection to an interchange.	\$81,400,000	2023	2027
U-5732	US 17/NC 210 Reduced Conflict Intersections	SR 1582 (Washington Acres Road)	Vista Lane	Construct reduced conflict intersections	\$90,300,000	2029	2032
U-5729SW	US 421/Carolina Beach Road Intersection Improvement	Intersection of US 421 (Carolina Beach Road) and US 117 (Shipyard Boulevard)	N/A	Construct intersection improvements	\$13,420,000	Funded for Preliminary Engineering Only	Funded for Preliminary Engineering Only
U-5729REG	US 421/Carolina Beach Road Upgrade	US 421 (Burnett Boulevard)	US 117 (Shipyard Boulevard)	Upgrade roadway	\$53,680,000	Funded for Preliminary Engineering Only	Funded for Preliminary Engineering Only
U-4434	Independence Boulevard Extension	Randall Parkway	US 74 (Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway)	Extend roadway on new location	\$424,600,000	Funded for Preliminary Engineering Only	Funded for Preliminary Engineering Only

# NCDOT Prioritization 7.0 and 8.0 Projects

## WMPO Submittals



0 2 4 8 Miles

Data Source: WMPO, NCDOT



NCDOT Prioritization 7.0 and 8.0 Projects  
WMPO Project Submittals

Project ID	Project Name	To	From	Project Description	Planning Level Cost Estimate (2045 MTP)	Planning Year (2045 MTP)
U-6080	Kerr Avenue Widening	Patrick Avenue	Wrightsville Avenue	Road Widening	\$25,900,000	2030
RW-166	Sidbury Road/Hampstead Bypass Interchange	Intersection of Sidbury Road and the future Hampstead Bypass	N/A	New Interchange	\$22,340,000	2035
RW-17	US 17/76/Oleander Drive Access Management	Pine Grove Drive	Greenville Loop Road	Access Management Improvements	\$20,860,000	2030
RW-221	US421/Snow's Cut Bridge Replacement	River Road	Access Rd	Bridge Replacement	\$149,090,000	2040
RW-222	Independence Blvd Road Widening	US 421/Carolina Beach Road	River Road	Road Widening	\$23,620,000	2035
RW-25	SR 1521/Piner Road Improvements and Intersection Realignment	S. College Road	Myrtle Grove Road	Road Widening and Intersection Realignments	\$21,200,000	2035
RW-5	US 74/76/Heide Trask Bridge Replacement	Airlie Road	Causeway Drive	High Rise Bridge Replacement	\$243,500,000	2045
RW-51	NC 133/River Road Widening	US17/74/76	Rabon Way SE	Road Widening	\$164,990,000	2045
RW-99	Murrayville Road Widening and Extension	US 117/N. College Road	Market Street	Road Widening and Extension	\$60,250,000	2035
RW-102	Greenville Loop Road Widening	Pine Grove Drive	US76/Oleander Drive	Road Widening	\$81,450,000	2045
RW-175	NC210 & Island Creek Road Intersection	Intersection of NC 210 and Island Creek Road	N/A	Intersection Improvements	\$1,560,000	2035
RW-176	Old Fayetteville Road Interchange	Intersection of Old Fayetteville Road and US 74/76	N/A	New Interchange	\$43,410,000	2035
RW-181	I-140 at Blue Clay Road Interchange	Intersection of I-140 and Blue Clay Road	N/A	New Interchange	\$24,870,000	2035
RW-220	US 17 BUS/Market Street Road Diet (II of II)	16th Street	Covil Avenue	Road Diet	\$4,230,000	2030
RW-226	US421/74/NC133 & US17/76 Merge Lane Widening	N/A	N/A	Road Widening	\$20,660,000	2040
RW-26	Blue Clay Road Modernization	N. Kerr Avenue	US 117/N. College Road	Road Modernization	\$1,420,000	2030
U-6083	N. 23rd Street Widening	US 74/Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway	Aviation Drive	Road Widening	\$23,000,000	2030
RW-106	US 17 to NC 133 Connector Road	NC133	US17	New Road on New Location	\$48,110,000	2030
U-4738	Cape Fear Crossing	US421/Carolina Beach Rd & Independence Blvd	US17/Ocean Highway	New Road on New Location	\$1,200,000,000	2045
U-5704	US117/NC132 (College Road) at US76 (Oleander Drive) Intersection Improvements (At-grade Alternative)	Intersection of US117/NC132 (College Road) and US76 (Oleander Drive)	N/A	Intersection Improvements	\$55,300,000	2025



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## SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE

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A special meeting of the **Wilmington Urban Area MPO Board** will be held on **Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at 1:30 p.m.** at 525 N 4<sup>th</sup> St, Wilmington, NC. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the WMPO's 2026-2031 Strategic Plan.



If you have any questions, please contact  
Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director,  
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization,  
(910) 341-3258.

  
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Lynn Barbee, Chairman

Posted: 3:00 PM

Date: March 13, 2026