



525 N. 4th Street, Wilmington, NC 28401
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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: May 22, 2026
SUBJECT: May 27th WMPO Board Special Meeting

A Special meeting of the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Board will be held on Wednesday, May 27, 2026, at 1:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the WMPO Board Room located at 525 North 4th 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:

- 2026-2031 Strategic Plan May 27th Agenda Details
- Existing and Draft Mission and Vision Statements
- Draft Focus Areas and Strategies
- Draft Committed and Non-Committed Project Priorities
- May 27th WMPO Board Special Meeting Notice

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

May 27, 2026

1:00 PM

Agenda Details

Welcome and Overview

Mission and Vision

Engage Board members in a discussion of the strategic plan mission and vision statement. Receive feedback on draft mission and vision and finalize mission and vision statements.

Focus Areas

Present the focus areas to the Board. Review each focus area in turn and seek clarity and consensus. Receive feedback, modify as needed and seek Board approval.

Strategies

Rotate through each focus area to review strategies developed from earlier Board input and to brainstorm additional strategies. The goal is to collectively generate and capture ideas to finalize strategies and reach consensus and approval.

Priority Projects

Present results of the project prioritization exercise, facilitate a discussion around the projects and priorities, and seek approval on strategic plan project priorities.

Wrap-up and Next Steps

WMPO Mission Statement

Existing WMPO Mission Statement

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.

Draft WMPO Mission Statement

To encourage and guide proactive transportation decisions across the Wilmington Urban Area, covering the lower Cape Fear region of southeastern North Carolina, by fostering collaboration and strategic actions that deliver safer, more connected communities, robust economic opportunity, and an elevated quality of life now and in the future.

WMPO Vision Statement

Existing WMPO Vision Statement

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.

Draft WMPO Vision Statement

The WMPO will serve as a collaborative leader, partnering with residents, businesses, the legislature, stakeholders, and visitors to proactively shape the future of transportation in the Greater Wilmington Metropolitan Planning Area. Our vision is to deliver safe, reliable, and seamless multimodal solutions that meet the evolving needs of everyone in our dynamic and growing region.

WMPO Focus Areas and Strategies – Draft May 18, 2026

Regional Collaboration and Partnerships

Promote collaboration and strong partnerships among residents, board members, NCDOT, local governments, and key stakeholders.

- Facilitate and encourage collaboration between local member jurisdictions.
- Develop joint initiatives or task forces with NCDOT and other partners to streamline project planning and project delivery.
- Facilitate regular collaboration and knowledge-sharing sessions among board members.
- Support member jurisdictions in efforts to coordinate and share transportation initiatives.

Infrastructure and Safety

Improve infrastructure to enhance safety.

- Ensure that legislative action to classify and allow e-bikes considers safety concerns.
- Focus on expanding transportation to and from Wilmington Port.
- Invest in infrastructure projects that enhance safety for all modes of transportation.

Promotion of Alternative Transportation and Connectivity

Promote and expand alternative and active transportation modes, such as biking, walking, and public transit, with a focus on multimodal connectivity.

- Expand and improve public transit options through targeted service enhancements guided by comprehensive needs assessments and benchmarking studies in partnership with WAVE.
- Actively nurture partnerships to encourage biking and walking through targeted outreach and education.
- Support legislative action to classify and allow local regulation of e-bikes.
- Expand multiuse paths to meet growing demand for biking, walking and other active modes of transportation.

Adaptive Resiliency

Advance adaptive resiliency to prepare for technological advances and advance disaster preparedness and mitigation strategies.

- Invest in infrastructure improvements and disaster-resilient designs to reduce vulnerability to severe weather events.

- Develop and implement a Resiliency Improvement Plan (RIP)
- Better position the region for a future with Connected and Automated Vehicles.
- Coordinate with NCDOT Aviation Division to discuss planning strategies to support advanced air mobility.

Engagement and Education

Enhance communication and engagement, improve board member and public understanding of the transportation planning process and foster broader community support through engagement and education.

- Coordinate a peer exchange to facilitate direct learning and sharing of ideas.
- Provide guest speakers at board meetings from industry, academia, or partner agencies to highlight innovative practices, updates from members, and emerging topics of interest to the WMPO board.
- Organize a targeted board training session that covers the NCDOT project delivery and implementation process including topics related to funding and risk management.
- Continue WMPO communications to make technical material more accessible and relevant for constituents.
- Expand WMPO public outreach efforts to educate residents about transportation options and benefits.

Organizational Excellence

Meet complex transportation challenges by fostering skilled staff, stable leadership, clear project management, and adaptability to board changes for continuity and effective leadership.

- Develop strategies to reduce loss of institutional knowledge stemming from board turnover or changes in leadership.
- Adopt knowledge management practices to retain and share organizational expertise in the event of board member or staff turnover.
- Encourage ongoing professional development for staff to further enhance technical competence.
- Implement leadership succession planning and mentorship programs to sustain staff leadership stability.

Planning for Growth and Development

Implement planning strategies that are responsive to the challenges and opportunities related to growth and development and the changing demographics and travel patterns associated with this growth.

- Adopt adaptive planning processes that account for rapid growth and changing priorities due to changing travel patterns and other uncertainties related to rapid growth.
- Initiate conversations with neighboring communities in preparation for a WMPO boundary expansion following the 2030 Census.
- Active participation in the TRC process to facilitate collaboration between transportation planners and land use planners to ensure that new developments are aligned with regional mobility goals, minimize congestion, and support multimodal options.
- Explore the use of alternative metrics in Traffic Impact Analyses (TIA) for major developments in urban areas or infill development.
- Use demographic and travel trend data to guide future land use and transportation investments to encourage strategies that address growth, shift travel demand, and support mixed use development.

Funding

Respond to ongoing challenges of insufficient resources, constraints on the ability to generate additional revenue, and funding levels that fail to match regional growth.

- Proactively engage with NCDOT to communicate the need for funding that matches regional growth and inflation. This includes providing data-driven evidence of unmet needs and the impact of delayed projects.
- Explore grants, Public-Private Partnerships, and innovative financing mechanisms to supplement traditional funding streams.
- Develop a regional voice to lobby state legislature to increase influence and access to funding.
- Foster regional collaboration to minimize competition and maximize collective funding opportunities.
- Actively pursue alternative funding sources and increase advocacy for federal and state support.

Draft WMPO Project Priorities

Committed Transportation Projects

1. US 74/Martin Luther King Jr Parkway & US 117/NC 132/College Road Interchange: *Upgrade roadway and upgrade intersections to grade-separated interchanges.*
2. Wilmington Citywide Signal System: *Upgrade to a new signal system.*
3. US 74/NC 133/Isabel Holmes Bridge Interchange: *US 17/US 421 in Wilmington. Construct a flyover and free-flow ramp at the interchange.*
4. Kerr Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr Parkway Interchange: *Upgrade existing intersection to an interchange.*
5. US 421/Carolina Beach Road Widening & Intersection Improvements: *NC 132 (South College Road) to Sanders Road in Wilmington. Widen the existing roadway and construct a continuous flow interchange at US 421 and NC 132.*

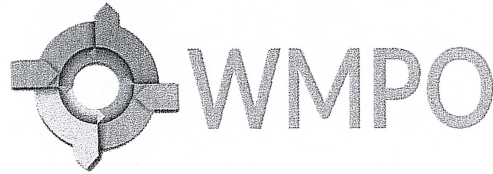
Non-Committed Transportation Projects

1. Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Replacement: *Bridge replacement and road widening to six 12-foot lanes.*
2. US 117/NC 132 (College Road) at US 76 (Oleander Drive) Intersection Improvements (at-grade alternative): *At-grade quadrant intersection improvement.*
3. US 17 Upgrades in Leland: *Access management improvements on US 17/Ocean Highway SE from Carol Lynn Drive NE to Zion Church Road NE.*
4. US 17/76/Oleander Drive Access Management: *Access management improvements on US 17/76/Oleander Drive from Independence Blvd to Greenville Loop Road in Wilmington.*
5. Cape Fear Crossing: *New route on new/partial new location, including a new high-rise bridge crossing over the Cape Fear River.*



SPECIAL MEETING NOTICE

A special meeting of the **Wilmington Urban Area MPO Board** will be held on **Wednesday, May 27 , 2026, at 1:00 p.m.** at 525 N 4th 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.

Lynn Barbee, Chairman

Posted: 3:50 PM

Date: May 12, 2026