



WMPO’s SS4A Safety Action Plan Round 2 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 2 of engagement focused on gathering feedback on draft locations for improvement around the region and the effectiveness of a variety of safety improvements. Community members were invited to review and comment on draft priority corridors and intersections identified through crash data, roadway analysis, and earlier community input. These locations are where safety improvements may have the greatest impact for people walking, biking, using mobility devices, driving, and getting on and off transit. Feedback from the public confirmed whether these locations reflect real-world conditions and community needs.

In addition to community engagement, the WMPO and project team engaged the SS4A Safety Action Plan Steering Committee to review the draft priority locations and to help share opportunities for their community members to provide input. The committee includes representatives from local municipalities and jurisdictions, providing expertise from several departments including transportation planning and engineering, fire, police, and education.

WMPO SS4A Safety Action Plan Round 2 Engagement Strategy

Round 2 of community engagement was open from January 13 through February 22, 2026. The WMPO launched an 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
- Flyers

To ensure clear and coordinated communication, the project team created a comprehensive outreach package that included ready-to-use social media visuals, suggested messaging, and customizable newsletter and email templates (see Figure 1 for sample materials). This toolkit was distributed to the WMPO SS4A Safety Action Plan Steering Committee and key community partners for dissemination through their respective networks and communication channels.

Community Engagement Results



Figure 1. Round 2 Toolkit Examples

Round 2 offered a variety of ways to provide feedback, including an online comment map, an online survey, pop-up events, and an open house. In-person events offered physical maps, paper surveys, and comment cards. Figure 2 summarizes the engagement results over six-week period:

719
Survey Responses



258
Map Comments



180
Meaningful Conversations




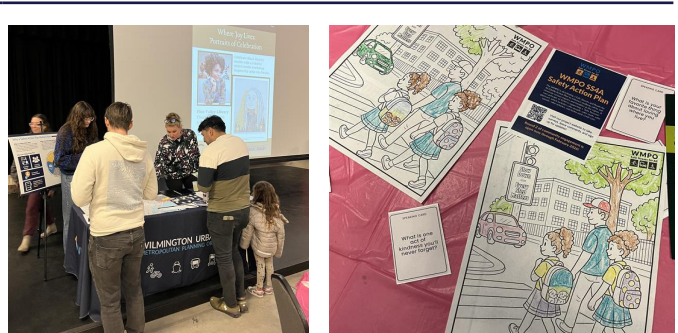


Figure 2. Round 2 Engagement by the Numbers

Your Voice Matters! Engagement Events Timeline

Meeting People Where They Are

The project team capitalized on lessons learned from Round 1 of community engagement to inform the planning and execution of Round 2. To increase the number of people reached, WMPO staff and the project team chose to attend more pop-up events as well as provide flyers or presentations at regularly scheduled meetings that are well attended. The project team also hosted one open house and facilitated a youth activity.

Event Location	Common Themes	Photos
<p>MLK Fun Day at MLK Community Center - January 17, 11 AM to 1 PM</p>	<p>Would like to see intersection safety improved across the region. Would like to see safer crossings on Carolina Beach Road.</p>	
<p>Cupcakes & Conversations at UNCW - February 4, 11 AM to 1 PM</p>	<p>Bicycle and pedestrian safety around campus along College Road and surrounding roadway connectors to campus.</p>	
<p>Line Dancing at Navassa Community Center - February 9, 6 PM to 8 PM</p>	<p>Concerned with high speeds on two-lane roads, lack of sidewalks along roadways, and traffic congestion on US 17.</p>	
<p>Northside Community Dinner at DREAMS of Wilmington - February 12, 6 PM to 8 PM</p>	<p>Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure should be prioritized as some community members do not have access to vehicles.</p>	

Location	Common Themes	Photos
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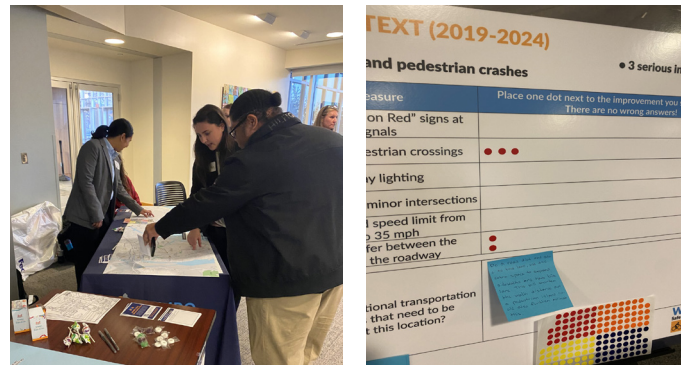
The Sweetheart Shop at Belville Riverwalk Park - February 13, 2 PM to 4 PM

Speed concerns on River Road (NC 133). Need access for residents on east side of NC 133 to be able to connect to the multiuse path on the west side.



WMPO SS4A Open House at Skyline Center - February 17, 5 PM to 7 PM

Safety investments such as safer crossings, more sidewalks and trails, and more No Right Turn on Red at appropriate intersections.



Agency Name	Meeting Date	Details
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UNCW Latino Alliance

January 20 at 1 PM

The project team attended the monthly UNCW Latino Alliance meeting held at New Hanover County Government Center. Meeting attendees were presented with project information and details about how to provide input and feedback.

Pender County Commissioners Meeting

January 20 at 5:30 PM

The project team passed out flyers prior to the start of the meeting as well as provided a project announcement during the public comment period.

Town of Belville Board of Commissioners Meeting

January 27 at 6 PM

As part of the Projects Update agenda item, the project team presented a brief update including information about the project, how to provide input and feedback, and a request for help sharing the information with community members.

Youth Activity with Boys & Girls Club of Southeastern NC

January 29 at 4 PM
February 18 at 4 PM

The project team created a coloring activity and contest for students at a local Boys & Girls Club.

Youth Activity with Boys & Girls Club of Southeastern NC

On January 29, the project team met with over 100 students after school and discussed different types of transportation, what types of transportation they use, roadway safety, and the purpose of the WMPO Safe Streets for All coloring contest. Students that chose to participate were provided with a coloring sheet with instructions and a goody bag with information on how parents/guardians can provide feedback on the plan. Students were tasked with drawing a picture describing what safe transportation looks like to them. The students were given two weeks to work on their drawings. On February 18, the project team returned to the Boys & Girls Club to collect and award winners of the contest the drawings (Figure 3). Five students won the contest, and all participants were provided with a bicycle keychain and a certificate for their hard work.



Figure 3. Examples of WMPO Safe Streets for All Coloring Submissions

Main Themes in Community Feedback

Round 2 of community engagement focused on gathering feedback on priority intersections and roads for safety improvements. Feedback also asked what safety looks like, such as what countermeasures people want to see in their community. Feedback was collected through an online survey and online comment map.

Survey Results

The survey was structured around four case studies. The case studies represent priority locations across the region. For each case study, respondents were asked to describe the perceived key safety issues and rank safety improvements in order of effectiveness.

Case Study 1: Market Street - From Wilmington Avenue to Gingerwood Drive

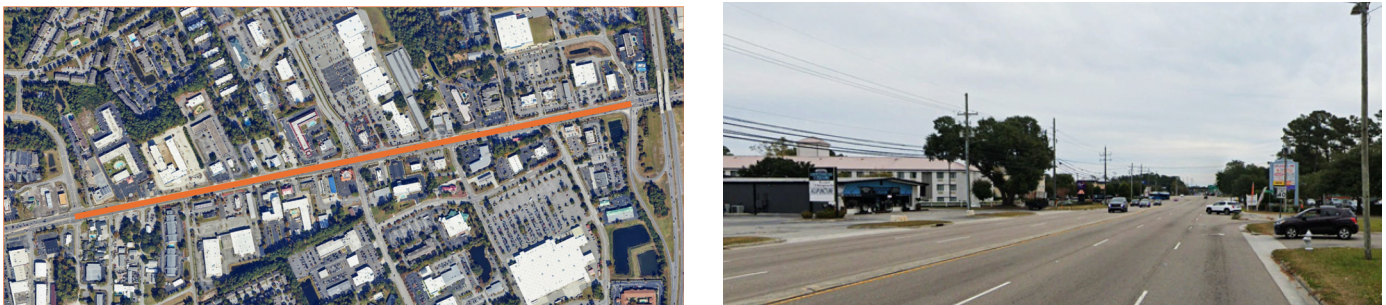


Figure 4. Market Street Case Study

Perceived issues were lack of bicyclist infrastructure, lack of signalized pedestrian crossings, a busy road with high speeds, and distracted or aggressive driving. The highest-rated improvement for this corridor is adding signalized pedestrian crossings. Increasing the buffer between the sidewalk and roadway and adding roadway lighting also scored relatively high. Adding traffic signals at minor intersections and reducing the posted speed limit received moderate support. Adding No Right Turn on Red restrictions was the lowest-rated option among those evaluated.

Case Study 2: US 17 North of Hampstead



Figure 5. US 17 Case Study

Perceived issues were speeding and distracted driving, lack of driver compliance, such as running red lights and lack of compliance with existing traffic control devices on the corridor. Closing median openings received the strongest level of support among the evaluated strategies. Adding traffic signals, wider edge lines, and sidewalks or trails also scored relatively high, indicating interest in both safety and multimodal improvements. Reducing the posted speed and adding roadway lighting received moderate support. Adding more warning signs was the lowest-rated option compared to the other improvements.

Case Study 3: River Road (NC 133) in Belville



Figure 6. River Road Case Study

Perceived issues were narrow shoulders, roadway curvature, speeding, and visibility concerns, particularly from lack of roadway lighting. For River Road in Belville, adding roadway lighting received the highest level of support, closely followed by reducing the posted speed, adding more warning signs, and using wider edge lines. Adding sidewalks and trails also ranked relatively high, indicating interest in multimodal improvements. Adding medians received moderate support. Adding traffic signals was the lowest-rated strategy among those evaluated.

Case Study 4: Lake Park Boulevard in Carolina Beach

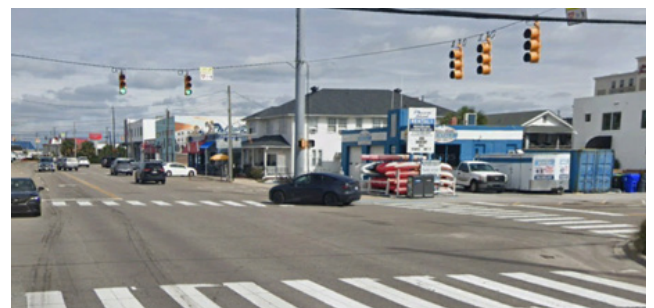
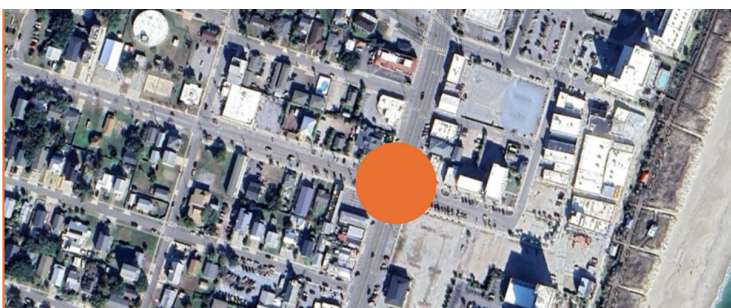


Figure 7. Lake Park Boulevard Case Study

Perceived uses of the roadway focused on pedestrian activity. Issues participants cited were around a busy signalized intersection with many modes using it, distracted driving, and aggressive driving. For Lake Park Boulevard in Carolina Beach, adding signalized pedestrian crossings received the strongest support among the proposed strategies. Adding no right turn on red restrictions and reducing the posted speed limit also ranked relatively high. Increasing the buffer between the sidewalk and roadway received moderate support. Adding roadway lighting and adding traffic signals at minor intersections were the lowest-rated options in this case study.

Key Findings from Case Studies

Survey results across the four case study corridors indicate strong correlations between corridor characteristics and preferred safety improvements. Each of the four case studies included a different collection of potential roadway safety improvements for consideration by the participants regarding its effectiveness. Across all corridors, chosen countermeasures generally aligned with roadway functionality, lane configuration, multimodal activity, and surrounding land uses. Several trends emerged:

- Higher-volume, multi-lane roadways generated support for controlled crossings and access management
- Perceived pedestrian and bicyclist activity drove concerns about long crossings, turning conflicts, and balancing mobility with access
- Lower-volume or rural corridors generated support for visibility and speed management improvements

Top Investments for Roadway Safety

Participants were asked about the top investment to enhance safety in the region' as an open-ended response. Several topic areas rose to the top from open-ended responses (Figure 8).

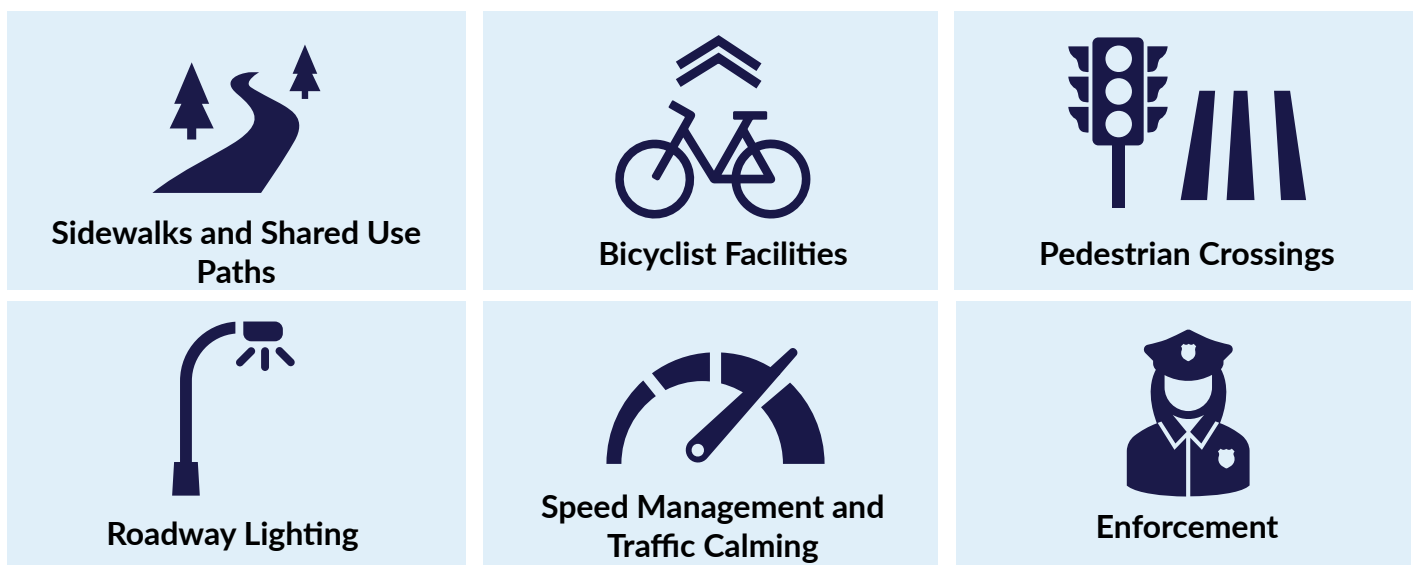


Figure 8. Top Safety Investments

Responses overwhelmingly emphasized pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure as the top safety investment priority, frequently citing continuous and connected sidewalks, protected or buffered bike lanes, shared use paths, and highly visible, signalized pedestrian crossings. Many respondents noted that existing sidewalks are inconsistent or end abruptly, and that crossing multi-lane roadways—particularly corridors such as Market Street and U.S. 17—feels unsafe. Roadway lighting was another dominant theme, with many participants describing the region as excessively dark at night and calling for improved street lighting, illuminated crosswalks, and reflective roadway markings. Speed management also emerged, with requests for lower speed limits and traffic calming measures. In addition to infrastructure, many respondents would like to see more enforcement for speeding and distracted driving. Overall, the public prioritized investments that protect vulnerable road users, improve visibility, manage speeds, and provide safer alternatives to driving.

Online Comment Map Results

A total of 258 comments were submitted through the Round 2 comment map. In this round of engagement, the comment map focused on structured input on identified priority segments and intersections. The resulting analysis of the community feedback highlights consistent corridor-level concerns, strong emphasis on multimodal safety, and broad public support for many proposed focus areas.

Several main themes emerged, with concerns for pedestrian and bicyclist safety rising to the top. Nearly half of the comments that referenced bike lanes described them as missing, unsafe, or inadequate, while one-third directly requested additional or improved facilities. Similarly, most comments mentioning speed limits were associated with concerns about current conditions and requests for modifications or additional traffic calming measures.

Comments were generally concentrated along major roadways. Market Street, College Road, Shipyard Boulevard, and Carolina Beach Road were the most frequently referenced corridors (Figure 9). Independence Boulevard, 3rd Street, and River Road (NC 133) also generated notable comment volume. Many of these corridors were also identified in Round 1, reinforcing the community’s ongoing safety concerns.

On the online comment map, respondents had the option to leave individual comments as well as “like” and respond to comments left by others. Looking at community interactions on the online comment map helped the project team identify additional corridor and intersection locations that received significant community interest and support (Figure 10).

Overall, nearly all locations commented on by participants received support. In other words, no corridor had strong opposition for investment. This strong level of agreement between feedback and the draft priority locations indicates that the corridors identified from the High Injury Network (HIN) and data-driven prioritization reflect lived experience and perceived risk within the community.

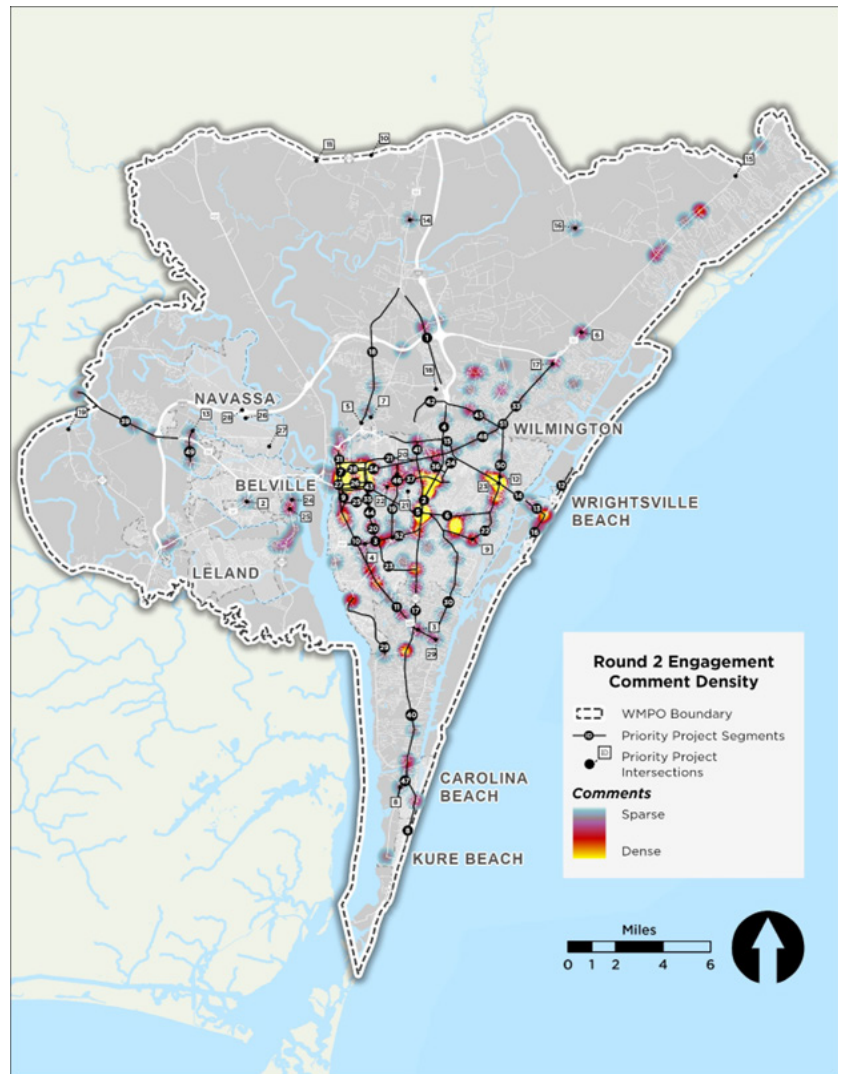


Figure 9. Comment Clusters

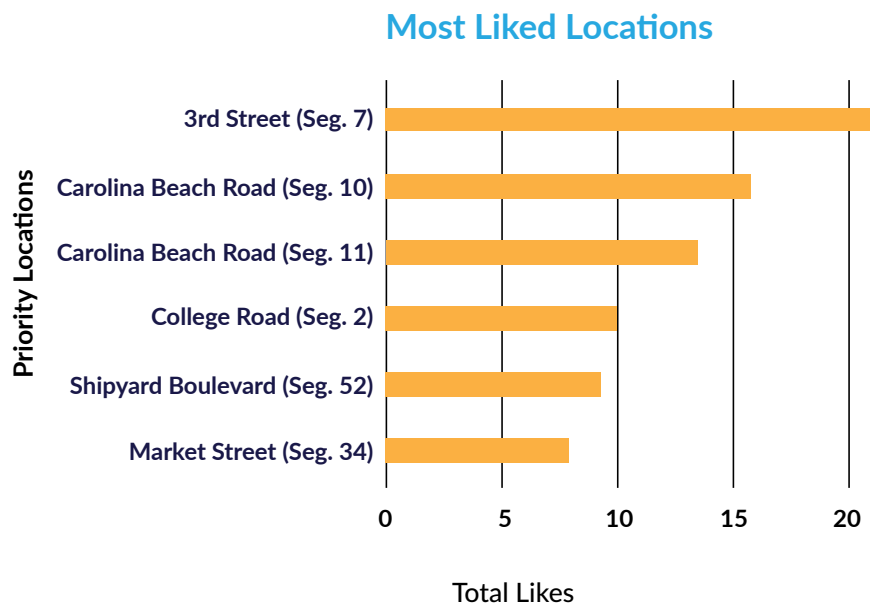


Figure 10. Top Liked Locations

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 2 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 11).



Figure 11. WMPO SS4A Safety Action Plan Timeline