WILMINGTON URBAN AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Public Participation Plan

Adopted May 27, 2026

Amended November 18, 2026



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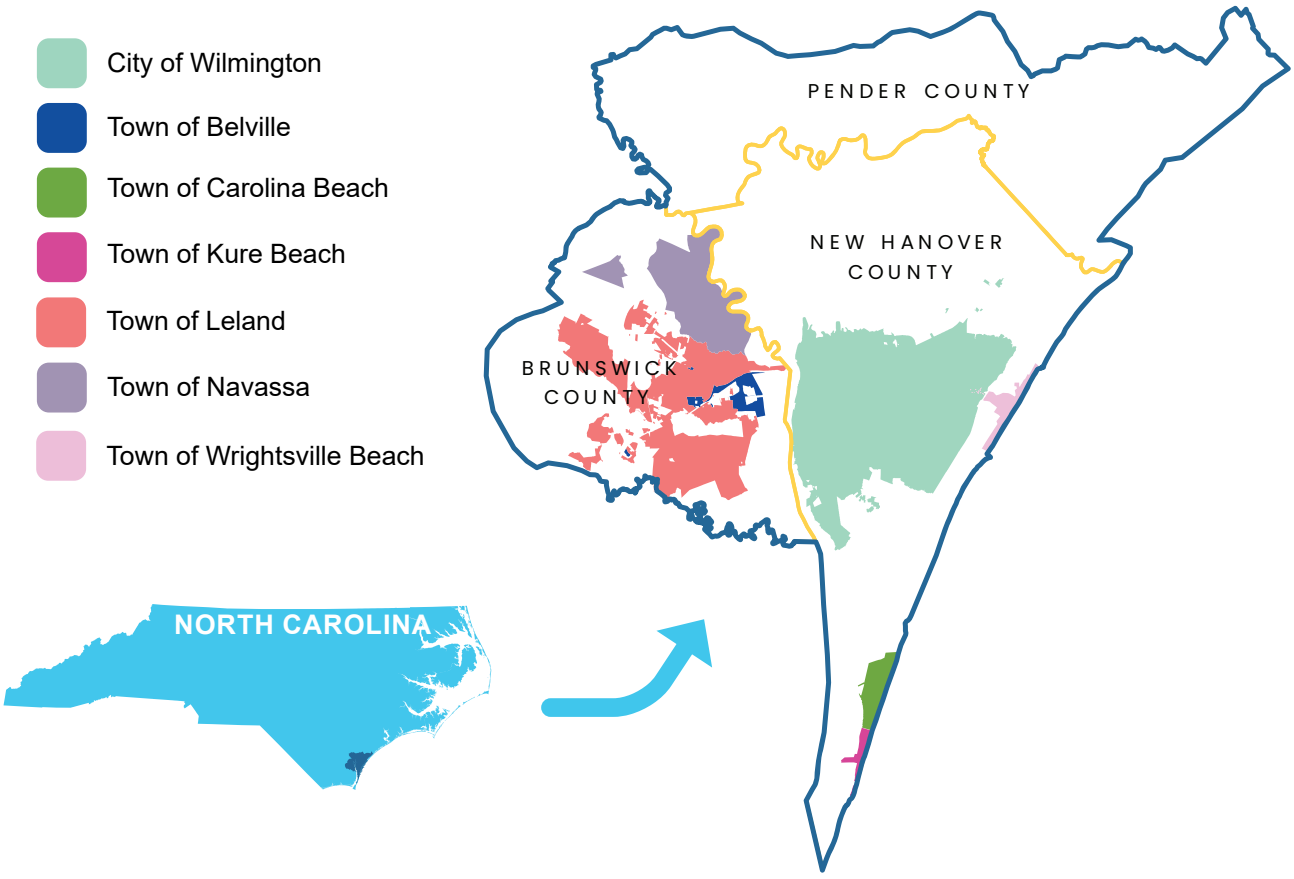
Getting to Know the WMPO

The Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WMPO) leads regional transportation planning in the greater Wilmington area. As a federally funded organization, the WMPO helps guide how federal transportation dollars are spent and ensures planning is coordinated, continuous, and comprehensive. Our work includes developing long-range transportation plans, reviewing projects, coordinating with local boards and committees, and setting regional transportation goals. Simply put, the WMPO brings together the community, local officials, and transportation experts to plan for safe, efficient, and reliable transportation in our region.

Here to Serve the Region

The WMPO's planning area spans about 494 square miles and includes the City of Wilmington, the Towns of Belville, Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, Leland, Navassa, and Wrightsville Beach, as well as all of New Hanover County and portions of Brunswick and Pender Counties. The policy and direction of our organization are guided by a Board of representatives from these communities, Wave Transit, and the North Carolina Board of Transportation, all working together to plan for transportation that meets our region's needs.

WMPO Planning Area Boundary



WMPO Mission:

The mission of the WMPO is to create and carry out continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive regional transportation planning efforts that proactively guide transportation decisions to improve safety, connectivity, economic development, and quality of life throughout the Wilmington region.

What is the Public Participation Plan?

The WMPO's Public Participation Plan (PPP) outlines how the public is informed, engaged, and involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process. The PPP is designed as a blueprint for action to ensure that public participation is fair, transparent, and effective. WMPO planning work products, as well as major amendments to adopted plans and programs, must follow the public involvement requirements outlined in this PPP. The plan also ensures compliance with applicable federal requirements, including the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The PPP serves as a guiding framework for meaningful public involvement across all major WMPO planning activities.

It establishes the policies, procedures, and techniques used to inform the public and gather feedback.

Your Involvement and Input Matter!

Meaningful public involvement is essential to the development and successful implementation of transportation plans, projects, and programs, and helps ensure that transportation decisions reflect the needs, values, and priorities of the region's residents, businesses, and stakeholders. This plan establishes the policies, procedures, and techniques used to inform the public and gather feedback from residents, community groups, partner agencies, and other interested parties throughout the WMPO. By expanding the information available to decision-makers, the PPP helps strengthen planning outcomes and promotes participation from all members of the community.



WMPO staff speaking with community member at an outreach event.

The Goals of this Plan

The goals of the WMPO's Public Participation Plan are:

Ensure meaningful and timely public involvement in decision-making

Actively seek, consider, and respond to public input by providing clear, accessible opportunities for participation early and throughout WMPO planning and decision-making processes.

Promote transparency and understanding in transportation planning

Provide timely, understandable, and accessible information so the public, stakeholders, and decision-makers can understand transportation issues, processes, and outcomes.

Engage a broad and diverse range of community voices

Use a variety of outreach methods and communication tools to reach diverse populations and encourage participation from a wide cross-section of the community.

Integrate and continuously improve public participation practices

Embed credible public participation processes into all WMPO activities, maintain effective feedback channels, evaluate outcomes, and adapt strategies to meet community needs and federal requirements, including IIJA, Title VI, ADA, and FTA/FHWA guidance.

Connect with Us!

Participate In-Person

Make a public comment at a WMPO Board meeting or visit WMPO's office at 525 N. 4th Street, Wilmington, NC 28401

Connect with us Online

Visit www.wmpo.org or www.gocoastnc.org

Follow us on:
Facebook: Wilmington Urban Area MPO | Go Coast
Instagram: wilmingtonmpo | gocoastnc
LinkedIn: Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Nextdoor: WMPO

Call, Email, or Send a Letter

Email us at wmpo@wilmingtonnc.gov
Call us at (910) 341-3258
Send letters to the WMPO at:
Wilmington Urban Area MPO
525 N. 4th Street
Wilmington, North Carolina 28401

Come to an Event

WMPO participates in special events throughout the region and hosts events for the public to learn about projects and resources. Visit the WMPO website to view opportunities.

WMPO

Who is Involved in the Process?

The WMPO is a cooperative partnership of local governments, transportation agencies, and planning partners that collaboratively address the region's transportation needs through a coordinated regional planning process. As a federally mandated Metropolitan Planning Organization, the WMPO operates in accordance with federal transportation planning regulations and works in partnership with state and federal partners to help guide transportation investments throughout the Wilmington region. This process is directed by the WMPO Board, with input and recommendations from three standing committees and various ad hoc steering and subcommittees, as needed.

The WMPO Board

The WMPO is governed by a 13-member Board, which serves as the region's transportation policy-making body. The Board is established in accordance with federal regulations (23 CFR § 450.104) and is composed of 12 elected officials and one appointed representative from local jurisdictions and transportation agencies with authority over transportation planning and project implementation within the WMPO planning area. The Board provides overall policy direction and approvals for the metropolitan transportation planning and programming process.

Each voting member is entitled to one vote. Non-voting members may include representatives from state and federal transportation agencies and other partner organizations, as identified in the WMPO's adopted Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and serve in an advisory capacity to support coordination and compliance with federal and state requirements.

WMPO Board Meetings

All WMPO Board meetings are conducted in accordance with North Carolina's open meetings law, N.C.G.S. Chapter 143, Article 33C.

WMPO Board Regular Meetings

When	Where	Who	What
3:00 p.m. Last Wednesday of each month	WMPO Office or via Zoom	WMPO Board Open to the public	Agenda posted ≥5 days before the meeting at wmpo.org Begins with public comment period

There is typically no regular WMPO Board meeting in December. The dates, times, and locations of meetings are subject to change. Additionally, certain situations may require the WMPO Board to hold special and/or emergency meetings, or to hold meetings fully virtual.

2026 WMPO Board Members

Updated 5.7.2026

WMPO

Pender County



Brad George
Commissioner

NC Board of Transportation



Landon Zimmer
Board Member

CFPTA



Stephanie Walker
New Hanover County Commissioner

Brunswick County



Frank Williams
Commissioner
WMPO Board Vice Chair

New Hanover County

Bill Rivenbark
Commissioner

Town of Navassa

Rose Terry
Mayor

Town of Wrightsville Beach

Ken Dull
Mayor

City of Wilmington

Cassidy Santaguida
Council Member

Kevin Spears
Mayor Pro Tem

Town of Leland

Brenda Bozeman
Mayor

Town of Belville



Chuck Bost
Mayor

Town of Kure Beach



Allen Oliver
Mayor

Town of Carolina Beach



Lynn Barbee
Mayor
WMPO Board Chair

WMPO Non-Voting Board Members

Federal Highway Administration
Cape Fear Council of Governments
North Carolina State Ports Authority
New Hanover County Airport Authority
North Carolina Turnpike Authority

Committees and Subcommittees

WMPO committees and subcommittees help the Board explore specific topics in more detail and better understand complex issues. They provide an opportunity for focused discussion that supports informed, transparent decision-making and helps guide the WMPO's transportation planning work. There are three standing committees: the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), the Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC), and the Go Coast Committee. Plan-specific committees and Board subcommittees meet on an as-needed basis.

Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)

The TCC provides overall oversight, direction, and coordination of the transportation planning process, and is responsible for making recommendations to the appropriate local and state government agencies, as well as the WMPO Board, on actions needed to support and advance the ongoing transportation planning process in the Wilmington region. The TCC is comprised of planners, engineers, and other staff from the WMPO's member jurisdictions and planning partners.



The TCC meets monthly and is composed of planners, engineers, and other staff from each member jurisdiction and WMPO planning partners.

TCC meets at 10 a.m., two weeks prior to the WMPO Board meeting, except December. Meetings are typically held in the Board Room of the WMPO office.

Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC)

The ATAC is composed of members appointed by the Board and is responsible for making recommendations to the Board on implementing relevant programs, policies, projects, and funding priorities related to active transportation access. Active transportation refers to any human-powered means of transportation.

The ATAC advises the WMPO Board in three focus areas:

1. Safety & Education
2. Planning & Policy
3. Public Engagement & Community Partnerships

ATAC members represent local jurisdictions, agencies, and stakeholder groups. Members may be private citizens, employees of WMPO member jurisdictions, nonprofit employees, educators, students, healthcare providers, and more.



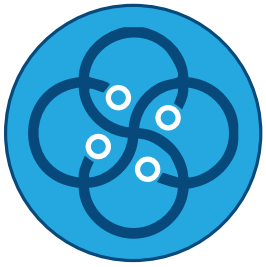
The ATAC meets every other month and is composed of citizens, subject matter experts, and stakeholders involved in matters related to active transportation.

The ATAC meets bimonthly on the third Tuesdays of February, April, June, August, October, and December at 2 p.m. in the Board Room of the WMPO office.

Go Coast Committee

The Go Coast Committee is composed of representatives from area employers, WMPO member jurisdictions, higher education institutions, and Wave Transit. The Committee guides the activities of the Go Coast program in implementing the short-range Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan included in the WMPO's adopted Metropolitan Transportation Plan, *Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050*, as Appendix L.

The Go Coast Committee shapes the program's various events, challenges, and campaigns, including the annual commuter challenge in October, the Be A Looker safety campaign, and Bike Month in May. The committee also provides valuable employer perspectives needed to inform outreach and support programs for area employers. The Committee's input helps facilitate a shift away from driving alone toward other modes of transportation, supporting Go Coast's goals to mitigate traffic congestion, improve air quality, and enhance the travel experience for residents, employees, and visitors of the Cape Fear region.



Go Coast meets quarterly and is composed of staff from major employers throughout the region.

Go Coast meetings are held quarterly at 3 p.m. on the third Thursday of the second month of each quarter. The committee meets in person at the WMPO office in February and August, and meets virtually in May and November.

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

The CAC is composed of individuals appointed by each WMPO Board member to assist in public engagement efforts during the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The committee is established by the WMPO Board at the start of the MTP development process and is dissolved following the completion of the plan. A meeting schedule for the committee is determined to correspond with the public engagement phases of the MTP's development.



MTP Advisory Committee (MTPC)

The MTPC is composed of technical staff from member agencies, planning partners, and modal subject matter experts to guide and oversee the development of the MTP. The committee is established by the WMPO Board at the start of the MTP development process and is dissolved following the completion of the plan. The MTP Advisory Committee typically meets on a monthly basis throughout the development of the technical components of the MTP.

The CAC and MTPC meet during MTP development cycles. The CAC meeting schedule corresponds with public engagement phases, while the MTPC typically meets on a monthly basis.

Board Subcommittees

To help guide its work, the WMPO Board uses subcommittees to take a closer look at specific topics. Subcommittees are composed of Board members who meet to learn more about an issue, hear presentations, ask questions, and discuss ideas before bringing their findings and recommendations back to the full Board. They do not make final decisions; instead, they provide recommendations that inform Board discussions and actions. For example, the Alternative Funding Subcommittee explores ways to fund transportation projects beyond traditional sources. Other subcommittees include Boundary, Governance and Structure; Evaluation and Compensation; and Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Replacement Aesthetics.



WMPO Board subcommittees meet on an as-needed basis and provide recommendations to the Board regarding specific issues. Meeting schedules vary.

Meeting Notice and Agendas

Notice of WMPO Board and committee meetings, including special and emergency meetings, will be provided in accordance with the North Carolina Open Meetings Law, as set forth in North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 143, Article 33C. For regular meetings, agendas and supporting materials will be posted on the WMPO website at least five (5) calendar days prior to regularly scheduled meetings.

The WMPO Board adopts its regular meeting schedule for the upcoming calendar year at its final meeting of each year. Any changes to the adopted schedule will be publicly noticed in accordance with state law.

WMPO Meeting Notice Requirements



- The date, time, and place of the meeting.
- A brief description of the meeting.
- The contact information where individuals can obtain meeting information and a copy of the agenda.
- Information about how to obtain a record of the meeting as stated in North Carolina Open Meetings Law.
- If held solely electronically, post on WMPO's website the meeting's electronic location and means, and instructions where the public may watch a livestream and/or listen to the meeting.
- Contact information for persons with disabilities needing special accomodations to participate in the proceeding in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and North Carolina Open Meetings Law.

Accessibility

All WMPO Board and Committee meetings will be held in facilities that are accessible to persons with disabilities and, where feasible, served by public transportation. Individuals requiring special accommodations, auxiliary aids, or language assistance to participate in a meeting are encouraged to contact the WMPO in advance. Instructions for requesting accommodations will be included in the meeting notices.

Virtual and Hybrid Meetings

WMPO meetings may be conducted in-person, virtually, or in a hybrid format, consistent with the North Carolina law. When meetings are held virtually or include a virtual participation option, the WMPO will take reasonable steps to ensure public access, which may include live streaming, call-in options, and the advance posting of agendas and presentation materials.

When in-person public comment is not feasible, alternative methods for submitting comments, including but not limited to, mail, email, voicemail, online forms, or other electronic means may be provided. Deadlines for submitting public comments will be clearly communicated and will allow reasonable time for public participation.

Public Comment During Meetings

Public comment is offered at regularly scheduled meetings of the WMPO Board and some of its advisory committees. Comment periods generally occur at the beginning of meetings and provide an opportunity for the public to speak on matters listed or not listed on the agenda.

Prior to the start of each regular meeting, a sign-up sheet will be available for those who wish to speak. Speakers are asked to state their name for the record before providing comments. Each speaker is limited to three (3) minutes, and the total public comment period shall not exceed fifteen (15) minutes. If necessary, the Board or advisory committee Chair may extend the public comment period by a majority vote of the Board or committee.

For meetings held in a hybrid format (both in-person and virtual), public comment is accepted in person only, in accordance with the WMPO's public comment policy.

Public Hearings

For certain projects, plans, and programs, federal, state, or local law may require a public hearing. The purpose of a public hearing is to provide public input into a decision to be made by a local government unit or body. Public hearings are conducted per the requirements of applicable statutes and the WMPO's adopted Rules and Procedures.

WMPO Meetings Summary	Meeting Frequency	Public Notice	Agenda Posted in Advance	Public Access to Attend	Public Comment on Agenda
WMPO Board- Regular	Monthly	●	●	●	●
WMPO Board- Non-Regular	As needed	●	●	●	
TCC- Regular	Monthly	●	●	●	
TCC- Non-Regular	As needed	●	●	●	
ATAC	Bimonthly	●	●	●	●
Go Coast	Quarterly	●	●	●	●
Ad Hoc Planning Subcommittees	As needed	●	●	●	
Standing/Ad Hoc Subcommittees	As needed	●	●	●	

Federal Certifications



Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

The WMPO operates under the federal requirements established in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), signed into law on November 16, 2021. This law reauthorizes and provides long-term funding for federal surface transportation programs while largely maintaining existing program structures. Under IIJA, the metropolitan transportation planning process must be continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive. The law also reaffirms certification requirements for Metropolitan Planning Organizations to ensure compliance with federal planning standards.

Self-Certification

In addition to the federal certification conducted no less than every four years, the WMPO completes an annual self-certification typically with the development of the upcoming fiscal year's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Through this process, the WMPO affirms that its transportation planning activities are being carried out in accordance with applicable federal and state requirements. The draft UPWP, including self-certification, is made available for public review and comment prior to Board consideration.

Federal Certification

Conducted at a minimum of every four years by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), federal law requires these agencies to review and certify the transportation planning process for Transportation Management Areas (TMAs), which are urbanized areas with populations of more than 200,000. The WMPO was designated a TMA in 2012, based on the 2010 census. During the Certification Review, FHWA and FTA examine how the MPO functions, transportation plans are developed, and how public outreach and participation efforts are included. The WMPO was designated as a TMA in 2012, beginning the requirement for federal certification review. Prior to a review, the WMPO notifies the public of this review through a press release that announces the opportunity to provide public comment.

The most recent Federal Certification Review was conducted in the spring of 2023.

WMPO Federal Certification Review (2023)

Visit wmpo.org/organizational-documents to view the most recent Certification Review. Hard copies are available upon request.

Public Participation Strategies and Tools

The WMPO uses a variety of outreach methods to inform, engage, and solicit input from the public and stakeholders throughout the transportation planning process. These methods are selected based on the purpose, scope, and audience of each planning effort and may be used individually or in combination. The WMPO is committed to making participation accessible by holding meetings in locations served by transit, offering virtual and in-person engagement options, providing multiple formats for surveys and materials, and accommodating language and accessibility needs whenever possible to reduce barriers to participation.

Engagement Strategies

Engagement strategies describe the structured ways the WMPO involves the public, stakeholders, and decision-makers in transportation planning. These strategies range from broad opportunities for public input to targeted collaboration with partner agencies and formal involvement through committees and governing bodies. Together, they support ongoing communication, informed discussion, and consideration of input throughout the planning process.

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

Opportunities for the public and stakeholders throughout planning or project development process to gather input, share information, and build collaborative relationships. Engagement may include coordination with local governments, partner agencies, community organizations, advocacy groups, and residents. These efforts help ensure that transportation plans, programs, and projects reflect regional needs and community priorities.



A stakeholder group was convened to inform the Go Coast short-range plan.

Public Meetings and Interactive Engagement

Opportunities for community members to learn about transportation initiatives and offer input. These meetings may be held in-person or virtually and are designed to encourage two-way communication. Formats may include open houses, workshops, charettes, small-group discussions, and transportation summits.



Community members explore project materials at a public meeting.

Advisory and Steering Committees

The WMPO uses advisory committees as targeted strategies to support outreach and engagement during major planning efforts, such as the development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). For planning initiatives, the WMPO may establish a steering committee to guide the planning process and provide focused input at key milestones. The steering committee typically includes representatives from local governments, transportation agencies, planning partners, and other stakeholders to ensure a balanced mix of technical expertise and community perspectives.



A steering committee meeting for the SS4A Safety Action Plan.

Engagement Tools

The WMPO uses a range of engagement tools to help inform the public and gather feedback on transportation planning efforts. These tools are designed to make participation easier and to ensure community input is considered in decision-making.

Print and Traditional Media

These tools share information through established, non-digital channels to raise awareness and reach audiences who may not regularly engage online. They are especially effective for brand distribution and targeted community awareness. Some examples include local media coverage, brochures and flyers, billboards, newsletters, and the WMPO Annual Report.

Surveys and Input Collection

Used to gather structured input from the public and stakeholders, these tools help the WMPO understand community priorities, concerns, and preferences related to transportation planning. Tools include paper and online surveys, comment forms, feedback cards, and written input collected at meetings.

In-Person Outreach and Educational Displays

These tools support face-to-face engagement and help explain transportation topics through visual and interactive materials. They are commonly used at public meetings, workshops, and community events to encourage discussion and learning, through maps, display boards, posters, and hands-on activities.

Websites and Online Engagement Platforms

Online platforms provide centralized, on-demand access to planning information and engagement opportunities, allowing the public to participate regardless of time or location. Tools used include the WMPO website, project web pages, online comment portals, and virtual meeting materials.

Social Media and Digital Communications

These tools are used to share timely updates, promote engagement opportunities, and encourage two-way communication with the public in formats that are familiar and widely used. Methods may include social media posts, digital newsletters, email announcements, and event reminders.

Multimedia and Interactive Visualization Tools

These tools use digital media to explain transportation plans, projects, and data in engaging, easy-to-understand formats. They are especially helpful for illustrating complex concepts or long-range plans. Examples include videos, animations, interactive maps, and dashboards.



WMPO staff gathering feedback from trail users.



WMPO staff seeking input from the community at a pop-up event.



An excerpt of the WMPO's monthly e-newsletter.



WMPO staff providing input for the Town of Leland's Safety Action Plan at an open house event.

WMPO Core Work Products and Plans

The WMPO is responsible for four core documents and transportation studies that all MPOs must complete to maintain federal certification and remain eligible to receive federal transportation funding.

Public participation requirements prescribed by federal law vary by document, but all of the plans and programs detailed on the following pages are developed through an open process that allows public review and feedback at various stages of plan or program development. Final products and reports are adopted after careful consideration of community comments.

Core Work Products & Transportation Studies:

- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
- Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Plan (MTIP)
- Public Participation Plan (PPP)
- Transportation Studies
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Core Work Product	Adoption Schedule	Public Comment Period	Public Hearing	Draft Document Locations
Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)	Every 5 years	30 days	Not Required	• WMPO offices and website • WMPO member planning department offices • Area libraries
Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	Annually	30 days	Not Required	• WMPO offices and website
Public Participation Plan (PPP)	As needed	45 days	Not Required	• WMPO offices and website
MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	Biannually	30 days	Yes	• WMPO offices and website

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

The MTP is fiscally constrained, developed for the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) and covers at least a 20-year planning horizon. The MTP encompasses transportation strategies to maintain the existing transportation infrastructure while meeting the future needs of all federally funded transportation modes in the MPA, including highways, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian, freight and rail, ferry, and aviation. Throughout the development of the MTP, the WMPO provides multiple opportunities for community members, partners, and stakeholders to share input and help shape priorities. Engagement occurs at key milestones in the planning process to ensure the plan reflects local needs, values, and long-term goals.

When can I make comments on the MTP?

Public Comment Period	Adoption	Amendments
30 days prior to adoption Available for public review and comment for 30 days before adoption, including amendments	The MTP is updated and adopted every 5 years	Conducted on an as-needed basis

How can I make comments on the MTP?

Comment Opportunities	Consideration	Draft Document Locations
• Via email and mail • Online form • Public meetings and in-person events • Virtual open house	When significant written/oral comments are received on the draft, a summary, analysis, and report on the comments shall be made as part of the final MTP	• WMPO offices and website • WMPO member planning department offices





Where can I view the MTP document?

To view the full document, visit wmpo.org/mtp/. Hard copies are available at WMPO office, Member Jurisdiction offices, and local libraries.

Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MPO TIP)

The MPO TIP is a multimodal capital improvement document that outlines the scheduling and funding of all transportation projects across the state over a minimum four-year time period, as required by federal law. The WMPO's MPO TIP spans a 10-year period, with the first five years designated as the delivery TIP and the latter five years as the developmental TIP. Federal law also requires the MPO and State TIPs to match exactly in projects, schedules, and scope, for projects to move forward with federal funding.

In North Carolina, MPO TIPs are typically updated every two years (but no later than four years) and developed in concert with federal and state revenue forecasts, the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) Strategic Prioritization process, preconstruction, and project development timetables, and in adherence with federal and state laws. When amendments to the MPO TIP are proposed, they are made available for public review and comment on the WMPO website, including in the announcements section and on the MPO Transportation Improvement Program webpage, where information on proposed changes, comment periods, and how to provide feedback is posted.

When can I make comments on the MPO TIP?

Public Comment Period	Adoption	Amendments
30 days prior to adoption Available for public review and comment for 30 days before adoption, including amendments A public hearing is conducted prior to adoption	The MPO TIP is updated and adopted biannually	Conducted on an as-needed basis Require 30-day comment period

How can I make comments on the MPO TIP?

Comment Opportunities	Consideration	Draft Document Locations
• Via email and mail • Online form • Public hearing • Public meetings	When significant written/oral comments are received, they are presented to the WMPO Board	WMPO offices and website

Annual Listing of Obligated Projects

The WMPO publishes the annual listing of obligated projects which displays projects and strategies that were authorized and committed using federal funds in the previous year. The annual listing will be published on the WMPO website at www.wmpo.org within 90 days following the end of the program year. Hard copies are available upon request by contacting the WMPO.

Where can I view the MPO TIP document?

To view the full document, visit wmpo.org/mpo-state-transportation-improvement-program/. Hard copies are available at the WMPO office.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The UPWP outlines how the WMPO will use its transportation planning funds. It serves as the WMPO's work plan and budget, identifying the tasks to be completed and the products to be delivered to support the region's transportation planning efforts.

The UPWP guides the day-to-day planning activities needed to carry out the goals of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and ensures that the WMPO's planning process meets federal and state requirements. It also documents how federal, state, and local transportation planning funds will be spent and helps coordinate work among WMPO staff, partner agencies, and funding agencies.

Public involvement is an important part of the UPWP process. Providing opportunities for public input helps keep the community informed about upcoming planning activities and ensures that transportation planning efforts reflect local needs, priorities, and concerns.

When can I make comments on the UPWP?

Public Comment Period	Adoption	Amendments
30 days prior to adoption Available for public review and comment for 30 days before adoption	The UPWP is adopted annually	Conducted on an as-needed basis Do not require 30-day comment period

How can I make comments on the UPWP?

Comment Opportunities	Consideration	Draft Document Locations
• Via email and mail • Online form • Public meetings	When significant written/oral comments are received, they are presented to the WMPO Board	WMPO offices and website

Where can I view the UPWP document?

To view the full document, visit wmpo.org/upwp-budget/.
Hard copies are available at the WMPO office.

Public Participation Plan (PPP)

The PPP outlines how the WMPO provides opportunities for the public to be informed, involved, and engaged in the transportation planning process. The PPP establishes the strategies, tools, and procedures for gathering public input and ensuring meaningful participation across all WMPO plans, programs, and projects.

When can I make comments on the PPP?

Public Comment Period	Adoption	Amendments
45 days prior to adoption Available for public review and comment for 45 days before adoption	The PPP is updated and adopted as needed	Conducted on an as-needed basis

How can I make comments on the PPP?

Comment Opportunities	Consideration	Draft Document Locations
• Via email and mail • Online form • Public meetings	When significant written/oral comments are received, they are presented to the WMPO Board	WMPO offices and website

Where can I view the PPP document?

To view the full document, visit wmpo.org/organizational-documents/.
Hard copies are available at the WMPO office.

Transportation Studies

In addition to the Core Work Products, the WMPO also completes special studies and plans. Periodically, the WMPO conducts specialized planning studies focused on specific transportation modes, issues, corridors, or areas within the region. These studies are funded through the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and help advance the goals of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The results often inform future transportation projects and improvements and help highlight community needs, concerns, and priorities in particular areas or among specific groups of residents.

When can I make comments on local and regional transportation studies?

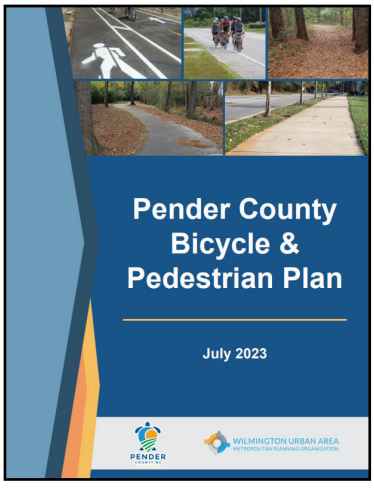
Public Comment Period	Adoption	Amendments
Varies Each planning effort develops a plan- and community-specific engagement strategy with opportunities for input throughout the study	Transportation studies are completed and adopted as needed	Conducted on an as-needed basis

How can I make comments on local and regional transportation studies?

Comment Opportunities	Consideration	Draft Document Locations
• Public comment at Board meetings • Public engagement occurs throughout plan development process	Study-specific Public comment is typically incorporated throughout the plan development process	WMPO office and website







Where can I view specialized planning studies?

To view the full documents, visit wmpo.org. Hard copies are available at the WMPO office.

Working Together

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) explains how the WMPO invites, encourages, and considers public input when making transportation plans and decisions. This plan is designed to:

- Provide clear, accessible ways for the public to learn about transportation projects and plans
- Offer meaningful opportunities for people to share ideas, concerns, and feedback
- Ensure public input is considered throughout the planning and decision-making process

Public participation helps us create transportation solutions that better serve the people who live, work, and travel in our region.

How We Measure Success

The WMPO regularly reviews how well our public engagement strategies are working. This helps us understand what is effective and where improvements are needed. Success can be measured by:



Open and click rates of email correspondence and social media links



Use of online tools, surveys, and comment opportunities



Social media reach (the number of people who see our content) and engagement (how people interact with it through likes, shares, comments, and clicks)



Range of geographic reach of public input



Participation levels at meetings and events



Feedback on the clarity, accessibility, and usefulness of information shared

This information is used to refine various approaches and strengthen future engagement efforts.

A Living, Evolving Plan

The PPP is a living document, meaning it is not fixed or final. As our community grows and changes, so do the ways people communicate, access information, and engage with public agencies. We update this plan as needed to respond to:

- Changes in community needs and priorities
- New technologies and communication tools
- Feedback from the public on how engagement can be improved
- Updates to federal or state requirements

This flexibility helps ensure our outreach efforts remain relevant and effective over time.

Conclusion

Building a transportation system that meets the needs of the region depends on continued collaboration. The WMPO is committed to listening to the community, evaluating what works, and adjusting its approach as needs and priorities change.

This Public Participation Plan will continue to evolve over time. By working together, the WMPO and the public can help shape transportation decisions that support safe, connected, and accessible travel for everyone in the region—now and in the future.

Appendix

Title VI

The WMPO strives to ensure full and fair participation by all potentially affected individuals, groups, and communities in the transportation decision-making process. The WMPO does not discriminate against any person with respect to any WMPO program, activity, or service and adheres to the Federal non-discrimination requirements under Title VI and other related regulations and statutes. *Public comments are solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status.*

The WMPO will seek out and consider the input and needs of interested parties and groups traditionally underserved by transportation systems who may face challenges accessing our services, such as minority and limited English proficient (LEP) persons. Underlying these efforts in our commitment to determining the most effective outreach methods for a given project or population.

General public involvement practices will include:

- Expanding traditional outreach methods.
- Providing for early, frequent, and continuous engagement by the public.
- Use of social media and other resources as a way to gain public involvement.
- Coordinating with community- and faith-based organizations such as the Hispanic Liaison, educational institutions, and other entities to implement public engagement strategies that reach out specifically to members of affected minority and/or LEP communities.
- Providing opportunities for public participation through means other than written communication, such as personal interviews or use of audio or video recording devices to capture oral comments.
- Considering radio, television, or newspaper ads on stations and in publications that serve LEP populations. Outreach to LEP persons could also include audio programming available on podcasts.

If you have questions or comments about the WMPO's Public Participation Plan, please contact:

Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director/Title VI Coordinator
Phone: (910) 341-3258
Email: Mike.Kozlosky@wilmingtonnc.gov
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
525 N. 4th Street, Wilmington, NC 28401

TITLE VI

To review the complete Title VI program administration and general responsibilities, please see the WMPO's Adopted Title VI Program Plan at wmpo.org/organizational-documents/

Accommodations

All notices for planning activities of the WMPO will include an announcement that states that persons with disabilities will be accommodated. Special provisions will be made if notified 48 hours in advance (e.g., having available large print documents, audio material, someone proficient in sign language, a translator or other provisions requested). Public meetings will be held in locations accessible to persons with disabilities and will be located near or on a transit route if possible. TTY users may dial 711 to contact the WMPO.

Acronyms

3-C	Continuing, Cooperative, and Comprehensive Planning Process
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ATAC	Active Transportation Advisory Committee
CAC	Citizens Advisory Committee
CMP	Congestion Management Process
CTP	Comprehensive Transportation Plan
DOT	Department of Transportation
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FY	Fiscal year
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
IIJA	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
LRTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Metropolitan Planning Area
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan
MTPC	Metropolitan Transportation Plan Advisory Committee
MTIP	Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program
NCDOT	North Carolina Department of Transportation
PPP	Public Participation Plan
RPO	Rural Planning Organization
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
TCC	Technical Coordinating Committee
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TMA	Transportation Management Area
UA	Urbanized Area
UNCW	University of North Carolina at Wilmington
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
WMPO	Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization