

**BE A LOOKER Safety Campaign
Final Report**

BE A LOOKER

**Watch For Bikes
and Pedestrians**





Executive Summary

According to the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Traffic Crash Facts, the Wilmington area is ranked as one of the most dangerous regions in North Carolina for bicyclists and pedestrians. In 2017, there were 74 pedestrian crashes, 6 of which were fatal, and 56 bicycle crashes, 5 of which were fatal.

Over the past 10 years, the WMPO region has made strides in increasing its bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. The completion of the Gary Shell Cross City Trail and other greenways as well as the myriad of projects from the 2014 City of Wilmington Transportation Bond has made walking and biking throughout the area more possible each year.

To combat the issue of bicycle-vehicle and pedestrian-vehicle collisions, Go Coast developed a campaign that resembled NCDOT's "Watch For Me NC".

Watch For Me NC is a bicycle and pedestrian safety campaign that requires leadership from municipal law enforcement. Because of limited resources and the need for police attention directed toward other matters of public safety, local law enforcement has shown decreasing interest in this program.

With a very evident need to reduce bicycle and pedestrian injuries and fatalities our region, Go Coast created the "Be A Looker" safety campaign. Be A Looker, ran from April through September 2019 with the primary goals of increasing the vigilance and improving the behavior of drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The campaign largely targeted messages towards drivers and placed an emphasis on the responsibilities of pedestrians and bicyclists.

Go Coast boosted these messages through a series of images on digital billboards, Wave Transit shuttles, website, print material, t-shirts, and social media. "Be A Looker" also appeared at 10 community events and a press release was held by the WMPO at Empie Park at the launch of the campaign.

A child wearing a pink helmet and a backpack with a sloth design is riding a purple bicycle on a paved path. The path is surrounded by trees and foliage, suggesting a park or wooded area.

“It’s critical that drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists pay attention to who they share the road with.”

Campaign Overview

Background

In recent years, the NCDOT has placed an increased emphasis on Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and even created the TDM Strategic Plan. This plan is carried out through grant-funded programs in five regions of North Carolina including “Go Coast” in the WMPO region.

Among several strategies to mitigate traffic congestion and encourage the use of alternative transportation in the Wilmington Area, is the increase of individuals walking and biking as a means of transportation. In the Fall of 2017, the WMPO released a Request For Proposal (RFP) for a turnkey bike share program. The City of Wilmington desires to implement a bike share program in the downtown core and connect areas of the city such as shopping centers, schools, parks, and other popular destinations with bike share.

NCDOT's *NC Bicycle Crash Facts, 2011-2015* lists Wilmington as the city with the 3rd highest total crash count and the highest **average** crash count of 4.9 out of every 10,000 residents.

According to survey results from the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 community feedback, 66% of respondents wish to bike more often, and 55% prefer to walk more often. To help ignite the culture change for bicyclists, drivers, and pedestrians to get around in safety and conformity, an educational marketing campaign was created.

A six-month time frame was chosen. April through September encompasses a majority of the warmest months, tourist season, and national bike month.

Biking, Walking, and Driving

In 2017, Wilmington Police recorded over 100 roadway accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists. Like most cities in the United States, the primary mode of transportation for citizens of Wilmington is a personal vehicle. Don Bennet, Wilmington Traffic Engineer says, "I think it comes down to a cultural change, even when we are in our cars, we have to think back to the times we were cycling, we have to think back to the times we were walking."

Communicating to citizens the importance of sharing the road is imperative to creating a cultural change that respects bicycling and walking. Here are a few key factors that make the WMPO area popular for biking and walking:

- a) **Population density:** New Hanover County is one of the densest counties in NC.
- b) **UNC Wilmington:** over 16,000 students and 3,000 faculty and staff are on the UNCW Campus each weekday between August and May. The University's one mile radius rule prevents students who live within one mile from the campus from driving a car to class, resulting in thousands of pedestrians and bicyclists in a concentrated area each week.
- c) **Beach community:** the beach is a popular place to walk and bike for permanent residents and visitors alike.
- d) **Income:** like any metropolitan areas, there are residents who bicycle or walk as their main or only form of transportation.

"We just have to understand that the pedestrian and bicyclist don't have the same safety features afforded to large vehicles."



Campaign Goals

The overall goal of “Be A Looker” was to reduce the number of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities caused by collisions with motor vehicles. This would be achieved by creating a campaign that:

- Promoted bicycling as walking as legitimate modes of transportation.
- Educated citizens on rules of the road for driving, walking, and biking.

Campaign Objectives

- Create a message that was simple, and easily adaptable for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
- Communicate the Wilmington area’s quality of life, including its diversity, small town sense of community, and population density.
- Convey the idea that habit change of “being a looker” is very simple.

Target Audience

Every citizen in the area was an appropriate target for Be A Looker. Driving, walking, and bicycling safety pertains to every citizen. Because of the especial physical vulnerability of those outside a vehicle, the primary audience were drivers, and the secondary audience were cyclists and pedestrians.

Target Behaviors

During the planning phase, Go Coast identified specific problem behaviors of drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians:

Motorist Behaviors

- Not looking for pedestrians or cyclists when making a right turn.
- Distracted driving.
- Not yielding to pedestrians or giving room to cyclists when passing.

Bicyclist Behaviors

- Riding on the left side of the street, against traffic.
- Not using hand signals, wearing a helmet, or using bike lights.

Pedestrian Behaviors

- Not looking for cars when crossing and/or not using a crosswalk.
- Not making eye contact with drivers/ distracted walking.



Campaign Strategy and Implementation

Being a marketing campaign, "Be A Looker" focused primarily on visuals with a simple message. There were additional opportunities to attend events and interact directly with individuals. There were eight strategies identified to present Be A Looker to the public.

Strategies

1. Images on Wave Shuttles
2. Digital Billboards
3. Mass Email
4. Local Media
5. Social Media
6. Community Events
7. Print Material
8. Web Page

Campaign Strategy



Campaign Strategy

Implementation

1. Wave Shuttles

A Be A Looker image was displayed on one side of the 107 College Road shuttle. This shuttle travels north to south along S. College Road on a one hour schedule.

A second image was displayed on one side of the 204 Brunswick Connector shuttle. This shuttle travels from downtown Wilmington into northern Brunswick County on a one hour schedule.

Estimated Impressions

2,962,000

204 Brunswick Connector

Downtown Station
Brunswick County

Legend:
 Bus Route
 Transfer Station
 Points of Interest
 Hospital

Fares Cash One-Way

Adult \$2.00
 Senior** \$1.00
 Persons with Disabilities*** \$1.00
 Students** 18-24 \$1.00
 Local College Students**** \$1.00
 UNCW Students & Staff**** Free

** Reduced fares are available for students, seniors, disabled and seniors, and ages 65+ with valid ID.
 *** \$1.00 required.
 **** \$1.00 required.

FARES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH NOTICE

wave
www.wavebus.com
(910) 343-0100

204 Schedule

MONDAY-FRIDAY: 8:00am - 8:00pm (every 60 minutes)
SATURDAY and SUNDAY: No Service

Service operates on 60-minute frequency. Stop points indicate the minutes after each hour that a bus will arrive at that location during operating hours. All bus routes refer to their starting point (Stop #1) after leaving that stop #1.

BUS STOP	MONDAY-FRIDAY	BUS STOP	MONDAY-FRIDAY
1 Downtown Station	00	1 Old Fayetteville Rd at North Brunswick High School	26
2 Village Rd / Fairview Rd	07	2 Village Rd at Food Lion Shopping Plaza	30
3 Main St / Old Mid Rd	14	3 Draper Dr at Harris Center	34
4 Old Fayetteville Rd / Lanesville Rd	20	4 Brunswick Village Blvd Roundabout	38
5 Old Fayetteville Rd at Lanesville Middle School	24	5 West Gate Dr at Walnut	42

107 College Road

Ford Station

Legend:
 Bus Route
 Transfer Station
 Points of Interest
 Hospital

107 Schedule

MONDAY-FRIDAY: 8:00am - 8:00pm (one direction only)
SATURDAY: 8:00am - 8:00pm (one direction only)
SUNDAY: 8:00am - 8:00pm (one direction only)

Service operates on 60-minute frequency. All bus routes refer to their starting point (Stop #1) after leaving that stop #1.

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Campaign Strategy

Implementation

2. Digital Billboards

Through an agreement the City of Wilmington has with Lamar, Go Coast was able to utilize free advertising on digital billboards throughout Wilmington.

Estimated Impressions

1,900,000

Three images were displayed on thirteen digital billboards in Wilmington and one on Carolina Beach. Each image was displayed for eight seconds every minute for 20 weeks.

Because of the placement of these billboards at highly trafficked intersections in town, the messages were geared towards drivers to prioritize bicycle and pedestrian safety.



3. Mass Email

Go Coast utilizes Constant Contact, a platform for mass emailing community members for events in the area.

One email was sent every month to approximately 15,000 individuals in the WMPO region promoting Be A Looker. These emails included educational components about rules of the road, and how to "Be A Looker". The emails featured tips such as look right before you turn right, don't block the crosswalk, make eye contact with drivers, use hand signals while biking, and more.

Opened emails

8,407



Estimated Media Impressions

102,500

Wilmington Urban Area "Be A Looker" Safety Campaign September 2019

Go Coast is continuing to encourage citizens to be vigilant on the road and reduce the amount of bicycle and pedestrian collisions in the region. Drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians alike all have a major responsibility to obey traffic laws and practice safety while getting around town.



Pedestrians

A smart pedestrian makes eye contact with drivers, makes themselves visible, and crosses the street at a crosswalk.



Bicyclists

A smart cyclist rides with traffic, uses hand signals, wears a helmet, and uses front and back lights.



How to be a looker

Being a looker is a commitment to embrace bicycling and walking as legitimate modes of transportation, to educate oneself on rules of the road, and to prioritize safety.

Lookers are smart drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

4. Media

At the launch of the campaign, Go Coast held a press event at Empie park where the Cross City Trail meets the newly constructed Park Avenue Trail.

During the event, news outlets heard messages from the TDM Coordinator, the Chair of the WMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, a New Hanover County Commissioner, and the Mayor Pro Tempore of Leland.

Spectrum News and WECT reported on "Be A Looker" in the evening news.

In the month of September, Go Coast utilized paid advertising with Local Voice Wilmington. A 30 second scripted message about bicycle and pedestrian safety and the "Be A Looker" pledge aired on radio stations 98.3, 97.3, and 106.3 a total of 144 times in a thirty day period.



5. Social Media

A “Be A Looker” message was posted at least once a week over the course of the campaign. Photos and videos with safety messages were posted on the WMPO Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts, and the Go Coast Instagram account.

Posts alternated messages directed towards drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists. The City of Wilmington created three videos featuring a WPD Officer sharing the safety information provided on the “Be A Looker” web page.

Social Media Interactions

2,000

5. Community Events

Go Coast attended ten local farmer's markets and three events with employers represented on the Go Coast Committee.

At these events, community members were taught about alternative transportation in the area, provided materials such as maps and brochures, and asked to sign the “Be A Looker” pledge.

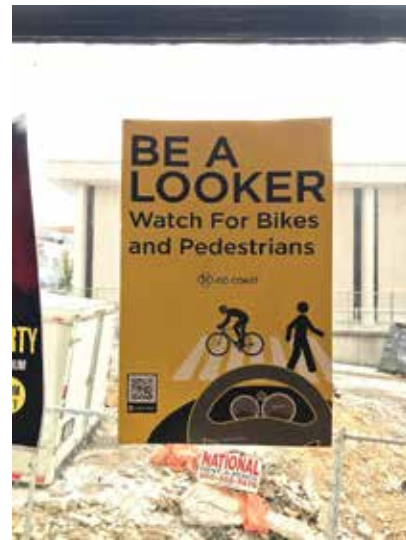
Events

13



7. Print Material

Over 800 bumper stickers, window posters, brochures, and t-shirts were distributed to individuals, local organizations, and businesses.



At least twelve local businesses put up window posters at their location.

Print Materials

800

8. Web Page and Pledge

The “Be A Looker” page was added to the WMPO web page at wmpo.org/BeALooker. This web page consisted of educational information for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The featured component of the “Be A Looker” web page was the Be A Looker pledge.

The “Be A Looker Pledge” is a “commitment to embrace bicycling and walking as legitimate modes of transportation, to educate oneself on rules of the road, and to prioritize safety.”

“Be A Looker” pledges

285



Feedback

To evaluate the campaign's effectiveness and learn about public response and behavior change, Go Coast conducted an online survey following "Be A Looker."

Thirty community members completed the survey. After answering the 10 questions in the survey, respondents had the opportunity to provide comments on the "Be A Looker" campaign.

"Please keep the campaign going. Changing habits takes a long time, and only through persistence will we make real change."

"This campaign was a great start to highlighting the huge problem of pedestrian/car accidents in our community."

"I strongly believe this type of campaign should run all the time in order to create a culture of awareness and safety among all users of the roadway."

"I hope to see new similar campaigns in the future which continue to inform and educate all community members of this issue and ways to fix it."

Campaign Impact

Survey Results

Successes

73%

Said they were positively impacted by the safety campaign.

93%

Think the campaign was somewhat or very successful at meeting its goal of increasing public awareness of biking and walking and educating citizens on rules of the road.

63%

Use a cell phone less while driving because of "Be A Looker."

66%

Learned a small or significant amount from "Be A Looker" as a cyclist or pedestrian.

70%

Learned a small or significant amount from "Be A Looker" as a driver.

93%

Think there is value in continuing a campaign like "Be A Looker."

Room For Improvement

72%

Feel no more safe walking or biking than before the campaign began.

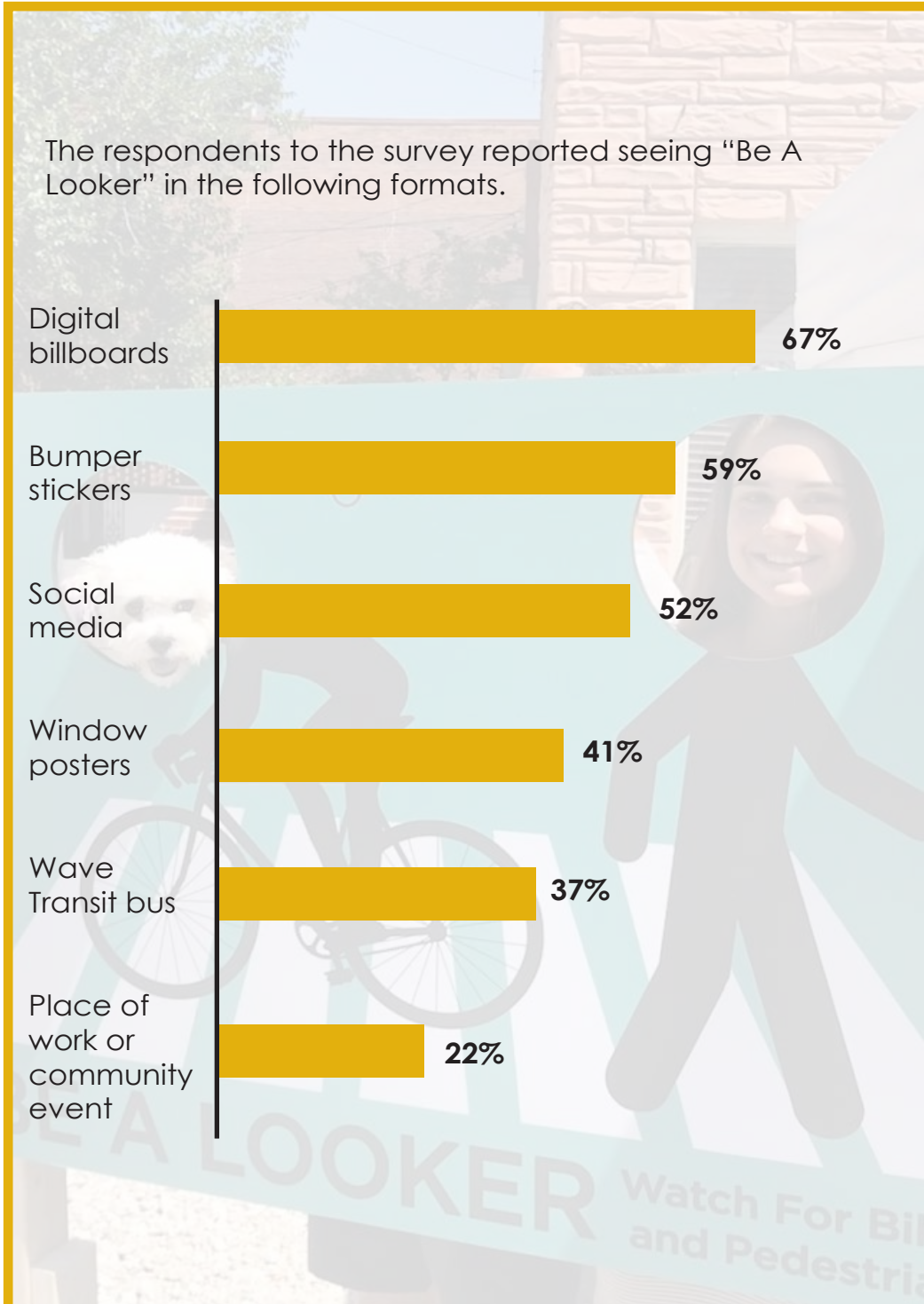
Campaign Impact

56%

Give room to bicyclists and yield to pedestrians more often than before the campaign began.

73%

Said they are more aware of bicycles and pedestrians while driving.



Stakeholders and Partners

While there was support from local businesses and employers represented on the Go Coast Committee, future campaigns should seek to have more involvement from major community stakeholders and partners that reach a larger audience. The City of Wilmington was a major supporter during this campaign and successfully shared Be A Looker images on social media, however other WMPO member jurisdictions did not include Be A Looker in their social media activity. Go Coast and the TDM Coordinator should explore opportunities with our members to promote the campaign with the public school system to share safety campaign information with students and parents. Go Coast may also recruit volunteers like elected officials and members of cycling and walking organizations to attend events.

Effective Marketing

The survey revealed that most of the “Be A Looker” messages were seen on the digital billboards throughout Wilmington, which happened to also be the most inexpensive form of marketing. Mass emailing proved to be an extremely effective way to communicate directly to community members and provide detailed information on how to “be a looker”. Social media was also a very effective way to track interactions and share “Be A Looker” tips and images. More paid advertisements on Facebook and Instagram are recommended for future campaigns. If the budget allows, mail communication is also recommended to reach residents more directly. The print material of brochures, bumper stickers, and window posters were cost effective and easy to distribute.

This campaign also took advantage of creating recognition of the Go Coast brand to the community. Under the assumption that a significant number of individuals in the region are now familiar with Go Coast, future campaigns should provide further information about Go Coast in conjunction with the message of the campaign.

Education and Outreach

Attending existing community events proved very successful for “Be A Looker.” Go Coast was able to bring campaign materials and messages to residents where they already were in large numbers. Partnering with Go Coast committee members to hold events at locations like Live Oak Bank, nCino, and CastleBranch made for convenient and passive participation from employees in the region. The downtown Wilmington Farmer's markets were more successful than the Wrightsville Beach Farmer's Markets largely in part to the day and audience of each market. The downtown market's held on Saturday mornings generated a significant amount of foot traffic from both planned and unplanned attendees. The Wrightsville Beach market's were attended by a significant number of vacationers and individuals who frequent the market but come for a specific product from a specific vendor with little intention to visit each tent.

The TDM Coordinator was the only WMPO staff member who attended these community events. If future campaigns enlist help from additional staff and volunteers from the community, more events can be attended. A dedicated web page for “Be A Looker” proved to be extremely useful to direct people to a single location for in-depth safety education.

High Profile Kickoff

The press event to kickoff “Be A Looker” was a great way to bring attention to the launch of the campaign. This event received media attention and gave the WMPO a platform to share with the community why a bicycle and pedestrian safety campaign is important to this region. In the future, the press event for a public safety campaign could benefit from the presence of local police.

Lessons Learned