

THE WILMINGTON CURRENT



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Wilmington Fire Department achieves ISO 1 Rating
- American Rescue Plan Act funding strategy
- Portia Mills Hines Park improvements
- Wilmington's commitment to core services
- Downtown streetscape project
- Annual Surface Water Quality Report

And more! ■

CITY OF
WILMINGTON
NORTH CAROLINA

PUBLIC INFORMATION REPORT
SPRING 2022

SHARE YOUR MEMORIES

The city is creating a master plan to improve Greenfield Lake Park. We're collecting stories and photos from past users to help guide the development. Share your memories of what made Greenfield Lake Park so special. Email communicationsoffice@wilmingtonnc.gov or send letters to PO Box 1810 Wilmington, NC 28402. ■



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



A vital part of the Stormwater Services mission is to bring awareness about stormwater pollution to the public. Jesse Hart, Education and Outreach Intern, works to raise community awareness by educating citizens on a variety of environmental concerns. Her focus areas include nonpoint source pollution, pet waste, fertilizers, and using stormwater solutions like rain gardens to absorb runoff on residential properties.

Jesse has worked to promote environmental education and stewardship by delivering instructional videos for 8th grade science classes in New Hanover County. She also maintains the city's Stormwater Demonstration Site within Anne McCrary Park, which enables the public to view landscape features that could be installed on their own property to soak in stormwater. She is currently working to administer and analyze responses to a community pet waste survey.

Jesse is working on a dual master's degree in Environmental Studies and Public Administration at UNCW. The long-term internship with the city has provided multiple opportunities to apply her studies to real-world environmental issues within Wilmington. ■



i Learn more about stormwater education programs:
wilmingtonnc.gov/departments/public-services/stormwater/education-outreach



FILM

Hollywood brought their lights and cameras. Wilmington is taking action to keep them here.

The City of Wilmington recently took steps to further cement itself as a thriving hub for film and production by announcing a new workforce development initiative. City Council awarded the non-profit Film Partnership of North Carolina a \$400,000 grant to launch a new film, television, and entertainment industry training program. The newly formed Film Partnership of North Carolina will help build the skillset of the local and regional workforce with an emphasis on women and minorities who are largely underrepresented in the industry.

"North Carolina's strength is our talented workforce, and we make it stronger by building on equity and diversity," said North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper. "Our film industry is

thriving, and the City of Wilmington's new grant and partnership will help make sure every group has access to the jobs and the ability to share their stories and talents."

2021 was a banner year for film in North Carolina, with a record-shattering \$410 million projected in direct spending.

This initiative derives from a recommendation of the Governor's Advisory Council on Film, Television, and Digital Streaming. ■

Partners of the initiative include:

- NC Department of Commerce
- Wilmington Regional Film Commission
- UNC-School of the Arts
- International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employee
- GLOW Academy

The mini-series "George and Tammy" utilized City Hall and Thalian Hall in March for filming. The city relocated several meetings to the Wilmington Convention Center to accommodate this production, one of several that have operated in Wilmington so far in 2022.

WORK UNDERWAY ON PORTIA MILLS HINES PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Three city youth helped spearhead some much-needed improvements to Portia Mills Hines Park in Wilmington's Northside community. They first approached City Council to advocate for upgrades to the park. Their persistence paid off and officials broke ground on the \$727,000 project in October 2021. Improvements include restrooms, additional parking, better lighting at the basketball court and playground, and a pavilion. Work is expected to be complete in the fall due to global supply chain issues.

The three student leaders, SaiMeya Williams, Shakeriah Brown, and LaiNeya Williams received the Inspiring Change Agents Awards during the ceremony for their leadership in this project. These change agents were involved in the entire process, made their voices heard, and bettered their community. ■



GRAB THOSE WALKING SHOES BECAUSE THE CITY'S TRAIL SYSTEM HAS EXPANDED!

City officials unveiled the final phase of the Park Avenue Trail during a ribbon-cutting ceremony in January. The newly-completed trail begins at Empie Park and stretches all the way to Kerr Avenue, where it connects with city sidewalks.

As a whole, the Park Avenue Trail is part of the much larger River-to-the-Sea Bikeway, which runs from downtown Wilmington all the way to the Wrightsville Beach drawbridge. Additionally, the trail connects with the Gary Shell Cross-City Trail at Empie Park.

The completion of the Park Avenue Trail grows the city's overall trail system to more than 20 miles, with more to come thanks to other pedestrian and bike-friendly projects that were part of the 2014 voter-approved Transportation Bond.

Here's an update on some of those projects:

Greenville Loop Trail

This 4.3-mile trail is being fast-tracked and has been broken into three phases to help speed up the process. The design of the first phase (the south end) of the project is now in right-of-way acquisition, with the plan to start construction from College Road up to the Holly Tree Road/Pine Grove Drive intersection in the fall. Work on the north and central portions of the trail is anticipated to begin in late 2022, pending the completion of design and right-of-way acquisition. An adjacent project will get underway mid-year — a bike/pedestrian crossing of College Road at Holly Tree Road that will connect the Greenville Loop Trail to the existing Central College Trail.



Masonboro Loop Trail

The city is finalizing right-of-way acquisition on this 1.4-mile trail with construction anticipated to begin this fall.

Kerr Avenue Trail

The design of this 0.7-mile trail is well underway and coordination with NCDOT and Duke Energy has begun.

Wrightsville Avenue sidewalks

The city recently filled a 630-foot sidewalk gap on the north side of Wrightsville Avenue between Castle Street and Independence Boulevard as part of the annual needs contract.

Design on the eastern portion of Wrightsville Avenue sidewalk project from Independence Boulevard to Hawthorne Drive is nearing completion. The city has begun right-of-way acquisition while completing permitting with the relevant state agencies. This project will be completed in conjunction with a roundabout at the Wrightsville Avenue/Wallace Avenue intersection.

Oleander Drive sidewalks

The section between Wooster Street and Mimosa Place is anticipated to begin construction this spring. Design is nearly complete on the section between Hawthorne Road and 42nd Street and right-of-way acquisition is currently in progress. Construction is set to begin late summer 2022.

South 17th Street sidewalks

The design of the sidewalk is complete and property acquisition is currently underway. Upon completion of right-of-way acquisition, the city will bid and award the project for construction. Work is anticipated to begin this summer.

Dawson/Wooster streetscaping

The design is nearly complete with right-of-way mapping in progress. In order to reduce cost and minimize disruption, the city is coordinating with the NCDOT to complete the paving of these corridors in conjunction with the streetscape project.

VEGETATED “YOGA MATS” INSTALLED IN GREENFIELD LAKE



Nitrogen and phosphorus are essential nutrients for plant growth, and are found in fertilizers used in residential and commercial landscapes. However, when nutrients wash into Greenfield Lake in stormwater runoff, it can cause pollution problems like harmful algal blooms.

This past fall, NC State University partnered with the city to install Floating Treatment Wetlands (FTW) in Squash Branch, the northernmost tributary of Greenfield Lake. FTWs are aquatic systems that use vegetation on floating mats, similar to yoga mats, to absorb nutrients from water. As the plants on the wetlands grow, nutrients in the water are taken up by the roots and stored in the tissues. Periodic harvesting of the mature plants prevents nutrients from re-entering the water when the plants die and decompose.

In addition to absorbing nutrients, FTWs are quickly becoming popular because they do not interrupt rainfall flow or require heavy equipment to install. They also provide improved habitat and biodiversity in a waterbody. Stormwater Services crews can easily unhook and move the mats to access Squash Branch to perform maintenance activities. NC Land & Water Fund provided grant funding to purchase, install, and monitor the efficacy of the FTWs and water quality in Squash Branch. ■

WILMINGTON MUNICIPAL CLUBHOUSE RENOVATIONS



The clubhouse at the Wilmington Municipal Golf Course recently underwent a \$1 million renovation. The project doubled the usable space inside the clubhouse as well as expanded the outdoor patio. This much-needed facelift allows the “Muni” to better serve the public. ■

wilmingtonnc.gov/muni

RIVERFRONT PARK



Live Oak Bank Pavilion at Riverfront Park struck the right note with eventgoers as the inaugural season was a smashing success. The city’s new flagship park in Downtown Wilmington quickly became a go-to entertainment venue, welcoming over 126,000 people during dozens of events and generating over \$300,000 in revenue. The city officially opened the West Garden, sponsored by the Port of Wilmington, in December. Riverfront Park’s concert season kicked off in mid-April, but the park is open year-round for all to enjoy. ■

wilmingtonnc.gov/riverfrontpark

CELEBRATING
10,000 TREES
AND COUNTING

PLANTED SINCE JANUARY 2020!



wilmingtontrees.com



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Invasive Plants Are Taking Over Our Waterways, But Not For Long

Invasive vegetation-like water hyacinth and alligator weed are spreading across Wilmington's ponds, but we have a plan. City Council voted in October to purchase an aquatic mower that will cut the weeds. Then, we'll scoop the floating debris and take it to the landfill. We'll repeat this process until the vegetation dies and stops coming back. ■

Scan to watch the mower in action ↓



📌 Watch a video of the aquatic mower in action on our YouTube channel @CityofWilmington.



UNCW LEADS COMMUNITY PET SURVEY

Do you love dogs? We do!

Please help UNCW and Stormwater Services understand dog owner awareness, attitudes, and behaviors related to pet waste.

Complete the ANONYMOUS online survey by **June 19th** using the link or QR code. The mostly multiple-choice survey should take less than 5 minutes to complete. ■

<https://tinyurl.com/petwaste2022>

Take the survey ↓



GRANT PROJECTS AIM TO IMPROVE BRADLEY CREEK

As development in the Bradley Creek Watershed continues, polluted runoff continues to be a concern. Of particular concern is fecal coliform bacteria which is carried from the land into the creek by stormwater runoff. Bacterial pollution impacts shellfish harvesting waters near the mouth of the Bradley Creek, which are currently closed.

In the first of two grant projects funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 319 grant program, NC State University is partnering with the city to retrofit stormwater systems on public and private properties in the watershed. The upgrades aim to reduce pollution flowing into the creek and include converting a wet pond to a wetland, improving a second wet pond to increase stormwater retention time, and enhancing a drainage swale (a stormwater conveyance that is wider and shallower than a ditch).

This project will also work with nearby neighborhoods to encourage rerouting downspouts to let stormwater soak into the ground naturally instead of running off. The grant totals over \$250,000 in EPA funding, including staff support and resources from the City.

In another grant project benefiting Bradley Creek, UNCW is continuing its work to improve the health of the creek with the help of North Carolina Coastal Federation and the City of Wilmington. UNCW is the largest landowner in the watershed and is installing additional stormwater projects on campus to absorb and reduce polluted runoff.

The new grant builds upon a previous grant project that installed rain gardens, a bioretention area, and permeable pavement on campus. New, similar installations will provide additional

opportunities for student and faculty participation, educational displays, and stormwater awareness on campus.



UNCW students and faculty help plant a large rain garden on campus.

Installations will begin in 2022 thanks to \$240,000 in funding from the EPA and grant partners (NCCF, UNCW, and HOW). ■

📌 healourwaterways.org



EVERY PARK FOR EVERYONE

The City of Wilmington offers a variety of programs. From pickleball to computer literacy, nature hikes to fitness classes, activities for home-schooled students to activities for senior citizens, we have something for you. Scan the QR Code to view the program calendar. ■



AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDING

Wilmington Allocates Millions to Economic and Community Assistance

The City of Wilmington is set to receive approximately \$26 million in federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act through two installments over two years. The city is dedicating that funding to address key issues impacting the Port City.

About Addressing Affordable Housing

Wilmington City Council unanimously voted to make a historic investment in affordable housing by utilizing \$3.5 million of American Rescue Plan funding for gap financing to develop 278 housing units. The units will be affordable to households that make 60 percent of the area median income.

In addition to using ARPA funding to create new affordable housing, council awarded \$250,000 to Cape Fear Collective to preserve naturally-occurring affordable housing. Cape Fear Collective will use the grant to acquire existing residential housing units within city limits, which will be rented to households earning at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income, adjusted for family size. Rents will not exceed 30 percent of the household income and will remain affordable for a minimum of 20 years.

About the Effort to End Food Insecurity

The City of Wilmington actively works with community members to improve access to affordable and nutritious foods in portions of the community identified as food deserts. The USDA designation considers the type and quality of food available to the population, in addition to the accessibility of the food through the size and proximity of the food stores. The Northside Food Co-op will utilize the \$125,000 to assist with its current operations and activities geared towards ending the food desert in Downtown Wilmington.

All awards are given in accordance with U.S. Treasury ARP guidance and NC General Statute authorization.

About Combatting Substance Abuse Disorder

Coastal Horizons, an area mental health provider, will receive \$100,000 to fund a temporary expansion of an ongoing innovative overdose reduction and treatment program. The Opioid Overdose Quick Response Team (QRT) program has been successful in getting community members who have overdosed or at risk of overdose to agree to engage in a treatment program. Mental health professionals have shared data and concern that because of the pandemic there is a need to expand the QRT to address substances beyond opioids. The QRT proactively seeks out and engages, primarily, members of the community that have overdosed and refused treatment options presented to them in the immediate aftermath. This engagement is led by professionals with lived experiences and is an ongoing effort until the individual either enters a treatment setting or has a no contact request. The team also engages individuals that have been referred by family members that have expressed concern. ■

ARPA Funding Breakdown

- **\$3.5 million for gap financing to develop 278 affordable housing units**
- **\$2 million to local businesses to help recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. With New Hanover County's \$2.5 million contribution, 192 businesses received help**
- **\$700,000 to 35 local non-profits that provide critical services in the community and arts-based programming**
- **\$400,000 to workforce training and development in the film industry**
- **\$250,000 to preserve naturally-occurring affordable housing**
- **\$125,000 to Northside Food Co-op and \$75,000 to Feast Down East to aid their effort of ending food insecurity**
- **\$100,000 to Coastal Horizons to combat substance abuse disorder**
- **\$100,000 to create opportunities for small business entrepreneurs**

DOWNTOWN PROJECTS



The North Front Streetscape Improvement project is underway. Upon completion in early September, North Front Street between Chestnut and Walnut streets will resemble Front Street between Market Street and Chestnut Street, which was completed in 2010 in a similar partnership with CFPUA. This \$3.5 million project is among the voter-approved Transportation Bond Projects and is jointly funded with the Cape Fear Public Utility Authority.



Renovations to Bijou Park are expected to be complete in April. The new park has contemporary landscape features and other extensive upgrades to improve the aesthetics, functionality, and safety of the park. Bijou Park will be a signature open space that will connect the mid-block of Front Street to River Place, Water Street, and the Cape Fear River. The park will be closed to pedestrians during construction. ■

FASTER CHARGE, CLEANER ENERGY

Two ChargePoint DC fast electric vehicle chargers were installed on the ground floor of the Market Street parking deck in February, providing the first DC fast chargers that are non-proprietary and usable by all electric vehicles in the greater Wilmington area. The chargers were fully funded through the Volkswagen Settlement Grant administered by the NC Department of Environmental Quality. ■



UN-BEE-LIEVABLE

Crews Save Massive Beehive

Crews with the City of Wilmington recently removed a massive beehive from a dead tree on Klein Road with the help of the New Hanover County Beekeepers Association. The bees will be permanently relocated to Halyburton Park. Until then, the Beekeepers Association will treat the hive and make sure it's healthy enough to make the move to its new home. ■



COMMITMENT TO CORE SERVICES

At the City of Wilmington, our job is to ensure services get delivered. That means your trash and recycling gets picked up, roads get paved, the police and fire departments have the necessary resources to respond, and more. We couldn't do this without the hard work of our nearly 1,100 employees who are committed to this community.



Public Safety

Public safety makes up the largest percent of the general fund expenditures, which includes funding for emergency services like fire and police. The city will create a safe, inclusive community with neighborhoods and area based public safety and support services through partnering with non-profit agencies and community building organizations, providing appropriate resources to staff, engaging in public outreach, and using state-of-the-art equipment for disaster and emergency response.

2021 By The Numbers:

- Wilmington Fire Department responded to **9,658** calls for service.
- Wilmington Police Department responded to **159,974** calls for service.



Public Services

The Public Services Department is responsible for Recycling & Trash Services including trash, recycling, yard waste, bulky waste, and downtown services, Streets & Sidewalks, Stormwater, and Public Buildings. Annually, the department services 31,000 residential trash customers, sweeps more than 13,000 miles of streets, repairs over 1,000 square yards of sidewalk, and repairs more than 2,000 potholes.

2021 By The Numbers:

- Residential Trash-Cart Refuse Collected – **25,861.1** tons or **51.7** million pounds
- Residential Recycling Collected – **6449.4** tons or **12.9** million pounds
- Residential Yard Waste Collected – **7974.9** tons or **15.9** million pounds (more than **47** tons of Christmas trees were collected in Jan 21)
- Residential Bulky Collected – **2578.3** tons or **5.2** million pounds



Community Services

The mission of the Community Services Department is to provide quality of life services to the people of Wilmington through building partnerships and community development, providing superior parks and recreation programs and facilities, and providing initiatives and creative programs. These services allow everyone to receive the benefits and rewards of neighborhood vitality, while protecting and conserving the natural resources and environmental quality of our community.

2021 By The Numbers:

- **126,355** people have attended an event at the city's newest park, Riverfront Park.
- Riverfront Park generated more than **\$300,000** in revenue.
- **10,000** trees were planted and/or given away as part of the Wilmington Tree Initiative.
- The Derick GS Davis Community Center at Maides Park opened.
- **Three** free public Wi-Fi sites were activated to help address the digital divide.



FY23 BUDGET

The City of Wilmington is developing the Fiscal Year 2023 budget and presented the recommended budget to City Council at its May 3rd meeting. The budget prioritizes new investments in affordable housing, transportation, and infrastructure improvements, and delivering equitable core city services. It also protects the city’s fund balance, which is critical to emergency response and recovery efforts, and contributes to the city’s consistently high marks from financial ratings agencies like Moody’s and Standard & Poor’s.

Council will hold a public hearing on the budget May 17 and will vote on the budget at its meetings in June. The FY23 budget will be effective July 1.

ADDRESSING FLOODING AS A REGION

Over the last five years, eastern North Carolina communities have faced devastating hurricane seasons, including multiple 1,000-year storms. The region is also facing increasingly high “blue sky” tidal flooding and destructive floods from intense non-tropical storms. These recent storms and floods have caused widespread damage to local communities, such as 2,500 road closures in the region—including along major transportation routes, such as I-95 and I-40—following Hurricane Florence. While these events have revealed the region’s vulnerability to more frequent and severe floods, they have also demonstrated the need to build more resilient communities.



Mayor Saffo and regional elected officials quickly saw the need to band together in an effort to strengthen the voice of communities impacted by flooding and hurricanes. This led to the Eastern NC Recovery and Resiliency Alliance, an informal alliance of local government leaders throughout southeastern North Carolina, encourages the legislature to help our region better prepare for, respond to, and recover from flooding events.

With over 60 counties and towns participating, the Alliance successfully advocated for considerable resources and policy improvements as part of this year’s state budget. The Alliance will actively work to ensure that the dedicated funding is utilized in a efficient and equitable manner in the years ahead.

ADDRESSING FLOODING AT NEW CENTRE DRIVE

This \$11 million project is the largest stormwater capital improvement project that the City of Wilmington has undertaken to reduce chronic flooding, improve water quality, and enhance natural habitat. Clear Run Branch is highly impacted and impaired due to excessive stormwater flows from upstream development.



The first phase is slated to begin later this year and involves the installation of large pipes to convey stormwater under College Acres Drive and Mallard Street. This phase also includes major stream restoration and floodplain creation to increase flood storage capacity and improve the natural characteristics of Clear Run Branch stream.

Phase 2 involves the installation of large pipes to capture and convey floodwaters from the South College Road/New Centre Drive area and tie into the drainage improvements installed during Phase 1. This phase includes incorporating as much green infrastructure as possible to help filter out pollutants and reduce the amount of runoff flowing from impervious surfaces into Clear Run Branch, then ultimately Bradley Creek. ■

MEET YOUR CITY COUNCIL

The City of Wilmington is governed by a non-partisan City Council consisting of a Mayor, Mayor Pro-Tem, and five Councilmembers. All Councilmembers represent the entire City, as they are not elected based on a specific district. Elected City Councilmembers were sworn in for the new term in December 2021. ■

i Reach out directly to City Council with comments, questions, or concerns by sending an email to council@wilmingtonnc.gov.



*Mayor
Bill Saffo*



*Mayor Pro-Tem
Margaret
Haynes*



*Councilmember
Charlie
Rivenbark*



*Councilmember
Neil Anderson*



*Councilmember
Clifford Barnett*



*Councilmember
Kevin Spears*



*Councilmember
Luke Waddell*

CODE ENFORCEMENT



Residents should not illegally dump trash and debris on the curb or street medians.

Wilmington's Code Enforcement Division helps to prevent neglected properties from adversely affecting your neighborhood. Below are two of the most common complaints we receive.

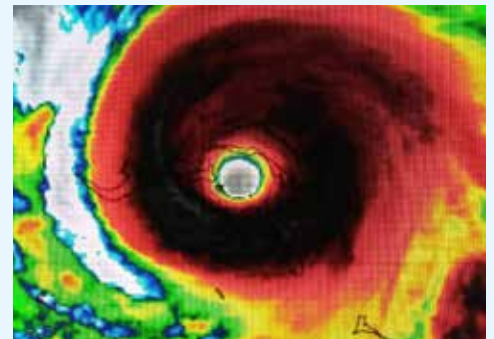
Tall Grass and Weeds: Grass or weeds should not exceed 8 inches in any yard if within 100 feet of the house or the street. Did you know: The property owner is responsible for maintaining the right-of-way in front of the property—all the way to the street in most cases. Bushes and other vegetation should not be allowed to grow over the sidewalk or curb.

Trash, Garbage, and Other Wastes: Residents and property owners should not illegally dump trash and debris on the curb or street medians. Trash and garbage, yard waste, and tree debris, construction or demolition debris, and other bulky trash should not be accumulated on the property or in the right of way. If you have active city trash service, properly prepare trash and yard waste for pickup. ■

i Visit wilmingtonnc.gov/trash for more information on preparation and pickup service.

i To report a concern or for more information please contact the Code Enforcement Division at 910-341-3266, codeenforcement@wilmingtonnc.gov, or visit wilmingtonnc.gov/code

STORM PREP



With the Atlantic hurricane season right around the corner, make sure to do these three things to prepare for a storm:

- 1** Put together an emergency kit that includes extra batteries, flashlights, a first aid kit, bottled water, and prescription medications. Your kit should include enough supplies for a minimum of three days.
- 2** Secure important documents such as birth certificates, social security cards, and tax records.
- 3** Strengthen your home by covering windows, reinforcing doors, and bringing all outdoor furniture inside before the storm hits.

Prepare now so you're ready for when it happens. ■

i For more tips, head to ready.gov/hurricanes

SPRING 2022 RESIDENT SURVEY:

Every two years, the City of Wilmington conducts a scientific community survey to better understand how residents feel about their city and the essential services it provides. Earlier this year, the most recent community survey was released.

Major findings include:

- 81% of Wilmington residents believe the city is a “good” or “excellent” place to live.
- Residents have an increasingly positive view of the local jobs market and economy.
- Overall, 56% of residents are satisfied with city services compared to 10% who are unsatisfied.
- Residents are most satisfied with fire department, trash and recycling, and police services, with each receiving 70% or more satisfaction, while traffic flow, stormwater, and streets and sidewalks present the greatest challenges to resident satisfaction.
- Residents overwhelmingly place high value on core city services, especially streets and sidewalks, stormwater infrastructure, and public safety.

Share Your Opinion:

In this edition of *The Wilmington Current*, you are invited to share your opinion on the greatest challenges facing our community and offer feedback to the city. This plays a valuable role in helping the city respond to the issues that matter most to you.

1. Which of the following present the greatest challenge to those who live in the City of Wilmington today?

[Please **SELECT UP TO THREE**, using "1" to indicate the greatest challenge, "2" for the next greatest challenge, and "3" for the third greatest challenge.]

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic congestion | <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to major storms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Growth & development | <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination and inclusion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime & public safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Drugs and substance abuse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rising cost of living | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of affordable housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Access to public transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Condition of roads & bridges | <input type="checkbox"/> Access to grocery stores |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local property taxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Access to high-speed Internet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of jobs and employment options | <input type="checkbox"/> Access to healthcare |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unsheltered/homelessness | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Climate and environmental concerns | |

2. Is there something on your mind that you want to share with the city to help improve the delivery of city services in our community? If so, please share it here.

To return a completed survey, use the postage paid reply envelope enclosed with the newsletter.

If you have completed the survey, your responses will be included with those from all other participants to provide valuable feedback to help inform and improve city decisions and operations. All survey responses are kept anonymous. Thank you for your participation.

The mailing address for submissions is City Manager’s Office, PO Box 1810, Wilmington, NC 28402-1810. Submissions may also be scanned and emailed to newsletter@wilmingtonnc.gov.

CREATIVE CORNER

Liquid Letters

Unscramble the letters to discover local watershed and stormwater-related words!

T
 N
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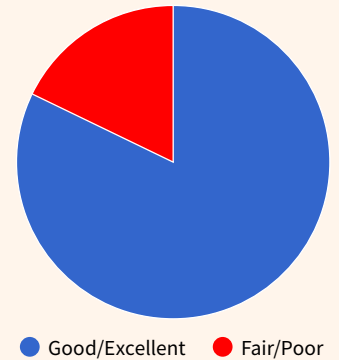
FALL SURVEY REVIEW

More than 200 surveys were returned from the Fall 2021 newsletter, which examined the use of City of Wilmington parks and recreation facilities.

Here are the key takeaways:

- More than 80 percent of respondents rated the quality of our parks and recreation facilities as good or excellent.
- About 70 percent of respondents say they do not actively participate in programs offered through the City of Wilmington Parks and Recreation Department.
- About 30 percent cited a lack of awareness or information about the programs as the primary reason for not participating.
- More than 50 percent of respondents said the Carolina Panthers is their favorite NFL team! #KeepPounding ■

Quality of Parks and Facilities



WFD

Wilmington Fire Department Officially Best of the Best

On April 1, 2022, the Wilmington Fire Department officially became an ISO Class 1 Department, as determined by the Insurance Services Office (ISO). See back cover for full story.

WFD App

The Wilmington Fire Department app offers quick access to items of public interest and is easy to use. In just a few clicks, users can:

- Receive instant push notifications
- View emergency and weather information
- Access FAQs and request services
- Learn fire safety tips
- Submit a customer service survey
- More!

The is available for download for free in the App Store and Google Play by searching "Wilmington Fire." ■



WILMINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT APP



SCAN TO DOWNLOAD

WPD

WPD Upholds Core Value of Community Engagement

As the weather begins to warm up, Police Chief Donny Williams will be out and about in the city with the Wilmington Police Department's ATV Unit. Chief Williams believes in WPD's core value of community engagement and enjoys interacting with the public one-on-one, devoting at least one day out of his schedule to community engagement.

Additionally, WPD's Community Engagement Unit focuses on this core value as its full-time primary role. The officers assigned to this unit spend most of their week talking with local residents, passing out free gifts at events, and enforcing the law in a proactive manner. These relationships between police officers and residents are key for building trust and assist with crime prevention. ■



WPD App

Help fight crime by download WPD's free app using the iTunes App Store or Google Play Store. Click "Submit a Tip" to share information safely and securely. The Tip411 system strips away all personal information, making it impossible for police to track or determine who submitted certain tips.

Those without access to a smartphone can text anonymous tips to 847411 and use the keyword WPDNC. ■



CONTACT

General Information Phone Numbers

City Information.....	910.341.7800
Cape Fear Public Utility Authority.....	910.332.6550
Code Enforcement	910.341.3266
Fire Non-emergency	910.341.7846
Parking.....	910.762.5678
Parks and Recreation.....	910.341.7855
Police Non-emergency	910.343.3600
Street Maintenance.....	910.341.7879
Stormwater.....	910.341.4646
Trash and Recycling.....	910.341.7875
Zoning.....	910.254.0900

Wilmington City Council

Bill Saffo, Mayor
Margaret E. Haynes, Mayor Pro-Tem
Charles H. Rivenbark, Jr.
Neil Anderson
Clifford D. Barnett, Sr.
Kevin Spears
Luke Waddell

City Council Meetings

City Council meetings are generally held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers. Meetings are streamed live on:

- GTV8 (Spectrum channel 8)
- wilmingtonnc.gov/gtv
- youtube.com/user/cityofwilmington

Previous meetings are available on-demand on:

- wilmingtonnc.gov/gtv

Stay Informed

Stay up-to-date with what's happening in the city by following us on social media.

- @cityofwilmington
- @cityofwilm
- @cityofwilm
- cityofwilmington

Get all these stories and more at:

- thewilmingtoncurrent.com



THE STATE OF WILMINGTON'S WATERWAYS

2021 UNCW SURFACE WATER QUALITY REPORT

(The following is a summary of the condition of major creeks and waterways, not drinking water, within the city limits.)

The State of Wilmington's Waterways 2021 UNCW Surface Water Quality Report is a summary of the current health and condition of the major creeks and waterbodies that fall within Wilmington's city limits. UNCW water quality sampling information was provided by Dr. Michael Mallin of the UNCW Center for Marine Science and lead scientist for the Wilmington Watersheds Project. The water quality sampling summary is based on data collected between the months of January-December 2021 and is presented from a watershed perspective, regardless of political boundaries.

The summary describes each watershed by size, state classification, state status, reason for impairment, and UNCW sampling summary. For more information on the current health of Wilmington's waterways or to read Dr. Mallin's entire report, please visit:

<http://uncw.edu/cms/aelab/research.html>

Water Definitions

Algal Bloom Rapidly occurring growth and accumulation of algae in a waterway resulting from excess nutrients that can lead to low dissolved oxygen levels and fish kills. (Sources: fertilizers, grass clippings, pet waste)

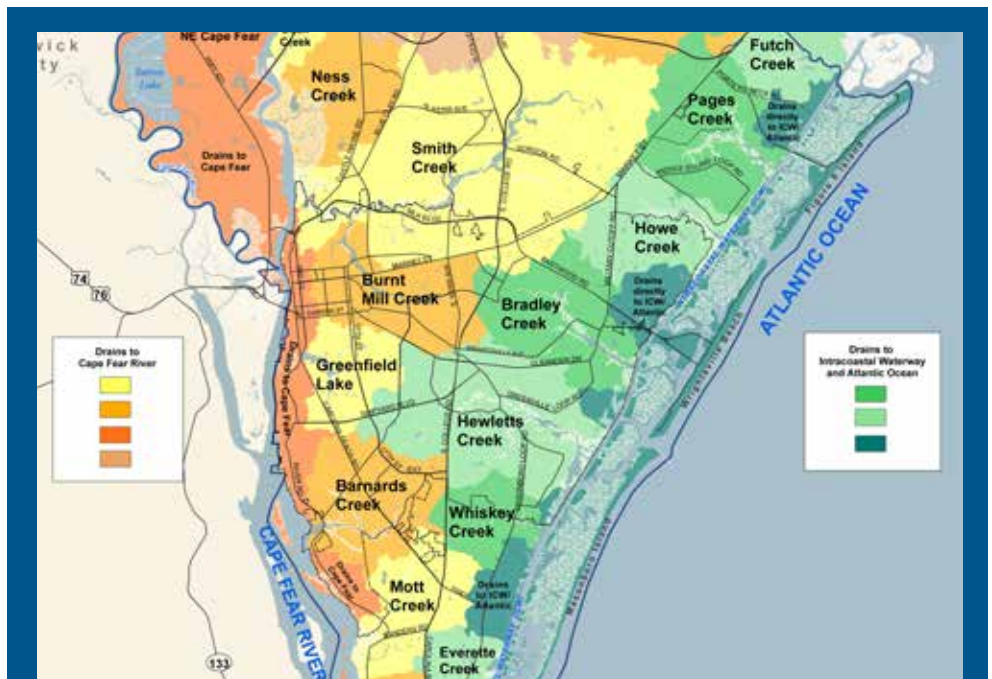
Biological Integrity The ability of an ecosystem to support and maintain a balanced and indigenous community of organisms.

Best Management Practice (BMP) An action or landscape modification that reduces the amount of pollution and/or the quantity of stormwater flowing into waterways. BMPs can be actions, such as picking up after your pet, or on-the-ground practices, such as rain barrels and rain gardens.

Chlorophyll a Allows plants to photosynthesize and gives plants their green color. Waters that have high chlorophyll a levels are typically high in nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen), which cause algae to grow or bloom. When algae die, it depletes oxygen from the water and can cause fish kills.

Dissolved Oxygen (DO) The amount of oxygen available in water. Fish and aquatic organisms require adequate levels of DO to survive.

Fecal Coliform Bacteria Bacteria present in the intestines and feces of warm-blooded animals. High counts of fecal coliform bacteria in a waterway indicate the presence of other disease-causing pathogens which can cause sickness and disease in humans and animals. (Sources: pet/animal waste,



UNCW Results Summary:

Lower Burnt Mill Creek and upper Bradley Creek maintain some of the most polluted waters in the City. Note that upper Bradley Creek is targeted by the City for future restoration work including a large capital improvement project and two simultaneous EPA grant projects.

Greenfield Lake continues to host nuisance algal blooms and the tributary creeks, Jumping Run Branch and Squash Branch, load high fecal bacteria and nutrients into the lake. Currently the state is funding a coalition including the City, Cape Fear River Watch, UNCW, NCSU and Moffat & Nichol in efforts to restore Jumping Run Branch and reduce nutrients and fecal bacteria draining into the lake from this tributary.

sewer overflows, septic system failure)

Hypoxia Low dissolved oxygen levels in a waterway which can result in fish kills.

Nutrients Substances (i.e. nitrogen and phosphorous) needed by plants and animals for growth; however, excessive nutrients in a waterway can lead to harmful aquatic weed and algae growth, low DO levels and fish kills. (Sources: fertilizers, yard waste, pet waste)

Pathogens Disease-causing organisms such as bacteria and viruses. (Sources: pet waste)

PAHs (Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons) Toxic by-products of petroleum and fossil fuels, which can be harmful to humans and aquatic life and can persist in the environment for a long time. (Sources: auto exhaust, motor oil, parking lot sealcoats, roofing tars, coal power plants)

Sediment Particles of silt, clay, dirt, or sand that wash into waterways caused by land-disturbing activities or natural weathering. Sediment can settle to the bottom or remain suspended in

water. (Sources: construction sites with failing/erosion control, eroding streambanks, and exposed soil)

Tidal Creek A saltwater creek that is influenced by tides. Many tidal creeks have oyster reefs along their shorelines.

Turbidity A cloudy condition in water caused by suspended sediment.

Watershed An area of land that drains into a specific body of water such as a creek, lake, or river.

Water Classifications

The NC Division of Water Resources applies classifications to waterways which define the best uses to be protected within those waters (i.e. swimming, fishing, drinking water supply, aquatic life). These classifications have an associated set of water quality standards to protect their designated uses. These standards may be designed to

protect water quality, fish and wildlife, the free flowing nature of a stream, or other special characteristics. In addition, there may be a **supplemental classification** applied to protect several different uses or special characteristics within the same waterbody. Listed below are the freshwater and saltwater classifications that apply to Wilmington's waterways. For more information, visit: <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/planning/classification-standards/classifications>

Freshwater Classifications

Class C Waters protected for secondary recreation (fishing, boating and other activities involving minimal and infrequent skin contact), wildlife, agriculture, biological integrity, and fish/aquatic life propagation and survival.

Supplemental Classification

Swamp Waters (Sw) Waters that naturally have low flow and other characteristics which differ from creeks draining land with steeper topography.

Saltwater Classifications

Class SC Saltwaters protected for secondary recreation (such as fishing, boating, and other activities involving minimal skin contact), fish and noncommercial shellfish consumption, fish/aquatic life propagation and survival, and wildlife.

Class SB Saltwaters used for primary recreation such as swimming, and all Class SC uses.

Class SA Saltwaters used for commercial shellfishing and all Class SC/SB uses. SA waters are also High Quality Waters (HQW) by supplemental classification.

Supplemental Classifications

High Quality Waters (HQW) Waters rated excellent based on biological, physical, and chemical characteristics and having primary or functional nursery areas.

Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW)

Unique and special waters having excellent water quality and being of exceptional state or national ecological or recreational significance.

State Status/Reason

Indicates whether or not a creek is supporting its State classification/use and the reason why.

NC 303(d) List of Impaired Waters

Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act requires states to develop and frequently update a list of waters that do not meet water quality standards or have impaired uses. This newsletter is based on the NC 303(d) List, which is available for viewing at: <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/water-planning/modeling-assessment/water-quality-data-assessment/integrated-report-files>. Unfortunately, several of Wilmington's waterways are on the 303(d) list because of pollution, such as bacteria and nutrients, which is washed from the land by stormwater runoff.



Cape Fear River

Watersheds that drain to the Cape Fear River (CFR)

Smith Creek

Size of watershed: 16,650 acres

State classification/Use: C, Sw

State Status: Currently supporting use

Reason: Meets standards for Class C waters

UNCW Sampling Summary: Smith Creek was sampled at the Castle Hayne Street bridge on eight occasions. Dissolved oxygen and fecal coliform bacteria only violated the State standard once. Turbidity was low and there were no algal blooms.

Burnt Mill Creek

Size of watershed: 4,207 acres

State classification/Use: C, Sw

State Status: Impaired. On NC 303(d) List

Reason: Does not meet standards for Class C waters, specifically for biological integrity of benthos (bottom dwelling organisms)

UNCW Sampling Summary: The upper portion of the creek had good dissolved oxygen levels and low turbidity, but had occasional fecal bacteria issues and algal blooms. The lower creek has high fecal bacteria counts, low dissolved oxygen, and occasional algal blooms. Previous studies show high metals and chemical levels buried in the sediments of the creek.

Greenfield Lake

Size of watershed: 2,465 acres

State classification/Use: C, Sw

State Status: Impaired. On NC 303(d) List

Reason: Does not meet standards for Class C waters, specifically for Chlorophyll a

UNCW Sampling Summary: The tributary streams flowing into the lake are impacted by low dissolved oxygen, high fecal bacteria counts, and are the main source of elevated nitrogen and phosphorus entering the lake. The lake itself suffers from algal blooms, high biochemical oxygen demand (which causes low dissolved oxygen levels), and high fecal bacteria.

Barnards Creek

Size of watershed: 4,173 acres

State classification/Use: C, Sw

State Status: Currently supporting use

Reason: Meets standards for Class C waters

UNCW Sampling Summary: Sampling of upper Barnards Creek near Carriage Hills show some issues with dissolved oxygen and fecal bacteria.

Mott Creek

Size of watershed: 3,342 acres

State classification/Use: C, Sw

State Status: Currently supporting use

Reason: Meets standards for Class C waters

UNCW Sampling Summary: Not sampled in 2021.



Intracoastal Waterway

Watersheds that drain to the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW)

Howe Creek

Size of watershed: 3,516 acres

State classification/Use: SA, ORW

State Status: Impaired. On NC 303(d) List; closed to shellfishing

Reason: Does not meet standards for Class SA waters, specifically for fecal coliform bacteria; a portion of Howe Creek is also impaired for dissolved oxygen

UNCW Sampling Summary: Not sampled in 2021.

Bradley Creek

Size of watershed: 4,583 acres

State classification/Use: SC, HQW

State Status: Currently supporting use

Reason: Meets standards for Class SC waters

UNCW Sampling Summary: Bradley Creek is sampled at two sites along Wrightsville Avenue and two sites in the upper north branch (Clear Run area). The Wrightsville Avenue stations are moderately impacted by fecal bacteria and low dissolved oxygen, but the two Clear Run sites have low dissolved oxygen and very high fecal bacteria pollution levels.

Hewletts Creek

Size of watershed: 7,478 acres

State classification/Use: SA, HQW

State Status: Impaired. On NC 303(d) List; closed to shellfishing

Reason: Does not meet standards for Class SA waters, specifically for fecal coliform bacteria

UNCW Sampling Summary: Hewletts Creek did not experience algal blooms or elevated turbidity levels. There were occasional minor issues with dissolved oxygen and fecal bacteria counts.

Whiskey Creek

Size of watershed: 2,078 acres

State classification/Use: SA, HQW

State Status: Impaired. On NC 303(d) List; closed to shellfishing

Reason: Fecal coliform bacteria

UNCW Sampling Summary: Not sampled in 2021.

**All waters in the State of North Carolina are impaired for mercury, based on high levels found in the tissues of several fish species.*



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Steve Mason Named Fire Chief

Wilmington City Council recently voted to appoint Interim Fire Chief Jon “Steve” Mason to the job on a permanent basis. Chief Mason has served in an interim capacity since September 2021.

“Over the course of his interim appointment, Chief Mason has confirmed our confidence in his ability to continue the progress and professionalism we have come to expect from the Wilmington Fire Department. His appointment to the permanent position of Fire Chief speaks to our trust in his experience and abilities and reflects our high opinion of the service our fire department provides,” said Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo. ■

Wilmington Fire Department Officially Best of the Best

On April 1, 2022, the Wilmington Fire Department officially became an ISO Class 1 Department, as determined by the Insurance Services Office (ISO).

“To achieve an ISO 1 rating, in addition to agency accreditation, is an incredible accomplishment that speaks to the strong and consistent leadership at the Wilmington Fire Department — not only are we among the best in the country, we are among the best in the world,” Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo said. “From Fire Chief to fire trainee, this designation is a testament to the dedication of the men and women who serve this community daily. Our commitment to providing core services of the highest quality continues to benefit Wilmington residents. As a lifelong resident and as Mayor of Wilmington, this is a very proud moment for me.”

According to ISO, only 338 of the nearly 30,000 fire departments in the United States have earned this prestigious recognition. The Wilmington Fire Department is also an accredited organization through the Center for Public Safety Excellence. Their website lists only 113 organizations worldwide that are both an accredited agency and an ISO Class 1 Department.

“This is an outstanding accomplishment for our department and the citizens of Wilmington,” said Fire Chief Steve Mason. “It is a testament of the excellent service WFD provides each and every day and a direct result of the support the department receives from Council, the persistence and dedication of our employees, and the adoption of a constant improvement business model established through our accreditation efforts.” ■