

# CITY OF WILMINGTON NORTH CAROLINA

CITY OF WILMINGTON PUBLIC INFORMATION REPORT

Winter 2017

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## Special insert:

2016 Annual Progress Report

## WPD reports historic low on crime in Wilmington

In 2016, Wilmington's violent and property crimes reached an historic low, according to statistics from the Wilmington Police Department.

Data for 2016 show that Part 1 crimes – classified as aggravated assault, rape, murder, robbery, arson, burglary, larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft – are the lowest in Wilmington in more than 23 years.

This reduction is particularly significant because Wilmington's crime dropped by 21.5 percent even as the population more than doubled from 56,690 in 1993 to 115,434 in 2016.

WPD Chief Ralph Evangelous says there are several reasons for the reduction:

- Citizen calls to report a crime and Neighborhood Watch Programs
- Anonymous tips to the department's Text-a-Tip
- Partnerships with other local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to gather critical intelligence
- New technology such as Shot-Spotter
- Use of social media and local news media to share and receive information

Wilmington's crime dropped by 21.5% even as the population more than doubled from 56,690 in 1993 to 115,434 in 2016.



While violent crime continues to drop, the number of homicides increased last year from 12 to 15 and Chief Evangelous says much of that increase is because of gang activity and the nationwide growing opioid epidemic.

"Heroin is being driven by a lot of our gangs and we are going to continue to focus on that," said Evangelous. As for the opioid problem, Evangelous said, "We can't arrest the problem away. We have to focus on the users. That's what is driving up property crime. That's who's breaking into our cars and houses and businesses.

"It's not happening overnight, but over the months and years, we are seeing a continuous decrease in crime and better quality of life for our citizens."

 [www.wilmingtonnc.gov/police](http://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/police)



## Annual State of the City Address

Rebroadcast on the web and on GTV:

[www.wilmingtonnc.gov/GTV](http://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/GTV)

Time Warner Cable Ch. 8

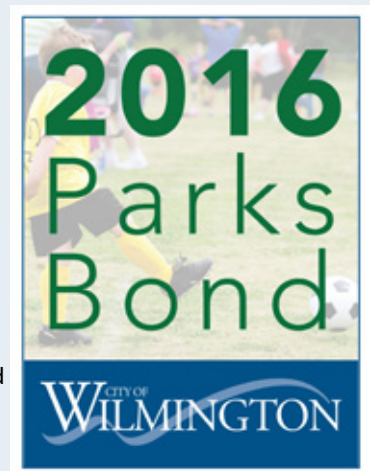
Tune in to learn more about improvements the city has made over the past year and get a glimpse of what's coming up in the future.

## Work underway on voter approved parks bond

The City of Wilmington thanks the citizens of Wilmington for overwhelmingly approving the 2016 Parks Bond in November. The bond identified 15 projects that the city hopes to complete in 5-7 years. The approved bond was for \$30.4 million with another \$7.6 million coming from planned construction funds, for a total of \$38 million.

Staff have already begun work to gather more information to help prioritize projects and determine what projects can get underway as quickly as possible. Funding for these projects will become available on July 1, 2017. In the meantime, city staff will be interviewing architects and engineers.

 [www.wilmingtonnc.gov/parksbond](http://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/parksbond)



## Check the back

Want to find out how to receive this newsletter by email or learn more about the city online? Check out the back page to find out more.



# Investing in our future

## 5 YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN



### Repaving and drainage improvements

More than 2 lane miles on Franklin and Greenway avenues and a portion of Lullwater Drive between Greenway Avenue and Vineyard Lane are being paved as part of the city's 5-year infrastructure improvement plan. Work is expected to be complete by the end of February.

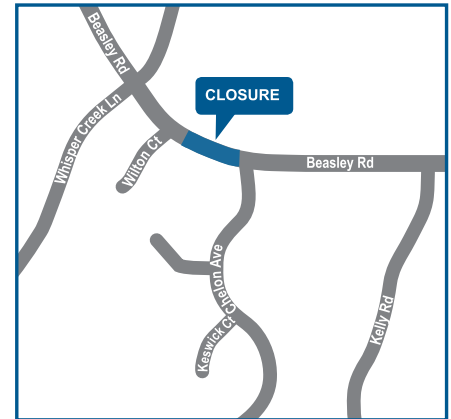
In addition, crews are expected to begin work this month on a \$2.2 million project to repave 2.8 lane miles on portions of Semmes Drive, RL Honeycutt Drive and all of Donald E Gore Drive in the Pine Valley neighborhood. The work will be combined with drainage improvements in the area and is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

These projects are among the last to be completed as part of the city's \$41 million, 5-year infrastructure improvement plan that began in 2012.

 [www.wilmingtonnc.gov/5yearplan](http://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/5yearplan)

### Beasley Road bridge replacement

Work is expected to begin in the next few weeks to replace the bridge on Beasley Road as part of a planned \$4 million drainage improvement project in the area. The bridge span will be increased from 15 feet to 50 feet, and the new bridge will be 10 feet wider than the existing bridge. Construction is expected to take approximately six months to complete. Originally scheduled to be closed beginning in November, Beasley Road is now scheduled to be closed beginning in April. The road will be closed to all traffic between Wilton Court and Chelon Avenue while work is underway.



### Cross-City Trail update

One of the two last remaining portions of the Gary Shell Cross-City trail to be built is now under construction. In late summer when the wooden boardwalk beneath the bridge opens, trail users will be able to cross Wrightsville Avenue, beneath the drawbridge, to access the commercial area on Airlie Road. This will also encourage beachbound bike and pedestrian traffic to use the southern sidewalk to cross the bridge, leaving the northern sidewalk open for bikers and pedestrians leaving the beach.



### Transportation Bond Up-

Work is beginning this month on two major projects identified in the 2014 Transportation Bond.

The city will be installing nearly a mile of sidewalks that will make sidewalk connections from North Kerr Avenue, through several neighborhoods to Princess Place Drive. Sidewalks will be installed on McClelland Drive, Fairlawn Drive, Clover Road and Gleason Road. A two-block section on North 23rd Street from Princess Place Drive to Belvedere Drive has already been completed.

The sidewalks will make connections from North Kerr Avenue, through several neighborhoods to Princess Place Drive, and will allow residents to walk/bike in the neighborhood and provide connectivity to nearby commercial areas.

Also beginning this month is construction of a bridge over Smith Creek that will provide another access into the Love Grove neighborhood. This neighborhood is currently only served with one entrance, which can be blocked by train traffic. Another entrance will guarantee access to the neighborhood, regardless of train schedules.

 [www.wilmingtonnc.gov/transportationbond](http://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/transportationbond)



## RIVERFRONT PARK UPDATE

Phase I of the \$6.3 million overhaul of Riverfront Park and Water Street is nearly complete, with the intersection of Water and Market streets now open and the section of Water Street in front of the Federal Courthouse slated to open in March.

This project phase involved new water and sewer lines beneath the street, drainage improvements, underground repairs to the underground supporting wall, and a renovated section of Riverfront Park at the foot of Market Street.

Additional work by the U.S. Coast Guard is slated in the coming years on their adjacent property, at which time the city will put the final touches on Riverfront Park and Water Street in front of the Federal Courthouse. Pedestrian access in the area will remain open at all times.

### Next steps

The project will move north up Water Street beginning this spring. In conjunction with construction of the Riverplace project where the old Water Street parking deck is located, the block of Water Street between Chestnut and Grace Streets will close in March or April for about six months while new water and sewer lines are installed in this block, followed by similar work between Grace and Walnut Streets.

In addition, construction of a new 243-foot section of Riverwalk is nearing completion behind the historic Brooks Building. The \$700,000 construction project also includes lighting and some shoreline stabilization beneath the Brooks Building.

While this work is critical, the city understands construction activity has sometimes been disruptive and officials appreciate the cooperation and patience of impacted businesses.

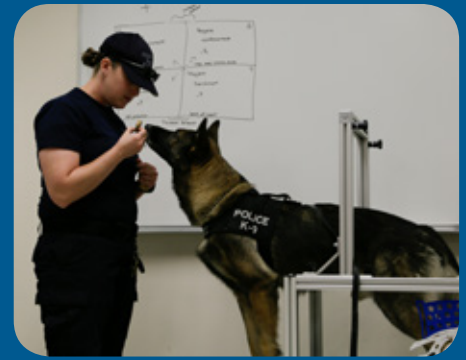
 [www.wilmingtonnc.gov/riverfrontpark](http://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/riverfrontpark)



Brooks Building riverwalk



Riverfront Park



## COOL JOBS: Learn more about WPD's K-9

**Unit** Corporal Murphy has been a corporal with the Wilmington Police Department's K-9 Unit since 2013. She and her dog Diablo, a German Shepherd, assist patrol officers with duties such as looking for drugs or criminals.

The WPD acquires dogs that come from any country in Europe, usually Germany or Belgium. The K-9 Unit uses two different breeds, German Shepherds and Belgium Malinois, because they are loyal, intelligent and want to work.

At the end of each day, Murphy takes Diablo home with her, as is the norm with K-9 officers and their handlers. Murphy says while it's a common misconception that K-9s are mean, they are really just well trained and want to do their jobs and help protect the police officers.

When a K-9 retires from duty, it becomes the sole responsibility of the handler, which is just fine with the police officers: "What a lot of people don't realize is we see these dogs more than our families because we work and live with them," said Murphy. "This really is one of the coolest jobs because we get to work with the dogs."

## Glen Meade rain garden

The City of Wilmington's Heal Our Waterways Program is working with partners to install a large scale rain garden - called a bioretention area - that will naturally filter polluted stormwater before it runs into nearby waterways. The bioretention area, located on Lynnwood Avenue, is only on about 1/4 acre, but will treat stormwater from the surrounding 33 acres before it enters Hewletts Creek (and then the ocean).

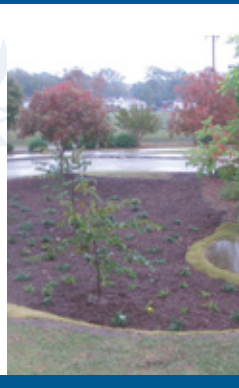
This grant funded project is made possible through a partnership with NC Coastal Federation and NC Cooperative Extension.

## Bioretention Area

A **bioretention area** is a large scale rain garden, designed with a shallow depression and native plants to absorb and naturally filter polluted stormwater runoff that would otherwise end up in nearby waterways.

### Benefits:

- Captures, absorbs and naturally filters polluted stormwater runoff
- Replenishes groundwater
- Reduces flooding
- Provides wildlife habitat in urban areas
- Adds beauty and functionality to landscapes



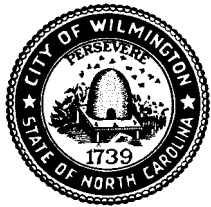
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### Wilmington City Council

Mayor and City Council .....341-7815  
 Bill Saffo, Mayor  
 Margaret E. Haynes, Mayor Pro-Tem  
 Neil Anderson  
 Paul Lawler  
 Kevin O'Grady  
 Charles H. Rivenbark, Jr.  
 Earl Sheridan, Ph.D.

**City Info Line** .....341-7800

**City Manager**.....341-7810  
 Sterling Cheatham

**Editor**.....341-5860  
 Malissa Talbert

Contributing Staff: Becky Blue, Chris Compton, Jennifer Isbell, Dylan Lee, Nicole Milliken

The Public Information Report is published by the City of Wilmington. Comments or suggestions? Contact us at 910-341-0833, send an email to [newsletter@wilmingtonnc.gov](mailto:newsletter@wilmingtonnc.gov) or mail us: Communications Office, P.O. Box 1810, Wilmington, NC 28402-1810

### General Information Phone Numbers

Citizen Services Information .....341-7800  
 Emergency..... 911  
 Police/Non-Emergency .....343-3600  
 To find the police district assigned to your neighborhood, see [wilmingtonnc.gov/police](http://wilmingtonnc.gov/police)  
 Fire/Non-Emergency .....341-7846  
 Parks and Recreation.....341-7855  
 Parks Hotline .....341-7852  
 Street Maintenance .....341-7879  
 Parking .....762-5678  
 Zoning .....254-0900  
 Trash pickup/Recycling .....341-7875  
 Stormwater .....341-4646  
 Cape Fear Public Utility Authority .....332-6550  
 Code Enforcement.....341-3266

Look for the for information

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### City Council Meetings

City Council meetings are generally held on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall. For more information, see the city's web site at: [wilmingtonnc.gov](http://wilmingtonnc.gov)

### City Council Meetings on GTV8

Council meetings are broadcast live on GTV8, the city channel on Timewarner Cable. Council meetings are replayed:

~ Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, the week of the Council meeting at 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.

### GTV8 online

All GTV8 programming can be found on the city's website, live or on-demand. From the front page, simply click on "online videos." Then, select the program you want to watch.

### City information at your fingertips

- [www.wilmingtonnc.gov](http://www.wilmingtonnc.gov)
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