

# THE WILMINGTON CURRENT

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Live Oak Bank Pavilion at Riverfront Park

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FY22-23 Budget

nCino Sports Park

New Land Development Code

Fall 2021 Resident Survey

*and more!*

CITY OF  
**WILMINGTON**  
NORTH CAROLINA

**PUBLIC INFORMATION REPORT  
FALL 2021**



## AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

The City of Wilmington and New Hanover County have allocated \$4.5 million from the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) to go toward grants for small businesses impacted from the COVID-19 pandemic. The city contributed \$2 million of the ARPA funds to help small businesses and the grants will be administered through the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce. The city is also partnering with United Way of the Cape Fear and the Arts Council of Wilmington to distribute \$700,000 to local non-profits. ■



SCAN ME

## TONY CAUDLE NAMED CITY MANAGER



City Council voted to name Tony Caudle City Manager. Caudle has served as Interim City Manager since June 1 and previously

served as Deputy City Manager since 2008.

"I am humbled and grateful for the opportunity to continue serving the City of Wilmington in this leadership role," Caudle said. "Building an efficient and effective city organization requires a great deal of time, dedication, and a shared commitment to public service. I will work hard every day to honor City Council's trust in me, support and develop our city's workforce, and provide a high level of service to the people of Wilmington." ■

[wilmingtonnc.gov/manager](http://wilmingtonnc.gov/manager)

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

**Joe Salicco**, an intern with the Lead Hazard Reduction & Healthy Homes Outreach program, has done exemplary work in addressing health and housing outreach for vulnerable populations within the city. He shadowed Robert (R.B.) Gardner, the program's Coordinator, on home visits and touring building sites undergoing lead remediation.

Joe has always had a passion for serving others. He says that the task force is a good community with which to brainstorm and exchange ideas, lessons learned, and best practices, and plans to apply these ideas in his own work to continue improving the lives of community members.

Learn more about the lead hazard reduction program here:

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

If you enjoy downtown's thriving atmosphere, chances are **Erris Dunston** had a hand in it. As Assistant to the City Manager for Economic Development, she wears many hats including overseeing downtown economic development, parking, and convention center operations. She also serves as the city's LGBTQ employee liaison. Wilmington is a more welcoming and inclusive place because of the work she does. ■

*Erris Dunston, Assistant to the City Manager for Economic Development*



*Joe Salicco, Intern with the Lead Hazard Reduction & Healthy Homes Outreach program*



## It's time to bounce back.



Explore pandemic relief opportunities:  
[wilmingtonnc.gov/relief](http://wilmingtonnc.gov/relief)

**WILMINGTON**  
NORTH CAROLINA

## FY 22 BUDGET REFLECTS CITY PRIORITIES

Wilmington City Council adopted a \$242.2 million budget for fiscal year 2022, which took effect on July 1. The city's strategic plan guided the development of the budget, which prioritizes affordable housing, infrastructure improvements, and continuing core services. Expenditures are directly linked to one of the plan's focus areas, which include: create a safe place; support efficient transportation systems; foster a prosperous and thriving economy; promote culture, arts, and public spaces; engage in civic partnerships; and provide sustainability and adaptability. Building upon City Council's Rise Together initiative, adopted in August 2020, the new budget also evaluated spending through an equity lens to focus on reducing barriers to service and opportunity. ■

 [Learn more: wilmingtonnc.gov/budget](https://wilmingtonnc.gov/budget)

### Here are the key takeaways:

#### PRIORITIZING AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

Council is making historic investments in affordable housing to the tune of \$5+ million. These funds will support and expand affordable housing programs, including the Homeownership Opportunity Program and the Rental Rehabilitation Incentive Loan Program.



#### ADVANCING TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS:

Council continues to prioritize capital improvement projects, including upgrades to roads, sidewalks, multi-use paths, and rail realignment, as well as parks and stormwater management. This budget includes \$29.9 million for these projects and added staff support to complete them sooner.

#### ENHANCING STREET REHABILITATION:

With more traffic comes more strain on Wilmington's roads. The new budget allocates \$8 million to ramp up the city's street rehabilitation program with enhanced maintenance and repairs.



#### SECURING THE FUND BALANCE:

The city maintains a healthy fund balance (think savings account), which it relies upon during emergencies like hurricanes. This budget includes a fund balance equal to 30 percent of the general fund, which allows the city to continue serving throughout emergency response and recovery.

#### INVESTING IN COMMUNITY BUILDING:

The city is expanding its biennial commitment to community building organizations and programs to \$2.5 million with targeted annual enhancements. This reflects City Council's belief that even though social services fall beyond the scope of city government, we have a shared responsibility to the well-being of our community.



#### ENSURING PUBLIC SAFETY:

The budget carefully and thoughtfully balances ensuring a safe and inclusive city with community-based approaches to public safety. Public safety makes up the largest percent of the general fund expenditures, which includes funding for emergency services like fire and police.

#### HOW THIS IMPACTS PROPERTY TAX BILLS:

New Hanover County's revaluations increased property appraisals ~36 percent. In response, the city reduced its tax rate by ~12 cents. The new tax rate is slightly above revenue neutral, meaning the average homeowner will see an increase of \$36 on their tax bill.





## NCINO SPORTS PARK



### nCino Commits \$1.3 Million to New Sports Park

Wilmington City Council unanimously approved an agreement with Wilmington-based company nCino to name the new sports park off US Highway 421 "nCino Sports Park." The sponsorship deal totals \$1.3 million over 10 years. nCino Sports Park will house 11 full-sized fields—one of which will be synthetic turf—and include outdoor lighting. The new park is part of the 2016 voter-approved parks bond. When complete, the Wilmington Hammerheads Youth Soccer Club will manage the park.

nCino Sports Park is currently a seven-field soccer complex owned and operated by the Wilmington Hammerheads Youth Soccer Club organization. With the addition of the extra fields, nCino Sports Park can expect upwards of 140,000 people to visit the facility on an annual basis. The city will provide \$10 million of investment into the property, allowing the project to break ground this fall. ■

## PLASTIC RECYCLING

The City of Wilmington is not able to recycle plastic bags and film through our local recycling center. While you can drop off your plastic and film recycling at most grocery stores, you can also creatively reuse them.



Here are three ideas how:

- 1) Use to pick up pet waste
- 2) Stuff into shoes or empty purses to keep their shape
- 3) Place in your car for emergencies or cleanup

City Council, working with the Plastic Ocean Project, adopted a resolution in September to support and promote the reduction of single-use plastic waste in the city, and the commendation and support of businesses participating in the Ocean Friendly Establishment Program. ■

 [Learn more: plasticfilmrecycling.org](https://plasticfilmrecycling.org)

## NEW LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

For the first time in 40-plus years, the city overhauled its Land Development Code, which will shape the future of Wilmington.

### Here's what that means:

- Roads will be less congested. The code helps locate residential housing closer to retail, restaurants, other services, and offices, which lessens the need to drive major corridors, and relieves traffic congestion. This makes the community more convenient, walkable, and bike friendly.
- Trees will be prioritized. The code makes tree replacement and tree preservation a priority to grow Wilmington's urban tree canopy.
- Wilmington will be more walkable by locating buildings closer to the street and reducing expansive asphalt parking lots to create a sense of place and make the community more connected.

- Stormwater runoff will be managed on-site. This reduces the amount of runoff and flooding on surrounding roads and properties and enhances the appearance of major roads.
- The redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties will be encouraged and help reduce sprawl. This helps to reduce long travel times on major roads and improves access and convenience for nearby neighborhoods.

Council voted to adopt the new code at its Aug. 17 meeting with an effective date of Dec. 1, 2021. ■

 [wilmingtonnc.gov/LDC](https://wilmingtonnc.gov/LDC)



*Director of Planning, Development, and Transportation  
Glenn Harbeck is retiring after nearly a decade at the department's helm, capping a 42-year career in city planning. During his time with the city, Harbeck oversaw the formation of the Create Wilmington Comprehensive Plan and the adoption of a new Land Development Code, which will physically shape Wilmington for years to come.*

## FILM SPOTLIGHT

Interest from film and television productions are at an all-time high, shaping 2021 up to be the biggest year ever for our local film industry. Currently four projects are filming within the city, with others in pre-production. Full Covid-19 protocols are still in place, making the local film and television industry safe for its employees.

### In Production:

- Florida Man - TV Series
- The Summer I Turned Pretty - Movie
- Our Kind of People - TV Series
- Christmas in Harmony - Movie
- Sloane & Raven - TV Series ■



Crews film "The Summer I Turned Pretty" at a convenience store on Wrightsville Avenue.

## WILMYWOOD TRIVIA

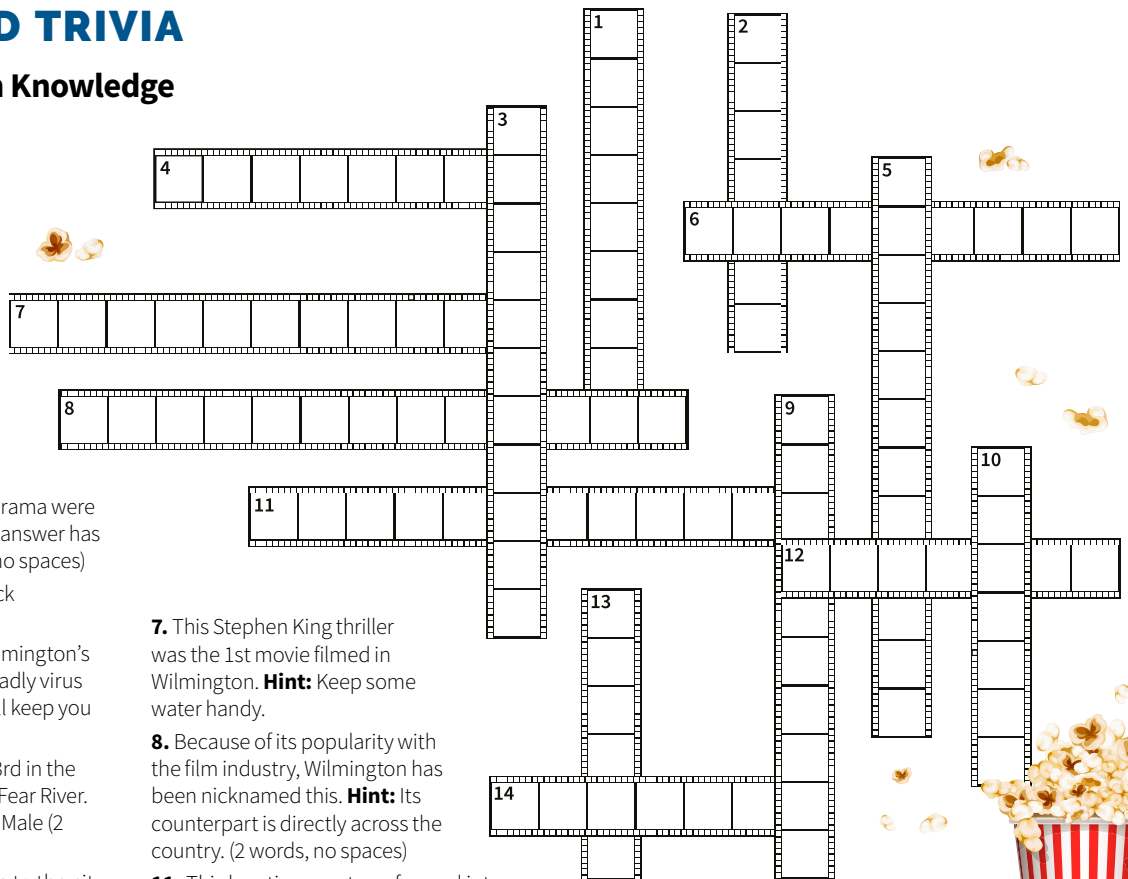
### Test Your Local Film Knowledge

#### DOWN:

1. This annual film festival will be celebrating its 27th anniversary later this year. **Hint:** The name sounds a little kooky.
2. This local mansion's kitchen was used in a recent *Sleepy Hollow* episode. **Hint:** It is one of the state's finest examples of historic antebellum architecture.
3. Nine seasons of this teen TV drama were filmed in Wilmington! **Hint:** The answer has three words and one. (3 words, no spaces)
5. This is another word for a mock documentary.
9. A CDC researcher explores Wilmington's marshy areas to investigate a deadly virus in this series. **Hint:** This thing will keep you guessing. (2 words, no spaces)
10. This top grossing 2013 film (3rd in the series) was shot along the Cape Fear River. **Hint:** The star of the movie is Fe Male (2 words, 1 number, no spaces).
13. The Ghostface killer returns to the city for the 5th film in this franchise. **Hint:** Cover your ears!

#### ACROSS:

4. The 2nd season of this Starz TV drama series was recently filmed in Wilmington. **Hint:** The town wasn't low.
6. Knife-wielding Michael Myers visited Wilmington to film the sequel of this classic horror movie. **Hint:** Its timely release will be in October.
7. This Stephen King thriller was the 1st movie filmed in Wilmington. **Hint:** Keep some water handy.
8. Because of its popularity with the film industry, Wilmington has been nicknamed this. **Hint:** Its counterpart is directly across the country. (2 words, no spaces)
11. This location was transformed into the Burklyn Café for the 2013 film *We're the Millers*. **Hint:** You can get more than java at this shop. (3 words, no spaces)
12. Which TV courtroom drama series was filmed in Wilmington in the 80s and 90s? **Hint:** It's named after the show's main character, played by Andy Griffith.
14. *The Longest Ride* features scenes in this famous hall's ballroom. **Hint:** It's also a theater.



**ANSWER KEY:**  
 DOWN: 1. CUCALORUS 2. BELLAMY 3. ONE TREE HILL 5. MOCKUMENTARY 9. SWAMPTHING 10. IRONMAN 13. SCREAM  
 ACROSS: 4. HIGHTOWN 6. HALLOWEEN 7. FIRESTARTER 8. HOLLYWOOD 11. PORTCITYJAWA 12. MATLOCK 14. THALIAN



# NEW DOWNTOWN PARK STRIKES THE RIGHT TUNE

## Wilmington's Flagship Riverfront Park Opens

*"Ten years ago, City Council set the stage for a park that would be transformative for our community. We're excited for this moment in our history and all the moments that will come from these partnerships and investments."*

Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo

**R**iverfront Park officially opened the weekend of July Fourth and has since been steadily welcoming visitors.

In 2013, the city purchased a 6.6-acre tract of land for Riverfront Park. The park—located along the Cape Fear River near the Isabel Holmes Bridge—includes a large concert venue, festival space, playground, and water feature, as well green space, plazas, gardens, and natural areas.

The concert venue is managed by Live Nation and is partially funded by the 2016 Parks Bond.

"People are more excited than they've ever been to reconnect with one other over the magic of live music," said

Andy Peikon, senior vice president of Live Nation's venue sales. "Fans are eagerly preparing for moments they'll never forget. By bringing a wide range of artists to Wilmington, [the park] will not only add to the vibrance and culture of the city, but also bring tremendous opportunities to local businesses."

### **The park has numerous amenities including:**

- Live Oak Bank Pavilion at Riverfront Park Amphitheatre
- Performance lawn
- Great lawn
- Back of Stage/House facilities
- Water feature & terrace
- Playscape

- Urban gardens
- Public Restrooms
- Festival Plaza
- Connection to the Riverwalk ■







## LIVE OAK BANK PAVILLION AT RIVERFRONT PARK

### Live Oak Bank Became the Name-in-Title Sponsor for the Newest Coastal Outdoor Venue

Live Oak Bank Pavilion at Riverfront Park opened July 16 welcoming a sold-out crowd to an electric performance featuring Widespread Panic and has been selling out shows ever since. The state-of-the-art boutique amphitheater is located downtown alongside the Cape Fear River. The 7,200-capacity concert venue is managed by Live Nation, which includes 2,400 seated and 4,800 on the lawn. The site also features rooftop VIP areas, adjacent views of the Cape Fear River, and plenty of places for on-site food & beverage purchases. The facility includes state-of-the-art sound, event lighting, and large screen image amplification in a natural outdoor setting.

“Ten years ago, City Council set the stage for a park that would be transformative for our community. We’re excited for this moment in our history and all the moments that will come from these partnerships and investments,” said Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo.





## WFD

### Longtime Fire Chief Cecil “Buddy” Martinette To Retire

Chief Martinette began his career at the Wilmington Fire Department in 2008 after a 25-year stint with the Virginia Beach Fire Department. Now, 13 years later, he is retiring from his top spot as Fire Chief.

Martinette is well known in the field for his Search and Rescue experience, which includes the Colonial Heights Wal-Mart Collapse, deployments for hurricanes Floyd, Fran, Frances, Charlie, Ivan, Katrina, and Rita, as well as the Murrah Federal Building bombing in Oklahoma and the 9/11 Pentagon collapse.

His last day will be September 11, 2021, a memorable and symbolic day for those in the fire service, and especially for Chief Martinette. Twenty years ago, he was called upon to run rescue operations at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. ■



## QRT

### Quick Response Team Helps Save Lives

What started as a partnership between several community entities in 2018 continues to save lives three years later. The Quick Response Team (QRT) helps reduce the amount of opioid overdoses in the Wilmington area. The team provides outreach to at-risk populations and is actively training different members of the community to increase referrals for assistance. Here's what you need to know:

- No financial barriers to getting help
- Help is available to everyone
- The team will come to you
- Everything is completely confidential ■



**If you or someone  
you know need help,  
call 910.833.2052**

## RIVER LIGHTS FIRE STATION



*Construction on the city's newest fire station—located in the River Lights community—is expected to begin in early 2022. The exterior of the building and the site is designed with consideration of the River Lights community design guidelines.*



## FALL 2021 RESIDENT SURVEY:

The City of Wilmington is currently developing a comprehensive plan to guide the future development of our city's parks and recreation amenities. The Fall 2021 Resident Survey asks for your input to help shape this plan around the community's priorities.

1. How would you rate the overall quality of all the parks or facilities offered by the City of Wilmington you or members of your household have used during the past 12 months?
  - ☐ Excellent
  - ☐ Good
  - ☐ Fair
  - ☐ Poor
2. In the past 12 months, approximately how often have you or members of your household visited any City of Wilmington parks or facilities?
  - ☐ Every couple of months
  - ☐ Once a month
  - ☐ A few times a month
  - ☐ Once a week
  - ☐ 2-3 times a week
  - ☐ Daily
3. In the past 12 months, have you or any member of your household participated in any programs or special events (Ex. Summer camps, July 4th Fireworks) offered by the City of Wilmington?
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
4. How would you rate the overall quality of programs or special events that you and members of your household have participated in?
  - ☐ Excellent
  - ☐ Good
  - ☐ Fair
  - ☐ Poor
5. From the following list, please **CHECK ALL** of the ways you learn about City of Wilmington parks, facilities and special events.
  - ☐ Direct email
  - ☐ City of Wilmington website
  - ☐ Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
  - ☐ Word of mouth
  - ☐ School flyers
6. Please **CHECK ALL** of the following reasons that may prevent you or other members of your household from using the parks and facilities offered by the City of Wilmington Recreation and Parks Division (or, if you currently use them, what prevents you from using them more often).
  - ☐ Cost of participation
  - ☐ The facilities I most want to visit are too far from home
  - ☐ Inconvenient hours of operation
  - ☐ Lack of access for people with disabilities
  - ☐ Lack of information/don't know what is offered
  - ☐ Lack of maintenance
  - ☐ I do not feel welcomed
  - ☐ Not interested in what is provided
  - ☐ Safety at facilities
  - ☐ Nothing; I am actively using the City's parks and facilities



### Just for fun!

It's football season again. Which NFL franchise do you cheer for on Sunday afternoons?

- |                                                   |                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carolina Panthers        | <input type="checkbox"/> Baltimore Ravens     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atlanta Falcons          | <input type="checkbox"/> New York Giants      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Washington Football Team | <input type="checkbox"/> Buffalo Bills        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pittsburgh Steelers      | <input type="checkbox"/> New England Patriots |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dallas Cowboys           | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____          |

**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.

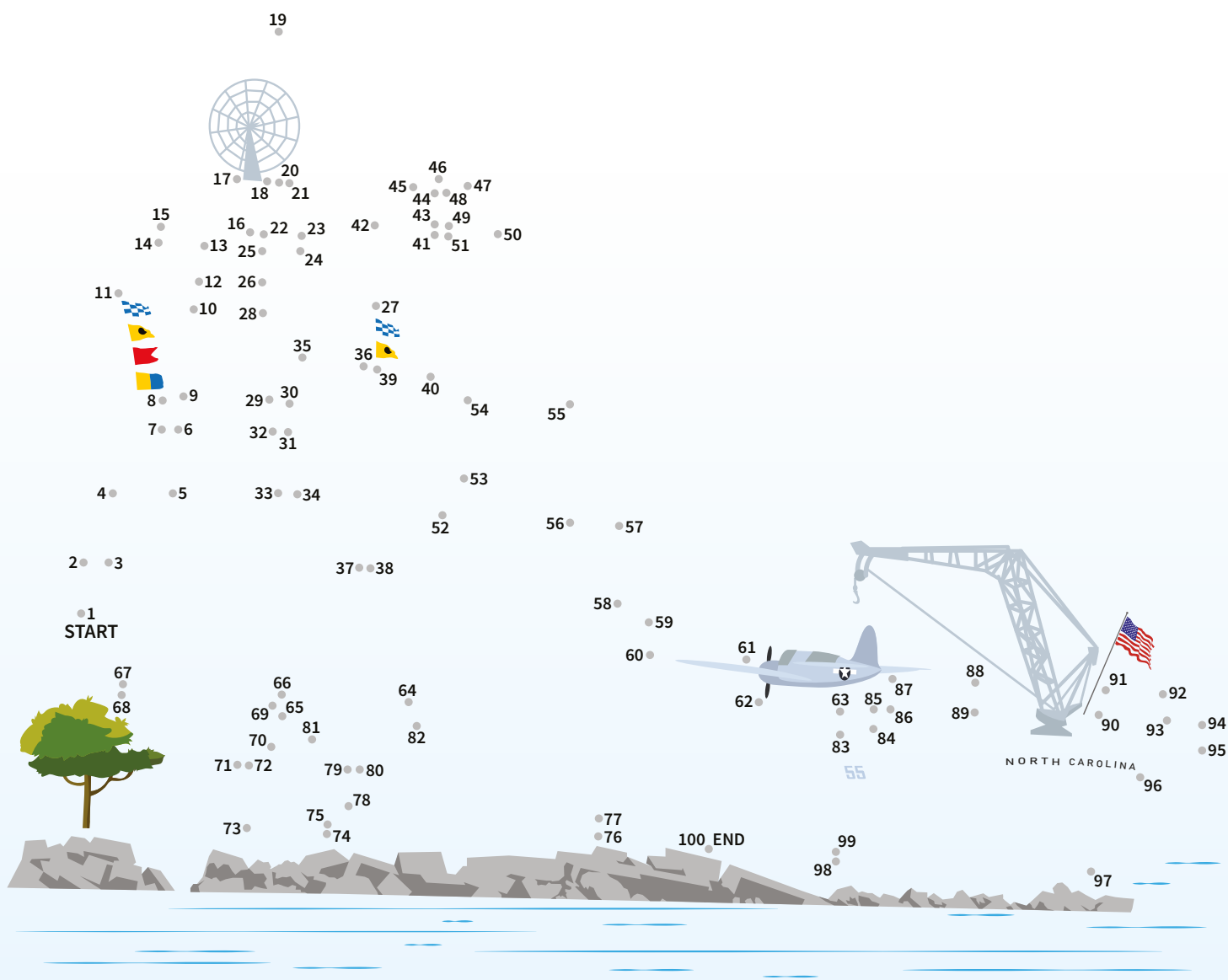
The mailing address for submissions is City Manager's Office, PO Box 1810, Wilmington, NC 28402-1810. Submissions may also be scanned and emailed to [newsletter@wilmingtonnc.gov](mailto:newsletter@wilmingtonnc.gov).



## KID'S CORNER

### Hidden in Plain Sight

Connect the dots to discover a popular Wilmington destination!



## SPRING SURVEY REVIEW

More than 1,000 surveys were returned from last issue's Spring 2021 resident survey, indicating a high level of interest by the public in the city's growth and development.

The survey asked respondents to assign a priority to 23 topics related to how the

city is managing its growth. The results strongly parallel the priorities expressed by over 4,000 city residents in face-to-face neighborhood meetings held during the development of the city's 2016 Comprehensive Plan.

This shaped the new Land Development Code, which council adopted on Aug. 17. Among the topics specifically addressed in the new code and receiving the highest levels of importance from survey respondents include:

1. Improve drainage and stormwater management
2. Preserve and grow the city's tree canopy
3. Develop new bike and pedestrian paths
4. Reduce large areas of concrete and asphalt
5. Upgrade the appearance of major streets and corridors ■



# A UNITED APPROACH TO A SAFER WILMINGTON

Crime knows no jurisdiction, which is why local law enforcement is working in close partnership to deter crime and protect the community. “In more than two decades as a prosecutor, I have never seen the law enforcement agencies more unified,” explained District Attorney Ben David.

This coordinated approach to public safety includes three major focus areas:

1. Community building investments that address root causes of crime with education, opportunity, and supportive structures
2. Enhanced public safety resources and cross-jurisdictional partnerships
3. Keeping violent offenders off the streets and getting justice for victims

As many cities in the U.S. continue to combat crime, Wilmington's coordinated approach is showing progress.

## By the Numbers

In the first seven months of the year, police seized 273 firearms in 2021 versus 183 in 2020.

Over the first six months, gun crime was 13.6% lower in 2021 versus 2020.

As of September, WPD responded to 7 homicides in 2021 down from 14 in 2020.

Over the first six months, violent crime was 18.14% lower in 2021 versus 2020.

*\*Statistics provided by Wilmington Police Department.*

## City Invests in New Public Safety Resources

Wilmington City Council allocated additional resources to help the police department combat and solve crimes. Council recently approved the purchase of Ballistic IQ, which will give the department's Gun Crime Task Force members actionable and timely investigative information. Council also approved the purchase of equipment that will reduce the time required to process evidence from gun crimes. This will help to solve gun crimes more quickly and stop others before they happen.

### COMMUNITY BUILDING



- City Council is addressing the root causes of violence and recidivism with a sustained commitment to community building
- The city increased its biennial commitment to community building organizations to \$2.5 million
- Creating a safe place and civic partnerships are embedded within the city's Strategic Plan

### PROTECTING THE COMMUNITY



- WPD expanded and is building upon the joint task forces and partnerships with the New Hanover County Sheriff's Office
- WPD dedicated an investigator position to focus primarily on gun crimes
- Newly enhanced patrols aim to protect Wilmington residents
- Newly allocated resources make investigations more efficient

### ENSURING JUSTICE



- Getting justice for the community and those affected by violence takes a partnership of local government, law enforcement agencies, and the justice system
- In concert with the efforts of local law enforcement, the District Attorney's office is using every tool available to keep violent offenders off the street while awaiting trial and pursue stronger convictions for prohibited possessors of firearms ■

## CONTACT

### Wilmington City Council

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

### 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

### City Council Meetings

City Council meetings are generally held on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Meetings are streamed live on:

- GTV8 (Spectrum channel 8)
- [wilmingtonnc.gov/gtv](http://wilmingtonnc.gov/gtv)
- [youtube.com/user/cityofwilmington](https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofwilmington)

Previous meetings are available for on-demand viewing at [wilmingtonnc.gov/gtv](http://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

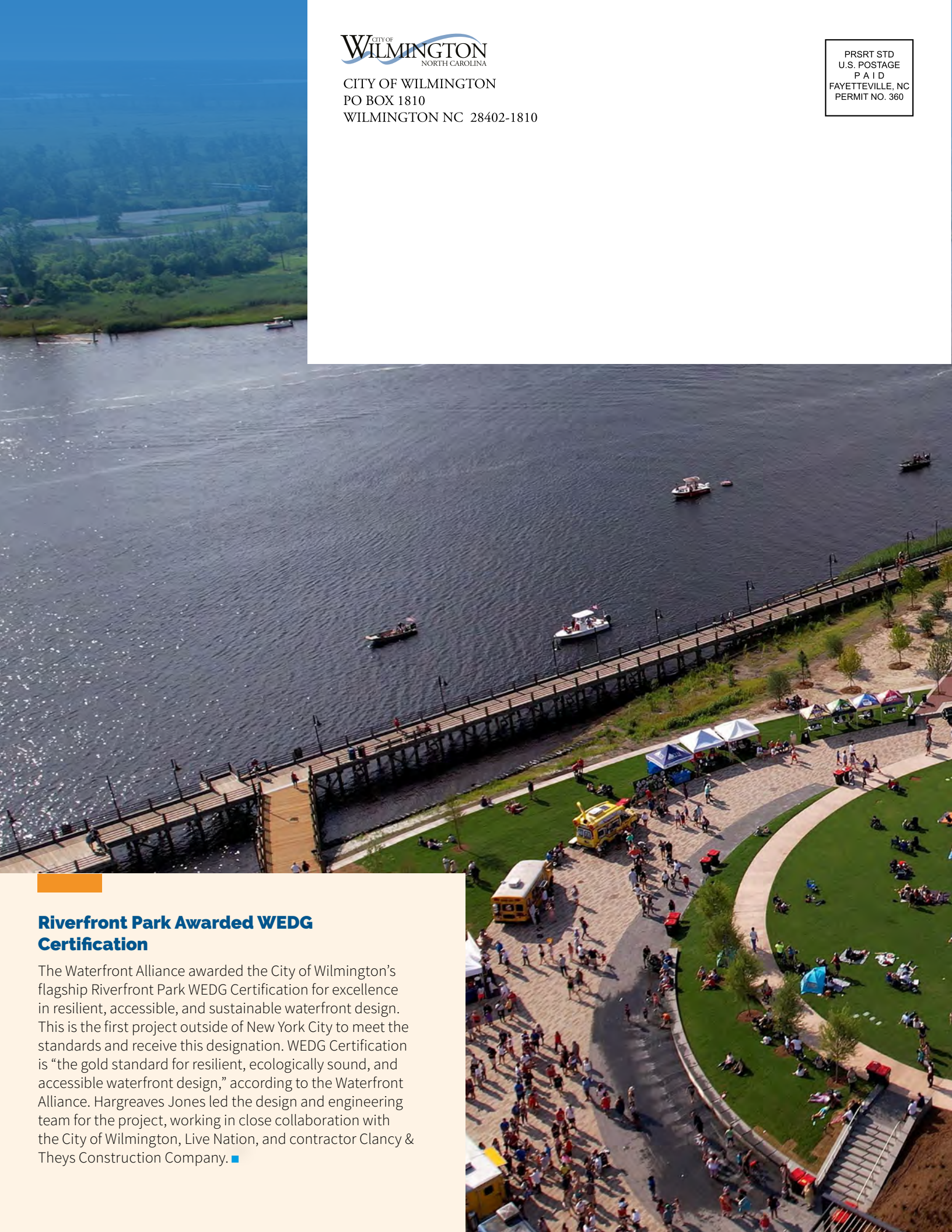






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## Riverfront Park Awarded WEDG Certification

The Waterfront Alliance awarded the City of Wilmington's flagship Riverfront Park WEDG Certification for excellence in resilient, accessible, and sustainable waterfront design. This is the first project outside of New York City to meet the standards and receive this designation. WEDG Certification is "the gold standard for resilient, ecologically sound, and accessible waterfront design," according to the Waterfront Alliance. Hargreaves Jones led the design and engineering team for the project, working in close collaboration with the City of Wilmington, Live Nation, and contractor Clancy & Theys Construction Company. ■