



The Story of New Bern Avenue

*Oral Histories of the New Bern Avenue Corridor
from the 1940s to 2021*

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11 Interviews

13 Participants

June 17 - July 13, 2021

New Bern Avenue
Station Area Plan

The Story of New Bern Avenue

Interview Summary

Overview

The Story of New Bern Avenue is a collection of oral histories examining the past, present, and hopeful future of the New Bern Avenue corridor. Thirteen (13) participants were interviewed to learn about their experiences in the corridor and how they have seen the corridor change over time. Additional sources were used to gather supplemental information about the corridor.

The purpose of the Story is to inform the New Bern Avenue Station Area Planning process. This planning process will look at areas within a short walk of future bus rapid transit (BRT) stations along New Bern Avenue. Plan topics will include:

- Housing affordability
- Access to jobs and support for area businesses
- The ability to safely and comfortably walk along the corridor

The Story of New Bern Avenue seeks to understand the history of the corridor in order to better plan for its future.

A full interview summary can be found in Appendix A. Additionally, interview terms can be found in Appendix B, and participant questions can be found in Appendices C and D.

Interview Outreach Summary

The following outreach was conducted to invite individuals to participate in *The Story of New Bern Avenue* interviews:



Sent direct emails and made phone calls to 32 businesses, schools, religious institutions, and community organizations in the project area



Outreached to the New Bern Station Area Plan Community Partner Group and Neighborhood Ambassadors to ask them to distribute information about the interviews to their networks



Sent direct emails to 54 stakeholders identified by the City of Raleigh



Contacted participants who indicated they were interested in being interviewed during the New Bern Station Area Plan kickoff meeting



Contacted by phone or email additional individuals or businesses recommended to the project team by interview participants

Participant Profiles

1

Resident near Anderson Point Park
Bought their home in 2010
Loves cycling and often commutes on their bicycle

2

Business owner on New Bern Ave for 2 years
Worked at the business for 12 years total
Sells real estate in the area

3

MOTHER

Current resident of Apollo Heights for 40 years
Moved to the area in the 1980s
Rode the bus to commute to work

4

DAUGHTER

Grew up in Apollo Heights in the 80's/90's
Works at an organization off of New Bern Avenue

5

Grew up off of Poole Road (22 years)
Moved back to the area and has lived in the area for 6 years now
Attended Carnage Middle School and Enloe High School

6 & 7

Residents of the Tanglewood subdivision
Part of their neighborhood's HOA
One participant works at a school in the corridor

8

Resident of Longview Gardens for 23 years
Used to travel the corridor as a teenager
Works in Downtown Raleigh

Participant Profiles

9

Represented Raleigh First Baptist Church, which is over 200 years old

Has been a church member for many years

First Baptist has a history of outreaching and providing services to the community

10

Moved to the area near St. Augustine College when she was 10

Current resident of the area

One of the first Black students to integrate Enloe High School

11

Traveled and shopped along the corridor

Attends church along the corridor

Used to work at Enloe High School

12

Grew up on New Bern Avenue in the 1940s/50s

Home was where the Richard B. Harrison Library now stands

Had to use the city bus to get to Washington High School

Graduated from St. Augustine's college

13

Resident of the area for over 20 years

Has worked at Raleigh Christian Academy and Beacon Baptist Church for over 35 years

In addition to the individual interviews, the project team used notes and quotes from a Wake Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) meeting on May 27th. This meeting took place at the Fisher Street Park. It was intended to gather information about future artwork for the BRT stations. This included gathering information on the history and culture of the New Bern Avenue Area.

Additionally, the project team received a copy of the Raleigh First Baptist Church's 200-year Anniversary history book. Some information for *The Story of New Bern Avenue* was also drawn from this resource.

"Well, for years I've described it as the best kept secret in Raleigh that now has been discovered, and I'm so upset that it has. [...] We've gotten a bad rap over the years about a lot of things that really weren't here, but the perception was here. But those of us who live over here have led a really high quality of life in neighborhoods and communities that have been in existence with people who knew each other and cared about each other. But gentrification has come in now and completely changed the flavor of so many of the communities. And really, it's not the same place."

"My neighborhood is a predominantly Black townhome community. Kind of small. We're kind of a family- extended family, I would say. We look out for one another. Most of the people here have been here for many years, so we've gotten to know each other pretty well."

"It is a community that is sort of a tight knit community for those that are willing to be open and be willing and friendly and neighborly. So, it's a community where a lot of people have been here for many years. From the inception of the community until now, there are people that are still here. The new people that are moving in, they're coming from various areas of the country. We have renters here as well, which seem to have adapted the notion of homeownership in a way that they are taking care of their properties for the most part, how they can. And so we welcome them. It's a predominantly African American community. There are several White homeowners, and I guess also renters. There's some Latino, Hispanic people as well, African people as well. So, we got a good diverse community."

In a few short sentences, how would you describe your neighborhood or the New Bern Ave corridor?

"Well, it has over the years become a very busy point on the eastern side of the city. My history with New Bern Ave goes back to the late 70s. I have been at my current location for 40 years. And so, I saw as the population of Wake County and Raleigh, as the population grew, the amount of traffic just exploded. It exploded to a point where before they built the bypass, it was... I mean, within minutes, if you didn't leave at your appointed time you were going to sit in a lot of traffic, especially when there was bad weather, so I think that corridor has reflected the overall growth of Raleigh."

"A tale of two cities. [...] There is a large, rich legacy of affordable housing and people in the working class. And then a newer class of higher net worth individuals that are buying into that corridor that should have an equal say as well. But that fight between the two makes a big shift in finding common ground."

"I mean, it's a nice neighborhood. It's from low income to middle class in income. Most houses are brick ranches and it's connected by Poole Rd to the city."

In a few short sentences, how would you describe your neighborhood or the New Bern Ave corridor?

"I think it's filled with resources and I've seen it develop across the decades or years, and I think it's a wonderful place to live and to work."

"Quiet. Dynamic. Finally, it's starting to change. Finally."

"The neighborhood is really nice, I like the spot where I live, I'm centrally located. 'Cause everything is nearby, I don't have to go a long way for anything. We have the um, grocery stores right in our area, drugstores, bus stops, parks, community centers. Everything is pretty well centrally located and New Bern Ave is only a couple blocks away. I've rode up and down there over the years. I've been here for 40 years or so. So, I've been up and down New Bern Avenue a whole lot. In fact, just as you're coming from downtown-- I guess this would probably start just beyond the post office, coming down New Bern is, it was a pretty nice neighborhood. There used to be houses along there, on both sides, along with offices and things of that nature. But I think a lot of the houses were torn down, and in fact they built a charter school or something over there, not far from New Bern Ave. But all in all it's pretty nice, nice scenery and everything, so I've enjoyed it over the years."

"I think it's a great neighborhood, as I grew up there, and everything is like she says, centrally located. You're close to downtown, so you have all the amenities like the schools; my son went to the school downtown, Moore Square. You have the food hall. So, you basically have everything nearby that you need. And then the only thing that changed lately with New Bern Avenue that I see is that the [department of] motor vehicles that used to be there, they moved, and it looked like they're building more houses right there in that area. They're fixing up that area. And as you move on down New Bern Avenue like towards WakeMed- WakeMed brought up all of Sunnybrook, New Bern Avenue area, so the Health Department will be moving. So, a lot of changes are happening."

"I don't travel it very much anymore, but I think it's quite busy going from downtown past the hospital and out through, I'm thinking by Tower Shopping Center. I would describe it as a busy thoroughfare."

What are your top three favorite things about the corridor?



Residents of the New Bern Avenue corridor in the 1950s.

When asked what their top favorite things about the corridor were, overwhelmingly participants spoke about the people.

The New Bern Avenue corridor is composed of diverse residents who make up welcoming and friendly communities. This strong sense of community is what drew many to the area and what they view as a valuable and integral part of the corridor.

Other responses on their favorite things included:

- Access to the bus for the renters and the businesses that hire people
- The rich history of buildings and tenants and neighbors and relationships
- College Park, which is right by St. Aug, and its rich history
- The Greenway
- Its proximity to Downtown Raleigh and Knightdale and how it connects the two
- WakeMed hospital
- Enloe High School
- Communities where everyone knows each other
- The longevity of residents and family legacies
- How quiet it is in some of the neighborhoods
- Access to the Beltline and connection to downtown
- The different cultures and people that live in the neighborhoods
- The retail businesses that have opened up over the years
- The historic look of the buildings and homes

Community Character

Community Character

The neighborhoods surrounding New Bern Avenue have a strong sense of community character and togetherness, which has existed since at least the 1940s.

In the 1940s and 50s, New Bern Avenue was a place where there was enough space to raise chickens and a turkey in the backyard. In the '60s, '70s, and '80s, kids could be seen riding their bikes up and down the side streets. All the kids knew each other, and evenings were filled with neighborhood games of basketball and football.

One participant noted that of the 11 girls she grew up with in her neighborhood, seven have since moved back into the community after moving away for many years. The sense of community that existed then, and still exists today, is what drew them back to the neighborhood.

But the community has not been devoid of change. In the past, neighborhoods were filled with traditional homes. Today, participants noted increases in large, modern homes and businesses. They do not think it would be safe for kids to ride their bikes on the streets anymore. One participant noted that he had enough mail-ins to start a fire every week from people trying to buy his property. He has noticed this among many property owners in the area and worries that it will lead to a loss of character in the area. Another participant noted that she senses a divide between the communities north and south of New Bern Avenue.

However, despite these challenges, the residents of the neighborhoods surrounding New Bern Avenue seem intent on preserving the character and community. One participant noted that her neighborhood is no longer “the best kept secret in Raleigh,” but they still have a wonderful quality of life and a strong sense of community. They try to impart that sense of community to new neighbors and make sure that they are aware of the existing community with its rich history.



Residents of the New Bern Avenue corridor in the 1950s.

“Come join this rich history and this rich culture as we grow and expand. Don’t come take it over.”

Community History

The New Bern Avenue corridor has a rich history that residents want to make sure is honored and preserved. However, they don't want the harder parts to be glazed over or ignored. This includes the instances of segregation that existed in the New Bern community.

"You have to be careful that you tell the truth, even if it hurts feelings. It is the past that gets you to your present, and the present that gets you to the future. As we build, we have something to look back on, a foundation to build on."

Many of the neighborhoods along New Bern were once home to primarily African American residents. One participant noted that her neighborhood was home to Raleigh's First African American Mayor, Clarence Lightner, and that one of the first Black former chairs of the Wake County Commissioner, Herald Webb, lived on her street. There were principals, school teachers, and professionals that made up the tight-knit community.

"I was raised in this community in 1943. I grew up in this community and what I came away with, when I left here as an adult and came back 40 years later, it changed."

[In the past,] it was a self-sufficient Black community. We had stores, seamstresses, restaurants, daycares, places to get your shoes fixed, soda shop, barber shop, places to go dancing. You didn't need to leave the community because everything we needed was here. This was in large part because we weren't allowed to go to many other places in Raleigh. We don't want this history to be washed away."

Mollie Huston Lee, Wake County's first African American librarian, was the driving force for opening of the Richard B. Harrison Library in 1935. After being expanded twice, the library moved to its current location on New Bern Avenue in 1967 to meet the needs of the community.



Home on New Bern Avenue where the Richard B. Harrison Library now stands. Photo taken in the 1950s.



The children in this photo are standing on what was just a side street in the 1950s, but now is part of New Bern Avenue in front of the Richard B. Harrison Library.

Demographics

Participants often noted that their neighborhoods today are diverse in terms of race, age, and income level. In predominantly African American communities, they have seen more non-Black people move in, which has made the area more diverse. One participant spoke about how they had noticed more Latinx individuals becoming residents. Another participant has noticed more immigrants from India and other parts of Asia are buying homes in their neighborhood.

While race has played a significant role in the history of the New Bern communities, income level was also a demographic characteristic that interview participants often brought up. Many have noticed more higher income groups moving into the area, and the divide between lower income and higher income residents is getting larger.

When one participant was a kid, the kids in the community didn't know who had more money and who had less - they all just saw each other at school and in the parks. However, when the public schools began bussing children to school, kids could see where others were picked up and dropped off. They then could see when kids lived in low-income neighborhoods, and this began creating a divide.

"There was some extreme pockets of poverty. There was some extreme pockets of streets you didn't want to go down because they were a little on the rough side, but they were sandwiched in by other communities. When we grew up, we didn't penalize somebody because they were poor. Now we have a war on the poor where it needs to be a war on poverty."

Personal Safety

In the 1950s, one participant said there was no violence and she felt safe walking through the community where neighbors would greet her by name. However, over the years, participants have noticed an increase in crime in the area, including instances of gun violence.

"It's relatively a nice neighborhood. It was basically quiet, you know, we never had a whole lot of stuff going on until recently, things like lately there's been a lot of shooting in the area and things like that. In fact, we had an incident right near here last month. Kinda got a little too close for comfort, but some things just can't be prevented, just have to kinda dodge the ball, so to speak."

One participant noted that they knew a member of their church who had been mugged at a local grocery store. Another participant mentioned that there used to be more instances of crime before Washington Terrace was revitalized.

Housing, Development, and Displacement

Housing Affordability

The history of New Bern shows a combination of both homeowners and renters in the area. However, participants have noticed a shift in the affordability of housing in the corridor. One participant noted that from their perspective, rent has gone up from \$750-800 a month 12 years ago to around \$2,000 a month today. This affordability issue is worse when trying to find a three-bedroom apartment or places with more space for families.

"I'd say within the last 10 years you've seen a stark difference in terms of the cost of renting, the costs of leasing, and then so many couples that I deal with or run into who are unable even to purchase their first home when both partners are working because of the supply, but also because of the cost and the ability of some people that come in with cash and even bid higher than the market price. And that that is really causing havoc in the community at large, whether here or any other part of the community.

And we know it's a supply and demand issue and more than that, but I support all efforts that the city has done to create housing for every segment of the population, and I think we need to work extremely hard to make sure that that continues, but it really has been problematic in a new way in- I'd say in the last 10 years."

In the past, when residents were offered \$100,000 for their house, there was a community or another Black neighborhood they could move into. However, homes at that price no longer exist today. One participant noted that many older residents or their children who sold their property were unaware that this shift in affordability was occurring. She felt this has likely contributed to the number of homeless senior citizens in the area who cannot afford a new home based on their fixed retirement income range.



Other participants had noticed an increase in the homeless population as well, and they view the lack of affordable housing as part of the problem.

Multiple participants expressed concern that when developers received tax subsidies for affordable housing, those affordable units were only guaranteed temporarily. Instead of this model, they want to see long-term affordable housing options. They are also concerned that increases in property taxes will push long-time residents out of their homes, as they will no longer be able to afford to stay.



Development

Generally, participants remembered the New Bern area filled with single-family homes with pockets of rural landscape. Sixty years ago, neighborhoods had four or five houses, a service station, and maybe a store.

"It's definitely switched from [being] rural to being a very suburban and almost urban area. Let's say a lot of the things that we could do as a kid, they're gone. The ponds are gone. The trails are gone. All of those have been replaced with roads or housing developments. You could go out in the woods. You could go to the pond. You know, you could do all that good stuff, but now it's gone. They're gone. So it's been deforested. It's been urbanized. And I think that's probably what I like the least about it."

Today, New Bern Avenue has greatly increased the number of commercial developments and single-family homes have been torn down to build multi-family condos, apartments, or larger, more expensive single-family homes. This has changed the character of the area, both in the way the land looks and the culture and demographics of the communities along New Bern Ave.

Many of the participants appreciated how development has brought in new grocery stores, entertainment venues, and greenway access. However, they do not like how this has seemed to be at the expense of affordable housing.

"The first wave was buying them as rentals. And then the second wave was buying them, fixing them up, and selling them as investments. The next phase was supersizing the houses and selling them for an astronomical price point. And now the new wave is buying them, tearing them down and building more modern homes that are selling for \$700,000 to \$1,000,000, or tearing them down and combining lots and building condos."

As more development occurs in the area, participants are concerned that this will entice more developers to buy up more property as they see how lucrative it can be, creating a cycle of development and displacement. While this could open up opportunities for smaller businesses, one participant explained that the red tape makes it very difficult for these businesses to succeed over the larger, well-known developers.



Gentrification and Displacement

Many participants view the growing development and decline in affordable housing as gentrification that has pushed residents out of their homes. Specifically, many noted how the gentrification was displacing Black and working-class residents. While some of the new development and revitalization of the area was viewed positively, there is concern about how that development has pushed and will push communities out.

"The biggest concern now is property value going up at an astronomical rate. The rezoning of our communities where all of a sudden you want us [to have] high density but you don't go to the other part of town to do high density, you just do it over here.

At one point [there was] no problem with a revitalization of certain communities that were dilapidated. Well, now you're not going into the dilapidated communities anymore. Now you're going into the middle class Black communities and you are buying their homes, tearing them down, putting

\$800,000 homes there, and you're doing things that the people who live there are having difficulty paying their taxes. [They're having difficulty] being able to stay in their own family home on their property that they want and they want to stay. So that's where I have a problem with some of the things."

A Black participant related that in recent years she has noticed more people looking at her as if she doesn't belong in the neighborhood when walking her dog, even though she has lived in the area for decades. She feels like some new residents come in with an attitude of "well we're going to be moving them out" or "they'll be moving out within a year."

One participant explained that they are also worried that the addition of bus rapid transit (BRT) to the area will increase displacement. They are concerned the BRT will increase the cost of rent and property taxes, pushing out residents and businesses that will no longer be able to afford to stay.

Transportation and Transit

Many participants discussed the connectivity achieved through the New Bern Corridor, specifically the connection to Downtown Raleigh. The corridor and the bus routes along it provide connections to notable places as well, such as WakeMed. The New Bern Avenue corridor also provides residents with connections to I-440 and 540, allowing residents to easily travel to surrounding areas and communities.

Transit

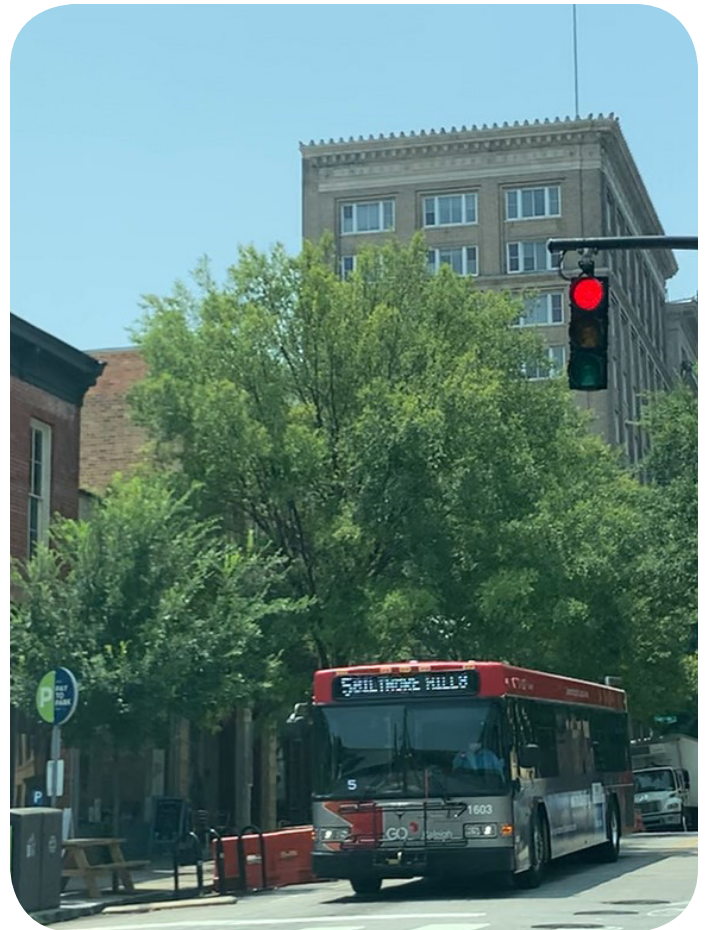
Interview participants discussed the change in transit in the corridor over the years. At one time, there were no bus routes along the corridor, as one participant noted. With the implementation of bus routes in the corridor, initially there was one bus coming and one bus going from the corridor.

“Well when I came, they only had the two buses, I got one going, one coming. So it has improved over the years; they got them going every direction now. So that was a big change, and I think they’re still trying to extend them out a little further to some of the other little towns and neighborhoods. ‘Cause some people still don’t drive, still got a lot of people here that don’t drive, so they depend on the bus.”

When participants spoke of transit, they focused on the increase in buses and stops along the corridor. Now, the bus routes extend connections to WakeMed and beyond, with GoRaleigh being extended into Wendell, Knightdale, and Garner to offer further connections to residents.

While some participants noted that in their younger years, they would ride the bus to and from school or work, others noted that the connections were not what they are today and thus, they were unable to use the bus as their primary means of transportation, relying instead on walking and biking.

When asked if he uses any of the bus services today, one participant said, “Absolutely not.” He explained that the time it would take to get somewhere by bus would double or



triple what it would take in his car. Another participant noted that Raleigh is very car-dependent and it would take a shift in mindset to convince people to use transit more often.

Traffic

Many participants mentioned the increased traffic in the corridor when discussing transportation. The corridor has changed over time with more housing in once rural areas and more commercial development as well, which in turn has driven more traffic to and through the corridor. The population growth in the area has also contributed to the increase in traffic, and some participants noted that with the continued development of housing, the traffic will continue to grow as more people come to the area. Some specific streets with traffic concerns include New Bern Avenue, Sunnybrook Road, New Hope Church Road, and the intersection of New Bern Avenue and the Beltline.

Bicycling and Walking

Between kids biking in the streets, participants walking to St. Augustine, and residents cycling to and from various recreation options, the New Bern Avenue corridor is home to a lot of multimodal transportation.

One participant discussed how they used to walk to St. Augustine University when attending school there, noting that the community felt safe to walk in as the neighborhoods were all friendly. Another participant noted that they moved to the area because of the bus line, and the bus and walking were their mode of traveling in the city.

One participant noted that while children used to regularly ride their bikes everywhere, they don't anymore. One reason for this change in biking was concerns from Black residents about being stopped by the police and questioned about the bike and how they got it. Now, kids and teenagers will ride the electric scooters more frequently, because they only run after being paid for, so they are less likely to be stopped on those.

Some participants mentioned additional concerns with riding bicycles in the corridor, such as increasing traffic, insufficient lighting, and not enough space in the bike lanes.

"There's a stretch of New Bern right in between the 440 and WakeMed, where if you're traveling toward downtown, it's downhill, and if you're traveling from downtown it's uphill. So traveling toward downtown downhill, I can maintain a decent speed so I can travel almost unimpeded by vehicular traffic.

But the other way, where if I had to climb, then obviously I'm a lot slower than I have to be and at night time when a car cannot give me enough space and where they have to travel with two vehicles side by side, I guess not many people can be as patient as they need to be. And that stretch, I think in that stretch of probably about half to 3/4 of a mile, I think there are only maybe two or three streetlights as well."

"When was the last time you saw a Black child, a Black boy over the age of 12 on a bicycle? You haven't because they used to be stopped regularly.

'Did you steal that bike? Are you trying to sell drugs? Where you get that bike from?' And they were harassed so they stopped riding bikes. One of the reasons why I like the scooters is that if a scooter's running, somebody paid for it. So the police can't stop you or somebody can't stop you and say, 'Where did you get the scooter from?' [...]

When those Bird things [electric rental scooters] came out. I mean, my heart was just warm. I would see groups of young boys and young men riding down the street like we used to ride bicycles. In groups together, and just having fun. And then they turned around and upped the price on them so much that now I don't even think a lot of those kids can afford to do that like they used to."

Amenities

Food Options

The New Bern Avenue Corridor is home to fast food chain restaurants, some local eateries, and a couple of grocery stores. Some of the food options the corridor offers have changed over the years, specifically in the way of grocery stores. Once home to a Piggly-Wiggly, a Kroger's, a Winn-Dixie's, and smaller, quick-pick community stores, the grocery options now include a Wal-Mart and a Food Lion. The lack of additional options, especially options for those with lower income, leads some to refer to the area as a "food desert."

While one participant mentioned Harris Teeter, Publix, and Wegman's as additional options, specifically for healthier food, they also noted that their price points would still leave a food desert for many that cannot afford to shop at those stores.

"This used to be a food desert. And that was really bad. Now we have groceries that are coming in. But those groceries price points don't really service the lower population from a cost standpoint. [...] They can't go to Publix and spend \$100 for half a bag of groceries. So I do see the benefit that there are healthier options in food. It's just not equitable."

As for restaurants, the corridor is home to numerous fast-food chains: Church's Chicken, Popeye's, Cookout, Bojangles, Hardee's, and more. Popular local places to eat include Jack's Seafood and Soul Food and La Count's Catering. Still, multiple participants said that they wished there were more options to eat out in the area, noting the need to drive outside of the corridor to visit many restaurants and grocery stores.

"We have a Bojangles across the street from a Cookout, which was right next to a KFC until recently, which was down from Jack's Seafood. So, we have good restaurants, good inexpensive restaurants. There are a lot of the students from St. Aug that asked me "can we get a Chipotle?" Can we [get] something a little healthier because if we can support and sustain that many fast foods, we can do a grocery store or more upscale restaurant and we'd like to see some of that in the area."

Shopping Options

At one time, the only shopping options around the corridor were located within downtown. If you wanted to go to a store, you needed to travel to Downtown Raleigh. This was before the Beltline made it easier to travel the corridor and surrounding areas.

“But to do shopping, we had to go downtown to Hudson Belk-- what was Hudson Belk at that time. And all the stores were downtown anyway. There was no North Hills shopping center. There was no Beltline. So there’s very little shopping we could do in our community. Just the drugstore and grocery stores.”

Over time, the corridor has become more commercially developed and now offers more shopping options for residents, workers, and travelers in the area.

Interview participants mentioned several stops along the corridor at which they frequently stop and shop, from gas stations to retail stores. Popular locations include Tower Shopping Center, Longview Shopping Center, Wal-Mart, Cato’s, Hamrick’s, and more. In spite of the continued commercial development along the corridor, multiple participants noted that they still travel outside of the corridor to other locations for shopping, such as North Hills, White Oak Shopping Center, Village District, and more.

Recreation Options

The New Bern Avenue corridor not only offers food and shopping options, but recreation options as well. In the past, recreation options in the rural landscape included baseball, basketball, football, and riding bikes, as a lot of the land was open. Hunting and fishing were also popular, especially the latter in irrigation ponds that were located in the area at that time, but that have since been filled in and developed. One participant noted that when they were younger, they and other children would ride bikes or skate in the streets, but most of the time people in the neighborhood played in their yards.

The corridor and surrounding area are home to multiple parks for residents to partake in recreational activities. Prior to integration, there were “Black parks” and “White parks.” Chavis Park, Lions Park, and Roberts Park were popular parks for Black children to play at, and even after integration, many still went to those parks. Others mentioned Anderson Point Park as a spot they frequent now, or Pullen Park outside the corridor.

The Longview Pool is another prominent recreational spot in the New Bern Avenue corridor. Many families visit this pool, swim meets are hosted there, and First Baptist Church has taken kids to visit the pool with their camp programs. In addition to the pool, recreation centers are visited along the corridor, such as the Anderson Point recreation center and the Ralph Campbell recreation center. Two participants noted the need for more equipment and updates to the Ralph Campbell Community Center to accommodate families with young children moving to the corridor.



Religious Institutions, Schools, and Businesses



Religious Institutions

Beacon Baptist Church

Beacon Baptist moved to the corridor in 1966, settling on Trawick Road, which was a dirt road at the time. The church originally was located in Downtown Raleigh across various pieces of property, including the old governor's mansion. As the church grew, they turned to the current location on Trawick Road as it allowed for more room and bought 25 acres of land. At the time, the area was all rural farmland, but now the church is surrounded by neighborhoods. In 1977, Beacon Baptist Church opened Raleigh Christian Academy.

Today, the church has around a thousand members, with many people still participating online due to COVID considerations. The congregation is made up of a mix of younger and older members, with lots of families with children as well.

The church participates and helps create that strong sense of community known throughout the New Bern corridor. In the past, during natural disasters, they have come together with their neighbors to help cleanup efforts and support their neighbors.

There have been times when we had natural disasters, hurricanes, and that's when we went to work to try to reach our neighbors and let them know we were there. [...] They're just they're good people. And they're good neighbors to us. We try to be good neighbors to them."

Beacon Baptist Church also hosts community gatherings to bring people together, especially during the holidays. They hope to continue to invite the community and welcome all their neighbors as the safety concerns of COVID subside.

"We planned a big Easter egg hunt. And we were going to go over to one of the neighboring parks and do that. But because of COVID, we were not able to fully see that transpire. [...] But we do everything we can, especially with children, to have children's events. We have Christmas events that we invite our community too. [...] Easter's a big time for us, so we invite all of our neighbors to attend and be there. And so, we as a church go and put flyers on all of our neighbors' doors, and we invite them to be a part of that with us."



Raleigh First Baptist Church

One prominent and notable place along New Bern Avenue is Raleigh First Baptist Church. With a history spanning over 209 years, First Baptist Church has played a significant role in the New Bern community through both church campuses: one primarily African American church on Wilmington St and one predominantly White church on Salisbury St.

The church started in 1812 as an integrated congregation including fourteen freed slaves and nine former slave owners. In 1868, the African American members of the church were granted permission to form their own church, and thus, First Baptist Church was split into the two campuses that exist today on either side of the Capitol.

"First Baptist Church historically has been engaged in community development and nurturing of the community and Christian education and also raising the voice for issues of justice and equality. Many of the people have been nurtured here across the years through the educational programs at First Baptist Church, and the church stands as a witness to the unity that we are striving for in terms of our culture, but also the true meaning of the principles related to the Kingdom of God, but also democracy. And so, and so the church has been committed to that since its beginning and has made an impact in the community relative to those issues."

Today, the First Baptist Church on Wilmington Street is attended by over 800 people, including many who live along the New Bern corridor. It often hosts community gatherings, and regularly provides services to the community, including the homeless community in the area.

"Our community has been diverse. It's in that diversity which has made it strong. Our Black churches are the same way. They are very diverse. We have people who are affluent and then we have some people who are struggling. But we all worship the same God and we go to the same church and the church tries to support those that are going through a crisis when they can. And so it's a sense of community. And First Baptist has a long history of that sense of community."

First Baptist also includes the Family Life Center, home to the nonprofit Capital City Intergenerational Care Inc. This organization focuses on working with children when they are out of school by hosting summer camps, after school, and year-round programs.

The church has always placed a heavy emphasis on voter education and engagement. Many church members have also run from public office. Those members and others running for office often come to the church to speak to the congregation. The church often works with City Council, mayors, and governors in order to educate their members about issues that matter: education, health care, jobs, wages, racial injustice, and so much more.

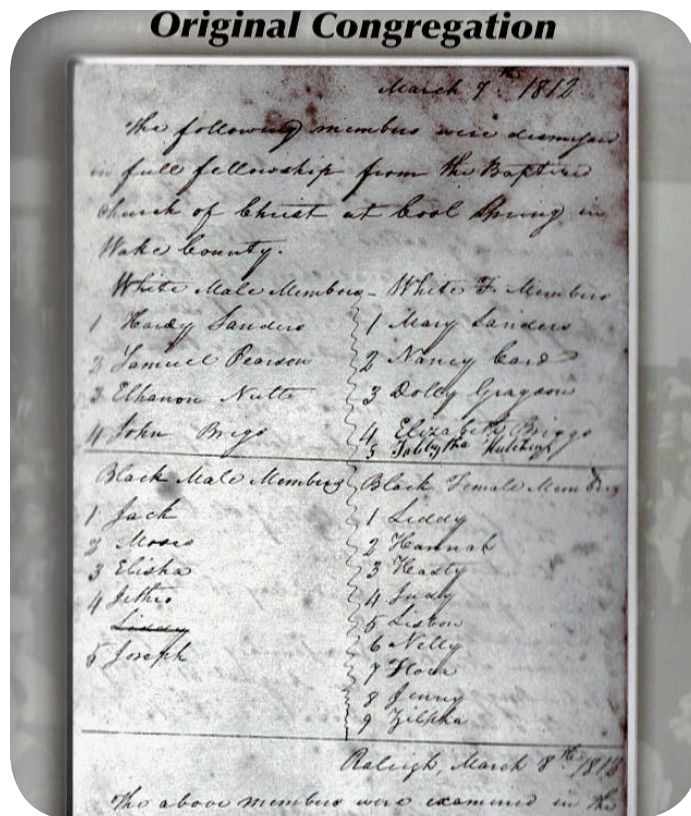


Photo courtesy of Raleigh First Baptist Church's Bicentennial Anniversary 1812-2012 commemorative book.

Other Institutions

While unable to interview representatives from other religious institutions in the area, there are many that have made an impact on the corridor. This includes:

- As Salaam Islamic Center
- Baha'i Faith Center
- Christ Wonderful World Outreach Ministry
- First Church of God Ministries
- Grace AME Zion Church
- Hickory Grove United Church of Christ
- Hillcrest Baptist Church
- Interfaith Prison Ministry for Women
- Martin Street Baptist Church
- Ministerio Evangelico El Exodo
- Mt. Peace Baptist Church
- New Freedom Christian Fellowship
- North Carolina Marthoma Church
- Raleigh Apostolic Faith Temple
- Treasuring Christ Church
- Wesleyan First Church

Schools

Wake County School System

The New Bern Avenue Corridor is within Wake County, home of the coveted Wake County Public School System. This school system was not always what it is today. The Wake County Public School System was formed in 1976 from the merger of Raleigh City Schools and the Wake County school system. Prior to this merger, Raleigh City Schools were composed of largely minority populations and many were under capacity. In contrast, Wake County schools in rural areas outside of the Beltline were overcrowded and the demographics of these schools were mostly White students. White families would flock to rural areas outside of the Beltline to attend these schools.

In 1971, the Supreme Court ruled that North Carolina schools must desegregate. Business leaders and school officials were in favor of the merger of the school systems, even though many residents were not, as they believed the “White flight” to rural areas was hurting the local economy. Further, it was believed that the merger would allow for more equal distribution of school funding and resources. The merger of the school system

was designed to bring diversity to all of the schools in the county, and to achieve this, the school system started bussing students to schools further away from their homes. The schools had targeted minority demographic percentages between 15 and 45 percent.

Even with the merger, many White families flocked to the outskirts of the county to stay in schools in the rural areas. Thus, the Wake County Public School System began creating magnet schools to incentivize attending schools closer to the city. In 1982, the Board of Education adopted the “Schools of Choice” program to help with desegregation efforts. Twenty-eight schools in the school system would become Gifted and Talented Magnet (GT Magnet) schools, which offered enhanced curriculums. These schools drew families from the county into the schools inside the Beltline. As people began to flock to the magnet schools in the Beltline, county schools began to put programs in place to encourage more people to stay in their schools. Enloe High School on New Bern Avenue is one of the magnet schools created as part of the desegregation efforts for Wake County Public Schools.



*School Bus, 1936. From the Barden Collection, Raleigh, NC.
Courtesy of the State Archives of North Carolina.*



Enloe High School

Enloe High School opened in 1962 as a Raleigh City Schools high school, and has remained a significant institution in the corridor ever since. Many participants discussed its significance, and several participants attended school or worked at Enloe High School.

"I was among some of the earliest students that integrated [Enloe High School and Aycock Junior High School]. Well, when I first started, well, it was a struggle. You know, let me say, we were struggling. It was a struggle for the White students as well as the Black students. [...] I can tell you now that I have some good White friends that I can call real friends that were made because we grew up and fought the stereotypes, and we learned, and we grew together.

But yeah, at the same time, I was pushed. I was spat on. I was abused in

certain, you know, I had to fight. But Enloe did two things, that experience did two things: It either made you or destroyed you. [...] So it was both ways. But I watched people grow. That's why I don't vilify the person and the politics. Because I know that it can be changed.

A lot of time, it's due to a lack of understanding, a lack of exposure, and fear. When you start taking some of that away, then people get to get together and Enloe played a big part over here in this community like that. Still is some of that."

Enloe High School is a popular GT Magnet school within Wake County; families from even outside of the United States apply to attend the school.

St. Augustine's University

St. Augustine's University is a prominent institution in the corridor. This historically Black university was chartered as Saint Augustine Normal School and Collegiate Institute in 1867 by the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina for the education of freed slaves. The university opened its doors officially on January 13, 1868. The university became a four-year institution in 1927 and the first baccalaureate degrees were awarded in 1931.

The college also established St. Agnes Hospital and Training School for Nurses to provide medical care for and by African Americans. It was the first nursing school in North Carolina for African-American students, and was the only NC hospital that served African Americans until 1960.

One interview participant discussed their experience attending St. Augustine's, noting that they used to walk to the college from their neighborhood. They described the school as an environment of caring due to the small enrollment size. At the time they attended, the university had 300-500 students enrolled. Now, the school has over 700 students.

"In fact, I graduated from Saint Augustine's and I was able to walk from my house to Saint Augustine's, which was no more than three or four blocks. And that's why it was first called College Street, the section in which I lived.

[Saint Augustine's] was the same kind of environment as you have in your neighborhood. Because the President of the university knew me and my family and most of the neighbors in our neighborhood. The schools were not integrated at that time, so therefore [...] the students in the HBCU's were able to get the best of the best because they didn't have to compete with large universities."

St. Augustine's is also a cultural hub in the community, and many visit the school for plays, sport events, and more. One participant also mentioned that the university helps support the local economy by providing jobs for faculty and staff of the university.

Raleigh Christian Academy

Raleigh Christian Academy became operational in 1977 with 17 students and two teachers. Today, it is home to close to 300 students ranging from pre-school to 12th grade. The Academy was founded as a subsidiary of Beacon Baptist Church, and many of its families attend the church. While the students who attended used to live in the area, the Academy now has a wider footprint, reaching students as far as Knightdale and Wendell.

"In the early days of the school, back in the late 70s and early 80s, a big part of the school population was made up of children that lived in the neighboring community. But what has happened is their parents, who at that time were maybe in their 30s and 40s, are now in their 70s and 80s, so they don't have school-aged children. So now children come from all over, they come from east and west and from Knightdale and Wendell. Some do live in Raleigh, but they would live further out, further away. So right now, we have maybe 10-15% of our students would come from places like Headingham. But a lot of them commute from other places."

Businesses

Commercial development in the corridor has made an impact on the way people travel and conduct business in the area. Larger businesses, such as WakeMed, provide essential services to the community as well as create many jobs and help the economy. Participants discussed businesses such as gas stations, the library, the ABC store, grocery stores, and more as places they frequented. However, they noted that even with the commercial development of the corridor, there are still businesses missing and additional things that they would like to see, such as more grocery stores.

“Black Main Street”

Multiple participants discussed the importance and prominence of Black-owned businesses along the New Bern Avenue corridor. However, this was not always the case. In the early 1900s, Hargett Street in Downtown Raleigh was referred to as “Black Main Street” due to the prominence of Black-owned businesses. The Jim Crow Laws, prohibition, and the removal of City Market away from Fayetteville and Wilmington Streets in 1914 led to the establishment of “Black Main Street.” By 1915, most of the Black merchants and professionals located on Wilmington Street relocated to Hargett.

One participant discussed “Black Main Street,” reminiscing on the hotel, arcade, drugstores, and more that existed on the street. They noted that the Black-owned businesses later moved from Hargett Street onto New Bern Avenue as downtown began to redevelop and Black businesses were pushed out.

Additionally, as Raleigh desegregated, the Black community had more options for locations, so some businesses also chose to relocate to other areas of the city. There was concern that if New Bern Avenue continues to develop at the rate it’s developing today, this new corridor of Black businesses will also be displaced.



Funeral Homes and Services

The New Bern corridor is home to multiple Black-owned funeral homes that have had a prominent and significant impact on the area. These include Steven L. Lyons Funeral Home, Lea Funeral Home and Cremations, and Carlton Gray Funeral and Cremation Services. Family-owned and run, these funeral homes continue to serve as pillars in the New Bern community.



Hargett St, 1926. From the Carolina Power and Light Collection, PhC.68. Courtesy of the State Archives of North Carolina.

Notable Places

Throughout the interviews, participants were asked to identify any notable places and businesses along the corridor.

JOSEF'S PHARMACY

LARRY'S SUPERMARKET

FEDERAL BUILDING

SHAW
UNIVERSITY &
ST. AUGUSTINE
UNIVERSITY

"I mean, we are fortunate to have two Black universities here in Raleigh, which also gives you staff, which also gives you faculty, which also builds a middle class and real money generators to the community and it used to be cultural hubs. If they had a play over there, everybody would go over to St. Aug to the play. You know, we still do go to some of their football games and some of their activities that they have and so it's an integral part of the community and it needs to be continued to be as such."



WAKEMED
HOSPITAL

"I would say probably WakeMed is the biggest positive impact there, the way it's grown. Because it went from just being a hospital to being what it is today, having multiple buildings."

CAROLINIAN
NEWSPAPER

RICHARD B. HARRISON
COMMUNITY LIBRARY

POST OFFICE

OASIS CAR WASH



THE ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

"[The Alamo] was a really nice addition, actually, because we could walk over there from our house. We could catch a movie or we can have a meal, we could come back. We can meet friends there, and that sort of thing."



ENLOE HIGH SCHOOL

"I think Enloe has been very important for the Community because people from all over Wake County want to go to Enloe and get into Enloe, and so people would apply, and [...] I always had more applicants than there were seats. And not only that, I got calls from people who didn't even live in the United States and they were inquiring about Enloe. [...] So, I think that Enloe has been an important part of Wake County, an important part of Raleigh, because of the school itself and because of the programs that it offers. It offers programs that you probably won't find in many of the high schools throughout the state of North Carolina."

LONGVIEW SHOPPING CENTER

"There used to be a Ben Franklins [in the Longview shopping center]. It's like a five and dime. I don't even know if you know what that is. But we used to shop [there with] my aunt when she lived on Sunnybrook Rd, so she used to go there often, but we would go to the five and dime and we would get like, toy soldiers and army men and dinosaurs and that type of thing. So yeah, it's kind of a fond memory of mine. But now it's gone. I think it's Ace Hardware now."

**STEVEN L. LYONS
FUNERAL HOME**

**STATE EMPLOYEES'
CREDIT UNION**

A THIEF'S MARKET

BOJANGLES

COOKOUT

CHURCH'S CHICKEN

GRINGO A GO GO

WALMART

DR. HOLLANDS

CVS



JACK'S SEAFOOD

"Jack's Seafood is considered as a staple in the community."

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Format

The project team conducted 11 interviews from June 17 through July 13, 2021 with a total of 13 participants. Each interview was an hour long and recorded to accurately capture participant comments. Participants were provided with information about the project and asked to agree to the interview terms.

Participants were also asked if they would be willing to have the video and/or audio from the first two questions used for the interactive website. Nine participants consented to video and audio from the first two questions being used. One additional participant agreed to just audio being used.

During the interview, participants answered questions about their experiences living, working, and/or traveling in the corridor. They also shared information about the history of the corridor as they have observed it. The project team used a standard set of questions to guide the interviews, but also asked follow-up questions based on participant responses. The standard set of questions can be found in Appendix C and D.

11 Interviews

13 Participants

June 17 - July 13, 2021

Appendix B

Interview Terms

We'll now go over some interview terms. The interview will be an hour long. All interviews are being recorded so that we can accurately capture participant comments. However, your responses will remain confidential and no names will be included in the final report. Only P3 staff – and NOT the City of Raleigh - will have access to the raw recorded data.

Quotes from this interview may be used in the final report and on the interactive website. If quotes are used, names will not be included, and any identifying personal information will be removed. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer. You may also stop the interview at any time.

We would also like to ask your permission to use the video recording for your answers to the first two questions. These questions are:

1. In a few short sentences, how would you describe your neighborhood?
2. What are your top three favorite things about your neighborhood?

If you agree to video recording for these two questions, the video clips of your answers may be used in a video for the website. Your name will not be included, but the video and audio would be publicly posted on the interactive website. If you do not agree, the video recording will not be used but your answers may still be quoted.

Participant Consent

We'll now begin with gathering your consent for the interview terms as described.

- First, can you please state your full name?
- Do you agree to have your verbal responses for all questions recorded for the purposes described? Please answer yes or no.
- Do you agree to have the video and audio of your responses to questions one and two used for the interactive website? Please answer yes or no.
- Do you acknowledge that your participation is fully voluntary? Please answer yes or no.

Appendix C

Resident Interview Questions

The following are the standard questions typically asked of residents during their interview. Participants were also asked follow-up questions unique to their responses.

- In a few short sentences, how would you describe your neighborhood?
- What are your top three favorite things about your neighborhood?
- What neighborhood do you currently live in? How long have you lived in the area?
- Tell me about your neighborhood when you first moved there. [If they've always lived in the area, say "Tell me about your neighborhood when you were a child."] What was it like to live there?
- What did your community look like outside of your family?
- How has the New Bern corridor changed since you moved to the area? [If they've always lived in the area, ask how the corridor has changed over time.] What changes do you like? What are some things that you wish hadn't changed?
- What places along the corridor are significant to you?
 - Where did you attend school?
 - Did you or any of your family members work in the area along the corridor?
 - Did you or your family shop or conduct other business in places along the corridor?
- Are there any people or businesses that you believe have made an impact on the area?
- Is there anything else about the history of the New Bern Avenue corridor that you'd like to share with us today?
 - Do you have any photos that you would be willing to share with us from your time in the corridor?
- Is there anyone else you believe we should be speaking with about the history of the New Bern Avenue corridor?

Appendix D

Institution Interview Questions

The following are the standard questions typically asked of representatives of institutions or businesses during their interview. Participants were also asked follow-up questions unique to their responses.

- In a few short sentences, how would you describe the New Bern Avenue corridor?
- What are your top three favorite things about the corridor?
- What institution/business are you representing today? What does your institution/business do?
- How long has your institution/business been in the area?
- What role does your institution/business play in the New Bern Avenue community?
- Do you or your employees live in the area?
- What has your experience been like in the corridor?
- What do you know about the history of the corridor?
- How has the corridor changed over time since you arrived? What changes do you like? What are some things that you wish hadn't changed?
- Is there anything else about the history of the New Bern Avenue corridor that you'd like to share with us today?
 - Do you have any photos that you would be willing to share with us of your business/organization from the past and present?
- Is there anyone else you believe we should be speaking with about the history of the New Bern Avenue corridor?

*Thank you to the Raleigh, NC residents who shared
their experiences and stories about the
New Bern Avenue corridor.*



Prepared by Public Participation Partners
in association with the City of Raleigh and Raleigh residents

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