



# New Bern Avenue Station Area Plan

## **Engagement Summary**

Fall 2020 - Summer 2022

# Project Overview

The New Bern Avenue Station Area Planning (SAP) process is centered along the New Bern Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor and surrounding area. This planning process will help to fulfill goals defined during the Raleigh BRT: Equitable Development Around Transit (EDAT) project. The Raleigh BRT: EDAT project was completed in August 2020 and used community feedback to develop the Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Guidebook.

The New Bern Avenue SAP process focuses on planning for the area around the stations along the New Bern Avenue BRT corridor. The work in this project explored:

- Land uses, including places to live, work, and shop in the corridor
- Measures to address affordability within the corridor
- Measures to increase pedestrian safety and comfort around BRT stations and other destinations
- Recommendations for zoning changes and city investments to help achieve broader goals

## Engagement Overview

Engaging the public was a key part of the planning process. The City wanted to make sure that small area plan details were tangible and offered everyone ownership in the process. The overall goal of engagement was to equitably empower residents most affected by potential future projects to take action in their communities. This was accomplished through a variety of engagement activities, including:

- A Scoping survey
- A Community Leader Group and Neighborhood Ambassadors
- Two Kickoff Meeting Sessions and survey
- The Story of New Bern Avenue Interviews
- An Affordable Housing Summit

## Communications and Public Outreach Overview

Communications and public outreach were an important part of the engagement process. The following methods were used to notify residents of upcoming meetings and public input opportunities:

- Project website
- Letters to all site and mailing addresses
- City GovDelivery email blasts to subscribers
- Flyers – both paper and digital
- Postings at bus stops along the corridor
- Signs at GoRaleigh station
- Yard signs along the corridor
- Social media posts
- Direct outreach via email and phone calls to 169 area community-based organizations and businesses
- Distribution of meeting notifications through Community Partner Group members and Neighborhood Ambassadors

- Design Workshops and survey
- A Walking and Biking Safety Summit
- A Draft Recommendations Meeting and survey
- A Draft Recommendations Check-In and survey
- Additional Informal Meetings with stakeholders

# Engagement Summary

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The following is a summary of the engagement that took place throughout the planning process. Feedback collected during the meetings and surveys was used to guide and refine the Plan recommendations.

# Scoping Survey

Prior to the project's kickoff, the City of Raleigh conducted a scoping survey in fall 2020. This survey sought to better understand the priorities of Raleigh residents. A total of 286 individuals participated. Participants were asked to rank how important it was to include various issues in the small area plans. The following results represent the average ranking out of 100 (with 100 being very important).

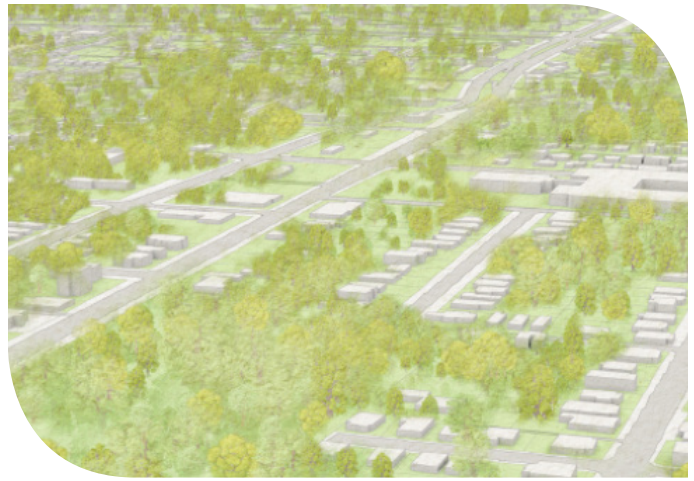
- 66 Average – Affordable housing, including at very low-income levels
- 87 Average – Safe and comfortable places to walk
- 62 Average – Cultural resources and historic preservation
- 81 Average – Land uses around station areas, such as places to live, work, and shop

## Community Leaders

Area residents helped assist with outreach, building relationships, and gathering feedback from the public through participation in community leader groups. These groups included a Community Partner Group and a team of Neighborhood Ambassadors.

The Community Partner Group consisted of 16 residents and stakeholders. Group members helped with outreach strategies and ensured that the final plans aligned with input received from the public. To have a corridor-wide perspective, the group members represented each of the station area groups. The group included residents, religious institutions, business owners, and people involved in housing and development. The intent was to ensure feedback and outreach within all of those overlapping spheres.

The City also selected three paid Neighborhood Ambassadors from a group of applicants. These Ambassadors helped



with outreach and education, distributing materials, and gathering input.

Both groups assisted at key points throughout the process. Generally, meetings took place before an upcoming public engagement event to review materials. They also took place after an event to review the public input. The meetings took place on the following dates:

- **Meeting 1: Orientation** – May 11 and May 13, 2021
- **Meeting 2: Listening Sessions** – June 2 and June 3, 2021
- **Meeting 3: Pre-Workshop Discussion** – August 24, 2021
- **Meeting 4: Workshop Takeaways and Community Meeting Preview** – November 15, 2021
- **Meeting 5: Community Check-In Meeting with Input Review and Next Steps** – May 11, 2022
- **Meeting 6: Next Steps and BRT Construction Communication** – May 31, 2022

The Community Partner Group members and Ambassadors provided input on outreach strategies and helped with communicating to their networks. They distributed meeting notifications through canvassing, paper and digital flyer distribution, and presentations at homeowner association meetings. They also provided feedback on materials and concepts, particularly with respect to making sure the recommendations aligned with input.



# Kickoff Meeting and Survey

To help introduce the New Bern Avenue Station Area Planning process to the public, the City of Raleigh hosted two kickoff meetings and an online survey.

The Kickoff Meetings took place virtually on July 7 and July 9, 2021. A total of 24 participants attended the meetings. The meetings began with a project overview, including the intended schedule. The project team then relayed information about the “missing middle” housing and Transit-Oriented Development overlay. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions before the meeting was concluded with next steps.

The survey was open from June 1 through July 17, 2021. A total of 258 participants took part in the survey and provided their initial thoughts on their vision for the New Bern Avenue corridor. Of those who participated, 80% either travel the corridor frequently or were a long-time resident. Main takeaways from the survey include:

- 34% of participants felt like they can reasonably afford housing in the area
- 69% of participants did not feel comfortable walking along the corridor
- 55% of participants felt there are some places to work or shop within walking distance

View the full [Results Summary](#).

# The Story of New Bern Avenue Interviews

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) long-time corridor residents were interviewed between June 17 and July 13, 2021, 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.

View The Story of New Bern Avenue [document](#) and [video](#).



# Affordable Housing Summit

The project team hosted two sessions of an Affordable Housing Summit on September 14 and 15, 2021. The meetings provided in-depth information about:

- the reasons why housing has become less affordable
- barriers to providing affordable housing
- potential approaches for addressing the issue

Participants were asked to provide input on their hopes for affordability along New Bern Avenue.

Both sessions were hosted in-person at Martin Street Baptist Church with an option to attend virtually via WebEx. There was a total of 58 attendees at these meetings.

The first session was resident-focused, including property owners, residents, and private developers. There was a total of 34 attendees, 14 of which were in-person and 20 virtual.

The second session was for housing providers, including local and regional market rate and affordable housing developers, tenant groups/advocates, advocacy groups, and government agencies. There was a total of 24 attendees with 11 practitioners joining in-person and 13 online.

View the [presentation](#) and videos of the [resident-focused](#) and [housing provider sessions](#) from the Affordable Housing Summit.

Staff also engaged the housing and development community on TOD at various points through the City's Development Services Advisory Committee, a working group that is focused on the development process, including housing provision. These conversations included discussion about and feedback on the City's proposed TOD zoning changes and on changes aimed at facilitating "missing middle" housing.

## Introduction

Rapid **population and economic growth** are leading to unprecedented **affordability pressures** in Raleigh.

Raleigh's population growth and housing price increases have **substantially outpaced the national average** since 2010. This trend may be further accelerated by planned **corporate expansions**, including the new Apple campus.

| 2010-2019         | Raleigh     | US Average |
|-------------------|-------------|------------|
| Population        | <b>+15%</b> | +6%        |
| Median Home Value | <b>+22%</b> | +15%       |
| Median Gross Rent | <b>+35%</b> | +26%       |

Source: US Census, Carolina Demography



# Design Workshops

The project team hosted three in-person design workshop weeks, with one week for each station-area grouping. The purpose of these workshops was to produce specific plans and designs for each SAP. They also served as a means to continue conversations with residents, housing providers, and others that began during the affordable housing workshops.

The workshops included in-depth discussions with residents, churches, business owners, and many other stakeholders. This allowed the process and planners to understand, in a much more detailed way, needs and priorities along the corridor. It also allowed for exploration of potential strategies and approaches to address those issues.

They also included conversations with owners and potential developers of most of the large development sites along the corridor. During these conversations, the focus was on communicating the city's vision for equitable transit-oriented development and for understanding market conditions and potential future projects.

Each station-area week followed a similar schedule with a kickoff event on Monday evening and drop-in events Tuesday through Thursday. The project team also hosted daily updates from 6-7pm to present a summary of the concepts discussed each day. The project team facilitated a final presentation covering the entire week on Thursday evenings.

During the workshops, the project team and members of the public discussed:

- What does growing around transit look like? What kind of land use/zoning changes are needed?
- How can we maintain and improve affordability through zoning changes and city investments?
- Where and how can we improve places for people walking or biking?
- How can we best recognize the culture and history of the area?

Over the course of the week, 63 people attended the Western Stations workshops, 12 people attended the Middle Stations workshops, and 3 people attended the Eastern Stations workshops.

## Design Workshop Survey

Residents could also complete a short-form survey and/or a long-form survey during this phase. The survey went live in September of 2021 and closed in October of 2021. A total of 150 people responded to the short-form survey. A total of 50 people responded to the long-form survey. The following are main takeaways from the survey results:

- 95% of participants were fine with taller buildings in exchange for improving housing choice, affordability, and work/shopping options
- 81% of participants thought that it is important to create low and very low-income housing
- 98% of participants were fine with more change in exchange for more walkability and lower carbon emissions and air pollution
- 93% of participants thought that 2/3/4-plex units are a good strategy
- 86% of participants thought that townhouses are a good strategy
- 72% of participants strongly supported 7-story apartment buildings within a block of BRT
- 63% of participants strongly supported 7-story apartment buildings farther than a block or two from BRT

The schedule for the Design Workshops and meeting materials are listed below:

- Western Stations (Blount St, Swain St, Tarboro St) – September 20-23, 2021 – Tarboro Rd Community Center
  - Review a presentation of [preliminary concepts](#).
  - Watch the video from the [workshop wrap-up meeting](#).
- Middle Stations (Raleigh Blvd, Longview, WakeMed) – October 4-7, 2021 – Roberts Park Community Center
  - Review a presentation of [preliminary concepts](#).
  - Watch the video from the [workshop wrap-up meeting](#).
- Eastern Stations (Trawick Rd, Corporation Pkwy, New Hope Rd) – October 4-7, 2021 – Comfort Suites, 1309 Corporation Pkwy
  - Review a presentation of [preliminary concepts](#).
  - Watch the video from the [workshop wrap-up meeting](#).

## Private Sector Engagement Summary

This engagement process included communicating with the private sector in order to convey the City's goals for equitable transit-oriented development. It also sought to inform property owners and builders of changing regulations and policies that support TOD. This process provided an opportunity to learn about market trends, the perspectives of potential developers, and to understand barriers to creating equitable TOD.

The City held numerous meetings with potential builders in the area, including those for most of the primary large potential redevelopment sites along the corridor. Many of these took place during the three week-long workshops that took place in the Fall of 2021. Others occurred at various points throughout the small area planning process, including at the affordable housing summit and other public touchpoints.

Topics included:

- The mechanics of city's affordable housing height bonus
- Recent code changes, including the removal of vehicle parking minimums
- Zoning changes, including applying the TOD overlay zone, which supports walkability and incentivizes the inclusion of below market rate units in new housing
- City funding for housing and potential partnerships

Specific outcomes from this private sector engagement included:

- Understanding the need to create simplified public/builder-facing informational materials about the affordability height bonus.
- Gaining confidence that the affordability bonus could be used in future developments along the corridor.



- Understanding that expecting lower levels of parking provision is likely to be a longer term process.
- Connecting potential builders with the City's financing programs for affordable housing development.

The engagement process included a formal role for the private sector – balanced with other stakeholders, including corridor residents, institutions, and business owners – in the form of the Community Partner Group. Focused private sector outreach also took place during two “summits” and subsequent design workshops.

During the three in-person design workshop weeks, the City had conversations with owners and potential developers of most of the large development sites along the corridor. During these conversations, the focus was on communicating the City's vision for equitable transit-oriented development. We also sought to better understand market conditions and potential future projects. At least partly as a result of these conversations, potential projects and rezoning requests separate from the City-initiated rezoning also incorporate key principles of the City's equitable TOD goals, such as the inclusion of below market rate units.

The City also engaged the housing and development community on TOD at various points through the City's Development Services Advisory Committee, a working group that is focused on the development process, including housing provision. These conversations included discussion about and feedback on the City's proposed TOD zoning changes and on changes aimed at facilitating “missing middle” housing.

# Walking and Biking Safety Summit

The project team facilitated a Walking and Biking Safety Summit on October 15, 2021. This summit took place in-person at the Raleigh Urban Design Center and virtually via WebEx. The purpose of this meeting was to help plan a safer, low-carbon future where walking and biking are prioritized. Participants were asked to discuss issues with pedestrian safety and potential solutions. Potential solutions included:

- Lowering the speed limit
- Implementing traffic calming, such as narrowing lanes and on-street parking
- Separating bike lanes and pedestrian paths from the street
- Providing median pedestrian islands
- Timing traffic lights for bike/ped speed
- Enforcing safety measures
- Partnering with HOAs to share information
- Engaging youth in safety practices
- Focusing on short trip conversion from car to bike/ped
- Engaging local officials, especially to increase awareness of challenges for people with disabilities

Watch the [Walking and Biking Safety Summit video](#).

# Draft Recommendations Meeting

The project team presented the draft recommendations to the public on December 14, 2021. This hybrid meeting was held in-person at the Tarboro Community Center and virtually via WebEx. A total of 38 people attended, including 18 participants online and 20 participants in-person.

The purpose of this meeting was to gather input on the Plan's draft recommendations. These include big ideas and details of how to:

- Address affordability
- Expand housing choices near bus rapid transit stations
- Make walking safer and easier
- Assist existing small businesses and future entrepreneurs
- Tell the story of New Bern's history and culture boldly in the form of public art and placemaking

## Draft Recommendations Survey

The public also had the chance to provide feedback via an online survey in December 2021. A total of 103 individuals participated in the survey. Main takeaways included:

- 52% felt the Plan met the goal of addressing displacement/ensuring housing for all incomes very well
- 46% felt the Plan supported existing businesses/future entrepreneurs very well
- 49% felt the Plan met the goal of celebrating history very well
- 56% felt the Plan met the goal of pedestrian safety and comfort very well
- 57% felt the Plan met the goal of growing around transit very well
- 45% felt the TOD overlay recommendation met the goal of plan very well

# Draft Recommendations Check-in Meeting

The project team hosted a second check-in meeting on April 20, 2022. This meeting was also hosted both in-person at the Tarboro Community Center and virtually via WebEx. A total of 34 individuals attended the meeting, including 15 online and 19 in-person. The purpose of this meeting was to update residents on how the Plan had been changed since the draft was released in December.

View the [recording of the check-in event](#) and final [recommendations slides](#).

## Additional Outreach

In addition to formal meetings and surveys, the project team conducted a variety of informal meetings with residents and stakeholders. Throughout the engagement process, over 65 people attended these informal gatherings, including:

- WakeMed (2 meetings)
- St. Augustine's University (2 meetings)
- Western business owners
- Longview
- Congregations for Social Justice
- Pastors group
- Raleigh Transit Authority (2 meetings)
- Fair Housing
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC)
- Human Relations Commission
- Raleigh Citizens Advisory Council
- Community Groups
- New Bern Corridor Alliance (2 meetings)
- Martin Street Baptist Church

## Draft Recommendations Check-in Survey

The public could also provide input on the changes through an online survey. A total of 70 individuals participated in the survey. Main takeaways included:

- 57% thought expanding the cultural district to include St. Augustine's University and celebrate Black Raleigh meets the goal of celebrating history very well
- 58% thought buying the DMV site for affordable housing, community-serving employment, and business support meets the goal of supporting businesses/entrepreneurs very well
- 57% thought allowing taller buildings so more people can live and work near BRT supports the goal of growing around transit very well
- 80% thought installing sidewalks/crosswalks at key intersections (Trawick, Corporation, New Hope, Tarboro, and others) supports the goal of safety and comfort for pedestrians very well

# Engagement Metrics

## Meeting Views on Instagram

| Event                          | Views (Instagram video) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Tarboro Workshop Wrap-up       | 86                      |
| Tarboro Workshop Mid-week      | 105                     |
| Tarboro Workshop Mid-week      | 108                     |
| Tarboro Workshop Kickoff       | 79                      |
| Tarboro Workshop Kickoff Intro | 214                     |
| Affordability Summit Intro     | 229                     |
| TOD Text Change (related)      | 164                     |
| Missing Middle (related)       | 250                     |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>1235</b>             |

## Survey Response Rate and Demographics

|                                     | Total response | Views        | Comments     | Responses    |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Survey 1 - Scope</b>             | 286            | 1,677        | 227          | 2,587        |
| <b>Survey 2 - Kickoff</b>           | 258            | 1,430        | 569          | 2,706        |
| <b>Survey 3 - Workshop Easy</b>     | 150            | 584          | 19           | 1,119        |
| <b>Survey 3b - Workshop Details</b> | 50             | 203          | 86           | 790          |
| <b>Survey 4 - Plan for Action</b>   | 103            | 496          | 111          | 869          |
| <b>Survey 5 - Check-In</b>          | 70             | 317          | 33           | 1,564        |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>917</b>     | <b>4,707</b> | <b>1,045</b> | <b>9,635</b> |



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