

CASTLE STREET COLLECTIVE

The mission of CSC is to foster the growth and prosperity of Castle Street businesses through dedicated initiatives in beautification, safety, and events.



August 2026 Newsletter





COMMUNITY MEETING ON AUGUST 19TH!

Come to The Union, the new
store operated by Skyler for the
August 19th community meeting
at 6:30. Open to all!!

539 Castle Street
(previously Modern Love)

Agenda

- Code Enforcement, City of Wilmington
 - Finances
 - Review of District Day
 - Castle Street Art Walk coming
- Update on Black Business Heritage on Castle Street Project
 - Tree documentation
- Update on Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Project
- WDI (Wilmington Downtown Inc) State of Business

**Meet and Greet with County Commissioner
Candidates**

Doug & Margi Erickson, Robert Wallen, and Gaye Spears invite you to an evening to meet and support Commissioner Rob Zapple and Dr. LeShonda Wallace, Candidates for New Hanover County Commissioner.

Light bites will be provided. A cash bar will be available.

We hope you'll join us to connect with the candidates, hear their vision for our community, and show your support for their campaigns.

Tuesday, August 11, at 6:00 p.m. at the Wilmington Sportsmen's Club (1111 Castle St.).

Anyone may forward events to share which they feel impact our community!
(This is not a Castle Street Collective event.)

RSVP

Castle Street Art Walk Coming!!!

Let's bring art to Castle! We are organizing an art walk for early October. If you are interested in contributing, please email Erin at The Roasted Bookery. erin@theroastedbookery.com

WDI Business Micro Loans

WDI has microloans available for businesses. Hit the Apply button for applying. Have questions? Email office@wilmingtondowntown.com

MICROLOAN PROGRAM

Wilmington Downtown, Inc. is proud to offer access to a valuable funding source through our Microloan Program. Designed to attract and retain businesses and jobs in the downtown area, this program provides loans at three-quarters of the New York prime rate, offering a more affordable financing option for local businesses. With a streamlined application process and a turnaround time as little as two-weeks, the Microloan Program ensures quick access to the capital needed to grow and sustain businesses in our community.

[Learn More About Our Microloan Program](#)

[Support As You Apply For Your Microloan](#)

[> APPLY FOR A MICROLOAN](#)

Loan Terms:

- Only commercial business owners within the Central Business District, established commercial districts, and emerging districts (see list below) are eligible applicants. Tax exempt entities such as religious or nonprofit groups are ineligible for loan funds.
- Maximum loan amount = \$20,000
- Maximum term = 5 years
- Loan rate = $\frac{3}{4}$ of the New York Prime rate as of the date of the application approval
- Payment deferral = Closed loans allow for loan payments to be deferred for the first 6 months.

Interest on the loan will accrue during the deferral period.

- Eligible expenditures include: inventory; furniture, fixtures and equipment; up to 3 months of rent or mortgage payments; equipment and equipment repairs; equipment to provide a safe/healthy environment for employees or customers; and adding or expanding e-commerce capabilities.
- Ineligible expenditures include: personnel expenses/salaries; interior or exterior building renovations (unless the applicant owns the building); moving expenses; and vehicles.
- In addition, applicants may not use funds to relocate from one building to another within downtown, unless this is the result of business expansion that creates new jobs.

[Apply](#)

Keep Castle Street Community Looking Good



See trash?

See an unkempt lot?

Report it to the City and help keep Castle Street Clean!

Black Enterprise: Black Business Heritage on Castle Street

Join the community in participating in twice weekly discussion options about the Black Enterprise project! You can attend virtually too!

Thanks Lizzie (Glimmers Recreational Therapy) and Erin (The Roasted Bookery) for your continued support in holding these meetings!

About



Castle Street Collective
A registered 501(c)(3) organization
Tax ID: 93-4317054
P.O. Box 386, Wilmington, NC 28402



ENTERPRISE ON CASTLE: BLACK BUSINESS HERITAGE ON CASTLE STREET

This community-led project reclaims the stories of Black families who built a thriving home-based economy on Castle Street after Emancipation
—before the Wilmington Coup of 1898 pushed their legacy out of view.

By pairing archival research with descendant oral histories, we're creating a heritage trail, interpretive signage, and a digital archive—grounded in truth-telling and community voice.

ATTEND THE VARIOUS COMMUNITY INPUT MEETINGS!

August's Schedule:

	Topic:
Tuesday, August 3 @ 5:00 pm	Who needs to be visible in this?
Friday, August 6 @ Noon	Who needs to be visible in this?
Tuesday, August 11 @ 5:00 pm	How should this show up in the world?
Friday, August 14*** @ Noon	How should this show up in the world?
Monday, August 17 @ 5:00 pm	What words feel right?
Thursday, August 20 @ Noon	What words feel right?

- 5:00 pm time meetings will be at Glimmers Recreational Therapy
- Noon time meetings will be at The Roasted Bookery
- ***August 14 @ TBD Location

*Attend virtually too!
Select Virtual when registering.
A link will be emailed to you.*



RSVP TO EACH
SESSION



PROJECT
NARRATIVE



READ PRIOR TO
SESSION

Castle Street Collective
www.castlestreet.org | admin@castlestreet.org
Facebook ([castlestreetcollective](https://www.facebook.com/castlestreetcollective)) | Instagram ([#ilmcastlestreetcollective](https://www.instagram.com/ilmcastlestreetcollective))

published 6.05.2026

RSVP

Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Replacement Project



From the meeting on Wednesday, July 29th at the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

RE: Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Public Meeting

A recent local news report (on WECT 6) stated that the WMPO Board will be meeting on Wednesday at 3 pm, at which time a reported "\$1 billion" bridge proposal will be considered.*

Per the WECT 6 report, the proposal of the "private company" would be tall enough to permit the passage of "cargo ships" and be "financed by a toll."

1. There is no need for "cargo ships" to be able to pass further upstream than the current Wilmington port, which is below (south of) the current Memorial Bridge, nor would it be desirable for wakes caused by large cargo ships to damage or wash over Wilmington's signature "Riverwalk," should a future mega-bridge allow large or heavily laden ships to pass by Wilmington city;

&

2. Citizens on both sides of the river oppose the very idea of a toll, not least if - as reliably reported - tolls would be collected by the "private company" long after the costs of bridge-building are recouped.

Results of this meeting?

- a) The unsolicited bid will not go forward.
- b) Nobody spoke in favor of the 135-ft high bridge option; several people denounced it directly or asked for consideration of "other options".
- c) Most of the 14 speakers denounced the paying of tolls --- saying, e.g., that downtown businesses would suffer, and/or that it was an "unfair tax" on people who have to commute to work (& words to that effect).
- d) Similarly, many speakers called on officials to find other ways of funding a new bridge.
- e) Several speakers addressed problems with the scope of the area subject to, and/or criteria that seem lie behind, the "determination" that a 135-ft. high bridge should (probably) be built; these problems did or could include: insufficient environmental impact studies; the definition / revision of "channel" or "harbor" area [linked, in turn, to: Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. §408), perhaps]; the economics / funding of the mega-bridge project [in terms of winners, losers, conflicts of interest, etc..]

Previous Updates

Funding & Tolling

- WMPO must vote by February 2027 to approve tolling or withdraw the project, which would eliminate state funding and cancel the federal grant.
- Without tolling, no alternative funding source currently exists.
- Tolling options under discussion include:
 - State-managed toll (NC Turnpike Authority)
 - Private-public partnership (Delivering Bridges LLC proposed ~\$2.75 per trip)

Environmental Review & Timeline

- Environmental Assessment (EA) expected late spring–summer 2026, followed by a public hearing.
- Federal permitting continues through March 2029 (permitting dashboard).
- Key milestones:
 - EA release — Spring/Summer 2026
 - Public hearing — Summer 2026
 - Preferred alternative — Fall 2026
 - FONSI — Winter 2027
 - “Shovel-ready” deadline — September 2027 (required to keep federal grant)

Community Positions

Wilmington Chamber of Commerce

- Supports the 135-ft fixed bridge.
- Argues it is the best long-term investment, accommodates future growth, and avoids costly maintenance associated with movable spans.
- Frames the project as essential for Wilmington’s competitiveness with cities like Charleston and Savannah.

Residents of Old Wilmington (ROW)

- ROW members submitted a public letter expressing strong concerns about the current plans.
- Their position emphasizes “Do no harm” and argues the proposed designs will:
 - Harm local economy and traffic flow
 - Damage historic neighborhoods
 - Affect evacuation routes
 - Impose significant toll burdens on residents (~\$1,500/year for commuters)
- ROW supports the 65–135 ft lift bridge, which maintains the existing footprint and avoids shifting entry/exit points into historic areas.

Recent Articles

Coastal Review - July 24, 2026

Few public projects have generated as much discussion in southeastern North Carolina as the proposed replacement of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. Citizens have raised thoughtful questions about the bridge’s cost, the possibility of tolls, impacts on surrounding neighborhoods, and perhaps most notably, one simple question: Why does the replacement bridge need to be 135 feet high?...

Read more at Coastal Review, coastalreview.org.

Article

Recent Articles

WHQR - June 30, 2026

"Do no harm" is a phrase commonly associated with the medical profession's oath, but it is increasingly applied to corporations, government organizations, and their regulators. Do no harm should guide NCDOT and the Wilmington Metropolitan Planning Organization with the plans to replace the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. Unfortunately, the current plans fall short of this goal and will harm the local economy, traffic flow, the environment, and evacuation routes...."

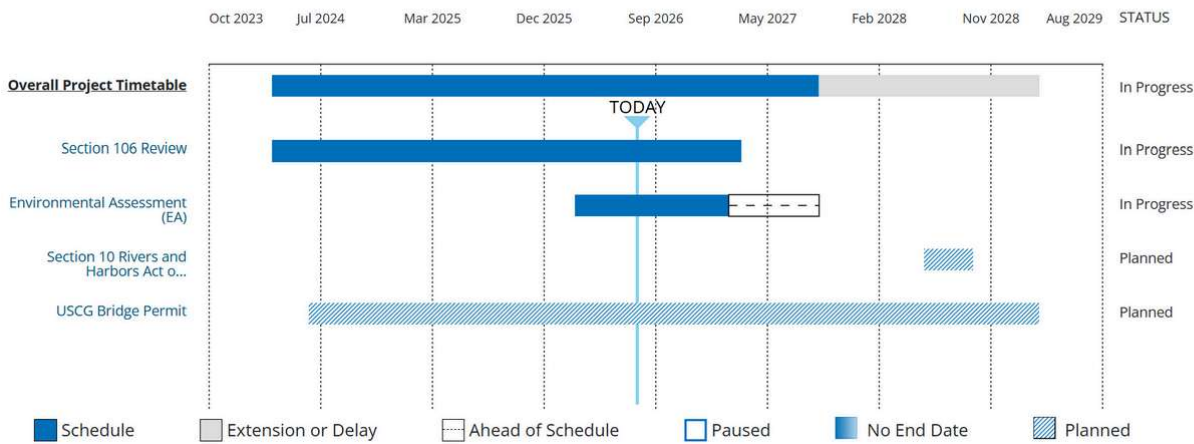
Article

For Your Information...

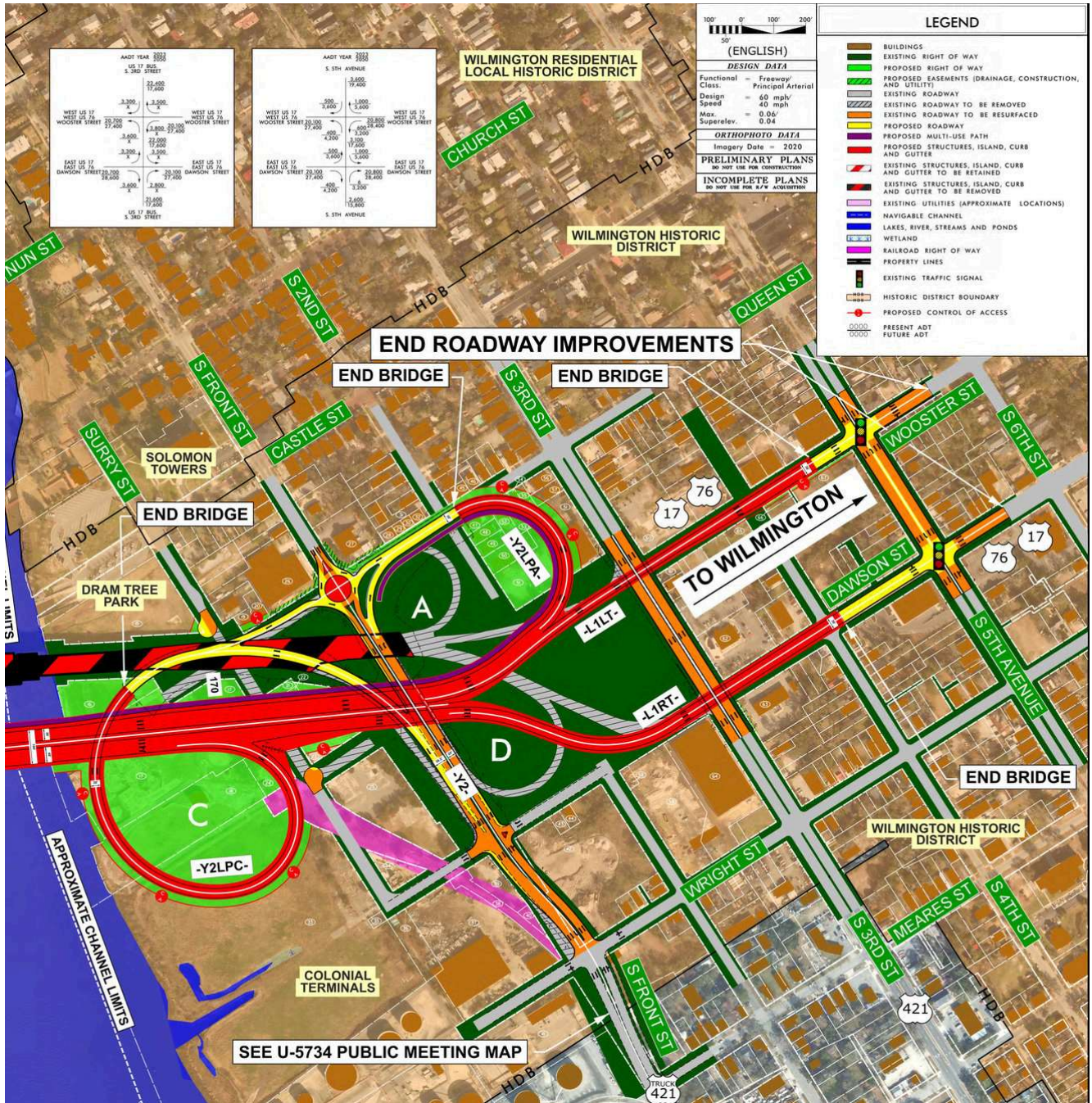
Permitting Timetable

The permitting timetable below displays data as reported by agencies. Dates for Environmental Review and Permitting processes (Actions) that are in 'Paused' or 'Planned' status are subject to change and are not indicative of a project's final schedule.

- For information about extensions, select an Action from the timetable below and select 'View Action Details' at the bottom of the page.



ALTERNATE A PLAN (least impact to existing)
(click for full plan)



Impact to Castle Street Community

This option moves the bridge landing from S. 3rd Street to S. 5th Avenue, which pushes traffic deeper into the residential grid and closer to Castle Street.

- Castle Street becomes a secondary cut-through route as drivers avoid congestion at the new S. 5th Avenue landing.
- Increased traffic pressure on Castle Street between S. 2nd and S. 7th due to redistributed flow from Dawson/Wooster.
- Higher risk of spillover traffic during peak hours because the new elevated ramps would pass over 3rd and 4th Streets, funneling vehicles toward 5th and 6th.
- ROW (Residents of Old Wilmington) specifically warns that the fixed-bridge footprint “moves the primary entry and exit from S. 3rd St to S. 5th Ave,” which places Castle Street directly in the impact zone.
- Historic Wilmington Foundation has also raised concerns that the fixed-bridge ramp system would cause home demolitions and neighborhood disruption in the blocks adjacent to Castle Street.

Bottom line: Castle Street sees more traffic, more cut-through behavior, and more neighborhood disruption under the fixed-bridge option.

Actions for Residents and Businesses

- **Review** the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Replacement FAQ from Historic Wilmington Foundation:
 - <https://historicwilmington.org/bridge-replacement/>
- **Sign and share** the online petition opposing tolls and supporting the 65/135-foot lift bridge option, if you agree with the concerns raised:
 - <https://www.change.org/p/replacement-cape-fear-memorial-bridge-a-citizen-s-petition/bsv>
- **Contact elected officials**, **WMPO** representatives, **NCDOT**, and other decision-makers to share your position.
 - Josh Stein, Governor / <https://governor.nc.gov/contact/contact-governor-stein>
 - Senator Ted Budd
 - <https://www.budd.senate.gov/contact/>
 - 929 N. Front St., Suite 460, Wilmington, NC 28401
 - Phone: 910-218-7600
 - Senator Thom Tillis
 - <https://www.tillis.senate.gov/email-me>
 - Phone (DC Office): 202-224-6342
 - Other Legislators:
 - <https://www.ncleg.gov/findyourlegislators>
 - WMPO / <https://www.wmpo.org/contact/>
 - NCDOT
 - Project Development Environmental Engineer, Mason Herndon
 - Phone: 910-341-2000
 - Send message:
 - <https://www.ncdot.gov/contact/Pages/form.aspx?UnitName=CFBridge&sourceUrl=/projects/cape-fear-bridge-replacement/Pages/default.aspx>
- **Watch** for yard signs or other community materials when they become available.
- **Encourage** neighbors, customers, and nearby businesses to stay informed and participate in public comment opportunities.
- **Help** Castle Street decide the best way to share accurate information across the neighborhood and business community.

Resources:

June 22nd Presentation: <https://historicwilmington.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Bridge-Member-Meeting-PowerPoint.pdf>

Sample letter to elected officials: <https://historicwilmington.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Sample-Letter-to-Elected-Officials-Officials.docx.pdf>

Historic Wilmington Foundation Inc.: <https://historicwilmington.org/bridge-replacement/>
<https://historicwilmington.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/CFM-Bridge-Frequently-Asked-Questions-rev-6.3.2026-1.pdf>

About WMPO: <https://www.wmpo.org/>



Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Replacement

Information and details about the proposed replacement of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge in Brunswick and New Hanover counties.

Tree Documentation

Alain and Bob have documented trees along Castle to help keep the tree canopy alive and growing! With this documentation, the team hopes to replace any dying trees, prune any overgrown or unruly trees, and add where needed.



Our meetings are open to Castle Street Businesses and Castle Street residents. We are currently securing meeting spaces, but all meetings are from 6:30-7:30. We are always learning about city ordinances, events, and happenings on Castle Street.

If you would like to host on one of the below dates, please let us know:

admin@castlestreet.org

- August 19th - The Union (previous Modern Love spot)
 - October 21st - place TBD
 - December – Holiday Potluck, date TBD
-

Have an Event to Share?

We want to let everyone know of the great events happening in our Castle Street Neighborhood. Have something coming up? Let us share in our monthly newsletter and on social media. Please provide us the details by filling out this online form.

Share Event

The Collective needs your support!

When you support the Castle Street Collective, you're helping keep our neighborhood vibrant, connected, and cared for.

Every dollar goes directly back into the community through the practical, everyday things that make our work possible.

Community Programs & Events

- Movie Nights & Pop-Up Events — Licensing fees, equipment rentals, and the little touches that make gatherings fun and welcoming.
- Snacks & Refreshments for Meetings — Because conversations flow better when people feel comfortable and cared for.

Neighborhood Care

- Cleanup Tools & Supplies — Gloves, grabbers, trash bags, safety vests, and other materials that keep our streets clean.

Operational Essentials

- Nonprofit Software & Technology — Tools that help us manage memberships, communicate with neighbors, and stay organized.
 - Insurance — Protecting our volunteers, events, and community spaces.
- Printing & Outreach Materials — Flyers, posters, signage, and educational materials that help us reach more residents.

Why It Matters

Your contribution—no matter the size—helps us host events, support local history, maintain public spaces, and build a stronger, more connected Castle Street community. You're not just donating; you're investing in a neighborhood that belongs to all of us.

Please consider updating your membership for 2026!
(membership runs calendar year)

Membership link

Castle Street Collective
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organization
Tax ID: 93-4317054
P.O. Box 386, Wilmington, NC

Visit our social accounts



Check out our website 