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New Bern Parking Policy Study

Presented to:

New Bern Development Services

Presented by:

Jordan Kearney

Photo taken by author, 2022.

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Acknowledgments

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the hard work and collaboration of the many people who made this report possible.

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Executive Summary

The Historic Downtown Exempt Parking Zone in New Bern, North Carolina, faces significant parking challenges due to competing demands from mixed-use developments, historic preservation constraints, and perceptions of insufficient parking. This study aimed to address these issues through comprehensive analysis and community engagement. Comparative analyses with benchmark cities (Beaufort, NC; Washington, NC; Greenville, NC) and case study cities (Annapolis, MD; St. Augustine, FL; Beaufort, SC) provided valuable insights into effective parking management practices, shaping the recommendations.

Key Findings

- Demographics reveal high vehicle ownership (94% workforce access) and modest population growth forecasted; Lead to an increase in parking demand.
- Downtown New Bern heavily relies on limited public parking, causing frequent conflicts between residents, employees, and visitors.
- Previous parking studies (2007, 2015) consistently identified issues like inadequate parking supply, ineffective enforcement, and a need for dedicated employee parking solutions.
- Community surveys indicated widespread frustration with restrictive two-hour limits, limited visibility of parking spaces, poor signage, inadequate lighting, accessibility and discomfort with tight parking spaces. Conversely, respondents valued free parking availability and proximity to destinations.
- Observational analysis revealed varied occupancy rates across different locations and times, highlighting inconsistent use of existing public lots, possibly due to lack of maintenance, safety concerns, and signage issues.

Key Recommendations:

- Increase clarity and visibility of parking through improved signage and wayfinding.
- Improve infrastructure and maintenance of public lots.
- Consider implementing an employee strategies for parking.
- Promote alternative transportation modes and expand pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure to reduce car dependency.
- Despite public opposition, consider future implementation of paid parking systems to improve utilization and efficiency of current parking resources.

The study's objective was to provide recommendations to effectively manage parking, enhance user experience, and support sustainable growth, all while preserving the historic feel of the downtown area.



Section 1:

Introduction to the Problem

The Project Site

New Bern is a city located within Craven County, North Carolina. Located between the Neuse and Trent Rivers, the city is known for its well-preserved Downtown Historic District. Founded in the early 1700s by Swiss immigrants, New Bern has been the capital of North Carolina, playing a crucial role in the Civil War. New Bern's history is long and beautiful (Craven County Government, n.d.-a). According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) Age and Sex Subject Table, New Bern had a population of approximately 31,563 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023).

This project will be focusing on the Historic Downtown Exempt Parking zone within the Historic Downtown area of New Bern. This zone primarily covers the area:

- North Boundary: Broad Street.
- East Boundary: E Front Street, extending to the waterfront near the Courtyard by Marriott and the Convention Center.
- South Boundary: Buildings along South Front Street.
- West Boundary: Hancock Street.



Figure 1.1. Map of North Carolina, highlighting Craven County.

Source: David Benbennick, via Wikimedia Commons (Public Domain).
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_North_Carolina_highlighting_Craven_County.svg

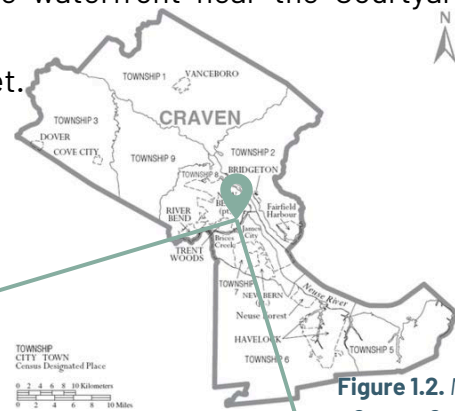


Figure 1.2. Map of Craven County.

Source: Craven County Map (n.d.), Wikitree.
https://www.wikitree.com/photo/png/Craven_County_North_Carolina

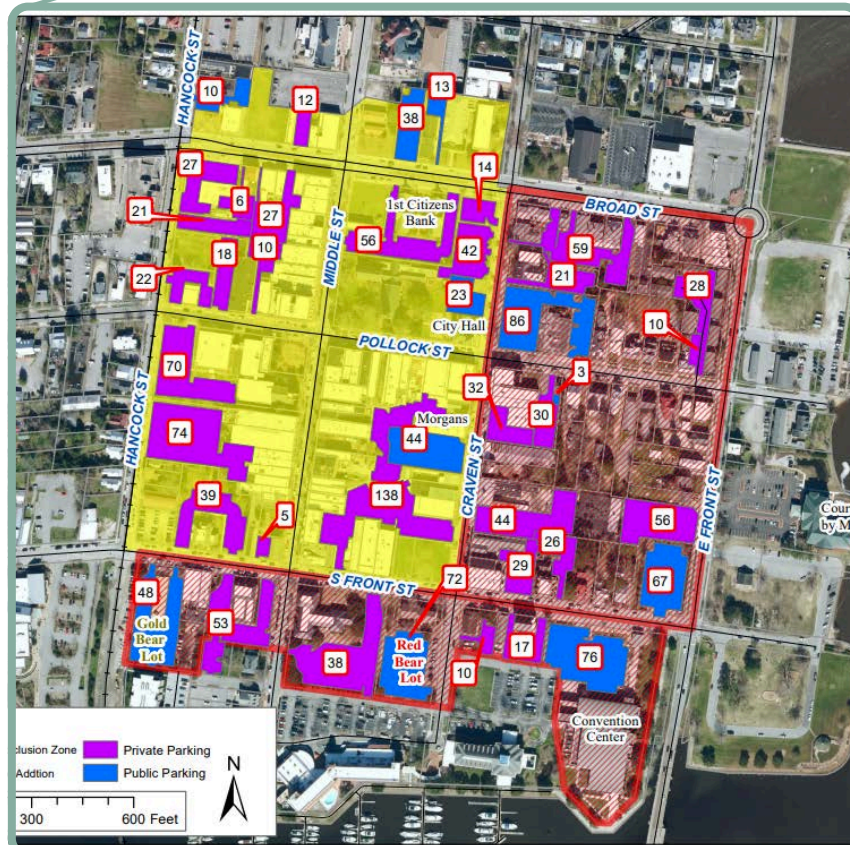


Figure 1.3. Map of Historic Downtown Exempt Parking Zone in New Bern, NC.

Source: Based on email communication with R. Gough (January 1, 2025).

The Problem

Downtown New Bern's historic district faces parking challenges within the downtown area, particularly in the recently expanded parking exemption zone. This area, characterized by mixed-use development and historic buildings, has limited private parking and relies heavily on public parking facilities. Past studies have identified that public parking is in need of expansion within the future, however the latest study was completed in 2015, suggesting the need for an updated look into New Bern's Parking situation and community input. Through a meeting with the sponsors, there were three challenges identified to downtown parking:

1. **Conflicts in Parking Needs:** The coexistence of residential and commercial uses in a compact area creates competing demands for parking spaces, particularly during peak periods such as weekends and market events.
2. **Historic District Limitations:** Many buildings in the area were constructed before modern parking requirements, and the preservation of the district's character restricts the development of new parking infrastructure.
3. **Perception of Shortages:** Despite available parking, some community members and officials perceive a lack of sufficient parking, particularly near high-demand locations.

These challenges emphasize the need for a data-driven analysis of various alternatives to parking requirements and the community's thoughts to address the perceived issues and explore opportunities for improvement within the downtown exempt parking area. Additionally, a light observational study will be completed overviewing the parking occupancy rate to evaluate the perceived vs actual parking inefficiencies in New Bern's Historic Parking Exemption Zone.

The Question

How can parking in the downtown New Bern exemption area be better managed to address parking challenges while preserving its historic character and supporting mixed-use development?

The Goal

The goal of this report is to provide the City of New Bern with actionable recommendations, both long and short term, to ensure the longevity of public parking within the Historic Downtown Parking Exemption Zone in Historic Downtown New Bern.



Section 2:

Community and Parking Overview

Community and Parking Overview

This section will focus on New Bern's current related demographic trends, parking infrastructure, related guidelines and regulations, as well as its land use plan. This analysis will provide context and information on the factors that influence the availability of parking in Downtown New Bern.

Vehicle Ownership

According to the 2023 American Community Survey Commuting Characteristics by Sex Data, approximately 94% of New Bern's workforce aged 16 and older has access to at least one vehicle. This high level of car ownership emphasizes the need for adequate parking infrastructure, particularly in areas like downtown, where public and private parking options are limited (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023a).

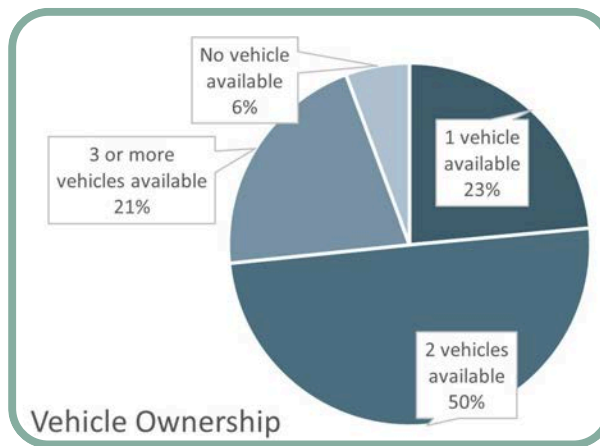


Figure 2.1. Vehicle Ownership in New Bern, NC.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates (2023).

Population Demographics

Based on the 2023 American Community Survey Age and Sex Data, New Bern has an estimated total population of approximately 31,563 residents. The population is diverse, with approximately 35% under the age of 30, 45% between 30 and 60, and 20% over 60, representing a broad spectrum of age groups across the entire city. This diverse age and sex range may influence parking needs across different age ranges, especially considering walkability, accessibility, and proximity to destinations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023b).

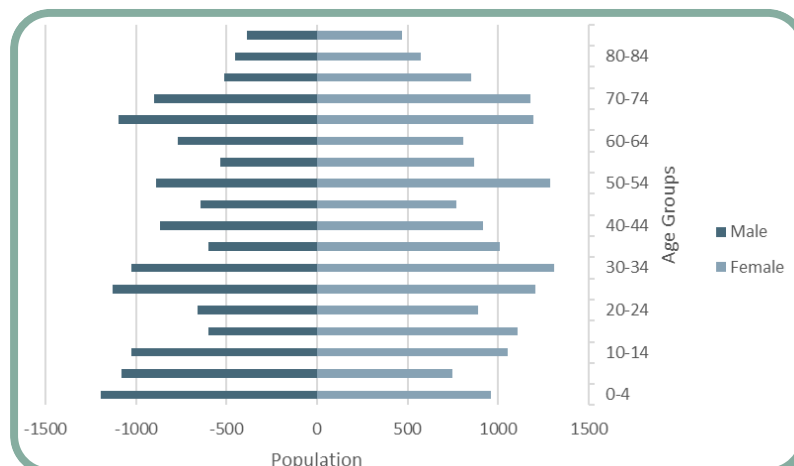


Figure 2.2. Age and Sex data for New Bern, NC.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates (2023).

Population Demographics Continued

The graph below illustrates the population trends from 2015 to 2023 based on the American Community Survey Age and Sex data via the solid blue line. The dashed green line is the forecasted population growth from 2024 to 2035, showcasing 10 years of growth. As of 2023, New Bern's estimated population was 31,563. By 2035, the population is forecasted to be 33,638 people, reflecting about a 2,000-resident increase. Paired with tourism and high vehicle ownership, even this modest increase in population can create additional pressures on downtown parking, creating demand for more accessible and well-managed parking infrastructure through proactive planning (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015–2023).

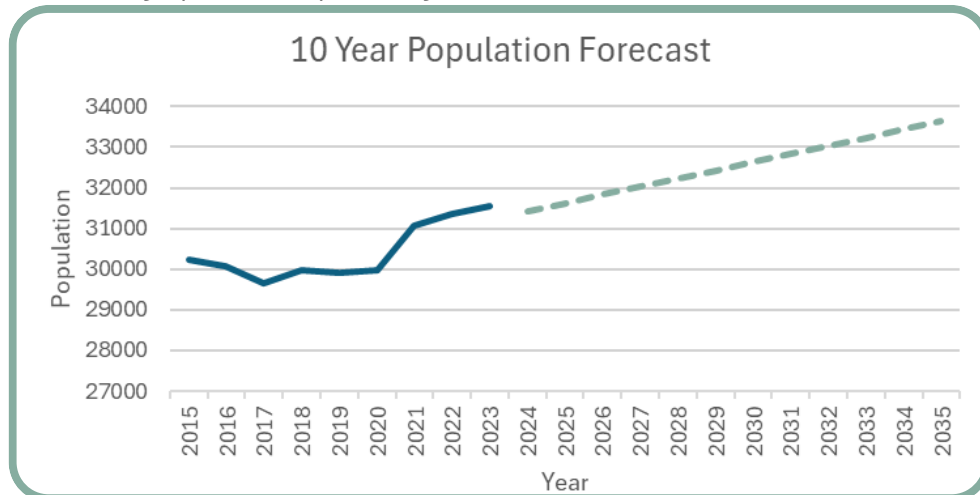


Figure 2.3. Population Forecast for New Bern, NC (2015–2035).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates (2015–2023).

Tourism

An economic impact study completed by the Visit NC organization calculated visitor spending in all counties in 2023. Visitors to Craven County spent a total of \$178.11 million across five industries (Visit North Carolina, 2024a):

- Lodging
- Food and Beverage
- Recreation
- Retail
- Ground and Air Transportation.

Among these, Food and Beverage grossed the most spending with a total of \$63.80 million.

From 2022 to 2023, Craven county has experienced a 4.4% increase in visitor spending (Visit North Carolina, 2024b). While the data does not get into specifics of where visitors were spending their money, one of the main attractions within Craven County is New Bern's Downtown Historic District. The increase in visitor spending reflects a potential increase in the amount of visitors in Craven County, and with the lack of public transportation, parking demands in the Historic Downtown area may increase as well. To better accommodate the growing tourism while still prioritizing the community and the historic feel, it may be imperative to expand parking infrastructure, improve accessibility, and invest in alternative modes of transportation to reduce dependency on individual vehicles.

Inflow/Outflow for Workers within the Historic Downtown

Using this roughly made mockup of the Historic Downtown Exempt Parking zone (shown below) on the United States Census OnTheMap tool, the inflow/outflow of workers from 2022 data was analyzed to better understand workforce commuting patterns.



Figure 2.4. Rough mockup of the Historic Downtown Exempt Parking Zone made on OnTheMap.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap [Data tool], Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Program.
<https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

As seen in the inflow/outflow chart below, the selected area contains a total of 1,527 people who either live and/or work there. Out of that, 99.5%, or 1,519 people, are employed within the area but live outside of it (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). This analysis highlights the strong demand for plentiful parking options, especially for employees.

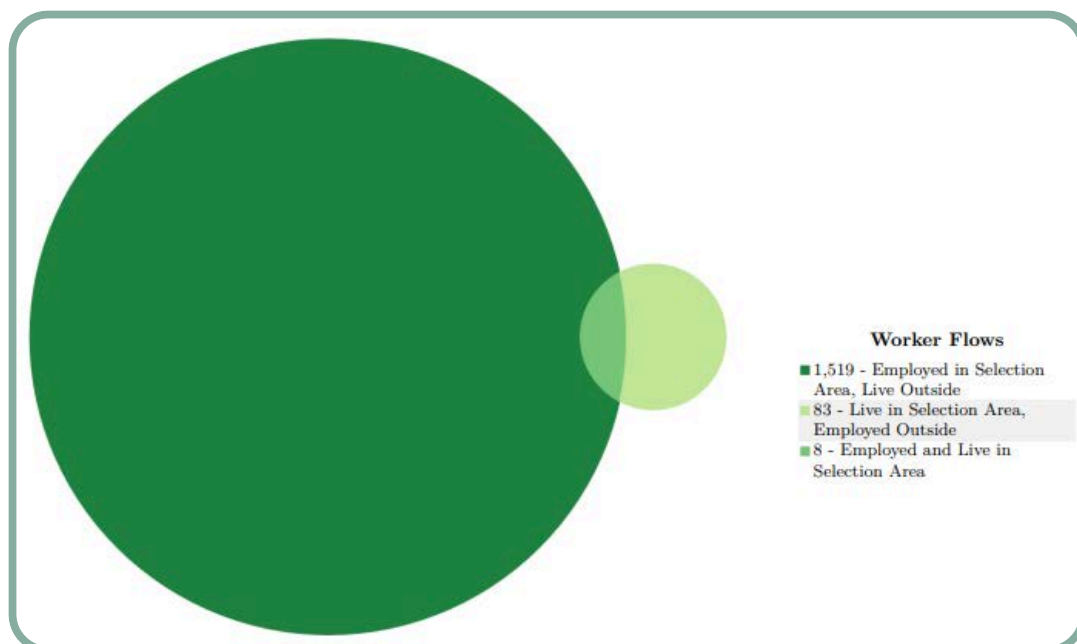


Figure 2.5. Inflow/Outflow of Workers in Downtown New Bern, NC (2022).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap [Data tool], Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Program.
<https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

New Bern's Parking Regulations

As noted previously, the project site is located within the Parking Exemption Zone, which is established under New Bern's Ordinance Section 15-343 (City of New Bern, n.d.-c).

"(e)Notwithstanding any other provision in this section, developments located in the central retail core shall be exempt from off-street parking requirements except those requirements set forth in subsection 15-163(h)(3), provided such development shall not reduce the number of parking spaces in existence as of the date of the adoption of this section. For purposes of this section, "central retail core" shall be defined as the area encompassing those properties abutting the east side of Hancock street, the south side of South Front Street, the west side of East Front Street, the south side of Broad Street from the west side of East Front Street to the west side of Craven Street, and the north side of Broad Street from the east side of Craven Street to the east side of Street Hancock Street, including the west side of southern terminus of Middle Street 100 feet from the intersection with South Front Street and excluding the Riverfront Convention Center of Craven County."

As the ordinance states, all new developments within the Central Retail Core are exempt from off-street parking requirements, provided they do not reduce the number of parking spaces that existed when the ordinance was adopted. Exceptions to this rule are outlined in Section 15-163 of New Bern's Ordinance, including places of worship, public and private schools, recreational facilities, child care homes, homeless shelters, family care homes, mobile food vendors, and short-term rentals. These uses must abide by the parking requirements originally set for them in New Bern's Ordinance (City of New Bern, n.d.-d).

Transportation

New Bern, NC, is covered by the Craven Area Regional Transit System (CARTS). According to the Craven County Government, the fixed loop route was replaced with the Omnibus on December 1, 2021, however, CARTS still offers a reservation-based service as well. The Omnibus will serve multiple locations with expanded operating hours(Craven County Government, n.d.-b), offering three different routes: the Orange Route, which serves educational and recreational facilities and contains three stops within the Historical Parking Exemption Area (Craven Area Rural Transit System, 2021a); the Green Route, which serves employment and retail areas, with one stop in the exemption zone (Craven Area Rural Transit System, 2021b); and the Blue Route, which focuses on the medical area and does not stops within the exemption Area though some are located nearby (Craven Area Rural Transit System, 2021c).

The Omnibus LOOP fare is \$1, with qualified individuals -those with a disability, are 65 years old or older, or people with a Medicare card- being eligible for a \$0.50 half fare. Jones and Pamlico residents are charged \$2.00 per trip. Fares for the reservation-based demand system within Craven County are based on distances unless specified for certain groups. Passengers utilizing the reservation-based system are informed of the fare amount when making the reservation (Craven County Government, n.d.-d).

Parking Inventory

New Bern has a multitude of different parking spaces for people visiting or working within the historic Downtown Area. Through a mix of on-street parking, public lots, and leased lots, it's easy to find parking, if available. The map below showcases the available Parking, with descriptions of each.

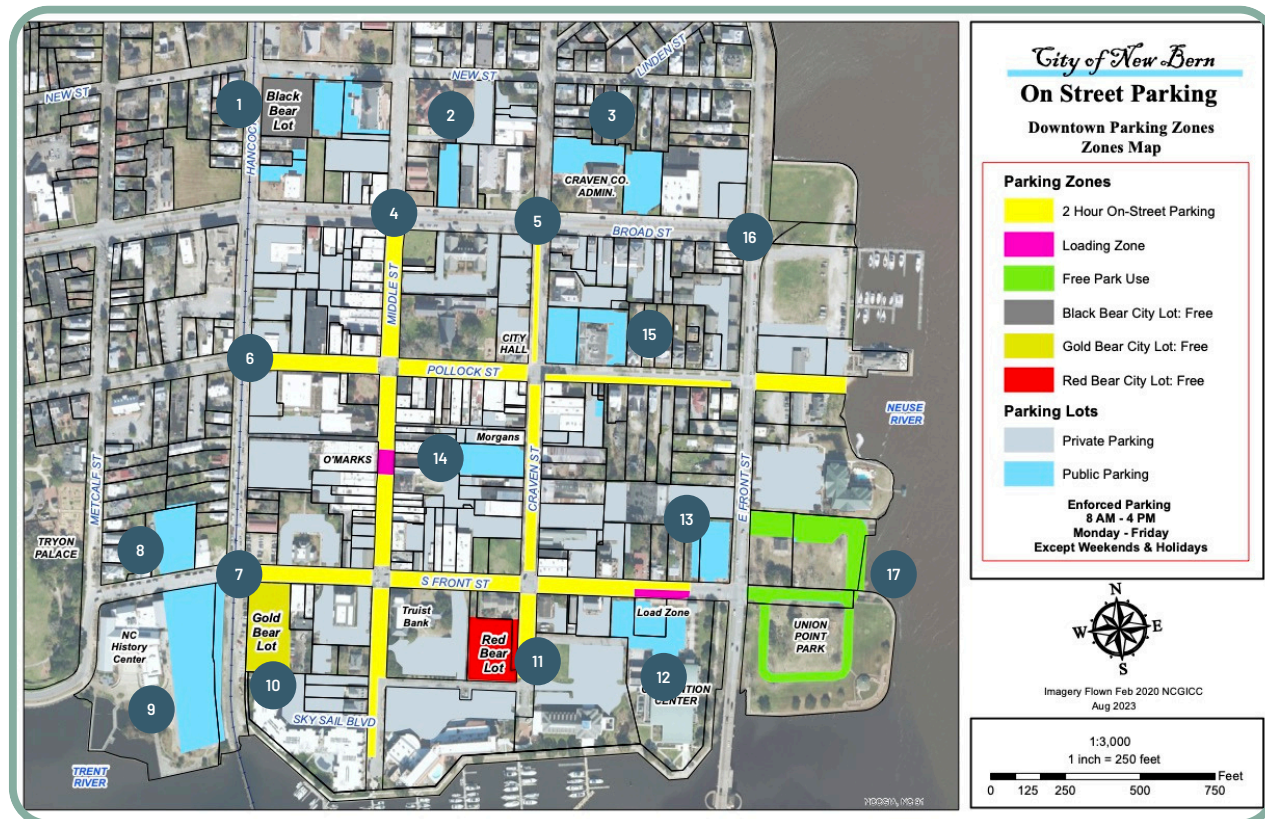


Figure 2.6. Parking Map of Downtown New Bern, NC.

Source: Swiss Bear, Inc. (n.d.). Downtown New Bern. <https://downtownnewbern.com/parking/>

Listed below are the parking streets/lots with the corresponding number on the map above.

1. Black Bear Lot- Free Public Lot, providing 56 spaces.
2. District Attorney's Office Lot- Some leased spots, parked where reserved, providing 39 spaces.
3. Craven County Business and Office Lot- Public Parking where marked for up to 3 hours, providing 107 spaces.
4. Middle Street On-Street Parking- Public Parking for up to two hours, providing 103 spaces.
5. Craven Street On-Street Parking- Public Parking for up to two hours, providing 58 spaces.
6. Pollock Street On-Street Parking- Public Parking for up to two hours, providing 82 spaces.
7. South Front Street On-Street Parking- Public Parking for up to two hours, providing 76 spaces.
8. NC History Center Overflow and Employee Lot- Overflow and Employee lot for the NC History Center, providing 56 spaces.

Parking Inventory Continued

9. NC History Main Lot- Parking for NC History Center, classified as public parking, providing 86 spaces.
10. Gold Bear Lot- Free Public Lot, providing 48 spaces.
11. Red Bear Lot- Free Public Lot, providing 72 spaces.
12. Convention Center Lot- Private Lot for events only, providing 76 spaces.
13. Convention Center Second Lot- Private Lot for events only, providing 67 spaces.
14. Craven Street City Parking Lot- Leased Lot for businesses, providing 44 spaces.
15. Pollock Street Lot- Public and Private Lot, providing 50 spaces.
16. Broad Street - Provides 63 spaces
16. Union Park- Public Parking during park hours (6 am-11pm), providing 109 spaces.

Note: The Brown Bear Lot was excluded due to its distance from the project site.

As seen by the map and each lot description, New Bern has a variety of different lots, and on-street parking for their residents, visitors, and employees. In total, while being conservative due an unknown number of spaces dedicated to the public in some leased/private lots, there is a minimum of 690 parking spaces available for the public (City of New Bern, n.d.-b).

Parking Signage Infrastructure

When Visiting Historic Downtown New Bern, one would quickly be able to find public parking to any of the Bear Lots provided by the city through signage posted along the streets and traffic light poles. Signage throughout the city directs drivers to public parking areas and provides details about each lot and its regulations. Additional signs also explain time limit restrictions for on-street parking, as seen in the provided photo.



Figure 2.7. Parking signage in Downtown New Bern, NC.
Source: Photo by author.



Figure 2.8. Parking signage on traffic light in Downtown New Bern, NC.
Source: Photo by author.



Figure 2.9. Parking signage on light pole in Downtown New Bern, NC.
Source: Photo by author.

Parking Inventory

Parking Infrastructure Overview Checklist

Identifying the current conditions of the public parking lots may prove vital in looking into the community's sense of safety and accessibility when parking there. While not every lot was surveyed and photographed, the city owned public lots were chosen to give an evaluation into the city's efforts. To guide the assessment, the following checklist was used:

- Does the lot have adequate lighting?
- Does the lot have surveillance?
- Does the lot feel hidden from public view?
- Is the lot easily accessible? Does the lot provide designated handicap spaces?
- Are parking spot markings clear and easy to see?
- What other amenities does the lot provide?
- Are there any other concerns? (Optional)

This evaluation aims to provide a snapshot of the physical and perceived conditions of Historic Downtown New Bern's public lots, which will be used to inform future recommendations for improvement.

Red Bear Lot Overview

Red Bear lot is located off the intersection of South Front Street and Craven Street. Pictures of Red Bear Lot, one during the day, and one at night, will be provided below, followed by the answers to the questions above.



Figure 2.10. Red Bear Lot during the day in Downtown New Bern, NC.
Source: Photo by author.

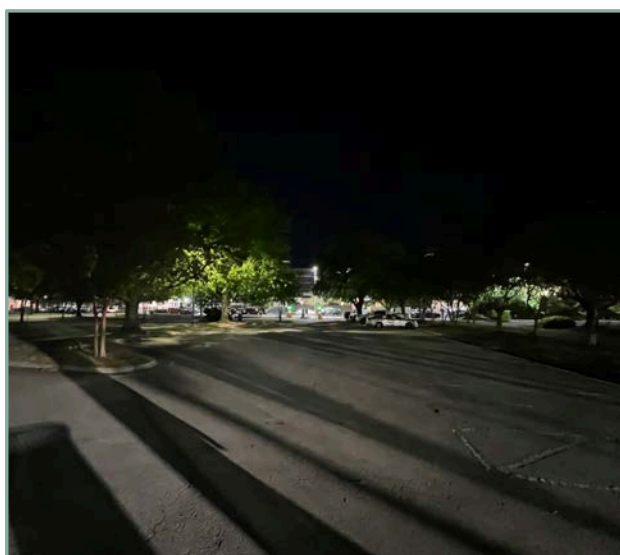


Figure 2.11. Red Bear Lot during the night in Downtown New Bern, NC.
Source: Photo by author.

Parking Inventory

Red Bear Lot Overview

Does the lot have adequate lighting?

Observations indicates that the lot only has one visible light pole, with its effectiveness being limited due to coverage of existing trees. As seen from **Figure 2.11** the lighting within the lot itself is inadequate, however the spillover lighting from the surrounding uses provide a far coverage over the lot, but in all, the lighting still seems to be fairly low. While there is no overnight parking allowed here, the public could still use this lot and not arrive back to their vehicles until after dark, with the current lighting, this could discourage use.

Does the lot have surveillance?

Upon initial observation, are no visible security cameras, raising concerns about surveillance and safety in the lot. While the lot is near other parking areas, it still feels hidden due to the tree canopy and the building blocking it from view from the main downtown core. Paired with the lack of lighting and the hiddenness from the downtown area, the sense of safety from this lot could be the reason for low occupancy rating, paired with the need for better signage.

Does the lot feel hidden from public view?

The lot is covered by a building, hiding it from the core downtown area. The other sides are overlooked by additional parking, the side of a bank, and in the distance, a residential apartment building. The combination of the visual obstructions, and limited signage can hide the lot from the public, possibly being the cause of underutilization.

Is the lot easily accessible? Does the lot provide designated handicap spaces?

Accessibility for this lot is somewhat limited, while they do provide three accessible spots, the curbs around the handicap space juts out, which could cause injuries. Additionally, the surrounding crosswalks leading from the parking lot into the downtown area are not ADA compliant, making it harder for people utilizing the handicap spaces to use this lot.

Are parking spot markings clear and easy to see?

The physical condition of the lot is lacking, with the previously mentioned uneven curbs, and fading parking space markings, the lot needs maintenance. This factor could play into another reason why the lots are not used.

What other amenities does the lot provide?

The amenities included in this lot is two electric vehicle charging stations, trash cans, and a well-shaded tree canopy. This lot is the only lot that provides electric vehicle charging stations, with recommendations from the public to increase EV infrastructure, this could be a great amenity to introduce to current lots to increase utilization from the public.

Parking Inventory

Gold bear Lot Overview

The Gold Bear lot is located behind the local farmers market off of South Front Street near the rail line. Figures 2.12 and 2.13 shows the Gold bear lot during the night and during the day



Figure 2.12. Gold Bear Lot during the day in Downtown New Bern, NC.
Source: Photo by author.



Figure 2.13. Gold Bear Lot during the night in Downtown New Bern, NC.
Source: Photo by author.

Does the lot have adequate lighting?

Observations indicates that the lot only has two visible light poles along the fence. As seen from **Figure 2.13**, the lighting within the lot itself is severely inadequate. While there is no overnight parking allowed here, the public could still use this lot and not arrive back to their vehicles until after dark, with the current lighting, this could discourage use.

Does the lot have surveillance?

Upon initial observation, there are no visible security cameras, raising concerns about surveillance and safety in the lot.

Does the lot feel hidden from public view?

The lot is surrounded by a gravel lot that has no pedestrian activity, a residential building, and vegetation screening, additionally the lot is also obscured by the farmers market building. Paired with the lack of lighting, the lack of cameras, and the distance form the downtown core area, the surveillence of this lot is extremely lacking and highlights an area for improvement to increase the utilization.

Is the lot easily accessible? Does the lot provide designated handicap spaces?

This lot provides 2 handicap parking spots for the community. Another thing to note, the lot itself is level with the current sidewalk infrastructure, so it would be easy to go from the lot to the sidewalks. Sidewalk crossings were pointed as a needed improvement by the community, being a recommendation for the city.

Parking Inventory

Gold bear Lot Overview

Are parking spot markings clear and easy to see?

The physical condition of the lot is lacking with fading parking space markings, the lot needs maintenance. This factor could play into another reason why the lots are not used.

What other amenities does the lot provide?

This lot includes no amenities for the public, not even trash cans. The lack of amenities from this lot could be a big reason for underutilization, suggesting areas for improvements.

Any other concerns?

One thing to note, this lot closes when the Farmers Market is open on Saturday's from 8 AM to 2 PM. Instead of parking, the lot is used as parking and booths for people so work the farmers market. With the farmers market being a destination for many people, the closure of this lot can be impactful. However, the lot directly across from the Farmers Market opens up to public parking but it does not contain as many spaces as Gold Bear.

Black Bear Lot Overview

The Black Bear Lot is further away from the other two lots, being behind the New Bern's Fire Museum near the intersection of Broad Street and Hancock Street. This is the only of the three lots that allow overnight parking. The two photos shown below show the lot during both the day and night.



Figure 2.14. Black Bear Lot during the day in Downtown New Bern, NC.

Source: Photo by author.

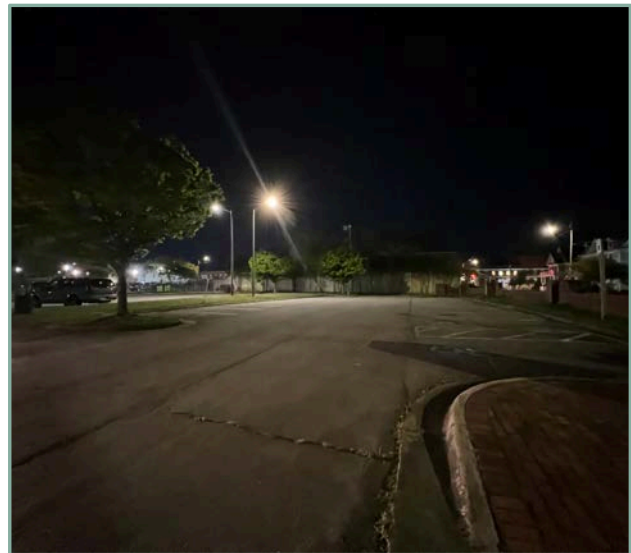


Figure 2.15. Black Bear Lot during the night in Downtown New Bern, NC.

Source: Photo by author.

Does the lot have adequate lighting?

Observations indicates that the lot has two visible light pole. As seen from **Figure 2.15** the lighting within the lot itself is adequate. Considering this lot allows overnight parking, it is good that it has adequate lighting. However, the walk to the lot could have inconsistent lighting, it is important for New Bern to make sure lighting is consistent throughout the area to ensure safety.

Parking Inventory

Black Bear Lot Overview

Does the lot have surveillance?

Upon initial observation, there are no visible security cameras, raising concerns about surveillance and safety in the lot.

Does the lot feel hidden from public view?

A point of concern for this lot is the wall blocking the lot from the main downtown area. The other sides of the lot are exposed to a residential area, a church, and a black metal spiked fence. Due to the low pedestrian activity in the area, this could be a concern, especially since overnight parking is allowed.

Is the lot easily accessible? Does the lot provide designated handicap spaces?

While the lot contains five handicap spaces, one spot is blocked from use by a mini dumpster. Two of the handicap spaces are far from the entrances and exits, believedly to connect to the sidewalk they are placed by. However, the sidewalk by these two handicap spots is not ADA compliant as it has no sloped entrance, just a curb.

Are parking spot markings clear and easy to see?

The physical condition of the parking spaces lines are visible, suggesting that they do not need maintenance.

What other amenities does the lot provide?

This lot includes amenities such as trash cans, and a mini hidden bike rack.

Parking Limits, Permits, and Fees

Parking Limits

The Historic Downtown Area in New Bern has a 2-hour free parking for all on-street spaces, Monday through Friday between 8 AM and 4 PM. Public Bear Lots provided by the city have specific regulations (City of New Bern, n.d.-a):

- Red Bear Lot: No parking allowed Sunday through Thursday between 3 AM and 6 AM.
- Gold Bear Lot: No parking allowed Sunday through Thursday between 6 AM and 2:30 PM and Saturday between 6 AM and 2:30 PM.
- Black Bear Lot: Daily and overnight parking is permitted.

Permits

According to the City of New Bern's parking website, parking permits are not currently offered throughout the historic downtown area. Leased parking is available; however, public information regarding availability and cost is not listed (City of New Bern, n.d.-a).

Fees

Parking tickets cost \$25, increasing to \$50 if unpaid for 30 days. Along with the fees, although most parking is free, a paid parking system was introduced on October 6th, 2023, for the lot located at the corner of Craven Street and Pollock Street (WITN News, 2023). Paid parking is enforced Monday through Saturday, between 8 AM and 8 PM. The rate is \$1 an hour, with a maximum daily charge of \$8 for the day, which is processed through the ParkMobile application (City of New Bern, n.d.-a).

New Bern's Historic Guidelines

The New Bern Historic Guidelines for parking provide specific regulations to ensure that parking infrastructure aims to preserve the district's traditional development patterns while considering modern transportation needs. Listed are the core considerations and restrictions along with the possible inferred implications (City of New Bern, 2021):

- Parking Project Planning Considerations:
 - The historic districts were developed before the rise of automobiles, resulting in limited off-street parking availability.
 - Many properties lack driveways, and those that exist tend to be narrower than modern standards.
 - New parking access should avoid disrupting significant landscape features and must respect existing development patterns.

Implications

Due to the development of the Downtown District before the rise of automobiles, parking was never considered. Due to this, many residential and commercial units do not have parking spaces to accommodate themselves or their customers. Pairing this with the requirement for new parking to avoid disrupting landscapes and respecting development patterns, it can be restrictive for new developments to create parking.

New Bern's Historic Guidelines Continued

- Driveway and Off-Street Parking Placement:
 - 2.7.1: Driveways on narrow lots must be confined to the Secondary Area of Visual Concern (AVC).
 - 2.7.2: Driveways should lead to off-street parking located in the Tertiary AVC. Additionally, areas designated for vehicles should not exceed 50% of the rear yard space in areas with a dense development pattern.
 - 2.7.3: Off-street parking is prohibited within the Primary AVC and cannot be placed on corner lots within historic districts.

Implications

These strict location requirements limit where driveways and off-street parking can be placed, which reduces the total number of available spaces. Restrictions on rear yard coverage, combined with limitations on lot placement, make it more difficult to provide off-street parking for residents, business owners, employees, and visitors. While these standards help preserve cohesiveness of the historic district, it can also present challenges for expanding or adjusting parking access.

- Parking Lot Screening:
 - 2.7.5: Parking lots must be screened using fences, walls, or hedgerows to visually separate vehicle areas from pedestrian spaces. These screening structures must not exceed four feet in height to maintain the district's historic aesthetic.

Implications

To keep a consistent feel and look throughout the Historic district, the guidelines also require screening for parking spaces. While this promotes the visual aesthetics for downtown New Bern, it can limit the design and placement of parking lots while also taking up additional space that could be used for parking.

Final Analysis

The historic parking guidelines in New Bern ensure that implemented parking remains visually compatible with the city's historic look and feel, but it can also create challenges for increasing parking supply. Expanding off-street parking for commercial or residential uses can prove to be expensive or just impossible for some owners. To meet the growing demand for parking supply, the city could look into relaxing some of the historic guidelines or providing more parking options for the community of New Bern.

New Bern's Zoning

The project site in the Historic Downtown area falls under two zoning classifications (City of New Bern, n.d.-e):

- C-1 – Central Business District
- C-2 – Commercial Waterfront District

C-1: Central Business District

As defined in Section 15-137 of the New Bern Municipal Code, the Central Business District serves as the primary trade and commercial service hub for both the local community and the surrounding region. The regulations in this district are intended to accommodate a broad mix of commercial activities, including offices, retail shops, and service establishments, in order to support and enhance the economic vitality of the downtown area (City of New Bern, n.d.-f).

C-2: Commercial Waterfront District

Also defined in Section 15-137 of the Municipal Code, the Commercial Waterfront District is intended for office and institutional uses, secondary retail, and commercial services located adjacent to the waterfront. This zoning designation aims to encourage commercial activities that benefit from proximity to the water, such as marinas, waterfront dining, and tourism-related services (City of New Bern, n.d.-f).

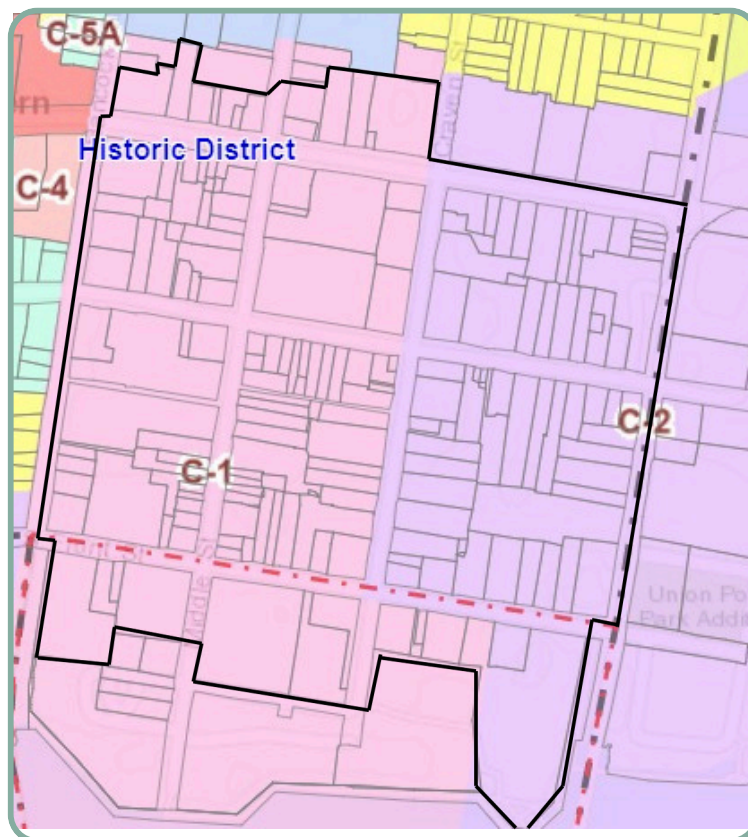


Figure 2.16. Zoning of the Historic Downtown Zone. Source: City of New Bern. (n.d.-e). Interactive zoning map – City of New Bern, NC [Map]. ArcGIS Open Data. <https://gis-newbern.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/interactive-zoning-map-city-of-new-bern-nc>

New Bern's Land Use Plan

The 2022 New Bern Land Use Plan highlights improvements to parking through thoughtful policy recommendations. The recommendations focus on sustainability, shared parking, cohesive design, and community engagement (City of New Bern, 2022). The policies listed below show a selection of parking-related recommendations from the Land Use Plan.

- Land Use & Development Policies (Pages 45)
 - Policy LUD 1.6: Consider site and surrounding context, environmental factors, sustainability, and resiliency in new construction to ensure community cohesion, compatibility, and design quality of new development.
 - Action LU 1.6.1: Review and update the Urban Design Plan and Unified Development Ordinance to address scenic views, view corridors, shared or connected parking and access, landscaping and planting, pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular movement, consistent sign standards, sustainability site design best practices, and resilience
- Infrastructure Policies (Page 50)
 - Policy IF 1.11: New development will need to provide adequate parking. Shared parking and permeable surfaces are strongly encouraged.
 - Action IF 1.11.1: Ensure parking standards establish a minimum and maximum requirement based on land use type within the Focus Areas. Ensure parking standards contain environmental provisions, such as reduction of stormwater runoff, permeable materials, and low-impact development practices.
- Transportation Carrying Capacity Policies (Page 180)
 - Policy T 10: Requires adequate parking for new developments, promoting shared parking and permeable surfaces where feasible.
 - Action Item T 10a: Suggests updating ordinances to include minimum and maximum parking requirements, with sustainability-focused provisions like stormwater management and LID techniques.
- Public Feedback on Downtown Parking (Page 233)
 - Public input reflected a need for better parking planning in downtown New Bern, with 5-10 votes highlighting parking concerns.

Key Takeaways

- Community-Oriented Design: Parking infrastructure is encouraged to complement the surrounding environment, architecture, and urban design that enhances the community's character.
- Balanced Parking Standards: The plan supports establishing minimum and maximum parking requirements to prevent overbuilt or underprovided parking lots.
- Environmental Sustainability: The plan emphasizes protecting and curbing impacts on the environment were encouraged via permeable surfaces, stormwater management and low-impact development
- Shared Parking: Several policies promoted shared parking to increase land efficiency.
- Public Engagement: Downtown parking was raised as a concern by residents, and its inclusion in the Land Use Plan reflects the city's responsiveness to community input.

Community and Parking Overview: Key Takeaways

This section provides a detailed look into the physical, demographic, regulatory, and policy landscape that shapes Historic Downtown New Bern's parking environment. The project area, the Historic Downtown Exemption Parking Zone -established by Ordinance 15-163- sits at the core of the downtown and is shaped by both historic preservation priorities and modern development pressures.

New Bern's high rate of car ownership -94% of the workforce having access to at least one vehicle- makes efficient parking infrastructure a necessity. The city, with a population of approximately 31,563, is also experiencing modest population growth and steady increases in tourism, both of which contribute to rising parking demand. Additionally, nearly all employees working within the parking exemption zone -approximately 1,500 people- commute from outside the area, reinforcing the need for reliable and accessible parking options.

New Bern is also served by the Craven Area Regional Transit System (CARTS), which operates both a fixed-route Omnibus system and a reservation-based service. However, public transportation options around the downtown area remain limited, leading to a greater reliance on personal vehicle use as the primary means of travel.

The city currently offers a variety of parking options, including on-street and off-street spaces, as well as three city-owned lots: Red Bear, Gold Bear, and Black Bear. Observational studies show these lots are inconsistently used, which may be due to observed factors such as poor lighting, limited signage, lack of surveillance, and safety concerns. While some lots include different amenities, maintenance needs, non-ADA-compliant curb ramps, and hidden lot entrances limit public use and comfort.

Additionally, the Historic Downtown New Bern area does not offer a parking permit program for residents, business owners, or employees. This is largely due to the fact that most parking is currently free, however, it can limit the city's ability to prioritize key groups, such as employees.

New Bern's parking policies are further shaped by the city's Historic District Guidelines. These guidelines aim to preserve the district's visual and architectural character but often restrict flexibility in the placement and design of parking infrastructure, especially for developers and property owners.

The Historic Downtown Parking Exemption Zone falls under both C-1 (Central Business District) and C-2 (Commercial Waterfront District) zoning, which emphasize commercial and waterfront-related activity, each with their own transportation and access needs. The 2022 New Bern Land Use Plan supports strategies like shared parking, permeable surfaces, and balanced minimum and maximum parking standards, while also highlighting community concerns about the availability, placement, and design of parking downtown.

Taken together, these factors illustrate a need for a coordinated effort across multiple departments to thoughtfully upgrade existing parking infrastructure, while preserving the historic charm. If done correctly, the city can better support growing demand while preserving its historic charm and meeting the mobility needs of its community.



Section 3:

Previous Parking Studies

New Bern's Previous Parking Studies

The City of New Bern has had two previous studies done overviewing the parking situation in the downtown historic area. The two reports were completed by Lanier Parking Solutions and UNC Development Finance Initiative. This section will delve into the key findings they had and their relevance to New Bern now.

Lanier Parking Solutions Parking Study

In 2007, Lanier Parking Solutions conducted a parking study for the City of New Bern, to evaluate current conditions, parking inventory, forecast future demand, and propose solutions to address parking concerns. The study area encompassed a large part of downtown New Bern, but Lanier Solutions focused most of the analysis and recommendations within the project area of Broad St (North), Craven St (East), S Front St (South), and middle St (West) (Lanier Parking Solutions, 2007). While the report contained a range of data, a few of the key findings included:

- Parking deficits projected to exceed 450 spaces by 2010, which would be critical for residential owners.
- Around 20% of the spaces in the core business area had vehicles parked there for an excess of two hours, which was inferred to be employees of the local businesses.
- There was a lack of signage and wayfinding to off-street parking, prompting recommendations to improve them to increase awareness.
- There was a lack of parking enforcement.

Additionally, the study identified the parking occupancy on two separate days:

- Saturday, May 5th: Peak occupancy reached 61.49%, with a 47.30% turnover rate, and 15.90% of vehicles exceeding the two-hour limit.
- Thursday, June 7th: Peak occupancy reached 72.93%, with a 44.30% turnover rate, and 26.48% of vehicles parked for over two hours.

To address these concerns, the study proposed several recommendations:

- Expanding the two-hour parking zone in the downtown core.
- Increasing parking enforcement.
- Increase the amount of off-street parking, even suggesting a parking garage.
- Enhancing signage for off-street parking.
- Developing long-term parking strategies for employees.
- Avoid paid parking UNLESS it is used to help construct a parking garage.

While these findings remain relevant, some recommendations have since been implemented or require readjustment. For example, the enforcement of two-hour parking limits was officially established in July 2018. However, other recommendations, such as developing long-term strategies for employees and expanding public parking, remain just as important today as demand for it rises.

UNC Finance Initiative Study

In 2015, the Development UNC Finance Initiative completed a Market Study for New Bern. The study area included a portion of Middle Street between the intersections of South Front Street and Pollock Street, as well as Pollock Street between Craven Street and Middle Street. This study observed occupancy rates and parking inventory, completed public engagement and then provided recommendations for the city. The study's primary goal was to identify potential sites for a downtown parking garage (UNC School of Government DFI, personal communication, April 10, 2025).

This study identified several key issues:

- Middle Streets average occupancy reached 90%, with turnover rates between 44% to 53% depending on the side of the street.
- Pollock Streets average occupancy ranged from 88%-90%, with turnover rates between 20%-53% depending on the side of the street.
- Over 40% of parking was used by vehicles parked for over 2 hours.
- Increase in illegal parking, some vehicles remained parked for 3+ hours.
- Many employees were still using on-street parking.
- Enforcement remained ineffective.

To address the concerns mentioned, they made several recommendations:

- Continue expanding two-hour time zones.
- Improve enforcement of parking restrictions.
- Develop employee parking strategies.
- Implement Pay parking

They included three sites within New Bern as potential parking garage locations:

- Adjacent to the convention center, replacing an existing parking lot.
- Directly in front of the convention center, also replacing an existing parking lot.
- On the Current Pollock Street paid lot.

The 2015 Market Study offered a more recent parking analysis, however it was on a smaller project area within the downtown core. The findings from this study reinforced some of the concerns identified in the Lanier Parking Study and highlighted an increase in parking occupancy. The study's recommendations for future parking garage infrastructure lays the groundwork for future planning as demand rises.

Parking Study Findings: Key Takeaways

When considered together, the 2007 and 2015 studies identify similar recommendations: increased enforcement, expansion of two-hour time limits, increasing of parking inventory, and dedicated employee parking strategies. Observations of both studies show an increase in occupancy rates, with turnover rates being as low as 20% in 2015. These repeated findings suggest that the core parking challenges have remained largely the same. While some recommendations have been implemented, other -such as employee parking- have yet to be fully addressed. Together, these studies provide a strong foundation for re-evaluating current conditions and recommending lasting improvements that fit the City's interests.



Section 4:

Community Engagement and Observation

Community Engagement and Light Observations

Community engagement is essential in any planning report, providing direct insight from those most affected by the parking issues. For this project, a single online survey was created using Qualtrics and distributed through flyers featuring a QR code, allowing community members to access and complete the survey easily. A copy of the flyer and survey will be included in the appendix of this report. In addition to survey responses, an observational analysis of parking behavior was conducted on two separate days to better understand real-time parking usage and occupancy patterns.

Community Engagement

As previously mentioned, community engagement for this project was conducted through a single online survey. The survey distribution was achieved by printing the flyers and passing them around the Historical Downtown New Bern Parking Exemption Area to 43 businesses. Along with passing the surveys out in person, distribution was also achieved via online New Bern Facebook Groups. The survey received 138 responses. The survey was designed to tailor questions based on the respondent's connection to Downtown New Bern after answering the question:

"What is your primary connection to Downtown? (Choose all that apply)"

- Resident
- Business Owner
- Employee
- Visitor/Tourist

Respondents were directed to questions specific to their selected role(s). This approach helped gather more relevant and targeted feedback across different stakeholder groups. The results are presented in grouped sections, which include an overview of general responses, followed by individual sections highlighting responses from residents, business owners, employees, and visitors. The final portion of this section summarizes broader parking-related feedback and overall impressions shared by the community.

Introduction Question Results

The following section summarizes responses to six introductory questions designed to provide context on how the community feels about and perceives parking in downtown New Bern. These questions address perceptions of parking difficulty, the types of parking typically used, how far individuals are willing to walk from a parking space, how they usually travel downtown, what brings them to the area, and their primary connection to downtown New Bern.

Community Engagement Continued

Introduction Question Results

Q1: How easy or difficult is it to find parking in the downtown area?

Around 49% of the survey respondents declare that finding parking within the downtown area is neither easy nor difficult and somewhat easy with only 5% of the respondents finding parking extremely difficult. These results highlight that although parking may be manageable for many, there is still a large portion of the community that may experience difficulty finding parking, pointing to different experiences depending on the time and/or location.

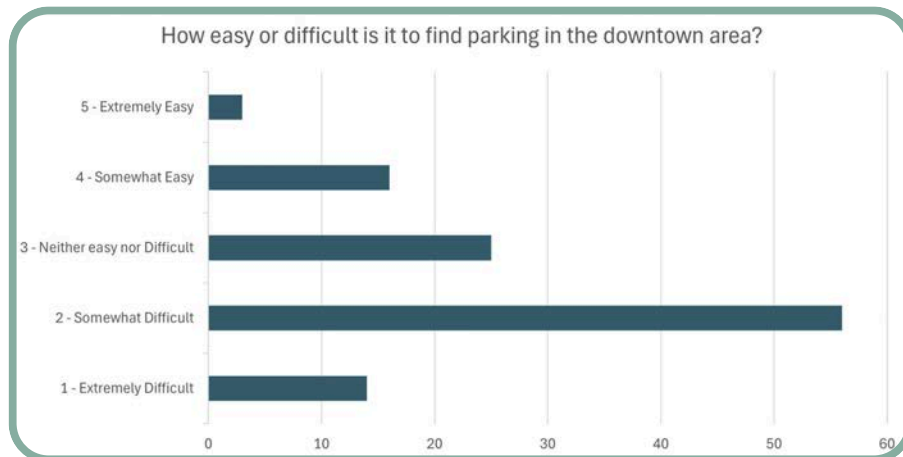


Figure 4.1. Respondents opinions on downtown parking difficulty.

Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Q2: What type of Parking do you typically use?

Surprisingly, approximately 73% of respondents reported using on-street parking over other available options. This may highlight the convenience and visibility that on-street parking offers. It can also be inferred that public and paid lots are either underutilized or less accessible and that many respondents do not have access to private parking. Respondents that selected other mentioned using private parking for work and street parking for leisure. These findings suggest that on-street parking plays a central role in the downtown parking experience and may be seen as the most straightforward or preferred choice by most.

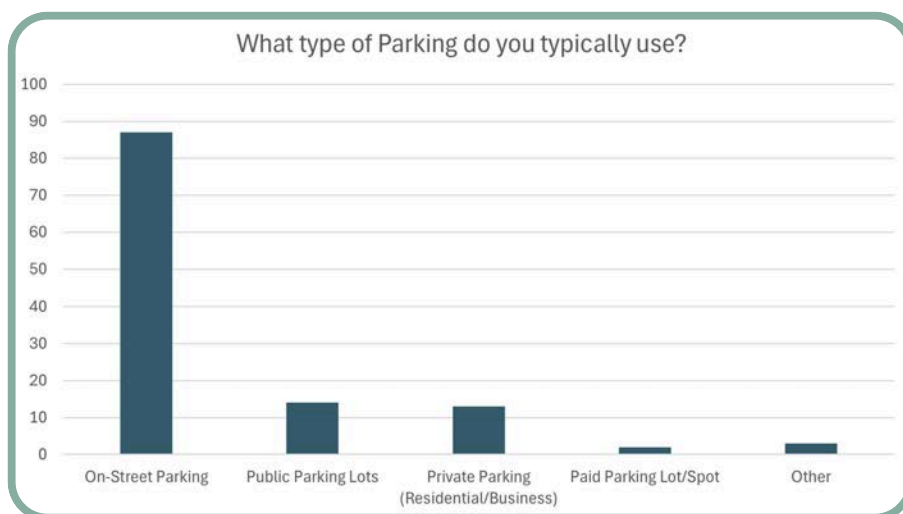


Figure 4.2. Respondents most common parking type.

Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Community Engagement Continued

Introduction Question Results

Q3: How far are you typically willing to walk from your parking spot to your destination?

When overviewing the results for this question, most respondents are willing to walk a short distance from their parking spot to their destination. Specifically, 37.82% of respondents are willing to walk 3-4 minutes, while 30.25% are willing to walk 1-2 minutes. These results suggest that the majority of the community is open to walking a short distance, which supports recommendations to increase pedestrian connectivity, especially between public lots. This willingness also highlights the importance of making public lots more accessible, visible, and secure, particularly those located just outside the immediate downtown core.



Figure 4.3. Respondents opinion on walking distance from parking to destination.

Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Q4: What is your primary connection to downtown New Bern? (Choose all that apply)

This question was used to discern the type of survey questions that would be unlocked for the respondent. Most of the respondents to the survey were residents (54.74%), while 19.71% were visitors or tourists, 18.25% were employees, and 7.30% were business owners. Keep in mind, however, that respondents were able to choose all that apply. The results show that although a majority of the respondents were residents, we heard valuable input from external voices such as visitors/tourists and business owners.

Q5: How do you usually get to downtown New Bern?

Although this question had multiple choices, 94.12% of respondents replied that they drove and parked, with the remaining 5.88% saying they walked. This highlights the lack of alternative modes of transportation and infrastructure into the downtown area, such as bicycle lanes and public transit, further contributing to car usage and demand for parking.

Community Engagement Continued

Introduction Question Results

Q6: What brings you to Downtown New Bern? (Choose all that apply)

While allowing respondents to select multiple choices for visiting downtown, the most commonly selected response was shopping and/or dining, with 40.66%. Respondents followed that up with work (20.33%), recreation (19.09%), and visiting family or friends (16.18%). A small number of respondents (3.73%) selected other, saying a variety of different activities such as going to the gym, living in the downtown area, volunteering with the Girl Scouts, attending the local Civic Theatre and Art Walk, practicing yoga, or going to church.

Business Owner Question Results

This section is meant to highlight the business owners' perspective on parking in the downtown area. It is important to hear from them as they can be one of the main drivers for tourists and residents coming into town. When asked question four regarding primary connection to downtown New Bern in the Introduction Question Section, 7.30% of respondents were directed towards these questions.

Q1: Please select which best describes your business:

This question was meant to discern the business types of the respondents. Understanding business categories helps provide context for how different industries may experience parking challenges. The businesses that responded included one retail business; two restaurants; two arts, culture, or entertainment businesses; four professional and business service providers; and one real estate business listed under the "Other" category.

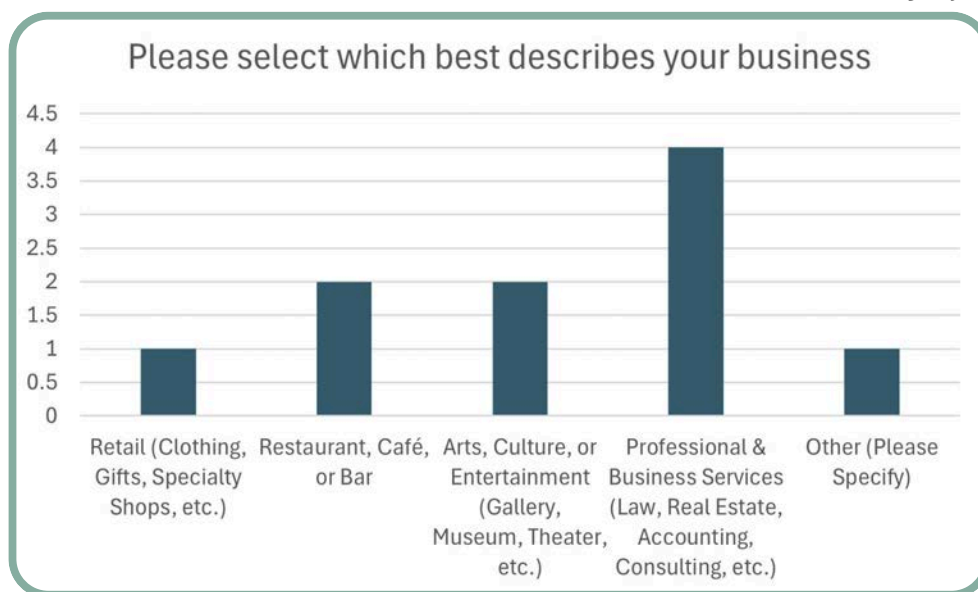


Figure 4.4. Respondents business types in New Bern, NC.

Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Q2: Do you have designated Parking areas for you and your employees?

Most (60%) of the business owners responded that they did have a designated parking area, with 40% saying they did not. This showcases that although most of the business owner respondents have designated parking for employees, there are still some that do not, showcasing a need for employees to park elsewhere.

Community Engagement Continued

Business Owner Question Results

Q3: How many designated parking spaces do you have?

Of the six respondents that stated they have designated parking, two businesses stated they have 1-2 spots, two businesses have 3-4 spots, one business has 9-10 spots, and one business has more than 10 spots. The variation in parking spaces highlights an inconsistency in parking among businesses, with some having substantial parking and others having none at all. The disparities between businesses influence how reliant customers are on public parking, which could lead to more difficulty in finding parking. When cross-referencing data with question 2, business type may play a partial role.. For example, Professional and Business services had a total of 12 spaces for three businesses, and the one restaurant that answered had 7 spaces for their business. While this is useful to note, the small sample size makes it difficult to draw broader conclusions about parking availability by business type.

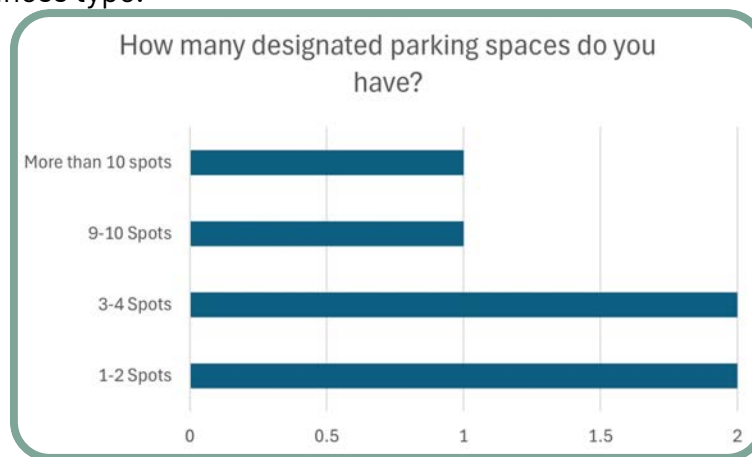


Figure 4.5. Amount of designated parking for each business respondent.
Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Q4: Not including yourself, how many people are employed by your business?

Of the six businesses that responded, three businesses have 1-2 employees, two businesses have 3-4 employees, one business has 5-6 employees, one business has 9-10 employees, and three businesses have more than 10 employees. Based on the previous question regarding designated spaces ,

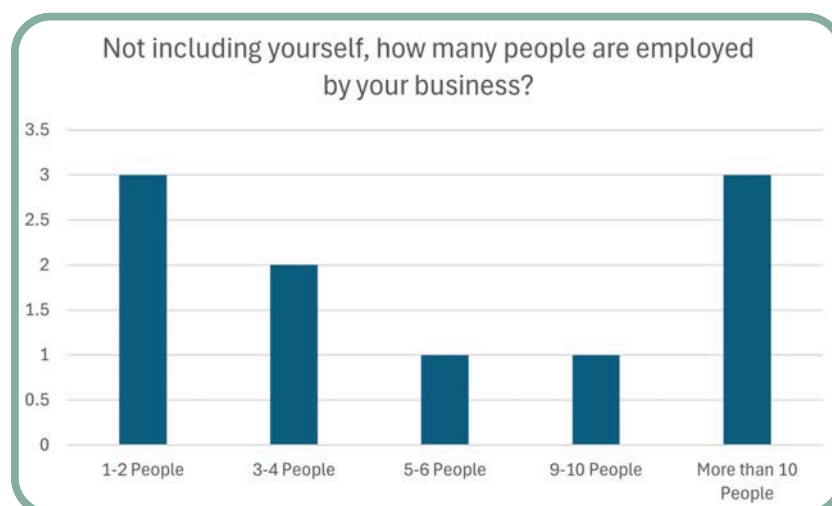


Figure 4.6. Amount of employed people per business.
Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Community Engagement Continued

Business Owner Question Results

Q5: When is your business the busiest? (Choose all that apply)

The surveyed businesses indicated that weekday afternoons, especially Thursday, were the busiest times for them. Fridays had consistent activity across all time frames. Evenings were the less commonly selected, excluding Friday. This highlights a potential increase in parking demand during weekday afternoons and Friday evenings.

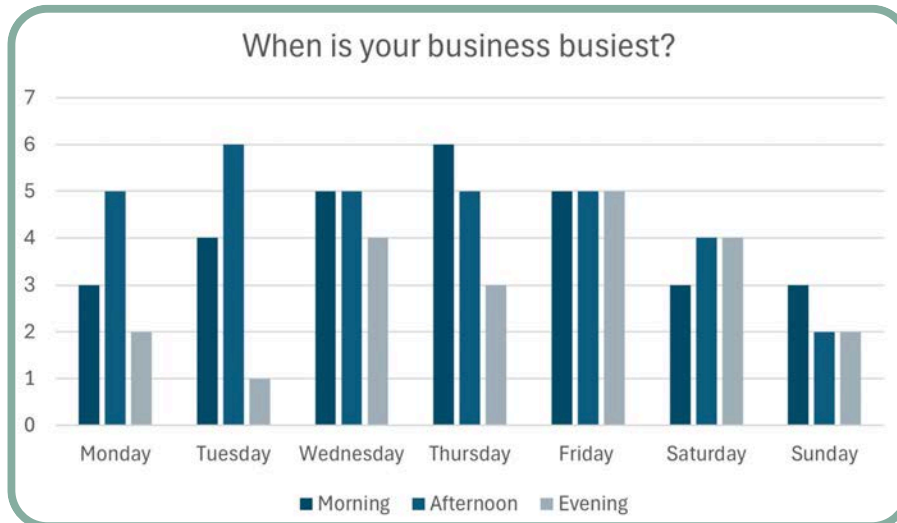


Figure 4.7. Amount of designated parking for each business respondent.

Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Q6: Do you believe your customers experience issues finding parking?

A large portion (60%) of business respondents indicated that customers probably or definitely experienced issues with finding parking before visiting their business. 30% of business owners were unsure if parking was an issue for their customers, while 10% of businesses indicated that customers had no issues finding parking. Given that most businesses either confirmed or suspected parking challenges for their customers, this response supports the broader concerns that parking availability may be impacting customers' access and experience, raising a flag for downtown businesses.



Figure 4.8. Business Perceptions of Customer Parking Issues.

Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Community Engagement Continued

Business Owner Question Results

Q7: Do you believe that the lack of parking has affected your business?

Most businesses (40%) indicated that the lack of parking has probably or definitely affected their business, with 30% being unsure and 30% indicating that their business has been affected. This varied response suggests that while parking is not a universally reported obstacle, a significant portion of businesses perceive it as having a negative impact, either directly or potentially.



Figure 4.9. Business Impact of Parking Availability.

Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Resident Question Results

This section captures the viewpoints of New Bern residents regarding the parking situation in the Historic Downtown area. Considering that both residents and visitors can contribute the most to the local downtown businesses, their experiences and opinions help establish a broader understanding of public sentiment. When asked question four regarding primary connection to downtown New Bern in the Introduction Question Section, 54.74% of respondents were directed towards these questions.

Q1. How far do you live from Downtown New Bern?

When asked this question, a majority of respondents, 67.12%, reported living more than 2 miles from Downtown New Bern. Only 20.5% live within a mile, and just 12.3% live directly downtown. The findings support the idea that many respondents rely upon driving, reinforcing the need for a well-managed and accessible parking throughout the downtown area.

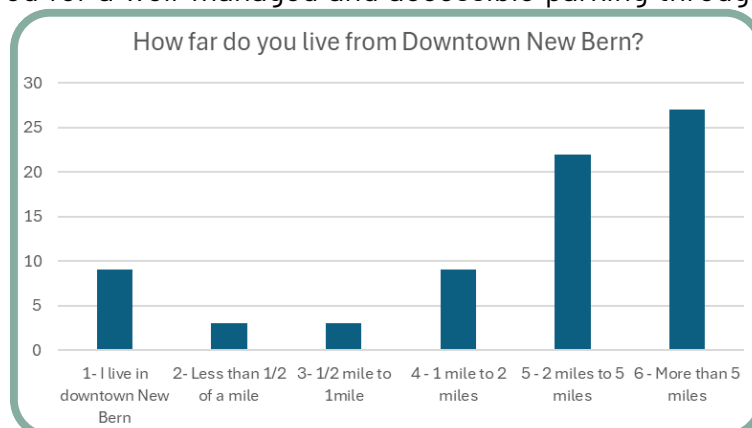


Figure 4.10. How far respondents live from Downtown New Bern, NC.

Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Community Engagement Continued

Resident Question Results

Q2. Do you have a designated parking area for your home?

Out of the 12.3% of respondents who live within Historic Downtown New Bern, 77.78% report having designated parking, while 22.22% do not. Due to their proximity, respondents' answers who live up to a mile away from the Historic Downtown Area were also analyzed. Among the 20.55% of respondents who live up to a mile away, 71.43% have designated parking, while 28.57% do not. This data suggests that while most residents in the downtown area have designated parking, those who do not must rely upon other ways to find parking, whether through on-street or the public lots.

Q3: How many designated parking spots do you have?

Out of the 77.78% of respondents who live within Historic Downtown New Bern and report having designated parking, the majority (37.5%) stated they have one designated parking spot. An additional 25% have two spots, 25% have three, and 12.5% have four. Out of the 20.55% of respondents who live up to a mile away from the Historic Downtown New Bern, none of the respondents reported how many designated spots they had. This data suggests that a majority of downtown residents have limited space, while others have access to multiple spots, potentially indicating private driveways or small lots within the downtown area.

Q4: How often do you travel to Downtown New Bern?

Out of 54.74% of resident respondents, 63.89% reported visiting Historic Downtown New Bern at least two to three times a week, with 9.72% reporting that they go many times in one day. Only 4.17% of residents go once a month. This distribution highlights that the historic downtown area is a regular destination for a large portion of the community, which supports the need for consistent and reliable parking availability to accommodate recurring trips for work, errands, or leisure.

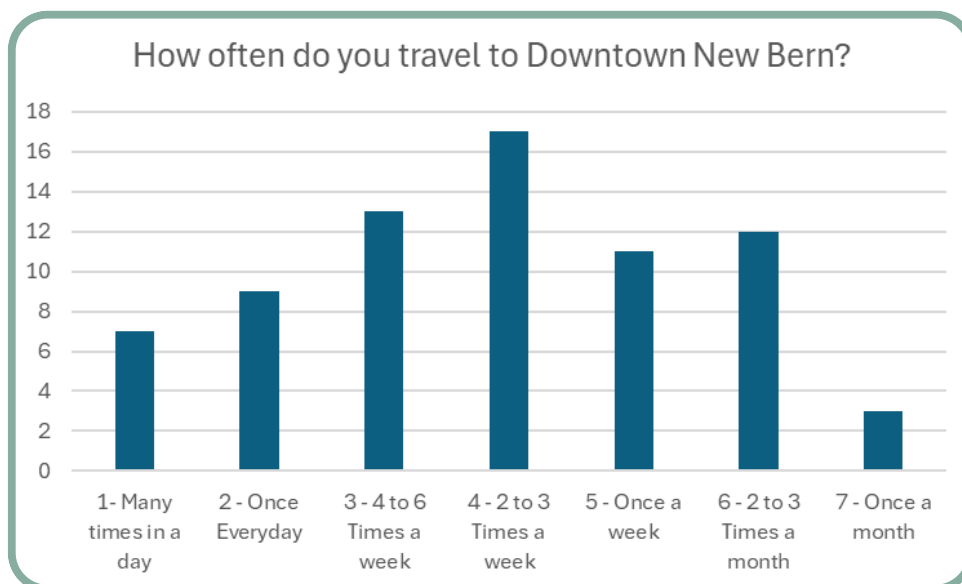


Figure 4.11. How often residents travel to Downtown New Bern, NC.

Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Community Engagement Continued

Resident Question Results

Q5: How much time do you usually spend in Downtown New Bern?

A majority (90%) of residents stay for more than an hour in Downtown New Bern. The largest share (40.28%) spend 1 to 2 hours, followed by 31.94% who spend 2 to 3 hours, and 18.06% who spend 3 hours or more. Only a small portion of visitors (under 10%) reported spending less than an hour downtown. Due to the longer stays from 50% of residents, this reinforces the necessity for the free no limit public bear lots.

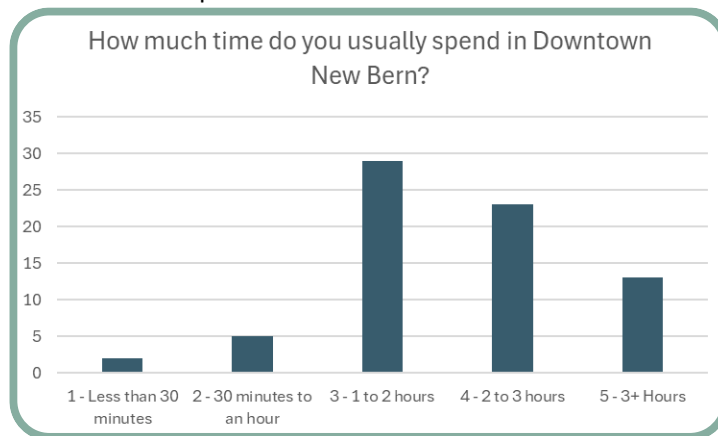


Figure 4.12. How much time residents spend in Downtown New Bern, NC.

Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Q6: When do you usually visit Downtown New Bern? (Choose all that apply.):

A lot of residents (55.34%) state that they usually visit Downtown New Bern during the weekdays (Monday through Friday), while 44.66% visit Downtown New Bern during the weekends (Saturday and Sunday). This suggests that weekday parking demand may be slightly higher, particularly when combined with work-related trips, errands, or appointments, although weekend traffic still represents a substantial portion of overall activity.

Q7: During what times of the day do you usually visit Downtown New Bern?

Out of the 71 responses collected, 46.48% of respondents stated that they usually visit Downtown New Bern in the afternoon, followed by 38.03% who visit during the evening. Only 15.49% of respondents said they typically visit in the morning. This trend shows peak parking demand occurring from the afternoon into the evening, overlapping with business hours, shopping, dining, or different events.

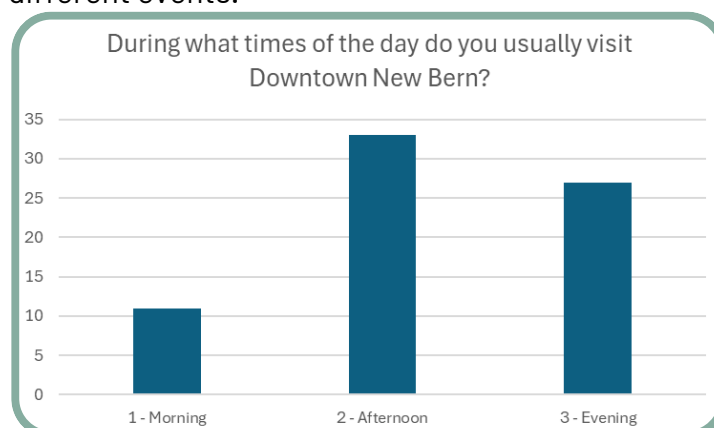


Figure 4.13. The times of day residents visit Downtown New Bern, NC.
Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Community Engagement Continued

Employee Question Results

This section covers the questions asked to employees who worked within the Historic Downtown Area. When asked question four regarding primary connection to downtown New Bern in the Introduction Question Section, 18.25% of respondents were directed towards these questions.

Q1. What time do you arrive at work?

Responses for this question varied, however, a majority of employees reported arriving between 7 AM and 10 AM, with a majority arriving between 9:00 and 9:59 AM. Four respondents said their arrival times vary, suggesting that they may either be part-time employees and/or have a flexible work schedule. These results may support designating long-term employee-specific parking areas to reduce overlap with visitor demand and manage parking space efficiently.

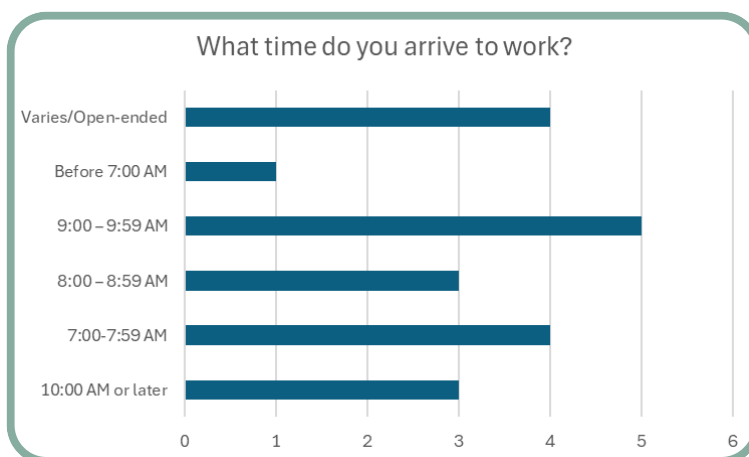


Figure 4.14. What time employees arrive to work in Downtown New Bern, NC.
Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Q2. How far away from your workplace do you park?

Out of 24 employee responses, the majority (58.33%) report that they park directly in their workplace parking lot. Another 33.33% park one block away, while only 8.34% park two or more blocks away. These results suggest that most employees in Historic Downtown New Bern have access to convenient parking; however, other employees park further out, which could be due to limited availability, restrictions, or preference.

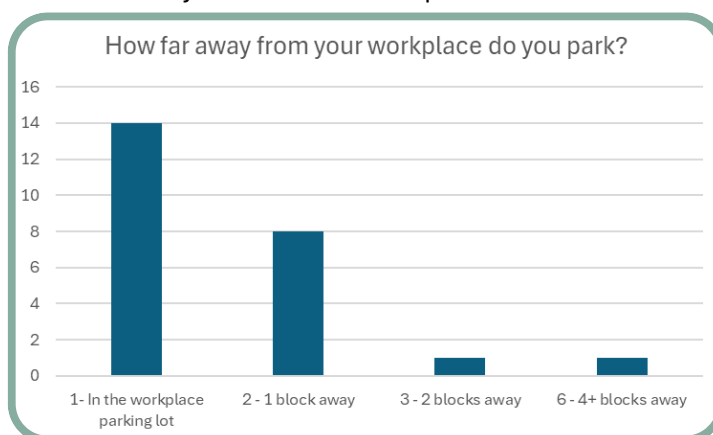


Figure 4.15. How far away employee's park from their work in Downtown New Bern, NC.
Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Community Engagement Continued

Visitor Question Results

This section covers the questions asked to visitors within the Historic Downtown Area. When asked question four regarding primary connection to downtown New Bern in the Introduction Question Section, 19.71% of respondents were directed towards these questions.

Q1. How often do you travel to Downtown New Bern?

Out of 24 visitor respondents, 78.48% of respondents report travelling to Downtown New Bern at least 2 to 3 times a week or more. This includes eight visitors who visit 4 to 6 times a week, seven who visit 2 to 3 times a week, and four who visit once a day. Only 3 visitors (12.5%) reported visiting once a week or less. These findings suggest that many visitors are regular downtown users, meaning that they are part of a consistent demand for parking in the area, that must be planned for.

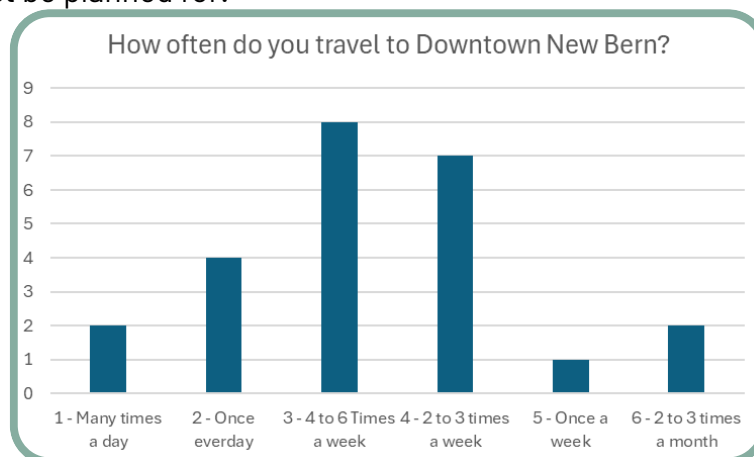


Figure 4.16. What time employees arrive to work in Downtown New Bern, NC.
Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Q2. Did you park in Downtown New Bern?

Out of the 24 visitors, 22 of them parked within the downtown area. This reinforces the finding noted previously, that visitor parking needs to be accounted for within the downtown area.

Parking Overview and Feedback Question Results

This section is to gather responses from all survey participants regarding the quality and availability of parking-related infrastructure in Downtown New Bern. This section also allows them to describe their likes and dislikes about parking in downtown New Bern through open-ended questions. These responses offer valuable insight into how the community perceives downtown parking, and the recommendations outlined in this report will use these results as a key reference point in shaping potential improvements.

Community Engagement Continued

Parking Overview and Feedback Question Results

Q1. What do you think of the quality and availability of the following downtown?

Respondents were asked to rate the quality and availability of several parking-related infrastructure within Downtown New Bern: Parking, Signage and directions to parking, Sidewalks, and Lighting. Overall, sidewalks and lighting received the most positive feedback, while parking and signage and directions to parking received more negative and neutral ratings, showing signs of mixed satisfaction. Below is a breakdown of the results:

- Parking: 24 respondents reported parking was “Good” or “Very Good”, 37 were neutral, and 41 respondents said it was “Poor” or “Extremely Poor”. This indicates a general dissatisfaction with both parking quality and/or availability.
- Signage and directions to parking: 30 respondents reported parking was “Good” or “Very Good”, 36 were neutral, and 36 respondents said it was “Poor” or “Extremely Poor”. This indicates that many people may struggle to locate parking or feel that the current signage is not helpful.
- Sidewalks: 71 respondents reported parking was “Good” or “Very Good”, 18 were neutral, and 9 respondents said it was “Poor” or “Extremely Poor”. This indicates that the sidewalks are well-maintained and generally approved by the public.
- Lighting: 62 respondents reported parking was “Good” or “Very Good”, 32 were neutral, and 6 respondents said it was “Poor” or “Extremely Poor”. This indicates suggest the community likes the current lighting quality and coverage.

In summary, while the City does provide parking signage and directions, along with public lots, the respondents indicate that they could be improved to enhance the quality, quantity, and visibility of parking infrastructure in downtown New Bern, enhancing the quality of the downtown experience.

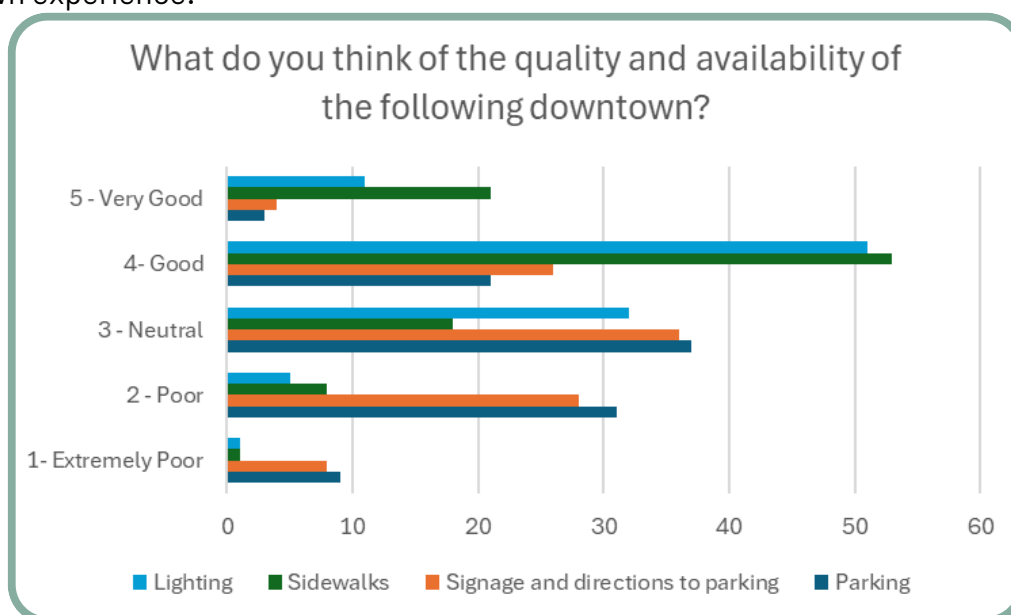


Figure 4.17. Respondent ratings on the quality and availability of downtown parking-related infrastructure in Downtown New Bern, NC.

Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Community Engagement Continued

Parking Overview and Feedback Question Results

Q2. Would you support changes to downtown parking policies if they improved availability and ease of use?

Out of 100 respondents, 50% stated that they would support changes to the downtown parking policies if it meant improving availability and ease of use. An additional 38% said “maybe”, and 4% said no. This indicated that with proper public engagement and education, parking policy adjustments could have a strong level of public willingness.

Q3. Which of the following parking strategies would you support? (Select all that Apply.):

This question asked respondents to select which parking strategies they would be willing to support to improve the availability and ease of parking in Downtown New Bern. These responses provide insight into the types of solutions that are most accepted by the community. The most supported strategies included:

- More public parking lots (26.40%)
- Improved signage directing people to available parking (21.20%)
- Off-site parking with walkable access (17.20%)
- All-day parking passes for employees and owners (12%)
- More private lots for downtown employees (10.40%)

Other strategies offered, such as paid parking in high-demand areas (3.6%) and paid parking on streets to fund more free parking infrastructure (3.6%), suggest a strong dislike for paid parking and massive public support for increasing free public lots. Of the 14 respondents that selected other, several responses emphasized strong opposition to paid parking, and some wanted to increase the on-street parking time limits to three hours. Others offered alternative ideas such as 15-minute parking spaces, constructing a parking garage, implementing electric vehicle charging stations, better public transportation, converting Middle Street to a one-way with angled parking for better traffic flow, and dedicated owner and employee parking. These responses reflect a broader desire for practical solutions, with a clear preference for preserving free parking options.

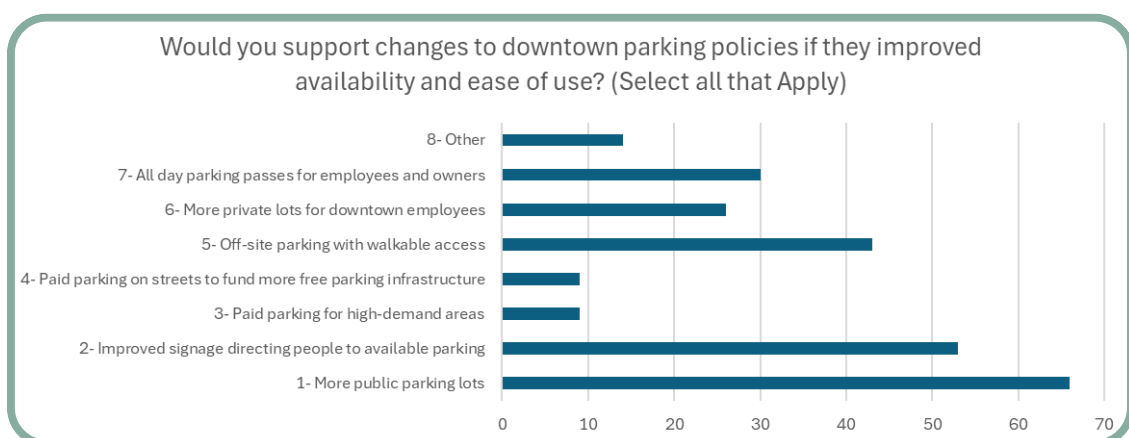


Figure 4.18. Public support for potential downtown parking strategies in Downtown New Bern, NC.
Source: Author's survey results (2025).

Community Engagement Continued

Parking Overview and Feedback Question Results

Q4. What are your biggest frustrations with parking in downtown New Bern?

This open-ended question allowed respondents to express their frustrations with parking in downtown in Historic Downtown New Bern. Though there was a variety of answers, they will be organized into different themes that were commonly expressed. Each frustration is summarized below, along with the number of respondents who shared similar feedback. This organization helps to highlight the most frequently mentioned issues and aids with the development of targeted recommendations. The key frustrations are listed below:

- Two-hour parking, mentioned by 18 respondents.
 - Widely seen as too restrictive, especially for dining, shopping, or attending events.
 - Business owners, employees, and visitors described the limit as stressful or inconvenient.
 - Suggestions from respondents include increasing the time limit to 3 hours to allow for more flexibility.
- Difficulty finding parking, mentioned by 12 respondents.
 - Many respondents noted challenges finding parking during lunch, weekends, festivals, or when the farmers market is open.
- Parallel Parking & Tight Spaces, mentioned by 15 respondents.
 - Several respondents reported discomfort or inability to parallel park.
 - Concerns were raised about the tightness of spaces, poor visibility, and safety near crosswalks and corners.
 - Suggestions included angled parking and removing some spaces near intersections for safety.
- Paid Parking & Underused Paid Lots, mentioned by 9 respondents.
 - Many expressed frustration with the introduction of paid parking, especially in the Pollock Street lot, which now sits underused.
 - Some questioned why parking near government buildings would require payment.
 - A few noted that paid parking might discourage people from visiting downtown.
- Lack of Clear Signage, mentioned by 4 respondents.
 - Respondents said it was difficult to tell which lots were public or free.
 - Several called for improved wayfinding, better street signage, and overhead markers for lots and directions.
- Employee & Business Owner Parking, mentioned by 5 respondents.
 - Concerns about employees using prime spaces due to lack of designated areas.
 - Business owners mentioned challenges with loading/unloading, enforcement during maintenance, and inflexible permits.
 - One respondent proposed a new "Small Business Maintenance" permit system with more flexible timing.

Community Engagement Continued

Parking Overview and Feedback Question Results

- Event Parking & Lot Closures, mentioned by 6 respondents.
 - People had frustrations with the lack of parking during special events.
 - People mentioned that all available parking should be available during events.
- ADA & Accessibility Concerns, mentioned by 3 respondents.
 - People have issues with the lack of handicapped and accessible parking.
 - Sidewalk ADA improvements were also mentioned.
- Other Suggestions & Concerns, 14 respondents with mixed but notable themes.
 - Requests for a parking garage or deck (mentioned by several respondents).
 - Calls for 15–30-minute short-term spaces for quick errands.
 - Ideas for angling parking and making Middle Street one-way.
 - Suggestions to enhance public transportation access.
 - A few respondents expressed no major frustrations, though some cautioned against changes like building a parking deck.

Overall, the open-ended responses reveal that many of the frustrations expressed by the public stem from a desire for more flexibility, clarity, and accessibility in the Historic Downtown of New Bern. Common concerns, such as the 2-hour limits, difficulty parking, and discomfort with the tight parallel parking, point to specific and addressable issues. The frustrations from the public will be used as a guide for the recommendations presented later in this report. The goal of this report is to recommend ways to create a parking system that is more user-friendly and aligned with the needs of those who live, work, and visit Historic Downtown New Bern.

Q5. What do you like most about the parking in downtown New Bern?

This open-ended question allowed respondents to highlight what they like most about the parking in Downtown New Bern. While some shared neutral or critical feedback, many responses identified recurring strengths in free parking, proximity to destinations, walkability, and overall accessibility. These themes are summarized below:

- Free Parking, mentioned by 15 respondents.
 - Most respondents praised the free parking in the downtown area for both on-street parking and the public lots.
 - A few noted that they avoid the paid lots in favor of the free options.
- Proximity and Convenience, mentioned by 14 respondents.
 - Several noted that parking is often close to where they need to go.
 - Some also appreciated that even if they are not able to find a spot near their destination, it is usually a short walk away.

Community Engagement Continued

Parking Overview and Feedback Question Results

- Accessibility and functionality, mentioned by 10 respondents.
 - Some respondents appreciated that parking downtown felt safe and convenient.
 - People also appreciated the unlimited time in evenings and weekends.
- Walkability and Sidewalk Experience, mentioned by 8 respondents.
 - Respondents shared that parking farther out is not a problem due to the enjoyability of walking around downtown.
 - Several highlighted how walking around helped them discover new businesses and enjoy the atmosphere.
 - The sidewalk conditions and scenic surroundings were noted as contributing to a positive walking experience.
- Appearance of Downtown New Bern, mentioned by 2 respondents.
 - People also appreciated the beauty of the downtown area.
- Neutral or mixed Feedback, with 10 comments.
 - A few people had nothing positive to say about the parking experience.
 - A couple of respondents vented their frustrations with the lack of parking or noted that parking is a hit or miss.

Overall, respondents reflect that many people value the convenience and cost-effectiveness of parking in Downtown New Bern. The availability of free parking stood out as the most appreciated feature, followed by the general proximity and convenience to downtown businesses. Respondents also made sure to express their appreciation of the walking experience and beauty in downtown. While some individuals offered neutral or mixed feedback, the majority of comments highlighted elements that can be preserved and enhanced in future planning efforts.

Important Note

This survey contained additional questions asking residents and visitors where they parked, with an option to click up to five points on an provided map. Due to issues with the survey system, these questions encountered an error, rendering results void. While this was a setback, and valuable information was lost, the remaining results provide enough feedback and guidance for recommendations.

Light Observational Study

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, a light observational analysis was conducted to assess parking occupancy in key areas of Downtown New Bern. The observations took place on Tuesday, April 8th, and Saturday, April 12th, each beginning around 12:30 PM, with a second count conducted approximately two hours later.

The purpose of the study was to count the number of parked vehicles at each location during both observation times, to identify general changes in occupancy rates over time, along with comparing weekday and weekend occupancy. While this observational analysis did not track vehicle turnover, it provides a general snapshot of how parking demand may vary by time of day and day of the week.

The locations observed included a mix of parking lots and public streets, which are commonly used by residents, visitors, and employees.

Street segments observed included:

- Broad Street: from the intersection of East Front Street
- Craven Street: from the waterfront to the intersection of Broad Street
- Middle Street: from the waterfront to the intersection of Broad Street
- South Front Street: from the intersection of East Front Street to the intersection of Metcalf Street
- Pollock Street: from the intersection of Hancock Street to the waterfront

The parking lots that were observed included the Gold Bear Lot, Red Bear Lot, Black Bear Lot, Pollock & Craven Lot, Craven Street Lot, District Attorney's Lot, Craven County Business & Office Lot, the NC History Center's main and overflow lots, and Union Park.

Shown below is the map shown earlier within the Parking Inventory section; this map was used as a guide to determine where the observations were done.



Figure 4.19. Parking Map of Downtown New Bern, NC.

Source: Swiss Bear, Inc. (n.d.). Downtown New Bern. <https://downtownnewbern.com/parking/>

Light Observational Study Continued

Key Findings on Tuesday, April 8th:

The following findings were found during the observational study on Tuesday, April 8th:

- On-street parking is heavily utilized, particularly in retail corridors like Middle and Pollock Streets. Middle Street (83.50%), Pollock Street (80.49%), and Craven Street (74.14%) were the busiest streets, however, South Front Street remained well below 25% occupancy.
- Some public lots remain underused, possibly due to signage, awareness, or perceived distance. The Gold Lot had an average occupancy of 20.83%, the Red Bear Lot had an average occupancy of 56.94%, and the Black Bear Lot had an average occupancy of 38.39%.
- NC History Center Main Lot had the highest occupancy at 87.12%, though it dropped later to 20.93%. This was mostly due to an event being held at the center, as there were multiple buses in the lots.
- Occupancy drops in the afternoon, possibly reflecting lunch crowds leaving, or short-term visits.

Listed Below is a table showcasing the total number of spaces for each street/lot, and the occupancy rates during each period, along with the average occupancy.

Street/Lot	# Spaces	P1 Vehicles	P1 Occupancy	P2 Vehicles	P2 Occupancy	Average Occupancy
Black Bear lot	56	29	51.79%	14	25.00%	38.39%
Gold bear lot	48	10	20.83%	10	20.83%	20.83%
Red bear Lot	72	43	59.72%	39	54.17%	56.94%
District Attorneys Office lot	39	21	53.85%	15	38.46%	46.15%
Craven County Business and Office Lot	107	52	48.60%	46	42.99%	45.79%
Middle Street	103	86	83.50%	56	54.37%	68.93%
Craven Street	58	43	74.14%	35	60.34%	67.24%
Pollock Street	82	66	80.49%	37	45.12%	62.80%
South Front Street	97	22	22.68%	21	21.65%	22.16%
NC History Center Overflow	56	22	39.29%	16	28.57%	33.93%
NC History Main Lot	86	75	87.21%	18	20.93%	54.07%
Craven Street City Parking Lot	44	28	63.64%	24	54.55%	59.09%
Pollock Street Lot	50	26	52.00%	28	56.00%	54.00%
Union park	109	39	35.78%	45	41.28%	38.53%
Broad street	63	45	71.43%	29	46.03%	58.73%

Figure 4.20. Parking Occupancy Rates in Downtown in New Bern, NC on Tuesday, April 8th.

Source: Authors Observational Notes.

Light Observational Study Continued

Key Findings on Saturday, April 12th:

The following findings were found during the observational study on Tuesday, April 8th:

- On-street parking was near or at capacity in retail corridors. Middle Street (95.63% average occupancy), Craven Street (92.24%), and Pollock Street (90.24%), experienced high levels of use, reinforcing their role as high-demand areas for parking to access the downtown area.
- During the weekend, South Front Street was a lot more heavily used, averaging 70.62% occupancy.
- The public lots, Gold Bear (4.17%) and Black Bear (10.71%), were severely underutilized, while Red Bear (35.42%) experienced moderate occupancy. However, one thing to note is that when the farmers market is open, which it was from 8 AM to 2 PM, the gold bear lot is closed for public use.
- In most parking locations, occupancy between both periods stayed relatively the same. This indicates that weekends are busy, and people tend to stay and enjoy their time a lot longer since time limits are not enforced.

Listed below is a table showcasing the total number of spaces for each street/lot and the occupancy rates during each period, along with the average occupancy.

Street/Lot	# Spaces	# Vehicles	Occupancy	# Vehicles	Occupancy	Average Occupancy
Black Bear lot	56	8	14.29%	4	7.14%	10.71%
District Attorneys Office lot	39	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Craven County Business and Office Lot	107	3	2.80%	4	3.74%	3.27%
Middle Street	103	102	99.03%	95	92.23%	95.63%
Craven Street	58	53	91.38%	54	93.10%	92.24%
Pollock Street	82	75	91.46%	73	89.02%	90.24%
South Front Street	97	76	78.35%	61	62.89%	70.62%
NC History Center Overflow	56	15	26.79%	10	17.86%	22.32%
NC History Main Lot	86	77	89.53%	48	55.81%	72.67%
Gold bear lot	48	N/A	N/A	2	4.17%	4.17%
Red bear Lot	72	25	34.72%	26	36.11%	35.42%
Craven Street City Parking Lot	44	34	77.27%	26	59.09%	68.18%
Pollock Street Lot	50	22	44.00%	17	34.00%	39.00%
Union park	109	39	35.78%	63	57.80%	46.79%
Broad street	63	26	41.27%	19	30.16%	35.71%

Figure 4.21. Parking Occupancy Rates in Downtown New Bern, NC on Saturday, April 12th.

Source: Authors Observational Notes.

Community Engagement and Observation: Key Takeways

Community engagement and light observations of current parking occupancy served as a critical component in understanding the parking challenges in Historic Downtown New Bern. A 138-response online survey gathered perspectives from residents, business owners, employees, and visitors, while a light observation study –conducted on a Tuesday, and a Saturday– helped examined parking usage over a period of time. Together, these efforts offered a well-rounded view of the public's perception of downtown parking, along with actual parking behavior.

The survey revealed that most respondents rely on driving (over 94%) to access the downtown area for work, or the most common reason, shopping and/or dining, with a strong demand for on-street parking. While many respondents found parking to be neither easy nor difficult, a notable share described it as somewhat or very difficult, suggesting mixed experiences based on time or location. Although many people indicate a willingness to walk a short distance from their vehicles, the results show that parking in the lots is not preferred by many, potentially due to visibility and awareness concern.

The open-ended questions from the survey allowed residents to express their likes and dislikes with the current parking system. Common concerns included restrictive parking limits, difficult finding parking, issues with parallel parking and the tight spaces, and the frustration with the paid parking lot on Craven and Pollock Street. At the same time, the community expressed gratitude for the free parking downtown, the proximity and convenience of current parking, and the accessibility and functionality.

Observations conducted during Tuesday and Saturday periods revealed a common trend: while on-street parking spaces near retail corridors were heavily used, public bear lots were largely underutilized by comparison. These patterns reinforce the idea of the lack of awareness of these lots, and a disconnect between the lots and the downtown area, raise concerns of accessibility, visibility, and comfort.

Together, the survey and observations revealed that the current parking system is useable, but the usage is uneven. It highlights that while many people can find spaces, the experience can be confusing, inconsistent, or discomforting. The insights from the observational study and survey highlight immediate opportunities for improvements, such as signage upgrades, accessibility, and the need to overlook at some parking spaces due to their tightness and safety concerns. Moving forward, these findings will be used to guide recommendations for the city to improve their parking infrastructure while aligning it with the community's needs and expectations.



Section 5:

Benchmark Cities

Benchmark Cities

The City of New Bern uses three cities that closely relate to its own for comparison, these are called benchmark cities. The three benchmark cities identified by New Bern include the Town of Beaufort, NC, the Town of Washington, NC, and the City of Greenville, NC. This section of the report will explain different parking-related items from each benchmark city, such as parking regulations, transportation, parking inventory, parking limits, permits, and fees, as well as their historic guidelines. After each section, a brief comparison to New Bern is included to illustrate key differences and identify possible opportunities for improvements.

Town of Beaufort

The Town of Beaufort is located in Carteret County, North Carolina, and serves as the county seat. With a population of approximately 4,616 residents, Beaufort (not to be confused with Beaufort, South Carolina) is a historic coastal town. Established in 1713 and incorporated in 1723, it is the fourth oldest town in North Carolina—following Bath, New Bern, and Edenton (Wikipedia Contributors, 2025).



Figure 5.1. Aerial view of Downtown Beaufort, NC.

Source: Medlin, E. (2023, June 29). Beaufort's quiet but rich history has become its big draw. *Coastal Review*.
<https://coastalreview.org/2023/06/beauforts-quiet-but-rich-history-has-become-its-big-draw/>

Parking Regulations

In Section 13(B)(1) of Beaufort's Land Ordinance, all developments in zoning districts except the Historic Business District and the Historic Waterfront Business District (H-BD & H-WBD) are required to provide a sufficient number of parking spaces to accommodate the number of vehicles. For any mixed-use development created after the adoption of their ordinance which cannot meet the residential off-street parking requirements, the owner or developer must contribute \$10,000 per parking space needed into a parking fund. The fund will be used by the town to acquire property for more parking (Town of Beaufort, n.d., Section 13(B)(1)).

In comparison, New Bern's Historic Downtown Exempt Area does not require off-street parking for most new developments (City of New Bern, n.d.-c). This parking fee model could allow New Bern to replace or combine its exemption policy with a model that puts money into potential future parking projects. However, this system may have pushback from potential developers and businesses.

Town of Beaufort Continued

Transportation

Currently, the Town of Beaufort does not offer a local public transportation system for residents or visitors. However, Carteret County Area Transportation System (CCATS) provides a county-wide public transit service, which includes Beaufort. CCATS operates on a reservation-based system, requiring users to schedule rides in advance, which can limit spontaneous local travel and may present challenges for residents or visitors without access to private vehicles (Carteret County Area Transportation System, 2024).

In comparison, New Bern is served by Craven Area Rural Transit System (CARTS), which offers the same reservation-based services but also a fixed-route system through the Omnibus. The Omnibus operates on set schedules and includes stops, though limited, in downtown New Bern, making it more accessible for spontaneous travel (Craven County Government, n.d.-b). However, the lack of public knowledge of this system, along with the lack of a transit system throughout the New Bern area itself, can be confusing and frustrating for visitors, and the community to use. These issues highlight a need for improved public outreach and expanded service.



Figure 5.2. Photo of CCATS Bus.

Source: Weston, A. (2020, May 4). *ENC transportation system resumes taking appointments for trips*. WCTI12. <https://wcti12.com/news/local/enc-transportation-system-resumes-taking-appointments-for-trips>

Parking Inventory

Beaufort provides surface parking throughout the downtown and waterfront areas, however, there is currently no online parking map available to showcase the location or total number of public parking lots. According to their website, parking is divided between premium waterfront lots and other public spaces, with fees enforced during the seasonal period (Town of Beaufort, n.d.-a). Most parking in the historic and waterfront business districts is on-street or within small public lots. Beaufort also offers several permit options for both short-term and long-term parking needs, which can be inferred from the permit application, is only open to Beaufort residents (Town of Beaufort, n.d.-b).

In comparison, New Bern also primarily relies on surface and on-street parking downtown, but unlike Beaufort, they provide a GIS-based public parking map that helps visualize parking locations, however it does not take into account which parking spot it taken or not (City of New Bern, n.d.-b). This is a small but meaningful advantage in terms of accessibility and transparency.

Town of Beaufort Continued

Parking Limits, Permits, and Fees

Beaufort operates a seasonal paid parking program, enforced annually from May 15 to October 31, between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM. This information is found on their website. Listed below are the parking charges, penalties, and their available permit parking.

Parking Rates (Town of Beaufort, n.d.-a):

- Premium Waterfront (Front Street East & West Lots): \$3.00/hour
- All Other Spaces: \$1.50/hour

Violations and Penalties:

- Overtime/Improper Parking Violation: \$50
- Handicap Parking Violation: \$100
- Late Payment Fee (after 30 days): \$30

Permit Options:

- Weekly Pass: \$25
- Monthly Pass: \$100
- Seasonal Pass: \$200
- Waterfront Business District (WBD) Resident Premium Pass: \$800
 - Not subject to time limits or premium lot restrictions
 - Only available to WBD residents

All passes are subject to specific lot restrictions and time limitations, except at designated locations such as the Queen/Craven Street lots.

In comparison, New Bern enforces free two-hour on-street parking during weekdays but does not currently charge for most public parking, except the Pollock lot. Unlike Beaufort's seasonal paid model and structured permit system, New Bern's approach is more lenient. Introducing seasonal fees or expanded permit options could offer New Bern a way to manage demand and fund future parking improvements while maintaining priority for residents if they choose to partake.



Figure 5.3. Parking Newsletter Image from the Town of Beaufort.

Source: Source: Town of Beaufort. (n.d.-c). Parking [Image].

https://www.beaufortnc.org/sites/g/files/vyhlif13736/files/styles/full_node_primary/public/media/parking/image/10461/news_letter_beaufort.jpg

Town of Beaufort Continued

Historic Guidelines

Beaufort's Historic Guidelines emphasize that parking lots and driveways must be carefully integrated into the historic context to avoid detracting from the district's architectural and landscape character. Some of their key elements include (Town of Beaufort, n.d.-d):

Driveway and Off-Street Parking Placement:

- 8.5.1. Locate new parking lots and driveways in the historic district as unobtrusively as possible. Parking lots consisting of large expanses of concrete or asphalt with little planting or other screening are not appropriate.
- 8.5.3. Site new parking areas in interior or rear lot locations where possible.
- 8.5.4. Avoid removing trees and other landscape elements that contribute to the historic character of a site.
- 8.5.6. Incorporate existing mature trees into new parking areas. Avoid the placement of impervious surface materials such as asphalt and concrete in areas below the canopy crown of the tree. Use turf stone, gravel, marl, or other pervious materials in these areas.
- 8.5.7. Use paving materials that were traditionally used on surface parking areas and driveways on the surrounding block or street. Gravel, marl, crushed shells, asphalt, and concrete are typical parking lot treatments, while grass, gravel or concrete runners with a grassy median, brick, and marl are typical driveway treatments. Use bricks, stone, or metal to contain loose paving materials. Landscaping timbers, railroad ties, and concrete or plastic edging are not allowed.

Parking Lot Screening:

- 8.5.2. Proposals for new parking lots or off-street parking areas should be accompanied by scaled site plans, including all proposed landscape and ground cover changes and information on proposed lighting types, placement, and intensity.
- 8.5.5. Integrate pedestrian scale lighting into parking areas to avoid excessive glare and illumination to adjoining properties. See EXTERIOR LIGHTING guidelines and the Beaufort Zoning Ordinance for further details on lighting standards.

Overall, Beaufort's guidelines prioritize minimizing visual impacts that come from parking while also preserving the natural vegetation, and the historic feel. Their restrictions feel more restrictive than New Bern's.

In comparison, New Bern's Historic Guidelines Parking section is less descriptive and restrictive than Beaufort's when it comes to surface coverage, lighting and vegetation. While Beaufort's guidelines offer stronger historical protections, they may also make it more difficult to expand or introduce new off-site parking within the historic district. For New Bern, adopting stricter design standards like Beaufort's could enhance preservation goals but may also limit opportunities to address the downtown parking demand.

Town of Washington

Located in Beaufort County along the northern bank of the Pamlico River, Washington was established in 1776 on land donated by Colonel James Bonner. Notably, it holds the distinction of being the first city in the United States named after George Washington, the nation's first president (Wikipedia contributors, 2025a). As of 2023, Washington, North Carolina, has a population of around 9,683 residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023c).



Figure 5.4. Photo of Downtown Washington, NC.

Source: Business North Carolina. (2022, April 4). Washington builds on its river front. <https://businessnc.com/washington-builds-on-its-river-front/>

Parking Regulations

In Little Washington, the B1H Historic Business District, which covers a large portion of their historic downtown core, has a no off-street parking requirement that are imposed on only nonresidential land uses, allowing flexibility for historic preservation and infill development. Historic residential areas, however, are still required to follow the listed parking requirements, including (City of Washington, n.d.-a):

- 0–1-bedroom units: 1.50 spaces per unit
- 2-bedroom units: 1.75 spaces per unit
- 3+ bedroom units: 2.50 spaces per unit

These requirements allow businesses within the downtown area to prioritize denser development and walkability, while balancing the parking need for residential uses.

In comparison, New Bern exempts almost all land uses, including residential and commercial within its Historic Downtown Exempt Area from off-street parking requirements. Washington's approach balances commercial in-fill and development with set residential parking standards, supporting both preservation and functionality. New Bern could consider this approach if future residential development increases demand for parking.

Town of Washington Continued

Transportation

The Town of Washington nor their county offers a public transportation system for local residents or visitors. There is no active transit infrastructure such as shuttles, circulators, or fixed-route services within the town. Local travel is primarily dependent on private vehicles, with limited walkability infrastructure in certain areas.

In comparison, New Bern is also limited in terms of transit options but is served by CARTS, a reservation-based system and fixed-route system that offers alternative travel. Washington lacks a similar service, leaving residents with fewer mobility options if they do not drive.

Parking Inventory

Washington provides on-street parking and small public lots throughout its downtown and adjacent residential areas. However, the town does not offer an online parking map, and there is no centralized source showing the locations or availability of public parking facilities. Parking in the historic business district (B1H) is largely comprised of timed, and free on-street spaces (City of Washington, n.d.-b). There are no paid parking facilities or parking garages currently available within the town.

In comparison, New Bern provides both free timed spaces and public and some paid long-term lots, along with a basic GIS-based parking map to guide users. Washington's lack of digital tools and structured facilities may make it more difficult for visitors or residents to navigate parking, though their overall demand may be lower.

Parking Limits, Permits, and Fees

Washington manages its parking system through a variety of time-based regulations found in the ordinance Section 18-123 but does not charge for parking. Time limits vary by zone and are enforced throughout much of the downtown (City of Washington, n.d.-b).

Time-Restricted Parking Zones Include:

- 15-minute parking areas
- One-hour, two-hour, and three-hour zones (8:00 AM – 6:00 PM, excluding Sundays and public holidays)
- Prohibited parking during designated weekday hours in specific locations
- Overnight Parking: Parking for over 48 hours is prohibited

In comparison, New Bern also enforces weekday time limits on free downtown parking, including two-hour limits on many on-street spaces. New Bern's parking limits are more uniform; however, the blanket approach may make some areas fill up faster. If New Bern wanted to implement this approach, they can have higher turnover spots for visitors or residents who desire to get in and out quickly.

Town of Washington Continued

Historic Guidelines

Washington's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) design standards emphasize minimizing the visual impact of parking, maintaining walkability, and preserving the district's historic development pattern. Some of their key elements include (City of Washington, 2021):

Driveway and Off-Street Parking Placement:

- 4.3.2. On-site parking within commercial areas shall be to the side or rear of the structure. Front yards, in particular, should be used for building area to create a continuous street wall consistent with the historic development of the commercial district.
- 4.3.3. Parking in residential areas should be to the rear of the structure whenever possible. Parking in front yards is not permitted.
- 4.3.9. New parking lots in downtown commercial areas shall use buffer strips, shrubbery, iron fencing, etc., along its perimeter to create a strong edge between the pedestrian sidewalk and parking areas.
- 4.3.8. The design of deck parking should be appropriate to the district in size, scale, proportion and materials and should comply with the standards for new construction.
- 4.3.12. Circular drives in front yards are not permitted.
- 4.3.13. Double width drives that are visible from the public right-of-way are not permitted.
- 4.3.14. Curb-cuts must be located in accordance with City Code and shall be kept to the smallest openings that are functional.
- 4.3.15. New driveways should be designed to minimize any impact to the landscape, building, and historic curbing.

Parking Lot Screening:

- 4.3.1. Parking lots, driveways and sidewalks shall comply with City Code requirements for size and landscaping elements as well as site grading.
- 4.3.4. Large expanses of parking are not allowed. Parking shall be adequately landscaped with buffers and vegetative islands. Pedestrian access and crossings shall be clearly designated in parking areas.
- 4.3.5. Parking shall be screened from the right-of-way whenever possible. Vegetative buffer strips, fencing, low-masonry walls, etc., shall be utilized to minimize the visual impact of parking and vehicles.

Walkway Standards:

- 4.3.16–4.3.20 – Guidelines for preserving historic walkways and connecting sidewalks and walkways between parking and buildings.

Town of Washington Continued

Historic Guidelines

Paving and Materials Standards:

- 4.3.6. Commercial parking areas shall be surfaced with suitable materials such as asphalt, concrete, brick, etc. Gravel, crushed stone, or other loose material including unpaved lots are prohibited in commercial areas.
- 4.3.7. Residential parking areas shall be surfaced with appropriate materials such as brick, concrete, asphalt, crushed stone, crushed and compacted oyster shells, or gravel (with edging materials).
- 4.3.10. Driveways on residential properties within the Historic District shall be composed of either concrete, brick, asphalt, crushed stone, or compacted and crushed oyster shells. Loose material is prohibited in commercial areas.
- 4.3.11. When loose material is used for driveways or parking, the perimeter of such shall be clearly defined by an edging material.

In comparison, New Bern is less restrictive than Washington in terms of driveway placement, materials, and design regulations. Washington prohibits front yard and circular driveways, requires rear access, and sets standards for materials, screening, and pedestrian experience. These detailed guidelines create significant challenges for adding new parking where lot size or access may be limited in the historic district. Washington's model reinforces strong preservation goals, but it may not offer a practical solution for New Bern if the primary concern is increasing parking availability.

City of Greenville

Serving as the county seat, Greenville is the central city of the Greenville, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area and functions as a major healthcare, entertainment, and educational hub for the state's Tidewater and Coastal Plain regions. Greenville is the largest city in Pitt County and the 12th-most populous city in North Carolina (Wikipedia contributors, 2025b) As of 2023, the City of Greenville has a population of approximately 90,053 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023d). This section will cover the current parking information for the City of Greenville as of April 2025.



Figure 5.5. Photo of Downtown Greenville, NC.

Source: Visit Greenville, NC. (n.d.). Downtown Greenville restaurants.

<https://www.visitgreenvillenc.com/restaurants/downtown-greenville/>

Parking Regulations

According to Section 9-4-243(A) of Greenville's Code of Ordinances, nonresidential land uses within the CD (Downtown Commercial) District are exempt from the city's off-street parking requirements (City of Greenville, n.d.-a) This means that commercial uses in the downtown core are not required to provide on-site parking. Residential uses, however, have to follow the minimum requirements as listed in Section 9-4-153(E), one-half space per bedroom (City of Greenville, n.d.-b).

In comparison, New Bern exempts most land uses, including Residential and Commercial, within its Historic Downtown Exempt Area from off-street parking requirements. While Greenville's exemption is more limited in scope, it still reduces parking obligations for commercial development. New Bern's broader exemption provides greater flexibility but could also lead to higher parking demand for residential uses. This model was also seen within the Town of Washington, NC.

City of Greenville Continued

Transportation

Greenville is served by three primary transportation services: Greenville Area Transit (GREAT), the Pitt Area Transit System (PATS), and ECU Transit. Each system serves a distinct population and provides varying levels of access to the downtown area.

Greenville Area Transit (GREAT) is the city's public bus system, operating Monday through Friday from 7:25 a.m. to 5:15 p.m, offering no service on weekends or major holidays. The system includes a mobile app and website with real-time tracking, route information, and estimated arrival times. Two stops are located near downtown but not near public parking facilities. All routes meet at a central point at the Butterfield Transit Center, which is near the downtown core. As mentioned GREAT does not provide direct service to key downtown destinations or public parking areas, and headways are around one hour, which limits frequency and overall convenience (City of Greenville, n.d.-c).

Pitt Area Transit System (PATS) is a reservation-based service primarily used by residents living outside the city limits. It is intended for essential travel such as medical appointments. The riders must schedule trips at least one day in advance during office hours, which are limited to Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Fares are 9\$ for one-way service and 18\$ for a round trip, payable by cash or check only (Pitt County Government, n.d.). Due to scheduling limitations limited office-hours, and limited-service area, PATS is not available as a viable option to get around Downtown or different parking area.

ECU Transit, while primarily serving East Carolina University students, is technically open to all Greenville residents, however most residents do not know this. Fixed routes serve the campus and extend to student housing, a few shopping centers, and other activity areas. An evening on-demand service provides additional coverage after regular bus service ends. While ECU Transit includes real-time bus tracking, it only stops at ECU-approved locations, which limits its usefulness for downtown connectivity (East Carolina University, n.d.).

In comparison, New Bern does not have the level or variety of transit systems as Greenville. Greenville benefits from multiple services that cover different populations, although none of them offer fast or direct service into the downtown core. Both cities lack strong transit connections to public parking areas, but Greenville's public transit foundation can be changed in the future to better accommodate movability among the city and their parking.



Figure 5.6. Photo of ECU Bus.

Source: East Carolina University. (n.d.). ECU Transit. <https://transit.ecu.edu/>

City of Greenville Continued

Parking Inventory

Greenville, NC has a mix of on-street parking, surface lots, and one structured parking garage that serves the downtown area. The total number of parking spaces, as provided by the City Manager through an internal Excel spreadsheet, amounts to at least 876 known spaces (K. Graves, personal communication, April 7, 2025), however, the 4th Street Parking Garage, containing 238 spaces, has an unknown number of spaces leased to the newly opened Hilton Hotel, which reduce the number of publicly available spots (Parkopedia, n.d.).

In comparison, New Bern has approximately 690 parking spaces, through a mix of public lots and leased spaces. Greenville's inclusion of a structured parking garage contributes a significant number of spaces without requiring a large land area. Although parking decks can be expensive to construct, they present a potential opportunity for New Bern to increase parking capacity within its already constrained historic downtown.

Parking Limits, Permits, and Fees

Greenville offers several types of parking permits and applies different time limits across its parking facilities. On-street and surface lot parking are free for the first two hours, then requiring people to move their vehicles to a different street or lot before they face a fine. The 4th Street Parking Garage also offers two hours for free, then charges 75 cents per additional hour, with no time limit, making it a better option for long-term parking (City of Greenville, n.d.-d).

For downtown employees, Greenville allows employers to purchase up to ten permits, and employees may purchase one. These permits cost \$264 per year or \$132 for six months, with rates increasing each July (City of Greenville, n.d.-d).

Residents living in designated zones can buy parking permits for \$12 per vehicle, valid from June 1 to June 1 of the following year. These apply mainly to the nearby historic Grid neighborhood. Core Downtown residents may lease a reserved space near their home for \$864 annually or \$432 for six months, with rates also increasing each July (City of Greenville, n.d.-f).

In comparison, New Bern does not offer the same variety of parking permits or structured pricing. While New Bern does have leased parking permits, public information is not readily available. Greenville's system, with tiered permits, multiple paid options, and time-limited free parking, offers more control and may serve as a useful model if New Bern considers expanding their permit system and parking inventory.

City of Greenville Continued

Historic Guidelines

Greenville's historic district guidelines place a strong emphasis on preserving the residential character of the neighborhood while accommodating limited parking in a manner that blends with historic development patterns. Off-street parking must be placed carefully to avoid disrupting site features or becoming visually dominant. Some of their key elements include (City of Greenville, 2014):

Driveway and Off-Street Parking Placement:

- The historic configuration and materials of existing driveways and alleys must be retained and preserved whenever possible.
- New driveways must conform with the spacing, width, configuration, and materials of existing driveways.
- New driveways must be located to minimize alteration to historic site features, such as landscaping, walkways, and retaining walls. Damage to historic curbs and sidewalks must be avoided.
- Use driveways to access side and rear parking areas and garages.
- New parking areas must be located as unobtrusively as possible in an area screened from public view.
- Locating off-street parking in front yards is not permitted.
- Locating off-street parking in the side yard is not permitted if the area would be visible from the street or the front yard.
- Abandoned or inoperable vehicles may not be stored in front yards.
- New driveways and parking areas may not directly abut the principal structure.

Parking Lot Screening:

- All new parking areas must be screened from adjoining properties with fencing or shrubbery.
- Existing mature trees should be incorporated into new parking areas whenever possible, and new trees introduced to maintain the tree canopy.
- Large off-street parking areas encompassing so much of the rear yard that the residential character of the site is lost are not permitted.

City of Greenville Continued

Historic Guidelines

Paving and Materials Standards:

- Driveway designs that combine wheel strips with permeable centers are encouraged.
- For new parking areas, paving material compatible with traditional materials in the district must be used. Permeability should be maximized.

Lighting Standards (Related to Parking):

- In lighting parking areas, follow the guidelines for exterior lighting in the district.
- Design lighting levels for safety. Use unobtrusive, directional fixtures to avoid light spillover. For nonresidential areas, use fixtures that turn off automatically after business hours, if possible.

In comparison, Greenville's historic guidelines provide a detailed and well-rounded approach that emphasizes preservation and practicality. Like Washington and Beaufort, Greenville prohibits front yard parking and requires new parking areas to be located at the rear or the side of properties. Greenville's guidelines strongly emphasize the preservation of existing infrastructure while encouraging the use of materials that are appropriate in the historical area.

While New Bern focuses more on restricting where parking can be located, Greenville offers clearer guidance on how parking can be added in a way that fits the character of the area. This makes it somewhat easier to accommodate new parking while still preserving historic features. New Bern could benefit from adding more detailed guidelines to continue their mission of keeping the historical feel of the area while offering more guidance to residents and developers.

Benchmark Cities: Key Takeaways

The Benchmark cities overviewed in this report -Beaufort NC, Washington NC, and Greenville NC- each offer valuable insights into how historic and comparable cities in Eastern NC manage their downtown parking. Each city presents a different approach based on its size, tourism demand, historic character, and investment in transportation infrastructure. Parking regulations, transportation, parking inventory, and any parking limits, permits, and fees, were reviewed. Listed below are suggested elements from each city that New Bern could introduce into their communities.

Beaufort, NC has implemented a structured approach to downtown parking with a fee-based minimums, seasonal paid parking, and a permit system. Within their ordinance, if a development within their Historic or Waterfront Business District can not meet the required amount of parking spaces, the developer is required to pay \$10,000 per unmet space. The funds used are then be used by the city to build future parking infrastructure. This model can offer an alternative to the parking exemption zone within New Bern. Their paid parking is operated seasonally to curb the negative impacts of tourism while still prioritizing local access. The permits for the city are fairly cheap, however a more expensive premium pass allows members to be exempted from time limits and lot restrictions. A similar seasonal and fee-based system could provide flexibility and funding opportunities if New Bern ever phases out its exemption zone.

Washington, NC also implemented a parking exemption zone, however residential uses are still required to provide parking. This system preserves parking for residents while encouraging infill development for businesses. Like New Bern, downtown parking is free; however, Washington applies varying time limits depending on location. Washington's approach to parking promotes turnover in high-demand areas, and denser development. Washington's approach demonstrates that free parking with strategic limits and residential requirements, can still support both growth and usability.

Greenville, NC, uses a layered approach through regulations, permits, and public transit. Notably, Greenville is served by three distinct transit systems, and while there is room for improvement, this system can be a good foundation to improve mobility. The city also provide a wide range permit systems for residents and employees of the downtown area, along with a multitude of different parking options, including a a parking deck. Greenville's model shows how tiered permits, designated employee parking, and diversified transit options can work together to support a growing downtown.

Together, these cities highlight the value of parking permits systems, flexible time-limits , and alternative policies like fee-in-lieu models. While each community has its own context and challenges, thoughtful implementation of these strategies in New Bern could enhance parking management while preserving the city's historic character.



Section 6:

Case Study Cities

Case Study Cities

While developing recommendations for the City of New Bern, examining how other cities address their parking challenges can offer valuable insight into potential strategies and improvements. Three cities were selected as “Case Studies” to highlight practices that may be applicable to New Bern. After each section, a brief comparison to New Bern is included to illustrate key differences and identify possible opportunities for improvements.

Annapolis, Maryland

Annapolis is the capital of the U.S. state of Maryland. Annapolis has a thriving historic district with shops and restaurants along the waterfront. Most of the buildings are original 17th, 18th, and 19th century, with brick-lined streets (Wikitravel contributors, n.d.). As of 2023, the population is estimated to be 40,552 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023e).



Figure 6.1. Aerial photo of Downtown Annapolis, Maryland.

Source: McKeating, B. (2024, March 20). Top 25 things to see and do in Annapolis. Visit Annapolis. Retrieved April 11, 2025, from <https://www.visitannapolis.org/blog/stories/post/top-25-things-to-see-and-do-in-annapolis/>

Parking Regulations:

While the City of Annapolis requires off-street parking, several zoning districts in the downtown area offer exemptions while also preserving their historic character (City of Annapolis, n.d.-a)(City of Annapolis, n.d.-b):

- C1 and C1A Districts: No off-street parking is required.
- C2 and C2A Districts: No parking is required unless the use exceeds 20,000 sq ft; then 20 spaces, plus 1 per additional 500 sq ft.
- WMC District: No parking is required unless the use exceeds 15,000 sq ft; then 15 spaces, plus 1 per additional 500 sq ft.

This system allows smaller businesses and developments to avoid costly parking requirements while also ensuring that larger projects still contribute to parking availability.

In comparison, New Bern exempts most all land uses within its historic downtown, exempt area from off-street parking requirements. Annapolis’ scaled approach maintains parking requirements but offers leniency to smaller developments. This model could offer New Bern a middle-ground alternative to preserve the historic preservation while addressing Impacts from larger developments.

Annapolis, Maryland Continued

Transportation

Annapolis offers a strong local transportation system made for downtown visitors and residents. A free Downtown Shuttle called Access Annapolis, connects major parking garages and surface lots with restaurants, shops, and other local destinations. The service loops around the downtown Annapolis area, providing convenient access to key locations and parking (City of Annapolis, n.d.-c)

Their operating hours include:

- Monday–Thursday: 6:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Friday–Saturday: 7:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM

This extended schedule allows both residents and visitors to commute, shop, or explore downtown without relying on personal vehicles. The long service hours, makes this system reliable for most.



Figure 6.2. Annapolis, Maryland Access shuttle route.

Source: City of Annapolis. (n.d.-c). Free downtown shuttle map [PDF]. <https://accessannapolis.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Free-Downtown-Shuttle-Map.pdf>

In comparison, New Bern does not offer a downtown shuttle. As mentioned previously, the city is primarily served by CARTS/Omnibus, a reservation-based and fixed-rout transit system. Annapolis's free, frequent shuttle highlights how a simple circulator system could increase and enhance mobility in downtown New Bern, particularly during peak tourist seasons.

Parking Inventory

Annapolis offers a variety of parking solutions for visitors, residents, and downtown employees, including six public parking garages, multiple surface lots, and on-street parking. All garages are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are fully staffed and secured while also providing a combined 3,706 spaces, with the employee-only Calvert Street Garage containing 720 spaces. This total does not include the many surface lots the city also maintains, such as the Visitor Center Lot, City Dock Lot, Fleet Lot, and Donner Lot, which offer more parking spaces for the downtown area. (ParkMe, n.d.) (Annapolis Parking, n.d.-a) (Annapolis Parking, n.d.-b) (Maryland Department of General Services, n.d.) (Annapolis Parking, n.d.-c) (Walker Consultants, n.d.) (City of Annapolis, 2017).

In comparison, New Bern relies mainly on free surface parking and time-restricted on-street spaces, with only one small paid lot downtown and no designated employee-only parking facilities. While New Bern's system is simpler and easier to navigate, Annapolis's larger, 24/7, and more structured parking system reflects a more proactive strategy to manage higher visitor volumes, employee access, and long-term demand.

Annapolis, Maryland Continued.

Parking Limits, Permits, and Fees

Annapolis, Maryland, uses a structured residential parking permit system divided into five districts. Residents must obtain a permit based on where they live, the number of vehicles registered, and whether they have access to off-street parking. These permits are required for on-street parking and must be renewed annually, with fees ranging from \$55 for one car to \$350 for four or more vehicles. A separate permit is also available for non-resident property owners (Annapolis Parking, n.d.-d).

In contrast, New Bern, North Carolina does not have a residential parking permit system. Residents and visitors may park freely on most downtown streets, with 2-hour limits enforced during business hours. Instead of managing on-street parking through permits, New Bern provides a mix of free, time-limited street parking and free all-day public lots. This approach prioritizes accessibility and simplicity but may pose challenges as the city grows and parking demand increases in the downtown area. Residents who live downtown may struggle to find consistent parking near their homes, especially during peak business hours or when events draw large numbers of visitors.

Historic Guidelines

Annapolis takes a detailed and preservation-focused approach to parking within its Historic District, particularly regarding the design and placement of garages, driveways, and surface parking areas. Some of their key elements include (City of Annapolis, n.d.-d):

- **Garages and Driveways (Section B.13):** Garages and surface parking areas must be concealed from street view through rear placement or screening using architectural or landscape features. These elements are recognized as 20th-century intrusions in the historic district, and new garages are only approved when historically appropriate. If permitted, garages must be detached, placed at the rear of the lot, and designed to match the scale and detailing of the historic house and nearby outbuildings.
- **Curb Cuts and Off-Street Parking (Section C.10):** New curb cuts and off-street parking are discouraged, especially where they disrupt the historic character or natural topography. Where allowed, plans must preserve vegetation and minimize grading. Preferred paving materials include brick, crushed oyster shell, and brick tire tracks, while asphalt, plain concrete, and bright gravel are discouraged due to their visual incompatibility.

These strict regulations help preserve the district's historic integrity but also make it more difficult to add or expand parking, particularly for homes without rear access or large lot sizes.

In comparison, New Bern regulates parking placement in historic areas using a system of Areas of Visual Concern (AVCs) but provides fewer design rules regarding garages, materials, and screening. Annapolis offers more descriptive guidance, making it a model of a preservation-focused guideline set. However, New Bern's simpler framework allows for more flexibility for homeowners and developers when it comes to parking.

St. Augustine, Florida

St. Augustine, Florida, is a small but historically significant city. Located along the Atlantic coast of northeastern Florida, it sits about 40 miles south of downtown Jacksonville and serves as the county seat of St. Johns County. Founded in 1565 by Spanish settlers, St. Augustine is recognized as the oldest continuously inhabited European-established settlement in the continental United States (Wikipedia contributors, 2025d). As of 2023, St. Augustine has a population of 15,596 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023f)



Figure 6.3. Aerial view of St. Augustine, Florida.

Source: Ghosh, D. (2022, January 27). St. Augustine, Florida. World Atlas.
<https://www.worldatlas.com/cities/st-augustine-florida.html>

Parking Regulations

St. Augustine has detailed off-street parking requirements for various land uses, as outlined in Section 28-373 of the city's zoning code. These requirements apply to new developments along with expansions. Minimum parking ratios vary by use (City of St. Augustine, n.d.-a):

- Retail spaces require one space per 300 square feet
- Restaurants require one space per four patrons.

Within the same parking ordinance design standards for San Marco Avenue corridor requires a 25% reduction in required parking to preserve the residential streetscape. However, most land uses still have to comply with all parking minimums set by their ordinances, as they do not have an exemption area like New Bern.

In comparison, New Bern offers more flexibility through their designated Historic Exemption Zone in its downtown, where many land uses are not required to provide off-street parking. If New Bern wanted a different model to use, St. Augustine's San Marco Design Avenue Standards Corridor could be altered to fit the existing parking exemption zone. This model would allow New Bern to keep parking requirements while lessening them for the historic downtown area, and setting goals to gradually decrease them to preserve the historic character. However, as the lack of parking may be an issue, this may not be the correct course of action.

St. Augustine, Florida Continued

Transportation

St. Augustine provides a free downtown circulator service called the St. Augustine Rider (STAR). The STAR Circulator aims to reduce vehicle congestion in the downtown core by offering a convenient public transit option for both residents and visitors. The service operates along a 1.12-mile loop through the downtown area, with an estimated headway of 15 minutes under normal traffic conditions. There are three designated stops, each located near surface parking lots, on-street parking, and the city's main public parking garage (City of St. Augustine, n.d.-b).

Operating hours vary seasonally:

- During the Nights of Lights Festival (Nov. 23, 2024 – Jan. 26, 2025): 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Beginning Jan. 6, 2025: Regular hours resume, 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM (last departure at 10:00 PM)

Per city policy, riders may complete one full loop per boarding and must disembark before reboarding.

In comparison, while New Bern has the CARTS system, it does not currently offer a downtown circulator or free local shuttle service. St. Augustine's STAR Circulator stands out as a targeted strategy for improving downtown mobility and reducing congestion, especially during high-traffic seasons. A similar low-cost or free shuttle system could be a valuable addition to New Bern's downtown, particularly to support tourism and ease parking demand.

Parking Inventory

St. Augustine operates a parking system that includes a mix of public and private facilities, with one major garage, several surface lots, and on-street metered spaces located throughout the downtown area. The city's largest facility is the Historic Downtown Parking Facility, located next to the Visitor Information Center. This garage offers approximately 1,200 spaces and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week (City of St. Augustine, n.d.-d). This garage plays a critical role in accommodating parking demand for both residents and tourists, especially during peak seasons and major events. The city also manages multiple surface lots and on-street metered spaces. A few privately owned lots operate independently with their own payment systems. Official city pay stations are clearly marked and visible with the city's crest and signage. Parking availability is monitored in real-time through the city's mobile app, ParkStAug (City of St. Augustine, n.d.-c). While exact inventory numbers for surface lots and metered street parking are not publicly available, capacity is supported with time limits and digital management tools.

In comparison, New Bern's parking inventory relies heavily on free surface lots and on-street spaces, with only one paid lot in the downtown area and no online parking availability system. While simpler, New Bern lacks the scale and digital integration of St. Augustine's system, which offers more visibility and support for people finding parking.

St. Augustine, Florida Continued

Parking Limits, Permits, and Fees

Downtown parking in St. Augustine is regulated through posted time limits and the ParkStAug mobile app, which serves as the city's central payment platform. Most metered on-street spaces and city surface lots have a four-hour limit, with rates set at \$2.50 per hour for non-residents and St. Johns County residents receiving a discounted rate of \$0.50 per hour through the app.

The Historic Downtown Parking Facility also uses ParkStAug for payment, with rates as follows:

- Standard Rate: \$20 per entry
- Resident Discount: \$3 per entry
- Tiered Pricing: \$20 during peak hours (7:00 AM – 5:00 PM), \$5 off-peak (5:00 PM – 9:00 PM)

A monthly parking pass is available for \$32 (before tax) and grants repeated access to the garage, though spaces are not reserved. Passes must be purchased in person with proof of vehicle ownership and a paid entrance receipt. Residents are limited to two permits and two guest permits a year.



Figure 6.4. St. Augustine Historic Downtown Parking Facility.

Source: Visit St. Augustine. (n.d.). Historic downtown parking facility.

<https://www.visitstaugustine.com/thing-to-do/historic-downtown-parking-facility>

Residents may also petition to create a Controlled Parking Residential Area within their neighborhood, where parking is restricted by permit. To qualify, the area must meet the 60/50/25 rule (City of St. Augustine, n.d.-e):

- 25% of parked vehicles must be from out-of-area
- 50% of on-street spaces must be occupied regularly
- 60% of households must sign a petition

These conditions must occur at least four days per week over nine months of the year.

In comparison, New Bern does not currently charge for most downtown parking and does not operate a mobile payment system or residential permit program. While simpler, this model may lack the structure needed to manage seasonal congestion or neighborhood spillover as demand for parking increases. The implementation of this kind of system will prioritize the community and residents, while still maintaining parking availability for tourism.

St. Augustine, Florida Continued

Historic Guidelines

St. Augustine's historic district prioritizes preserving the architectural and environmental character of its buildings and sites. The city follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, particularly those focused on maintaining historic character, the protection and preservation of significant archeological resources, and compatible design for new alterations and additions. The architectural guidelines provided by the city were organized by Do's and Don'ts, making it easier for readers to discern what is and is not allowed within the historic district.

Note: While the historic parking-related guidelines for other cities in this report were included in full, St. Augustine's guidelines are more extensive. To maintain focus and avoid overwhelming the reader, a condensed and organized summary is provided below.

Some of their key elements include (City of St. Augustine, n.d.-f):

Driveway and off-street Parking placement:

- Parking areas must be located behind or within buildings whenever possible and must not be adjacent to or easily visible from public rights-of-way.
- Curb cuts and paved areas must be kept to a minimum to preserve historic relationships between buildings and their surroundings.
- New parking features must be designed to be as unobtrusive as possible and should avoid damaging landscape features or archaeological resources.
- Garages are considered 20th-century intrusions and are only permitted when historically appropriate. When allowed, they must be detached, placed at the rear of the lot, and scaled and detailed to match the primary structure and surrounding outbuildings.
- New driveways must be based on historical documentation or physical evidence. Conjectural changes are discouraged.

Parking Lot Screening

- All parking areas must be screened from public view using fencing, walls, landscaping, or buildings.
- Landscaping materials such as trees, shrubs, and trellises should be used to maintain views, provide screening, and reflect the historic setting.
- New site features and vegetation must be compatible in size, scale, material, and design with the surrounding historic district.

St. Augustine, Florida Continued

Historic Guidelines

Paving and Materials Standards

- Appropriate paving materials for parking and driveways include: Loose coquina, Crushed shell, River gravel, Brick or stone pavers on sand, Coquina or tabby concrete, Concrete with a slate-like appearance
- Asphalt and plain concrete are not appropriate, particularly in areas visible from the public right-of-way.
- Post-1821 properties may use more decorative paving treatments (e.g., mid-yard beds, colorful plants), while pre-1821 properties should reflect simpler, utilitarian surface treatments that are historically appropriate.

In terms of historical guidelines, St. Augustine has provided detailed guidelines, but still making it easy to read by breaking them into Do's and Don'ts, and Pre-1821 and Post-1821 sections. The guidelines are easy to interpret and apply. St. Augustine's guidelines regarding site features, parking, and landscaping prioritize compatibility with the historical look and feel while also being minimally invasive.

In comparison, New Bern's historic guidelines restrict parking placement through visual concern areas and require screening and material compatibility, but they allow more flexibility in design details. While New Bern emphasizes minimizing disruption to development patterns, St. Augustine applies stricter requirements on screening height, approved materials, and landscape integration, creating a more controlled and uniform approach to managing the visual impact of parking in historic areas. While implementing strong guidelines like St. Augustine would keep the historical area looking uniform and preserve the history, it can severely limit the expansion of parking facilities for residents and developers.

Beaufort, South Carolina

Not to be confused with Beaufort, North Carolina, Beaufort, South Carolina, serves as the county seat of Beaufort County. Chartered in 1711, it is the second-oldest city in South Carolina, following Charleston. Beaufort is often referred to as the "Queen of the Carolina Sea Islands" for its rich history and coastal charm (Wikipedia contributors, 2025e). As of 2023, Beaufort's estimated population was 13,850 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023f).



Figure 6.5. Aerial Photo of Downtown Beaufort, SC.

Source: GroundBreak Carolinas. (n.d.). Davis & Floyd opens office in Beaufort, SC.
<https://groundbreakcarolinas.com/davis-floyd-opens-office-in-beaufort-sc/>

Parking Regulations

Beaufort, South Carolina, provides off-street parking exemptions within their historic downtown. According to Section 5.7.5 of the city's code (City of Beaufort, n.d.-a):

- In the T5-DC Downtown Core District, all nonresidential uses are exempt from off-street parking requirements, with the exception of hotels, motels, and extended-stay accommodations.
- Buildings listed as vacant or abandoned may also be exempt if on-site parking cannot reasonably be accommodated.

These exemptions are assumedly put in place to allow for denser development and to revitalize existing abandoned infrastructure, however, it still requires extended-stay developments to follow existing parking requirements.

In comparison, New Bern's Parking Exemption Zone similarly removes off-street parking requirements in its downtown for most uses. However, while short-term rentals in New Bern may be exempt, there are no rules exempting extended-stay accommodations. While there may not be any extended-stay businesses currently in the zone, future developments may get away with not providing more parking.

Beaufort, South Carolina

Transportation

Public transit throughout the Lowcountry areas, including Beaufort, is provided by the Lowcountry Regional Transportation Authority through a system called Palmetto Breeze Transit. Palmetto Breeze's transit system is expansive, with 16 routes covering five counties using a mix of reservation-based systems, paratransit, and fixed-route systems (Palmetto Breeze Transit, n.d.-a).

Within the City of Beaufort, at least five routes converge in the area. One of the routes, route 702-Beaufort Loop, services the Beaufort area exclusively. However, it operates as a reservation-based service rather than a fixed-route system. This means that residents and visitors must schedule their trips in advance during Palmetto Breeze's dispatch hours: Monday through Friday, from 8 AM to 4 PM (Palmetto Breeze Transit, n.d.-b). While other regional routes converge in the area, the reliance on a reservation-based system for local service may limit spontaneous or time-sensitive travel. The fare to ride route 702 is \$3.75 for a one-way ticket, however, they also have discounts if you decide to buy tickets in bulk, with a 12-ticket bundle being \$40.50 and a 44-ticket bundle being \$148.50 (Palmetto Breeze Transit, n.d.-c).

Although it does not service the City of Beaufort, a route of note is route 515- Coligny Beach parking shuttle. This seasonal and fare-free service leaves from the University of South Carolina Beaufort Campus parking lot to the Coligny Beach access. These shuttles run on-demand between 10 AM and 1 PM and then become a fixed-route system with 20-minute headways between 1 PM and 4:30 PM (Palmetto Breeze Transit, n.d.-d).

In comparison, while New Bern does have the CARTS system, the coverage within the historic downtown area is limited. Unlike Beaufort, the CARTS system is a fixed-route system, but they also offer reservation-based services. The transportation service in the historic City of Beaufort is not that good as it tends to limit mobility and spontaneous travel within the area. However, the seasonal shuttle is a model that New Bern could implement to offer transportation services to public parking lots.

Parking Inventory

With a six public parking lots, and plenty of on-street parking, the City of Beaufort offers more than 500 paid spaces for residents, employees, and visitors. They also provide an online map, showing where the parking lots and on-street parking is, however it does not note current availability (City of Beaufort, n.d.-c).

In comparison, Historic Downtown New Bern also offers approximately 700 public parking spots for the community, with online maps and signage directing people to them. However, unlike Beaufort, New Bern does not charge for most parking, suggesting a model they can use.

Beaufort, South Carolina

Parking Limits, Permits, and Fees

The City of Beaufort has implemented paid parking in both the public parking lots and on-street spaces. After reviewing each lot's pricing and time limits, rates have been found to vary between \$0.50 to \$1 an hour, with time limits being between 2 to 8 hours depending on the lot (City of Beaufort, n.d.-c through n.d.-h). On-street parking follows a similar system, with variations depending on what street you are on, with pricing ranging from \$0.50 to \$1 an hour and time limits being between 2 to 8 hours.

Monthly parking is also available to purchase by Beaufort Downtown owners and employees only, costing \$35 a month at lots that allow 8-hour parking limits: Carteret, Marina, Saltus, and Scott (City of Beaufort, n.d.-i).

In comparison, New Bern mainly offers free parking for both public parking lots and on-street spaces, except one lot. The time limit for on-street parking is 2 hours, with the public lots having no limits except for some not allowing overnight street parking. New Bern also does not offer permits for parking, considering that they are free. While the varying limits and fees can be confusing for the community, implementing paid parking in the lots and for on-street parking could potentially be a model to adopt, however, a permit system should be created in coordination to offer relief for Downtown employees and residents.

Historic Guidelines

Historical guidelines for the City of Beaufort were located within the Beaufort Preservation Manual. While there is no section solely dedicated to parking, several relevant guidelines appear throughout the document. Some of their key elements include (City of Beaufort, 2022):

Off-street Parking Placement:

- Parking lots are considered a problematic addition to the historic district.
- Parking should be placed within an intra-block lot or limited to on-street spaces.
- The city discourages the demolition of historical buildings to create parking lots.
- Residential area roadways lack many modern features, such as curbs, drainage systems, consistent lighting, and formal sidewalks. In several areas, parking areas meander around existing vegetation into the vehicles' right-of-way. This causal approach should be maintained and encouraged.
- New parking areas and larger structures should not block key views, particularly at the end of streets or in a way that they become the dominant visual element.
- Locations for large structures and lots should prioritize:
 - Previously altered areas with modern intrusions
 - Large, easily screened lots
 - Areas with few or no historic structures

Beaufort, South Carolina

Historic Guidelines

Parking Lot Screening:

- At least 20% of the area within any parking lot in the Historic District must remain unpaved and planted to appear more “park-like”.
- Lots should be screened from public streets using borders and islands with vegetation to break up large expanses of pavement.
- Parking should be placed within an intra-block lot or limited to on-street spaces.

Paving and Material Standards:

- When more on-street parking is needed, perforated pre-cast concrete should be used instead of asphalt to allow the areas to remain grassy in appearance.

In comparison, New Bern’s parking section lacks guidelines that directly address the visual impact of parking within its historic district. The guidelines, along with the land use plan, references broader goals to preserve the community’s character, however, there are no requirements mandating parking lot placements and the amount of landscaping within lots. The City of Beaufort’s guidelines prioritize the preservation of the historical look and feel at the expense of parking lots. While this method is ideal for historical preservation, it can severely limit the addition of new parking infrastructure.

Case Study Cities: Key Elements

The case studies analysis examines how other historic cities- Annapolis Maryland, Beaufort, South Carolina, and St. Augustine Florida- offers a diverse set of strategies for managing parking within downtown areas. Key elements from each city are outlined below and will guide future recommendations.

Annapolis, MD, uses a tiered approach to manage their parking. Minimum parking requirements are waived unless developments exceed 15,000-20,000 square feet, depending on zoning. This allows smaller projects to move forward without the burden of off-street parking. Annapolis also offers a free shuttle that connects parking areas to key destinations downtown. The shuttle operates for an extended hours, allowing people to enjoy downtown without worrying about missing a return trip to their vehicle. The city also offers a large supply of public parking spaces and designates reserved parking specifically for employees.

St. Augustine, FL uses a public parking garage to manage high seasonal and tourist demand. The city also enforces structured hourly limits downtown and utilizes a city operated app to simplify payments. Residential permit programs are established by residents of the neighborhood through petition and data collection, allowing residents to protect on-street spaces in their area. Compared to New Bern, St. Augustine's reliance on paid parking, permit enforcement, and centralized facilities shows how a city with similar tourism impacts balances accessibility for both locals and visitors while protecting residential areas. Additionally, the self-appointed parking permit system is something that could be established in New Bern to curb negative impacts of tourism.

Beaufort, SC highlights historic preservation and permitting with parking enforcement and design standards. While transit within Beaufort is not the best, a free seasonal shuttle nearby is offered between beach access and parking lots. Downtown parking includes varying time-limits and prices are used in parking downtown, with a permit system established for downtowns employees. Beaufort's historic design guidelines also emphasize the screening and placement of parking lots and thoughtful integration into the streetscape, an approach that is similar to some of New Bern's current historic preservation goals but with stronger visual requirements.

Each case study illustrates a distinct approach to managing parking in a historic and tourism-driven context. Whether through zoning-based exemptions, parking structures, permit systems, or transit shuttles, these cities provide a variety of strategies that could inform improvements in New Bern's downtown parking system.



Section 7:

Parking Exemption Policy Overview

Parking Exemption Policy Overview

This section will overview research the benefits and consequences of eliminating parking minimums in zones like New Berns Historic Exemption parking Zone. A review of the removal of parking minimums was requested by the project sponsors.

Parking Exemption Policy

Parking Exemption Zone

Parking exemption zones, like the one established in the Historic Downtown of New Bern, is a zone overlaying an area to remove parking minimum requirements for new developments. These zones are typically established in walkable, transit-accessible districts where market demand for parking is lower and alternatives to parking are more viable. Benefits and consequences are listed below from Srirang Sohoni and Bumsoo Lee's article "After the Minimum Parking Requirements". This article provides a good overview of the removal of parking minimums within Champaign, Illinois, and was published in the American Planning Association's journal The benefits and consequences of eliminating parking minimums are listed below (Sohoni & Lee, 2023):

Benefits of Parking Exemption Zones

- Encourages Development Flexibility:
 - Developers gain the ability to provide parking based on market needs rather than outdated and car-centric formulas. In Champaign, 84% of post-reform projects provided fewer spaces than previously required, with some not providing any.
- Reduces Construction Costs:
 - Eliminating parking requirements can also lead to cheaper development costs. In Champaign, developers saved around \$43-\$49 million over seven years.
- Improves Urban Design & Density:
 - With less land needed for parking, it can increase density and developments. In Champaign, residential unit density increased by 79%, having as much as 170 units per acre of parcel.
- Promotes Sustainable Transportation:
 - When applied in a district with extensive transportation, ridership for transit can increase. In Champaign, their transit system increased in ridership while the rest of the region's declined, suggesting that concentrated growth in walkable districts can support transit usage.
- Encourages Better Use of Existing Parking:
 - The removal of parking minimums encourages developers to use existing parking stock more efficiently by combining them with new developments. Additionally, as it happened in Champaign, parking permit sales could increase, leading to better utilization of public parking stock and increased revenue for the city.

Parking Exemption Policy

Consequences of Parking Exemption Zones

- Community Pushback:
 - Just as Champaign did, the community can push back against policy reform as they might be concerned about parking spillover, lack of free and ample parking, and politics.
- Expensive land prices:
 - A concern raised by the University of Illinois within the article was that the removal of parking minimums would increase the density and land prices in the area, leading to the expansion of existing facilities being more expensive.
- Uncertain Rent Outcomes:
 - While reduced costs should, in theory, lower rents or improve unit quality, results were mixed. Some developers said they could offer better amenities, while others noted no direct price impact.

Parking Exemption Policy: Key Elements

New Bern, NC, is one city of many to remove parking requirements through a parking exemption zone. The study completed in Champaign, Illinois, reports that the removal of parking minimums can reduce excess parking supply, lower construction costs, and support higher-density, more walkable development. However, while the benefits are clear, concerns about spillover parking, enforcement, and future development costs highlight the importance of careful implementation. Ensuring that these zones are supported by alternative modes of transportation and an adequate supply of public parking is crucial for minimizing negative impacts. Although New Bern's parking exemption zone is not a new concept, to maximize the benefits, Downtown New Bern must implement and maintain public transit options, walkability, accessibility, and adequate parking infrastructure.



Section 8:

Recommendations

Recommendations

After reviewing community data, public feedback, benchmark comparisons, and case studies, it is clear that parking challenges in the Historic Downtown Area of New Bern are not just a perceived issue but an actual concern. Due to the historic nature of the town, recommendations will be made to respect the historical guidelines in place. While all recommendations are important, they are organized in order of timeline and importance.

Priority Actions - 6 to 12 Months

R1. Increasing Visibility and Signage to Public Lots

- **Summary:** This recommendation involves improving the signage around public parking lots to ensure that both residents and visitors can easily locate them. Better wayfinding will help alleviate confusion and make it easier to access underutilized lots.
- **Source:** The need for better signage was highlighted in the community survey and observation. Respondents noted difficulties in locating parking lots, and occupancy observations showed that public lots were severely underutilized.
- **Pros:**
 - Increases parking utilization by directing drivers to available spaces.
 - Enhances the visitor experience by reducing the time spent searching for parking.
- **Cons:**
 - Potential visual clutter in the historic district if not implemented thoughtfully.
 - Costs related to updating and installing new signage.

R2. Create a public campaign on parking regulations and potential changes

- **Summary:** The most important recommendation is to create a public education campaign to educate the residents and business owners about current parking regulations, upcoming changes, and the rationale behind these improvements. This should also be used as a space for the community and the City to work together to identify solutions that best fit their community.
- **Source:** Survey responses indicate that many members were unaware of certain rules and regulations.
- **Pros:**
 - Increases community awareness and collaboration.
 - Reduces confusion during the implementation of new policies.
- **Cons:**
 - Requires time and resources to design and engage with the public.
 - Effectiveness depends on the community's willingness to participate.

R3. Increase Safety and Amenities in Public Lots

- **Summary:** This recommendation involves enhancing the safety and amenities within public parking lots, such as improved lighting, surveillance cameras, and additional facilities like trash cans or EV charging stations.

Recommendations Continued

R3. Increase Safety and Amenities in Public Lots

- Source: Observations of each public lot found a need to increase safety and surveillance by upgrading lighting and installing cameras. An increase in amenities for some lots was also observed, with some respondents from the survey expressing an interest in EV charging stations and observations of each lot showing a potential need for trash cans.
- Pros:
 - Increases public confidence in using the public lots, especially at night.
 - Provides a more comfortable and safe parking experience for both visitors and residents.
- Cons:
 - Requires initial investment in infrastructure and maintenance.

R4. Increase ADA Compliance Throughout Downtown

- Summary: Ensuring that all parking lots and sidewalks are fully ADA-compliant, including proper ramps, signage, and accessible parking spaces, is vital for providing equitable access to all. Handicap parking could potentially be added throughout on-street parking areas.
- Source: ADA compliance was mentioned as one of the key issues in the community survey, with some respondents noting difficulties accessing accessible parking and the lack of ADA-compliant sidewalks. Observations of the lots also found that some handicap spots were poorly maintained, and others were located far from the core downtown area.
- Pros:
 - Makes downtown accessible for all residents and visitors, enhancing inclusivity.
 - Reduces potential legal liabilities related to non-compliance.
- Cons:
 - Upfront costs for upgrading infrastructure.
 - Potential pushback from the public due to the loss of parking spaces.

R5. Remove on-street parking near intersections and crosswalks.

- Summary: Some on-street parking locations in Downtown New Bern decrease the visibility of crosswalks and intersections, leading to safety concerns.
- Source: Survey respondents noted concerns about the poor visibility and safety concerns due to some on-street parking.
- Pros:
 - Increase safety for pedestrians.
- Cons:
 - Takes away parking spaces for the downtown area, reinforcing the main issue.

Recommendations Continued

R6. Implement varying time limits to increase turnover.

- Summary: Adjusting parking time limits in certain areas based on location and demand to encourage turnover. This includes possibly adding a few 15 to 30-minute-only spots, for communities trying to quickly enter and leave the downtown area.
- Source: The need for increased turnover was identified in previous studies. The varying time limits were implemented in different cities. The survey showed an interest in quick turnover spots for people who would like to enter and leave the area.
- Pros:
 - Encourages better utilization of longer timed spots and the free non-time-limited lots.
 - Balances demand across different parking areas.
- Cons:
 - It can be confusing over varying time limits.
 - Requires clear enforcement.
 - Take away more long-term spots.

Next Phase Implementation - 1 to 2 years

R7. Implement Employee Parking Strategies

- Summary: This recommendation suggests introducing designated parking spaces or lots for employees in the downtown area to ensure they have consistent, accessible parking, freeing up visitor spaces. This method is typically implemented through a permit system.
- Source: Employee parking issues were highlighted through community engagement, noting that employees often occupy prime parking spaces, reducing availability for visitors. Employee parking strategies were also successfully implemented in other cities, acknowledging the importance of the workforce to the area.
- Pros:
 - Frees up spots for visitors and customers, improving turnover rates.
 - Provides employees with reliable and cost-effective parking.
- Cons:
 - It may be opposed by the public if it impacts the total available parking.
 - It would require funding for signage and possibly a new lot, depending on how it is implemented.
 - Potential pushback against the need to purchase a permit.

R8. Integrate Multimodal Transportation Alternatives

- Summary: This recommendation involves expanding options for biking within and to the downtown area. For proposer utilization, it is important for New Bern to implement this infrastructure throughout the area, not just Downtown New Bern. Key elements of this recommendation include:

Recommendations Continued

R8. Integrate Multimodal Transportation Alternatives

- Implementing bike lanes: Designating dedicated bike lanes across key routes could ensure safer cycling. These lanes will encourage cycling as a viable and safe alternative to driving. (Note: this portion is a long-term battle).
- Installation of Bike racks: Placing bike racks at strategic locations, including parking lots, parks, and near popular destinations, encourages visitors and employees to bike into the downtown area.
- Bicycle Signage: Installing clear and visible signage along roads or painted on roads to raise awareness of cyclists. While bike lanes are preferred, proper signage can ensure some level of safety if the roads are shared with cyclists.
- Enhancement of Walking Infrastructure: Enhancing pedestrian infrastructure with wider sidewalks, better crossings, and clearer pedestrian signs to make walking around and to the downtown area a more attractive mode of transportation.
- Improved Connectivity: As noted before, it is important to ensure seamless connectivity between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Source: Alternative transportation strategies were noted as a potential improvement in the community survey. Survey data also noted heavy vehicle usage when going to the downtown area. The New Bern Land Use Plan also notes a need to improve alternative transportation modes.
- Pros:
 - Reduces parking demand, easing pressure on parking spaces.
 - Promotes sustainability and supports New Bern's goals.
 - Enhances the overall downtown experience for pedestrians.
- Cons:
 - Requires heavy investments for infrastructure, signage, and bike racks.
 - It could face resistance if it removes street parking.
 - Maintenance of bike racks and lanes is ongoing.

R9. Introducing Seasonal Shuttles around Downtown

- Summary: A seasonal shuttle service could be introduced to move people quickly between key destinations in the downtown area, reducing the need for parking near downtown, easing congestion during peak times, and maintaining the historical feel of the area. Given the small nature of the core Downtown New Bern, increasing the shuttle service area could help promote development.
- Source: Similar shuttle systems have been successfully implemented in other cities mentioned throughout the report. Survey results and occupancy observations noted high congestion, especially on weekends and during events.
- Pros:
 - Reduces parking demand, particularly during high-traffic events and seasons.
 - Provides an easy, accessible mode of transport for those without vehicles.
 - It could promote development by improving access to various parts of downtown.

Recommendations Continued

R9. Introducing Seasonal Shuttles around Downtown

- Cons:
 - High upfront costs, along with recurring costs for staffing and maintenance.
 - Requires coordination with the current local transit system, potentially creating logistical challenges.
 - Given the small nature of the downtown area, this could be unfeasible.

R10. Introducing more guidance within the parking section in the Historical Guidelines

- Summary: While not recommending stricter guidelines, the city should update the current historical guidelines to provide clearer instructions for integrating modern parking solutions while preserving the district's historic charm. This includes outlining what is and is not allowed, and possibly showcasing properly implemented parking infrastructure.
- Source: New Bern's current historical guidelines were shown to be a bit ambiguous, which was highlighted as a potential barrier to implementing parking solutions. Other cities discussed in the report included specific guidance for residents and developers.
- Pros:
 - Make it easier for developers and residents to implement parking improvements.
 - Ensures compatibility with historic preservation growth.
- Cons:
 - It may take time to update the guidelines and gain approval.
 - Could face resistance from the community.

R11. Increase Parking Enforcement

- Summary: Although the current parking enforcement was not reviewed for this report, strengthening parking enforcement would help maintain parking turnover and prevent long-term parking spaces from occupying prime spaces.
- Source: The 2007 and 2015 studies on parking in New Bern both highlighted the need for stronger enforcement.
- Pros:
 - Ensures that parking spaces are available for short-term visitors.
 - Reduces congestion from long-term parkers,
- Cons:
 - Potential community backlash over fines and increased regulations
 - Requires investment in staffing and enforcement tools.

Heavy Policy and System Changes - 4 to 7 years

R12. Creation of a Residential Permit System

- Summary: For historic residential neighborhoods surrounding the downtown area, the implementation of a community-led permit system could be beneficial. Neighbors experiencing parking challenges could collaborate, and with sufficient support, data, and the city's approval, certain roads could be designated as permit-only parking zones.

Recommendations Continued

R13. Creation of a Residential Permit System

- Source: St. Augustine implemented a similar parking permit system.
- Pros:
 - Ensures residents experiencing a lack of parking spaces.
 - Help manage limited parking resources.
 - This system can be flexible and scalable.
- Cons:
 - Takes away from current on-street parking.
 - Requires staffing and enforcement.

R14. Implement paid parking.

- Summary: Paid parking could be introduced in a multitude of ways to manage demand and generate revenue for parking improvements. Discounts for residents and employees should be considered with this recommendation. Although this received a lot of pushback from the community, eventually, New Bern may need to look into implementing it. Public education on the benefits should be done to ease public frustrations.
 - All paid parking: This includes implementing paid parking throughout all on-street spaces and public lots.
 - Paid On-Street Parking: This includes paid parking for on-street spaces only. This could improve the occupancy rates of the free Bear Lots.
 - Seasonal paid parking: This includes paid parking for all spaces during set seasonal dates. These dates should be advertised to the public.
 - Paid parking for high-demand areas: Implementing paid parking in high-demand areas only. This can cause lots and other streets to be more heavily utilized.
- Source: Several cities throughout the report have implemented different forms of paid parking.
- Pros:
 - Generates revenue for the city that can be reinvested in parking infrastructure.
 - It could improve the utilization of public lots, reducing congestion.
- Cons:
 - Strong community pushback, as acknowledged by a lot of respondents in the community survey.
 - This could shift parking demand to surrounding private lots and residential areas, increasing illegal parking.

R14.1. Implement the use of technology for parking management.

- Summary: Downtown we could implement parking technology to help drivers find available spaces quickly and make parking more efficient.
- Source: Technological integration in parking through apps has been implemented in some cities mentioned in the report.

Recommendations Continued

R14.1. Implement the use of technology for parking management.

- Pros:
 - Increases parking efficiency and reduces time spent searching for spaces.
 - Enhance the experience by providing real-time parking information.
- Cons:
 - For this to best work, the implementation of paid parking through online apps would be required, although paid parking has pushbacks.
 - Initial setup costs.

R14.2. Creation of Parking Permits:

- Summary: Introducing a parking permit system for residents and employees to manage parking availability in high-demand areas, ensuring priority for these groups. With the implementation of paid parking, residents and employees could receive discounts on the purchase of the pass.
- Source: Multiple cities within this report mention a parking permit system in conjunction with a paid parking system. Survey results also show that employee parking challenges were a concern.
- Pros:
 - Ensures residents and employees have discounted parking.
- Cons:
 - Requires a paid parking system, which has significant pushback from the community.
 - Requires administration and enforcement to maintain and distribute these permits.

R15. Construct a parking Garage.

- Summary: The construction of a parking garage would significantly increase parking capacity in the downtown area, particularly in high-demand areas. A parking garage would offer more space-efficient solutions to accommodate growing tourism, employees, and the community.
 - Location Consideration: Although there was not much analysis of where it would be best to implement a parking garage, the 2015 parking study identified potential areas, laying the groundwork.
 - Design Considerations: The garage should complement the historic nature of the downtown district.
- Source: The need for more parking spaces was highlighted in the community feedback and case studies. The parking demand for other historic cities mentioned in the report relieved parking concerns by building parking garages.
- Pros:
 - Increase in parking capacity.
 - Revenue generation through fees to park there.
 - Some noted interest in a parking garage in the survey.

Recommendations Continued

R7. Construct a parking Garage.

- Cons:
 - A big negative is the high initial costs, according to MDPavingPros, a parking garage could cost an average of \$50-\$80 a square foot, with a total of \$7.5-12 million for a roughly 150,000 square foot parking garage (Kirksey, 2020).
 - Pushback from the community will occur as it has from the survey.
 - A parking garage would only be effective and well-used if the remaining parking was paid. Survey results show that paid parking is not wanted by the community.



Section 9:

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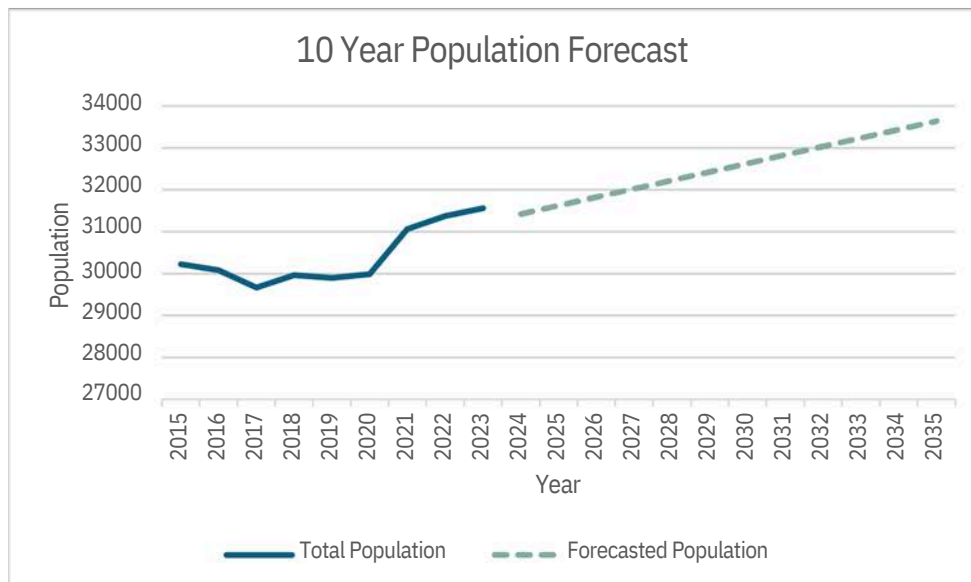
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Appendix 9.1. New Bern, NC's Forecasted Population

New Bern Population 2015-2035		
Year	Total Population	Forecasted Population
2015	30218	
2016	30075	
2017	29664	
2018	29958	
2019	29895	
2020	29985	
2021	31058	
2022	31373	
2023	31563	
2024		31422
2025		31623
2026		31824
2027		32026
2028		32227
2029		32429
2030		32630
2031		32832
2032		33033
2033		33235
2034		33436
2035		33638



Appendix 9.2. Inflow/Outflow Data for New Bern's Exemption Zone

Inflow/Outflow Analysis of New Bern Parking Exemption Zone

Worker Flows In, Out, and Within the Custom Area

Selection Area Labor Market Size (All Jobs)

	2022	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	1,527	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area	91	6.0%
Net Job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	1,436	-

In-Area Labor Force Efficiency (All Jobs)

	2022	
	Count	Share
Living in the Selection Area	91	100.0%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	8	8.8%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	83	91.2%

In-Area Employment Efficiency (All Jobs)

	2022	
	Count	Share
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	8	0.5%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	1,519	99.5%
Employed in the Selection Area	1,527	100.0%

Outflow Job Characteristics (All Jobs)

	2022	
	Count	Share
External Jobs Filled by Residents	8	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	3	18.1%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	1	48.2%
Workers Aged 55 or older	5	33.7%
Workers Earning \$1,250 per month or less	4	22.9%
Workers Earning \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	0	28.9%
Workers Earning More than \$3,333 per month	2	48.2%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	8	14.5%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	1	16.9%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	9	68.7%
Inflow Job Characteristics (All Jobs)	2	
	4	

	2022	
	Count	Share
Internal Jobs Filled by Outside Workers	1,519	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	44	27.3%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	710	46.7%
Workers Aged 55 or older	395	26.0%
Workers Earning \$1,250 per month or less	348	22.9%
Workers Earning \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	534	35.2%
Workers Earning More than \$3,333 per month	637	41.9%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	8	0.5%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	126	8.3%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	1,385	91.2%
Interior Flow Job Characteristics (All Jobs)		

	2022	
	Count	Share
Internal Jobs Filled by Residents	8	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	2	25.0%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	3	37.5%
Workers Aged 55 or older	3	37.5%
Workers Earning \$1,250 per month or less	4	50.0%
Workers Earning \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	2	25.0%

Workers Earning More than \$3,333 per month	2	25.0%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	0	0.0%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	4	50.0%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	4	50.0%

Row Labels	Sum of Co	Sum of Share
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	8	0.5%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	1,519	99.5%
Grand Total	1,527	100.0%

Appendix 9.3. Downtown New Bern's Public Lot Checklist

Black Bear Lot	Answer
	12 light poles.
	2No visible surveillance
	Yes, blocked on one side by a building. Brick fencing structure on some sides, with a metal pointed fence on one side . Other sides are exposed to residential that don't seem to have much pedestrian activity
	You have access to the sidewalks, however, crossings still feel not Ada compliant. Yes,
	45 spots one is taken
	7Yes, more clear than red bear.
	Trash cans, a a tiny hidden buck rack, had trees but the canopy
	8isn't that great
	2 handicap spots are far from the entrances and exits, with one of them being taken by a mini dumpster. The sidewalk near the handicap spots in question are NOT ADA compliant as there is
	9a curb.

Gold Bear Lot	Answers
	12 light poles.
	2No visible cameras
	Yes and no. On side is has a residential apartment, on side is a gravel lot, one side is screened with vegetation, and the other side is partially blocked with a
	3building.

	Seems accessible, lot leads directly to sidewalk and the same level. 2 spots.
	There are markings however they are fading away
	No, not even trash cans.
	Lot is closed to the public when Farmers market is open, understandable but can cause frustration and lack of parking.

Red Bear Lot	Answers
	1 light pole.
	2 No visible cameras
	Yes and no. Feels hidden from the downtown area however there are surrounding private parking. Still seems hidden
	3 accessible spots, however crosswalks to leave spot aren't exactly Ada compliant. Yes, 3. Poorly maintained, ledges are uneven
	Yes however lines are starting fade suggesting a need in maintenance
	Has electric charging stations, trash cans, and good tree canopy.
	Lighting is covered by existing trees. Interesting note unrelated to the project, the local community leaves food and water for stray cats.

HELP SHAPE PARKING IN DOWNTOWN NEW BERN!

Scan the QR Code and take the survey!

Through a student-led project, this research is studying various alternatives to parking requirements in the historic downtown exemption area of New Bern NC, and we need your input!

This survey is part of a student-led research project conducted by an East Carolina University Planning Practicum student to better understand parking challenges, usage patterns, and potential improvements.

Your feedback will help shape future parking decisions!

The survey is:

- **Quick** – Takes about 5-8 minutes
- **Anonymous** – Your responses are confidential
- **Impactful** – Results will inform policy recommendations

Take the survey today and make your voice heard!



Questions?
Feel free to contact:
Jordan Kearney
kearneyjo22@students.ecu.edu

https://ecu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1Yvuh4jcu08Rpfo

Appendix 9.5. Public Survey Questions

4/15/25, 9:35 PM

Qualtrics Survey Software

Consent

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled "Addressing Parking Challenges in Downtown New Bern." The goal of this research study is to assess parking conditions within the downtown exemption zone and explore potential improvements to better serve residents, businesses, and visitors while preserving the district's historic character. This study is being conducted and prepared by an East Carolina University Planning Practicum student.

You are invited to participate in this survey because you either live, work, or own a business in the downtown New Bern area. Participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a brief survey that should take no more than 5 minutes. While participating in this study may not benefit you directly, it will help inform parking policies and improvements in downtown New Bern.

You will be asked questions about your parking experiences, challenges, and potential solutions for the downtown exemption area, as well as some basic demographic questions. All answers will be confidential, and they will not be able to be traced back to you. You may skip any questions you don't feel comfortable answering, and you may end the survey at any time.

By selecting "I agree," you consent to your responses being used to inform recommendations for parking policies and management in downtown New Bern. If you do not wish to participate, you may select "I do NOT agree."

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research!

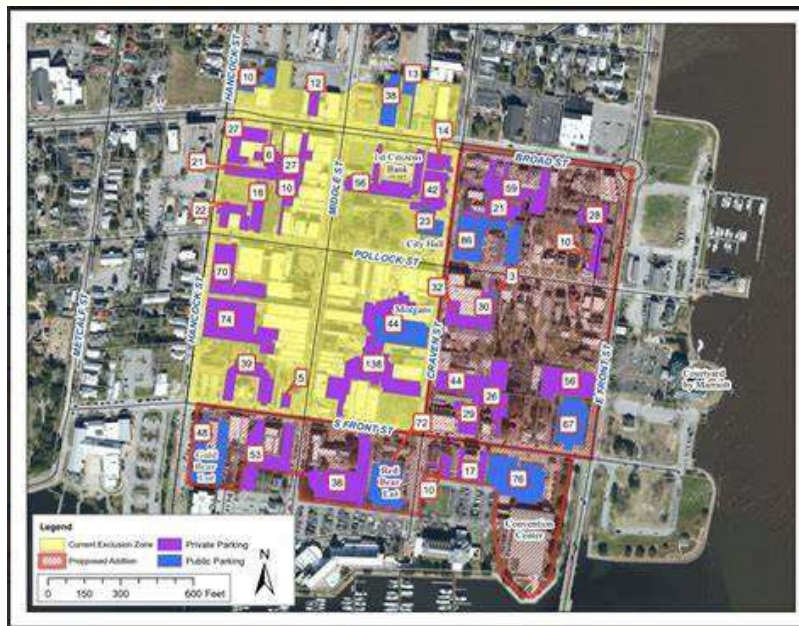
- ☐ I agree
- ☐ I do NOT agree

https://ecu.pdx1.qualtrics.com/Q/EditSection/Blocks/Ajax/GetSurveyPrintPreview?ContextSurveyID=SV_1Yvuh4jcu08Rpfo&ContextLibraryID=UR_ea...

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Project Site

For reference, the highlighted yellow and red zones indicate the project site. According to New Bern's ordinances, new developments within this area are exempt from the city's minimum parking requirements. When we refer to Downtown New Bern in this survey, we are specifically referencing this designated area.



Intro Questions

How easy or difficult is it to find parking in the downtown area?

Extremely difficult Somewhat difficult Neither easy nor difficult Somewhat easy Extremely easy

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

What type of Parking do you typically use?

- ☐ On-Street Parking
- ☐ Public Parking Lots
- ☐ Private Parking (Residential/Business)
- ☐ Paid parking Spot/Lot

☐ Other

How far are you typically willing to walk from your parking spot to your destination?

- ☐ Less than a minute
- ☐ 1-2 Minutes
- ☐ 3-4 Minutes
- ☐ 5+ Minutes

What is your primary connection to downtown New Bern? (Choose all that apply)

- ☐ Resident
- ☐ Business Owner
- ☐ Employee
- ☐ Visitor/Tourist

How do you usually get to downtown New Bern?

- ☐ Drive and Park
- ☐ Carpool
- ☐ Walk
- ☐ Bike
- ☐ Public Transit
- ☐ Other (Please Specify):

What brings you to Downtown New Bern? (Choose all that apply)

- ☐ Work
- ☐ Family/Friends
- ☐ Shopping and/or Dining
- ☐ Recreation
- ☐ Other:

Business Owner Questions

Please select which best describes your business

- ☐ Retail (Clothing, Gifts, Specialty Shops, etc.)
- ☐ Restaurant, Café, or Bar
- ☐ Lodging (Hotel, Inn, or Bed & Breakfast)
- ☐ Arts, Culture, or Entertainment (Gallery, Museum, Theater, etc.)
- ☐ Professional & Business Services (Law, Real Estate, Accounting, Consulting, etc.)
- ☐ Health & Wellness (Medical, Fitness, Salon, Spa, etc.)
- ☐ Tourism & Recreation (Boat Tours, Rentals, Guided Tours, etc.)
- ☐ Other (Please Specify)

Do you have designated Parking areas for you and your employees?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How many designated parking spaces do you have?

- ☐ 1-2 spots
- ☐ 2-3 spots
- ☐ 3-4 spots
- ☐ 5-6 spots
- ☐ 7-8 spots
- ☐ 9-10 spots
- ☐ More than 10 spots

Not including yourself, how many people are employed by your business?

- ☐ 1-2 people

- ☐ 3-4 people
- ☐ 5-6 people
- ☐ 7-8 people
- ☐ 9-10 people
- ☐ More than 10 people

When is your business busiest? (Choose all that apply)

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you believe your customers experience issues finding parking?

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Definitely not | Probably not | Might or might not | Probably yes | Definitely yes |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Do you believe that the lack of parking has effected your business?

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Definitely not | Probably not | Might or might not | Probably yes | Definitely yes |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Resident Questions

How far do you live from Downtown New Bern?

- ☐ I live in Downtown New Bern
- ☐ Less than 1/2 of a mile
- ☐ 1/2 mile to 1 mile
- ☐ 1 mile to 2 miles

- ☐ 2 miles to 5 miles
- ☐ More than 5 miles

Do you have a designated parking area for your home?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How many designated parking spots do you have?

- ☐ 1 space
- ☐ 2 spaces
- ☐ 3 spaces
- ☐ 4+ spaces

How often do you travel to Downtown New Bern?

- ☐ Many times in a day
- ☐ Once everyday
- ☐ 4-6 times a week
- ☐ 2-3 times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ 2-3 times a month
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Other

How much time do you usually spend in Downtown New Bern?

- ☐ Less than 30 minutes
- ☐ 30 minutes to an hour
- ☐ 1 to 2 hours
- ☐ 2 to 3 hours

☐ 3+ hours

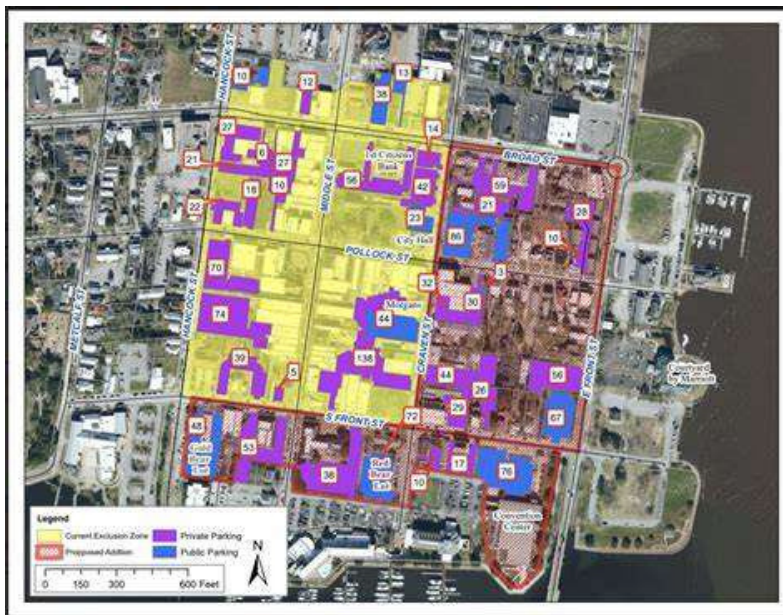
When do you usually visit Downtown New Bern?

- ☐ Weekdays (Monday-Friday)
- ☐ Weekends (Sunday-Saturday)

During what times of the day do you usually visit Downtown New Bern?

- ☐ Morning
- ☐ Afternoon
- ☐ Evening

Pinpoint on the map where you frequently park when you visit the downtown area. (You may select up to 5 points)



Pinpoint on the map where you find it most difficult to park. (You may select up to 5 points)



Employee Questions

What time do you arrive to work?

How far away from your workplace do you park?

- ☐ In the workplace parking lot
- ☐ 1 block away
- ☐ 2 Blocks away
- ☐ 3 blocks away
- ☐ 4 blocks away
- ☐ 4+ blocks away

Pinpoint where you usually park in the downtown area. (You may select up to 5 points)



Visitor Questions

How often do you travel to Downtown New Bern?

- ☐ Many times in a day
- ☐ Once everyday
- ☐ 4-6 times a week
- ☐ 2-3 times a week
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ 2-3 times a month
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Other

Did you park in Downtown New Bern?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Pinpoint where you parked in the downtown area.



Parking Overview and Feedback

What do you think of the quality and availability of the following downtown?

	Extremely Poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very Good
Parking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Signage and directions to parking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sidewalks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lighting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Would you support changes to downtown parking policies if they improved availability and ease of use?

- ☐ Yes
☐ Maybe
☐ No

Which of the following parking strategies would you support? (Select all that Apply)

- ☐ More public parking lots
- ☐ Improved signage directing people to available parking
- ☐ Paid parking for high-demand areas
- ☐ Paid parking on streets to fund more free parking infrastructure
- ☐ Off-site parking with walkable access
- ☐ More private lots for downtown employees
- ☐ All day parking passes for employees and owners
- ☐ Other (Please Specify)

What are your biggest frustrations with parking in downtown New Bern?

What do you like most about the parking in downtown New Bern?

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Appendix 9.6. Downtown Parking Occupancy Rates

New Bern Historic Downtown Parking Exemption Zone - Light Parking Observational Study										
Date - Tuesday, April 8th, 2025					Weather Conditions- 62 Degrees, Partly Cloudy					
Street/Lot	# Spaces	P1 Start	P1 End	P1 Vehicles	P1 Occupancy	P2 Start	P2 End	P2 Vehicles	P2 Occupancy	Average Occupancy
Black Bear lot	56	1:06	1:07	29	51.79%	3:49	3:50	14	25.00%	38.39%
Gold bear lot	48	12:27	12:28	10	20.83%	3:28	3:29	10	20.83%	20.83%
Red bear Lot	72	12:30	12:32	43	59.72%	3:30	3:31	39	54.17%	56.94%
District Attorneys Office lot	39	12:42	12:44	21	53.85%	3:37	3:37	15	38.46%	46.15%
Craven County Business and Office Lot	107	12:36	12:42	52	48.60%	3:34	3:36	46	42.99%	45.79%
Middle Street	103	12:45	12:49	86	83.50%	3:38	3:42	56	54.37%	68.93%
Craven Street	58	12:33	12:35	43	74.14%	3:31	3:33	35	60.34%	67.24%
Pollock Street	82	12:52	12:58	66	80.49%	3:56	3:58	37	45.12%	62.80%
South Front Street	97	12:25	12:27	22	22.68%	3:25	3:28	21	21.65%	22.16%
NC History Center Overflow	56	12:50	12:51	22	39.29%	3:43	3:45	16	28.57%	33.93%
NC History Main Lot	86	12:52	12:54	75	87.21%	3:45	3:46	18	20.93%	54.07%
Craven Street City Parking Lot	44	1:02	1:04	28	63.64%	3:59	4:00	24	54.55%	59.09%
Pollock Street Lot	50	12:59	1:01	26	52.00%	3:53	3:54	28	56.00%	54.00%
Union park	109	12:20	12:21	39	35.78%	3:23	3:25	45	41.28%	38.53%
Broad street	63	1:10	1:13	45	71.43%	3:50	3:52	29	46.03%	58.73%
New Bern Historic Downtown Parking Exemption Zone - Light Parking Observational Study										
Date - Saturday, April 12th, 2025					Weather Conditions- 56 Degrees, Cloudy					
Street/Lot	# Spaces	P1 Start	P1 End	# Vehicles	Occupancy	P2 Start	P2 End	# Vehicles	Occupancy	Average Occupancy
Black Bear lot	56	1:07	1:08	8	14.29%	3:20	3:20	4	7.14%	10.71%
Gold bear lot	48	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3:46	3:47	2	4.17%	4.17%
Red bear Lot	72	12:55	12:56	25	34.72%	3:11	3:12	26	36.11%	35.42%
District Attorneys Office lot	39	1:20	1:20	0	0.00%	3:40	3:40	0	0.00%	0.00%
Craven County Business and Office Lot	107	12:53	12:53	3	2.80%	3:08	3:08	4	3.74%	3.27%
Middle Street	103	1:02	1:05	102	99.03%	3:16	3:19	95	92.23%	95.63%
Craven Street	58	12:54	12:55	53	91.38%	3:09	3:11	54	93.10%	92.24%
Pollock Street	82	12:48	12:51	75	91.46%	3:03	3:05	73	89.02%	90.24%
South Front Street	97	12:43	12:47	76	78.35%	3:00	3:02	61	62.89%	70.62%
NC History Center Overflow	56	12:58	12:59	15	26.79%	3:13	3:14	10	17.86%	22.32%
NC History Main Lot	86	12:59	1:01	77	89.53%	3:14	3:15	48	55.81%	72.67%
Craven Street City Parking Lot	44	1:11	1:12	34	77.27%	3:44	3:44	26	59.09%	68.18%
Pollock Street Lot	50	1:10	1:11	22	44.00%	3:42	3:43	17	34.00%	39.00%
Union park	109	12:41	12:42	39	35.78%	2:57	2:59	63	57.80%	46.79%
Broad street	63	1:14	1:16	26	41.27%	3:41	3:42	19	30.16%	35.71%

