

TOURISM AND RELATED INDUSTRIES IN NEW HANOVER COUNTY

The following items represent changes in various sectors of the local tourism-related industries in recent and coming months.

FILM

Wilmington:

What's New:

- North Carolina offers a 25% rebate on qualifying expenses and purchases made by productions while in-state as its film incentive. The rebate is funded through the N.C. Film and Entertainment Grant, which currently is allocated \$31 million per fiscal year (Jul 1-Jun 30), with any unused funds carrying over from fiscal year to fiscal year. The rebate funding is now labeled recurring in the state budget and the program's sunset date was recently eliminated in an effort to make a long-term commitment to the film and entertainment industry. (*source: filmnc.com/25-rebate.html*).
- 2019/2020 productions include: “Swamp Thing” (DC Universe series); “Reprisal” (Hulu series); *Uncle Frank* (independent film); *Halloween Kills* (Universal Pictures); “The Lost Boys” (Warner Bros. Television); others TBA. (*source: wilmingtonfilm.com/ and wilmingtonfilm.com/current-productions/*)

SHOPPING & RETAIL

- South Front II, located at 22 Greenfield Street, is a Tribute Properties development of shops and restaurants in a former industrial area. New businesses continue to open during 2019-2020.
- The Pointe at Barclay continues to add shops and restaurants (S. 17th St. & Independence Blvd./Midtown).
- Independence Mall, located on Oleander Drive in midtown Wilmington, is transforming and rebranding the shopping complex as The Collection at Independence. Sections of the mall's interior will be removed during the coming months to modernize and revitalize the property.
- River Place, a new 13-story mixed-use building with condominiums, apartments and a parking deck, along with a restaurant/bar and retail space overlooking the river, continues construction with a projected completion date of 2020.
www.wilmingtonnc.gov/departments/major-construction-projects/river-place
- Other future mixed-use developments with retail include: The Avenue (Military Cutoff, mixed-use with a Westin hotel) and CenterPoint (1531 Eastwood Rd.).

ENTERTAINMENT/NIGHTLIFE

Wilmington:

- The City of Wilmington's North Waterfront Park, adjacent to the Port City Marina, will feature a children's play area, splash plaza, green space, and connection to the Riverwalk. An outdoor performance space will host outdoor events and concerts, becoming Wilmington's largest outdoor entertainment venue. Park completion delayed until 2021.
www.wilmingtonnc.gov/departments/major-construction-projects/2016-parks-bond/north-waterfront-park

CRAFT BEER / DISTILLERY NEWS

- Breweries continued to open and/or expand in 2018/2019 with more on the way, further establishing Wilmington & Beaches as a Craft Beer destination:
 - Flying Machine Brewing Company opened at 3130 Randall Pkwy., Wilmington
 - New Anthem Beer Project opened its second location at 110 Greenfield Street, Wilmington. (*sources: [Wilmington Ale Trail](#)*)
 - Wilmington Brewing Company will open an events center and expand production in 2019.

- Panacea Brewing Company (specializing in kombucha) will move its taproom from Eastwood Road to a larger location on Oleander Drive in Wilmington. (source: www.wilmingtonbiz.com/restaurants/2019/09/18/panacea_brewing_co_plans_move_to_new_taproom/19405)
- TRU Colors, a local for-profit group, has purchased the old Century Mills complex on Greenfield Street (Wilmington) for a future brewery, restaurant and office space; groundbreaking in fall 2019.
- Wilmington Ale Trail launched a digital passport in late August. By using the mobile passport, consumers who check into 18 or more venues with their mobile passport can receive a free Wilmington Ale Trail t-shirt, and vouchers for craft breweries and the Port City Brew Bus. (source: <https://passport.wilmingtonaletrail.com>).
- The area's first distillery, Blue Shark Vodka, is a family-run distillery in Wrightsville Beach. At this time, the distillery is not open to the public nor does it have a tasting room.
- *Accolades*
 - Mad Mole Brewing in Wilmington took 1st Place in the America's Favorite Solar-Powered MicroBrewery contest by Solar United Neighbors [June, 2019].
 - *The Bourbon Review* includes Front Street Brewery in its list of America's 99 Best [Bourbon Bars](http://www.gobourbon.com/bestbourbonbars19) (South). (source: www.gobourbon.com/bestbourbonbars19)

RESTAURANTS

Wilmington:

- Wilmington's dining scene continues to expand and evolve from the river to the sea with new and exciting restaurants in all price ranges and types of cuisine, including vegetarian and vegan eateries.
- Coming Soon:
 - Wilmington's first freestanding food hall is planned for the corner of 10th and Princess Streets. Once complete, Phun Seafood Bar (Keith Rhodes, chef/owner) is among the eateries that plan to open in the new space.
- Culinary Accolades:
 - Manna restaurant received its fifth consecutive AAA Four-Diamond rating; the only restaurant in Wilmington with this distinction.
 - Chef Dean Neff (formerly at PinPoint) was nominated for a James Beard Best Chef award. He is currently planning his next restaurant venture.
 - Savorez is included in EatThis.com's list of best brunch in every state. (Source: www.eatthis.com/best-brunch-every-state)
 - *Wine Spectator* magazine's prestigious 2019 Award of Excellence winners: Grand Cru Food & Wine, Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, and Sweet n Savory Cafe. (source: <https://restaurants.winespectator.com/article/58119/wine-spectator-reveals-2019-restaurant-award-winners>)
 - As recently seen on TV:
 - The Food Network show "Diners, Drive-ins and Dives" featured area restaurants (Sweet & Savory, Cast Iron Kitchen, Something Fishy, Copper Penny, Ceviches). Cast Iron Kitchen also featured on the network's game show "Guy's Grocery Games."
 - The Travel Channel show "Man V. Food" featured Flaming Amy's Burrito Barn and Joe's Oasis.
 - The Food Network recently filmed at Winnie's Tavern and Cheesemith Food Truck for upcoming shows.

Beaches:

- Carolina Beach:
 - Carolina Beach's dining scene continues to expand with new eateries, including: Cork 'n Fork, Salt Fish, Stoked, Lake Park Steakhouse; North End Café To Go, JuSea, more coming
 - Culinary Accolades:
 - Today.com includes Squigley's Ice Cream & Treats in its roundup of Best Ice Cream Shops in America (July, 2019) (source: www.today.com/food/these-are-absolute-best-ice-cream-shops-america-t158900)
 - CoastalLiving.com includes Surf House Oyster Bar and Surf Camp in its of 2019 Best Seafood Dives (source: www.coastalliving.com/travel/lodging-dining/best-seafood-dives-2019?slide=274079#274079)
 - SpoonUniversity.com lists Wake 'n Bake Donuts among its roundup of [Legendary Donut Shops](#) (2018)
- Kure Beach:
 - New: Happy Hippie Java Hut and Happy Subs & Creamery (both near the KB Fishing Pier)
- Wrightsville Beach:
 - New: Adapt Kitchen & Juice Bar (inside Robert's Grocery); Gulfstream WB (Causeway Drive), Topsail Steamer
 - Renovated (reopened after repairs due to storm damage): South Beach Grill, The Oceanic, EAST Oceanfront Restaurant

ATTRACTIONS, TOURS, CRUISES

Wilmington:

- Wilmington Accolades:
 - Wilmington was voted one of the "[South's Best Cities](#)" (#8) in *Southern Living* magazine's 2019 South's Best readers' choice awards. (source: www.southernliving.com/souths-best/cities?slide=583775#583775)
 - Wilmington and Island Beaches was voted "[Best North Carolina Weekend Getaway](#)" during the 2018 WRAL Out and About Voters' Choice Awards Contest.
 - Wilmington, N.C. was selected as one of TripAdvisor's 2018 Travelers' Choice "Top Destinations on the Rise – United States." The vibrant riverfront city, also home to three nearby island beaches, ranked #3 out of 10 on the coveted TripAdvisor list that reveals the top trending spots in 2018. Wilmington was the only NC destination included in this list.
 - According to Carolina Publishing and Associate's 2018 survey of North Carolina's Most Visited Attractions, three attractions are among the state's 30 most visited historic attractions: Fort Fisher State Historic Site (#2 with 903,254 guests); N.C. Aquarium at Fort Fisher (#10 with 482,079 guests) and the Battleship North Carolina (#23 with 186,283 guests).
- Attractions:
 - Battleship *North Carolina*:
 - In July 2019 the ship opened its cold storage compartments, which are available to for public touring. This marks the first addition to the ship's tour in decades. (source: www.battleshipnc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Cold-Storage-opens.pdf)
 - The ship recently renovated its gift shop and visitor center.
 - Burgwin-Wright House Museum celebrates 250 years of history in 2020 with a full year of special events.

- Cape Fear Museum of History & Science:
 - CFM is now a Smithsonian Affiliate; one of only seven affiliates in the state of N.C.
 - The Dinosaur Discovery exhibit opened June 28; runs through Feb. 23, 2020.
 - Upcoming CFM exhibits:
 - Snoopy Soars with NASA (opens Nov. 16, 2019)
 - We Are The MusicMakers (opens March 27, 2020)
 - Hometown Teams (opens May 16, 2020)
 - Fighting for the Right to Fight (opens July 24, 2020)
- Cameron Art Museum:
 - CAM is one of 10 recipients in NC of a Z. Smith Reynolds Inclusive Public Art Grant that will be used to interpret the story of the U.S. Colored Troops who fought at the Battle of Forks Road during the Civil War, the historic site of which is on the museum's campus. A dynamic sculpture will be designed and constructed by Durham-based artist Stephen Hayes to commemorate and illuminate the little-known story of the 1,600 African American soldiers who fought for the Union Army not only to preserve the U.S. but for their own freedom and the freedom of their families. (Timeline TBA)
 - Upcoming CAM exhibits:
 - The Eye Learns - Modernist prints from the Louis Belden Collection (Oct. 22, 2019 - April 26, 2020)
 - Structure in Space and Time - Photography by Phil Freelon (Oct. 22, 2019 - April 26, 2020)
 - Illumination 2019 (Dec. 7, 2019-Jan. 12, 2020)
 - Portions of the famous AIDS Memorial Quilt exhibit are being considered for future display at the CAM (dates TBA).
- Children's Museum of Wilmington new exhibits include: Community Market, Active Lifestyle; and the Lawson Learning Center.
- 2019 Blue Star Museums: Three museums—Burgwin-Wright House, Cape Fear Museum and Cameron Art Museum—participated in this National Endowment for the Arts initiative whereby museums across America offer free admission to active-duty military personnel and their families (from mid-May through Labor Day).
- New Indoor Golf Venues:
 - The Clubhouse Indoor Golf (6213 Market Street, www.clubhouseindoorgolf.com/)
 - Club Golf Indoor (Riverlights community, www.clubgolfindoor.com/)
 - Rounds Golf & Lounge (6801 Parker Farm Dr., Mayfaire, <https://roundsgolf.com/>)
- Wilmington Riverfront improvements:
 - Construction of a 125-room Aloft Hotel scheduled to open in 2020;
 - North Waterfront Park scheduled to open in 2021 (see Recreation & Outdoor Sports section);
 - RiverPlace, a multi-story mixed-use development that will include parking, residential and retail space, is under construction; slated for completion in 2020;
 - Water Street Improvement Project:
 - A large section of Riverfront Park remains closed as repairs to the US Coast Guard bulkhead are underway with a projected completion date of Summer 2020.
 - Above-ground improvements will include: Riverwalk repairs, renovation of Riverfront Park, expansion of the plaza in front of the Federal Courthouse and streetscape improvements, including ADA accessibility at the foot of Market Street, street furnishings, lighting and landscaping.

(source: www.wilmingtonnc.gov/departments/major-construction-projects/riverfront-park-project)

- Cruises and Tours:
 - Cape Fear Riverboats added the new *Henrietta* riverboat to its fleet in 2019, offering narrated scenic cruises and catered events for groups of up to approximately 85 for a meal; 90 for cocktails; or 120 for a sightseeing tour. (source: <https://cfrboats.com>)
 - Wilmington Water Tours added new cruises: Early Flight Excursion-Breakfast with the Birds and a Wine Tasting cruise. (Source: <https://wilmingtonwatertours.net/cruises/early-flight-excursion>)
 - BrewBoat Wilmington is a new BYOB cruise along the Cape Fear River that combines beer, peddling, and boating for up to 15 passengers. (source: <https://brewboatnc.com/>)
 - SeaCoast Trolley Tours will soon offer a variety of themed motorized trolley tours of Wilmington during Fall 2019. The tours will be operated by Cape Fear Transportation. (source: www.seacoasttrolleytours.com)
 - Cape Fear Unearthed Walking Tour: On June 1, the Star-News launched its first Cape Fear Unearthed walking tour, a series of single-day, theme tours based on the daily newspaper's podcasts by the same name. Guided tours are currently available only on pre-set dates. (Source: www.starnewsonline.com/news/20190514/cape-fear-unearthed-podcast-announces-new-season-walking-tour)
 - Wilmington Tours, a self-guided app tour company, now offers personally guided walking tours by appointment with advance reservations. (source: www.wilmington.tours)
 - Wilmington Trolley Tours discontinued operation in 2019.

Carolina Beach/Kure Beach:

- N.C. Aquarium at Fort Fisher:
 - Repairs and replacements of the conservatory roof and fire suppression panels in the Aquarium's 23,000 square foot conservatory begin in November, leaving that portion of the aquarium closed to the public into spring 2020. The marine building, playgrounds and garden will remain open.
 - Construction for a new Asian small-clawed otter habitat at the entrance of the aquarium's conservatory is slated to begin in early 2020; with anticipated completion by summer 2020.
 - The Aquarium recently earned its Sensory Inclusive Certification to ensure a positive experience for guests with sensory issues.
 - Butterfly Bungalow, a temporary seasonal exhibit, will return to the Aquarium in late spring 2020 offering guests an immersive experience with hundreds of exotic butterflies.
- Fort Fisher State Historic Site recently added a display that interprets the Federal Point Lighthouse.
- Sea Legs Pedal Pub in Carolina Beach is a new boating experience that uses pedaling power (steered by a skilled licensed captain). (source: <https://sealegspedalpub.com>)
- Beach Accessible Walkway:
The non-profit Ocean Cure in Carolina Beach recently expanded the seasonal beach accessible walkway at the Carolina Beach Boardwalk, adding 1,500 sq. ft. to widen the walkway and move it closer to the ocean.
- Accolades:
 - TripSavvy.com included Carolina Beach and Kure Beach (#16) among its picks for the Best Family Beach Vacations in the Southeast. (June 2019, www.tripsavvy.com/best-family-vacations-southeast-us-3267721)
 - *Budget Travel* named Carolina Beach Boardwalk among its list of America's Most Awesome Boardwalks (June 2019, www.budgettravel.com/slideshow/photos-americas-most-awesome-boardwalks_12984)

Long-range:

- The N.C. Aquarium at Fort Fisher is planning for a \$20 million expansion and renovation project which will include updates to and renovations of existing exhibits and infrastructure to make the aquarium more modern and relevant. All improvements will be made with the goal of enhancing the visitor experience. A construction start date is dependent on funding approval.
- Fort Fisher State Historic Site: Plans are underway to develop a new two-story 20,000 sq. ft. visitor center and museum that will include new exhibits, a multi-purpose classroom, event space and a platform for offloading buses. The site also hopes to reconstruct three earthwork mounds that were destroyed by erosion and airstrip construction during World War II. Pending funding, ground-breaking could take place as early as the end of 2020; completion date TBD. (Source: www.starnewsonline.com/news/20190916/as-visitors-surge-fort-fisher-historic-site-charges-ahead)

Wrightsville Beach:

- Accolades:
 - Wrightsville Beach (#4) is among the [South's Best Beaches](#), as voted by readers of *Southern Living* magazine. (2019, www.southernliving.com/souths-best/beach-towns)
 - Wrightsville Beach is featured by *Travel & Leisure* as one of the “Best Spring Break Destinations in the U.S.” (Feb. 2019, www.travelandleisure.com/trip-ideas/spring-vacations/best-us-spring-break-destinations#wrightsville-beach)
 - Wrightsville Beach is featured on MSN's list of “[The Best Beaches in the U.S.](#)” (Feb. 2019, www.msn.com/en-us/travel/article/the-best-beaches-in-the-us/ss-BBTyIbe#image=5)
 - The Wrightsville Beach Ocean Rescue competition team placed 2nd in the 2019 South Atlantic Lifesaving Association Lifeguarding Competition (regionals).
 - CoastalLiving.com ranks Wrightsville Beach among its list of “Small Beach Towns to Visit This Summer” (July 2018)
- Wrightsville Beach Museum of History:
 - Restorations to the historic Bordeaux Cottage (c. 1924), which was relocated in January 2018 to the Town’s historic square, adjacent to the museum, are nearing completion. The house, slated to open in Fall, 2019, will provide additional space.
 - The Museum has been accepted for two upcoming Smithsonian Traveling Exhibitions:
 - Dec. 4, 2020-Jan. 19, 2021: Water/Ways “Water/ways”, a traveling exhibition from the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street (MoMS) program, is part of the Smithsonian’s Think Water Initiative to raise awareness of water as a critical resource for life through exhibitions, educational resources and public programs.
 - Oct. 2019-Spring 2020: 2020 *Stories: YES* will explore and record experiences of students who live in nearby inland communities that were impacted by Hurricane Florence.
- Oceanfront Park: Plans for the East Salisbury Street Oceanfront Park near Johnnie Mercer Fishing Pier are moving forward. The park will feature a rebuilt “ocean access park,” in addition to showers and bathrooms, new landscaping, improved sidewalks and new streetscaping for the parking areas. Construction is expected to begin Fall 2019 with anticipated completion by May 2020. (Source: <http://luminanews.com/2019/04/wrightsville-beach-residents-get-first-look-at-salisbury-street-project>)

RECREATION AND OUTDOOR SPORTS

Wilmington:

- Tennis courts at Echo Farms Park were resurfaced in the spring.
- Empie Park Althea Gibson Tennis Complex: In spring 2019, the park’s \$1.425 million improvement project was completed, which includes renovations to original tennis courts and

five additional hard courts, along with new parking spaces, landscaping and sidewalks connecting to the Gary Shell Cross-City Trail. The tennis complex now has 24 hard courts with lights to allow for larger scale tournaments and events. It is the largest tennis facility east of I-95 in North Carolina.

- NHRMC Wrightsville Beach Marathon & Half Marathon is changing its course and rebranding as the NHRMC Wilmington NC Marathon Madness for the March 2020 race. (sources: <https://www.wilmingtonncmarathon.com/day-of-event/races/> & www.wect.com/2019/03/30/wrightsville-beach-marathon-announces-new-course-new-name/)
- Long-range:
 - Cape Fear Regional Soccer Park plans to add 5-7 new fields to provide additional field space to serve local youth soccer teams and attract bigger tournaments.
 - North Waterfront Park is a City of Wilmington planned urban green space that will take advantage of views of the Cape Fear River, connected by the Wilmington Riverwalk and two marinas. A playground with splash pad, shade trees and lush gardens are among the amenities that will allow visitors to enjoy respite among the active downtown urban landscape. The park will also include a large open-air music venue managed by Live Nation. Anticipated completion date: 2021.

Beaches

- Wrightsville Beach: Shred the Gnar Wake School, owned and operated by Women's World Champion and Liquid Force team rider Kara Austin, now offers summer camps in addition to watersport lessons (including wakeboarding and wakesurfing).

FISHING/BOATING/CRUISE SHIPS

- American Cruise Lines small cruise ships regularly visit Wilmington during the spring (April/May) and fall (November), docking along the riverfront at Port City Marina.

SPECTATOR & AMATEUR SPORTS

- IRONMAN 70.3 North Carolina returns on October 19 with a new sponsor: UnitedHealthcare. (Source: ironman.com/triathlon/events/americas/ironman-70.3/north-carolina.aspx)
- NHRMC Wilmington NC Marathon Madness - marathon & half marathon is the new name for the race formerly known as the Wrightsville Beach Marathon & Half Marathon, which takes place in March. A new course in 2020 begins at Johnnie Mercer Fishing Pier in Wrightsville Beach and ends along the Wilmington riverfront. (source: www.wilmingtonncmarathon.com/)
- Cape Fear Community College's Schwartz Center recently completed extensive renovations to include new locker rooms, resilient wood strip flooring, a new bleacher system and scoreboard, roof, heating/ac system and a team/multi-purpose room, adding 6,200 square feet to the facility.
- Sports Accolades:
 - Wilmington Municipal Golf Course was ranked among the Top 100 Golf Courses of the World. (source: www.top100golfcourses.com)
 - IRONMAN 70.3 Athletes' Choice Awards (2017) recognized the IRONMAN 70.3 North Carolina race in Wilmington/Wrightsville Beach for Overall Swim (tied for 5th) and Overall Run (2nd).
 - The Carolina Pro-Am and Carolina Cup stand-up paddle races are now part of the Association of Paddlesurf Professionals (APP) Qualifier Series supported by the World Paddle Association.

ARTS & CULTURE

Wilmington:

- TheatreNOW, Wilmington's only dinner theatre, closed in August 2019.
- Opera House Theatre Company hired Justin Smith as executive artistic director.

MAJOR EVENTS & FESTIVALS

- Event Milestones:
 - Cucalorus Festival celebrates 25 years in November 2019.
 - Fort Fisher State Historic Site will commemorate the 155th anniversary of the fall of Fort Fisher (1865) in January 2020.
- Event Accolades:
 - *MovieMaker* magazine (April 2019) includes Cucalorus Film Festival in its list of 50 Film Festivals Worth the Entry Fee 2019. (source: www.moviemaker.com/archives/spring-2019/50-film-festivals-worth-the-entry-fee-in-2019/15)
 - TravelChannel.com lists the Carolina Beach Music Festival #5 among its top picks for 10 Terrific U.S. Beach Festivals to Check Out This Season (spring 2018)
- Event changes:
 - Due to construction along Wilmington's riverfront, events such as the Downtown Sundown summer concert series, Riverfront Farmer's Market, street fairs for NC Azalea Festival and Riverfest, among others, were relocated to nearby locations in the river district.
 - Wilmington Jewish Film Festival's 2019 summer series moved to The Pointe 14 Cinemas.
- Inaugural events in 2020 include:
 - Wilmington Coffee Festival (February)
- Annual events that ceased:
 - Wilmington Wine & Chocolate Festival recently announced it is suspended indefinitely.

TRANSPORTATION

Wilmington:

- Wilmington International Airport (ILM):
 - Passenger air service currently provided by Delta, United and American Airlines to 8 non-stop destinations, including 7 hubs and 6 international gateways: ATL, CLT, LGA, PHL, ORD, Washington-DCA (seasonal) and Washington-IAD. (source: flyilm.com)
 - According to an ILM press release, total passengers rose in 2018 to 934,058, setting a new passenger record. (source: <https://flyilm.com/ilm-sets-new-passenger-record/>)
 - Terminal Expansion: In order to accommodate the growth of passenger travel and air service at ILM, the Wilmington International Airport is expanding its terminal. The Terminal Expansion Project began in 2018 with the first of three construction phases that will span 4+ years. Phase 2 began in late May 2019. Once complete the terminal will grow by 75%, expanding to 162,800 square feet. (source: <https://flyilm.com/ilm-sets-new-passenger-record/>)
- WAVE Transit news:
 - The Wilmington Multimodal Transportation Center/Downtown Transit Center at 3rd & Campbell streets is under construction, with expected completion by December 2019.
 - In October 2018, the Downtown Trolley expanded its route to connect several downtown districts, with stops at Castle Street, Brooklyn Arts/N. Fourth Street, Central Business District,

North Waterfront and South Front/Greenfield Street. (source: www.wavetransit.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Map-Portion-Revised-Downtown-Trolley-October-15-2019.pdf)

- NCDOT Bridges:
 - Following major renovations to the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge last spring, the NCDOT is now considering replacing the 50-year-old Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, which the organization projects has up to a 20-year life span remaining. (source: www.starnewsonline.com/news/20190828/goodbye-cape-fear-crossing-hello-memorial-bridge-replacement)
 - Studies to build the long-anticipated Cape Fear Crossing project have been halted by the NCDOT. (sources: www.ncdot.gov/projects/cape-fear-crossing/Pages/default.aspx)

Kure Beach/Fort Fisher:

- The NC Ferry System's Southport-Fort Fisher route will be offline during September for repairs to the ferry ramp system on the Southport side. Target date for repairs is October 1. (source: www.ncdot.gov/news/press-releases/Pages/2019/2019-08-30-southport-fort-fisher-repairs.aspx)

Carolina Beach:

- The Town of Carolina Beach recently completed the Island Greenway project, a .2-mile paved path that takes pedestrians and bikers safely through town. (source: carolinabeach.org/projects/plans_and_drawings_islandgreen.php)
- The Town of Carolina Beach is in the planning stages for the Clarendon Avenue Multi-Use Path project to provide pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between the Central Business District and Boardwalk area, CB Lake Park, CB elementary School, Mike Chappelle Park and the trailhead for the new section of the Island Greenway System, and the Dow Road corridor. (source: *Town of Carolina Beach press release, 9-10-19*)

Wrightsville Beach:

- NCDOT is exploring the feasibility of replacing Drawbridge No. 12, the C. Heide Trask Memorial Bridge, which connects Wilmington to the Town of Wrightsville Beach via US 74/US 76. No timeline has yet been established. (source: www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com/DocumentCenter/View/2940/Heide-Trask-Drawbridge-Draft-Feasibility-Study-Report?bidId=)

ACCOMMODATIONS

What's New:

Wilmington:

- Downtown/River District: ARRIVE Wilmington (formerly The Wilmingtonian) opened in June 2019 following a complete restoration and renovation. The 36-room boutique hotel and Dram Yard restaurant/bar is located at 101 S. Second Street. (source: arriveenterprises.com/arrive-wilmington)
- Downtown/Mansion District: Between the Covers – A N.C. Writers B&B opened in late 2018 and is located in a historic home (1817 Market Street). (source: www.betweenthecoversbandbnc.com/)

What's Changed:

Wilmington

- Downtown/River District:
 - The Inn at City Club's suites (23 S. Second Street) are now managed by ARRIVE Wilmington (source: www.cityclubofwilmington.com/suites)
 - Closed permanently: Camellia Cottage B&B, Hotel Riverwalk, The Dames Inn.

Coming Soon:

- The Hive, a vacation rental with multiple units at 505 North Second Street, plans to open 8 more suites in October: www.thehivewilmington.com
- Midtown:
 - Flag change:
 - America's Best Value Inn (2828 Market Street) is under renovation with plans to reopen under another flag: AmeriVu Inn & Suites. Opening date TBA.
 - America's Best Inn & Suites (2929 Market Street) recently changed flags and is now operating as the Azalea Inn & Suites.
 - Temporarily offline due to Florence (plan to re-open by 2020):
 - Comfort Suites
 - Days Inn
 - AmeriStay Inn
 - AmeriVue Inn & Suites (formerly America's Best Value Inn)
 - Baymont Inn remains closed post-storm; unable to obtain status update.
 - A total of 329 limited service rooms in Midtown are still offline.

Beaches:

- Carolina Beach:
 - Closed:
 - Surfside Lodge has been demolished/closed permanently
 - Latitude 34 Realty closed; properties managed by Bryant Realty
 - Russo's Motel status is unknown; phone disconnected and website inactive
 - Blue Water Realty & Ocean Breeze Properties (Carolina/Kure listings) were acquired by Topsail Realty and are now operating as Blue Water Realty by Carolina Retreats: www.carolinaretreats.com/wilmington-beach-destinations
 - Long-range: Plans are underway to redevelop the site where Surfside Lodge once stood; new development may include a new hotel or condominiums.

What's Next:

Wilmington:

- Downtown/Convention District:
 - A 125-room Aloft Hotel (501 Nutt Street) broke ground in January 2019 (Poteat Hospitality Associates LLC) on a boutique hotel property that will incorporate the existing historic Coastline Conference & Event Center into the building design. Anticipated opening: mid-2020. (source: www.starnewsonline.com/news/20190116/what-projects-are-breaking-ground-in-downtown-wilmington, 1/16/19)
- Downtown/River District: ARRIVE Wilmington will add approximately 10 rooms in an adjacent building that formerly housed the Hotel Riverwalk which is being completely renovated. Projected completion date: late 2019. (source: <https://portcitydaily.com/local-news/2019/05/16/arrive-hotels-submit-plans-for-additional-four-story-45-unit-building-in-downtown-wilmington/>)

Midtown Wilmington:

- Midtown/Medical Center Drive: A four-story, 109-room Holiday Inn Express & Suites Wilmington West - Medical Park (839 Medical Center Drive) is nearing completion (Kismet Wilmington LLC). Anticipated opening is Fall 2019. (source: www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/wilmington/ilmmmd/hoteldetail).
- Midtown/Porters Neck: A four-story, 116-room Holiday Inn Express (168 Porter's Neck Rd.) is under construction (Crown Hotel & Management). Anticipated opening : August 2020. (source: www.crownhoteltm.com/Properties/hie-porters-neck-wilmington-nc & www.facebook.com/hieportersneck/)

Long-range:

- Midtown/Military Cutoff: The Avenue. The Carroll Companies, a Greensboro-based developer, is moving forward with plans to develop The Avenue (349 Military Cutoff Rd.), a planned mixed-use development that would be anchored by a Westin hotel and conference center. Timeline not yet determined. (source: www.starnewsonline.com/news/20190313/avenue-submits-plans-for-1-million-sq-ft-of-development, 3/13/19) www.theavenuewilmington.com/westin-wilmington/
- Midtown/Military Cutoff/Eastwood: Wilmington-based Swain & Associates plans to develop CenterPoint, a mixed-use project, in the 1500 block of Eastwood Road as a retail, hospitality, office and residential with street frontage on both Military Cutoff and Eastwood roads. A proposed flagship luxury hotel (TBA) with 200 rooms would be part of the project. Developers anticipate breaking ground in early 2020. (source: www.starnewsonline.com/news/20190207/centerpoint-at-eastwood-and-military-cutoff-to-start-construction-in-2020, 2/7/19)
- Convention District/Downtown: A 120-room hotel at 1 Hanover Street is still part of the long-range plan for the northern riverfront property owned by developer USA InvestCo. (source: <http://usainvestco.com/projects/northern-riverfront-development/future-hotel/>)
- Pooler, GA-based Ideal Hospitality plans to build a 4-story, 108-room Home2 Suites by Hilton at The Pointe at Barclay. Projected ground-breaking for the limited service, extended stay property is late 2019/early 2020. (source: <http://idealhospitality.com/portfolio.php>)
- Ideal Hospitality also plans to build a La Quinta in Wilmington (Location/Timeline: TBD). (source: <http://idealhospitality.com/portfolio.php>).
- ARRIVE Wilmington is moving forward with plans to construct a 4-story, 45-room additional building on 2nd Street, located across the street from the hotel and between the Community Arts Center and Tarantelli's restaurant. Groundbreaking TBA; Projected Completion TBA. (source: <https://portcitydaily.com/local-news/2019/05/16/arrive-hotels-submit-plans-for-additional-four-story-45-unit-building-in-downtown-wilmington/>)
- In April 2019 local news sources reported that Ameristay Inn (5001 Market St.) will renovate the existing property, expand, rebrand and reopen with additional rooms (for a total of 207). The property is expected to rebrand as Tru and Tapestry, a combination of Tru (Hilton's budget brand) and Tapestry (Hilton's soft brand for independent hotels). Timeline TBA. (source: <https://portcitydaily.com/local-news/2018/04/13/ameristay-leaving-4-story-hotel-planned-on-market-street/>, 4/13/19)
- The Generations Companies of Raleigh has submitted plans for a Home2 Suites by Hilton, an extended-stay property) to be built at 5518 Market Street. No further details were available. (source: www.wilmingtonbiz.com/real_estate_-_commercial/2019/07/12/hotel_coming_to_the_pointe_at_barclay_in_midtown_wilmington/19158)
- Based on a recent study and analysis by Strategic Performance Group LLC, Wilmington International Airport (ILM) may consider attracting a 100-room, full-service flagship hotel to become a part of ILM's Business Park. (source: www.wilmingtonbiz.com/more_news/2019/01/04/ilm_hopes_to_land_airport_hotel/18415 & <https://flyilm.com/airport-history/>)