



Anglers take home huge prize in fishing tournament

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Construction continues in the Trestle Ridge neighborhood of Brunswick Forest on Aug. 31 off of Brisco Way in Leland.
KEN BLEVINS/STARNEWS

80% of approved housing waits for construction

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Brunswick County officials have approved tens of thousands of new homes and apartments over the past decade. Despite residents seeing development take over, county development records show many of those units have yet to be constructed.

Brunswick’s residential development dashboard shows 149 major residential developments totaling nearly 60,000 residential units have been approved since 2016. Despite earning approvals years ago, the vast majority of approved homes have yet to hit the market.

With the total number of approved units sitting at 58,313, not even half have been constructed. County records indicate only 9,104 units have been built, while another 1,224 were under construction when the data was exported.

That leaves more than 80% of approved units in the queue for construction.

Single-family and other house-oriented developments take up the largest share of approved housing. County records show about 36,947 approved units are developments featuring single-family homes, townhomes and duplexes. The other 21,366 approved units were identified as multi-family housing, including apartments.

The pace of development approvals has also accelerated significantly in recent years. After several years of more modest approvals, the county approved 10,873 units in 2024 and 13,119 units in 2025, the highest annual totals in the dataset. So far this year, 8,374 units have been approved.

Despite the growing number of apartment pro-

posals, the data lists approximately 1,172 multifamily units as built, compared to about 5,388 housing units. Both development styles still have a long way to go.

Several large developments account for a significant portion of the county’s future housing pipeline.

Some of the biggest projects include: Canopy, a 3,700-unit development approved in 2026; Midway Tract, with 3,612 units approved in 2024; and Rice Creek, with 3,400 units approved in 2021. Other large projects include Evergreen, formerly known as Ashton Farms, with 2,950 approved units, and Timber Farms with 2,500 units.

Residential projects require a variety of permits before construction and are often built in phases that stretch across several years. Between earning permits, working with state entities and finalizing designs, it may take two or more years after approval before site work begins on a project.

With thousands of homes already constructed, tens of thousands of approved units remain unbuilt. For residents, that means the subdivisions and apartment complexes visible today represent only part of the growth that local governments have already authorized.

County officials maintain a residential development dashboard that tracks major projects approved since 2015. The dashboard reports 69,511 approved units when annexed, inactive and abandoned developments are included and notes that data are compiled from planning, permitting and addressing records and updated monthly rather than in real time.

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NCDOT files eminent domain for Wilmington gas station

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The N.C. Department of Transportation has filed eminent domain cases for properties to make way for improvements along South Front Street including a longstanding gas station.

After failing to negotiate with property owners, NCDOT is exercising its eminent domain authority to acquire portions of two properties needed to complete roadway improvements along the busy corridor. The project, a \$76.5 million road widening with additional improvements, is expected to begin construction in 2029.

In April, the project prompted the relocation of the Greenfield Lake Yacht Club. The bar’s former building at 1756 Carolina Beach Road will be demolished to make way for the improvements. The club’s owners previously told the StarNews that they were aware of the project when the business opened in 2023 and have since relocated to Bourgie Nights on Princess Street.

In court documents filed in August, NCDOT began pursuing eminent domain for the property at 1746 Carolina Beach Road. A Mobil gas station with a Han-Dee Hugo’s convenience store will be demolished.

The agency will take the entire 0.34-acre property, compensating the owner a sum of \$750,725. Owner Clark Stores LLC purchased the property for \$296,000 in 2004 and it has a tax value of \$609,800.

NCDOT has also filed an eminent domain case to obtain easements over a portion of a 2.24-acre property at 1404 S. Front St. The agency will pay the owners, a collection of heirs, \$36,175 for the acquisition.

Right-of-way acquisition costs for the South Front Street widening total approximately \$14.8 million.

NCDOT will widen South Front Street from the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge to Burnett Boulevard, making the street four lanes. A stretch of Carolina Beach Road will also be widened to become a four-lane, median divided highway. The improvements will run from Willard Street to Shipyard Boulevard.

A 10-foot-wide multi-use path will be located along the east side of the street. The intersection at South Front Street, Burnett Boulevard and Carolina Beach Road will be converted to a double quadrant intersection.

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N.C. Ports Authority suspends Wilmington Harbor deepening

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The N.C. State Ports Authority has suspended its proposed Wilmington Harbor deepening project in response to concerns over environmental impacts.

The authority has requested to pause consideration of the \$1.35 billion naviga-

tion improvement project, which would have deepened the channel along the Cape Fear River in an effort to accommodate larger container ships, according to a letter from Executive Director Brian Clark to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Clark also requested the suspension of consideration of the associated Wilmington Harbor 403 Letter Report activities and the pending record of decision.

The project called for deepening 26 miles of the Cape Fear River shipping channel from its current 42 feet to 47 feet. The six-year undertaking also proposed widening and deepening of the shipping entrance channel at the mouth of the river.

In the letter, Clark cited concerns over stirring up per-and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, commonly known as PFAS or

“forever chemicals,” for the suspension.

“The questions raised by residents, researchers and other stakeholders regarding the potential effects of PFAS within the scope of this project are too important to be subject to a systematic timeline,” Clark wrote in the letter. “The North Carolina State Ports Authority

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