

Moving New Bern Forward, Together



JULY 2025

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Moving New Bern Forward, Together: A Plan for Growth & Opportunity

By: Trey Ferguson, Candidate for Ward 1 Alderman

Introduction

When I am elected as one of six aldermen on New Bern’s Board, I understand that progress is built through teamwork and thoughtful action. While my vote will only be one of seven—including the mayor—I am



committed to working collaboratively with my colleagues and the community to guide New Bern toward smart growth, broad-based opportunities, and long-term resilience.

This campaign centers on three focused priorities, each supported by concrete, achievable steps designed to improve our city today and for generations to come. What follows is my vision for Ward 1 and New Bern, a practical roadmap to move our community forward together when I am elected on October 7, 2025. With the other Aldermen’s help, we can accomplish these goals and many more.

About Trey

I’m a local government attorney, former high school teacher, and proud father of three daughters. My wife and I were married in downtown New Bern and returned here to raise our family and serve the community we love. As an attorney, I represent local governments across North Carolina, serve on the New Bern Board of Adjustment, and stay active through church and civic involvement. I’m running for Ward 1 Alderman to bring responsible, community-focused leadership that helps shape a strong and resilient future for New Bern.

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1. Planning for the Future

Planning for the future means shaping a New Bern that works for all of us—one that grows responsibly, prepares for challenges, and invests in our people and neighborhoods. That future depends on meaningful partnerships, smarter infrastructure, and opportunities that start at the neighborhood level. Here's how I'll work to move Ward 1 and all of New Bern forward:

- **Create a citywide strategic plan** through inclusive public workshops; neighborhood outreach to associations; and strong partnerships with the faith community and organizations like Swiss Bear, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Tourism Development Authority.
- **Develop a Downtown Development Plan** to promote walkability, storefront vitality, and family-friendly spaces by leveraging the work and mission of existing organizations focusing on this work, like the Historic Downtown Residents Association, Swiss Bear, and the Chamber.
- **Expand Parks & Recreation youth programming** with community partners to offer youth job training, after-school activities, and summer programs.
- **Modernize historic preservation guidelines** to reduce the economic burden on homeowners, support resilient renovations while maintaining the historic fabric of downtown and Riverside, and streamline the guidance and approval process that focuses on collaboration and compliance.
- **Strengthen resilient infrastructure with stormwater upgrades** throughout the City. This includes targeted drainage upgrades in flood-prone areas, use of green infrastructure like rain gardens and permeable pavement, and stronger planning to ensure our infrastructure keeps up with growth.
- **Elevate the Redevelopment Commission** as a tool for community reinvestment by banking vacant or blighted lots for future affordable housing, offering workshops for first-time homebuyers, and educating current homeowners about low-cost repairs, storm preparation, and major rehab projects.

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- **Update the City's Land Use Plan** to strengthen climate resilience and utility coordination within state limits. While recent changes to state law restrict down-zoning, New Bern can still promote smarter, forward-looking growth by prioritizing development in areas with existing infrastructure; incorporating stormwater and flood risk into planning decisions; and better aligning land use with the capacity of services like electric, water, and sewer.

2. Economic Development & Opportunity

Economic growth that benefits everyone starts with strong partnerships, supporting local businesses, and investing in our workforce. As Alderman, I'll work to grow New Bern as a regional hub, attract diverse businesses downtown, strengthen job training, and improve healthcare access, so we can build a healthier, more prosperous community.

- **Hire a dedicated in-house Economic Developer** for New Bern to collaborate closely with Craven County's economic development team and the New Bern Chamber of Commerce. Together, they will position New Bern and the wider region as a thriving economic hub by strategically recruiting new businesses, supporting existing employers, and identifying growth sectors that benefit all wards.
- **Expand and diversify downtown entrepreneurship** by partnering with Swiss Bear to enhance grant programs and technical support aimed at attracting a broad mix of businesses that will expand downtown down Broad Street. This effort will focus on retail and residential services to build a vibrant, inclusive downtown that serves residents and visitors alike.
- **Create targeted tax incentives and utility plans and grants** designed to attract larger businesses to New Bern and Craven County. By working with utility providers and city leadership, we can offer competitive, sustainable packages that encourage economic growth beyond Ward 1, because a rising tide truly lifts all boats.
- **Support smart, responsible growth** by prioritizing infrastructure investments that improve roads, sidewalks, lighting, and stormwater management in areas ready for development, which ensures new projects benefit neighborhoods and integrate with existing services.

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- **Strengthen workforce development through education partnerships** with Craven Community College and local public schools by:
 - Expanding programs like New Bern 101 to introduce young people to city government and public service career paths;
 - Creating more job training and apprenticeship opportunities aligned with city needs, including public safety, utilities, and emerging industries; and
 - Building pipelines for recruitment in high-demand local sectors, helping residents secure good-paying jobs close to home.
 - **Encourage partnerships with local health providers**, including the hospital system, to increase access to quality health care within New Bern, while supporting and expanding a community health clinic to serve residents who need affordable, accessible care.

3. Transparent & Accountable Government

Transparency and accountability are essential to rebuilding trust and ensuring the city government truly serves its residents. As Alderman, I will prioritize open communication, meaningful community involvement, and clear oversight to make sure Ward 1 and all of New Bern have a government that listens, explains, and acts responsibly.

- **Reinstate the New Bern Utility Commission** to provide strong oversight of our utility services. This commission will increase transparency around water, sewer, and electric operations, ensuring ratepayer interests are represented and decisions are made responsibly.
- **Hold regular Ward 1 listening sessions and town halls** to maintain an open dialogue with residents. Coupled with my routine electronic updates, these meetings will give neighbors a consistent opportunity to raise concerns, offer feedback, and stay informed about city initiatives affecting their neighborhoods.
- **Improve public notice and engagement** by seeking early community input on major projects and decisions. Enhancing the City's online presence with user-friendly tools and clear communication channels will ensure more residents can participate in shaping New Bern's future.
- **Push for plain-language budget and project reporting** so all residents can easily understand how tax dollars are spent. Clear, accessible reports will promote accountability and help residents track progress on priorities that matter most.

My Commitment to New Bern

As a local government attorney, former teacher, a parent, a neighbor, and a committed public servant, I'm running to bring knowledge, integrity, and results to City Hall. I'll work with anyone who's serious about doing right by the people of New Bern. I believe in public service that: listens before it speaks, plans before it spends, and works together before pointing fingers.

Let's move New Bern forward, together!