



West End Revitalization Association
(WERA)
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"Right to Basic Public Health Amenities."

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Enviro-Art by
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"Cherish every drop of water you drink, Cherish every leaf that's green, Cherish every hand keeping it clean."

September 20, 2023

FACT SHEET: Western Electric / Tarheel Army Missile Plant, Burlington, NC

Background

1992 – The 22-acre Western Electric / Tarheel Army Missile Plant site closed after a century of textile, Western Electric, and Army plant production of industrial and military products with known and unknown toxic metals, plastics, and chemicals for telephone cables and parts. During World War II, its technology was employed to produce secret US Army missile weapons two story underground and three story above ground. Access YouTube: [Bing Videos](#)

The site adjoins decades old low-income housing with a significant percentage of people of color and senior citizens. The site adjoins and is across the street from the Alamance County Health Department, Alamance County Soil and Water Conservation District, health care offices for low-wealth families, churches, schools, the Alamance County Schools Systems center office, restaurants, and Armory.

Reporter Lisa Sorg has written a series of articles about the air, water, soil contamination at this site. [NC Newsline](#) article by Lisa Sorg "*Clear and Present Danger: Former Army missile plant has polluted a Black, Latino neighborhood in Burlington for more than 30 years*" – 9/8/2021. [Former Army missile plant has polluted a Black, Latino neighborhood for more than 30 years | NC Newsline](#), and [Former Army missile plant in Burlington poses "an urgent public health risk" | NC Newsline](#)

Implementation of Justice40 Policy and Protection – Mitigation/Removal of 32-acre Western Electric / Army Missile Plant and parking lot, east Burlington, NC

2021 - WERA was invited to write an Environmental Justice chapter for the Alamance County Health Department's "County Health Assessment". This included addressing sites that lead to health disparities for Black, Indigenous, Latinx and other low-wealth communities. The Alamance County Health Department revealed that the life expectancy for people of color in east Burlington near the Western Electric site is eleven years less than west Burlington which is predominately white residents with higher income.

January 23, 2023 – In a planning and zoning article, former Burlington, NC Mayor Ian Baltutis labelled the site "***Too Big to Dismantle: Planning for Reuse of the Tarheel Army Missile Plant***" (Western Electric) – [Carolina Planning Journal](#) – 1/23/23. [Too Big to Dismantle: Planning for Reuse of the Tarheel Army Missile Plant – Carolina Planning \(carolinaangles.com\)](#)

April 21, 2023 - Under Biden-Harris Administration Justice40 initiatives, environmental justice sites are not too big to dismantle and removal from BIPOC communities. Executive Order – 14008: Access these two links: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/04/21/executive-order-on-revitalizing-our-nations-commitment-to-environmental-justice-for-all/> and <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/biden-sign-executive-order-aims-advance-environmental-justice-rcna80813> (An all of government must be employed)

April 2023 - West End Revitalization Association (WERA) and collaborative partners sent a letter and supporting articles seeking EPA's technical and Justice40 funding assistance to clean-up the Western Electric / Army Missile Plant site that has been closed since 1992 without environmental or environmental justice mitigation or removal. A federal and state interagency response (EPA, Army,

HHS, HUD, CEQ, DOJ, and NIEHS) is necessary to support impacted communities, local/state agencies, and public health service providers remove “a clear and present danger” to public health.

Additional information can be provided. We look forward to hearing from you soon at WERA vera1usa@gmail.com and (336) 675-1608

