



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT + COMMERCIAL + ACTION

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REPORT

ECONOMIC

As a member of the Greensboro Partnership, Action Greensboro is united with the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce and Greensboro Economic Development Alliance to approach economic development, urban livability, and business success with a collective course of action.

In 2008, Action Greensboro kept its sights focused on increasing community vitality in Greensboro. The organization accomplished this through its effort to attract and retain young professionals, to keep Center City Park the lively center of downtown, to plan and fund construction of the Downtown Greenway, to enhance public school education, and to prepare for Action Greensboro Phase II. By fostering an exceptional quality of life in the city, Action Greensboro contributes to business attraction and expansion as well as new capital investment, which enables all of Greensboro and Guilford County to prosper.



## A VISION FOR COMMUNITY

### Attracting, Retaining, and Developing Young Professionals

synerG, under the umbrella of Action Greensboro, is an active organization of young adults who lead initiatives with the mission to attract, engage and connect Young Professionals to Greensboro. Through its projects, synerG promotes social and professional networking, leadership opportunities and serves as a clearinghouse for information for young adults in the 21-39 year-old age demographic.

- > synerG increased its young professional membership by over 400 people in 2008.
- > synerG's Leadership Initiative presented over 100 profiles of young professionals interested in leadership opportunities to the Greensboro City Council and the Guilford County Commissioners and facilitated two "meet and greet" sessions between elected leaders and young professionals.
- > Triad InternNet, a service connecting area college students to businesses with internship opportunities, launched a web portal in April 2008. Since March 2008, the website has received nearly 6,700 visits and 126 internships have been posted.
- > synerG on Tap, one of the most popular events for young professionals in the area, hosted 10 networking events, some attended by as many as 200 people.
- > synerG's YP Sports initiative has engaged hundreds of young professionals through 17 teams encompassing dodge ball, kickball, and softball as well as through other special events in 2008.

### Center City: A Robust Hub

#### CENTER CITY PARK

Center City Park is a signature urban space enjoyed by thousands of downtown office workers, residents, and visitors. It serves as both a quiet retreat and a festival space in the heart of the city. The park



# CITY BUILDING

continues to be a catalyst for downtown development, with projects like Center Pointe taking advantage of its appeal.

- > Regular programmed activities make Center City Park the hub of downtown, with weekly lunchtime concerts and monthly family-friendly Sundays in the Park from May until October.
- > Major community events such as the Fun Fourth Festival, the Festival of Lights, and the Greensboro Bicentennial Birthday Party in the Park were held in the park in 2008.
- > Attendance at events in Center City Park reached well over 100,000 in 2008.
- > Over 100 individuals and families joined the Friends of Center City Park in the first half of 2008, which more than doubled the organization's fundraising goal.
- > Center City Park attracted national attention as one of the subjects of "The Park Next Door," a segment of Wanda Urbanska's Simple Living television show aired on public television.



- > A funding strategy for the Greenway was developed, ensuring development of the first several phases of the project. In November, voters approved a Street Improvement Bond allocating \$7 million to the Downtown Greenway. In addition, four Greensboro foundations pledged \$4.5 million for the greenway contingent upon passage of the bond. With over \$570,000 in private & public funds committed earlier in 2008, the total funding secured for the greenway in 2008 was more than \$12 million.

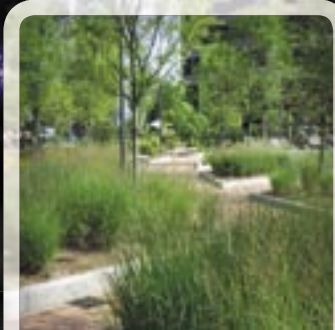
Two artists were selected to create original pieces for the project - artist Gary Gresko will create a bench for the Warnersville neighborhood in Phase 1 and artist Brower Hatcher will create the first cornerstone in the SouthWest corner of the greenway.

## DOWNTOWN GREENWAY

This planned 4.8 mile loop around downtown Greensboro will have tremendous positive impact on the community including increased physical activity to promote health and wellness; significant economic development opportunities; decreased vehicular traffic and encouragement of alternative modes of transportation; and the strengthening of community connectedness and social capital. Action Greensboro made great progress towards advancing this project in 2008.

## ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

- > Action Greensboro took a diverse group of 70 citizens and community leaders to Charlotte for a one-day tour to learn about alternative techniques to finance downtown development and to facilitate public/private partnerships.
- > Two additional foundations joined the Action Greensboro Operating Group – the Moses Cone Wesley Long Community Health Foundation and the Ellison Family Foundation.





# ENHANCING THE PERFORMANCE AND REPUTATION OF GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS

## BUSINESSES FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Action Greensboro continued its work to enhance the performance and reputation of Guilford County Schools through the Businesses for Excellence in Education program. This initiative has been an eight-year effort to promote and recognize academic excellence in the Guilford County School (GCS) system. In 2008, Action Greensboro funded the Academic All-Star Camp for top-performing 9th graders, the Early College Academy, a teacher development program to offer loans/scholarships to GCS students who are willing to become GCS teachers upon completion of college, and the annual Celebration of Excellence. Also in 2008 the Guilford County Education Alliance assumed the administration of Businesses for Excellence in Education in partnership with Action Greensboro.



## ACTION GREENSBORO PHASE II

After a series of community meetings in 2007, Action Greensboro began crafting a new work plan for the next several years in 2008. The Phase II Core Committee of 42 business, higher education and elected leaders worked with six citizen task forces of over 180 volunteers to examine:

### > MAXIMIZING URBAN LIVABILITY

The focus for this committee is to continue planning for and begin construction of the Downtown Greenway, to complete the International Civil Rights Center and Museum, and to update and implement the Center City Master Plan.

### > CAPITALIZING ON GREENSBORO'S HIGHER EDUCATION ASSETS

This group has been focusing on the Data Center & IT industry cluster and the Advanced Manufacturing & Materials cluster to assess what the gaps in education are, so that workforce development in those sectors can be more seamless. Advocacy for Gateway University Research Park, UNCG School of Pharmacy and further enhancement of the NC A&T School of Engineering and the Engineering Research Center (ERC) have also been important focus areas. The group hopes to create a formalized structure to encourage and facilitate collaboration by colleges and universities.

### > EXCELLING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION IN GUILFORD COUNTY

Recommendations made in concert with the Guilford County School System's strategic plan.



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